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Service Quality Level and Customer Satisfaction of Pharmaceutical Stores in Muar, Johor

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Abstract: Customer satisfaction has long been recognised as the most important element in determining the quality of services provided by an organization. This study aims to investigate the relationship between customer satisfaction and service quality level provided by pharmaceutical stores in Muar, Johor. Pharmaceutical stores' service delivery depends much on their customer satisfaction feedback and acceptance. SERVQUAL model has been adapted for this research. The model consists of five dimensions that measure service quality; tangibility reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Quantitative research method was applied for data collection purposes whereas questionnaire was used as the main instrument. Target respondents in this study are among customers that normally attend services provided by pharmaceutical stores. The outcome suggested the relationship between service quality level and customer satisfaction that attended services provided by pharmaceutical stores are still low in several dimension concentrating highly in the reliability element. Realiability towards the services provided, level of patient-physician relationship, caring and caring attitude toward the patient and all other elements should be improved and upgraded. In conclusion, the research help and encourage pharmaceutical stores operators in understanding more of the expectations and satisfactions of the customers.

Keywords: Service quality, Customer satisfaction, Pharmaceutical services, Servqual

1. Introduction

Customer satisfaction is defined as a person customer satisfaction and business performance of the product as the ability to generate profits. Quality in fact, is when customers will be satisfied when they use the product. (Suchanek, Richter Kralove, 2014). According to Kotler (2009), quality is defined as the overall characteristics, the nature of the product and the effect given by the product. Mutawa *et al* (2006), have highlighted that service or product itself is one of the principal factors of customer satisfaction from meeting a need or reaching a goal, defined as a system that customer goes through to receive the value for money. Service quality has gained a lot of interest for researchers and practitioners

in the past twenty years. The practitioners believe that service quality can increase the performance of a firm (Al-Hawari, 2006; Cheruiyot & Maru, 2013; Yoo & Park, 2007). Further, a lot of work has been done in different service industries to better understand the dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction (Chumpitaz & Paparoidamis, 2004; Pantouvakis, 2013; Zhu *et al*, 2002).

Clinicians and healthcare professionals, generally, contend that the views of patients are too subjective to be beneficial in identifying the benefit or high-quality of medical and healthcare (Coulter, 2002). An association affords first-rate when its services meet or exceed consumer expectations, and when pride is affirmative with client expectation and satisfaction. In a consumer-oriented culture the place healthcare transport is patient-led and commodified, the patient must be the arbiter of the first-class of healthcare (Kotler and Keller, 2006)

1.1 Research Background

There are several words and descriptions that define different aspects of pharmacy practice and service delivery, but none cover the full spectrum of clinical services that community pharmacy offers. The concept will assist in many ways including awareness of the broad range of services offered by community pharmacy, and promoting the identification of benchmarks for the implementation and effective delivery of qualified pharmacy services.(Moullin, Sabater-Hernández, Fernandez-Llimos, & Benrimoj, 2013)

1.2 Problem Statements

In the service marketing literature, early research has drawn attention to the role of emotional responses to service settings such as tourism, leisure, entertainment, and expensive (Chan *et al.*, 2015; Jani and Han, 2015; Kim *et al.*, 2016; Koenig-Lewis and Palmer, 2014). Emotions are believed as a principal factor in understanding perceptions of service experience (Jani and Han, 2015; Lin and Liang, 2011; Mattila and Enz, 2002), but their role in useful service settings is not well enough investigated. Traditionally, health care professionals including community pharmacists have been regarded by the public as delivering unquestioned services. In recent decades, this situation has shifted toward a more critical use of health services by increasingly informed patients. A growing number of pharmacies and the consumer desire for "best value for money" have contributed to increasing competitiveness and strategic business orientation in community pharmacy (Villako & Raal, 2007).

1.3 Research Questions

(i)   What is the level of service quality offered by pharmaceutical store?
(ii) What is the customer satisfaction of services provided by pharmaceutical store?
(iii) What is the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction by pharmaceutical store?

1.4 Research Objectives

(i)   To investigate the service quality level offered by pharmaceutical store.
(ii) To identify the customer satisfaction of services provided by pharmaceutical store.
(iii) To investigate the relationship between service quality level on customer satisfaction by pharmaceutical store.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Although there have been studies related to customer satisfaction for an organization, the aspects under study vary. This customer satisfaction survey of pharmacy services in Muar Johor is very important as it benefits everyone involved, students, pharmacies and health centers themselves. In terms of services, the management of pharmacy health centers can see the quality of their services to patients

through this study. Patients will certainly evaluate based on their experiences and experiences while receiving treatment at this health center. As such, the management of the Pharmacy Health Center will be able to determine the patients' perception and perception of the services provided. Once the management of the Pharmacy Center determines the quality of their services, there will be improvements and improvements in the quality of services. The management will take into account issues related to patient satisfaction so that it will not happen again in the future. Therefore, the services provided will be improved over time as before.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the problem being explored is limited to the effect of the quality attributes of service. The measurements are limited to the satisfaction, loyalty and appraisal of patients towards pharmacies services. The satisfaction and service outcome characteristics evaluated in this research are based on specific satisfaction with the visits. Measuring the service outcome from the perspective of the patients (who consumed the service) in private primary medical clinics. The respondent involved are among customers attending services at pharmacies stores in Muar.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Customer satisfaction

Kotler and Armstrong (2012) defined that "customer satisfaction is the extent to which a product's perceived performance matches a buyer's expectations." Customer satisfaction consists of several indicators, namely loyalty, satisfaction, repurchase interest, small desire to make a complaint, the willingness to recommend the product, and the reputation of the company (Kotler and Keller, 2012; Nguyen and LeBlanc, 1998).

2.2 Customer service

According to Fitzsimmons (2011), which is cited from the book Service Management-Operations, Strategy, Information Technology (Adventists Edition), says the service is not long lasting, an intangible experience done for customers who Acting in the role of the manufacturer. Services can also be defined as an activity or series of activities either more or less intangible properties usually but not necessary (Gronross and Lexington from the book Service Management and Marketing, 1990). Services occur in an interaction between the customer and the employees of the services or physical resources or goods or systems from service providers provided as solutions to customer problems

2.3 Service Quality

According to Kahar (2008), the satisfaction of mop or Customer Satisfaction is one of the business terms that intends to measure the extent to which a product or service provided by the organization satisfies customer expectations, namely Customer Expectation or in other words customer satisfaction is the part that indicates the will, needs and expectations of customers who need to be achieved or fulfilled to realize customer loyalty to products or services

2.4 Customer Service Model SERVQUAL

In present day, there are various measuring instruments to measure the quality of the service to meet customer satisfaction (Ramli, Chai and Idris, 2009). Among the instruments used are SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. SERVQUAL measurement was developed by Parasuraman. Berry, and Zeithaml in 1988 to measure the perception of service quality in the field of marketing and then have been widely used in other areas. SERVQUAL works to identify the potential gaps between expectations and perception of both internal and external services delivery. La helps service providers to understand

customer expectations and perception of the services rendered and continuous quality assessment (Booth, 2003). The evaluation of the SERVQUAL concept will evaluate the quality of service based on five dimensions, which is the most valued dimension by the customer in achieving satisfaction for a service which is reliability (Reliability), Security (Assurance), Physical Evidence (Tangibles), empathy (Empathy), and Responsive (Responsiveness). According to Johari (2007), each dimension provides a distinctive assessment of which evidence for each dimension is as follows:

- Tangibles: Physical appearance such as facilities, equipment, communication and employee appearances of an organization.
- Reliability: Organizational ability in providing services that have been accurately and reliably promised.
- Responsiveness: Willingness to act to help customers and perform services with immediate rates.
- Assurance: Worker knowledge and modesty and its ability to grow trust and confidence in the customer's party.
- Empathy: Individual attention provided by service providers to its customers.

2.5 Customer Service

According to Lovelock, Vandermerwe, Lewis, and Fernie (2016), customer service needs in an industry is very important for the purpose of providing information, advice, take orders, solve problems, manage business credit and others. Quality plays an important role in ensuring the development of an organization to continue to grow and remain competitive (Selvakumar, 2015). Excellence in the service quality provided by the organizations showed a good customer satisfaction towards the service quality of a system (Lily, 2008).

2.6 Pharmaceutical Store

Private healthcare plays a significant role in Malaysian overall healthcare sector growth. This is also evident by recent growth projections – that Mal private health carers will be responsible for half its needs by 2020 (Ramesh and Wu, 2008). These trends indicate that a highly competitive healthcare industry is emerging in Malaysia, where private healthcare will face competition from existing public healthcare facilities and the growing private enterprise. Traditionally, private healthcare providers are perceived to provide healthcare more efficiently and robustly (Bhatta, 2001).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Flow

In this research, will be separate to 5 phases including Phase 1: Problem statement, Phase 2: Literature review, Phase 3: Data collection, Phase 4: Data analysis and result, and the last phase will be conclusion.

3.2 Pilot Study

A pilot study (Pilot Test) conducted by researchers before the actual study was conducted to test the validity and reliability of questionnaires were distributed. In a research, pilot study refers to either a trial run of the major research study or a pre-test of a research instrument or procedure (Salkind, 2010).The pilot study is also an initial attempt to study the actual techniques and procedures. The researchers conducted a pilot study involving 30 respondents with characteristics approaching the characteristics of the study population. In a pilot study, 30 respondents have been composed of customers in the pharmaceutical pharmacist about Muar Johor to assess the reliability of the structure

of the questions in the questionnaire. In fact, this study is to identify the level of understanding of respondents to the direction and content of the questionnaire

3.3 Data Collection Process

The first step for data collection was formed the literature review. Second, respondent target set in the area of pharmaceutical services operated within the research scope area that has been identified. Survey questionnaire were formed based on the objectives of the study. In the last stage data were collected in the written form from the respondent.

3.4 Research Method

Research methods are tools that people use to conduct research. The study conducted by researchers is a quantitative study in which the researchers in this study used a descriptive study to identify the customer satisfaction on the quality of the services offered by some pharmaceutical at district of Muar Johor. Questionnaires were used as the main tool for collecting quantitative data for this study were constructed based on the customer satisfaction model SERVQUAL model and modified to meet the criteria in question is to be studied.

3.5 Research Respondent

Convenience sampling is for members or units are selected based on availability (Neuman, 2014). In this research, the respondent selected based on a total of 300 customers at the pharmaceutical store in Muar Johor was used as a sample in this study.

3.6 Research Tool

The study tools in this research were based on literature review, pilot test and data analysis techniques which are quantitative research data.

3.7 Data Analysis Method

Quantitative analysis method was used in this study. After all the data has been obtained, these data were analyzed using factor analysis to get the answers to the research questions and thereby achieve the research objectives. All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. Through SPSS, the analysis results are presented in tabular form specific and so forth in the form of graphs, diagrams, histograms, bar charts and pie charts to give a clearer picture to facilitate researchers interpret and make conclusions of the study. During this study, there is a method of data analysis used descriptive methods. Whereas, Cronbach's Alpha is a numerical coefficient for reliability used to identify the consistency of the statements in scale, which is more than 0.70 is acceptable (Reynaldo 1999, Thursday et al. 2008). With SPSS, simple and complex data can be analyzed quickly in a short time

4. Data Analysis and Results

This chapter discusses the analysis and description of the results obtained from the study conducted. The data collected from the study are analyzed and presented in accordance with the research objectives stated .

4.1 Objective 1: To investigate the service quality level offered by pharmaceutical store.

Based on the analysis performed, there are items that measure the level of customer satisfaction. The results of the study show that the item "I am very satisfied with the counter service provided by

management" is high with a mean score of 4.06. Overall, customers of the pharmaceutical stores are satisfied with the services provided.

4.2 Objective 2: To identify the customer satisfaction of services provided by pharmaceutical store.

There are 5 factors that are presented where the dimensions of reliability, all of them record high levels based on the mean score obtained. The same is true for other items where the dimensions of existence / reality, reliability, response / responsibility and security are all high. However, among all the dimensions, the dimension with the highest values is the dimension of reliability. This finding is supported by studies from Ismail, Sufardi, and Yunan, (2016) who stated that quality of service acts as an important indicator in ensuring customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Service quality is an important model in ensuring that an organization's operations are performing well. This statement is supported by a study by Neupane and Devkota (2017) who stated that the quality of hospital services is high where hospitals provide quality services that meet customer needs.

4.3 Objective 3: To investigate the relationship between service quality level on customer satisfaction by pharmaceutical store.

As a result of the Spearman test, all SERVQUALs have a positive relationship with customer satisfaction over pharmacies in Muar, Johor. *Spearman* correlation tests can show correlations with correlation values between -1 and +1. From the results of the study, there is a positive relationship between the two variables. The results indicates there are strong relationship between how the customer perceive the quality of services and satisfaction towards the services received.

4.3.1 The relationship between tangibility and satisfaction of the study

The relationship between the tangibility dimensions shows a simple positive relationship with r = 0.370. The positive relationship between the tangibility dimensions suggests that organizations need to ensure that facilities are kept up-to-date and organized in order to facilitate each customer's business.

4.3.2 The relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction level

The relationship between reliability and customer satisfaction exists where a positive relationship with the mean score value is r = 0.399. There is a positive relationship with this dimension that contributes to the contribution of customer satisfaction where management constantly informs clients about the current state of service.

4.3.3 Relationship between responsiveness and level of customer satisfaction

The relationship between responsiveness also had a strong positive relationship with a correlation value of r = 0.411. This shows that there is a positive relationship with management that management should always be ready to assist customers to ensure that they are always satisfied with the services provided.

4.3.4 The relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction level

The relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction recorded a value of r = 0.478. this shows that the relationship between assurance and customer satisfaction is positively positive. There is a positive relationship between the assurance dimension and the level of customer satisfaction. This indicates that this dimension has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. Organizations need to ensure that every customer feels secure with the services provided.

4.3.5 The relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction

The relationship between empathy and customer satisfaction also had a strong positive relationship with a value of r = 0.433. This relationship states that organizations need to play their part in constantly

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caring and providing the best service to their customers to ensure customer satisfaction is always maintained.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Limitation of study

In view of the prevalence of the virus corona virus (COVID-19), there has been an impediment to distributing questionnaires and it has taken a long time to distribute the questionnaire to the respondents. Once the questionnaire has been distributed, the researcher will also have to wait for the respondent to complete the questionnaire and the researcher will have to wait a long time to recover the questionnaire that has been distributed. Once the questionnaire has been distributed, the researcher will also have to wait for the respondent to complete the questionnaire and the researcher will have to wait a long time to recover the questionnaire that has been distributed.

5.2 Recommendation

There are several suggestions that can be made on the weaknesses studied. The proposed proposal is divided into two, namely, suggestions on improvements to service quality and further research proposals. Regular maintenance needs to be taken to ensure that each facility is in good working condition. Example, new facilities that are important to the city need to be provided by the city council such as bus stops near the pharmacy.

5.3 Closure

In conclusion, the customer experience on the quality of services at Muar Johor pharmacies is very complex and customers have different perceptions depending on the situations and environments they have been through, such as race differences, marital differences, gender differences and place differences. Customers provide feedback that many facilities and services need attention and maintenance. In addition, customers find that aspects of their accountability, outcomes and ongoing care are underestimated by the pharmacy. Overall the quality of service and facilities at Muar Johor pharmacy is very high。 There are only a few aspects that need to be improved. This aspect needs to be improved and improved so that pharmacies are seen as alternatives to hospitals that are sensitive to customer demand. Pharmacies need to focus on what their customers think is important and should look at quality from the customer's perspective and not just from the management.

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Appendix

Table 1: Respondent Background

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	46	45.1
Female	56	54.9
Races		
Malay	95	93.1
Chinese	1	1
Indian	2	2
Others	4	3.9
Age		
18-25 years	56	54.9
26-33 years	10	9.8
34-41 years	18	17.8
42-49 years	12	11.8
50 above	6	5.9
Status		
Student	74	72.5

Worker	22	21.6
retire	0	0
Others	6	5.9
Frequency goes to pharmacy premises		
Once a day	3	2.9
Once a week	3	2.9
Once a month	65	63.7
Once a year	31	30.4

Table 2: Descriptive Overall Analysis of Service Quality Variables

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
Hypothesis 1: The tangibility dimension has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction	Moderate positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 2: The dimensions of reliability have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction level	High positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 3: The responsiveness dimension has a significant correlation with the level of customer satisfaction	High positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 4: The assurance dimension has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction level	Moderate positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 5: Empathy dimensions have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction	High positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted

Table 3: Hypothesis formulation

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
Hypothesis 1: The tangibility dimension has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction	Moderate positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 2: The dimensions of reliability have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction level	High positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 3: The responsiveness dimension has a significant correlation with the level of customer satisfaction	High positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 4: The assurance dimension has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction level	Moderate positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted
Hypothesis 5: Empathy dimensions have a significant relationship with customer satisfaction	High positive relationship	Hypothesis accepted