

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the results of the study will be discussed. Following the discussion, some recommendation for Lanka Hospitals to enhance service quality will be presented followed by recommendation for further studies and the limitations of this study.

Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that there is a connection between service quality experience and the level of patient/client satisfaction at Lanka Hospitals. It was found out that the level of patient satisfaction increases with increase level of service quality experience and vice versa. In addition, it was found that reliability was the most important service quality experience for the Maldivian patients/ clients seeking medical assistance from Lanka Hospitals which was different with some of the previous studies. The other service quality experience dimensions that followed reliability were responsiveness, empathy, assurance and tangibility. The findings of the research are discussed in detail below.

Discussion

Customer satisfaction is crucial for any establishment since satisfaction does influence customer's intention to re-patronize from the establishment in future. The finding in this present study have shown that service quality has a positive influence on customer (patient/client) satisfaction which is consistent with the study of Parasuraman, et al. (1988). The study findings were in consistent with another study carried out by Kitsuda (2006) to find out customer satisfaction with spa services. The study revealed that both first time and repeated customers were satisfied at a higher level with the service dimension; responsiveness, empathy, reliability, assurance and tangibility. The study confirmed that service quality dimensions had an influence on customer satisfaction.

In the present study, in order to measure the service quality performance, the five dimensions of service quality were used. The results of this study show all service quality dimensions are positively related with customer satisfaction indicating service quality as a requirement for establishing and having satisfied customers. Consequently, the results of this study confirmed the relationship between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction discussed in chapter 2 above (Sureshchandar, et al., 2003; Spreng and Mackoy, 1996). Jajae and Ahmad (2012) states that when service quality decreases rapidly, customer satisfaction declines dramatically and if service quality increases radically, customer satisfaction inclines rapidly.

The study found that reliability is the foremost determinant of customer satisfaction. This finding corresponds to those found by Ramez (2012) and Sultan and Simon (2000). However, the results differ from that of Andaleeb (1998). In his study tangible and assurance had the greatest impact on patients' satisfaction. The reasons for these results may come from the 'expectations and beliefs of the patients/clients seeking medical assistant. Calnan, (1988) states the behaviour of a healthcare consumer may show a discrepancy from one culture to another. Another interesting finding that emerged from the study was that the respondents who were not satisfied with one or two service dimensions were still pleased with an overall services provided by Lanka Hospitals. This may be due to the reason that Maldivians tend to compare the services received from the hospitals in Maldives to that of Lanka hospitals.

In summary, the proposed framework of the present study was able to reveal that there was an existence of relationship between the dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction. Quality and customer satisfaction are two different constructs yet an increase in one is likely to lead to an increase in another and vice versa. Thus, Organizations should always endeavour to ensure that their customers are very satisfied. Customer loyalty and repeat business is potentially one of the most influential weapons that pecuniary or profit making business establishments (institutions) can utilize to fight against increasing competitive environment. In addition, as customer expectations are changing over time, practitioners are advised to

evaluate their customer expectation and satisfaction regularly and handle complaints timely and efficiently.

Recommendations

Based on the research, the author recommends Lanka Hospitals the following;

1. The hospital should increase the number of cash counters in order to facilitate speedy and convenient transactions. From the findings, the hospital provides cash counters only on the ground floor which consumes time of patient/client to walk forth and back to make payments. To alleviate this problem, cash counters could be provided at each major department so that patient/clients can make payments at the respective department counters which will reduce time involved in making payments.

2. If possible, the hospital should provide broader areas of medical services. The hospital lack some medical services which Maldivians would want to get treatment for. Thus, it is important to provide these services in order to attract as many Maldivian patient /clients as possible. An area of service include broader areas of treatment in special needs and the ability to perform some laboratory tests such as allergy tests that could not be done in Lanka Hospitals.

3. The hospital should conduct studies at interval about the degree of client's satisfactions with its service quality: Structured questionnaire and open-ended questionnaire surveys could be done in regular intervals to get opinions/feedback on various services of the hospital and patient /client satisfaction level. This could help the hospital to improve their services in a timely manner and be updated with the level of service they provide

Recommendations for further studies

Since this study focused only on the service quality, recommendation for future studies are made as follows;

1. Study could be conducted using such factors as cost, price perception, image of establishment etc.

2. Study could be conducted in service quality dimensions using subjects with different racial, socio-cultural backgrounds with the same hospital or with hospitals in other countries.

3. It may be valuable to carry out studies about Maldivians attitude towards the quality of other service business such as airlines and banks in Maldives. Further research in areas of Maldivians banks and airlines may perhaps contribute to overall development of service standards throughout Maldives.

Limitation of study

The findings of this study have to be interpreted bearing in mind few limitations which are as follows;

1. Data were collected only from Maldivians as the study was based on Maldivians. Therefore the results might not hold true for other nationalities that seek medical care from Lanka Hospitals

2. A few number of respondents were from the age group of 41-50 and 51-60 years since most of the potential respondents hesitated to take part in the study. Thus, the results of this study may vary if majority of the respondents were from this age group.