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CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS ON THE SERVICES OF DOCTORS IN MIZORAM

(Case Study of select hospitals in Mizoram)

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Abstract : Health Care is where a person seeking (health) care expect state of the art, accessible care delivered by competent and caring professionals in a user-friendly style. Health Care is a service provided by a co-ordinated group of doctors, paramedical staff, nurses, and technicians, supportive and administrative workers to the people suffering from physical, mental and social ailment. The level of care depends on the skill and clinical acumen of the physician and his team as well as equipment and infrastructure facilities. Building of a brand image will ensure prestige and reputation for the hospital.

The study is exploratory in nature. The study analyzed the quality of medical service delivery in the hospitals in the state of Mizoram. Keeping in view the concentration of hospitals, which is relatively high, in these areas and also considering Government, church-led and private for comparative study, the study was limited to the following six (6) hospitals viz., 2 government hospitals, 2 church-led hospitals and 2 private hospitals, namely, Civil Hospital, Aizawl (Government); District Hospital, Lunglei (Government); Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang (church-led); Christian Hospital, Serkawn (church-led); Aizawl Hospital and Research Centre, Mission Veng (private) and Greenwood Hospital, Bawngkawn (private).

IndexTerms – Customer Expectation, Health care, Church led.

INTRODUCTION

In 1941 Henry Sigerist, analysing the relevance of health for human welfare, stated that “A healthy individual is a man who is well balanced bodily and mentally, well adjusted to his physical and social environment. He is in full control of his physical and mental faculties, can adapt to environmental changes, so long as they do not exceed normal limits, and contributes to the welfare of society according to his ability. Health therefore is not simply the absence of disease, it is something positive, a joyful attitude towards life and a cheerful acceptance of the responsibilities that life puts upon the individual.”

In the new millennium, people are realising the importance of good health and improving their health not only through government machinery but by their own efforts. It is being realised globally that health is one’s own responsibility and depends to a substantial extent on the lifestyle of the people and not entirely only on health intervention by hospitals.

Health Care is a service provided by a co-ordinated group of doctors, paramedical staff, nurses, and technicians, supportive and administrative workers to the people suffering from physical, mental and social ailment. The level of care depends on the skill and clinical acumen of the physician and his team as well as equipment and infrastructure facilities. Building of a brand image will ensure prestige and reputation for the hospital.

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Kenagy, Berwick and Shore (1999) stated that health care is a service-based industry. Health Care is where a person seeking (health) care expect state of the art, accessible care delivered by competent and caring professionals in a user-friendly style (Koerner, 1996). However, the study of quality in the contemporary healthcare domain began with the work of Donabedian (1988). He provided a framework for health care practitioners that separated the quality of care delivered into two distinct elements. These elements are labeled technical and interpersonal. Technical elements are those skills and judgments used in conjunction with current medical knowledge and technology used to improve health. The interpersonal component is the communication process for which the information about the medical condition is exchanged with the patient and thus the relationship is established. These two elements do not exist in a vacuum. “The interpersonal process is the vehicle by which technical care is implemented and on which its success depends”. He proposed the measurement of quality of care which is in the form of a structure, process and outcome format. Finison (1992) also stated the outcome measures have become an important indicator of technical quality although there have been some criticisms of their use.

Expectation is a customers’ belief with respect to various product attributes and the overall performance level of the product. Purohit H.C(2004) divided expectation into two forms, pre purchase expectation and post purchase belief where pre purchase expectation means consumers belief about the product on various attributes while post purchase beliefs means the performance level of the product on various attributes. Contrary to this, Miller (1976) separated expectations in four ways viz., the ideal, expected, the deserved and minimum tolerable where the ideal would always represent the highest expectation level. The expected would be second, the deserved represent next and then the minimum tolerable would always represent the lowest.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is exploratory in nature. The study analyzed the quality of medical service delivery in the hospitals in the state of Mizoram. The total number of Hospitals as of 2017 including private, Church led and Government Hospitals is thirty one (31) Hospitals, where twelve (12) Hospitals are Government Hospitals and nineteen (19) Hospitals are Non Government Hospitals. Further, these Non- Government Hospitals are church-led and private Hospitals in which 6 Hospitals are Church led and the remaining 13 Hospitals are private/partnership ownership. Out of the total 31 Hospitals, 13 hospitals are situated in the State capital Aizawl, which is 41.93% of the total hospitals in Mizoram. The total bed strength in the Government hospitals is 1000 and 1172 in the non Government hospitals in Mizoram.

Selection of Hospitals

Keeping in view the concentration of hospitals, which is relatively high, in these areas and also considering Government, church-led and private for comparative study, the study was limited to the following **six (6)** hospitals viz., 2 government hospitals, 2 church-led hospitals and 2 private hospitals, namely, **Civil Hospital**, Aizawl (Government); **District Hospital**, Lunglei (Government); **Presbyterian Hospital**, Durtlang (church-led); **Christian Hospital**, Serkawn (church-led); **Aizawl Hospital and Research Centre**, Mission Veng (private) and **Greenwood Hospital**, Bawngkawn (private). These hospitals had been purposely selected since they are the largest and biggest hospitals in the state of Mizoram which can be presented as a sample for the study.

1. Civil Hospital, Aizawl

From available records, an impoverished treatment camp was established at Aizawl in a tent for labourers in 1894 which was later upgraded to a full-fledged dispensary in 1896. Subsequently, in the same year, i.e. 1896 the Civil Hospital, Aizawl was established having only 20 beds. (GoM 2008)

2. Christian Hospital, Serkawn, Lunglei

This hospital is one of the institutions under the Baptist Church of Mizoram (Church-led) and was established in 1919 by the Baptist Missionary Society's missionary Ms. E.O. Dicks (Pi Dawki), with the main objective of educating women in nursing and also to equip them in the spirit of Christ and of meeting the health needs of the public.

3. Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang

In the year 1928, Presbyterian Church of Mizoram established Presbyterian Hospital at Durtlang which is Church led and is managed by the Hospital Board. The members of which represents - Presbytery of the Mizoram Synod along with the Hospital Director and Office bearers.

4. Civil hospital, Lunglei

The exact year of establishment of Civil Hospital, Lunglei could not be traced back due to lack of records. According to Thangchhuana, it was set up during the period from 1896 to 1920 headed by a Sub-Divisional Medical Officer.

5. Greenwood Hospital, Bawngkawn, Aizawl

Owned by Dr. Lalbuatsaiha, the hospital was established on 7th February 1992 with the main objective of improving the poor health care services in Mizoram. This hospital is one of the most successful private hospitals in Mizoram.

6. Aizawl hospital and Research Centre, Khatla Aizawl

It is a private hospital. The ownership of this hospital is shared among Dr. Lalrinawma Hnamte, Dr. Lalrinmawia, Dr. Laltanpuia and Dr. Lalduhawma. It was established in the year 2006. At the time of collection of data, the hospital was located at Mission Veng.

Sampling:

The sample customer (patients) was drawn purposively from each of the six selected hospitals namely, Civil Hospital, Aizawl, Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang, District Hospital, Lunglei, Christian Hospital, Serkawn, Aizawl Hospital and Research Centre, Mission Veng and Greenwood Hospital, Bawngkawn. Out of 300 patients, 50 each from the six selected hospitals were selected as respondents for the study. These customers (patients) were selected from the patients who had been admitted and stayed at least 5 days in the respective hospitals for treatment during previous three months at the time of field work. i.e. January 2012 till March 2013

Data Collection and Analysis

Key informant interviews of patients and families of the patients were conducted to assess patient expectations and satisfaction. Interviews were also conducted to the owner of private hospitals. Both primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were collected from the patients and their family members through structured interview schedules designed and developed in consultation with patients, medical experts/administrators and academicians, after reviewing the relevant literature.

Observation was a technique that enhanced primary data. The interview scheduled is based on the perceived accountability of doctors in government and private hospitals.

Secondary data have been collected from published and unpublished sources like reports, annual reports, official reports, newspapers, journals and magazines etc.

The data collected was entered into statistical software packages like SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Hypotheses were tested by using relevant statistical techniques like rating score, mean, standard deviation, Chi-square test and post hoc test (Tukey's test) for mean comparison of the groups.

For primary information with regard to the customer expectations on doctors of select hospitals, it had been measured with eight parameters. Cronbach's alpha is designed as a measure of internal consistency i.e., all items within the group should measure the same thing. This alpha value ranges from 0 to 1. The closer is the alpha is to 1, the greater the internal consistency of items in the model being assessed.

It reveals that the Cronbach's alpha values for the items used in measuring the level of customer's expectations in services of doctors is 0.922 and show that the items used in the dimension is highly reliable to use in the study will produce the same results in all situations.

Reliability of questionnaires

Expectations	No. of items (questions)	Scales	Minimum score	Maximum score	Reliability
Services of Doctors	8	1= Very poor, 2= Poor, 3= Satisfactory, 4= Good, 5= Very good	8	40	0.922

Note: Figures within parentheses are reliability of satisfaction

Source: Field Survey

CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS ON THE SERVICES OF DOCTORS

Sympathy and politeness, promptness, Diagnosis, supportive and helpful attitude, spending enough time on patients' treatment and care, accountability, prognostication, adequacy are the traits expected by patients from the doctors.

Table 1.1**Customer expectations regarding the services of doctors**

Sl.no.	Particulars	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	No Response
1	Sympathy and politeness	26 (8.67%)	89 (29.67%)	180 (60%)	3 (1%)	-	2 (0.67%)
2	Promptness	16 (5.33%)	89 (29.67%)	191 (63.67%)	1 (0.33%)	1 (0.33%)	2 (0.67%)
3	Diagnosis	16 (5.33%)	87 (29%)	189 (63%)	4 (1.33%)	-	4 (1.33%)
4	Supportive and helpful attitude	21 (7%)	86 (28.67%)	185 (61.67%)	5 (1.67%)	3 (1%)	-
5	Spending enough time on patients' treatment and care	26 (8.67%)	80 (26.67%)	169 (56.33%)	23 (7.67%)	1 (0.33%)	1 (0.33%)
6	Accountability	17 (5.67%)	84 (28%)	187 (62.33%)	8 (2.67%)	-	4 (1.33%)
7	Prognostication	13 (4.33%)	63 (21%)	194 (64.67%)	24 (8%)	4 (1.33%)	2 (0.67%)
8	Adequacy of Doctors	14 (4.67%)	73 (24.33%)	201 (67%)	6 (2%)	3 (1%)	3 (1%)

Source: Field Survey

Customer expectations regarding services of doctors are measured with the above parameters as shown in the above table which are analysed in brief as under:-

In case of sympathy and politeness, majority respondents of 60% said that it was average and 29.67% of the respondents said that it was good whereas only 1% said that it was poor and no one responded very poor which shows that customers expectations are hardly achieved on sympathy and politeness of the doctors.

In case of promptness of the doctors 63.67% responded that it was average and 29.67% also responded that it was good whereas 0.33% of the respondents said that the promptness of the doctors are both poor and very poor which shows that promptness of the doctors are within expectation level.

The majority of the respondents ie, 63% responded that diagnosis of the Doctors are average and 29% responded that it was good whereas only 1.33% responded that it was poor. There was no one who said that it was very poor and 1.33% of the respondents who did not respond. In case of diagnosis expectations of customers on the services of doctors are said to be achieved.

In case of supportive and helpful attitude on the services of doctors 61.67% said that it was average and 28.67% of the respondents said that it was good. Only 1.67% and 1% of the respondents said that it was poor and very poor respectively. This has also shown that supportive and helpful attitude on the services of the doctors are within expectation level.

The level of doctors spending enough time on patients treatment and care was rated as average by 56.33% of the respondents followed by 26.67% of the respondents said that it was good. At the same time 7.67% as well as 0.33% of the respondents said that it was poor and very poor respectively.

In case of accountability of the doctors, 62.33% responded that it was average followed by 28% who said that it was good whereas only 2.67% responded that it was poor. This report highlighted that doctors are accountable as expected by the customers.

As much as 64.67% of the respondents said that it was average on prognostication followed by 21% of the respondents who said that it was good. Only 8% of the respondents said that it was poor and 1.33% also said that it was very poor. In view of their response it is clear that customer expectations are achieved in this regard.

In case of adequacy of doctors 67% responded that it was average and 24.33% responded that it was good. Only 2% and 1% of the respondents gave negative remarks of poor and very poor respectively.

In view of overall survey findings, it is concluded that customer expectations on the services of doctors was average and improvements in this regard is very much essential.

Customer Expectations regarding the Services of Doctors: Overall

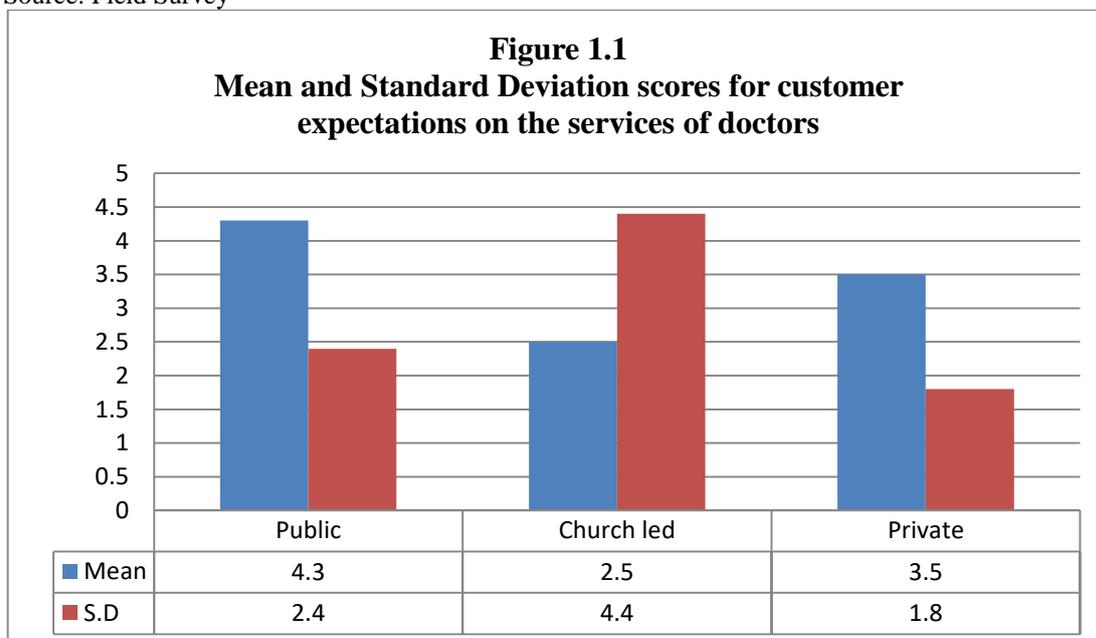
Table 1.2
Overall customer expectations regarding the services of doctors

Score of	Type of hospital	N	Mean	S. D.	95percentC.I. for Mean		F	P
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Services of Doctors	Public	100	24.80	2.32	24.34	25.26	13.172	<0.001
	Church*	100	27.88	5.37	26.81	28.95		
	Private*	100	27.34	5.23	26.30	28.38		
	Total	300	26.67	4.71	26.14	27.21		

*Post hoc test shows the mean comparison of the groups.

Source: Field Survey

Figure 1.1
Mean and Standard Deviation scores for customer expectations on the services of doctors



Source: Field Survey

The expectation of customers regarding the services of doctors in a particular hospital is assessed by using 8 items each with 5-point scales. The mean score of customer's expectations on the services of doctors in public hospitals is found to have mean= 24.80 (S.D. = 2.32) with 95 percent confidence interval 24.34 and 25.26. The mean score of customer expectations on the services of doctors in church hospitals was found to have mean=27.88 (S.D. = 5.37) with 95 percent confidence interval (26.81, 28.95) and in private hospitals mean= 27.34 (S.D. = 5.23) with 95 percent confidence interval (26.30, 28.38).

The Tukey's test shows that the mean scores of customer's expectation on the services of doctors were higher in church and private hospitals as compared to public hospitals. It shows that the expectation of customers on the services of doctors in church and private hospitals were higher than the public hospitals.

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