
PATIENT RELATIONSHIP PRACTICES -A STUDY OF NORTH KARNATAKA STATE

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Abstract: Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is how to attract new customers coming to an organization, retaining them throughout the entire lifetime of a relationship, and extending other services or products to the existing customers. Likewise, in the healthcare environment, healthcare providers are challenged to acquiring potential patients for the healthcare services, retaining them to use the services, and extending various services in the future. In order to achieve those strategies, healthcare provider must consider establishing closeness of relationship between patient-healthcare providers, offer convenience of services, and build trust of information sharing.

Keywords: CRM, Patient management, Information sharing, Patient health care

1. INTRODUCTION

The history of the health care and the competition in the sector was very high due to number of

HCU's, customer base in the India. The health care sector has been considered as a major participant in service industry involving ample transaction between the patient and personnel within HCU's on various aspects.

In early 90's its found the on-set of globalization in Indian market with most of the sectors including health care is to global competition. Since the beginning of time, technology has shaped and reshaped the way people live and work. From the invention of the wheel, to the first bow and arrow, the discovery of electricity and wireless communications, and the first computer, every technological development has brought with it new possibilities and challenges. Technological innovations have changed the way doctors and Para medicine workers perform routine practices and the way they interact with their patients on a day-to-day basis. This has led to enhanced customer satisfaction.

This new pace has changed the situation of competition in the Health care market. Even traditional (nationalized and private) health care units paced up with the same speed. A need has been felt to enhance the facilities like cash less facility, ATM in campus, General stores, children park, mind refresh games which in turn are really contributing to the enhancement of customer satisfaction both in patients and out patients. Whether patient want or don't, still, these services are should be made available in campus are canteen, medical shop etc.

Since, **North Karnataka** is slightly back footed in having relatively high class hospitals and medical facility, and as well as very rarely CRM practices are seen in other sectors also. Therefore it is felt

that there is a need to study and find out to what extent patient relationships can really contribute to patient's satisfaction in the existing medical facilities.

The analysis proves that the satisfaction levels for all the facilities is quiet higher or facility is available up to required level, which indicates at least that they are not on the dissatisfied side, in core CRM practices are appreciated by patients in the study area, by adopting an **explorative Reserch model**. A sample of 300 patients has been chosen across the hospitals in three Districts of North Karnataka through **convenience sampling** basis using an explorative research design in the context.

Literature review

As a business, healthcare organization stands in need of the same standards of customer service as other business organizations. The fact that customer service expectations in healthcare organization are high poses a serious challenge for healthcare providers as they have to make exceptional impression on every customer. In the competitive commercial healthcare market, poor service and distrusted service leads customers to switch healthcare providers because poor service indicates inefficiency, higher cost and lower quality of care.

Nowadays, more patients have more choices in where they seek care and how they interact with their healthcare providers. A great customer service can lead to major improvements in the health care system. Customer service is not an "extra"— it is an essential requirement for

providing high quality healthcare and for staying in highly competitive business (Stanton, 2009). Patients are making clear choices about where they receive care based on service experiences and it is crucial for organizations to create an institutional ability to sense and respond empathetically (Katzenbach Partners, 2008).

Healthcare organization strategies should transform customer strategies and systems to customer engagement. The one is more focused on the conversation that is going on between organization and customer. Conversation between healthcare organization and customers is important to initiate trust between both parties. Proactive strategies will improve customer services. And great customer support will increase loyalty, revenue, brand recognition, and business opportunity Customer Relationship Management CRM is a broad term and widely-implemented strategy for managing interactions with customers which involves using technology to organize, automate, and synchronize business processes— principally customer service, marketing, and sales activities. The overall goals are to find, attract, and win new customers, nurture and retain those the company already has, entice former customers back into the fold, and reduce the costs of marketing and customer service (Gartner, 2009).

Greenberg (2009) defined CRM is a philosophy and a business strategy supported by a system and a technology designed to improve human interactions in a business environment. Furthermore, it is an operational, transactional approach to customer management that is focused around the customer facing departments, sales, marketing and customer service. Furthermore, the early CRM initiatives was the process for

modification, culture change, technology and automation through use of data for support the management of customers so it can meet business value of corporate objectives such as increases in revenue, higher margins, increase in selling time, campaign effectiveness, reduction in call queuing time, etc.

Although the development of CRM has been mature, there are many challenges in adopting CRM for healthcare organizations. Due to the complexity of the business nature in healthcare there are many issues dealing with patients must be considered. A healthcare is undergoing a paradigm shift, from ‘Industrial Age Medicine to Information Age Healthcare’ (R. Smith, 1997). This ‘paradigm shift’ is shaping health systems (Haux et.al, 2002). It is also transforming the healthcare-patient relationship (Ball, 2001). For example, World Wide Web has changed the way the public engage with health information (Powell et al., 2003).

Implement CRM practices is a challenge in Health care units. The customer being delicate patients with no patience and power to respond to the CRM practices by and large. Even the other beneficiaries of CRM the staff of the health care units also face all sorts of challenges and as well as the benefits of CRM practices. This study is an attempt to capture the response of these beneficiaries and to explore the effectiveness of already implemented CRM practices in the selected health units of north Karnataka.

Conceptual model

This study is developed on the basis following objectives

1. To study the Patients opine about effectiveness of CRM practices at the hospitals.
2. To study the overall impact of CRM practices on the patients and staff.
3. To study the staff opinion about the effect of CRM practice.

Research methodology

To meet out the above objectives, an exploratory research design and a combination of Descriptive research design has been adopted with the following specifications.

- ❖ PHASE-I: selected sample of patients was studied about their opinion on CRM practices and gathered the response.
- ❖ PHASE-II: related man resource was subjected to implementation through well designed questionnaire and their response was gathered.
- ❖ PHASE-III: collected data has seen compiled analyzed with the help of SPSS.
- ❖ PHASE -IV: Z-test for testing population of respondent’s opinion on the impact of CRM practices.

Type of Study Combination of Explorative and Descriptive

Source of data collection Primary source

HCU- Health care units in the study area of Hubli, Dharwad & Belgaum area, and the admitted patients in these hospitals.

Individual HCU and patient

Sampling method - Purposive Judgmental sampling

Sample Size HCU – 103: Inpatient –204: Staff - 96

Tool of Data Collection - Questionnaire

Data and discussions

Analysis and findings: The population for the study includes patient/nearest to the patient and HCU owner or Medical Superintendent or chief of Patient relationship officer or senior Doctor of private hospital, multi specialty hospital, specialty clinic, nursing home, dispensaries in the study area Hubli-Dharwad-Belgaum. Clinics in rural area have been kept out of the purview of this research since they are in the very nascent stage of providing CRM services.

Table 1: Demographics

Description	Actual Sample Size taken
Patient	204
Staff	96

Source: Primary data

Table2: The distribution break-up

Health care units	Selected units			
	Hubli	Dharwad	Belgaum	Total
Clinics , Hospitals	18	9	10	37
Multispecialty	5	3	3	11
Dispensaries	20	18	17	55
Total	43	30	30	103

Source: Primary data

Table3 : details the opinion of patient and staff on the effectiveness of CRM practices.

Sample	Effectiveness	Non-effective	Total
Patient	122	82	204
Staff	61	35	96
Total	183	117	300

Source: Primary data

1. Average bed occupancy is **79%**.
2. **Registration Process** on paper **9%**, **36%** automated and **55%** on both paper and automated.
3. **Registration formalities /process time:** Range - 2 to 15 minutes with an average:

11.04 min & std. Error being 0.39. **54.3 %** of the patients have spent less than 10 minutes.

4. Level of satisfaction towards doctors behaviour is **97%**.
5. Immediate responses to patient queries with adequate actions are about **75.26%**.
6. **86%** of Patients recommended the hospitals to friends/relatives.
7. The factors rated by patients are (i) location **78%**, (ii) housekeeping **53%**, (iii) doctors care **49%** and commented frail towards medicine availability, hospitality nursing care, medical diagnose, knowledge imparting on disease, Para medical staff & billing.
8. The appreciation listing (i) patient care (**38.63**), (ii) timely service (**36.05**), and (iii) ambience (**16.31**) followed by Technical support, Billing, Medicine Availability with critical comments.
9. **38.2%** patients are satisfied for Cleanliness in the HCUs
10. **34.6%** of patients are satisfied for Medicine availability in the campus

Further, patients are happy and satisfied with add-on facilities towards entertainments, food, medicine availability, facility of general stores, and financial aids.

Now based on the other observations made in the sample shown the following finding have recorded

11. Patients responded; Television is available about **97%** among the cases.
12. **89%** of HCUs' have Medical shops & Hotels/canteen/cafeteria etc

The Health Care Units' revealed following details in due with CRM practices as:

1. About 4.8% of the HCU's have cashless facility and mind freshening games,
2. 18.4% of HCU's maintain children park
3. 20% of HCU have ATM facility
4. 60% of HCU's installed Television (TV)
5. 86.4% of HCU's have canteen/Hotel facility,
6. 88.8% of HCU's have medical shops with 77.6% medicine availability and
7. 61.6% of patients understood the diagnose is recorded by doctor

Null Hypothesis:

H_0 : There is a significant effectiveness of CRM practices in the management of health care units.

To test the above hypothesis, we challenge it by alternative hypothesis study.

H_1 : There is no significant effectiveness of CRM practices in the management of health care units.

With the help of SPSS, we have calculated a Z statistics for testing population in two tailed test at a 5% level of significance.

The Z test workouts are as under

$$N=300$$

p = proportion of respondents opinion on the effectiveness of CRM practices

$$= 183 / 300 = 0.61$$

$$q = 1 - p = 0.39$$

$$Z = \frac{p - P}{\sqrt{pq/n}} \sim Z(0,1)$$

$$= \frac{0.5 - 0.61}{\sqrt{0.61 \times 0.39 / 300}} = \frac{0.5 - 0.61}{0.02816} = 0.391$$

Where Z tabulated value at 5% for a two tailed test is equal 1.96. Therefore Z-calculated is being less than the Z-tabulated at 5% level of significance, we may accept our H_0 , ie there is no significant effectiveness of CRM practices in overall management of health care units.

Conclusions

A need has been felt to enhance the facilities like cash less facility, ATM in campus, General stores, children park, mind refresh games which in turn are really contributing to the enhancement of customer satisfaction both in patients and out patients. Whether patient want or don't, still, these services are should be made available in campus are canteen, medical shop etc.

The analysis proves that the satisfaction levels for all the facilities is quiet higher or facility is available up to required level, which indicates at least that they are not on the dissatisfied side, in core CRM practices are appreciated by patients in the study area.

Scope for further Research

- The present study is undertaken in Hubli, Dharwad, Belgaum city and data is collected from the health care units for the year 2012-13. Hence, data pertained to the study is too short and brief for generalization. Hence, it would be difficult to draw precise generalizations regarding the implications of the study. The findings in the study, interpretations and conclusions drawn could be best seen within these limitations.
- This research was confined to semi-urban type city. The same type of research can be extended to other classes of cities to find out the possibilities in those types of cities.

- The selected patients and doctors are generally suspicious of the motives of any investigation because of fear of press media and taxation. Therefore, the investigator has problems in ascertaining accuracy of data. Hence, greater care is taken to collect data as accurately as possible.
- Now a day even the rural people would be benefited if there were practices of CRM in respective hospitals. The rural hospitals can think in this direction and go for practicing CRM. A doable research on the Rural health care units since it was not a part of the research.

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