

A Study on Impact of Nursing Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Thrissur Kerala

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ABSTRACT: Healthcare is one of the largest grossing service-based industries in the world and competition is increasing day by day. Institutions are finding out more and more ways to attract customers and thereby increase business. Of all aspects related to a hospital that influences patient satisfaction and retention, the quality of nursing is considered to be of prime importance. This paper tries to establish whether there is such a significant relationship between nursing satisfaction and overall patient/customer satisfaction in the Thrissur district of Kerala state in India.

The research proved that there is a significant relationship between nursing satisfaction and overall customer satisfaction. It was also found that behavior and compassion contribute the most toward nursing satisfaction. It was also found that nursing satisfaction contributes most towards recommendations which is the most popular way of attracting new customers. The brand value has a very low influence in Thrissur. Cleanliness is the next most important factor for patients/customers

Providing continuous training and quality assurance to the nursing department would influence the success of a hospital to a very large extent

KEY WORD: Nursing Satisfaction, Patient Satisfaction, Thrissur, Hospitals, Healthcare

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I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The healthcare industry is a prominent area of service-based business. According to the study conducted by Precedence Research, global hospital services market was valued at 10,44 trillion USD in 2021 and is expected to grow to 19.61 trillion USD by 2030. With the growth and size of the industry, competition is also inevitable and hospitals are on constant search to build customer loyalty and brand value. One of the important aspects of hospital industry is nursing care service and this study attempts to find out its importance in customer/patient satisfaction.

Nursing is a career that demands a high level of compassion and dedication and according to the words of Florence Nightingale who is considered to be the founder of modern nursing practices, "A nurse must be no gossip, no vain talker is strictly sober and honest; but more than this, she must be a devoted woman, she must have respect for her calling, she must be a sound, a close and a quick observer, and she must be a woman of delicate and decent feeling". The American nurses association describes a nurse by "Nursing practice is a direct service, goal-directed and adaptable to the needs of the individual, the family, and community during health and illness. The nurse's primary responsibility is to those people who require nursing care."

The instruments that were designed to ascertain patient satisfaction are often focused on patient treatment [Muntlin et al., 2006]. Nursing satisfaction is regarded with utmost importance when assessing patient satisfaction which is a key indicator of the quality of care. Healthcare institutes must ensure maximum patient satisfaction if they are to stay in business.

Many factors in a hospital determine the satisfaction level of customers/ Patients¹. This study intends to find out if the nursing quality is a significant factor in determining the level of customer satisfaction. Patient satisfaction has become an integral part of healthcare and a determinant factor in establishing the brand values of hospitals. The perception of patients toward the quality of nursing care, which is one of the most important components of hospital-based healthcare, is an important indicator of the quality of healthcare

Even though numerous other factors contribute to overall patient satisfaction and preferences, Laschinger et al; [2005] in their study conducted in Ontario, Canada established that total satisfaction towards nursing care is directly related to overall satisfaction and preferences towards hospitals. Fahad [2005] through

¹Patients are the service receiver at a healthcare facility hence from here on customers would be referred to as patients.

his study in Kuwait also establishes that patient satisfaction is directly linked to satisfaction towards nursing care and thus the management of the nursing department.

Health care business is having severe competition in recent times and many healthcare institutes are suffering to stay in business. Peer recommendations are often a good source of promotion for healthcare firms and it has been established that satisfaction with nursing care is an important deciding factor for recommending a healthcare institution to a friend or family member [Abramowitz - 1987]

In the modern healthcare industry, a nurse is expected to undertake eight interrelated roles -caregiver, advocate, critical thinker, teacher, communicator, manager, researcher & rehabilitator [Harkreader and Hogan2004].

The relationship between nursing care and patient satisfaction has been studied and established in different parts of the world through elaborate studies. But since patient satisfaction is considered to be an attitude, and it is more of an empirical aspect [Bhanu Prakash- 2010] it may be affected by different social, economic, and demographic factors along with other multiple factors. In this context, this study attempts to access whether there is a relationship between satisfaction with nursing care and overall patient satisfaction in the Thrissur district in the state of Kerala India.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Objectives

- To find out whether nursing care has a significant impact on customer satisfaction
- To find out overall nursing satisfaction among patients.
- To find out overall customer satisfaction.
- To find out how important a patient considers nursing care as a factor when recommending a hospital.
- To find the key factors influencing nursing satisfaction.
- To understand the most important factors influencing the selection of a hospital for the first time.

2.2 Research Hypothesis

H₀: Nursing care has no influence over customer satisfaction

H₁: Level of satisfaction in nursing care has a significant impact on overall customer satisfaction

2.3 Research Design

The design used for the study is "Descriptive research design". The design is used to effectively describe a phenomenon under consideration and its nature without diving into the factors that caused the phenomenon. In this study, the researcher is only attempting to describe if there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with nursing services and overall patient satisfaction without going into the details of how such a relationship might come into existence. The design is best suited to analyze and study existing conditions and problems. All problem-related questions including, "What", "When", "Where" and "How" are answered while the question "Why" is left for further research.

2.4 Primary Data: The primary data is collected through the administration of a questionnaire which is designed as an adaptation of the Newcastle Nursing Satisfaction with Nursing Scale (NSNS) developed by Thomas et al. The questionnaire was administered in person.

2.5 Secondary Data:Secondary data was sourced from journals, books, magazines and other digital and printed media.

2.6 Sampling Technique:For this research, the judgment sampling technique is used where the researcher used his experience, knowledge and inference to identify a suitable sample representing the population.

2.7 Population:The population under consideration for this study is defined as patients who were admitted to a hospital in Thrissur district, Kerala, India for at least 24 hours.

2.8 Sample Size:The sample size is defined as 100 respondents who are either currently admitted to the hospital or had been admitted to a hospital in Thrissur district, Kerala, India for at least 24 hours.

2.9 Sampling Unit: One patient who is either currently admitted to the hospital or had been admitted to a hospital in Thrissur district, Kerala, India for at least 24 hours.

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The study Tries to establish a relationship between nursing satisfaction and customer satisfaction. Chi-squared test is used to establish relation and the rest of the variables are analysed using percentage analysis.

3.1 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION TOWARDS THE LAST ADMITTED HOSPITAL.

Table No 1: Satisfaction towards the last admitted hospital.

Score	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Unsatisfied	13	13
Unsatisfied	17	17
Neutral	17	17
Satisfied	27	27
Highly Satisfied	26	26

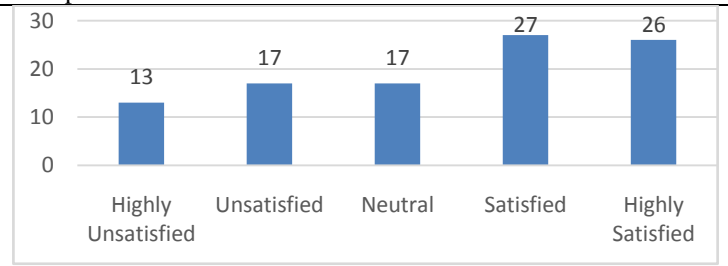


Figure 1: Satisfaction towards the last admitted hospital.

From the data, it is found that 26% of respondents are highly satisfied with the last hospital they were admitted in while 27% said that they were satisfied. 17% had a neutral response and 17% were unsatisfied. Only 13% were highly unsatisfied.

3.2 LEVEL OF SATISFACTION TOWARDS NURSING CARE.

Table No 2: Level of satisfaction towards nursing care

Score	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Unsatisfied	12	12
Unsatisfied	13	13
Neutral	17	17
Satisfied	34	34
Highly Satisfied	24	24

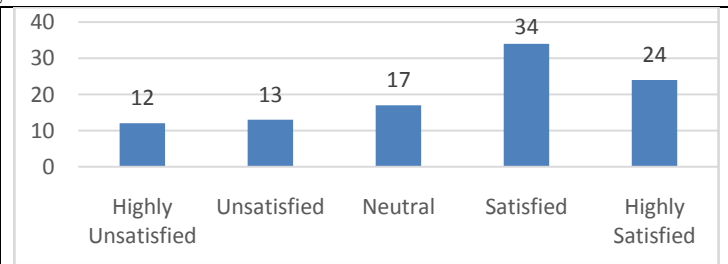


Figure 2: Level of satisfaction towards nursing care

Most respondents (34%) were satisfied with the nursing care and 24% were highly satisfied. 12 % of respondents were highly unsatisfied and 13% were unsatisfied. 17% of respondents gave a neutral response.

3.3 THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOMMENDING YOUR LAST ADMITTED HOSPITAL TO A FRIEND OR FAMILY.

Table No 3: Possibility of recommending your last admitted hospital

Score	Frequency	Percentage
Most Unlikely	15	15
Unlikely	11	11
Neutral	21	21
Likely	32	32
Most Likely	21	21

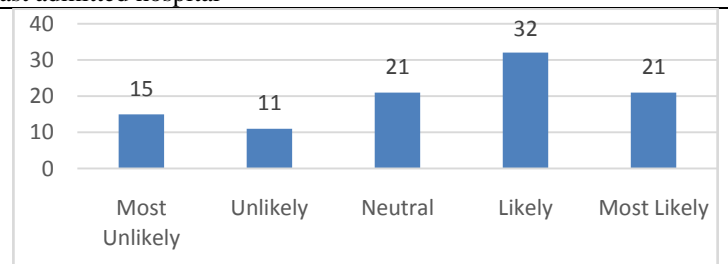


Figure 3: Possibility of recommending your last admitted hospital

21% respondents said that they would most likely recommend their hospitals to others and 32% respondents would likely recommend the hospital. 21% gave a neutral response and 11% are unlikely to recommend. 15% respondents ate most unlikely to recommend.

3.4 FACTORS FAVORING A HOSPITAL FOR FIRST VISIT.

Table No 4: Factors favoring a hospital for first visit

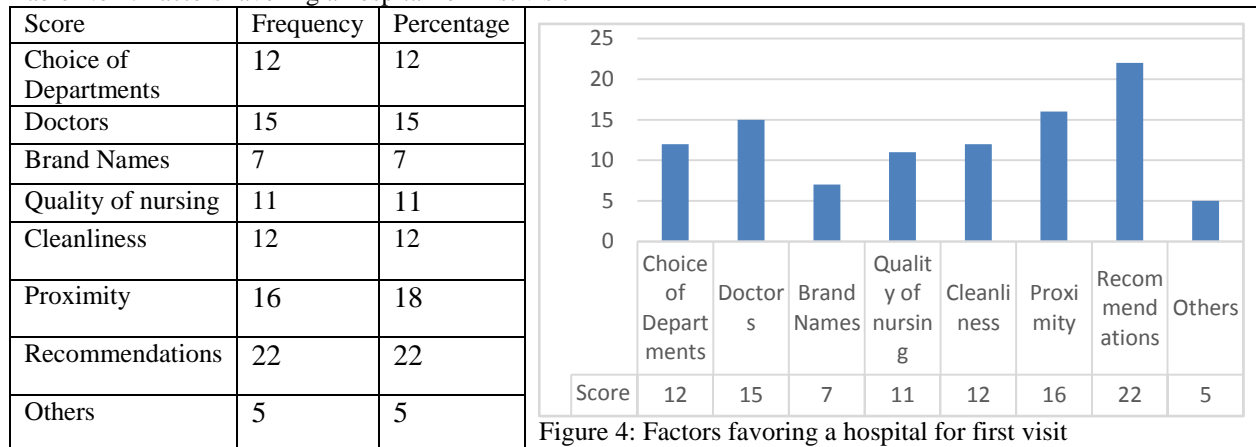


Figure 4: Factors favoring a hospital for first visit

While selecting a hospital to visit for the first time, most respondents rely on recommendations. 22% rely on recommendations while 16% consider proximity. Cleanliness is most important for 12% and quality of nursing is considered by 11%. 7% are attracted to brand names while 15% consider the reputation of doctors as the most important factor. 12% consider choice of departments and 5% are driven by other reasons.

3.5FACTORS CONSIDERED WHILE RECOMMENDING A KNOWN HOSPITAL TO OTHERS

Table No 5: Factors considered while recommending a known hospital to others

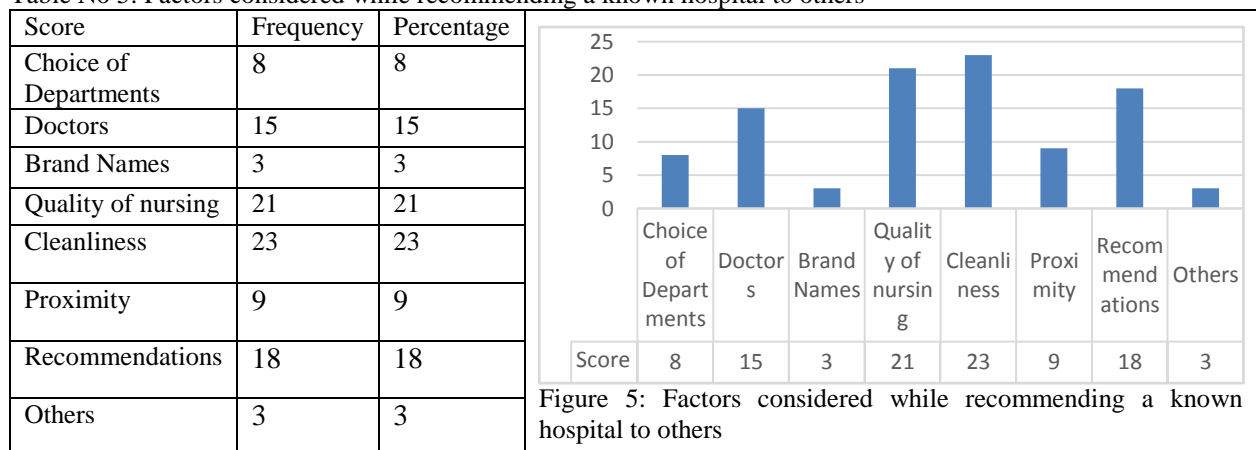


Figure 5: Factors considered while recommending a known hospital to others

After a first visit and being exposed to actual situations there is change in opinion. Most respondents (23%) consider cleanliness while recommending and followed by nursing care quality (21%). The next most important factor is recommendations (18%) followed by doctors (15%), Proximity (9%), Choice of departments (8%) and brand names (3%). 3% respondents have other reasons.

3.6 IMPACT OF NURSING SATISFACTION ON RECOMMENDING A HOSPITAL

Table No 6: Impact of nursing satisfaction on recommending a hospital

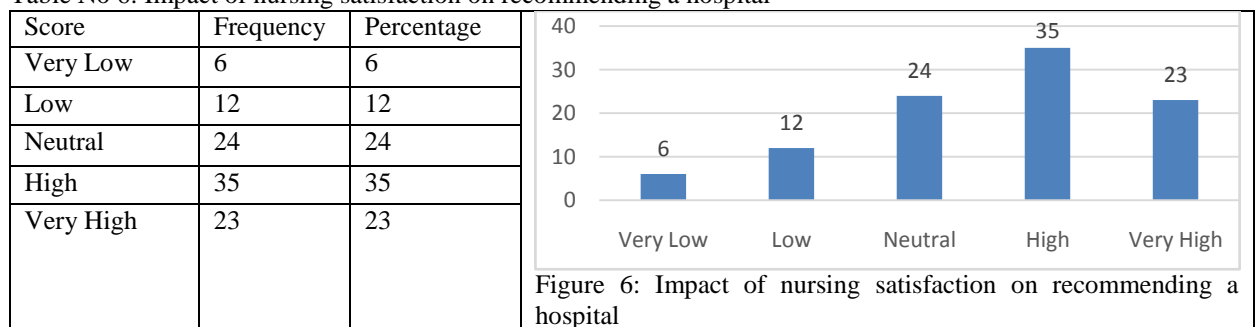
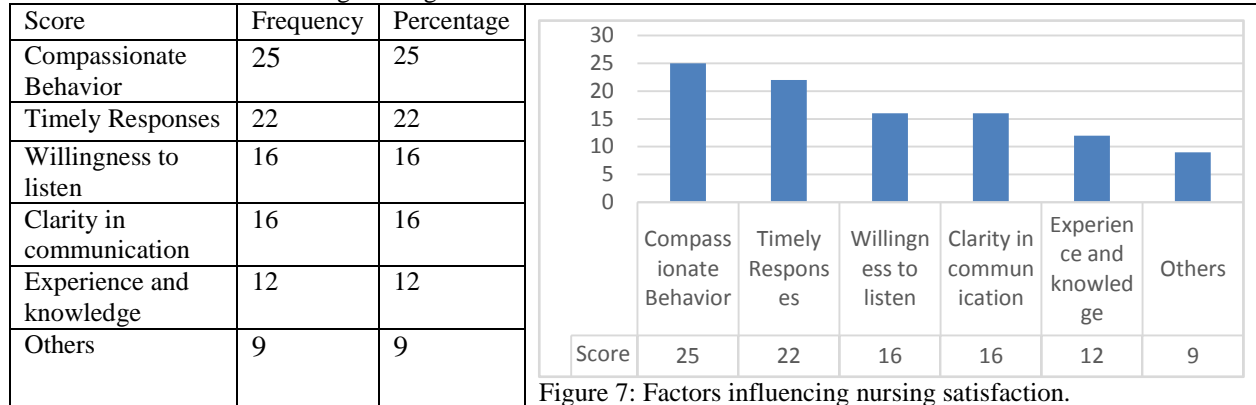


Figure 6: Impact of nursing satisfaction on recommending a hospital

Most respondents (35%) believe that nursing care has high impact on recommending a hospital while 23% believe nursing care quality has very high impact. 24% shared a neutral response and 12% believes nursing care a low impact. 6% believe that nursing care has very low impact while recommending a hospital.

3.7 Factors influencing nursing satisfaction.

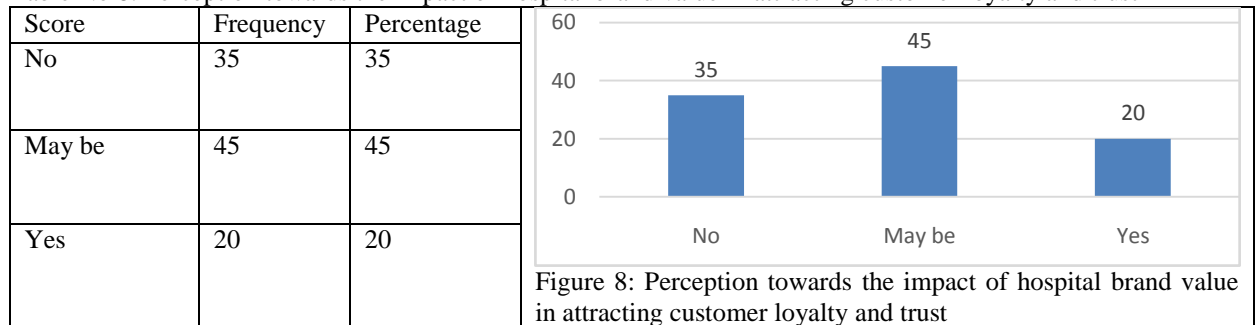
Table No 7: Factors influencing nursing satisfaction.



Compassionate behaviours is considered by 25% respondents as the most influencing factor. 22% consider timely responses to be the driving force followed by willingness to listen (16%) clarity in communication (16%) and experience & knowledge (12%). 9% are influenced by other factors.

3.8 DOES HOSPITAL BRAND VALUE HAVE AN IMPACT ON ATTRACTING CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND TRUST

Table No 8: Perception towards the impact of hospital brand value in attracting customer loyalty and trust



35% respondents don't consider brand value as an important factor in attracting customer loyalty and trust. 45% doesn't have a clear opinion and 20% believe that brand value has an influence.

3.9 Chi-Squared distribution table for nursing satisfaction and overall customer satisfaction.

Table No 9: Chi-Square Distribution Table

Nursing Satisfaction	Overall Customer Satisfaction					
	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Highly Unsatisfied	Total
Highly Satisfied	12	5	3	2	2	24
Satisfied	11	15	3	3	2	34
Neutral	1	4	7	3	2	17
Unsatisfied	1	2	2	5	3	13
Highly Unsatisfied	1	1	2	4	4	12
Total	26	27	17	17	13	100

The chi-square statistic is 39.7838. The p-value is .000837. The result is significant at $p < .05$. Thus the null Hypothesis **H0**: Nursing care has no influence over customer satisfaction is rejected and the alternate hypothesis **H1**: Level of satisfaction in nursing care has a significant impact on overall customer satisfaction is accepted.

IV. FINDINGS

- Most respondents are satisfied with the hospitals they were admitted in.
- most respondents are satisfied with the nursing care they were given.
- There is a significant relation between nursing care satisfaction and overall customer satisfaction.
- People who are more satisfied with nursing care are more lenient towards recommending hospitals.
- First visit to a hospital is mostly influenced by recommendations.
- Proximity is the second most important factor when choosing a hospital.
- Brand names of hospitals have comparatively lower influence on patients' choices.
- When recommending based on their experiences, patients consider cleanliness to be the most important factor followed by quality of nursing.
- Doctors have the same and significant effect on both recommendation and first time visits.
- More than 50% of respondents are of the opinion that nursing care is an important factor while recommending a hospital (35% believe it has high impact and 23% believe it has very high impact).
- Nursing satisfaction is influenced mostly by the behavior and compassion exhibited by the nurses followed by their timely responses.
- Most respondents don't believe that hospital brand values are influencing patients' loyalty and trust.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study came to the conclusion that nursing care and patient's satisfaction towards nursing care has a significant role in overall customer satisfaction. When recommending a hospital to a friend or family member, the quality of nursing care is given prime importance, even though the influence of nursing care on selection of hospital for the first is comparatively lower, it still has a very high impact as it is influencing the most common driving force; recommendations. It was observed that compassionate and welcoming behaviour of nurses are contributing towards patients satisfaction. Most respondents are of the opinion that they feel better when staying in hospital that delivers quality nursing care. So the hypothesis that there is no significant relation between nursing satisfaction and overall customer satisfaction has no significant relationship is rejected.

In a the fast developing and highly competent healthcare industry, it has become inevitable to ensure quality of service if an organization is to stay in business. Since nursing care is an important driving force in customer satisfaction and retention, ensuring quality nursing care is must. Continuous training and quality control should be implemented and periodic assessment of service quality should be ensured. It would be best to develop a quality assurance committee within the nursing department with periodic cycling of committee members to discourage bias. The committee should also collect Responses from nurses and find out areas where improvement is required.

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