

## Comparison of Supervisors' Attitude in Yazd Private and Governmental Hospitals About the Effect of Services Marketing Mix

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**Abstract:** Considering the difference in attitude between internal (service providers and health care workers) and external customers (patients and their accompaniments) and the difference between the attitudes of service providers in private and governmental hospitals about the effectiveness of factors affecting service marketing in quality and satisfaction of customers and the necessity to use maximal hospital capacities this study was designed to determine the effect of these factors from service providers' point of view in Yazd private and governmental hospitals. This work was a practical and cross-sectional study conducted in 2012. The study population consisted of 74 supervisors working in 3 private and 3 governmental hospitals in Yazd. Considering the number of hospitals supervisors were identified and counted they were all questioned in Yazd hospitals and sample was not taken. Data was collected by a researcher-designed questionnaire about factors of marketing mix. The validity of the questionnaire was approved by ten professionals in this field (content validity) and for assessment of its reliability test-retest and alpha Cronbach's test was used (Cronbach's alpha is equal to 78%). The factors which may increase the marketing share of hospital services from the viewpoint of private and governmental supervisors in order of importance included: a) governmental hospitals: 1. Physical appearance, 2. Service or product, 3. People or individuals, 4. Productivity and quality, 5. process, 6. Distribution, 7. Development or propaganda, 8. Price. Regarding private hospitals: 1. service or product, 2. Physical appearance, 3. People or individuals, 4. productivity and quality, 5. Process, 6. Distribution, 7. Price, 8. Development or propaganda. Conclusion: According to the results of this study, from supervisors' point of view, for selecting a hospital by customers, service and price in private hospitals were more important than governmental hospitals. In both kinds of hospitals service and physical appearance were important in selecting the hospital, but price and propaganda were in the last order of importance which shows a limitation in marketing in health field about these two factors.

**Key words:** Marketing Mix • Service • Supervisors • Hospital • Health Care Workers

### INTRODUCTION

Considering the high costs of hospital services especially in private hospitals and the necessity for systematization of their economic issues, there is a need for the identification of the effect of each factor affecting marketing in health care settings and the amount of their application in hospitals, so the managers can systematize their hospitals and wards by paying attention to the effect and role of each factor.

Nowadays the domain and type of individuals working in the market are increasingly various. Individuals and organizations do marketing. Marketing has gained entrance to profit-making and non-profit-making institutes. Although there are unique aspects in each industry which needs a change or correction in marketing in order to match it with the special need, the marketing mix and focus is almost related to all organizations [1]. All successful service firms are customer-oriented [2]. In the current health

market, marketing philosophy is changing from customer searching to patient satisfaction and service improvement [3].

By increasing local or international competitions, organizations should become more flexible, more active, changeable and more customer-oriented in order to succeed [4].

By increasing globalization, the need for the presence of countries and preparedness of different sectors of health care settings is being more important [5], so as even the patients themselves prefer to travel in order to enjoy the best cares and to find the best physicians and hospitals [6]. In the management of contact with a customer, marketing can be proposed as the final solution for both the customers and the organization [7]. Service marketing is challenging and mostly difficult. Five characteristics of services which a health care marketer should determine include: intangibility, lack of similarity and changeability, in distinguishability, stock and interaction with customers [1]. The individuals' behavior in an organization is important as well for the quality of services [8]. This can also affect the customers' satisfaction and such behaviors as loyalty and in addition that he (she) will become a permanent customer, he (she) can act as a marketer as well [9] and is a key factor for increasing the customer's self-confidence as a presenter of services, satisfaction and loyalty [10]. In the marketing in health care settings, customer's satisfaction is emphasized more than other factors [1].

The effective factors of service marketing including the elements of product, place and time, process, productivity and quality, individuals, developmental propaganda and education, physical appearance, price and other costs of services [2].

In this study we aimed to assess the supervisors' attitudes about the effect of these factors on the market share of services in private and governmental hospitals.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was a practical and cross-sectional one conducted in Yazd hospitals in 2012. The study population consisted of 74 supervisors working in 3 private and 3 governmental hospitals in Yazd to find the factors affecting the market share of hospital services. Considering the number of hospitals supervisors were identified and counted and

considering the number of samples required all of them questioned (sample wasn't taken).

Data was collected using a standard questionnaire consisting of 46 questions and was distributed in three governmental (ShahidSadoughi, Afshar and ShahidRahnamoun) and three private (Goudarz, Mortaz and Seyyedolshohada) hospitals. The validity of the questionnaire was approved by ten professionals in this field (content validity) and for assessment of its reliability test-retest and alpha Croenbach's test was used (Cronbach's alpha is equal to 78%).

The questions were based on 8 key factors: questions 1-5: presented services or product factor; questions 6 and 7: price factor; questions 8-12: distribution factor; questions 13-22: education development factor; questions 23-27: individuals' factor; questions 28-33: physical evidence factor; questions 34-39: process factor; and questions 40-46: productivity and quality factor. All questions were multiple choice questions (5 choices for each question) and were scored from 1 to 5; 1 (very low), 2 (low), 3 (moderate), 4 (high), 5 (very high).

The mean for the total score of questions was calculated in both governmental and private hospitals and the scores were compared between two kinds of hospitals. Data was analyzed by SPSS (ver. 19) and statistical software.

## RESULTS

The factors which supervisors in governmental hospitals believed that affect the increase in market share of hospital services include (in order of importance): 1. Physical appearance, 2. Product or service, 3. People or individuals, 4. Productivity and quality, 5. Process, 6. Distribution, 7. Development or propaganda, 8. Price.

In Shahid Rahnemoun hospital the order of the factors was as follows:

- Physical appearance,
- Productivity and quality,
- Product or service,
- Process,
- People or individuals,
- Distribution,
- Price,
- Development or propaganda.

In ShahidSadoughi hospital the order of the factors was as follows:

- Physical appearance,
- People or individuals,
- Productivity and quality,
- Process,
- Product or service,
- Distribution,
- Development or propaganda,
- Price.

In Afshar hospital the order of the factors was as follows:

- Physical appearance,
- Product or service,
- People or individuals,
- Distribution,
- Development or propaganda,
- Productivity and quality,
- Process,
- Price

Table 1 shows the frequency of supervisors' attitude toward the amount of the effect of marketing factors in governmental hospitals.

The factors which supervisors in private hospitals believed that affect the increase in market share of hospital services include (in order of importance):

- Product or service,
- Physical appearance,
- People or individuals,
- Productivity and quality,
- Process,
- Distribution,
- Price,
- Development or propaganda.

In Goudarz hospital the order of the factors was as follows:

- Product or service,
- Physical appearance,
- Productivity and quality,
- People or individuals,

Table 1: Frequency of supervisors' attitude toward the amount of the effect of marketing factors in governmental hospitals

Marketing factor	ShahidRahnemoun	ShahidSadoughi	Afshar	Mean
Situation (frequency)				
1-Service or product	76	83	83	80.66
2-Price	59	70	70	66.33
3-Distribution	68	76	76	73.33
4-Education (propaganda) and development(improvement)	54	70	75	66.33
5-Individuals or workers	74	88	78	80
6-Physical appearance	80	91	84	85
7-Process	75	84	73	77.33
8-Productivity and quality	79	86	73	79.33

Table 2: Frequency of supervisors' attitude toward the amount of the effect of marketing factors in private hospitals

Marketing factor	Mortaz	Goudarz	Seyyedolshohada	Mean
Situation (frequency)				
1-Service or product	89	85	79	84.33
2-Price	77	71	73	73.66
3-Distribution	75	76	76	75.66
4-Education (propaganda) and development(improvement)	54	66	68	62.66
5-Individuals or workers	75	80	85	80.66
6-Physical appearance	80	85	86	83.66
7-Process	80	80	80	80
8-Productivity and quality	74	83	83	80

Table 3: Comparison of supervisors' attitudes in private and governmental hospitals

Market factors	Mean score (%)		P value
	Governmental	Private	
1	80.66	84.33	0.99
2	66.33	73.66	0.96
3	73.33	75.66	0.97
4	66.33	62.66	0.84
5	80	80.66	0.97
6	85	83.66	0.97
7	77.33	80	0.97
8	79.33	80	0.99

- Process,
- Distribution,
- Price,
- Development or propaganda.

In Mortaz hospital the order of the factors was as follows:

- Product or service,
- Physical appearance,
- Process,
- Price,
- People or individuals,
- Distribution,
- Productivity and quality,
- Development or propaganda.

In Seyyedolshohada hospital the order of the factors was as follows:

- Physical appearance,
- People or individuals,
- Productivity and quality,
- Process,
- Product or service,
- Distribution,
- Price,
- Development or propaganda.

Table 2 shows the frequency of supervisors' attitude toward the amount of the effect of marketing factors in private hospitals.

Table 3 compares the mean score of the supervisors' attitudes between governmental and private hospitals.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study showed that private and governmental hospitals have an approximately similar opinion about the amount of the effect of the factors affecting service marketing. From the viewpoint of supervisors, customer's price and service for selecting a hospital are factors that are more important in private than governmental hospitals which are probably due to higher tariffs in private hospitals and the fact that these hospitals pay less attention to specific services such as nursing than hoteling and physical appearance. So supervisors by giving superiority to service in comparison to physical appearance had considered this factor and eventually patients' demands as an important factor, but these two factors are among the most important factors in the viewpoint of supervisors in governmental hospitals. Price and propaganda in both private and governmental hospitals are in the last order of importance which shows the limitation of marketing in health care settings about these two factors.

There are few studies about the effect of marketing mix of services in hospitals from the viewpoint of internal customers such as nurses.

Taylor and Pringle [11] assessed the factors affecting the selection of hospitals by patients and found that easy access and the quality of cares is more important for the patients. Several investigators have conducted some studies on tourism therapy and activation of health care market [12-15]. Kesar and Rimac article [12] is primarily focused on medical tourism, one of the most interesting aspects of health tourism development, originally conceived as a marketing tool for attracting international demand for health care services. Muller and Kaufmann [13] proposed presenting a package including services appropriate for patient's physical condition, healthy diet and a comfortable place for education. Kusen [14] considered patients as guests, who spend a part of their time for treatment and after transfer to the country and performing medical tests, receive required therapeutic procedures. York [15] have paid attention to treatment via physicians' tele-conference, travelling and ... as an industry and provided benefit for communities and individuals.

The study conducted by Kim *et al.*, [17] identified five factors that influence the creation of brand equity through successful customer relationships: trust, customer satisfaction, relationship commitment, brand loyalty and brand awareness. An empirical test of the

relationships among these factors suggests that hospitals can be successful in creating image and positive brand equity if they can manage their customer relationships well. Kim *et al.* [18] in another study in 2011 examined the methods that marketing management relates to recruitment marketing in the hospital industry. They emphasized on the issues related to marketing management including marketing in hospital industry and continuation of their competition advantage and marketing strategy.

Tokunaga *et al.* [19] in 2013 determined the factors affecting market entry of for-profit providers under price regulation and in competition with existing non-profit providers. They found that demand (the number of eligible care recipients) and cost factors (population density and minimum wage) significantly influenced for-profit providers' choice of market entry. So they concluded that for-profit providers strategically choose a local market to increase their profit.

Jung and Hong found that determining factors for patient satisfaction include facilities, accessibility, process, physicians and medical staff. The study showed that medical institutions by recognizing and managing patient's satisfaction are able to foster customer loyalty and improve service quality [3]. In a literature review conducted by Lega [20] definition of the scopes of marketing and of the elements that affect its incorporation in the healthcare sector; conceptualization of the possible approaches to marketing by health organizations operating in PHSs; and discussion of the resulting framework for action was assessed.

## CONCLUSIONS

results of this study showed, from supervisors' point of view, for selecting a hospital by customers, service and price in private hospitals were more important than governmental hospitals and in private hospitals pay less attention to specific services such as nursing than hoteling and physical appearance and eventually patients' demands as an important factor, but these two factors are among the most important factors in the viewpoint of supervisors in governmental hospitals. In both kinds of hospitals service and physical appearance were important in selecting the hospital, but price and propaganda were in the last order of importance which shows a limitation in marketing in health field about these two factors.

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