

Internal Customer Satisfaction at Department of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To determine the levels of internal customer satisfaction and to take their requirements as well as problems after using services at the Department of Nursing.

Methods: The subjects in this cross-sectional survey research were internal customers. A set of questionnaire was filled out by random sampling method; 192 cases were drawn. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability per each aspect of the inventory was used; it was more than 0.75 per each subject. The data were analyzed by SPSS for Windows in terms of percentage, mean and standard deviation.

Results: The findings revealed that the majority of the subjects were registered nurses (44.30%), practical nurses (28.60%), and regular internal customers (65.60%). There were four aspects that fell within the high level (or the good quality level) which meant the personnel must always maintain their quality services (i.e. the environment, the responsiveness system, the accessibility aspect, and the service behavior aspects) and the rest, 1 moderate satisfaction level (or a developing level) meant the personnel should develop better services (i.e. the sufficiency of facility aspect). The internal customers' requirements and problems were service behaviors, the drinking -water service, an important point of announcement, the service signs, faster finance payment, duration of time for service, more area for space and good ventilation.

Conclusion: Although the total satisfaction fell within a high level, comprising four high levels (the good quality levels) and one moderate level (the developing level). They still wanted to receive higher degree of satisfaction over their service behaviors and many facilities. Recommendations were: the organization should pay more attention to internal customers' requirements and problems for improvement. Further research should add satisfaction evaluation method on aspects of customer relationship.

Keywords: Internal customer; Satisfaction

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Internal customer satisfaction can be used as a way for evaluating the quality and values of the organization because in the today's fast-changing and highly competitive services climate, offering of excellent internal customer services has never gained the degree of importance as now. Focusing on internal customer satisfaction not only helps the organization to survive and prosper, but it also has added benefit of motivating personnel, meeting their wants and promoting a satisfying environment to work within.¹ Every organization cannot have excellence customer service without excellence internal service.² Therefore, in the era of quality awareness and hospital accreditation is mandatory to improve personnel for improvement of work and service quality. But most accredited hospitals had assessed on external customer satisfaction but they lacked information of internal customer satisfaction assessment. To learn about internal support and/or satisfac-

tion can get specific information on how to take away obstacles to higher performance and eliminate behaviors which do not add value, while reducing problems which may lead to higher turnover. Thus, internal customer satisfaction survey can be used as a diagnostic tool to improve performance and increase quality at every level and can help to determine whether departments followed the hospital accreditation strategy in words and deeds. If everyone within the organization cares to provide their internal customers with better service, then in the long run end customers will receive a much higher quality service.³ Thus, by getting information on perceived strengths and internal customers' wants, satisfaction as well as frustrations or problems from research finding, all managers can improve their department reputations, performance and ability to thrive within any unit, division or organization.

Research questions

1. What is the level of internal customer satisfaction at the Department of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital?

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2. What do internal customers want? And what are the problems of using the services at the Department of Nursing?

Research objectives

1. To determine the level of internal customers satisfaction at the Department of Nursing, 84 / 2 Building, Siriraj Hospital.

2. To know the needs and problems of internal customers using services at the Department of Nursing.

Scope of the research

The internal customers were personnel of the Department of Nursing, using services at the Department of Nursing, 84 / 2 Building in 2004 BE; their data were collected only once per each subject from September - December 2004.

Outcome to be obtained

1. To be a guideline for upgrading customer satisfaction covering more than five aspects, i.e., promoting the way to overcome obstacles, reducing problems, improving behaviors and increasing the quality of the services.

2. To help determine whether or not the department followed the hospital accreditation strategy in words and deeds.

3. To offer the continuing development according to the organization policy.

Operation definitions

An "internal customer" means anyone within the Department of Nursing who came to use the services, do his/her job, and take care of another person, both internal and external, at 84/2 Building at any time.

"Hospital accreditation" means a process or strategy to motivate all dimensions of development, learning and sharing as well as accrediting from external organization committee; the main point was to set a standard, to prove and to improve the organization. It was recognized nationwide as a "symbol of quality" which indicates that an organization that met certain performance standard improves its ability to provide quality services.⁴

"High level" or "high satisfaction level" means the quality level (that the personnel must always maintain their good quality services).

"Moderate level" or "moderate satisfaction level" means the developing level (the personnel should develop their services for better quality).

"Low level" or "low satisfaction level" means under-developing level (the personnel must correct and improve their services).

Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework was based on hospital accreditation regulations. Hospital accreditation must have evidence to elicit the quality services and concept of customer satisfactions based on relevant service literature^{5,6} as well as consulting experience of researcher team. The model combines five aspects as follows: the environment, sufficiency of the facility (man and material), responsiveness of the system, accessibility and aspects of service behavior.

Population and sample

Population was all personnel of the Department of Nursing who came to use services at 84/ 2 Building, in 2004 BE (3,564 cases).

The researchers formulated the sample size by proportional stratified method, using simple random sampling and taking allowances from manager-committee. The mean and standard deviation estimation formula were used so that they yielded the minimum sample size at confidential level of 95% as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} n \text{ (sample size)} &= Z\alpha^2 \frac{\hat{\sigma}^2}{e^2} \\ Z\alpha &= \text{score at one tailed} = 1.645 \\ \hat{\sigma}^2 &= \text{standard deviation}^2 \text{ (getting from pilot study)} \\ e &= \text{allowing error} = .1 \text{ or } 10\% \end{aligned}$$

The researchers deliberated the sample size and chose the biggest of five sample sizes from each of the five satisfaction aspects after the pilot study. The appropriate sample size was 184 cases, 50 % for additional estimate of total sample size were sent for cases with no response. The research obtained total complete response from 192 cases.

Collecting the data, the researchers became aware of Hawthorne effect to avoid the irregular behavior during the period of data collection. No service-provider at the Department of Nursing knew the date of data collection. The data collection was on work-days by using simple random sampling method that provided on 3 work-days per week started on the first Wednesday of October, then Monday and Tuesday from October to December 2004.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional survey was invented on evidence which the researchers had established after literature reviews. The inventory comprised of three parts as follows: part 1, was about individual information taken by adding clarity to customers' data; part 2, contained five aspects of check-list questionnaire called the internal customer satisfaction assessment related to the feasibility of the organization services based on Likert's scale of measurement which is composed of five levels and the rest; part 3 was open-ended questionnaire with 2 sub-parts to identify the internal customers' wants and problems from using the services.

All the questionnaires were approved and validated by five experts; then corrected and developed before use. The new questionnaires contained 29 cases in total, who were not the target samples. The inventory was validated by the item of congruence (IOC) method, each item had a value of IOC more than 0.8. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability was used. The total reliability of part 2 was 0.95, comprising five aspects as follows: environment, sufficiency of the facility (man and material), responsiveness of the system, accessibility and aspects of service behavior. These were under conceptual framework. The alpha coefficient of each aspect was 0.85, 0.84, 0.77, 0.82, and 0.92, respectively.

The criteria were based on the tenets of Best⁸ and Wichian Kaitsing⁹.

Each aspect of the inventory had four items with 4 - 20 scores. Thus, low satisfaction level scores 4 - 9.30; moderate satisfaction level, 9.31-14.70; and, high satisfaction level, 4.71 - 20. The total five aspects (20 items) score 20 - 100; therefore, 20 - 46.60, 46.61- 73.40 and 73.41- 100 fell within the high, moderate and low satisfaction level, respectively; shown in Table 1.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The statistics were percentage, mean and standard deviation.

TABLE 1. Internal customer satisfactions (each aspect and total level).

Aspect of satisfactions	Mean ($\bar{X}$)	Standard deviation (S.D.)	Level
The environment	15.78	2.44	High (quality level)
The sufficiency of facility (man, material)	14.10	2.61	Moderate (developing level)
The responsiveness system	15.38	2.67	High (quality level)
The accessibility	15.08	2.42	High (quality level)
The service behavior	15.90	2.96	High (quality level)
Total internal customer satisfactions	74.58	11.50	High (quality level)

RESULTS

The findings revealed that the majority of the subjects were register nurses 85 cases (44.30%), practical nurses 55 cases (28.60%), and workers 28 cases (14.60 %), etc. Most of them were regular internal customers (65.60%), using many services, i.e., requesting or asking for ID card 102 cases (53.10%), using learning lab 91 cases (41.40%), claiming the curing money equal to sending and taking messages 74 cases per each item (38.50 % per each item), etc.

DISCUSSION

From the five aspects (20 items) analysis on internal customers' satisfaction at the Department of Nursing, Siriraj Hospital, this has been accredited. The researchers could determine that the total levels of internal customers' satisfaction fell within the high range (the quality level) comprised of four essential aspects which were not only depicted as a strength but also fell within the high level (i.e., the environment, responsiveness of the system, accessibility and aspects of service behavior) and the rest. Only one aspect fell within the moderate level (i.e., the sufficiency of facility). The four quality levels might come from the following reasons:

- The human resource development policy of the Department of Nursing made all personnel aware of the root of services and quality that made their hospital get continuing accreditation (two times).

- Changes in the social environment directly affected the the Department of Nursing management and all personnel. Many strategies were brought to implement the coping ability for any change.¹⁰ The personnel were aware of the organization policy that was encouraged over many tenets for excellence services.

- Many managers believed in many strategies of the Ministry of Public Health for helping organization and personnel to survive, for example: excellence services behavior training, quality activities, efficiency and audit.¹¹ Therefore, the providers followed those strategies.

- Most personnel believed that the quality was the status which would give utility for all customers by doing the right thing right from the first time. To do the right thing is the performance that is up to the standard.¹²

The only aspect that fell within the developing level (moderate level) that had not been successful to date in reaching the high level, perhaps many reasons might

be stuffs' inability to reach agreement on the man and material resources for services. This aspect depends on the budget and policy of the Faculty of Medicine affiliated with the Mahidol University that mandates maximization utility of resources. Managerial efficacy was developed by utilizing the existing resources to achieve the highest benefits, cutting off unnecessary expenses, downsizing, reorganizing, total quality management (TQM), and HA. programs. Thus, many projects and programs were used into human development for work development as the quality of hospital for the quality of life¹³ based on limitation of the number of men and material.

Although the total internal customers' satisfaction fell within the high level, they still wanted to receive more satisfactions as follows: drinking-water service, an importance announcement point, service sign, faster finance payment, and more space of many areas as well as good ventilation. Some internal customers wanted a better environment for better health (qualitative data shown that at the 84/2 building, the surrounding was poor, no space, and no good ventilation). Thus, satisfaction depended on environment, training and materials for services.¹⁴

After using the services, the problems were ponderous ones, the qualitative data revealed that the minority of personnel were not committed to provide as an excellence service behaviors. Some not only are unwilling to assume responsibility for their practices but also are unwilling to demonstrate commitment to their jobs development because the characters of some Thai people were calm and passive, not enthusiastic. This was the character of people in an agricultural society.¹⁵ This could be one of many reasons why having the problems after using the services. It would be strongest when all segments or aspects of the services got into the goals and aspirations followed HA. On the other hand, it depended on the budgetary and timing as well as support from the administrative staff and peers.

CONCLUSION

The total satisfaction fell within the high level or the good quality levels ($\bar{X}$ =74.58 S.D.=11.50), comprising four high levels (i.e., the environment, the responsiveness of the system, the accessibility and the service behavior aspect) and one moderate level or the developing level (i.e., the sufficiency of facility aspect). Although total satisfaction fell within the high level, they still wanted to receive more satisfactions in many issues. The problems of the minority of respondents after using services were: excellence service behavior, the insufficiency of available resources and some organizational management.

Recommendation

Our recommendations are as follows: the organization should pay more attention to internal customers' requirements and problems, such as determining the time duration for each service, having indicating label and each job as well as each function, improving the surroundings by adapting and adopting health promotion concepts.

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บทคัดย่อ

ความพึงพอใจของผู้ใช้บริการภายใน ณ สำนักงานฝ่ายการพยาบาล ตึก 84 ปี ชั้น 2 โรงพยาบาลศิริราช

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วัตถุประสงค์: เพื่อกำหนดระดับความพึงพอใจของผู้ใช้บริการภายในหรือลูกค้าภายในและเพื่อทราบความต้องการของผู้ใช้บริการฯ ตลอดจนปัญหาที่ผู้ให้บริการฯ ประสบจากการมาใช้บริการ

วิธีการ: เป็นการวิจัยเชิงสำรวจประชากร คือ บุคลากรผู้ให้บริการภายในทุกระดับที่สังกัดฝ่ายการพยาบาลฯ และได้มาใช้บริการ ณ สำนักงาน ฝ่ายการพยาบาล ตึก 84 ปี ชั้น 2 โรงพยาบาลศิริราช กลุ่มตัวอย่างได้จากการสุ่มแบบง่าย จำนวน 192 คน เก็บข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสอบถามซึ่งมี 5 ด้าน แต่ละด้านมีค่าความเชื่อมั่นสัมประสิทธิ์อัลฟาของคอรันบาร์คเกิน 0.75 ทุกด้าน สถิติที่ใช้ในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ สถิติพรรณนา ร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

ผลการศึกษา: กลุ่มตัวอย่างส่วนใหญ่เป็นพยาบาลระดับปฏิบัติการ (44.30%), รองลงมา เป็นผู้ช่วยพยาบาล (28.60%) และส่วนใหญ่มาคิดต่อใช้บริการเป็นประจำ (65.60%) ความพึงพอใจโดยรวมทุกด้าน 5 ด้านอยู่ในระดับสูง (ระดับคุณภาพดี ที่ผู้ให้บริการต้องดำรงรักษา การให้บริการในด้านนั้น ๆ ให้คงอยู่ต่อไป) ซึ่งประกอบด้วย ระดับความพึงพอใจสูง 4 ด้าน (ด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม, ด้านระบบการตอบสนองต่อผู้รับบริการ, ด้านการเข้าถึงจุดบริการ และด้านพฤติกรรมบริการ) ที่เหลืออีก 1 ด้านคือด้านความพอเพียงของสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกอยู่ระดับความพึงพอใจปานกลาง (เป็นระดับกำลังพัฒนาผู้ให้บริการควรพัฒนาการบริการให้ดีขึ้น) แม้ว่าความพึงพอใจโดยรวมทุกด้านตกอยู่ในระดับสูง แต่ผู้ให้บริการฯ มีความต้องการและปัญหาที่ประสบหลังจากให้บริการได้แก่พฤติกรรมบริการ, ความต้องการให้มีจุดบริการน้ำดื่ม, ต้องการมีจุดวางเอกสารที่เป็นประกาศต่าง ๆ, ต้องการป้ายที่ชัดเจนว่าห้องใดบริการเรื่องอะไร ใครรับผิดชอบ, ต้องการให้ช่วยสำรองจ่ายการเบิกเงินค่าอบรมซึ่งล่าช้ามาก และ ปัญหาสถานที่คับแคบ อากาศถ่ายเทไม่สะดวก

สรุป: แม้ว่าความพึงพอใจโดยรวมทุกด้านอยู่ในระดับสูง (ระดับคุณภาพดี) แต่ผู้ให้บริการฯ ยังมีความต้องการเพิ่มเติมและประสบปัญหาจากการมาใช้บริการทั้งด้านพฤติกรรมบริการและระบบการอำนวยความสะดวกต่าง ๆ จึงควรพัฒนาการบริการโดยนำข้อมูลความต้องการ และปัญหาที่ผู้ให้บริการฯ ประสบมาร่วมพิจารณา การวิจัยครั้งต่อไปควรพัฒนารูปแบบการประเมินความพึงพอใจโดยเพิ่มด้านสัมพันธ์กับลูกค้าแนวใหม่