AN ANALYSIS OF THE ASPECTS OF HEALTHCARE SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATION TO PATIENT LOYALTY

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INTRODUCTION

Healthcare facilities such as hospitals, public health clinics, and private practices are places that people visit to obtain thorough medical care. The state bill no.44 of 2009 stipulates that hospitals are institutions that provide complete healthcare service for individuals. The service included is providing inpatient facilities, home care, and medical emergency service. According to the bill, among the functions of a hospital is to establish and maintain the quality standard of healthcare service within the hospital, which is then used as a blueprint or a reference in day to day patient care.

The general public are becoming evermore conscientious on choosing which hospital to go to when they become ill. Which is why for every hospital that offers medical service, the challenge then arises on how to implement various strategies in order to develop and not merely survive in the growing healthcare industry. Among the strategies that needs attention is sustaining the quality standard of the hospital care service.

The quality standard of the hospital care service can be measured using the SERVQUAL model (Service Quality model), which gives rate to the indicators of various qualities of service (Tjiptono, 2011). There are 5 main aspects that are measured and arranged below according to the relative significance/importance (Tjiptono dan Chandra, 2011):

A. Reliability, which signifies the institution's ability to provide error-free and accurate medical care upon patient arrival, within the agreed upon time constraint.

B. Responsiveness, signifies the healthcare personnel's availability and capability to provide fast response aid and cater to their needs and request. It also involves the tactful knowledge of informing the patient when the medical care will be given and performing the promised care accordingly.

C. Assurance, signifies how the healthcare personnel establish trust with patients which in turn earns the patient's trust towards the institution. This can be achieved by providing healthcare personnel who maintain courteous conduct at all time yet possess the skill and ability to answer any arising questions or handle any given situation.

Furthermore, it involves the institutions ability to foster a safe and secure environment for patients.

D. Empathy, signifies the ability of healthcare personnels to establish effective communication while delivering proper diagnosis. Caring is an essential component which can be implemented by giving personal attention to each patient.

E. Tangibles, correlates with the physical environment of the establishment, which can come in the form of an attractive office design, availability of a full range medical equipment, and further complemented by the pleasant appearance of the healthcare personnels.

Delivering optimum service is essential for institutions who thrive on gaining customer satisfaction and building towards patient loyalty in the long run.

METHOD

The writer will analyze 3 main aspects of healthcare service quality that relatively play important roles in gaining customer satisfaction and in turn, patient loyalty. The method used in this study is a cross sectional analysis. Data of the 3 aspects were taken from researches conducted at one of the hospitals in Jember, with varied number of samples from each aspect. The data is derived from questionnaires which seek answers for questions concerning customer satisfaction seen from aspects of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and patient loyalty. After calculating the data, a conclusion can be reached in regard to which aspect has more effect on patient loyalty.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Reliability

The number of samples used to measure patient satisfaction in terms of the reliability of a healthcare service quality were 84 respondents. Research (Table 1) showed that 4 respondents had a neutral stance, 22 of respondents were satisfied, and 58 respondents felt extremely satisfied for the care that they have received. Up to 71 respondents stated that they have a high sense of loyalty towards the hospital. From the gathered data we continue by inputting them into the Spearman corelation scheme and saw that there is a relation between patient satisfaction index based on the reliability aspect of

healthcare service quality and patient loyalty with a positive corelation value of 0,252 (Amalia, 2016)

Table 1. Reliability aspect of healthcare service quality in relation with patient loyalty

Patients' Satisfaction in Reliability Aspect	Patient Loyalty		Total
	Low	High	
Neutral	3	1	4
Satisfied	4	18	22
Very Satisfied	6	52	58
Total	13	71	84

There are several researches that comply with this result, they are Solikhah (2008), Adhytyo (2013) and Suswardji (2012). They respectively conclude that there is a correlation between the reliability aspects of healthcare service quality and the satisfaction of patients, therefore leading to patient loyalty.

In addition, there are three components in the reliability aspects according to Supriyanto (2010) namely dependable, accurately and consistently. Dependable means that the product can relied upon, trusted and accounted for. Accurately means the product or service is delivered as promised. Consistently means that through time, over and over again the product or service is brought out in a manner as it has been carried out from the beginning. David (2014) stated that a patients' satisfaction is influenced by whether a service can meet the patient's expected service consistently.

Responsiveness

The number of sample collected using the simple random sampling method to measure patient satisfaction in terms of responsiveness og healthcare service quality is 108 samples.

Table 2. Responsiveness aspect of healthcare service quality in relation with patient loyalty

Patients' Satisfaction in Responsiveness Aspect	Patient Loyalty			Total
	High	Medium	Low	
High	81	19	3	103
Low	0	5	0	5
Total	81	24	3	108

Spearmen's Correlation Rho shows the positive value of the relation of up to 0.323, proving that this aspect does indeed play an important role. (Hajar,2015) Result of the research can be seen previously in Table 2.

From a Cross Tabulation we were able to affirm that 81 respondents which show a good degree of loyalty have rated highly on the responsiveness aspect of healthcare service quality. This result corresponds with the research of Ulfa (2012) at Tugu Ibu Hospital which concludes that a good service quality translates into better patient loyalty, and vice versa. Another research conducted by Kholid (2012) concluded that the aspects of healthcare service quality including responsiveness and reliability has a 68,7 % positive effect on the patients' satisfaction.

Assurance

The aspect of assurance has 3 elements, namely competence, courtesy, and credibility. Competence signifies with the knowledge and skills of the personnels during care, courtesy correlates to the hospitality factor and overall manner of the personnels involved, while credibility is related to the trust building proccess between patient and hospital (Trimurthy, 2008). The number of samples in this study were 50 respondents.

Each respondent were classified according to age, gender, education, occupation, salary, visiting frequency and means of payment. Although each category distribution was described descriptively in perspective towards its influence on patient's satisfaction index , in the end, the patients' satisfaction index on assurance aspects was the variable that was cross tabulated against patient loyalty.

After being tested through Spearman's Correlation Rho (ρ), the relation value of (p=0,030) between the patient satisfaction index on assurance aspects of healthcare service quality and patient loyalty shows and r value of 0.308 (Masnunah, 2015). The positive value is proof of the positive relation between the variables. Results of the study can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3.Assurance aspect of healthcare service quality in relation with patient loyalty

Patients' Satisfaction in Assurance Aspect	Patient Loyalty		Total
	Low	high	
Satisfied	3	6	9
Very Satisfied	3	38	41
Total	6	44	50

Patients' Loyalty

The gathered data above allows us to conclude that all 3 aspects of healthcare service quality have a positive and direct correlation with patient loyalty. A study abroad, conducted in 678 hospitals further supports our conclusion concerning the strong relation between patient satisfaction in regard to healthcare service quality and patient loyalty (Kessler, 2011).

Another study also elaborates that the patients' experience in relation to the private hospitals' services has strong impact on the outcome variables like willingness to return to the same hospital and reuse its services or recommend them to others. The

relationship between the service quality and patient's loyalty proves the strategic importance of improving the service quality for dragging and retaining patients and expanding the market share (Arab, 2012).

The correlation strength of each aspect in the analysis of our article can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. P and r value aspects of healthcare service quality and patient loyalty

Aspect	P value	r value
Reliability in healthcare service quality	0,021	0,252
Responsiveness in healthcare service quality	0,001	0,323
Assurance in healthcare service quality	0,030	0,308

The assessment of patients' satisfaction levels, and the knowledge of what factors influence satisfaction are very important for healthcare managers as it influences healthcare results and healthcare quality. Which dimensions of healthcare quality influence the patient's satisfaction the most are important to find out. (Raposo, 2009)

In a study conducted at one of the hospitals in Jember, showed that among the 3 aspects of healthcare service quality, the responsiveness aspect possessed the strongest correlation coeficient. Parasuraman (in Lupiyoadi, 2013) gives explanation that responsiveness is a policy designed to help give faster and more accurate response to patients by delivering a clear and concise information. Zeithaml (1996) states that responsiveness is the ability of the personnel to give aid swiftly to patients, provide swift and decisive service in terms of patient handling, office administrative procedures, and complaint management.

Berlianty (2013) states that responsiveness includes the willingness to help patients by providing swift and accurate service, also gathering decisive and accurate information in regard to the patient's current condition.

CONCLUSION

According to the service quality model, there are 5 aspects of the quality standard of the healthcare service that can be measured. Those five aspects are reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangible. Each and every aspect of healthcare service is essentially equal in significance and needs to be increased simultaneously to achieve customer satisfaction and patient loyalty. However, the research carried in this study shows that the respondents' need to receive fast service, swift and

accurate response to complaints plays the most significant role in elevating patient loyalty.

This might be caused by the fact that when someone seeks a healthcare service anywhere, it is more likely that the first expectation of that individual is that he or she gets immediate medical attention. It is in human nature to want to be responded to in a fast manner according to each complaint. Therefore, when the responsiveness aspect is already met and attended immediately by a healthcare provider, a sense of relief may come over a patient and elevate the patients' satisfaction.

What is expected and what is perceived by a patient determines his or her overall satisfaction index regarding all the aspects of healthcare service quality.

It was our hope that the conclusion of this study will be taken into consideration by hospitals that aim to improve the quality of healthcare service, but without ignoring the other aspects involved.

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