



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT ON PATIENT SATISFACTION

KEY WORDS: Employee empowerment, Patient satisfaction, Healthcare sector.

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ABSTRACT

Considering the nature of service delivery and particularly intangible-dominant services, employee empowerment becomes a very important issue to organizations producing services. In that, the customers and the employees are, engaged simultaneously in the production of the service. This inseparability is what is considered by the organization in choosing how best to serve its customers, either by the traditional method or through the empowerment approach. The inability of the management to control the service encounter makes the employees responsible for the quality of service delivered to the customers. In order for the management to trust that the employees are successful in dealing with their customers, the management has to give the employees the authority and necessary support to succeed at it, which is referred to as employee empowerment. The practice of which can directly affect the quality of services delivered, and customer satisfaction.

1 INTRODUCTION

Employees in a service organization and particularly, those who have frequent contacts with the customer usually serve as representatives of both the organization and their products or services to the customer at contact point. The quality of the service and the satisfaction the customer may derive will be an assessment of the entire service experience. Employees who are empowered in an organization can either portray a positive or negative picture to the customers. Considering that, a satisfied customer and employee are of important value to the organization; it therefore, becomes the duty of the management to put in place a system that would ultimately generate either satisfaction, or dissatisfaction from their customers and employees. Since the employees have a major role to play in determining, whether a customer would enjoy the experience or turn to their competitors for better solutions. This according to Baruch (1998:82-87), forces organizations to re-think their strategy” because as Zeithaml et al (2006:106) points out, companies today recognize that they can compete more effectively by distinguishing themselves with respect to service quality and improved customer satisfaction.

1.1 Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to understand the impact of employee empowerment on the patient satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

2.1 Empowerment:

Dia Zeglal et al. (2014), the study has been conducted to understand the impact of employee empowerment on customer oriented behaviour in Jordanian commercial banks. The study found that three dimensions of empowerment namely meaning, competency and impact have a positive and significant influence on customer behaviour.

Prof. V. S. Chauhan (2015), the article focuses on employee involvement and empowerment, commitment and loyalty of staff, staff retention and work life balance in Hindustan Aeronautic Limited and National Aerospace Laboratories, Bangalore. The study has proved that employees have high degree of involvement in job and commitment to the organisations where the employees are empowered.

Geoffrey Kiprono Biwott et al. (2015), the paper essentially studies whether employee empowerment facilitates employee commitment to the organisation. The study was conducted at MOI Teaching and Referral Hospital in Kenya. The article justifies that due to employee empowerment, the hospital has good and committed employees with a positive correlation with their organization.

Winnie Kivuya (2015), the study was made to understand the

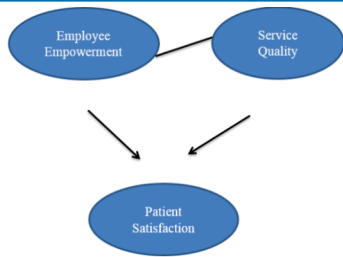
effects of employee involvement in strategic management implementations. The study confirms that it is imperative for the managers to engage and involve employees to gain competitive edge for the organisation. It highlights that in order to achieve the desired targets of the organisation, it is necessary that employees are permitted to involve.

2.2 Patient Satisfaction and Employee Empowerment:

Sparks, et al., (1997) explore the effects of employee empowerment (full, limited, and none) on customers' satisfaction. Results revealed that fully empowered employees produce more customer satisfaction, but only when the service provider used an accommodating style of communication.

Hocutt & Stone (1998) investigated the effects of frontline employee empowerment in a service recovery situation. The results revealed that if employees were properly trained and given autonomy to make decisions, then service recovery efforts would be maximized, thus leading to higher consumer satisfaction.

Zeglal, et al. (2008) analysed the effect of employee empowerment on customer satisfaction and concluded a positive relationship between the two variables. The question now is what is customer satisfaction? Customer satisfaction therefore is defined as customer perception regarding a particular product / service according to his / her already set expectations (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2005). When would customers feel that they are being offered products / service according to their expectations? That depends a lot on the efficiency levels of the service providers or on the people who are involved in the production process. How would efficiency level go up? This is possible through autonomy, responsibility, innovation and information (Yang & Choi, 2009), thus, the concept of empowerment. Empowered employees are more motivated as compared to those who just follow the given lines (Naeem & Saif, 2010). Employee empowerment creates sense of belongingness and ownership towards the parent organization, hence, made them feel more confident and try to give their best to their employers; as a result, service quality improves (Naeem & Saif, 2010). The authors further opined that improved product or service quality generally results into higher level of customer satisfaction. Study conducted by Yang & Choi (2009) concluded that employee empowerment can contribute a lot towards business growth and development. Business growth is largely dependent upon customer satisfaction and customer satisfaction is one of the end products of employee empowerment. In view of the above the researcher proposed that there is a positive and significant relationship between employee's empowerment and customer's satisfaction. Hence, the conceptual framework for the present study is presented as shown in Figure 1.



3 Hypotheses

H0: There is a no impact of employee empowerment on patient satisfaction.

H1a: There is a significant positive impact of employee empowerment on patient satisfaction.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research design: Descriptive

4.2 Sampling method: Convenience sampling, two stage sampling method.

First stage: Selection of multi speciality hospital in Gujarat state.

Second stage: Selection of patients and employee's (Doctors, Nurses, Front-line service providers) of hospital.

4.3 Research instrument: Structured 7 point Likert scale questionnaire.

4.4 Data analysis & Interpretation: The obtained data are analyzed with SPSS 17.0 software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 17.0, SSFS)

4.5 Sampling size: In this study 100 questionnaire were distributed to the selected employee's from whom 80 questionnaires were finally selected for the study, whereas 80 fully filled questionnaire was selected from the patient's side.

5 Data Analysis

5.1 Measurement Model

First, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to evaluate the reliability of empowerment and patient satisfaction through service quality constructs. All factors had alpha values greater than the cut off value of .70, where

Cronbach's alpha for employee empowerment=.888, patient satisfaction through service quality=.951.

5.2 Demographic profile of employee's:

Male respondents 41% and female respondents 59% have found in this study. According to the designation 31% doctors, 51% nurses, 18% frontline service providing employees.

5.3 Demographic profile of Patient:

In this study 30 % of the respondent study group is Attendants (Relatives) while 70 % of respondents are Patient itself. In this study 55% patients are Female and 45% are male. 84% of respondents are saying that their satisfaction with this hospital is high. 11% of respondents are saying that their satisfaction with this hospital is medium and only 5% of respondents are saying that their satisfaction with this hospital is low.

6 Regression Analysis (Employee empowerment and patient satisfaction through service quality)

Table 1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.587(a)	.345	.336	.51118

a Predictors: (Constant), MCSQ

The Table shows that the empowerment explains 33.6% variance in patient satisfaction through service quality because adjusted R2 is 0.336; this indicates a moderate proportion of explained variance. The correlation of coefficient (R) is 0.587 that means there is a strong relationship exists between empowerment and patient satisfaction through service quality.

TABLE 2 ANOVA (b)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.727	1	10.727	41.051	.000(a)
	Residual	20.382	78	.261		
	Total	31.108	79			

a Predictors: (Constant), Empowerment

b Dependent Variable: SQ

The ANOVA Table shows that F = 41.051 and it is significant at 0.000 level that means

Overall the employee empowerment as a predictor, predicts significantly the dimensions of service quality for patient satisfaction.

TABLE 3 Coefficients (a)

Model		B	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
			Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.292	.423		5.414	.000
	MCSQ	.593	.093	.587	6.407	.000

a Dependent Variable: SQ

The coefficients Table shows that beta= .587 and it is significant at 0.000 level that means

Employee empowerment as a predictor, predicts significantly patient satisfaction through dimensions of service quality. Therefore null hypothesis is rejected.

7. CONCLUSION:

The study will focus on the employee empowerment to understand how it can affect the patient satisfaction through service quality. Thus, overall service quality will be improved and automatically performance of the organization will be improved. The motivated employees are the asset of workplace and this asset ultimately ensures service quality resulting in patient satisfaction.

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