

Abstract

The private hospitals, nowadays, are facing bad consequences of the economic crisis that lead them to face various business problems. One of which that directly affects the private hospital business is the declining demand of customers. In order to cope with this circumstance, to understand the customers' needs and satisfaction would help solve this problem. This study spotlights findings that are useful to the private hospitals.

This survey research is aimed to study the factors that affect the customer's service utilization in the private hospitals in Bangkok Metropolitan area. A statistically representative survey is conducted covering 5 private hospitals and 380 the private hospital's customers. The data set collected by this survey has provided an appropriate interpretive analysis of the customer's service utilization. The data is collected during September to October 2000 and is analyzed by using frequency, percentage, and z-test at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

The result reveals that female respondents of this research account for 58.4% and 41.6% are male. A figure of 55.8% of respondents are single, and 42.6% are married and 94.7% of customers are between 18-45 years old. A majority of 63.9% have obtained bachelor degree education, and most of respondents' occupation is business employees, they account for 55.5%. The family sizes between 2-4 persons and 5-7 persons are 57.1% and 36.6%, respectively. The majority of respondents' family income is between 20,001 to 40,000 Baht per month.

The result of the analysis indicates that customers' choice in selecting a private hospital depends on the *physician's skill* which is the first factor according to the frequency table when compared to other factors, that is 78.4% of customers come to obtain the private hospitals' service because of physician's skill. While the *medical equipment* is the second factor, though the customers see that they consider the clean and sanitary medical equipment more than others. For the good service in every

department is still important for the customers; however, when compared to the *physician's skill* and *medical equipment*, it is the third factor.

High responsibility and human relationship of nurses as well as personnel also influence the customer's service utilization. Even though it is not the most important, it is the crucial aspect for the private hospital.

In addition, there are other factors that affect the customer's service utilization: *family size, acquainted hospital, traveling time, convenient travel, supporting personnel availability, and waiting time* for physician or dispensary.

For the privilege, reimbursement, and treatment expenditure, they have no influence on customer's service utilization. The result shows that the private hospital's customers are not concerned much on the privilege, reimbursement, and treatment expenditure because they are willing to pay for it in order to exchange for the conveniences and good treatment provided. However, the reasonable price of service charge is another factor that the private hospital should consider.

This research would be beneficial to the private hospital administrators for improving their services by providing qualified specialists, training all their personnel and also improve the public relations. The rate of charge could be modified to reflect good services and convince the customers of the quality services worth the money they have spent for.