

Abstract

A service delay is a condition where service is not delivered in a prompt and timely manner, causing the customer to wait for the desired service. It is referred to as an obstacle to service. This research study is based on the statement of problem “To study the effects of the various components of delay, on the evaluation of service offered at Bumrungrad Hospital”. The three objectives of this research are as follows: To study patients perception about various dimensions of delay at Bumrungrad Hospital, to study patients evaluation of services at Bumrungrad Hospital and to study the relationship between service delay and evaluation of services.

For this research, the data was acquired by self-administered questionnaires with 200 respondents who were patients at Bumrungrad Hospital and encountered a delay while waiting for service, during the month of August 2003. The research instrument used was a semi-structured questionnaire, which had a list of questions that prespecified the set of response alternatives and format. Convenience and judgmental sampling techniques were used. All data were analyzed and summarized by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The research used Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), which was originally proposed by Karl Pearson for testing. The data was collected during the period of August 2003, at Bangkok Bumrungrad Hospital.

The results showed that the various dimensions of delay are related to the evaluation of service at Bumrungrad Hospital. The various dimensions of delay are delay in service, stability of the delay cause, service provider control over delay, uncertainty, filled time and indication about progress. All these dimensions have an impact on service evaluation.

Delay in service affects service evaluation positively when a delay is expected, prior to receiving the service. Also when customers perceive the cause of the delay to be stable it increases anger and leads to a negative service evaluation. Similarly, the more the service provider is perceived to have control over the product failure or the delay cause, the angrier the customer will be and it is less likely that the customer will repurchase. This also leads to a negative service evaluation. If the waiting customer is

somewhat certain about the amount of time that he will have to wait for, it will affect service evaluations positively. By filling the waiting customer time, less attention will be paid to the passage of time itself, which leads the customer to evaluate the service positively. Lastly, when indication is provided about progress on the delay, or if feedback is given to the waiting customer regarding his position in the queue, it reduces uncertainty, thus leading to a positive evaluation of service.

Therefore, the recommendations regarding this study were that service providers at the hospital should understand the impact that delay has upon the waiting patients and take measures to minimize them. Steps could be taken to inform the waiting patients approximately about the average amount of time it takes at different points of receiving service in the hospital. Also, hospitals should try to identify the causes of stable delays and why they occur, and the management should come up with measures to eliminate them. In addition, the hospital could introduce some “fillers” in order to keep the patients distracted.

The results from this study suggested that delays have adverse effects on consumer perceptions of the service and by understanding how consumers react to a delay, service providers can alleviate its negative effects better. However the empirical setting used here, involved only an “active” delay- type of wait. Although it is expected that many types of relationships hypothesized in this study would generate to other types of wait, it is possible that they will not. Further, model development is also needed. Important variables in the wait experience such as waiting costs, one’s time orientation and perceived inequalities in the wait should be investigated.