

ABSTRACT

The focal construct in this study is the relationship quality between the hospitals and the patients. The previous studies on relationship quality had developed relationship quality dimensions mostly in terms of “want to” aspect and tested their model in various B2B and B2C contexts. However, in several long-term relationships, “ought to” and “have to” aspects of relationship are also important in helping create the relationship longevity in spite of dissatisfaction in the relationship. Very few empirical researches on relationship quality have captured these dimensions.

The objective of this research was to develop the comprehensive dimensions of relationship quality by using the Investment Theory. In addition, the objectives also were to identify the antecedents of relationship quality by applying the Transaction Cost Analysis (TCA) Theory and investigate their relative significant relations to relationship quality and to investigate the consequences of relationship quality by using the Exit-Voice Theory. Moreover, the antecedents and the consequences of relationship quality were captured from the previous literatures and the qualitative in-depth interview findings. The self-administered questionnaire survey data was gathered from 478 outpatients of the four private hospitals in Bangkok, Thailand. The Structural Equation Modeling technique was employed to test the hypotheses.

The results of the research showed that knowledge about patients had the most significant relationship to trust and patient switching risks had the most significant association with both inertia and dependence. The variation in trust was explained the most among all the dimensions of relationship quality. Trust and inertia created positive effects on constructive feedback and revisit intention. Trust could also discourage switching intention. Dependence had a positive impact on revisit intention.

The empirical findings provide important theoretical contributions for future researchers to understand the tested model with the theoretical sequences of the TCA Theory - Investment Theory - Exit Voice Theory. In addition, the findings also provide important managerial implications for the hospitals' marketing or customer relationship managers to understand the antecedents and consequences of relationship quality, which can serve as a guideline for the hospitals to effectively develop their relationship marketing strategies.