

A Comparison of Human Elements and Nonhuman Elements in Private Health Care Settings: Customers' Perceptions and Expectations

Abstract

In today's highly competitive health care environment, many private health care settings are now looking into customer service indicators to learn customers' perceptions and determine whether they are meeting customers' expectations in order to ensure that their customers are satisfied with the services. This research paper aims to investigate whether the human elements were more important than the nonhuman elements in private health care settings. We used the internationally renowned SERVQUAL five-dimension model plus three additional dimensions-courtesy, communication, and understanding of customers of the human element-when evaluating health care services. A total of 191 respondents from three private health care settings in the Klang Valley region of Malaysia were investigated. Descriptive statistics were calculated by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program, version 15. Interestingly, the results suggested that customers nowadays have very high expectations especially when it comes to the treatment they are receiving. Overall, the research indicated that the human elements were more important than the nonhuman element in private health care settings. Hospital management should look further to improve on areas that have been highlighted. Implications for management practice and directions for future research are discussed.