

The Impact of Hospital Reputation on Patient Loyalty Mediated by Patient Satisfaction

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of Hospital reputation on patients' loyalty and the mediating role of patients' satisfaction in Jordanian public hospitals. A survey was conducted to gather data with a complete of 400 patients. To obtain the results and to analyse the hypothesis, the study used PLS-SEM Statistical technique. The findings show that Hospital reputation has a positive direct effect on patients' loyalty, and patients' satisfaction mediated the relationship between Hospital reputation and patients' loyalty. The study recommends that Public hospitals should provide services as advertised on TV, magazines and the Internet, so that patients can build the image for hospital. Future studies may include other factors such as perceived value, trust, availability of hospital resources that can affect patient satisfaction and loyalty.

Keywords: Hospital reputation, Patients' loyalty, Patients' Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of customer loyalty in any organization, especially in the health sector cannot be overemphasized. In this era of stiff competition, getting patients that are loyal to one hospital, in particular, is becoming a big challenge since many of these patients are exploring several other primary service providers based on the information available at their disposal (Tosyali, Sütücü, & Tosyali, 2019). For the customer loyalty evaluation, it is important to understand patient's behavior specifically what influences their satisfaction, one such variable that could trigger loyalty is the reputation of the service provider (Melewar, Sarstedt & Hallier, 2012). For the customer loyalty evaluation for public hospitals, reputation is very important because consumers understand how precious health is for their lives, but, understanding how costly the cost of health care service is often difficult to achieve, The hospital's reputation has been acknowledged in achieving the business goal and stays competitive through engaging continuous patient satisfaction by providing excellent medical services (Bilgin, 2018).

The impression of health care by the patient is seen through the hospital reputation based on patient expertise and references in terms of skills, attitudes, and behavior of the hospital's employees as well as the hospital's equipment, which form the initial perspectives of patient's satisfaction (Wu, 2011). A good hospital image from in consumer perspective will decrease frustration with poor experience in health care and help to reverse an unfavorable image caused by consumer unhappiness, and consumers need a lot of good service recovery in the event of a bad experience to change the overall image of the hospital (Sumaedi et al, 2014).

Jordanian health services have been under a great deal of pressure, as those services are provided public sector, in hospitals and health centers across the kingdom, to all Syrian refugees who enter its territories (Alsoudi, 2020). The reputation of public hospitals in Jordan has been problematic due to the changing nature of the hospital environment caused by the entry of Syrian refugees to Jordan Where the spread of epidemics and infectious diseases such as measles, tuberculosis and polio among refugees, also, lack of financial

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support by the government, and work pressure on hospital staff which have reduced the quality of services provided (Kanhutu, Leder & Biggs, 2019; Al-Rousan, 2018). As these factors affected the reputation of public hospitals among citizens. Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of hospital reputation on patients' loyalty towards Jordanian public hospitals mediated by patient satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Patients' loyalty

Loyalty in service management is an important concept, in which by having loyal customers the service providers will achieve many major benefits such as increasing market share, lower marketing costs, and higher profitability and income (Chang et al., 2013). The loyalty concept in marketing refers to positive attitudes, re-buying behavior, and a long-term consumer commitment towards a specific product, service, or business (Keller, 2016). According to Ellynia and Widjaja (2017), the loyal consumer is an individual who regularly uses a service or product, repeats the purchase from the same service provider or company, and does not switch to another service provider or the company.

Consumer loyalty to a healthcare provider has been defined as patient loyalty, loyal patients who are happy with the service are the most effective customers because they will inform friends, family, and co-workers (Tosyalı, Sütçü & Tosyalı, 2019). Hospital economic value was provided by patients, that loyal patients are a priceless asset for the hospital, while loyal patients have the characteristics of continuing to buy back, buy between product lines and services, refer to others, and show resistance to rivals. Unsatisfied customers cannot become loyal customers, while satisfied customers are always loyal customers (Afthanorhan et al., 2018).

Hospital Reputation

Lievens (2017) mentioned that organizational reputation refers to people's beliefs and evaluation of the organization, and it is a shared perception of how the public feels about the organization, and organizational images refer to the impressions of the stakeholders or corporate audiences in terms of their knowledge or beliefs about an organization. As acknowledge by Ghazali et al. (2017) one of the most promising marketing strategies to attract current customers is a planned and well-managed corporate reputation. In fact, a good image helps organizations build a good reputation, enter new markets faster, increase the ability to expand and promote services, and attract efficient staff. From the customer point of view, the image and reputation of a good organization evoke positive feelings and perceptions among consumers as well as being able to differentiate brands easily (Keller, 2016).

Many people do not directly choose the hospital for treatment, and the results indicate that they do so through the advice of a personal doctor or through word-of-mouth that is circulating among people about the extent of its good reputation (Afthanorhan et al., 2018). A good image is considered a high-value strategic tool for the organization and is used as a competitive advantage because the image of the organization is difficult to emulate, takes a long time to develop, and requires substantial financial and human investment. Therefore, health organizations such as private and public hospitals should ensure the elimination of negatives perceptions and reputations by investing more to build a good image (Akin & Demirel, 2011).

Patients' Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is someone's feeling of pleasure or deception with a product after comparing the product results believed to be the anticipated results of the product (Oliver, 2014). If quality satisfies expectations, it implies that the consumer is satisfied. But unless the achievement does not meet the expectations of the client, then the client is not satisfied (Juhana et al., 2015). The perception of patients that the demands are met or exceeded is patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is the level of patient feeling that arises from the health care services' performance provided to match patients to what was expected. If the findings are felt to meet or overcoming expectations, then there will be a sense of satisfaction, if not, there would be a sense of disappointment or frustration when the outcomes are not in line with expectations (Kulsum & Syah, 2017).

Hypotheses Development

Hospital reputation and Patient Loyalty

Sciulli and Missien (2015) argue that in complex service services, brand image is the main element that will lead to brand loyalty. The company's image is important for health organizations in several ways because problems will arise if the hospital is negatively imaged, which will reduce the market share of the hospital (Emari, Jafari & Mogaddam, 2012). On the other hand, the image of a good hospital will increase the tendency of patients to be loyal in choosing the hospital in the future (Hwang & Sim, 2016). The research has been

carried out by Ramli (2019), Veloso et al.(2018) and Ishaq et al. (2014) exposing that there is a positive relation, between reputation and customer loyalty. Thus, this study hypothesized the following:

H1: Hospital reputation has a positive effect on patient loyalty in Jordanian public hospitals.

Hospital reputation and Patients' Satisfaction

Previous results have shown that a good reputation leads to a greater level of customer satisfaction (Chen & Phou, 2013; Prayag & Ryan, 2012).Wu (2011) states that it requires businesses to enhance customer satisfaction by encouraging customers to pay more attention to the image of the brand than to a product's physical characteristics in making purchasing decisions. People with a positive image in mind will probably have a positive view of their experiences on-site, which in turn leads to a greater level of satisfaction (Kim & Holland, 2013). Previous research findings indicate that greater customer satisfaction is produced by a favorable destination image (Assaker, Vinzi, & O'Connor, 2011; Mohamad, Ali, & Ab Ghani, 2011). Wang and Hsu (2010) find that the overall image influences behavioral intentions indirectly by satisfaction. Thus, this study hypothesized the following:

H2: Hospital reputation has a positive effect on patient satisfaction in Jordanian public hospitals.

Patients' Satisfaction and Patient Loyalty

Most studies confirm that satisfied customers have a greater possibility to buy back and communicate positively toward the organization (Nezakati, Kuan, & Asgari, 2011; Abu-ELSamen et al., 2011). Estalami et al. (2007) noted that customer loyalty improves in part through satisfaction as one of the most influencing factors. Highly satisfied customers tend to be loyal supporters of the company and spread positive news about how they satisfied with the company (Mohsan et al., 2011; Ganiyu, 2017; Lovelock & Wirtz, 2015). Previous studies have shown that satisfaction has a positive and important impact on customer loyalty (Dagger & O'Brien, 2010; Chang et al. 2013; Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010; Kassim & Abdullah, 2010). Thus, this study hypothesized the following:

H3: Patient satisfaction has a positive effect on patient loyalty in Jordanian public hospitals.

Mediating Role of Patient Satisfaction between Hospital reputation and Patient loyalty

Some researchers reported reputation as an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Jani & Han, 2014; Prayag & Ryan, 2012), In turn, satisfaction has a positive effect on loyalty. Moreover, some other authors evidenced the influence of customer satisfaction and image on loyalty that differs with the nature of customer experience in that experienced customers are loyal customers owing to the image of the service, whereas new loyal customers are encouraged by their satisfaction level (Abd-El-Salam, Shawky, & El-Nahas, 2013). Moreover, Wu, (2011), Tu, Wang, and Chang (2012) and Veloso et al. (2018) outcome of the study that reputation has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, this study hypothesized the following:

H4: Patient satisfaction mediates the relationship between Hospital reputation and patient loyalty in Jordanian public hospitals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted a quantitative research design method by using questionnaires as data collection tools adopted from previous studies, which were distributed to individuals by applying the convenience sampling method. The population of this study is the Jordanian patients who has visited a public hospital in Jordan. The patients who are sampled in this study are adult patients who can provide information or can communicate well so that they can fill out questionnaires, whereas if patients cannot provide information about this study, they can be replaced by family. The sample size was determined in line with the power of analysis, such as the minimum number of samples based on the model's complexity. Following Green's (1991) table and using two predictors from the research framework at medium effect size as suggested by Gefen et al. (2011), the minimum sample size for this study was set as 74 patients. On the other hand, the greater the sample, the higher the rate of confidence, the smaller the variance of error, the greater the representation of results, the more homogeneous the sample will be (Klassen et al., 2012). Thus, the data were gathered from 400 patients and the analysis method starts from looking at data characteristics through descriptive statistics and further analysis of multivariate data analysis includes factor analysis and Partial Least Square (PLS). In Table 1, the study variables, item numbers and sources of adapted scales are shown.

Table 1. Scales Used in Research

Variable	No of items	Reference
Patient loyalty	7	Oliver (1999)
Hospital reputation	5	Lien et al., (2015)

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Data Analysis and Results

The current study used Smart PLS version 3.3.2 to analyze the data. Figure 2 shows the results of measurement model assessment including path coefficients, factor loading, and coefficient of determination. All items achieved loading more than 0.70. Therefore, all items have been retained (Hair et al., 2016).

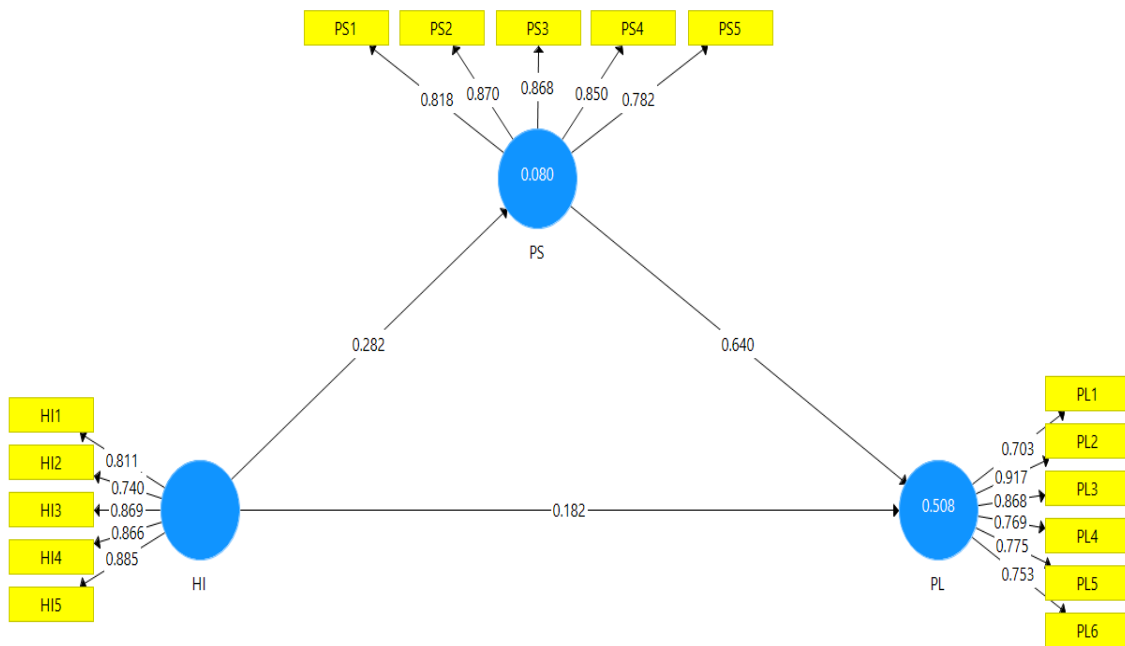


Figure 2: Results of PLS algorithm

To ensure convergent validity, the test of composite reliability, Cronbach’s alpha, and average variance extracted have been performed. Table 2 shows the results of convergent validity test, where that Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability obtained values more than the suggested threshold values from 0.70 and above all for all constructs (Hair et al., 2016). Regarding average variance extracted, all constructs achieved values greater than the suggested threshold value of 0.50 by Hair et al. (2016).

Table 2. Convergent validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Hospital Reputation	0.891	0.920	0.699
Patient Satisfaction	0.894	0.922	0.702
Patient Loyalty	0.887	0.914	0.641

To ensure discriminant validity, the test of Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was performed. Table 3 shows the HTMT values were all smaller than 0.85 for each construct and were within the range of 0.305 to 0.753 (Hair et al., 2016).

Table 3. Discriminant validity by HTMT

Construct	Hospital Reputation	Patient Satisfaction	Patient Loyalty
Hospital Reputation			
Patient Satisfaction	0.305		
Patient Loyalty	0.388	0.753	

Testing of the proposed hypothesis is done using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the help of PLS software version 3.3.2. Hypothesis test decision making is to look at the results of t-value, where if the value is positive it means that the variable has a positive effect, while to see its significance is to refer to the t-

statistic value between variables, if the t value obtained is greater than t-table amounting to 1.96, meaning that the effect is significant (Hair, et al. 2016). Regarding the hypotheses testing as shown in Table 4, hospital reputation was reported as having a positive direct effect on patient loyalty (Path Coefficient = 0.182; T-Value = 2.148; P-Value = 0.032; 2.5% LL= 0.025; 97.5% UL= 0.358), thus, hypothesis 1 was supported. Moreover, hospital reputation was also reported as having a positive direct effect on patient satisfaction (Path Coefficient = 0.282; T-Value = 3.654; P-Value = 0.000; 2.5% LL= 0.111; 97.5% UL= 0.416), thus, hypothesis 2 was supported. Patient satisfaction was reported as having a positive direct effect on patient loyalty (Path Coefficient = 0.640; T-Value = 7.963; P-Value = 0.000; 2.5% LL= 0.459; 97.5% UL= 0.779), thus, hypothesis 3 was also supported.

Table 4. Hypotheses testing

No.	Hypotheses	Path Coefficient	T-Value	P-Value	Confidence Interval		Decision
					2.5% LL	97.5% UL	
H1	HR→PL	0.182	2.148	0.032	0.025	0.358	Supported
H2	HR→PS	0.282	3.654	0.000	0.111	0.416	Supported
H3	PS→PL	0.640	7.963	0.000	0.459	0.779	Supported

It can be seen from the data in Table 5 that patient satisfaction was reported as having a mediating effect on the relationship between hospital reputation and patient loyalty (Indirect Effect = 0.180; T-Value = 3.108; P-Value = 0.002; 2.5% LL= 0.066; 97.5% UL= 0.290); thus, hypothesis 4 was supported.

Table 5: Testing the mediating effect of patient satisfaction

No.	Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	T-value	P-value	Confidence Interval		Decision
					2.5% LL	97.5% UL	
H4	HI→PS→PL	0.180	3.108	0.002	0.066	0.290	Supported

DISCUSSION

Only by providing satisfactory medical services to patients, earning good reputation in a competitive market of medical service institutions, and obtaining large numbers of loyal patients can public hospitals embark on a healthy path of long-term development. The current study investigates whether HR and PS influence PL, which aids in the development of loyalty in Jordanian public hospitals. This examination gave proof of the positive effect of HR on PL, PS (H1, H3), and the positive impact of PS on PL (H2), and The final hypotheses showed that PS mediates the relationship between HR and PL (H4).

The stronger and deeper the relationship between PL and the hospital grows as the number of PL in the hospital grows. Hospitals that have a good reputation develop strong and deep relationships with their patients, which is reflected in their understanding, affection, and behavioral reliance on them. The possible explanation is that public hospitals have established a good reputation among patients and have made them feel at ease when visiting physicians because they control the increasing number of refugees and Jordanian patients, have good medical technology, excellent medical talent, and sophisticated equipment. Establishing a good reputation and medical staff, including doctors, is critical for public hospitals. To gain patients' trust, doctors must be honest and provide the best service possible. So that patients can form an impression of the hospital, public hospitals should provide services as advertised on television, magazines, and the Internet.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

Based on the results of the research that has been done on the effect of hospital reputation and patient satisfaction on loyalty implications for patients in a public hospital in Jordan which showed that the hospital reputation and patient satisfaction affect the patient's loyalty and Patient satisfaction mediates the relationship between Hospital reputation and patient loyalty. It is important to satisfy the patients, a great service will not improve their loyalty if it can't satisfy the patient. Moreover, improving the hospital's reputation is as important as improving the service quality. It should be in align the reputation of the public and the service provided to the public.

Some of the limitations that faced the research, which is the difficulty of distributing questionnaires in hospitals and communicating with patients face to face due to covid-19 the epidemic spreading in Jordan and around the world. Future studies could confirm if other variables could be used to control the relationship between reputation and patient loyalty. As this study used a quantitative methodology, future studies could instead use the mixed methods approach for potentially superior insights.

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