

CONSUMER MARKET RESEARCH FOR HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS

#¹Mr. G.NARENDRA BABU, *Assistant Professor*,

#²Mr. V.RAMBABU, *Assistant Professor*,

Department of Master of Business Administration,

SAI SPURTHI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SATHUPALLI, KHAMMAM, TELANGANA.

ABSTRACT: The healthcare industry in India is predicted to have double-digit annual growth over the next decade. The current rate at which hospitals are being built in India is unprecedented. Putting these facilities into effect is fraught with complications. The arduous chore of marketing oneself is faced by any hospital, big or small. Healthcare marketers are shifting their focus from providers to patients as the sector gets more cutthroat. The study set out to answer the question, "What factors affect patients' decisions about which hospitals to choose" Interviews with Telangana top marketing minds provide more light on the sector's current state.

Keywords: *Healthcare scenario, Decision making, Healthcare services marketing.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian healthcare sector is quickly becoming one of the most significant and lucrative service businesses in the country, both in terms of income and employment, and the industry is also growing at a rapid rate. This is due to the fact that the sector is increasing at a rapid rate. This is because the healthcare industry in India is seeing significant growth at the present time. The sector witnessed growth of 9.3 percent between the years 2000 and 2009, which is comparable to the growth rate seen in other sectors of the economies of developing nations like China, Brazil, and Mexico during the same time period. This growth rate was consistent with the growth rate that was observed in other parts of the global economy. According to a recent press release distributed by the Confederation of Indian Business (CII), the Indian healthcare industry has the potential to amass a value of more than 275 billion United States dollars by the year 2020. This estimation is based on the assumption that the business will continue to increase at the same rate at which it is increasing at the current time. The rapid rate of expansion of the industry is being driven almost entirely by factors that are localized within the borders of the nation. The following is a list of some of these reasons: The expansion of India's middle class can be attributed, in part, to the growing population of the country as a whole as well as to the growing number of people living in

India who are classified as members of the affordable middle class.

This shift in disease pattern, from communicable diseases to the high frequency of non-communicable and lifestyle-related diseases, which has created a demand for expert treatment in India, has resulted in the population of the country wanting more specialist care. This demand is due to the fact that lifestyle-related and non-communicable diseases account for the majority of disease cases in India. This demand has been brought about as a direct result of the rising prevalence of lifestyle-related illnesses as well as non-communicable diseases.

As a direct result of the significant expansion in the cost of treating lifestyle-related diseases, which has caused the cost of treating inpatients to grow, hospitals have experienced an increase in the amount of money they generate from treating inpatients. This has led to an increase in the amount of money hospitals generate from treating inpatients. A growing disparity between the amount of demand and the amount of supply as a direct result of a rise in the number of people who have health insurance. The fact that the country's population is getting older at a faster pace is another factor that contributes to the urgency with which new and improved services are required. As the globe evolves toward a more health-conscious culture, other terminology that have been used interchangeably with "healthcare," such as

"wellness programs," "fitness programs," "health management," and "preventive medicine," are also becoming increasingly common.

2. HEALTHCARE SERVICES MARKETING

The marketing and advertising of the many services that are given in the healthcare business are now extremely important to the smooth operation of the industry as a whole. As a direct result of the greater competition that has arisen as a direct result of this business, the healthcare industry is currently undergoing a shift away from the dominance of service providers toward the choice of service seekers. This is taking place because of the higher competition that has formed as a direct result of this business. This shift is occurring in reaction to the fact that the sector is currently witnessing greater levels of competition, which is the primary driver of these changes. The marketing of healthcare services is consisted of a number of significant components, which are categorized and described in the following list in the order in which they are presented:

Knowledge management

Every consumer in this day and age has come to expect that their desires and preferences will be replied to in a manner that is tailored to suit their requirements and preferences. This is because every consumer has come to anticipate that their wants and preferences will be catered to meet their requirements and preferences. This is due to the fact that in today's day and age, each and every consumer has grown to anticipate that organizations would cater to their individual requirements and inclinations. Organizations have also ramped up their attempts to provide personalized solutions by tailoring the products and services they provide to the specific preferences of individual customers rather than making generalizations about the interests that are being pursued by that particular individuals. This shift away from generalizations has allowed organizations to provide more personalized solutions to customers. Because of this move away from generalizations, these businesses are now able to give more individualized solutions.

Because of this, all businesses are now collecting vast amounts of data relevant to their clients by making use of a wide variety of information systems and advancing their technological expertise. This is due to the fact that they are aware that the information that is stored in these enormous databases is crucial for building a competitive advantage and providing support for a variety of decisions that need to be made inside the firm. The reason for this is because they are aware that the information that is stored in these large databases is vital for establishing a competitive advantage. There is a significant need for a system that is not only plainly outlined and uncomplicated, but also integrated, in order to extract the information of the consumers from these enormous databases and then to apply this knowledge for the purpose of making various important decisions, the most important of which are decisions regarding marketing. In order to do this, there is a significant need for an integrated system. This is due to the fact that there is a significant desire for a system that is not only plainly articulated and uncomplicated, but also incorporated.

Customer relationship management (CRM)

CRM is an acronym that stands for "customer relationship management." The full definition of CRM is "customer relationship management," which means "customer relationship management." CRM is an acronym that stands for "customer relationship management," and it refers to a tool that is extremely important for keeping customers and ensuring that favorable word-of-mouth publicity is maintained over an extended period of time. Additionally, customer relationship management (CRM) guarantees that there is a steady flow of information between the company and the customer. In its most basic form, a customer relationship management system would be made up of a variety of different approaches to guarantee that a continuous connection is kept with clients. These methods would be implemented to guarantee that customers are kept up to date with relevant information.

Brand image building

Due to factors such as the corporatization of

healthcare, India's advertising as a sought after medical tourism destination, and the mushrooming of new hospitals, it is becoming increasingly difficult for hospitals to rely on basic "word-of-mouth" promotion to attract patients in this day and age. Because of these considerations, it is becoming increasingly challenging for hospitals to acquire new patients. As a result of these various factors, it is becoming an increasingly difficult task for hospitals to recruit new patients. As part of their continuous efforts, the management of each hospital is investing more time and attention to increasing the hospitals' exposure and building a distinctive brand identity for each of the hospitals. This is part of the effort that is being made. Hospitals are unable to engage in aggressive marketing. Because of this, the reputation of a hospital will primarily be established through the positive word-of-mouth of patients who have previously had care at that facility, positive patient testimonies, buzz marketing, presence in the media, and other patients who have received treatment at the hospital. Moreover, the reputation of a hospital will also be developed through other patients who have received treatment at the hospital.

Internal marketing: key element of marketing

Prior to initiating any kind of external marketing, hospitals have the option of establishing that they are "market worthy" by engaging in activities that are classified as "internal marketing." This can be done before the hospitals begin any other kind of marketing. The concept that is going to be advertised, just like with any other kind of marketing, needs to have some value in the minds of the potential customers who are going to be exposed to it. In an effort to boost overall revenue, this measure is going to be taken. As a direct result of this, the very first item that needs to be completed is the formulation of what is known as a "value proposition." If the individual who will be making the purchase does not consider there to be any value in it for them, then they will not go through with the transaction. As a consequence of this, it is of the utmost importance that the healthcare facility give some thought to the question, "Why would our people work harder for accreditation?" What advantages does it give them

as a result of the fact that it exists? If the administration of the hospital had been capable of coming up with a solution to this problem that was not only all-encompassing but also advantageous, then they would have been able to get their hands on the idea.

3. MARKETING STRATEGIES OF HOSPITALS

In the not too distant future, a growing number of corporate healthcare institutions will adopt a combative strategy toward the market in order to ensure their continued existence in the face of intense competition. Despite the fact that some experts are of the opinion that aggressive marketing is necessary to maintain today's competitive climate, others are of the opinion that aggressive marketing is not required in the field of healthcare because it would not result in an increase in the number of patients. Others are of the opinion that aggressive marketing is not required in the field of healthcare because it would not result in an increase in the number of patients. Patients choose which hospital to go to depending on a number of different factors, such as the facilities that are provided by the hospital, the degree of medical expertise that is provided by the doctors and workers, and the distance that the hospital is from the patient's house. As a consequence of this, every healthcare firm that is effectively managed ought to establish a methodical approach to marketing, complete with various strategies and an action plan. If the existing institutions go through a process of modernization that includes the improvement of standard service delivery, the development of cutting-edge infrastructure and facilities, and the incorporation of research-based innovative techniques into performance, then they will be able to weather the onslaught of emerging fashions. In this multi-billion dollar business, the unbreakable adage that every satisfied client generates thousands of new consumers continues to hold true. This mantra states that every satisfied customer brings in new customers.

The 'customer bonding' paradigm that Tom Duncan and Sandra Moriarty describe can be helpful in understanding the relationship that a

hospital has with both its current patients and those who are considering becoming patients there. This can be true for both the existing patients of the hospital as well as those who are considering becoming patients there. Each of these five levels is represented by the following:

Awareness: -

When the name of the hospital is included on the list of alternatives from which the customer may select one to meet their needs.

Identity:-

Where the customers feel an identification with the brand and are pleased to display it in their places of business and homes.

Connected: -

Where talks about subsequent purchases take place between customers and the company in between purchases.

Community: -

where the users are able to speak with one another and recognize each other as being members of the same community of users.

Advocacy: -

where current customers recruit new members by spreading the word about the establishment in order to grow the community and give them a warm welcome. They stress how essential it is to get a more in-depth comprehension of the customer base by recording data on the interactions and transactions that take place between the parties involved. In point of fact, the expense of obtaining a new client is five times more than the cost of keeping an old client as a customer. Patient relationship management, commonly referred to as P.R.M., and patient experience management, also referred to as P.E.M., are two issues that need to be dealt with in a serious manner. They also offer the advice that customers should be reminded of the benefits that they are obtaining as a consequence of the relationship that they have with the firm on a frequent basis. This advice is provided by them. This will assist not just in the process of acquiring new customers, but also in the process of retaining the customers that we now have. Both processes will benefit from this.

Many specialists in the business believe that

hospitals should create their own marketing departments because of the growing awareness of the necessity of hospital marketing. Patients are able to make advantage of the fully-functioning marketing departments that are available in virtually all private hospitals in today's modern world. People have a tendency to refer to the marketing department as the "voice" of the hospital. This is due to the fact that the marketing department is the place within the hospital where the brand is built and communicated, both within the organization and to the community as a whole. The ability of the marketing department of a modern healthcare organization to promote communication between the many internal departments of the organization, organizational management, external agencies, and the medical management community is the marketing department's greatest advantage. Colonel B. S. Khimani, who is the Director of Administration and Operations at Jaslok Hospital, is of the opinion that the marketing department at the hospital assists in developing liaisons with the medical authorities of foreign consulates in order to attract patients from other nations. This is done in order to bring in patients from those other countries. The following is a list of some more strategies for marketing hospitals that have emerged over the course of the past few years: -

Mergers and Acquisitions

Permits healthcare organizations to immediately boost their brand recognition and to aggressively grow into new geographic areas. Companies in the healthcare industry can now take advantage of this opportunity. As a consequence of mergers and acquisitions, large hospitals that are owned and operated by companies have established new standards for the delivery of healthcare services. The merging of more modest medical facilities, such as nursing homes and hospitals, into larger healthcare conglomerates has been linked to an improvement in the quality of healthcare services provided.

International Accreditation:

As a result of the rising number of people in the United States who are deciding to seek medical treatment in countries other than the United States, a lot of people in the United States are

expressing their concerns about the level of medical care that can be obtained in other countries as well as the ways in which medical tourists can ensure that the provider(s) they've chosen overseas are trustworthy. There are a number of organizations in the United States that provide accreditation, but the one that is the most well-known and has been around the longest is the Joint Commission. Joint Commission International (JCI) provides accreditation services to medical professionals located all over the world. These professionals can be found in every country in the world. One of the most stringent procedures for the accreditation of hospitals, the review is carried out based on a total of 1033 measurable criteria, making it one of the most comprehensive. Hospitals have the chance to work toward gaining the Joint Commission worldwide (JCI) seal, which will assist them in acquiring worldwide accreditation and, as a result, patients from other countries. This can be accomplished by working toward earning the seal through a variety of means.

A significant contributor to the growth of medical tourism will be the construction within hospitals of fully operational sections dedicated to the care of international patients. Airport transfers, language translators, patient rooms dedicated exclusively for international patients, a choice of cuisine that must be approved by a physician, and cooperation opportunities with key companies in the hospitality industry are all options that can be made accessible. Recuperative vacations are another option that can be organized. connections on a strategic level with the travel and figurer operators of international insurance companies, medical tourism groups, and corporate entities like as International SOS and Blue Cross Blue Shield. The creation of events, which may include both in-house and community-based outreach initiatives, is a big help to the marketing of healthcare facilities. Continuing medical education (CME), awareness seminars for the general public, free check-up camps, planning activities on health days, holding interviews of professionals on visual media, printing and making numerous emergency or appointment numbers publicly available are some of the most

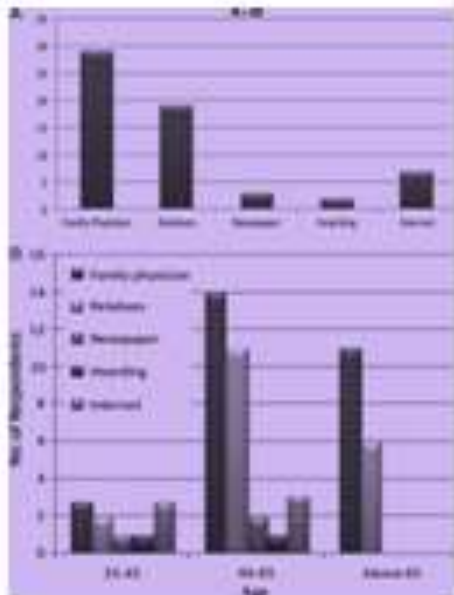
common types of marketing strategies. Free check-up camps, planning activities on health days, planning activities on health days, and planning activities on health days are also common types of marketing strategies.

In order to adapt to the new era of e-Health, traditional marketing strategies will need to be revised, regardless of whether they are implemented inside or outside of the healthcare industry. In order for hospitals to raise people's knowledge of the services they offer, it is essential for them to capitalize on the growth of the internet and generate new forms of media. It is quite beneficial to make use of e-detailing tools such as video conferencing, email, and other similar technology in order to facilitate communication in both directions. Patients who are being cared for at outstations may also use the hospital website to obtain information and communicate with hospital staff members.

4. PATIENTS' DECISION MAKING REGARDING CHOICE OF A HOSPITAL

Data analysis and key findings:

Tabulation and analysis of the data that was obtained were carried out with the assistance of Microsoft Excel and SPSS, which is a software program. The findings were broken down into three categories: patients who were treated in the in-patient department (IPD), patients who were treated in the out-patient department (OPD), and patients who were visiting the out-patient department for health checkups.



(A) According to responses from people of all ages in Figure 1, the most prevalent source of information regarding hospitals is word of mouth. (B) The source of the information regarding the age restrictions that a hospital imposes on patients.

IPD patients:

The 'family physician' is the most valuable source of information regarding a hospital, with 'relatives' coming in a close second (see Figure 1A). It was found that the "Internet" is the primary source of information that the younger generation use (see to Figure 1B for more details on this). According to the research, the factor that has the biggest impact is 'multispecialty,' followed by 'recommendation of doctor,' and then 'word-of-mouth' (please refer to Figure 2 for additional clarification). It was discovered that "Location" was the criterion that had the least influence on the selection of a hospital (see Figure 2 for further explanation).

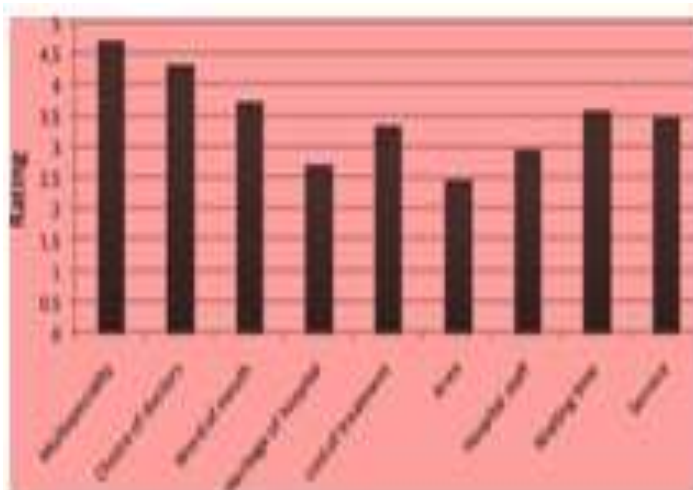


Figure 2: shows the several criteria that need to be taken into account while selecting a hospital.

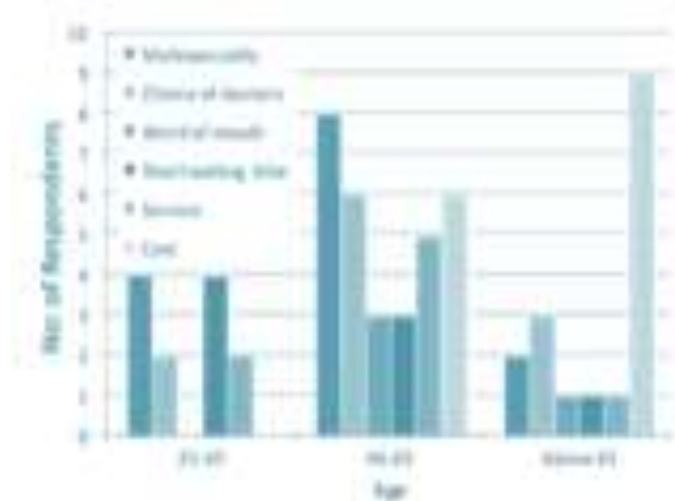


Figure 3: The many factors that should be taken into account when choosing a hospital for treatment in the outpatient department (OPD) are outlined

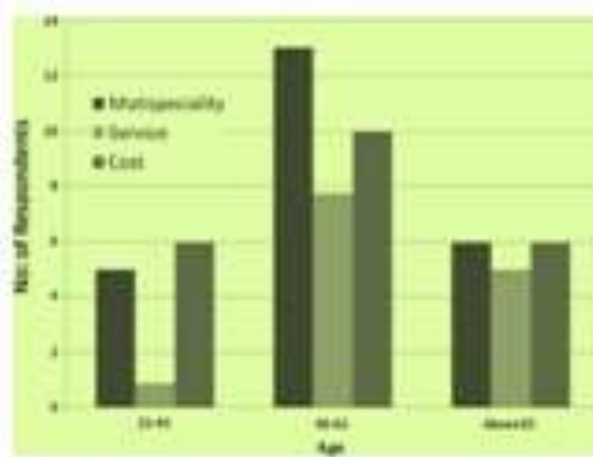


Figure 4: The decision of which hospital to visit for a checkup is influenced by a variety of factors, which are depicted

OPD patients:

When it comes to patients who are in their younger years, the most important factors to take into account are the phrases "multispecialty hospital" and "waiting time" (see Figure 3). According to the data presented in Figure 3, the variable denoted by the phrase "multispecialty hospital" is the one that has the largest influence on patients who are between the ages of 46 and 65. When considering those older than 65 years old, the factor that has the greatest impact is "Cost" (see Figure 3 for further explanation).

Health check-up patients:

Patients who are currently getting wellness examinations: For further clarification, please see

Figure 4. The factor known as "cost" is the one that has the most influence on younger age groups. Having access to a "multispecialty hospital" is the single most critical feature for age groups older than 46 years old (see Figure 4 for further information).

Implications

Because the recommendation of a 'family physician' is a crucial factor that patients take into consideration when making decisions, it is essential for hospitals to advertise themselves to general practitioners in order to establish referral networks. This is because marketing to general practitioners is also known as developing a referral network. Patients have a preference for hospitals that offer a wide range of medical specializations; hence, a multispecialty hospital is just what the sector requires at this time. Because one's financial situation is the single most significant factor to take into account when it comes to scheduling routine exams for their health, the cost of a healthcare checkup package ought to be kept at a level that is acceptable. E-marketing is crucial due to the fact that the internet is the primary information resource for the younger generation that is currently in existence. It was concluded that 'Quick Service' was essential for OPD patients, and as a consequence, efforts should be made to maintain waiting time at a level that is as low as is physically practicable.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the consumer market research for healthcare items has provided illuminating new knowledge that possesses the potential to impact the route that the industry will take in the future. As a consequence of completing a thorough examination of the preferences, behaviors, and requirements of consumers, we have gotten a more in-depth understanding of the elements that influence purchase decisions in this competitive market. This has enabled us to better meet the needs of our customers. The findings of this study shed light on the increasing significance of health consciousness among consumers, with a clear emphasis placed on preventative and holistic approaches to healthcare. Consumers are

becoming more interested in acquiring products that improve their overall well-being, provide solutions to specific health challenges, and make their day-to-day lives easier in some way. The outcomes of the study also highlighted the growing significance of digital channels in terms of their capacity to impact the decisions that consumers make. The usage of online platforms, social media, and peer reviews have all matured into powerful tools that may be used to mold the impressions that customers have of brands and impact the decisions that they make to purchase those items. In this harsh market, gaining a customer's trust in one's product and being transparent about one's manufacturing method have emerged as two of the most crucial components in the battle for their business. The legitimacy of the product, the ethical source of the materials, and the honest communication of the health advantages and potential detrimental implications are all very important to the consumers. Because consumers are looking for personalised solutions that cater to their own needs and preferences, personalization and customization have emerged as key trends. This is due to the fact that consumers are looking for individualized solutions. Products that provide customers with the ability to personalize their experiences, like personalised meal plans or tools for health monitoring, are likely to have an advantage over those offered by their rivals.

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