Evidence-Based Design and Transformative Service Research Application for Achieving Sustainable Healthcare Services: A Developing Country Perspective

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Abstract

Patients look carefully for detailed information pertaining to their expectations before selecting a healthcare service provider. In order to meet these expectations and achieve patient wellbeing, healthcare service providers should understand more the importance of sustainable hospital servicescape designs for their patients jointly with the common focus on functionality in the medical procedures. The importance of the servicescape in creating a healing environment for patients has been shown through Evidence-Based Design research. The rising importance of consumer wellbeing and sustainability is shown in Transformative Service Research. The aim of this study is to bridge the gap between the two research fields to develop guidelines for future hospital servicescapes in developing countries. The application of this study is on Egypt because of the deterioration of its healthcare service provision. Results indicate that patients find plants and greenery, safety, and single rooms as the most important aspects to improve their wellbeing state. These results indicate that patients want to receive their basic treatment in a healing environment without mistakes. The achieved results act as guidelines for improving servicescapes of hospitals in Egypt and other developing countries. This contributes to hospital managers by offering a more sustainable competitive advantage. Contributions for future research are related to testing the effect of the servicescape on patient wellbeing by combining all servicescape aspects in one model.

Keywords: Evidence-Based Design; Transformative Service Research; Hospital Servicescape; Consumer Wellbeing; Sustainability

1. Introduction

The healthcare service sector is one of the largest and most important services globally. There is a continuous demand by customers for better healthcare service provision in hospitals. Patients have growing expectations (Charmel and Frampton, 2008; Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2005). Their expectations are increasing because patients have many sources of information. Therefore, patients seek detailed information before selecting their healthcare service provider (Malhotra et al., 1994). The resulting rise in expectations leads to an increase in competition between hospitals to meet these needs (Hutton and Richardson, 1995). Patients compare between their expectations and the service provided to evaluate a hospital (O’Neill and Palmer, 2001). Services are known to be difficult to evaluate. Healthcare services are harder to evaluate due to their technicality (Hutton and Richardson, 1995; Severt et al., 2008). Although patients find it difficult to evaluate the medical details in their treatment, they still evaluate the service (Baalbaki et al., 2008; Li et al., 2011). Patients use tangible items (such as the appearance of staff members, the signage system, the tools, and equipment used) to evaluate the intangible service itself (Lovelock and Wright, 2002; Magrath, 1986; Zeithaml et al., 2006). A key question is whether this evaluation poses challenges to professionals that are aiming to achieve sustainable healthcare systems. A sustainable healthcare system is one that assures improved patients recovery rate, improved patient wellbeing, and offers a healing environment for treatment (Dellinger, 2010; Wittmann, 2010). A hospital gains a competitive advantage on the long-run by offering a sustainable healthcare service. A good reputation, higher profits, lower costs,
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