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Influence of Marketing Tool on Promotion of Services in a Multi-Specialty Hospital

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Abstract: Background & Objectives: Promoting hospital services helps in lowering the cost of acquiring information, as it helps in informing the consumer about the services which they are now aware of, and also it may also help them in making appropriate choices of treatment.

With an aim of promoting the super speciality services of the hospital, the objective of analysing the maximum utilized type of advertising tool by the organisation was framed in the present study.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried in the super speciality hospital in a smart city for the period of six months (December 2018 to May 2019).

A predetermined questionnaire was administered to collect the information regarding demographic profile and the study variable. Descriptive statistics is conducted.

Results: Majority of the respondents (62.8%) were actively involved in face book, 16.4% in Instagram, 11.8% in you tube, 4.4% in twitter, 3.6% in LinkedIn, 0.6% in E-Commerce, 0.2% in E-Mail, 0.2% in browsing. The result highlights the level of influence of type of social media on the customers.

Conclusion: The present study aimed at studying the role influence of social media as a marketing tool. This information is important for the health care organisation to plan strategies to increase the awareness of the people regarding the services that are provided in the hospital. The result showed that out of the total 500 respondents, 86.4% used social media for many purposes. Among these respondents 35.8% of them used Mass media, like newspaper, newsletter, advertisements on television, radio etc. This information can guide the hospital administrators to concentrate more on the specific social media used by the customers to give more information on hospital services.

Keywords: Marketing, Medical services, Social media, Super specialty hospital

I. INTRODUCTION

Innovations and changes in the health care needs has been always an integral part of the hospital industry from long past years. Managerial parameters for future survival of these health care centres, paved a new way since an era now by altering the regulations, financing strategies and marketing structuring. With these efforts the hospitals looked into new strategies for the competitive approaches for the survival.

Due to the expansion of awareness among the customers, the demand for quality health care is increased. The skills of the provider is been questioned and the demand is measured in terms of money they pay for the service they receive in the health care units and also in the tangible terms like the quality of treatment, the dignity of care, safety, availability of the services and the convenience of the patient. Hence it is especially important for the health care unit to communicate these acts of performance in an appropriate and effective way. The channel which provides the information about the range of services should reach the people easily and conveniently. Hence, the hospital should choose the suitable media through which the customer seeking for the service can get the accurate information easily. This will help the customers to make right choice of treatment. Now the question is, which will be the appropriate media to reach the people easily which is socially acceptable without any restrictions and also be free from draw back

that affect the customers and the hospital. This being the research question, the investigators reviewed various articles to find the relevance of the research problem.

So research articles were reviewed to understand the influence of social media in promoting the health care services in the health sector. Wyanda Hooijsma et.al[1] reviewed around 1.743 articles and found that social media improved self-management and control, enhanced psychological well-being, enhanced subjective well-being, leading to more equal communication between the patient and health care professionals, and harmonious relationship. analysing this literature, the present author felt that social media proves to increase the awareness of the person, because there is scope for analysing and comparing the huge information he gets. This may lead to some extent of knowledge, where he could acquire before he approaches the service. This also helps during the communication with health professional indirectly following the patient rights.

However, some authors reported that due to excess connecting with the social media, there was loss of privacy and addiction to social media, switching of the doctors[2]. Another study conducted by Anita Gupta et.al[3] (2013), observed that social media are low-cost marketing which facilitates the building of networks, instant dissemination of information and it also encourage trust and confidence of the public. In their study they mentioned about the six different types of social media like collaborative projects like Wikipedia, blogs and microblogs like Twitter, content communities like You tube and Flicker, social networking sites like face book and myspace, virtual game worlds like world of Warcraft, whyville and virtual social worlds like second life etc. When the question arises about how many people were getting information from the social media, the author cited that social media provides a large market for health promotion with 30 million social media users (Nielson Company May 2011) in India with average spending of three hours per month, 41 per cent of users read blogs, 60 hours of video are uploaded every minute or one hour of video is uploaded to YouTube every second, over 4 billion videos are viewed a day whereas over 800 million unique users visit YouTube each month. Also, over 3 billion hours of video are watched each month on YouTube, over 800 million users are on Facebook and at a recent press conference Dick Costolo the CEO of Twitter revealed there are 100 million active users monthly, 50 Million users a day ,200 million registered users and Twitter receives 400 million visitors a month. Hence, we understand that these statistics show the importance of the social media in promotion of the services provided by the organisations.

Another study conducted by C. Lee Ventola[4] reveals that social media could be used for organisational promotion. This includes strategies like communicating with the community and patients, enhancing organisational visibility, marketing products and services, establishing a venue for acquiring news about activities, promotions, fund-raising and providing a channel for patient resources and education; and providing customer service and support.

Another study by Peck JL[5] also cited that 57% of the consumers reported that a hospital's social media presence would strongly influence their choice of going for their services. It was also reported in the study that the social media will be an indication of the cutting-edge technology that the hospital offers.

However, Fatimah Alshakhs[6] et.al (2018),in their study reported that there are ethical of legal challenges, the risk to patients health status, of the breaching of privacy of the patient. This study highlights the importance of framing the type of information that should be provided in the social media.

Therefore, the scope of the present study helps to analyse the depth of marketing strategy in promoting the super speciality services provided by the Hospital.

With the guidelines provided by the previous research that are conducted, the objectives for the present research was framed. Hence, keeping the social media as a marketing tool to increase the customers to the hospital, the present study is undertaken. The social media will be improvised with appropriate information to the customers regarding the quality services that are provided by the hospital. The objectives of the present study are to analyse the type of advertising tool of the hospital in the social media and its level of utilisation by the customers.

The implication of the present study is to develop new and effective marketing tool to promote the health care service to the customers.

II. MATERIALS & METHODS

A. Conceptual Framework

1) *Title of the Present Study:* Influence of marketing tool on promotion of services in a multi-specialty hospital.

B. Objectives of the study

- 1) To compile all the methods used to advertising the services through various media by the hospital
- 2) To analyses the maximum utilized type of advertising tool by the respondents and to understand its role.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried in the super speciality hospital in a smart city for the period of six months (December 2018 to May 2019) All the patients or patient attendants who visited during the study period were randomly selected for the study. Non probability, convenience sampling was employed, among those who visited the hospital during the study period. Customers who visited the hospital and were willing for the study were included as the respondents. Participation was entirely voluntary and ethical consideration was done. Termination of participation was permitted with no hindrance to the agreed treatment. Confidentiality and privacy were protected adhering to the ICMR ethical regulations (2017). A predetermined questionnaire was consisted of two main sections. Section 1 comprised of demographic data. The responses is used to understand the background profile of the respondents to compare the access of media for gathering the information

The section 2 of the questionnaire comprised assessment of the type of channel they used to approach the hospital.

Statistical analysis: _data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics.

III. RESULTS

A. Demographic Data

The socio-demographic data of the respondents was taken to understand the influence of the social media in these variables. Among the total 500 respondents, 56% (N=280) were male respondents and 44% (N=220) were female respondents. Although the total respondents ranged in the age group of 20 years to 60 years, most of them were in the age group of 20-30 years which comprised of 46.4% (N= 232), following with the age group of 31-40 years (20.4%, N=102) and 19.2% (N=96) were from the age group of 41-50 years. Only 14% (N=70) of the respondents were from 51-60 years.

Majority 78% (N=390) of the respondents had degree level of education and 22% (N=22%) of the studied postgraduation level of education.

The core result of the present study showed that majority of the total 500 respondents used various media for many purposes (86.4%, N=432). The present study aimed at studying the role influence of medias as a marketing on promoting the increase of customers for the hospital services. Among these respondents 35.8% (N=179) of them used Mass media, like newspaper, newsletter, advertisements on television, radio etc. as an influence in using the services of the present hospital services. The social media like face book, twitter and you tube was frequently used by the 4.2% (N=21) respondents, among whom 1.8% (N=9) were influenced by you tube, 1.4% (N=7) by face book, and 1% (N=5) by the twitter.

However, the study results reported that majority of the respondents visited the hospital from the referral services (55.4%).

It was also reported that 4.6% (N=23) of the respondents came to know about the services through the webpage of the study hospital.

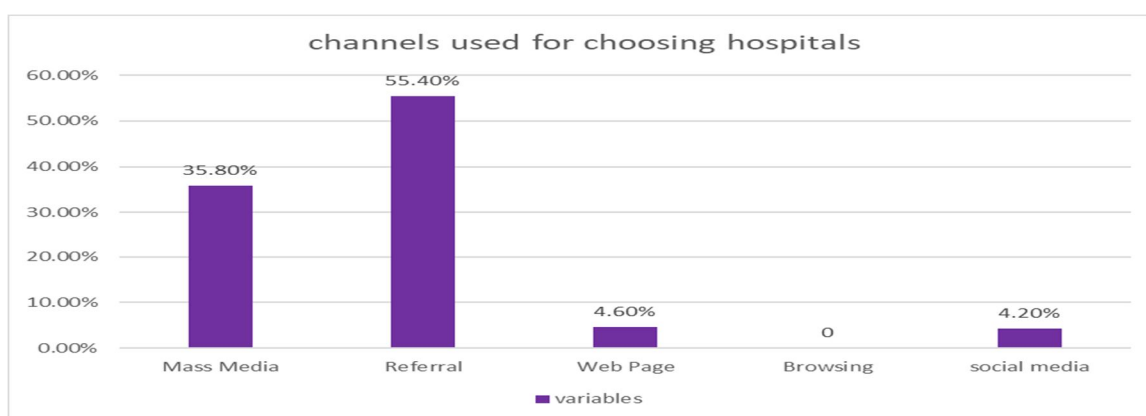


Fig: 1 Channels Used For Choosing Hospitals

The present study also studied the opinion of the respondents about the advertisement of hospital in the media to analyse the influence of the tool on availing the hospital services.

When comparing both the opinions, it was found that 44.6% (N=223) of them agreed that this tool is important in influencing the customers to hospital services whereas 45.4% (N= 277) of the respondents disagreed about the influence of the advertisement on the promotion of hospital services.

The study further analysed the influence of the social media and tried to find the level of participation in each of the medias. Here majority of the respondents (62.8%) were actively involved in face book, 16.4% in Instagram, 11.8% in you tube, 4.4% in twitter, 3.6% in LinkedIn, 0.6% in E-Commerce, 0.2% in E-Mail, 0.2% in browsing.

IV. DISCUSSION

In any organisation, marketing the services is especially important to attract the customers. Recently with the Federal Trade Commission petition given by the Supreme Court in 1982, triggered the new beginning of Hospital advertising. This brought about changes in regulations, financing and marketing structure and this forced the managerial parameters to begin with competitive approaches for survival. The current trend of fast communication is the online technology practices. This has promoted competitive edge effectively thus benefitting the marketing professionals to optimise their strategy to expand the reach of a business. While the primary goal of the health care provider is to render quality service to the customer, the customers in turn expect maximum satisfaction from the services.

The present study aimed at understanding the convenient mode of communicating the hospital services to the vast population in order to frame strategies to increase the customers to the hospital. The result of the present study showed that most of the patients (55.4%) who availed the services from the hospital was by reference from others. The reason for the reference is mostly seen among the customers who are satisfied with the services availed. Reference of customers was done through private practitioners, relatives and friends which shows the satisfaction in the service received by them. However, we should understand that this method of referencing is the slow procedure and may have geographical restrictions.

However, with the rapid competitions in the health care field, it is equally important to market the services as it is needed to promote the new services or the technology of the hospital to the vast population in a short period of time. Hence to analyse the proper platform utilised by the customers for gathering the information about the hospital services, and to develop marketing strategies, the present study was conducted.

The study analysed the various channels used by the customers to make a choice of health care services. The majority of the respondents (86.4%) used different media for various reasons. Mass media was one of the type which was used by most of the customers (35.8%), followed by the web page of the hospital (4.6%). 4.2% respondents used social media like facebook (1.4%), You tube (1.8%) and Twitter (1%). Although the social media users were considerably less percentage, developing this media would help in promoting health care service.

This is because the analysis shows that 44.6% of the respondents chose the hospital with the influence of advertisement in various media. Hence the author feels that advertisement in public media could help in promoting the services. Among the Facebook users, 62.8% found it useful to get the information of the service, the other social media like Instagram was found useful by 16.4%, 11.8% of the you tube users, 4/4% of the twitter users, 3.6% of the linkedin, 0.6% of the E-commerce site, 0.2% of those use E-mail, and 0.2% of those who browse. This analyse give clear evidence that the customers get information about the services provided by the hospital through the mass media or social media, which could be made more effective by providing more systematic improvements with forecasting. In the present study, the age group which was researched was maximum in 20 to 30 years (46.4%), hence, while modifying the tool, youth have to be kept in view.

V. CONCLUSION

With the concept derived by the result of the present study, public media is the fastest marketing tool, which if modified according to the hospital services and needs of the people, could promote more customers and give a scope to spread information to vast population without geographic restrictions. This platform may not only help as a marketing tool to promote health care services, but also to follow up the patients which will ensure quality care to the customers. The author suggest that Website should be encouraged to help in time and crowd management. Hospital web page can be modified as friendly user to promote the hospital services even to those who are having average technical knowledge. However, the future study could be more based on the in-depth analysis of each specialised care of the hospital like health lounge, International wards etc.

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