

Quality management framework in the health and medical care industry in Pakistan

Uzma Rasool Khan, Fazila M. Ayub*, Saman Zaidi, Sana Khalid and Sidra Sehar

Department of Business Administration, Jinnah University for Women, Karachi, Pakistan.

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ABSTRACT

This research is conducted to identify the effect of quality control and its supervision in the physical care industry in Pakistan. The basic aim of this study is to assess whether principles of Quality control is followed in the health care sector or not. Different variables such as doctor's performance, patient satisfaction, financial issues of patients, surgical instruments and medication error have taken into consideration. Quantitative technique of research is applied to the study. Data is collected through questionnaire from 80 patients of different hospitals in Karachi. Data is analyzed by using statistical graphs which shows that majority of the respondents prefer private hospitals and their services. The authors conclude that quality management has considerable effect on the working conditions of hospitals. They also talk about the future prospects and provide guidance for further research.

Keywords: TQM, patient's satisfaction, medication error, doctor's performance, health care sector.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: fazilaayub62@gmail.com.

INTRODUCTION

Hospitals are vital and fundamental part of the society. They are considered as an efficient system of service that provide health and well being to the people of the society. This industry is the largest, extremely competitive, rapidly growing and emerging industry in the services sector of the world. The performance of any organization can be evaluated through the commitment of all employees of the firm. Similarly, the performance of the hospital industry depends upon the performance of its employees. The better performance of hospitals not only help them to treat their patients in a good way but it also assist them to provide their services at low cost (Humayon et al., 2018).

Like many other countries, the hospital industry of Pakistan also faces the biggest challenge of measuring its performance and maintaining its reputation among people. In order to improve the performance of hospitals, Pakistan's government has taken many steps and strive to implement the concept of Total Quality Management. The philosophy behind the concept of TQM is the art of managing and controlling the magnitude of a quality of product and services entirely. It emphasizes on stakeholders' engagement, satisfied the needs of customers, improves the financial position of a firm and

enhance the quality of employees' management. The basic idea of TQM is to have the defect free product and quality services.

Background of the study

Health is the basic right of every human being but unfortunately thousands of people in Pakistan are bereaved of this basic human right due to improper medical facilities. It is said that hospitalization is not a business but a responsibility of state. The healthcare sector should be subsidised by the government so that better medication could be provided to people (Saeed and Ibrahim, 2005).

The hospital industry of Pakistan is experiencing many issues in delivering services to people. There are many reasons behind providing low quality services to patients. Among these reasons, the major issues include, improper management, lack of doctor's engagement, lack of professional para medical staff and absence of advanced technology. These factors contribute to the low performance of the Pakistan's health care industry. In

addition, the lower performance create serious consequence which include serious health issues with the patients. Most of the time the condition goes severe and people will lost their lives. It is therefore necessary that the employees of the hospital including doctors and nursing staff must be experienced and must adhere to the goals and objectives of the organization (Humayon et al., 2018).

A number of researches have been carried out in order to find out relationship between health indicators and the growth of the economy. Schultz (2010) and Currie (2009) found a positive and significant relationship between the economic growth of an economy and the indicators of health. The study said that the availability of good health and nutrition to the people of society especially to the children may protect them from diseases and increase their productivity. The good health will ultimately help the children and teenagers in the development of vigorous foundation for the sustainable growth of the economy.

In order to improve the performance of health care sector, several laws have been made and many regulatory bodies had come into existence world wide. The responsibility of these organizations is to provide guideline to the professionals in the medical field. It also keep proper check and balance on the performance of doctors (Cox et al., 2006).

Now a days efforts has been made by the government to improve health care sector of Pakistan. For this purpose, government had introduced the vision of Pakistan 2025 for providing better services in hospitals (Humayon et al., 2018). Pakistan has also taken many initiatives and has been participated in many programmes for the growth of its health sector. The purpose of all these projects is to eliminate poverty, provide education, intrusion of healthiness and nutrition facilities to people, supply of clean and healthy drinking water and work for the welfare and well being of the people (Kurji et al., 2016).

A large portion of the population of Pakistan is living in absolute poverty. There are enormous inequalities in the accessibility of health facilities and proper treatment between the poor and rich classes. The health services provided to the poor are not satisfactorily. They are not giving much care in the hospitals which compel them to go to private hospitals which are quite expensive and not affordable to them. Pakistan faces the shortage of funds due to which the expenditure on the health sector is not sufficient (Kurji et al., 2016).

Problem statement

The health care sector of Pakistan steps forward in providing quality service and better treatment to patients and make them satisfied. The principles of total quality management are not followed in the majority of hospitals in Pakistan. Therefore, it is said that if TQM is not properly applied to hospitals then the health care industry

will be failed. The purpose of this study is to provide an insight to the effect of the total quality administration on the working conditions of hospitals and the satisfaction level of the patients.

Questions related to research

1. Does total quality management practices are followed in the health care industry in Pakistan?
2. Do the financial aspects; doctors' performance and hospital environment are satisfactory for patients?
3. Is the paramedical staff well trained and consistent in their jobs?
4. Is the hospital providing proper treatment and medication to patients?

Objectives of research

The key purpose of the research article is to find problems faced by the patients due to the negligence and inadequate facilities provided by the hospitals. The study also aims to find the impact of implementation of total quality principles on the performance of health care industry. However, the major objectives are:

- To determine the practices of total quality management followed in the hospitals of Pakistan.
- To evaluate the effect of TQM on the performance of hospitals.
- To provide a useful guideline for successful execution of TQM practices in the health care sector.

Significance of the study

Total quality management has got considerable importance in the recent years in every field whether it is education, health care, and manufacturing etc. This study identifies the impact that health care sector will have due to the implementation of TQM. The study is meaningful in providing knowledge about the problems faced by the health care sector.

Sample of the study

The targeted population for data collection in this research is patients of different hospitals in Karachi while the sample size is under 100.

Scope of the research

The research has a wide scope and it is useful for many people such as management of hospitals, government, economists and policy makers. It helps them in making

strategies, policies and decisions regarding the implementations of quality services. The research also has a scope to fulfil the gap of previous studies and identify new areas for research.

Limitations of the study

There are certain limitations in the research conducted on the health care sector of Pakistan. The sample size is very small which does not cover majority of the population. The study is conducted only on the hospitals situated in Karachi due to which the health care sector of all over Pakistan is not covered. The data is collected through survey and questionnaire basis. All the factors that affect the performance of hospital have not taken into consideration. Time factor is also a limitation as the research is conducted within a limited time frame.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the past studies of total quality management practices and their implementation in the health care sector of Pakistan.

Doctor's performance

According to Khan (2018), serving humanity or hospitalization and healthcare is one of the most dignified professions. Irvine (1997) says, the doctors' performance is basically related to the attitudes and behaviour of a doctor. The dissatisfaction of the patients is due to the doctors' negligence. This negligence causes severe health problems with patients and sometimes it may cause death. In Pakistan, there are several cases which are the witness of doctors' negligence.

In 2010, Dawn news revealed a case of partially damage of brain of man due to the anesthesia by an inexperienced medical practitioner. Not only this, but these cases are increasing day by day due to the use of incorrect injections, supply of expired medicines and drugs, administering imperfect techniques of operation, leave cotton and other surgical instruments such as scissor, needles and tubes etc. in abdomen, and providing wrong medication and treatment to patients cause severe complications and may even lead to death of people (Shiwani and Gadit, 2011).

Hasan (2006) said that the reason behind the increasing number of negligence cases is that the majority of doctors in Pakistani hospitals are interns or house job doctors, who are not trained and do not have proper medical knowledge. According to The Medical Council of Ireland (2012), the interns or house job medical practitioner are the junior and subordinate doctors of medical association. In Pakistan, the senior medical staffs make the wrong use of this practice.

Despite of that the senior doctors monitor the interns, they put the entire burden on them and free themselves from their responsibilities (Rahim et al., 2018).

One of the major causes of negligence of the medical practitioner is that majority of the doctors in the public hospitals are also running their private clinics or they are working in different private hospitals due to which they are unable to give proper time to their patients (Shiwani and Gadit, 2011).

Patients satisfaction

In modern times, a number of patients are well educated, having enough information, knowledge and also holding great expectations from the hospitals that they will provide quality services to them (Mukhtar et al., 2013). There are multiple factors which can impose great impact on the level of satisfaction of patients and service quality which include top to bottom quality perfection, belief, facilities, goodwill, reliability, knowledge, firm, concentrating on all the problems which are related to human psychology, result of care and the nature of human beings (Hussain and Rehman, 2012).

The quality services provided by the organization are always attracting the consumers. Additionally, the total quality services can be defined by the product and service's features and characteristics which hold the ability to completely satisfy the implied as well as stated need of the patient (Hussain and Rehman, 2012). Lack of skilled and trained paramedical staff, inadequacy of necessary medicines and mandatory equipment is the main reason of dissatisfaction among patients (Joiya et al., 2016).

Medication error

Medication error is one of the most severe risks in hospitals. In Pakistan yearly, 450,000 to 500,000 deaths occurred due to medication error in health care sector and several are unreported. In Pakistan mistakes in medication is the 8th foremost reason of deaths of people. Medication error includes overdose of tablets, wrong instructions from the nurses, taking medicines without concerning to doctors, dissimilar drugs under the similar packaging, expired injections and tablets to patients and unfavourable effects of medicines, mistakes in writing prescriptions and many other errors (Recorder, 2018).

Gadit (2012) said that in Pakistan, lots of factors are responsible for medication error but the leading cause is the absence of responsibility, long working hours of doctors and corruption in health care. According to Aziz et al. (2018) along with the patients' injuries, these errors also results in the wastage of time and money and sometimes affect long life productivity of patients. It could be the alarming situation for the doctor's career as well as patients' health. As a result, health care providers are

not willing to expose any report regarding medical error.

Patient safety and trust

Trust, commitment and respect are the foundation of stronger relationship between physician and patient. Most of the lower middle and poorer people of Pakistan highly depends upon public health care hospitals. In public sector, absence of standardization and regulations in procedures, organized monitoring on recommendations, positive communication between medical practitioners, computerized documentation of patient's proceedings, unwillingness of medical practitioners to report errors publically, management of staff and resources are the common hurdles to patient safety (Rizvi et al., 2017).

In order to grow a relation between doctors and their patient, empathy and trust must be present. Quality care must provide on time without any delay as it is injurious for patients (Khalid and Abbasi, 2018). To have a trustworthy relationship, physicians must provide sufficient time, critically listen and let their patients to talk. This would lead to healthier consequences (Descours, 2015).

Financial issues of patients

According to Khalid and Abbasi (2018), the provision of quality services in the health care sector is the combination of protected, efficient, cost effective and unbiased environment to the patients. In Pakistan, a huge discrepancy is seen in the health care services provided to wealthy and the deprived sections of the society.

The poor health facilities compel them for private treatment which is very costly and unaffordable for poor. People from remote areas had to travel a long distance for better medical facilities and have to pay high medical fees whether it is within their means or not. The big hospitals do unnecessary test which are quite expensive and beyond the reach of poor people. They have to sell their property (land and animals) for the treatment of their patients and in this way the poor becomes poorer (Kurji et al., 2016).

Surgical instruments

Pakistan is one of the major international traders of surgical instruments. The manufacturing of more than 10,000 multiple surgical instruments has been mainly centred in Sialkot. It is also reported that Pakistan produced high quality surgical instruments and due to its quality, Germany closed their whole setup and start purchasing from Pakistan (Khan, 2016).

Pakistan also faces threat from their expected future competitors like, Mexico and China. Both of these

countries are having low-cost workers, updated and advanced technology as well as high quality raw material for manufacturing surgical instruments. On the other hand, severe problems have been faced by Pakistan's surgical sector. These issues are obsolete technology and marketing techniques. On the other hand, the supply of energy is become another serious issue (Khan, 2016).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is given in Figure 1.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis statement

H₁: There is an association of total quality administration and the hospital's working conditions.

H₂: There is an association between performance of doctors and patient's health.

H₃: There is an association between financial aspects and patient satisfaction.

H₄: There is an association between medication error and patient's trust.

Data collection method

The following research paper is aimed to investigate the Total quality management practices that are being followed in the health care sector of Karachi. For this purpose we have surveyed different private and government hospitals. The sample size is 80. The authors collected data with multiple primary sources to get authentic information which includes interviews direct with the patients and through self-constructed questionnaire by the researchers. The data was collected from the patients of multiple hospitals situated in Karachi.

Sampling techniques

For data collection, two sampling techniques were used which includes "convenience sampling" and "Random sampling". The authors utilized their virtual connections by sending questionnaire through LinkedIn, Gmail, Google docs and other social sites in order to collect data- Convenience sampling. On the other hand, the patients were randomly selected it is called random sampling.

Research design

In order to achieve the objective of this research, the

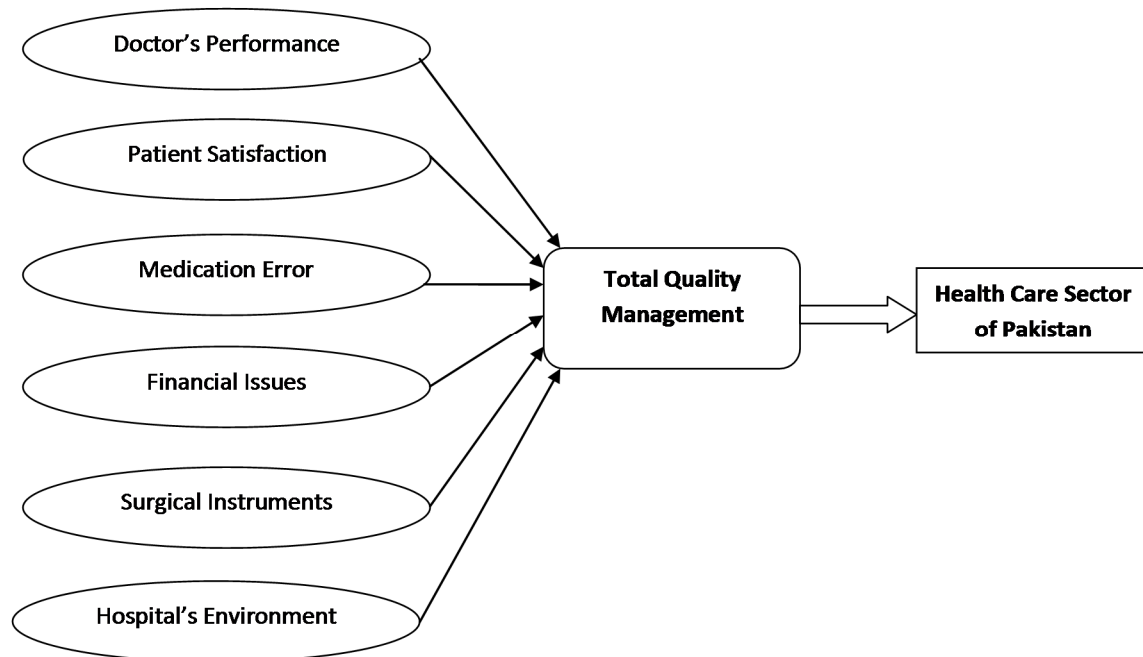


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

authors used descriptive study design.

Data analysis

Patient's satisfaction

As shown in Figure 2, the first three columns is related to Patient's satisfaction regarding the services, facilities and environment provided by the hospital in Karachi and after the analysis of data we can say that 56% which is almost half of the targeted population is agreed that they are satisfied with the given services, facilities and environment. On the other hand, 21% patients had shown their extreme dissatisfaction while the rest of 23% were neutral. In the last three column of the given diagram 46% says that the discharging system of the hospital is convenient for them but 29% patients were having negative views regarding the discharge system and 25% patients are neutral.

Doctor's performance

In Figure 3, 58% respondents agree that the Para medical staff of the hospital is well trained and holding great consistency while performing their duties. While 20% patients are having negative views and 23% were neutral. On the right side of the above diagram, the three columns describe that 56% patients agreed that the doctors in the hospitals give them proper time and listen to their problems carefully but 23% patients extremely

disagree and were depressed with their doctors' performance but 21% patients were neutral in their answers.

Surgical instruments

Now days, latest and upgraded tools, equipment and technology is become mandatory for hospitals. So while asking the question regarding the current state of tool and equipment in hospitals from patients 54% respondents was agreed that they enjoyed the latest and upgraded tools and equipment during their treatment but on the other side of picture, 26% patients having extreme negative experience and the rest of other 20% respondents were having neutral answers as shown in Figure 4.

Financial aspects

The financial aspects of patients has been described by Figure 5 in which 58% patients declared that the services they avail and whatever treatment they are having in health care institutes of Karachi is affordable for them but 25% respondents deny with this statement and says the expanses of hospital is not under their affordability range but 18% was neutral while describing their affordability range. On the right side of Figure 5, the rest of the three columns explained that overall 48% targeted population is satisfied with the financial aspects of the billing while visiting in the hospital as well as their subsequent follow

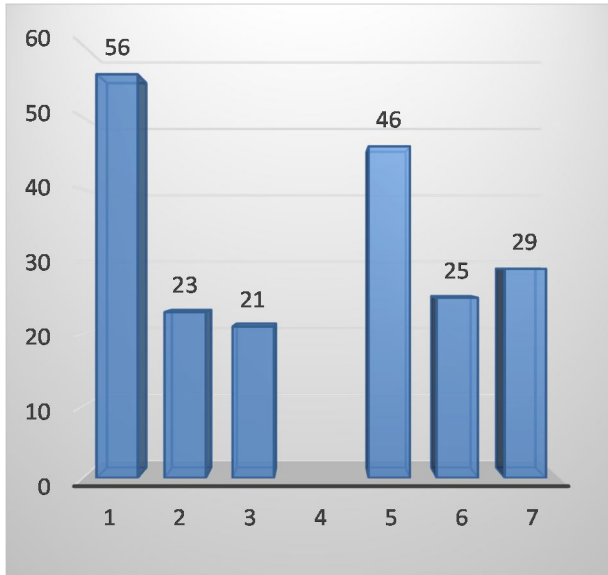


Figure 2. Patient's satisfaction.

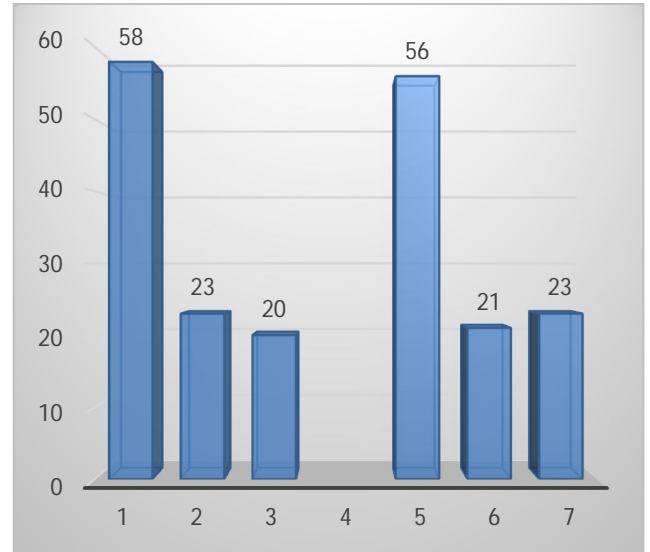


Figure 3. Doctor's performance.

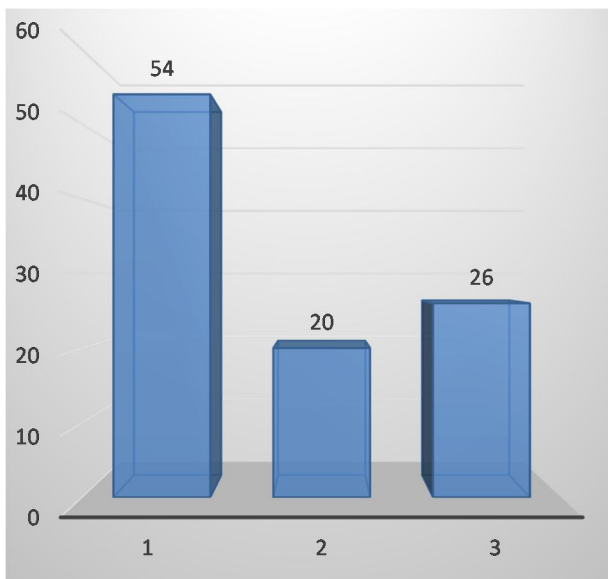


Figure 4. Surgical instruments.

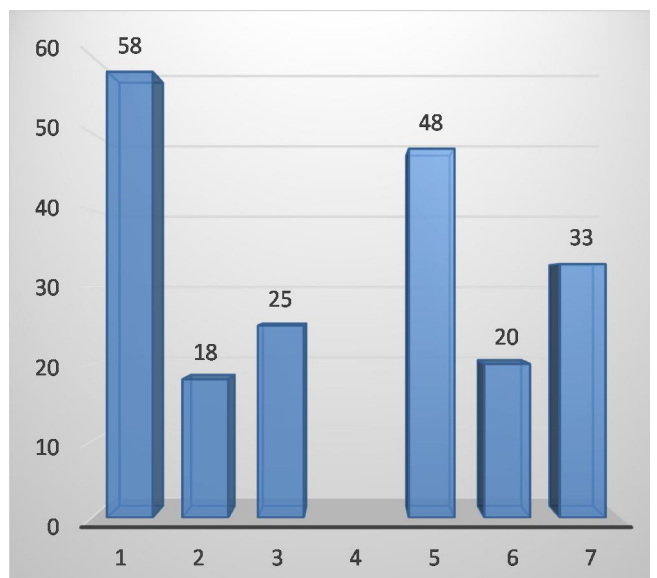


Figure 5. Financial aspect.

up but on the other side of the picture 33% patients are not getting enough satisfaction from the financial aspects of the billing system. While 20% targeted population were being neutral.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This section of the study reveals the findings of the research. The results are demonstrated by using the column diagram. From the findings, it is observed that, majority of the respondents from our sample are satisfied

with the services and facilities provided by the hospitals in Karachi. Not only this, but most of them agree that treatment is affordable for them. The results found that the targeted sample of this study make comparison of public to public and private to private hospitals. The lower class prefers public hospitals due to which they are satisfied with its treatment and financial aspects and the rest of the population use to prefer private hospitals. Most of the people satisfied with the service quality due to the facility of panel. The reason behind the satisfaction level of tools and equipment is that majority of the population is not aware of it and most of them said during treatment, they are unable to observe tools.

CONCLUSION

The research represents the impact of quality of services provided by hospitals in Karachi on the satisfaction level of patients. It has been observed that people have high level of expectations from private hospitals as they provide better medication and treatment facilities but have comparatively higher charges than public hospitals. The reason of satisfaction with the services is that people make comparison of public to public and private to private hospitals. Therefore, there is a requirement of perfections and improvements to fill this gap. Most of the physical care providers have organized structure to safeguard their patient's safety. In order to implement TQM, health care sector needs to restructure their behaviours towards quality and determine their customers' expectations.

RECOMMENDATION

As prosperity and progress of every country highly depends upon their individuals. If the people of country are healthy they will be able to do better work and actively makes their contribution for country's success. Therefore, this is recommended to upgrade health care sector and enhance the quality of services to satisfy people. Not only this, but it is also suggested that the research should be extended to other cities and towns of Pakistan as it is conducted only in Karachi. In addition, other factors such as culture, size of the hospital, and number of employees must also be considered in further researches in order to analyze the performance and the service quality provided by the hospitals.

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