ASSESSMENT OF BRAND IDENTITY OF SUCHIRAYU HOSPITAL

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Abstract- Health care industry is changing rapidly; in the earlier times, people used to visit the same doctor for years and the association was continued even for generations. For a company to build a good brand, brand identity and brand image need be congruent. This research is attempting to analyze and address patient inflow particularly during the period 2015-2016 at Suchirayu Hospital, Hubli-Dharwad District, Karnataka, India. This study investigates brand identity and brand image in the newly established hospital, Suchirayu. The aim of this study is to assess existing brand identity vis-à-vis consumer perception of Suchirayu Private Hospital. This study uses both qualitative and quantitative method approach. The qualitative method uses interview as the survey approach, in order to obtain information concerning the brand identity of the hospital. The quantitative method uses questionnaire as the survey method, conducted among the patients of Suchirayu Hospital, concerning the brand image. The study concluded stating that, “Suchirayu brand identity and brand image are not congruent and the brand image is not mirroring the brand identity defined by the hospital”.

Key Words- Brand Identity, Brand Image, Perception

I. INTRODUCTION

Brand Identity deals with:
- Hospital internal perceptions
- Expected quality or a promise defined within the hospital
- Functional and emotional relationship with patient

Brand identity is the promise that hospital makes to people along with the mission, personality and competitive advantages. It includes the thinking, belief and expectations of the target customers. It is a means of identifying and distinguishing an association from another.

According to Vargo and Lusch, 2004, Marketing has created values and the relationships between industries and consumers. Effects of a range of tools and techniques for establishing, modifying, and understanding relationships among brands are not well understood. Many relations between businesses are purely transactional, brand-related relations between owners are laudable of consideration.

Healthcare sector is facing unique challenges in creating brand identity among customers. It has become a necessity to have a brand identity in order to find a position in the market and consumer’s mind, for products and services, independent of the consumer. Brand identity strategies provide a way to create it; it is how hospital seeks to identify itself. A well-built brand identity will effectively communicate a hospital personality and its value to potential customers, and will help in building brand recognition, association and loyalty.

These days, the healthcare sector has transformed from a seller’s market to a buyer’s market and patient is considered to be more significant. As an end result, the hospital has to widen its own technology and focus on more service-related activities in order to accomplish patient satisfaction. The major objective of a marketing program is to identify the needs and wants of their clients and to accomplish them through design, interaction, development and delivery of suitable and competitively feasible goods and services. Brand consumer relationship formation implies clearly defining the brand identity and consumer perception to drive value delivery. The major purpose is to determine whether every consumer understands the brand value and whether brand value satisfies the consumer.

1.1. Reason to Select this Topic:
To analyze and address the reduced patient inflow particularly during the period 2015-2016 at Suchirayu Hospital, Hubli, Dharwad District, Karnataka, India.
1.2. Suchirayu Hospital:

Suchirayu, one of the biggest hospitals in Hubli, was established by a group of local doctors in collaboration with Fortis, and aimed at providing better quality of healthcare. There are 12 members in the board who are managing the organization and are also practicing as doctors. Fortis-Suchirayu hospital, one of the best hospitals in Hubli, could not reach the expected performance level due to managerial issues. The hospital went through some unavoidable situations, which led to separation. Fortis ended the partnership with Suchirayu within 8 months of the hospital inaugural that resulted in great amount of loss in-terms of money and image of the hospital.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

- Chao-Chau Wu (2011), in the paper titled ‘The impact of hospital brand image on service quality, patient satisfaction and loyalty’ states that brand image of hospital certainly works as a principal feature in improving the quality of service, satisfaction of patient and loyalty. This study suggests that administrators of hospital should struggle to form and sustain the constructive brand image. For future studies, author suggests integrated model for a diversity of hospital types to authenticate its applicability. This study has used Questionnaire and Hypothesis testing as a survey method.

- Annamalai Solayappan, Jothi Jayakrishnan (2003), in the paper titled “Key Determinants of Brand-Customer Relationship in Hospital Industry” states that brand consideration has connection with the brand liking. Brand image significantly influence patient satisfaction. Brand fondness, image and satisfaction are the factors that extremely add to brand loyalty. Brand image, brand loyalty and satisfaction are the ideal insight of the consumers association with the brand. Questionnaire was used as a survey method for this study.

- Diogo Manuel Ferreira Dias da Costa (2012), in the paper titled“A Proposal for a Brand Identity for the new Pediatric Hospital” states that he was competent to get understanding on how kids make out the mascot, what they think about it, understanding towards it and what kind of actions they would like to do with Hospital. It is lucid that Joãozinho is perceived as being a cool, well behaved, dauntless and a superior friend during their treatment and recovery time. It is important that brand builders’ strategize future by developing programs related to services offered. Qualitative and Quantitative Research and Questionnaire were adopted to do the study.

- Naveen Kumar, Anil Jacob, Smruthi Thota (2014), in the paper titled ‘Impact of Healthcare Marketing and Branding on Hospital Services’ state that one way of upholding good status is with ideal marketing of services. There are numerous strategies to highlight services of the hospital. One of the important aspects to note is the role of the print and advertising media and reputation of an organization or services is tremendously dynamic in nature, never constant. It is ever changing according to nature of the exterior forces. Author has tried to adopt strategies like print media, loyalty programs for marketing of hospital but I believe word of mouth is more important. This study was conducted based on Retrospective and customer feedback.

- Abha Sood(2011), in the paper titled ‘Brand Strategies of Corporate Hospitals’ states that the brand strategies based on perception of customers are impacted by various facets. And author concluded saying that a big number of hospitals will help in making the research strong. For future research, study should be carried out in varied parts of the world so that the study can be standardized across the world. Questionnaire was used as survey method for this study.

- Lisa M.Sciulli (USA), Traxey L Missien(USA)( 2015), in the paper titled “Hospital positioning and brand image: Influences on service quality, patient satisfaction and desired performance” states that patients who are extremely pleased with their hospital will bear these associations and finally perform as advocates for that healthcare giver. The recommended framework offers an exceptional insight into a healthcare industry model, configuration, and implementation of a selling plan for selected facility lines. The effort may help managers in their efforts to foster a feasible positioning plan which most successfully please their patients and the society they provide. Case study was used to do the study.

- Dr.Ankita Jain, Ms.Varsha Choudhary (2015), in the paper titled “Branding: An effective tool to achieve competitive advantage” states that Healthcare and hospital industry is moving in the direction of corporatization, and branding leads to this corporatization culture. By establishing a solid brand, the rate of recurrence of the patients visiting hospital will be improved. Questionnaire was used as a survey method for this study.

- B.Sirisha, Dr M. Kishore Babu (2014), in the paper titled ‘Branding of hospitals-Through tangible factors by selected hospitals’ states that in healthcare sector, people choose brands discussing with their family and colleagues.
before visiting a doctor. The author feels only trust can help rule the health care sector. Hospital Branding is reliant on patient satisfaction & word of mouth. Investment has to be made in Branding to attain confidence in consumer to an raise in the market share, enhanced loyalty, and income growth. Case study approach was used to do the study.

- Dimala Lingavel (2015), in the paper titled “Impact of customer Relationship Management on Brand Equity Private Hospitals in Jaffna” states that consumer association management has effect on brand, brand perception, and difference exists in brand equity between male customers and female customers. Consumer relationship management has the impact on brand equity amongst the clients in Private hospital in the Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The Author stated that for finest customer relationship management ‘ability of human capital’ matters, which sounds correct because I believe it helps for positive ‘word of mouth’. Questionnaire was used as a survey method for this study.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Assessment of Brand Identity of Suchirayu Private Hospital”

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the existing brand perception of the hospital amongst the employees
2. To study the consumer perception towards the hospital (among Patients within the hospital and General Public)
3. To analyse the gaps between employee perception and consumer perception towards the hospital
4. To suggest and recommend on the identified gaps

V. METHODOLOGY

Data for this study will be derived from Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Primary data: Communication Method
- Personal interviews
- Questionnaire

Secondary data:
- A thorough literature review
- By referring to published journals

5.1 Limitation of the Study

The present study is confined to 200 respondents and the study area is restricted to Suchirayu Hospital Hubli only.

5.2 Data Analysis Factors:

The data analysis has been done on the following factors:
- Effect of Hospital Brand identity on Patient Satisfaction
- Effect of Hospital Brand Identity on the hospital brand image
- Effect of Hospital Brand Identity on visit intention

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The statistical tool used for the analysis of data is Pie charts using SPSS package.

6.1 Effect of Hospital Brand identity on Patient Satisfaction:

Kunder states that quality is and will be one and only way of measuring a brand of hospital and not from number of patients visiting hospital or how much money they make (Building Brand Image for Hospitals, Express health, September 2009). Marketing of hospital depends on the way we treat and satisfy patients.

It is clear from the above results that patients are satisfied within the quality of service provided by the hospital and the hospital can expect people to visit hospital through positive word of mouth.
6.2 Effect of Hospital Brand Identity on the hospital brand image:

Fig 5 represents the hospital identity defined by the hospital management team, when tested against both patients within hospital (Fig 6) and general public (Fig 7), both agree to the identity defined by the Suchirayu.

From Fig 1 - Fig 7, we have seen positive results in patient satisfaction rate and brand identity of the hospital but I was yet to figure out root cause for reduced patient inflow, as can be seen from fig 11 12 & 13, Suchirayu wants to be perceived as “Quality of care at affordable price” for which patients within hospital agree because they have experienced the hospital where as general public who are yet to pay a visit consider Suchirayu a “Expensive”. Earlier, Suchirayu assumed (Fig 8,9&10) separation with Fortis or lack of awareness as the reason but people perceive Suchirayu hospital as “Expensive” and there could be fear to approach the hospital. Now, if we trace back; we can say that population of other city is more in the hospital because people of Hubli consider Suchirayu expensive.

6.3 Effect of Hospital Brand Identity on visit intention:

From Fig 14, despite the separation with Fortis and the assumption that Suchirayu is expensive, people are still ready to pay a visit, which is a positive thing for Suchirayu.

VII. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

- The current study suggests that the consumer relationship management should be measured as the one major identity along with marketing and HR management
- To increase customers awareness on core identity of hospital
- To extend the capacity to identify the flaws within hospital
- To have a clear brand identity within the employees of hospital
- Need to work more understanding the consumer
- Must show hospital presence regularly in market

Generally speaking, there are five key brand strategies to establish to create a strong brand. These are developing the brand vision, establishing the brand position, communicating the brand position, fulfilling the brand contract and measuring return on brand investment. All these have to be adopted and implemented at Suchirayu.
CONCLUSIONS

The study has found gaps between hospital brand identity and consumer perception.

1. Effect of Hospital Brand identity on Patient Satisfaction:

- From results, I conclude that brand identity of Suchirayu is considered to be strong on patient satisfaction. Suchirayu can expect positive outputs from word of mouth which they consider as main marketing strategy.

2. Effect of Hospital Brand Identity on the hospital brand image:

- From 1, we expected positive impact of "word of mouth" strategy, but results have shown that most of the patients within hospital are doctor referrals. Based on this finding, I say that the brand image of Suchirayu is not fully established yet.

- General public was then asked to answer whether they are aware of Suchirayu hospital or not, 86.27% people said they are aware and it was confusing as to why they are not visiting the hospital.

- In order to clarify doubts, general public was asked to answer whether they have heard negative comments on hospital and 51.96% said no and 48.04% said yes.

- Then we went ahead and asked whether it was because of separation with Fortis and it turned out that both patients within hospital and general public were not at all bothered about it which Suchirayu found surprising.

- At last, people were asked to answer what exactly they think about Suchirayu. I found an unexpected result and the reason for reduced patient inflow, majority of population feel that hospital looks expensive and there could be fear to approach the hospital but Suchirayu core identity says "Quality of care at affordable price"

So I conclude stating that “Suchirayu brand identity and brand image is not congruent; the brand image is not mirroring the brand identity”.

Bibliography:

Journal Paper:

Book: