A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE THE NET PROMOTER SCORE

THROUGH FOCUSED COMMUNICATION AT

SPECIFIC TOUCH POINTS OF A PRIVATE

HOSPITAL IN INDIA

by

Shiny Varghese, Master of Business Administration, Post graduate Diploma in Healthcare management, Post graduate Diploma in laws on hospital administration

DISSERTATION

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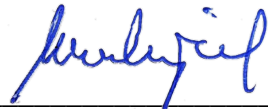SPECIFIC TOUCH POINTS OF A PRIVATE

HOSPITAL IN INDIA

by

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Admissions Director

DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this accomplishment to my husband, Ronald Harsha, and our precious daughter, Ronia Shanthini Ronald, whose inspiration has driven me to reach this milestone.

I also dedicate this work to my parents, who always took pride in my success. I remember the sacrifices they have taken in order to help their children have a bright future. They are indeed a blessing to our lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE THE NET PROMOTER SCORE
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Shiny Varghese

2024

Dissertation Chair:

Co-Chair:

A happy customer serves as the brand's representative, might accept, and support a service. Every business still operates on the same fundamentals: the client brings the business. The firm takes note of what customers have to say and improve as per the requirement continues to exist and thrive their business. When they are pleased, they will tell a few people about the experience and the business; when they are dissatisfied, it will multiply and reach a far larger audience. In healthcare facilities too this is not different. Having satisfied customers is the measurement of adherence to the expectation, and the fulfillment of the expectation. Many times, it is noted that the communication gap is the major reason for the customer not being satisfied with the services. The experience the patient receives at every touch point matters for the overall satisfaction during the encounter or stay. If there are challenges foretold, it would help them modify their perception, as they know what to expect. So, communication at every touch point makes a huge difference to the patient to make the event a memorable one. It was noticed in a private hospital in India, that a few touchpoints get good satisfaction scores whereas a few touch points get many negative scores, which was below the targeted score of the organization. When the scores were averaged, the total satisfaction score was not as desired, although a few touchpoints were getting exceptionally good scores. It was also noted that whether the good or bad scores certain touchpoints obtain was due to their communication or due to lack of communication, or the way they used to communicate. The intent of this study is to have focused communication delivered at those touch points. Considering what was expected by the patient, and to address them in a proactive manner. This could improve the satisfaction scores in those specific touch points as well. Thus, this improvement would help the overall net promoter scores to be as targeted. This can be done by training the staff, and thus creating an awareness on their communication style, their behavior, and its impact on the customer satisfaction. Also, to make the employees understand the importance of the Net Promoter Scores. When the team understands that the customer is to be served well, and their communication matters in alleviating the anxiety and creating the first impression to every customer who walks in. To make it lasting, the first impression must be a good one. The communication across the care continuum matters especially at the front office. Mainly due to the first nonclinical

contact happening at the front office. There are many literatures available abroad on customer satisfaction. Indigenously there is a dearth of resources addressing this specific problem. To address this problem this study is selected. "When you make things right, you increase trust, loyalty, and advocacy." - Shep Hyken .

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Patient satisfaction and loyalty are paramount in today's competitive healthcare landscape, particularly in India's growing private hospital sector. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) has emerged as a critical metric to gauge patient satisfaction and loyalty. The "customer is the most important person in any premises," according to Mahatma Gandhi. "The customer's perception is your reality." - Kate Zabriskie. Every flourishing company wants its clients to use it repeatedly. "You have to start with the customer experience, and work backward with the technology, and not the other way around," as Steve Jobs once said. A happy consumer serves as the brand's representative. He might accept and support a service. Every business still operates on the same fundamentals: that the client brings the business. For the purchase of a service or a product consumer takes recommendation from their friends and family or a colleague. Leisen and Hyman, (2004), Mishra, A and Satish, K. (2016, pp 56-78). A positive word of mouth increases business profitability. Whereas a negative word of mouth may severely affect the sales and reputation of the service or the business. Mishra, A and Satish, K. (2016). Thus, favorable recommendations for the product or service are critical for the sustenance of business. The firm takes note of what customers have to say improves their service and business. When they are pleased, they will tell a few people about the experience and the business; when they are dissatisfied, it will multiply and reach a far larger audience. In healthcare facilities too, it remains the same. Having satisfied customers is the measurement of adherence to the expectation, and the fulfillment of the expectation. Many at times it is noted that the communication gap is the major reason for the customer not being satisfied with the services. The experience the patient receives at every touch point matters for the overall satisfaction during the encounter or stay. If there are challenges foretold, it would help them modify their perception, as they know what to expect. Thus, communication at every touch point makes a huge difference to the patient to make the event a memorable one. It was noticed in a private hospital in India, that a few

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touchpoints get good satisfaction scores whereas a few touchpoints get not so good scores, when it is averaged, the total satisfaction score was not as desired, and it was way below the expected Net promoter Scores. It was also noted that whether the good or bad Net promoter scores certain departments got was due to the effective communication or due to lack of communication or due to the deficiency of the communication of the staff at those specific departments. The intent of this study is to have focused communication, considering what was expected by the patient, and to address them in a proactive manner, make the staff aware of the impact they make due to their communication, to make the staff understand the importance of Net Promoter Scores, and how their communication can help to improve the satisfaction scores in those specific touch points. Mainly in the front office, as the front office is the first nonclinical area a patient and their family first visits, and makes their first opinion about the hospital. The first impression matters, and to make it a lasting one, the staff has a crucial role to play. There is literature available abroad on this subject. But indigenously there is a shortage of resources addressing the specific problem. Effective communication is crucial in health care settings as it can significantly affect patient satisfaction, Berry et al., (2015) highlights the importance of effective communication in healthcare settings. Smith (2020, p.34) suggests that high NPS scores are associated with improved patient satisfaction and loyalty in healthcare. Krol et al., (2015) explores the potential of using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) in patient experience surveys. Brown et al. (2018), argues that NPS is a valuable metric for evaluating patient experience and identifying areas for improvement in healthcare services. American Hospital Association (2020) reports that hospitals with high NPS scores tend to have higher patient satisfaction ratings and improved quality of care. American Customer Satisfaction Index, (2019) highlights the importance of measuring patient satisfaction through NPS to improve healthcare services. Promoters are the evangelists, they shout out for the brand, they bring people. Negative scores, the detractors pull the brand down.

In today's competitive healthcare landscape, the growing demand for quality healthcare in India, increasing competition among private hospitals, and the need for differentiation

through exceptional patient experiences. In fact, patient satisfaction and loyalty are crucial for private hospitals to thrive. Communication is crucial in healthcare settings, influencing patient trust, adherence to treatment, and overall experience. NPS has emerged as a key metric to measure patient satisfaction and loyalty.

However, Manipal hospital Whitefield has identified a critical gap in its NPS performance at a specific touch point, scoring lower than the benchmarked average. A thorough analysis of the hospital's Voice of the Customer (VoC) reviews revealed that ineffective communication and explanation are the primary pain points driving patient dissatisfaction at this touch point. Effective communication is pivotal in healthcare settings, influencing patient trust, treatment adherence, and overall experience. Research has consistently shown that positive communication experiences correlate with higher NPS scores.

1. Doyle et al. (2013) explored the relationship between communication and patient satisfaction, finding a positive correlation between effective communication and higher NPS scores.

2. A study by Fenton et al. (2016) demonstrated that improved communication leads to increased patient loyalty and retention, ultimately enhancing NPS.

3. Otani et al. (2018) identified communication as a critical factor influencing patient satisfaction and NPS in hospitals.

4. Reichheld (2003) introduced the Net Promoter Score concept, emphasizing its importance in measuring customer loyalty.

5. The work of Berry and Parish (2018) underscores the critical role of effective communication in patient-centered care, leading to enhanced engagement and satisfaction.

Despite this, there is a scarcity of research on tailored communication strategies to improve NPS in Indian private hospitals. To mitigate this problem, this research proposes the development of a framework for focused communication at this specific touch point, with the goal of increasing NPS and enhancing patient satisfaction. By exploring the complex dynamics of patient communication and satisfaction, this study proposes to design and

develop a patient-centered communication strategies that can be replicated across healthcare settings.

Though there are many literatures available abroad, there are very few indigenously speaking about such a critical subject. The lack of research on tailored communication strategies to improve NPS in Indian private hospitals prompted this study. I hope to contribute to the world a framework that would enhance the business outcome by having many satisfied customers in our healthcare premises.

Figures shows the Net Promoter Scores for three months before the intervention

Figure:1.1 NPS – JUL22

Figure:1.2 NPS – AUG22
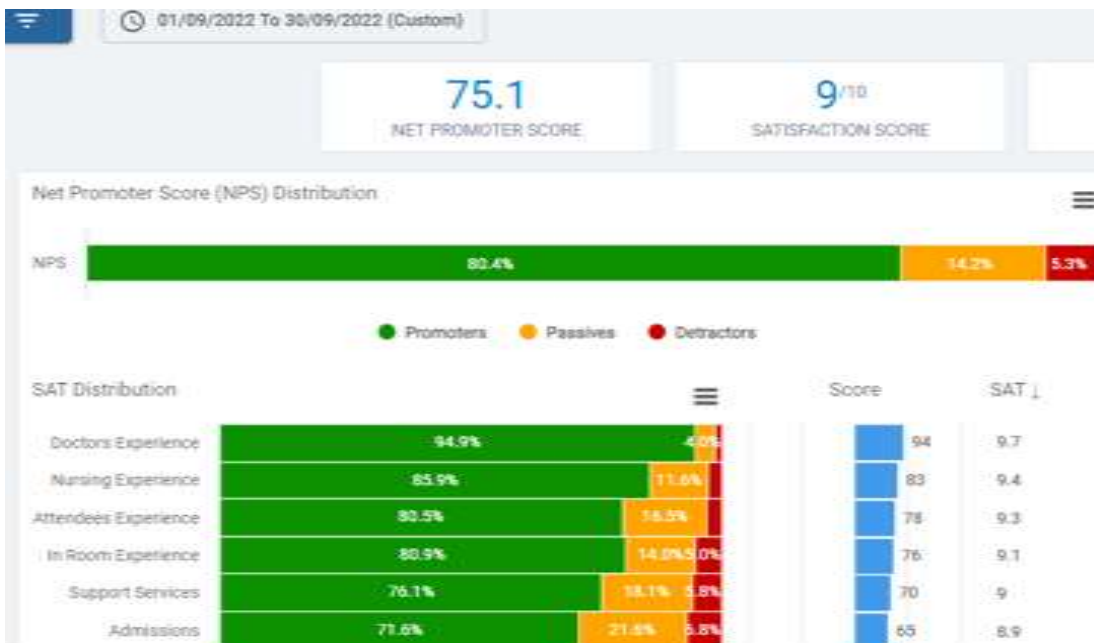
Figure:1.3 NPS – SEPT22

** courtesy to hospital feedback network

Root cause Analysis for the NPS Dip

MAN- Human Factors

Lack of empathy

Stressed employees

Unprepardnes s's to handle query

Inadequate hand holding of customers.

Inadequate explanation

Process

Material- resources

Constraints on a hand out or guidance

Time constraints

Increased footfall

Many customers at the same time

Environment

Crowded front office

Availability of beds

NPS DIP

Reasons for the Dip in the NPS	Solutions
• Poor Knowledge of the team members on NPS • Unequipped to handle pressure • Poor ownership of process • Lack of empathy • Long waiting time for the bed allocation	• Introduction of AIDET tool • Introduction of SHARE Method • Introduction of Scripts • Continuation of training on focused communication, empathy, and handling of query • Implementation of technology to get the bed vacates on process

Figure 1.4 Fish Bone Diagram

Root cause analysis (RCA) is a structured process that helps find the cause of a problem and come up with a solution to stop it from happening again. Many industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, and facilities maintenance, use RCA. Define the problem, collect data to support it, identify potential root causes, determine the root cause, and apply solutions. RCA adopts a holistic approach, seeking to eliminate problems at their source rather than merely managing their consequences. If removal stops a problem from repeating, it is considered the root cause.

Analyzed the strength, weakness, opportunity and treats of the net promoter scores in relation to the focused communication, and same is shown below:

SWOT Analysis:
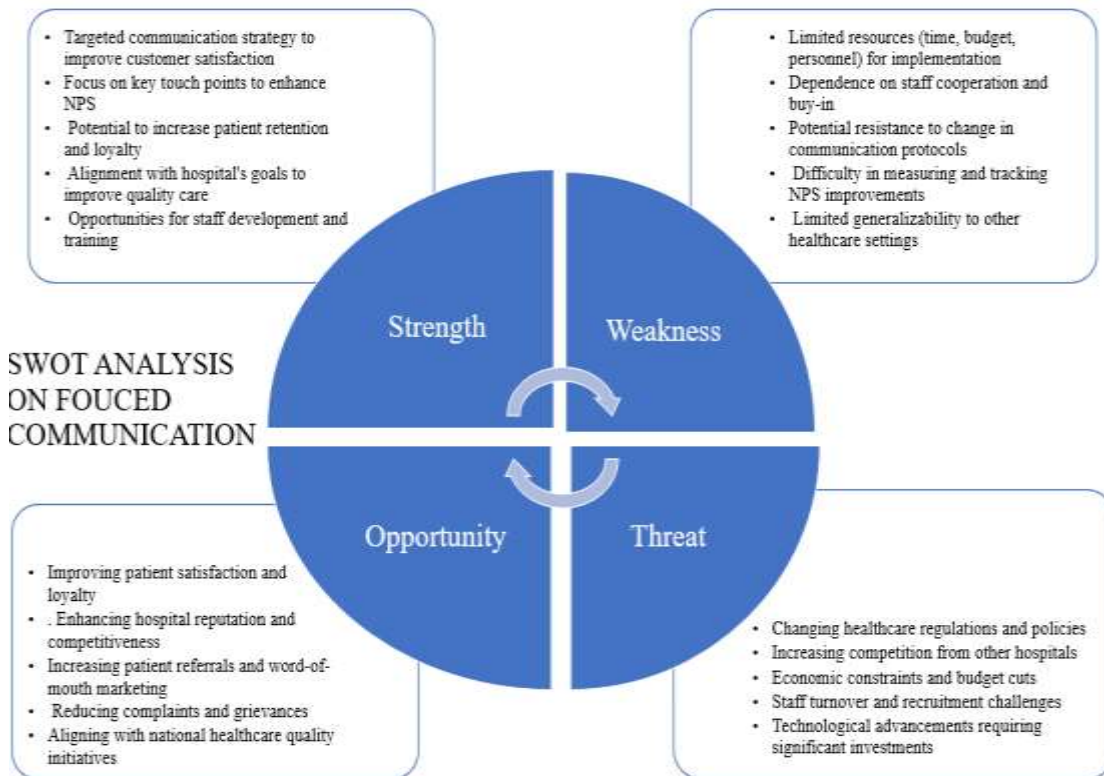
Figure:1.5   SWOT analysis

1.2 Research Problem

In a private hospital in India, it was noted that customer satisfaction scores were fluctuating. This was specifically due to the satisfaction scores certain departments got, which was way beyond the expected scores, and when the average score was taken, it was not meeting up the expected scores. To have it addressed, and to have a satisfying experience given to each of the patients at every touch point of the hospital, this study is taken up. Communication of the front ending employees is an important soft skill. This would impact the overall satisfaction of the customer; in a hospital the external customers

are its patients and their family. The need for focused communication was thought about and was initiated to address the similar issues in the nursing department of Manipal hospital Whitefield. The intervention worked so well, that the Net Promoter Score of the nursing department started rising, and has consistently reached the score above 75. Assuming the focused and targeted communication style practiced by the nursing team is spread across to other functions, a similar result could be attained. This is the reason for choosing this study.

The retention of existing customers is critical to any business for its sustenance, healthcare is no exception to it. There is a lot of effort needed to get new customers. Whereas the existing customer continues to avail of the service, the goodwill increases, and the loyal customers avail the service again from the same facility or the service. Healthcare too would benefit from the loyalty of the customers when it makes every interaction a memorable one to its customers.

The purpose of this study mainly focused on how customer satisfaction in a hospital can be enhanced through focused communication of its employees. In healthcare settings, the customers are the patients and their family. The patients' needs to be nursed to health. As the Nurses are with the patient 24/7, 365 days, and the communication of the nurses matters a lot to have happy customers. It was brought out that the patient is predominantly not happy due to the following reasons about nursing.

1. The explanation about a procedure or a movement of a patient is not done appropriately
2. The delays in call bell attendance or availability
3. The attitude of the nurse or Patience of the nurses
4. Pro-activeness of the Nurse in anticipating the needs of patients

Though the reasons mentioned are four, it will all pin down one specific issue, communication. This was addressed through the hourly purposeful rounding with the specific checkpoints through specific focused communication. When this initiative was introduced, there was a notable positive change in the customer satisfaction scores obtained

by the nursing department. Similarly, if other touch points such as the front office too are focused on communication, the net promoter scores can be improved, and thus overall customer satisfaction could be taken to great heights. For the business to thrive the organization needs its customer speaking well about its products and services. The Net Promoter Score is a vital benchmark that gauges customer satisfaction and predicts the probability of customer retention and long-term loyalty. Many times, the employees are unaware of the impact they make knowingly or unknowingly through their interactions. The employees may not be even aware of the importance of the NPS to its business. The dearth of knowledge on this important subject is detrimental. It is essential that the staff and employees are trained on the NPS, and the impact it has on the business. Effective communication is crucial to customer satisfaction.

Despite the importance of effective communication in healthcare, many healthcare organizations in particular hospitals struggle to improve patient satisfaction and loyalty, as measured by Net Promoter Score (NPS). The current communication strategies may not be adequately addressing patient needs and expectations, leading to suboptimal NPS scores. This study seeks to examine the effectiveness of a tailored communication strategy, strategically targeting key patient journey touchpoints, in driving improvements in Net Promoter Score (NPS) and fostering enhanced patient satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

1.3 Purpose of Research

To improve the net promoter scores in the hospital through focused communication at specific touch points. It is a kind of replication of the intervention, which resulted in achieving the expected Net Promoter Scores of the nursing team, which contributed to the overall increase of the NPS. Awareness and training of the nurses of the same organization, yielded the desired outcome. This study is done to improve the focus on the customer in terms of their perceived and unperceived needs through communication, at specific touch points. These touch points were selected, as these areas were identified through the analysis of the voice of the customer. It was important to business that these touch points to achieve

the expected levels of customer satisfaction, to get an overall good net promoter scores. As positive word of mouth is crucial for the sustenance of the business. Effective communication is crucial in healthcare settings, where patients' concerns, anxieties, and expectations need to be addressed promptly and empathetically, even at the front office. Private hospitals, in particular, faces an intense competition and must prioritize customer satisfaction to maintain loyalty and reputation. This study seeks to offer actionable insights and evidence-based strategies to enable private hospitals to optimize communication, boost customer satisfaction, and achieve sustainable business growth. This research investigated the impact of effective communication on customer satisfaction in a private hospital, in India. This study aims to identify key touch points where communication significantly influences patient satisfaction, evaluate current communication practices, and develop targeted interventions to enhance communication and customer satisfaction.

The purposes of the research are as below:

1. To Identify key communication gaps and pain points at specific touch point that impact patient satisfaction and NPS.
2. To Design and implement a targeted communication framework to address these gaps and improve patient satisfaction.
3. To Evaluate the effectiveness of the framework in improving NPS and patient loyalty.
4. To Provide recommendations for hospitals to implement similar frameworks, enhancing patient-centered communication and driving business growth through improved NPS.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Every thriving business focuses on its customers. Healthcare business is no exception. Our hospital too wants its customers to choose us every time when they need assistance. It was identified that due to the poor scoring of a few departments, the overall net promoter scores were dwindling, and were not stable. When the NPS of the nursing department was improved through focused and proactive communication, it was chosen to try the similar

method through educating the team members on the importance of customer focus, NPS and its direct impact to the business. The team was made aware of the importance of communication, and the importance of change in their approach. These small changes made a noticeable difference in the NPS of those departments. Thus, the overall net promoter scores at large.

This study is significant because it addresses a critical gap in the literature on patient-centered communication in healthcare settings at specific touch points especially in private hospitals in India. By developing and testing a framework for improving Net Promoter Score (NPS) through focused communication at the front office being one of the significant touch points, this research aims to enhance patient satisfaction and loyalty (Reichheld, 2003). Successful communication at this critical juncture can yield enhanced patient outcomes, higher patient retention rates, and favorable recommendations through word-of-mouth, as supported by research (Stewart et al., 2000). Furthermore, this study's findings can inform hospital administrators and healthcare professionals on strategies to improve patient-centered communication, ultimately driving business growth through improved Net Promoter Scores (Kotler et al., 2009). This research enriches the current literature by developing a robust and tailored framework to enhance communication practices specifically within the Indian private hospital sector. The findings will have practical implications for healthcare professionals, administrators, and policymakers seeking to enhance customer satisfaction, patient outcomes, and business performance in private hospitals.

1.5 Research Purpose and Research Questions

1. To Identify key communication gaps and pain points at the front office, as it is the face of the organization. The customer makes their first non-clinical contact at the front office.
2. Design and implement a targeted communication framework to address these gaps and improve patient satisfaction.
3. To Evaluate the effectiveness of the framework in improving NPS and patient loyalty

4. To Provide recommendations for hospitals to implement similar frameworks, enhancing patient-centered communication and driving business growth through improved NPS.

The following research questions answered through this study.

1. How useful is focused communication to enhance customer satisfaction in private hospitals?
2. Why communication in the healthcare industry is important and what is its impact on business?
3. How can customer satisfaction be enhanced through focused communication at specific touch points?
4. How does communication influence customer satisfaction in specific touch points?

CHAPTER II:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As per Mahatma Gandhi, the "customer is the most important person in any premises". Any successful business wants its customer to come back to them again, again. In the words of Steve Jobs "You have to get started with the customer experience, and work backward with the technology, and not the other way round" A satisfied customer is the brand ambassador. The basics of every business remain the same, that the customer brings the business. What the customer says about a business matter to the business. As when they are happy, they will talk about the business to few people, when they are not, it will reach many more in multiplication. It is not different in healthcare facilities. Customer satisfaction is the measurement of adherence to the expectation, and the fulfilment of the expectation. Many times, it is noted that the gap in communication is the major reason for the customer not being satisfied with the services.

The experience the patient receives at every touch point matters for the overall satisfaction during the encounter or stay. If there are challenges foretold, it would help them modify their perception, as they know what to expect. Communication at every touch point makes a huge difference to the patient to make the event a satisfying one. Burgener (2017) highlights the imperative for healthcare organizations to adopt a communication-centric approach, as the ongoing rise in adverse events and sentinel events due to ineffective communication necessitates a paradigm shift towards prioritizing effective communication, patient safety, and experience, ultimately driving financial success. Studies have found that high NPS scores are linked to improved patient satisfaction and loyalty in healthcare settings, as demonstrated by Smith (2020). Research suggests that NPS is a useful indicator of patient experience, enabling healthcare providers to identify areas for improvement as suggested by Brown et al., (2018). Hospitals with high NPS

scores tend to have higher patient satisfaction ratings and improved quality of care, as reported by the American Hospital Association (2020). Measuring patient satisfaction via NPS is essential for improving healthcare services, as highlighted by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (2019). The importance of effective communication in healthcare settings cannot be overstated. As patients' expectations and demands for quality care continue to rise, private hospitals face increasing pressure to deliver exceptional customer experiences. Communication is a critical component of patient satisfaction, influencing patients' perceptions of care quality, trust, and loyalty. Despite its significance, communication breakdowns remain a common occurrence in healthcare, leading to decreased patient satisfaction, negative word-of-mouth, and ultimately, business losses.

A growing body of research highlights the correlation between effective communication and patient satisfaction, emphasizing the need for healthcare providers to prioritize patient-centred communication. This literature review endeavours to consolidate and analyse existing research on communication's influence on patient satisfaction in private hospitals, uncovering pivotal themes, research gaps, and evidence-based strategies to guide tailored communication solutions. Through a critical examination of the current evidence base, this review establishes a foundational framework for understanding the intricate dynamics between effective communication, patient satisfaction, and business performance in the private hospital setting.

2.1.1 Literature review - An extension to the healthcare sector

According to Scotti et al. (2017), high-performance work environments are linked to improved patient satisfaction. This study reveals that healthcare managers can foster loyal customers by delivering exceptional patient services, driven by a high-involvement work environment that empowers employees. Analyzing 113 Veterans Health Administration ambulatory care centers, the research demonstrates a strong correlation between employee perceptions, service quality, and patient satisfaction, underscoring the critical role of staff productivity in driving customer loyalty in healthcare settings.

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The research Gap:

Although this study establishes a connection between healthcare worker perception, productivity, and customer satisfaction, it does not specify which categories or levels of healthcare employees (e.g., nurses, administrators, or physicians) are particularly influential in driving these outcomes.

1. Touchpoint-specific analysis: The article focuses on the overall service quality and customer satisfaction, but doesn't delve into specific touchpoints. A research gap exists in exploring how focused communication at touchpoints impacts NPS.

2. High-performance work environment's influence on touchpoint communication: The article discusses the high-performance work environment's impact on service quality and customer satisfaction. However, it doesn't examine how this environment influences communication at specific touchpoints, leaving a research gap.

3. NPS-specific outcomes: The article measures customer satisfaction, but not NPS specifically. A research gap exists in investigating how focused communication at touchpoints affects NPS scores.

4. Healthcare sector-specific touchpoint communication: While the article focuses on the healthcare sector, it doesn't explore touchpoint-specific communication strategies. A research gap exists in developing a framework for improving NPS through focused communication at specific touchpoints.

5. Quantifying the impact of touchpoint communication on NPS: The article doesn't provide quantitative data on the impact of touchpoint communication on NPS. A research gap exists in measuring and analyzing the effect of focused communication on NPS scores.

2.1.2 Literature review - Model development of nursing service loyalty

Ahsan et al. (2019), indicates that nursing service loyalty is an important aspect of healthcare. This research aimed to create a predictive model for enhancing patient loyalty to nursing services. Utilizing the SERVQUAL and American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) frameworks, the researchers identified 132 influential factors and surveyed 34 nurses to assess customer expectations, service quality, perceived value, and overall satisfaction. The findings suggest that proactive fulfilment of patient expectations is crucial for delivering high-quality nursing services and achieving customer satisfaction.

The research Gap:

1. The existing study focuses on nursing services loyalty, whereas the proposed research encompasses a broader scope, including all aspects of private hospital services.

2. While existing research overlooks the specific relationship between communication and customer satisfaction, the present study focuses squarely on exploring the impact of effective communication on customer satisfaction, addressing this critical knowledge gap.

3. The existing study develops a model for nursing service loyalty, whereas the proposed research aims to design and implement a targeted communication framework to address communication gaps and improve patient satisfaction.

It addresses only one specific set of employees in the hospital, and the importance of communication is never considered in the study

2.1.3 Literature review - Malaysia's healthcare sector

As noted by Ndubisi (2012), mindfulness is an important factor in conflict handling in healthcare. Applied mindfulness theory to investigate how service reliability, proactive conflict resolution, and customer-centric approaches influence customer satisfaction and loyalty in Malaysia's healthcare sector. Analysing data from 423 healthcare consumers, the

research revealed that reliable care and information, conflict prevention, and customer orientation directly impact customer satisfaction, which in turn drives loyalty. Notably, customer satisfaction fully mediates the relationships between these factors and loyalty, underscoring its pivotal role in fostering loyalty among healthcare customers.

The research Gap: This study speaks about certain aspects of the customer expectation and conflicts management However it doesn't give a wholesome picture as how the employee behaviour impacts the customer satisfaction.

1. While Ndubisi's study examines mindfulness, reliability, conflict handling, and customer orientation as drivers of healthcare outcomes in Malaysia, this current research narrows its focus to investigate the distinct impact of effective communication on customer satisfaction specifically within the private hospital setting.

2. Examines a broader range of factors influencing outcomes, whereas the proposed study concentrates on communication as the primary variable.

3. Investigates outcomes in general, whereas the proposed research specifically targets customer satisfaction, Net Promoter Score (NPS), and patient loyalty.

4. Is conducted in Malaysia's healthcare sector, whereas this study is focused on private hospitals in India.

5. Does not specifically investigate the role of communication at key touch points, nor does it design and implement a targeted communication framework to address communication gaps, which is a primary focus of the proposed research.

2.1.4   Literature review - Patient Satisfaction Survey

Al-Abri and Al-Balushi (2017) Overall, the study provides valuable insights into patient satisfaction with healthcare services in Oman and highlights areas for improvement to

enhance patient experience. This highlights the growing significance of patient satisfaction surveys over the past two decades as vital instruments for identifying quality gaps and guiding healthcare organizations' improvement strategies. Despite their importance, surprisingly few studies have assessed the tangible outcomes of implementing patient satisfaction survey feedback, with existing research yielding inconsistent results. This article conducts an in-depth examination of key research studies, exploring the complex relationships between influential factors affecting patient satisfaction and its impact on quality improvement initiatives within healthcare settings.

The research Gap: This study speaks about the customer satisfaction surveys. But the results of the surveys have never been published. Thus, it is unclear what to learn from the survey as it is not clear what the patient expects from the provider or the healthcare organisation.

1. NPS focus: The article focuses on patient satisfaction surveys, but doesn't specifically address NPS or its improvement. A research gap exists in exploring how patient satisfaction surveys can be used to improve NPS.

2. Touchpoint-specific analysis: The article discusses patient satisfaction surveys in general, but doesn't examine specific touchpoints. A research gap exists in identifying and prioritizing critical touchpoints for focused communication.

3. Communication strategies: The article emphasizes the importance of patient satisfaction surveys for quality improvement but doesn't provide specific communication strategies for improving NPS. A research gap exists in developing effective communication approaches for specific touchpoints.

4. Quantifying NPS impact: The article doesn't quantify the impact of patient satisfaction surveys on NPS. A research gap exists in measuring and analyzing the effect of focused communication on NPS scores.

5. Integration with existing frameworks: The article presents a standalone approach to patient satisfaction surveys. A research gap exists in integrating this approach with existing frameworks for improving NPS, such as touchpoint analysis and communication strategies.

2.1.5   Literature review - Indian private healthcare

Kondasani and Panda (2015), observed that the customer perceived service quality is an important factor in determining satisfaction and loyalty in healthcare. This study investigates how perceived service quality and satisfaction drive loyalty to healthcare providers. The findings reveal that strong relationships between healthcare seekers and providers, quality facilities, and positive interactions with support staff significantly enhance customer perception, ultimately fostering loyalty. These insights provide healthcare managers with actionable strategies to enhance service quality, improve customer satisfaction, and build long-term loyalty.

The research Gap: The study speaks about the customer-provider connects, and how the infrastructure of the facility would help the customer satisfaction. The customer expectation on the soft aspect of its employee is not mentioned.

1. NPS focus: The study focuses on service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty, but doesn't specifically address NPS or its improvement. A research gap exists in exploring how service quality and satisfaction can be leveraged to improve NPS.

2. Touchpoint-specific analysis: The study examines customer perceptions of service quality, but doesn't identify specific touchpoints. A research gap exists in analyzing how focused communication at specific touchpoints impacts NPS.

3. Communication strategies: The study emphasizes the importance of service quality, but doesn't provide specific communication strategies for improving NPS. A research gap exists in developing effective communication approaches for specific touchpoints.

4. Quantifying NPS impact: The study doesn't quantify the impact of service quality and satisfaction on NPS. A research gap exists in measuring and analyzing the effect of focused communication on NPS scores.

5. Private hospital context: While the study focuses on Indian private healthcare, it doesn't specifically address the unique challenges and opportunities of private hospitals. A research gap exists in developing a framework tailored to the private hospital context.

6. Framework development: The study presents findings on service quality and satisfaction, but doesn't develop a comprehensive framework for improving NPS. A research gap exists in creating a structured approach to increase NPS through focused communication at specific touchpoints.

2.1.6   Literature review - Healthscope role

As per Sahoo and Ghosh (2016), healthscope plays a significant role in customer satisfaction in private healthcare. This work provides pivotal insights for existing and prospective healthcare developers seeking to establish a presence in India. The research offers strategic guidelines for effective service positioning and market segmentation tailored to customer needs. Historically, healthcare consumers prioritized timely, quality services; however, this study identifies key dimensions for a distinctive healthcare experience, shedding light on the private healthcare delivery process in India and customer satisfaction levels. Notably, this work contributes to the limited existing research on this topic, informing healthcare providers on how to enhance customer satisfaction.

The research Gap: The study identifies the set of dimensions that are pertaining to customer satisfaction in a broader way. However, the behavioral aspects of the staff is not identified or discussed. The study emphasizes the importance of Healthscope in customer satisfaction, but doesn't provide specific communication strategies for improving NPS. A research gap exists in developing effective communication approaches for specific touchpoints.

Quantifying NPS impact: The study doesn't quantify the impact of Healthscope on NPS. A research gap exists in measuring and analyzing the effect of focused communication on NPS scores.

Private hospital context: While the study focuses on private healthcare, it doesn't specifically address the unique challenges and opportunities of private hospitals. A research gap exists in developing a framework tailored to the private hospital context.

Framework development: The study presents findings on Healthscope and customer satisfaction, but doesn't develop a comprehensive framework for improving NPS. A research gap exists in creating a structured approach to increase NPS through focused communication at specific touchpoints.

Lack of empirical evidence: The study doesn't provide empirical evidence on the impact of focused communication on NPS. A research gap exists in conducting empirical research to validate the framework.

2.1.7 Literature review - Improve customer satisfaction

Gonzalez (2019), argues that understanding customer needs is crucial for improving customer satisfaction in healthcare facilities. This literature emphasizes the pivotal role of provider-customer interaction in service-oriented businesses. The research highlights the critical link between trust in service quality and customer satisfaction, particularly in interpersonal service encounters. Addressing a literature gap, this study develops standardized lean-based methodologies rooted in customer experiences to enhance satisfaction. By leveraging total quality management tools, including Quality Function Deployment (QFD), benchmarking, and House of Quality Key Performance Parameters (HKPP), practitioners can effectively gather and address customer expectations, fostering loyalty and satisfaction. The study's findings underscore the importance of considering accessibility, sustainability, and customer needs in service design, providing valuable insights for healthcare professionals and organizations seeking to improve customer satisfaction.

The research Gap: Above study identifies the relation between customer satisfaction and the interaction between its customers and providers. Specific interactions of specific groups of staff members are not being referred to.

1. **Lack of focus on NPS:** The study focuses on customer satisfaction, but doesn't specifically address NPS or its improvement.

2. **No clear identification of touchpoints:** The study emphasizes understanding customer needs, but doesn't identify specific touchpoints for focused communication.

3. **No framework for communication strategy:** The study doesn't provide a comprehensive framework for developing a communication strategy to improve NPS.

4. **Limited context**: The study focuses on healthcare facilities in general, without specifically addressing the unique challenges and opportunities of private hospitals.

5. **No empirical evidence on NPS improvement:** The study doesn't provide empirical evidence on how focused communication at specific touchpoints can improve NPS in private hospitals.

6. **No clear prioritization of touchpoints:** The study doesn't prioritize touchpoints based on their impact on NPS, making it unclear where to focus communication efforts.

7. **No consideration of patient segmentation**: The study doesn't consider patient segmentation, which could help tailor communication strategies to specific patient groups.

2.1.8   Literature review - Determinants of customer satisfaction

As noted by Chalikias et al. (2016), several factors determine customer satisfaction in the healthcare industry. This study explores the measurement and evaluation of customer satisfaction and its influence on loyalty, with a specific focus on home nursing services provided by the Hellenic Red Cross.

The research Gap: This study analysed the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty, specifically within the context of home nursing services, revealing a correlation between the two, albeit with a narrow focus on this single aspect of healthcare.

1. Limited generalizability: The study focuses on a single organization (Hellenic Red Cross), which does not represent the broader healthcare industry or private hospitals.

2. Narrow scope: The study explores a specific set of determinants (e.g., quality of care, staff behaviour, facilities), but may not consider other crucial factors like effective communication, patient engagement, or technology adoption.

3. Lack of communication focus: This study overlooks a crucial dimension of healthcare services: the influence of effective communication on customer satisfaction, leaving a significant knowledge gap in understanding the interconnectedness of these key factors.

4. No development of a communication framework: The study does not design or implement a targeted communication framework to address communication gaps and improve patient satisfaction.

5. Limited consideration of patient loyalty and retention: The study focuses on customer satisfaction but may not explore the relationship between satisfaction and patient loyalty or retention.

6. Regional limitation: The study is conducted in Greece, which may have different cultural, social, or healthcare contexts compared to other regions.

2.1.9   Literature review - Establish Customers Satisfaction

Mahadi et al. (2017), noted that customer satisfaction is a crucial aspect of the healthcare industry. This study investigates the pivotal roles of lean management and employee satisfaction in driving customer satisfaction. The research reveals that lean management's process standardization and simplification enhance employee satisfaction by eliminating

unnecessary workload, ultimately leading to improved customer satisfaction and organizational performance.

The research Gap: This speaks about the correlation between lean management towards employee satisfaction, and which interns resulted in customer satisfaction. Communication as an integral part of customer satisfaction is not discussed.

1. Lack of focus on NPS: The study focuses on customer satisfaction, but doesn't specifically address NPS or its improvement.

2. No clear identification of touchpoints: The study emphasizes understanding customer needs, but doesn't identify specific touchpoints for focused communication.

3. No framework for communication strategy: The study provides general strategies for improving customer satisfaction, but doesn't offer a comprehensive framework for developing a communication strategy to improve NPS.

4. Limited context: The study focuses on the healthcare industry in general, without specifically addressing the unique challenges and opportunities of private hospitals.

5. No empirical evidence on NPS improvement: The study doesn't provide empirical evidence on how focused communication at specific touchpoints can improve NPS in private hospitals.

6. No consideration of patient segmentation: The study doesn't consider patient segmentation, which could help tailor communication strategies to specific patient groups.

7. No clear prioritization of communication channels: The study doesn't prioritize communication channels based on their impact on customer satisfaction and NPS.

9. No consideration of staff training and empowerment: The study doesn't discuss the importance of staff training and empowerment in delivering high-quality communication and improving NPS.

2.1.10 Literature review - Tool Towards Quality

According to Al-Abri and Al-Balushi (2014), patient satisfaction surveys can be an effective tool for quality improvement. This conducts an in-depth analysis of existing research studies to explore the complex relationships between key factors influencing patient satisfaction and its subsequent impact on quality improvement initiatives within healthcare organizations.

 The research Gap: This study discusses the relationship of quality and customer satisfaction. However, the other soft aspect of customer satisfaction is not touched upon.

1. Lack of focus on NPS: The study focuses on patient satisfaction, but doesn't specifically address NPS or its improvement.

2. No clear identification of touchpoints: The study uses a general patient satisfaction survey, but doesn't identify specific touchpoints for focused communication.

3. No framework for communication strategy: The study emphasizes the importance of patient satisfaction surveys, but doesn't provide a comprehensive framework for developing a communication strategy to improve NPS.

4. Limited context: The study focuses on a specific hospital in Oman, without generalizing findings to private hospitals.

5. No empirical evidence on NPS improvement: The study doesn't provide empirical evidence on how focused communication at specific touchpoints can improve NPS.

6. No consideration of patient segmentation: The study doesn't consider patient segmentation, which could help tailor communication strategies.

7. No discussion of technology-enabled communication: The study doesn't explore technology-enabled communication to enhance patient satisfaction and NPS.

8. No clear prioritization of communication channels: The study doesn't prioritize communication channels based on their impact on patient satisfaction and NPS.

9. No consideration of staff training and empowerment: The study doesn't discuss staff training and empowerment in delivering high-quality communication.

10. No longitudinal study: It is a cross-sectional survey, which did not assess the long-term impact of focused communication on NPS.

2.1.11 Literature review - Strategic Framework

Birkelien (2017), proposes that a strategic framework is essential for improving the patient experience in hospitals. This highlights hospitals' shifting focus towards patient-centered care, driven by value-based reimbursement models and patient satisfaction scores (HCAHPS). As hospitals strive to meet evolving consumer expectations, this essay advocates for a comprehensive approach extending beyond HCAHPS measures, integrating patient perspectives to deliver high-quality outcomes that meet patients' diverse needs and preferences, and prioritizing exceptional patient experiences as a strategic imperative.

The research Gap: Improvement of Overall customer satisfaction in the hospital through various departments is not discussed. No specific focus on communication strategies: The study provides a general framework for improving patient experience, but doesn't specifically focus on communication strategies to improve NPS.

2.1.12 Literature review - Focused Communication

Constand et al. (2014), noted that focused communication in healthcare settings has been the subject of various research studies. This review focused communication is crucial in healthcare to improve patient outcomes, satisfaction, and safety. Despite its critical role in healthcare, effective focused communication remains poorly understood, with significant knowledge gaps hindering its optimal implementation and impact. BMC Health Services Research categorized into three themes:

1. Patient-centered communication (e.g., patient engagement, shared decision-making).
2. Inter-professional communication (e.g., teamwork, handovers).
3. Organizational communication (e.g., leadership, policies).

   Focused communication is essential for improving patient satisfaction, safety, and health outcomes. Effective communication strategies include active listening, empathy, and clear information exchange. Barriers to focused communication include time constraints, language barriers, and technological issues. Focused communication is critical in healthcare, and this scoping review highlights its importance and existing research gaps. The article provides a comprehensive overview of focused communication in healthcare, highlighting its significance, existing research, and areas for future investigation.

The research Gap:

1.Lack of research on focused communication in private hospitals: The review primarily focuses on public healthcare settings, leaving a gap in understanding focused communication in private hospitals.

2. Insufficient attention to touchpoints: The article highlights the importance of identifying key touchpoints for focused communication, but notes a gap in research on this specific aspect.

3. Limited evaluation of communication interventions: The review notes that few studies evaluate the effectiveness of communication interventions, making it difficult to determine best practices for improving NPS.

4. Need for more research on staff training and development: The article emphasizes the importance of staff training, but notes a gap in research on effective training programs for improving focused communication skills.

5. Gaps in understanding patient-centered communication: The review highlights the importance of patient-centered communication, but notes a gap in research on patient-led or patient-centered communication initiatives.

6. Limited attention to digital communication channels: The article notes a gap in research on digital communication channels (e.g., email, patient portals) in healthcare, which could be relevant to private hospitals.

7. Need for more research on NPS-specific communication strategies: The review does not specifically address NPS, leaving a gap in understanding communication strategies that can improve NPS in private hospitals.

8. Gaps in understanding staff training and development: There is a need for more research on effective training and development programs for healthcare staff to improve focused communication skills.

2.1.13 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review concludes that though there are literatures available on the patient experience and patient satisfaction across the healthcare settings overseas, there are only a few literatures available indigenously, especially in a private sector of healthcare industry. The available literature speaks about the patient satisfaction across the care continuum minus the front office. However, these are the gaps noticed in the review through the available literature.

- Lack of focus on Net Promoter Score (NPS) improvement through focused communication at specific touchpoints in private hospitals.
- Limited identification of specific touchpoints for focused communication to improve NPS.
- No empirical evidence on how focused communication at specific touchpoints can improve NPS in private hospitals.
- Limited consideration of patient segmentation and staff training and empowerment in improving NPS.
- No comprehensive framework for developing a communication strategy to improve NPS in private hospitals.
- No longitudinal studies assessing the long-term impact of focused communication on NPS.

This study aims to bridge existing research gaps and develop a comprehensive framework for enhancing Net Promoter Score (NPS) through targeted communication at key touchpoints in private hospitals. By ensuring a seamless, patient-centered experience through coordinated care and proactive, query-specific communication, hospitals can exceed patient expectations, leading to exceptional customer delight. Despite extensive global research on patient experience and satisfaction, India's private healthcare sector lacks sufficient indigenous studies, highlighting the need for localized insights to inform effective communication strategies and improve patient outcomes. Available literature speaks about patient satisfaction across the care continuum minus the front office. A patient's hospital experience is significantly enhanced when they receive seamless, team-based care, characterized by coordinated and patient-centered services delivered by collaborative healthcare staff throughout their entire stay. When they communicate in a focused manner considering the query of the patients in a proactive manner that is when the customer experience is improved towards exceeding their expectations and the customer delight. The improved customer satisfaction would result in improved NPS and customer loyalty. Improved customer loyalty would increase the customer stickiness, that would result in positive business outcomes.

Justification for further study

1. Limited research in healthcare: While NPS is widely used in various industries, there is a scarcity of research on its application in healthcare, particularly in private hospitals in India.

2. Limited study conducted in INDIA on the customer satisfaction, NPS scores, specific touch points analysis, or any recommendation or creation of a specific frame work

3. Importance of patients satisfaction:
   Customer satisfaction is crucial in healthcare, and NPS is a key metric for measuring it. Enhancing Net Promoter Score (NPS) fosters long-term patient relationships, driving loyalty, retention, and enthusiastic recommendations, ultimately fuelling a hospital's reputation through positive word-of-mouth.

4. Impact of communication on NPS: Effective communication is critical in healthcare, and focused communication at specific touchpoints can significantly influence patient satisfaction and NPS.

5. Variability in touchpoint experiences: Patients interact with multiple touchpoints during their hospital stay, and each touchpoint presents an opportunity to improve or detract from their experience.

6. Lack of standardized frameworks: Currently, there is no standardized framework for improving NPS through focused communication in private hospitals, especially in INDIA highlighting the need for a structured approach.

7. Potential for cost savings: Improving NPS can lead to increased patient loyalty, reducing acquisition costs and improving resource allocation.

8. Competitive advantage: Private hospitals can differentiate themselves by prioritizing patient satisfaction and NPS, leading to a competitive advantage in the market.

9. Generalizability to other healthcare settings: The insights gained from this research have broader implications and can be extrapolated to inform quality improvement initiatives across various healthcare settings, including public hospitals, outpatient clinics, and long-term care facilities like nursing homes.

10. Contribution to patient-centered care: This study aligns with the principles of keeping patient as the centre of care, emphasizing the importance of understanding, and addressing patient needs and preferences. As they are the reason for the existence of every healthcare facility.

11. Opportunity for interdisciplinary collaboration: This research can foster collaboration among healthcare professionals, administrators, and communication experts, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of patient satisfaction and NPS.

These justifications highlight the significance and potential impact of further study on improving the Net Promoter Scores through focused communication in private hospitals in India.

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods, to assess the effectiveness of targeted communication strategies at key touchpoints within a private hospital setting.

Quantitative Phase: Survey Design

Participants: A diverse sample of patients as customers, the frontend staff, and the top management. Sample size of 375 patients, 43 staff, and 8 Top management executives were selected

Inclusion Criteria

- The patients who avail the service of the hospital, who speak English
- The staff who are at direct interaction with the patients at the front office, and
- The TOP management who makes the strategic decisions. This includes the hospital director of Manipal hospital White field, the medical superintendent, the chief nursing officer, head operations, head marketing, and finance, head human resource are chosen

Exclusion criteria

The patient who doesn't speak English, the staff who newly inducted in to the organization

Instrument: A structured questionnaire comprising Likert-scale items and closed-ended questions.

Data Collection: Online survey distribution through professional healthcare networks and associations.

Sample Size: The patient data was statistically analysed to ensure reliability, with a confidence level set at 95% and an acceptable margin of error limited to 5%.

Qualitative Phase: Open ended questions

Participants: A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to selectively recruit survey respondents for follow-up, in-depth interviews, allowing for more nuanced exploration of key themes.

Instrument: A semi-structured interview framework was designed to explore the subtle, underlying factors that influence attitudes, allowing for in-depth and insightful responses.

Data Collection: Survey forms Likert-scale items

Comparative Analysis: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Data Integration: Triangulation of findings to identify convergent and divergent patterns.

Thematic Analysis: Qualitative data is subjected to thematic analysis for emergent themes.

Statistical Analysis: Quantitative data is analysed using statistical software for patterns and correlations. SPSS, Two-way ANOVA and CRONBACH ALPHA

Schedule of the study/Gantt chart		
Phase	Activities	Time line
Preliminary Planning	Define research questions and objectives	1st month
Quantitative phase	Develop Pilot and survey questionnaires'	2nd month
	Secure Ethical approval	3rd month
	Distribute questionnaires	3rd month
	Data collection and analysis	4th, 5th month
Qualitative phase	Develop Interview guide	6th Month
	Identify and conduct the interviews	7th month
	Conduct and transcribe interviews	7 th month
	Thematic analysis of the qualitative data	8th month
Data Integration	Triangulate findings from quantitative and qualitative data's	9th month
	Comparative analysis and synthesis of findings	10th month
Report writing	Drafting of research findings and conclusions	11th month
Review and finalization	Review/ feedback/revisions	12th month
Submission of final report to authority		12th month.

Table 2.1 - Research schedule - Schedule of the study/Gantt chart

(There may be a change of plan owing to unforeseen circumstances)

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1   Fred Reichheld's Loyalty Framework:

NPS is based on Fred Reichheld's work on customer loyalty, which emphasizes the importance of creating loyal customers who drive growth through retention, referrals, and revenue growth.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) serves as a key metric for assessing customer satisfaction and loyalty, quantifying the likelihood of patients to recommend a healthcare provider. This metric is developed by Fred Reichheld. The proponents of the NPS suggests that the net promoter scores help an organization to stay focused and work on areas which required improvement in its product or its services. The origin of the concept called Net Promoter Score (NPS) dates to December 2003, when it was first introduced by Reichheld (2003) in a Harvard Business Review article titled "The One Number You Need to Grow". Since then, NPS has rapidly spread around the world. NPS has given insight on how the work of the   organization   has   improved   the   lives   of   the   customer.

The three major components of NPS are

1. **Promoters:** Promoter's scores are 9 and 10. They are customers who are happy with the services and products. The promoters could positively become the brand ambassadors through word of mouth. They could influence their friends and family for the brand.
2. **Passives:** Passives scores are 7 and 8. They are the customers who don't want to Commend on the service or products. They feel they got what they paid for, and nothing else. They could either become positive or become Negative depending upon their mood. It is important that the organisation quickly analyse the scores and turn them to be positive.
3. **Detractors:** Detractors scores below 6 are of detractors. Detractors are negative scores, which is given by an unhappy customer, who got a bad experience who could

be a bad word of mouth for the brand's reputation and growth. It needs immediate attention to learn from it, and correct it at once.

The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated by subtracting the percentage of dissatisfied customers (Detractors) from the percentage of highly satisfied customers (Promoters), resulting in a score that indicates overall customer loyalty and satisfaction. NPS helps the business to know the customer loyalty and the business Performances. Which can turn a promoter to brand advocate.

Table 2.2 Net Promoter Score (NPS) calculation (adapted from Raileanu, 2024)

Taking note of the behaviour of the customer labelled as earned as against bought will determine the lifetime value the customer brings to the business. This also throws light on the investment decision, expansion strategies etc. According to Kumar and Pansari, (2020), most businesses found retaining the existing customer is far more profitable than getting the new customer.

2.2.2 Customer Satisfaction Theory (CST)

explains how customer satisfaction is influenced by various factors, including expectations, experiences, and perceptions. Oliver, R. L. (1980) proposes a cognitive model of customer satisfaction, arises from the gap between expectations and actual experience, where

perceived performance of a product or service either meets, exceeds, or falls short of anticipated outcomes.

As per Oliver the key points derived are:

Expectations: Customers form expectations before purchasing a product or service.

Performance: Customers evaluate the product or service performance after consumption.

Disconfirmation: The difference between expectations and performance leads to disconfirmation (positive or negative).

Satisfaction: Satisfaction is a result of the disconfirmation process, influenced by individual differences and situational factors.

Consequences: Satisfaction influences future purchase intentions, word-of-mouth, and complaint behavior.

Model Components:

Expectations (E): Customers' beliefs about the product or service before purchasing or using it. Expectations can be based on various factors, such as:

Past experiences

Advertising and marketing messages

Word-of-mouth

Personal needs and desires

Performance (P): The actual experience or outcome of using the product or service. Performance can be evaluated in terms of:

Quality

Features

Benefits

Overall experience

Disconfirmation (D): The difference between Expectations (E) and Performance (P). Disconfirmation can be:

Positive: Performance exceeds Expectations ($P > E$)

Negative: Performance falls short of Expectations ($P < E$)

Zero: Performance meets Expectations (P = E)

Satisfaction (S): The outcome of the disconfirmation process. Satisfaction is a function of Disconfirmation (D) and is influenced by individual differences and situational factors. Satisfaction can be:

High: Positive disconfirmation or meeting expectations

 Low: Negative disconfirmation or unmet expectations

Consequences (C): The outcomes of Satisfaction (S), including:

Future purchase intentions

Word-of-mouth (positive or negative)

Complaint behaviour

Loyalty or Switching behaviour

These components interact to form a dynamic model of satisfaction decisions, highlighting the importance of managing expectations, delivering quality performance, and monitoring customer satisfaction to drive positive consequences

Implications:

- Managers should understand customer expectations and manage them effectively.
- To foster satisfaction, the quality and delivery of products or services must align with, or preferably surpass, customer expectations, ensuring a positive experience.
- Companies should monitor and address customer dissatisfaction.

Oliver's cognitive model provides a foundational framework for understanding customer satisfaction, influencing research and practice in marketing and consumer behavior.

2.2.3   Customer Satisfaction

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2016) defines customer satisfaction as "a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) to their expectations". Kotler and Keller define customer satisfaction as the emotional response (pleasure or disappointment) that results from comparing a product's actual performance to one's expectations.

The Customers form expectations about a product or service

They experience the product's actual performance

They compare the two, leading to feelings of satisfaction (pleasure) or dissatisfaction (disappointment)

Key Points:

Customer satisfaction is an emotional response, not just a rational evaluation

Expectations play a crucial role in shaping satisfaction

Perceived performance (outcome) is compared to expectations to determine satisfaction

Implications:

Companies should understand customer expectations and manage them effectively

Delivering quality performance that meets or exceeds expectations is crucial

Monitoring customer satisfaction helps identify areas for improvement

Customer satisfaction is defined as "a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) to their expectations" This definition highlights the importance of understanding customer expectations and delivering quality performance to drive satisfaction and loyalty.

2.2.4   SERVQUAL model

Parasuraman et al., (1985) introduce the SERVQUAL model, which assesses service quality gaps between customer expectations and perceptions, influencing customer satisfaction.

Gap 1: Difference between customer expectations and management's perception of those expectations

Gap 2: Difference between management's perception of customer expectations and service quality specifications

Gap 3: Difference between service quality specifications and actual service delivery

Gap 4: Difference between actual service delivery and external communications (e.g., advertising)

Gap 5: Difference between customer expectations and perceived service quality

Main theme discussed are:

Service quality is a function of the gaps between customer expectations and perceptions

Closing these gaps is crucial for delivering high-quality service and ensuring customer satisfaction

The SERVQUAL model provides a framework for identifying and addressing service quality gaps

Implications:

Companies should understand customer expectations and manage them effectively

Service quality specifications should be aligned with customer expectations

Actual service delivery should meet or exceed customer expectations

External communications should accurately reflect actual service delivery

SERVQUAL is defined as "a model for assessing service quality gaps between customer expectations and perceptions" This model provides a foundational framework for understanding and improving service quality, highlighting the importance of closing gaps between customer expectations and perceptions to drive customer satisfaction.

NPS is a measure of customer loyalty and satisfaction, calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters (Reichheld, 2003). A study by Harvard Business Review found that companies with high NPS scores tend to have higher customer satisfaction and loyalty rates (Reichheld, 2003)

 Relationship between net promoter score and customer satisfaction: Insight in to the longitudinal impact

A study by Keiningham et al. (2007) investigated the relationship between Net Promoter Score (NPS) and customer satisfaction, providing insights into the longitudinal impact of NPS on firm revenue growth. The study found a significant positive correlation between NPS and CSAT, indicating that customers who are more likely to recommend a product or service are also more satisfied.

NPS predicts customer behavior: The study showed that NPS is a strong predictor of customer intent to return (CIS) and actual customer behavior.

NPS drives revenue growth: The study found a positive relationship between NPS and firm revenue growth, indicating that companies with higher NPS scores tend to experience higher revenue growth.

The study provides evidence that NPS is a valuable metric for measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty, and that it can be used to predict customer behavior and drive business growth. Keiningham et al., (2007) Research has shown that NPS is strongly correlated with customer satisfaction, as it measures the likelihood of customers to recommend a product or service to others

Relationship between net promoter score and customer satisfaction: Cross industry Benchmark study

A study by Net Promoter Score creators, Satmetrix, found that NPS is highly correlated with customer satisfaction metrics such as CSAT (Customer Satisfaction) and CIS (Customer Intent to Return). Satmetrix Systems, (2011) used a Cross-industry benchmark study using data from over 200 companies across various industries Over 100,000 customers. It was found that High correlation between NPS and CSAT: The study found a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.80$) between NPS and CSAT, indicating that customers who are more likely to recommend a product or service are also more satisfied.

High correlation between NPS and CIS: The study also found a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.85$) between NPS and CIS, indicating that customers who are more likely to recommend a product or service are also more likely to return.

Relationship between net promoter score and customer satisfaction: A useful tool
Gerkovich et al., (2018), this study explores the use of Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a tool to measure patient satisfaction in hospitals. The authors argue that NPS is a simple and effective metric that can help hospitals identify areas for improvement and track changes in patient satisfaction over time. They also discuss the benefits of using NPS, including its ability to provide a comprehensive view of patient satisfaction and its ease of use.

Relationship between net promoter score and customer satisfaction: A systemic review

Lee et al., (2020), this systematic review aimed to examine the relationship between patient satisfaction and Net Promoter Score (NPS) in healthcare settings. The authors searched multiple databases and included 22 studies that reported both patient satisfaction and NPS metrics. The review found a positive correlation between patient satisfaction and NPS, indicating that higher patient satisfaction is associated with higher NPS scores. The authors concluded that NPS can be a useful tool for healthcare organizations to measure patient satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

Relationship between net promoter score and customer satisfaction: A cross sectional study

Jha et al., (2019), this cross-sectional study examined the relationship between Net Promoter Score (NPS) and patient satisfaction in hospitals. The authors collected data from 1,200 patients across 12 hospitals using a standardized survey instrument. The study found a strong positive correlation between NPS and patient satisfaction, with higher NPS scores associated with higher patient satisfaction ratings. The authors also identified specific drivers of NPS, including communication, care coordination, and emotional support. The study concludes that NPS can be a valuable tool for hospitals to measure patient satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

2.3 Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned Action (TRA) is a psychological framework that explains how Attitudes and beliefs influence customers' behaviour. In the context of Net Promoter Score (NPS), TRA can help organisation understand how customer's attitudes and beliefs affect their probabilities of recommending a product or a service.

Null hypothesis: Communication training will not improve customer satisfaction

Alternate hypothesis**:** Communication training will improve customer satisfaction

t-Test:		Mean	Variance	N	df	t Stat	P(T<=t) one-tail	t Critical one-tail	P(T<=t) two-tail	t Critical two-tail
Q 2	PRE	2.930233	0.923588	43	84	- 8.603 09	1.86735E-13	1.663197	3.7347 E-13	1.9886 10
	POST	4.674419	0.843854	43					0.05	
Q 3	PRE	4.372093	0.286822	43	84	- 5.002 972	1.52858E-06	1.663197	3.0572 E-06	1.9886 10
	POST	4.860465	0.122924	43						
Q 4	PRE	4.232558	0.420819	43	84	- 5.296 729	4.65306E-07	1.663197	9.3061 E-07	1.9886 10
	POST	4.837209	0.139535	43						
Q 5	PRE	3.837209	0.520487	43	84	- 7.531 862	2.60139E-11	1.663197	5.2028 E-11	1.9886 10
	POST	4.813953	0.202658	43						
Q 6	PRE	4.581395	0.534884	43	84	- 2.949 857	0.0020589 17	1.663197	0.0041 1783	1.9886 10
	POST	4.930233	0.066445	43						
Q 7	PRE	2.906977	1.181617	43	84	- 10.81 879	6.80307E-18	1.663197	1.3606 E-17	1.9886 10
	POST	4.837209	0.187154	43						
Q 8	PRE	2.813953	1.059801	43	84	- 12.81 982	8.94903E-22	1.663197	1.7898 E-21	1.9886 10

Table 2.3 t-Test Analysis

Fishbein & Ajzen, (1975) This book introduces the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which explains how beliefs, attitudes, intentions, and behaviour are connected. It lays the foundation for understanding how attitudes and subjective norms influence intentions and behaviour.

Ajzen & Fishbein, (1980) This book expands on TRA, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding attitudes and predicting social behaviour. It discusses the role of attitudes, subjective norms, and intentions in shaping behaviour.

Ajzen (1991) This article introduces the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), an extension of TRA. TPB adds perceived behavioural control as a predictor of intentions and behaviour, in addition to attitudes and subjective norms.

Taylor and Todd, (1995) This study applies TRA to understand consumer complaint intentions. It investigates how attitudes, subjective norms, and control factors influence consumers' intentions to complain about a product or service.

Sheppard et al., (1988) This meta-analysis examines the effectiveness of TRA in predicting behaviour across various studies. It identifies limitations and provides recommendations for modifying and extending TRA in future research standing how focused communication can improve patient satisfaction and loyalty, as measured by NPS scores.

How TRA can be applied to NPS:
Attitudes: Customers' positive or negative evaluation of a product or service is   influenced by their beliefs and experience. Patients' attitudes towards communication with healthcare providers can influence their intention to recommend the hospital (NPS). TRA suggests that attitudes are a crucial factor in shaping intentions.
Subjective Norms: There's a social pressure and expectation as Customers' perceptions of what others think they should do. Patients' perception of social pressure from family,

friends, or online reviews can influence their intention to recommend the hospital. TRA includes subjective norms as a predictor of intentions.

Intention: Customers' probability of recommending the product or services, based on their attitudes and subjective norms. Patients' intentions to recommend the hospital (NPS) are the direct result of their attitudes and subjective norms. TRA posits that intentions are the immediate precursor to behaviour.

Behaviour: The actual behaviour of recommending the hospital (NPS score) is the outcome of interest. TRA suggests that behavior is a direct result of intentions. The actual act of recommending or not recommending the product or service. By understanding the relationships between these factors, businesses can use Theory of reasoned Action to identify areas to improve attitudes and beliefs. Influence subjective norms through social proof and customer testimonials. Increase the likelihood of positive recommendations. By applying Theory of Reasoned Action to Net Promoter Score, businesses can develop targeted strategies to improve customer satisfaction and loyalty, thus eventually focusing on growth and revenue of the business. Through Theory of Reasoned Action to Net Promoter Score business might identify how patients' attitudes towards communication and subjective norms influence their intentions to recommend the hospital (NPS)

Summary: The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) posits that individuals' behaviors are influenced by their intentions, which are shaped by their attitudes towards the behavior and subjective norms. In the context of patient satisfaction and loyalty, TRA suggests that patients' intentions to recommend a hospital (Net Promoter Score) are influenced by their attitudes towards communication with healthcare providers and subjective norms. Studies have applied TRA to understand patient behavior, demonstrating that attitudes and subjective norms significantly predict intentions to recommend healthcare services.

2.4 Human Society Theory

The Human Society Theory, also known as Social Identity Theory, relates to Net Promoter Score (NPS) in the following ways:

Group membership: Customers identify with a brand or product, creating a sense of belonging and loyalty.

Social identity: Customers' self-image is influenced by their association with the brand, shaping their attitudes and behaviour.

In-group favouritism: Customers tend to prefer, favour, and recommend brands that align with their social identity and values.

Social influence: Customers are influenced by others' opinions and behavior, especially within their social groups. Regarding NPS, human society theory suggests that the Promoters, they are the loyal customers who identify strongly with the brand and feel a sense of belonging, leading them to recommend the brand to others. Passives, the neutral customers who may not have a strong social identity tied to the brand, making them less likely to recommend. Detractors, the dissatisfied customers may feel a disconnect between their social identity and the brand's values, leading them to bad mouth or terminate their association with the brand. Understanding human society theory, businesses can:

Create a sense of belongingness among the communities they operate,

Align the brand values with that of the customers,

Identify the social influences and make them ambassadors for the brand through word-of-mouth marketing, and positively affect the customer loyalty and advocacy to a higher net promoter score and its impact on business growth in volume and revenue.

Hogg and Vaughan, (2005) Social Identity Theory This theory explains how individuals derive identity from group membership, influencing their attitudes and behaviour. Apply this to understand how patients' social identities shape their NPS scores.

(Emerson, R. M, (1976) This theory describes how individuals evaluate relationships based on costs and benefits. Relate this to how patients weigh their experiences with healthcare providers when determining their NPS scores.

Rogers, (2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how new ideas spread through social networks. Connect this to how patients share their experiences and recommendations with others, influencing NPS scores.

Cohen and Wills, (1985), Social Support Theory highlights the importance of social support in coping with stress. Apply this to understand how patients' perceptions of support from healthcare providers impact their NPS scores.

Vargo and Lusch, (2004) Human society theory Service-Dominant Logic, emphasizes the importance of customer-centric approaches in service industries. Relate this to how focused communication can improve patient satisfaction and NPS scores.

SDL theory proposes a shift from a goods-dominant logic to a service-dominant logic, emphasizing that services are the fundamental basis of exchange. Emphasizes the importance of customer-centric approaches in service industries (healthcare), Highlights the role of co-creation in value creation (patients as co-creators of their experiences). Supports the idea that value is created through interactions and experiences (communication at touch points). Encourages a relational approach to customer interactions (building patient relationships through communication).

Key principles include:

- Service is the fundamental basis of exchange
- Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange
- Goods are distribution mechanisms for service provision
- Knowledge is the fundamental resource
- All economies are service economies
- The customer is always a co-creator of value
- The enterprise cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions
- A service-centered view is inherently customer-oriented and relational.

Summary

In summary the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) determines what influences decision making attitudes and beliefs. Social pressure plays an important role in shaping the choices people make. The Human Society Theory says that the identity the customer makes with the brand creates a sense of belongingness and loyalty, which prompts them to recommend the brand. Identifying the social influences and make them ambassadors for the brand

through word-of-mouth marketing, increases customer loyalty and advocacy to ensure a higher net promoter score and its impact on business growth in volume and revenue. Thus, by understanding both the theories, the business could encourage positive attitudes and beliefs, create a sense of belonging in the community where the business operates, and strengthen social influence and loyalty to improve the customer advocacy promoting the brand and thereby increasing the customer satisfaction scores, the Net promoter scores. Serving the people is the only way to win: (Reichheld, 2021).

This research, "A framework to increase Net Promoter Score through focused communication at specific touch points," leverages Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) theory to underscore the significance of patient-centric communication. By adopting an SDL perspective, the study acknowledges patients as active co-creators of their healthcare experiences, prioritizes value creation through meaningful interactions and experiences, and fosters a relational approach to patient communication.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

In a private hospital, it was noted that customer satisfaction scores were fluctuating. This was specifically due to the satisfaction scores certain departments get, which was way beyond the expected scores, and when we take the average score, it was not meeting up the expected scores. To have it addressed, and to have a satisfying experience given to each of the patients at every touch point of the hospital, this study is taken up. Communication of the front ending employees is an important soft skill. This would impact the overall satisfaction of the customer, called patients. The need for focused communication was thought about and initiated to address the issue and it has worked in a particular group of employees. Assuming the focused communication style practiced by the nursing team is spread across to other functions, a similar result could be attained, it is the reason for choosing this study.

The retention of existing customers is critical to any business for its sustenance, Healthcare is no exception to it. There is a lot of effort needed to get new customers. Whereas the existing customer continues to avail of the service, the goodwill increases, and the loyal customers avail the service again from the same facility or the service. Healthcare too would benefit from the loyalty of the customers when it makes every interaction a memorable one to its customers.

The purpose of this study mainly focuses on how customer satisfaction in a hospital can be enhanced through focused communication among its employees. In healthcare settings, the customers are the patients. The patients' needs to be nursed to health. As the Nurses are with the patient 24/7, 365 days, and the communication of the nurses matters a lot to have

happy customers. It was brought out that the patient is predominantly not happy due to the following reasons about nursing.

The explanation about a procedure or a movement of a patient is not done appropriately

The delays in call bell attendance or availability

The attitude of the nurse or Patience of the nurses

Pro-activeness of the Nurse in anticipating the needs of patients

Though the reasons mentioned are four, it will all pin down one specific issue, communication. This was addressed through the purposeful hourly rounding with the specific checkpoints through specific verbatim and communication strategies. When this initiative was introduced, we saw a positive change in the customer satisfaction scores obtained. Similarly, if other touch points such as the front office when we focus on communication, the net promoter scores can be improved, and thus overall customer satisfaction could be taken to great heights.

3.2 Methodology
Phase 1: Exploratory Research

Literature Review: Conduct a comprehensive review of existing research on communication, customer satisfaction, and NPS in healthcare settings.

Stakeholder Interviews: Conduct in-depth interviews with hospital staff, patients, and administrators to identify key touchpoints and communication practices.

Focus Groups: Conduct focus groups with patients and staff to gather more information on communication experiences and expectations.

Phase 2: Data Collection

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT) scores:

Baseline scores before implementing communication interventions

Post-intervention scores to measure improvement

Communication practices and behavior data:

Staff surveys or interviews to assess current communication practices

Observational studies to evaluate staff behavior during customer interactions

Touch point analysis:

Identify key touch points where communication interventions will be implemented

Assess customer feedback and pain points at touch points

Staff training data

Training program attendance and engagement metrics

Staff knowledge and skills assessments before and after training (pre-post test)

Communication intervention metrics:

Number and type of interventions implemented (e.g., scripts, training, coaching)

Mandatory training at induction, and on the job

Customer feedback and complaints data:

Pre- and post-intervention customer feedback and complaints volume

Analysis of feedback and complaints content to identify areas of improvement

Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Baseline and post-intervention NPS to measure improvement in the customer satisfaction scores

Control group data (Pre- test and post- test of the training from the front office staff):

Compare outcomes between the intervention group and a control group

Qualitative data:

Customer and staff interviews or focus groups to gather contextual insights

Analyze the quotes, themes, and sentiment to support quantitative findings

Instruments used are

Surveys: Develop and distribute surveys to patients and staff to gather data on current communication practices, customer satisfaction, and NPS.

Observational Studies: Conduct observational studies of staff-patient interactions to assess communication behaviors.

Data Analytics: Analyze hospital data on patient satisfaction, NPS, and face to face communication analysis

Phase 3: Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis: Analyze interview, focus group, and survey data to identify key themes and patterns.

Statistical Analysis: Conduct statistical analysis to identify correlations between communication practices and customer satisfaction/NPS.

Gap Analysis: Conduct a gap analysis to identify areas for improvement in communication practices.

Phase 4: Intervention Development

Communication Strategy: Develop a comprehensive communication strategy based on research findings.

Intervention Design: Design communication interventions (e.g., training programs, communication tools) to address identified gaps.

Implementation of AIDET Tool

Implementation of SHARE Model

Phase 5: Implementation and Evaluation Intervention Implementation: Implement communication interventions at the touch point identified that is the front office. Initiated The modified AIDET Tool and SHARE Models.

Modified AIDET Tool
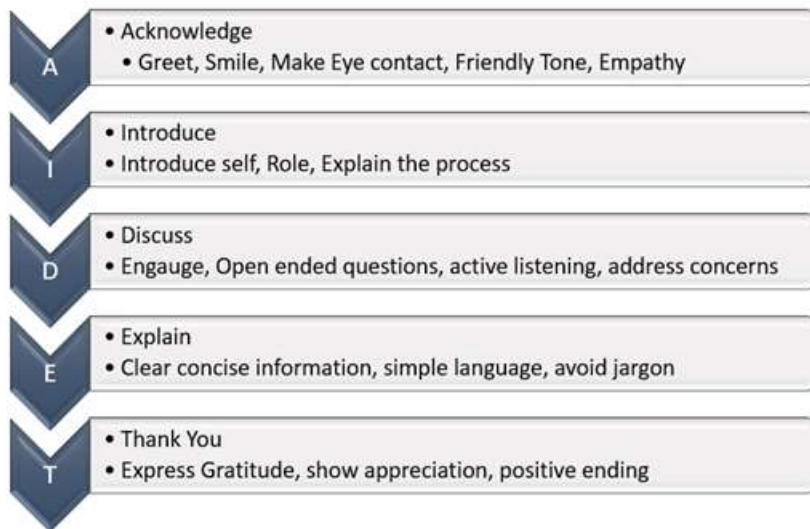
Figure :3:1 – Modified AIDET Tool
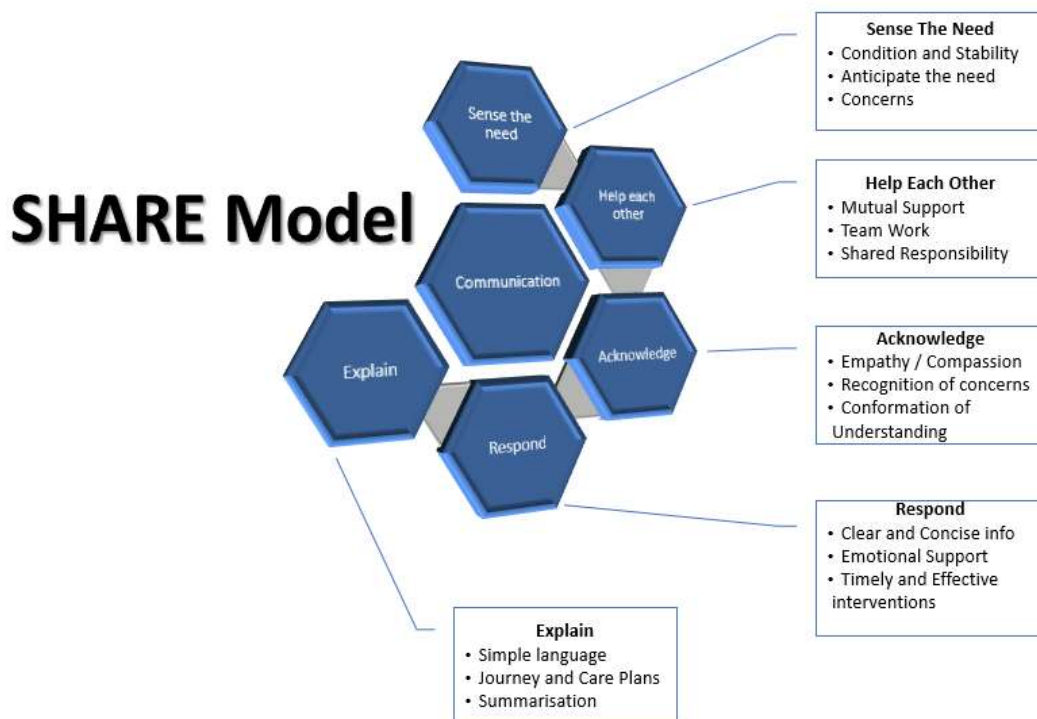
Figure:3:2 – SHARE Model

Evaluation: Evaluate the impact of interventions on customer satisfaction/NPS using surveys, observational studies, and data analytics.

Continuous Improvement: Continuously monitor and improve communication practices based on evaluation findings.

3.3 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs refers to the process of defining and measuring abstract concepts or variables in a research study. In this research Operationalization of theoretical constructs is crucial to define customer satisfaction and effective communication, identify indicators (e.g., patient feedback, staff communication skills), develop operational definitions (e.g., measurement scales, data collection methods), and select measurement tools (e.g., surveys, interviews)

The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches will offer an awareness of and understanding of the complexities surrounding customer satisfaction and the Net promoter Scores in relation to the communication and behavior aspects of the team members. The research methods used for this study are literature review, quantitative and qualitative methods. The opinions of the patients were collected through questionnaires, surveys, and the voice of the customer. This research used a Quantitative and qualitative method of approach followed to collect and analyze the data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected through surveys and interviews with patients, front office staff, and the top management. The secondary data is collected through a review of relevant literature on communication in the healthcare industry.

3.4 Research objectives and questions

This study aims to improve customer satisfaction and net promoter scores through focused communication to patients at specific touch points. There by increasing customer retention and customer loyalty. This study wants to identify specific touch points which can

significantly impact the customer satisfaction, and the net promoter scores. This study wants to evaluate the current communication practices to identify if there is scope for the practices to be improved or strengthened. Also aims at developing and implementing communication interventions, and measuring the impact of those interventions on the customer satisfaction.

Objectives are:
- To identify key touch points where effective communication has a significant impact on overall customer satisfaction
- To evaluate current communication practices and behavior of the staff to propose an improvement strategy
- To develop and implement communication interventions
- To measure the impact of communication on customer satisfaction scores

Long term outcome of the study

Enhanced patient experience which would result in improved satisfaction scores: Patients would feel more valued, understood, and supported throughout their interactions with the hospital staff, which would lead to a higher level of satisfaction and loyalty. This would reflect positively on the reputation, competitiveness, and image of the hospitals.

Increased Trust and confidence in the hospital: Positive experiences would build trust and confidence on the hospital services, resulting long-term relationships and positive word-of-mouth referrals. Positive experiences will cause the promoters to be the ambassadors, who will refer the business to its friends and families.

Boost staff morale and job satisfaction and increase operational efficiency. Happy employees make happy customers.

Objective 1: Identify key touch points where effective communication impact an overall customer satisfaction – It was identified through voice of the customer and customer feedback.

Through the voice of the customer and the feedback from the patients it was understood that the NPS scores on the admission and billing session was not as targeted by the organization. When it was further analyzed, the pain point identified for the dis satisfaction was due to the improper explanation, and lack of proper communication and guidance. It was evident in the responses received from the customer in the customer feedback. This was the major reason to dip the NPS scores in this area. The front office being the area where the patients get its first encounter for the admission from the nonclinical point of view. Right from the beginning of their journey in the hospital till the discharge the patients interact with the staff constantly. These interactions can be made memorable by the courteous and polite behavior of the staff. When the staff explain what is relevant to the patient and their family with an empathetic and considerate manner. These interactions could be made memorable. As experiences are only felt and it cannot be seen.

Benefit of touch point analysis

Improved customer satisfaction: Touch point analysis helps identify areas for improvement, leading to enhanced customer experiences (Bitner et al., 1990).

Increased customer loyalty: By optimizing touch points, organizations can build stronger relationships and loyalty with customers (Reichheld, 2003).

Enhanced brand image: Consistent and positive touch points contribute to a strong brand image and reputation (Kotler et al., 2009).

Increased efficiency: Touch point analysis can identify unnecessary or inefficient touch points, streamlining processes and reducing costs (Hammer, 2001).

Competitive advantage: Organizations that effectively manage touch points can differentiate themselves from competitors and gain a competitive edge (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

Data-driven decision making: Touch point analysis provides valuable insights for data-driven decision making, enabling organizations to allocate resources effectively (Davenport, 2006).

Objective 2: Evaluate current communication practices

To evaluate the current communication practices the staff interactions with customers were observed to assess their communication skills, professionalism, and behavior.

Conducted staff surveys and interviews, focused group discussions, and observation studies to understand the staff perspectives on the customer satisfaction, patient interactions, their communication and challenges they may face. Understood the scope for improvement in their communication. In the data received through the voice of the customers, (VoC) it was evident that the lack of communication and deficiencies in the communication directly impacted the satisfaction scores to be dipping. There were many suggestions received on improving the communication. To address this gap have arranged trainings, roleplays, and coaching programs.

A Survey is done through google form to understand the current practices in communication and training resources the team has received, what are the main communication channels used to communicate, what are the customer interactions, the barriers to communication, training and coaching they received, and additional comments were asked to understand their suggestions, and to device measures to improve the communication, and how they overcome the barriers if any.

Questionnaire is as followed

Section 1: Communication Training and Resources
Have you received training on effective communication skills?
How would you rate the quality of communication training received? (Scale: 1-5)
Do you have access to resources (e.g., scripts, guidelines) to support customer interactions?

Section 2: Customer Interactions

How often do you interact with customers? (Daily, Weekly, Monthly)

How do you currently handle customer complaints or issues? (Open-ended)

What types of customer inquiries do you typically handle? (Open-ended)

Section 3: Communication Channels

Which communication channels do you use most frequently with customers? (Select all: phone, email, chat, in-person)

How would you rate the effectiveness of each channel in resolving customer issues? (Scale: 1-5)

Section 4: Communication Barriers

What challenges do you face when communicating with customers? (Select all: language barriers, technical issues, time constraints)

How do you currently overcome these challenges? (Open-ended)

Section 5: Feedback and Coaching

How often do you receive feedback on your communication skills? (Daily, Weekly, Monthly)

Who provides feedback on your communication skills? (Select: supervisor, peers, customers)

What are the pain points observed, to be addressed in the feedback? (Open ended)

Section 6: Additional Comments collected through open ended questions

What suggestions do you have for improving communication practices in our front office?

Any additional comments or concerns about our current communication practices?

Staff interviews, customer interviews, and focus group discussions conducted to understand the current communication practices, and the pain points, and scope of improvements

To derive qualitative data from customer and staff interviews, the following steps were followed. Open-ended questions are asked to encourage customers to share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Like, kindly explain your recent experience with our hospital, and front office in general. To probe for details, follow up questions asked to gather more information and clarity. Active listening practiced to pay attention to non-verbal cues, gestures and body language used. Thematic analysis through recurring themes and patterns, and sentiments in their responses were analyzed.

Staff Interviews were conducted through

Semi structured interview questions in a mix of open ended and structured questions to gather insights on their experiences and perspectives.

Discussed challenges faced.

Gathered their suggestions, and ideas to improve their communication practices. Analysed staff perceptions on customer needs, their pain points, and expectations.

Training needs were analysed to determine areas of improvement, where staff requiring additional training and support to improve their communication skills.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews: Record and transcribe interviews to facilitate analysis.

Identified key quotes and phrases: Highlighted notable quotes and phrases that illustrate key themes.

Created a framework to organize and analyze data.

Thematic analysis applied to identify recurring themes and patterns in the data.

Conclusions and recommendations determined based on the analysis to improve communication practices.

Following are the Interview Questions used:

Customer Interviews:

Can you describe a recent experience with our hospital?

How did our staff communicate with you during your visit?

What did you find most helpful or frustrating about our communication?

Staff Interviews:

Can you describe a challenging communication situation with a customer?

How do you currently handle customer complaints or concerns?

3.What training or support do you need to improve your communication skills?

Focused group discussions- the focused groups in this research are patients as customers.

What was your recent experience like at our hospital?

How would you rate the communication you received from our staff?

Were your questions and concerns addressed in a timely and clear manner?

How did our staff make you feel during your visit?

What would you like to see improved in terms of communication during your hospital stay?

Have you experienced any communication barriers (e.g., language, cultural)?

How did our staff involve you in decision-making about your care?

Were you satisfied with the instructions and follow-up care?

Frontline Staff:

Can you describe a recent interaction with a patient that was challenging or rewarding?

How do you currently communicate with patients and families?

What communication training have you received, and was it effective?

What are the most common questions or concerns patients have, and how do you address them?

How do you handle difficult or emotional patients?

What resources or support do you need to improve communication with patients?

How do you involve patients in decision-making about their care?

What are the biggest communication challenges you face, and how do you overcome them?

Leadership and Management:

What is your vision for patient-centered communication at our hospital?

How do you prioritize communication in quality improvement initiatives?

What communication metrics or data do you track, and how are they used?

How do you ensure that communication is integrated into staff training and development?

What resources or support do you provide to staff to enhance communication skills?

How do you handle patient complaints or concerns at the leadership level?

What are the biggest communication challenges you face, and how do you overcome them?

How do you involve patients and families in decision-making about hospital policies and procedures?

Objective 3: Develop and implement communication interventions

Designed training programs and workshop to enhance staff communication skills

Developed clear communication guidelines, protocols, or standards.

Strengthened feedback mechanisms for customers and staff.

Introduced Scripts for easy reference

Training Module 1: Effective Communication Fundamentals

Verbal and non-verbal communication skills

Active listening and empathy

Clear and concise message delivery

Module 2: Patient-Centered Communication

Understanding patient and family needs and concerns

Using patient(customer)-friendly language and tone

Empathetic responses to patient and family emotions

Clear explanations on the course of the patients journey and procedures and cost

Module 3: Conflict Resolution and De-escalation

Recognizing and managing conflicts

Staying calm and composed under pressure

Effective de-escalation techniques

Resolving patient and family complaints and concerns

Module 4: Communication Channels and Technology

Effective phone communication skills

Email and messaging best practices

Patient portal and digital communication tools

Secure and confidential communication practices

Module 5: Team Collaboration and Handovers

Clear and concise handovers and reporting

Collaborative communication with healthcare teams

Respectful and professional communication with colleagues

Effective communication during shift changes and transitions

Module 6: Specialized Communication Scenarios

Handling patient complaints and feedback

Communicating with patients' families and caregivers

Module 7: Role-Playing and Practice

Practice scenarios for effective communication

Role-playing exercises for conflict resolution and de-escalation

Group discussions and feedback sessions

Module 8: Continuous Improvement and Feedback

Self-assessment and reflection on communication skills

Seeking and giving constructive feedback

Continuous learning and professional development

Evaluating and improving communication practices

Scripts for front office staff

At the Admission Counter:

Greeting and Introduction

Namaste, welcome to Manipal Hospital! My name is (Name of the staff), and I'll be happy to assist you with the admission process."

Patient Information Verification

"May I please verify your name, date of birth, and contact information to ensure we have the correct details with us?"

Registration and Consent

"I'll need you to sign our registration form and consent for treatment. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns."

Bed allocation

"May I know which category of bed you would like to choose"

Unavailability of desired bed category or lack of vacant bed needs to be explained to the patient and family

"I'm sorry now we do not have the bed available according to your wish. However, we shall try to arrange one as soon as there is a discharge in this category. Kindly be seated in the waiting counter, we shall do the needful, and let you know soon"

Insurance Verification

"Would you please provide your insurance card and photo ID so we can verify your details?"

Room Assignment and Orientation

"Your room number is [Room Number]. I'll have one of our staff members escort you to your room and provide an orientation."

Billing Counter:

Greeting and Introduction

"Namaste, welcome to the billing counter. My name is (Staff Name), and I'll be happy to assist you with your billing inquiries, if you may have any."

Payment and Billing Information

"Please provide your payment information and any relevant billing details. We accept [need to list payment methods]."

Insurance Claims and Coverage

"We'll need to verify your insurance coverage and process your claim. Please allow us [Timeframe] for processing."

Payment Plans and Follow-up needs to be told clearly and calmly

"Kindly make the payments Sir/ Madam." Say Thank you after making the payment

Assisting for reimbursement

"We shall help you with information needed for your reimbursement"

Points to be noted: Always to be empathetic, clear, and concise in your communication.

Use active listening skills to understand patient concerns and questions.

Provide clear explanations and instructions.

Be knowledgeable about hospital policies, procedures, and services.

Maintain patient confidentiality and handle sensitive information with care.

Communication Intervention Metrics used

Customer Satisfaction (CSAT): Track customer satisfaction scores through surveys or feedback forms.

Net Promoter Score (NPS): Measure customer loyalty by asking one simple question: "On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend our hospital to a friend or family member?"

Complaint Reduction Rate: Monitor the number of customer complaints and aim to reduce them over time.

Objective 4: Measure the impact of communication on customer satisfaction

Tracked customer satisfaction scores before and after implementing communication interventions.

Feedback and complaints are monitored to assess improvements.

Metrics used are like Net Promoter Score (NPS), Customer Satisfaction (CSAT

Research questions

1. How useful is focused communication to enhance customer satisfaction in a private hospital

Here the key concepts considered are the focused communication, customer satisfaction in private hospital. This question examined the effectiveness of focused communication to

enhance the customer satisfaction. The scope of the study is the private hospital. The sub questions related to the main question are as follows:

What are the specific aspect of communication (eg: clarity, empathy, and timeliness) are mostly associated with the customer satisfaction

How does focused communication impacts in different areas of the hospital like nursing, billing, admission

What are the barriers of focused communication in the hospital setting?

Focused communication defined as set of communication skill and strategies (eg: active listening, clear explanation of the journey)

Customer satisfaction: Measured using tools such as NPS

The research design: Quantitative study by Cross sectional survey design

Data collection: Using questionnaires, surveys, and interviews with patients and hospital staff

2. Why communication in the healthcare industry is important and what is its business impact on the business?

Key concepts examined through this question is communication in health care, and its importance, and its impact on the business. This is to identify the importance of communication in health care and to examine the impact of effective communication on business outcome in healthcare

Sub Questions examined are the consequences of poor communication, resulted in the dissatisfaction of the customer.

How does effective communication impact the patient outcome like customer satisfaction?

What are the financial implication of effective communication like satisfied customer turns to an ambassador for the hospital, resulting more patient flow

Operational definitions:

Communication in healthcare: exchange of information between the staff and the patient and family.

Importance of communication: which is measured by its impact on patient outcomes, satisfaction, and business outcome

Impact on business: Measured by NPS, word of mouth, increased foot fall, revenue, patient flow

3. How can customer satisfaction be enhanced through focused communication at specific touch points?

Key Concepts examined are customer satisfaction, focused communication, and specific touch points to identify the specific touch points where focused communication can become a catalyst to improve the customer satisfaction and to determine the most effective communication strategies could be used at these touch points.

Sub questions: What are the key touch points of a hospital where communication can impact the customer satisfaction? Eg: front office. What are the communication strategies can be adopted in these touch points? (eg: active listening, empathy, clear explanation.

Operational definitions: Customer satisfaction measured through the NPS, CSAT

Focused communication: Targeted communication strategies at specific touch points

Touch points: Specific points of interaction between patients and hospital staff

4. How does communication influence customer satisfaction in specific touch points?

Key concepts examined are Communication, customer satisfaction, and touch points to examine the relationship between the communication and customer satisfaction at specific touch points.

Sub questions: What aspects of communication impact the customer satisfaction (eg: clarity, empathy, timeliness)

Operational definitions: Communication is the exchange of information between staff and customer, in a setting

Customer satisfaction: Meeting and exceeding the expectation of a customer which is measured by the customer satisfaction scores.

Toch points: It is the specific points of interaction between customers and staff

3.5 Research Design

Mixed-methods study using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data .

Quantitative and qualitative method through surveys focused group discussion, and interviews questionaries of patients, staff, and Top management

Quantitative Phase Surveys conducted by Administering standardized questionnaires to patients and healthcare staff to collect data on their experiences, satisfaction, and perceptions of communication. Observational studies conducted to Observe patient-staff interactions to assess communication patterns and behaviors. Developed a questionnaire to measure patient satisfaction at certain touch points like front office. Where quality of communication, clarity of information provided, responsiveness of the staff, and overall satisfaction were covered.

Qualitative Phase: Conducted Semi-structured interviews by in-depth interviews with patients, family members, and healthcare staff to gather rich, contextual data about their experiences and perceptions. Organized focus groups with patients and healthcare staff to explore their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about communication in healthcare settings. Content analysis through Analysis of documents, policies, and guidelines related to communication in the hospital to identify themes and patterns

3.6 Population and Sample

The patients who got discharged is selected for this study. A random sampling of patients who have availed the service of the hospital, and the staff at the front office were selected. Purposes of selecting survey questions to investigate the level of support the customer received, ease of information received, helpfulness and professionalism, empathy of the staff, and the patient opinion on the hospital, as a result of the staff behaviors, and their willingness to return to the hospital, or refer the hospital to their friends and family.

1. Patients were selected in random sampling method.

Justification for sampling: As the patients receive services from the front office staff

They have expectations and needs that need to be met

They can provide feedback on their experience which contribute to the NPS

Assumed Confidence level of 95%. Error margin of +/- 5% for the population of 4500. Average discharge per day is 50. Average discharge per month is 1500. For 3 months 1500x3= 4500

As per Yamane's formula for sample size is as below:

$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size = 4500

e = margin of error = $\pm$5%

A larger sample size generally yields more reliable results

n=4500/ (1+4500(0.05)^2) =367

Rounded off to 375 for easier division for each month. Hence monthly sample size will be 375/3=125

2. Front office staff:

As they Interact with patients directly

Justification

They are responsible for providing information and resolving queries

They May have limited authority to make decisions or resolve complex issues

Staff covered were 100%

3. Top management: 8 of the Head of Departments including the Hospital director have been selected

Justification:

As the Top Management Oversees all the operations of the hospital, including the front office operations. Their input is critical. They have the power to strategize and implement the policies to enhance the employee behavior.

Top management sets policies and procedures

Top management can provide resources and support to address communication gaps

3.7 Participant Selection

The patients who got discharged, the staff at the front office and Top management like hospital director, operations head, medical director, HOD's of various department were selected to understand their opinion on the impact of communication on the customer satisfaction scores. This also helps to review the adequacy of the current training practices, and strengthening of the practices.

Patient sample:

Patients who have recently received services from the front office are most likely to provide accurate and relevant feedback about their experience.

Sample size: 375 patients discharged in three months is a reasonable sample size to capture a representative view of patient experiences. This sample size allows for a margin of error of around 5% at a 95% confidence level.

Front office staff sample:

Including 100% of front office staff ensures that the perspectives of almost all staff members who interact with patients are represented. This helps to identify common communication challenges and areas for improvement.

Sample size: 100% of front office staff is a high response rate, which reduces the risk of non-response bias and increases the reliability of the findings.

Top management sample:

Including 90% of top management ensures that the perspectives of key decision-makers are represented. This helps to understand their views on communication priorities and resource allocation.

Sample size: 90% of top management provides a comprehensive understanding of management's perspectives and priorities.

Rationale for sample sizes:

The sample sizes are sufficient to provide reliable estimates of population parameters (e.g., means, proportions).

The samples are large enough to allow for subgroup analysis (e.g., by patient demographic, staff role, or management level).

With a 100% response rate from staff and management, the risk of non-response bias is eliminated, enhancing the reliability and representativeness of the findings, and allowing for robust generalizations.

3.8 Instrumentation

Quantitative Phase Surveys conducted by Administering standardized questionnaires to patients and healthcare staff to collect data on their experiences, satisfaction, and perceptions of communication. Observational studies conducted to Observe patient-staff interactions to assess communication patterns and behaviors. Developed a questionnaire to measure patient satisfaction at certain touch points like front office. Where quality of communication, clarity of information provided, responsiveness of the staff, and overall satisfaction were covered. Questionnaire Method was used to measure patient satisfaction at certain touch points like front office. The patients were asked to rate from 1-10 how would they rate various aspects of the services they have received during their interactions. Where quality of communication, clarity of information provided, responsiveness of the staff, and overall satisfaction was covered. Survey used to assess the effectiveness or the gap existing in the current practices of communication.

And to gauge the understanding of the staff on the importance of their communication on the impact of the overall customer satisfaction. Also, the survey addresses the staff knowledge and attitudes towards communication and its impact to customer satisfaction.

Qualitative Phase: Conducted Semi-structured interviews by in-depth interviews with patients, family members, and healthcare staff to gather rich, contextual data about their experiences and perceptions. Organized focus groups with patients and healthcare staff to explore their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about communication in healthcare settings. Content analysis through Analysis of documents, policies, and guidelines related to communication in the hospital to identify themes and patterns

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

Through the onsite Survey the data on the customer experience is collected. Where quality of communication, clarity of information provided, professionalism and responsiveness of the staff, and overall satisfaction was covered. The training effectiveness, and behavioral change of the staff after the training in relation to the communication with the customer were chosen and analyzed.

Rationale for the data collection method: Surveys are effective tool to analyze a large amount of data.

Focus Group Discussions: Focus groups foster interaction and dialogue among participants, enabling the exploration of diverse viewpoints and facilitating the identification of shared experiences and concerns. Group dynamics encourages participants to reflect on their own attitudes and engage in collaborative sense-making, generating nuanced qualitative data. Focused group discussion and interviews would give insight on their pain points, and the same can be addressed to make a notable change in the outcome. Semi-structured Interviews: Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility and depth in exploring participants' experiences and perspectives. The open-ended nature of the

questions allows for the emergence of themes and insights that may not be captured through structured surveys alone, enriching the qualitative analysis.

Used a mix of multiple-choice, Likert scale, and open-ended questions.

Focused group discussions (FGDs): where a semi-structured discussion guide to ensure consistency. Participants of different roles were included. The discussions were recorded and analysed.

Observational studies conducted to have the real time understanding of the communication practices and the behavior of the staff, and the comfort the patients received through the explanations and interactions.

Used google forms and online data collection.

3.10   Data Analysis

Quantitative method used to examine and identify patient satisfaction levels,

through trends and patterns in communication experiences. This trends and patterns would give insight into the effectiveness of the project. Customer satisfaction scores before and after the project is compared.

Quantitative Data Collection Surveys for the systematic collection of quantitative data, which can provide numerical insights into respondents' experience and perceptions. The same data can be analysed statistically to identify trends and patterns. Used statistical analysis software (e.g., SPSS, R) for quantitative data.

Employed thematic analysis and content analysis for qualitative data (FGDs, open-ended questions). Comparative analysis of the NPS score pre training of the staff and post training of the staff on the focused communication

Top Management survey:

Net Promoter Score (NPS) Awareness and Importance.

(Select from 1-5, 1 being the least and 5 being the highest).

Analysis of the collected data revealed that 100% of members demonstrated awareness of the organization's Net Promoter Score (NPS) ratings and rankings.
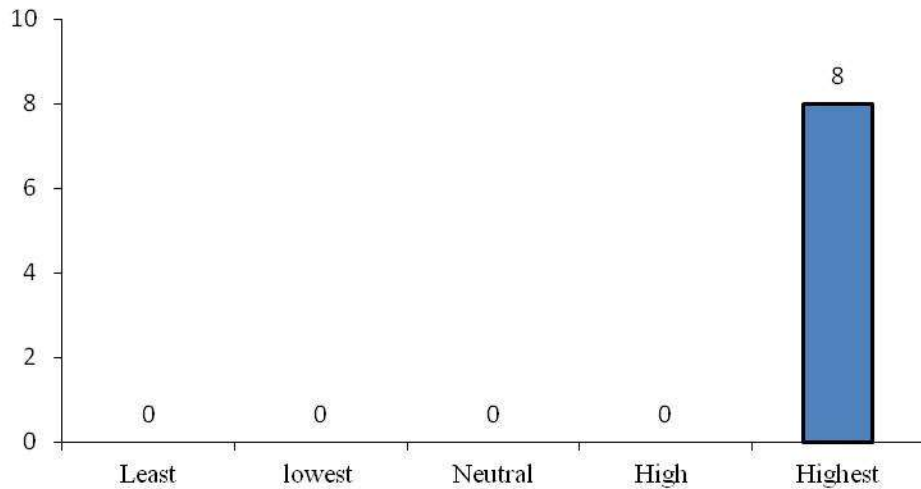
Figure 3.3 NPS Awareness and Importance

How important is improving NPS in achieving our hospital's goals?

Post-analysis, findings showed 100% consensus among members, who overwhelmingly deemed this aspect crucial
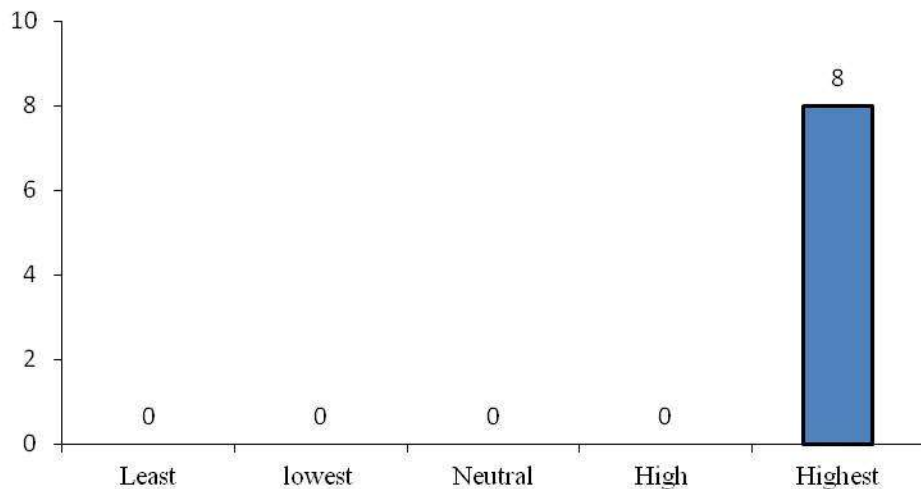
Figure 3.4 NPS as strategy to achieve business goal

Data analysis revealed a consensus among top management that leadership and accountability are essential for prioritizing NPS and patient satisfaction in organizational strategy.

How would you rate the need for enhancing the communication as a strategy to achieve customer satisfaction?

An overwhelming majority (87.5%, or 7/8) identified communication as a key strategy for achieving customer satisfaction, highlighting its paramount importance.
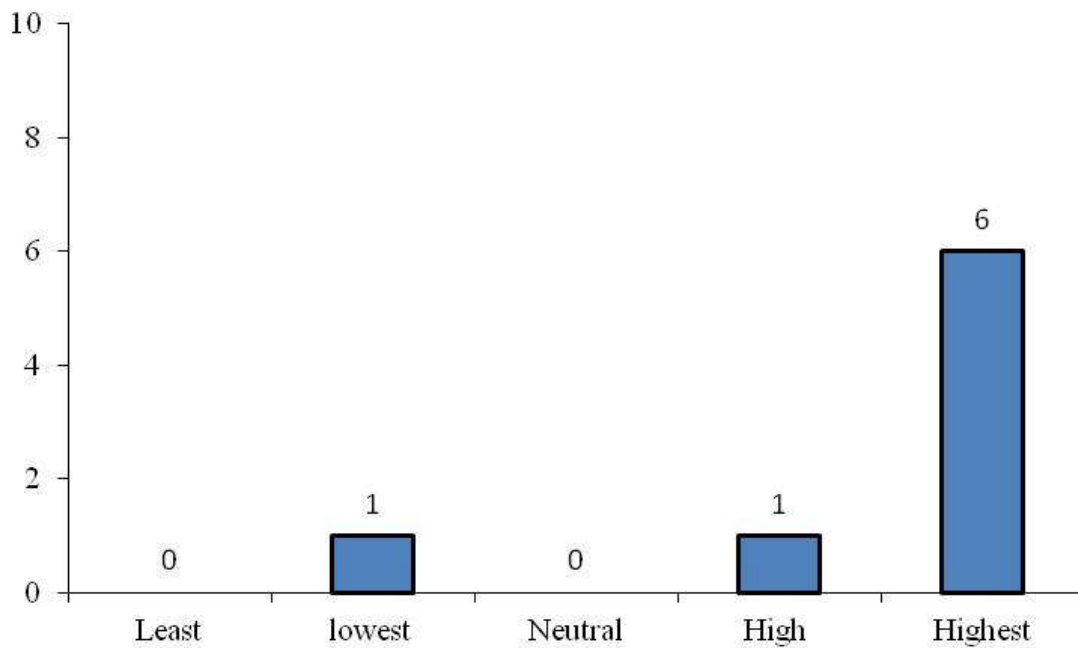
Figure 3.5 Communication as a strategy
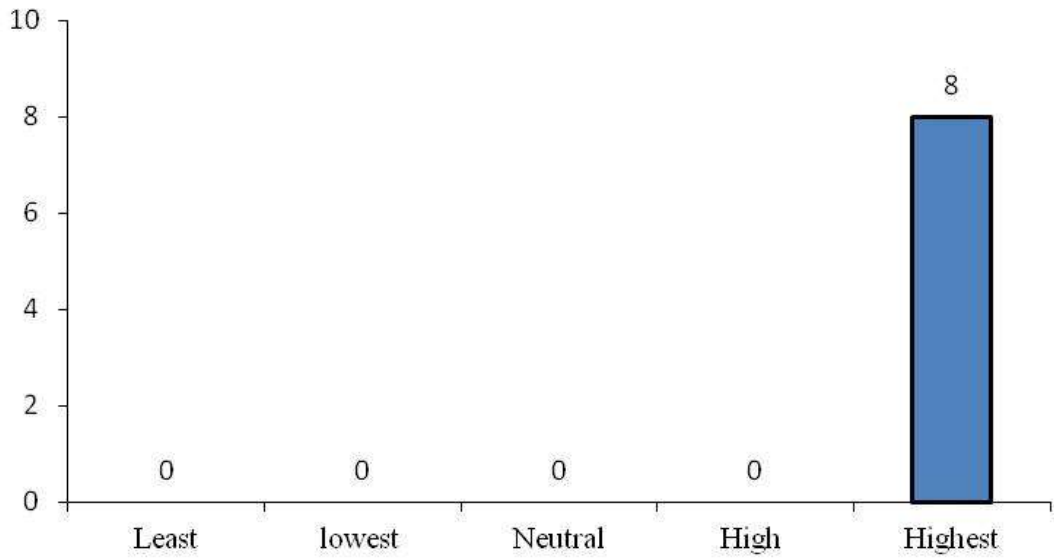
Figure 3.6 NPS and Goals

There is overwhelming alignment among top management regarding the NPS target of
75.

Understanding of the touch point

Which touch-points do you think have the most significant impact on patient satisfaction
and NPS? Select all that apply

Top management identified admissions as the highest priority among four critical touch
points essential for organizational growth, with nursing care, discharge, and billing ranked
subsequently, while recognizing the overall significance of all four.
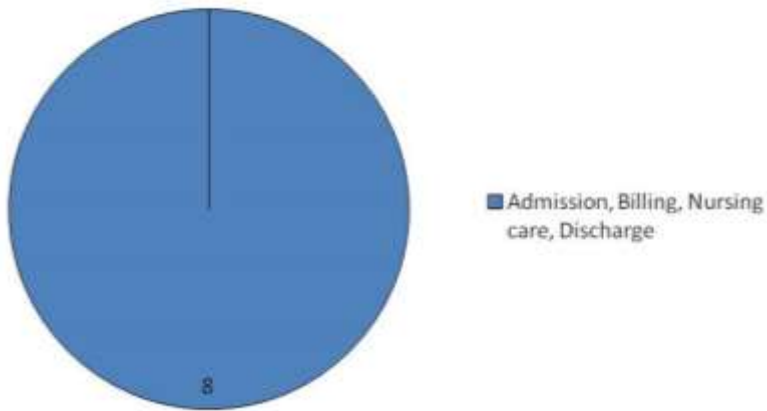
Figure 3.7 Understand of the touch point

Feedback collection

Section 3: Patient Feedback and Insights   1. How often do we collect patient feedback, and through what channels? (select all that apply)
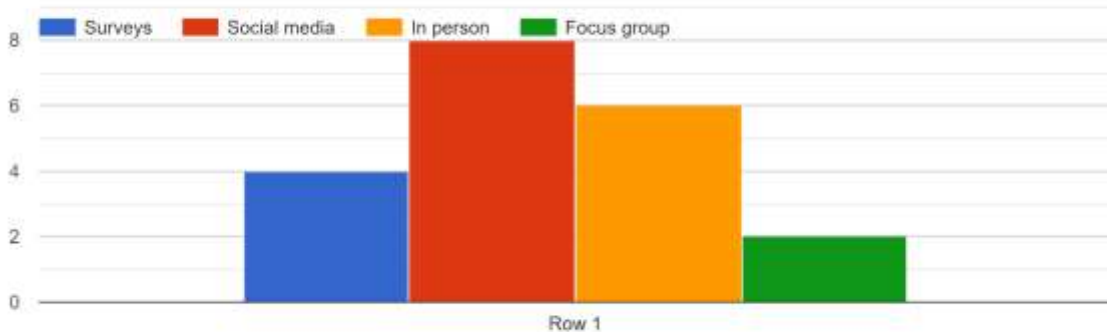
Figure 3.8 Feedback and Insight

How would you rate the level of employee engagement and empowerment in delivering exceptional patient experiences?

Analysis of the data revealed that a significant majority (75%, or 6 out of 8) of management considers active employee engagement and empowerment essential for delivering exceptional patient experiences

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Employee Engagement and Empowerment
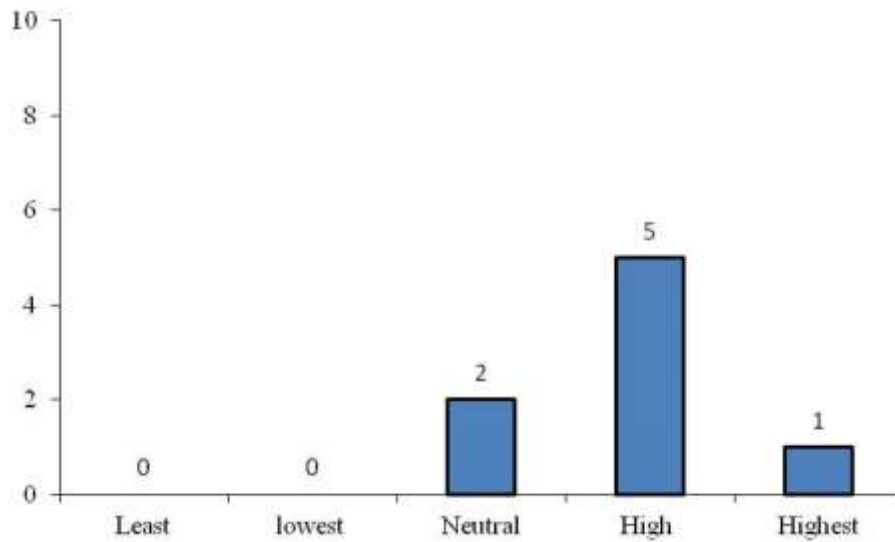
Figure 3.9 Employee Engagement and Empowerment

Leadership and Accountability

How does leadership prioritize NPS and patient satisfaction in strategic decision-making?

Analysis of the data revealed unanimous agreement among respondents that leadership prioritizes Net Promoter Score (NPS) and patient satisfaction, holding themselves accountable for these metrics in strategic decision-making.
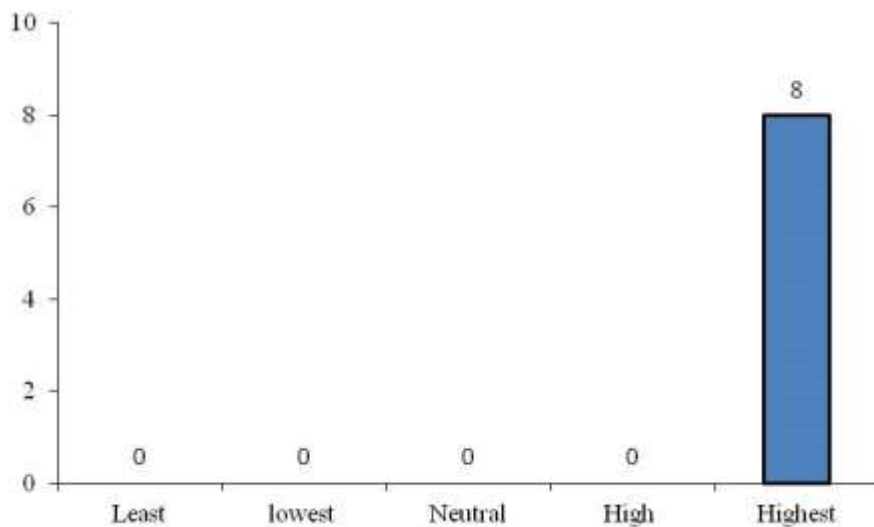
Figure 3.10 Leadership and Accountability

Prioritization of communication in quality improvement

How do you prioritize communication in quality improvement initiatives?

How important is communication in your quality improvement strategy?

Our findings show that nearly 90% (7/8) of management ranks communication as essential for quality initiatives and recommends prioritizing it.
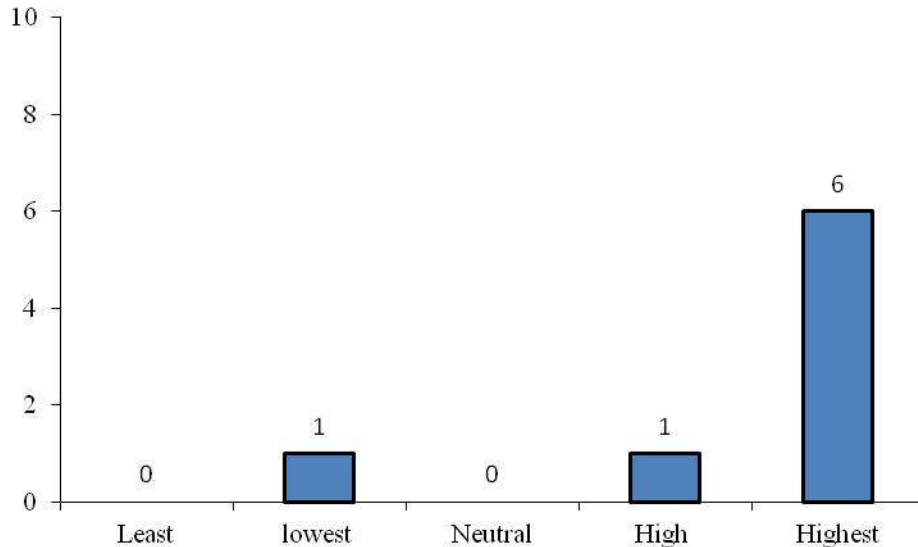
Figure 3.11 Prioritization of communication

3.11 Staff survey to understand the current practices

Statistical techniques like tabulation, average mean, and frequency count were used in SPSS version 20 to summarize the data gathered from the questionnaire. Descriptive data analysis techniques were employed to examine and handle the collected data. Additionally, employed inferential data analysis approaches to demonstrate the degree of relationship and relative influence between independent and dependent variables.

Used two-way ANOVA to compare the statistical difference between the pre and post training program through a set of 8 questionnaire along with 2 output questions.

Hypothesized communication skills training could aid in the overall development and focused attention of the staff towards the customers. As such collected questionnaires from over 43 staff members at the front office. The questionnaire included about 8 all rated from 1 to 5 (Likert scale) where 1 being rarely; 2: occasionally; 3: sometimes; 4: Frequently; 5:

78

Almost always. Questions can be seen from the table. This questionnaire was collected from staff (n=43) pre and post training, to find the significance and impact of the training on the overall development and focused attention towards the customers.

Our study includes 43 responses and all were used in the analysis. The results of the descriptive and inferential analyses are presented first to make the empirical analysis easier to conduct. It may be concluded that the questionnaire has sufficient reliability as the Cronbach alpha value obtained for all items is highly significant than 0.7 (Satvati, Rabie, & Rasoli, 2016). Pre and post training survey's Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.802 and 0.811 respectively.

STAFF PRE-TRAINING

		N	%
Cases	Valid	43	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	43	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3.1 Staff Pre-training

STAFF POST TRAINING

		N	%
Cases	Valid	43	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	43	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 3.2 Staff Post Training

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
STAFF PRE-TRAINING	0.802	7
STAFF POST-TRAINING	0.811	7

Table 3.3 Cronbach's Alpha Values

		PREQ2	PREQ3	PREQ4	PREQ5	PREQ6	PREQ7	PREQ8
N	Valid	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		2.9302	4.3721	4.2326	3.8372	4.5814	2.9070	2.8140
Median		3.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	5.0000	2.0000	2.0000
Std. Deviation		.96103	.53556	.64871	.72145	.73136	1.08702	1.02947
Sum		126.00	188.00	182.00	165.00	197.00	125.00	121.00

Table 3.4 Pre-test values deviation

		POSTQ2	POSTQ3	POSTQ4	POSTQ5	POSTQ6	POSTQ7	POSTQ8
N	Valid	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		4.6744	4.8605	4.8372	4.8140	4.9302	4.8372	4.9070
Median		5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000
Std. Deviation		.91862	.35060	.37354	.45018	.25777	.43261	.29390
Sum		201.00	209.00	208.00	207.00	212.00	208.00	211.00

Table 3.5 Post Test Deviation

Initially it was asked a question (labelled question 0). To check the staff perception on focused communication.

QUESTION 0

What is your knowledge level on focused communication?
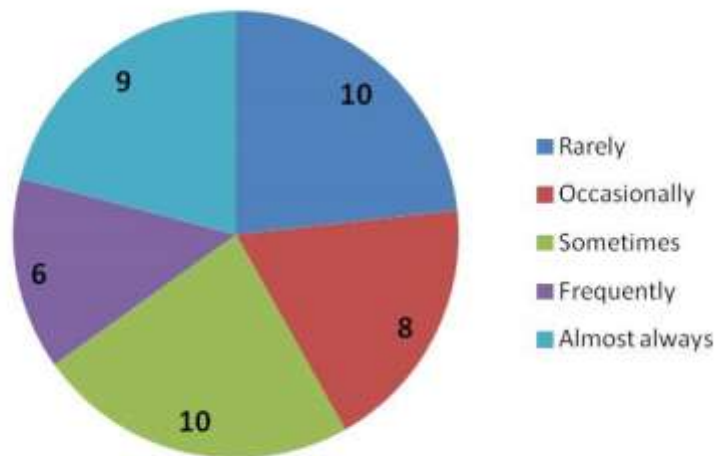
Figure 3.12 Knowledge level on focused communication

It was found that a mixed response from the staff (n=43). When asked whether communication matters for the overall customer satisfaction 35% (15/43) of them agreed to the statement, whereas most of them 65% (28/43) showed negative response to the same.

QUESTION 1

What is our organization's current customer satisfaction score (CSAT)/NPS target?

To check the level of literacy on the NPS /CSAT score for the institute, when asked the staff of current satisfaction score of our organization. Got a surprising fact that, majority of them are not aware of the exact score.

PRE-TRAINING Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR00001	43	1.6744	1.08498
Valid N (listwise)	43		

Table 3.6 Pre-Training statistics

POST TRAINING Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
VAR00052	43	2.8605	1.05968
Valid N (listwise)	43		

Table 3.7 Post-Training statistics
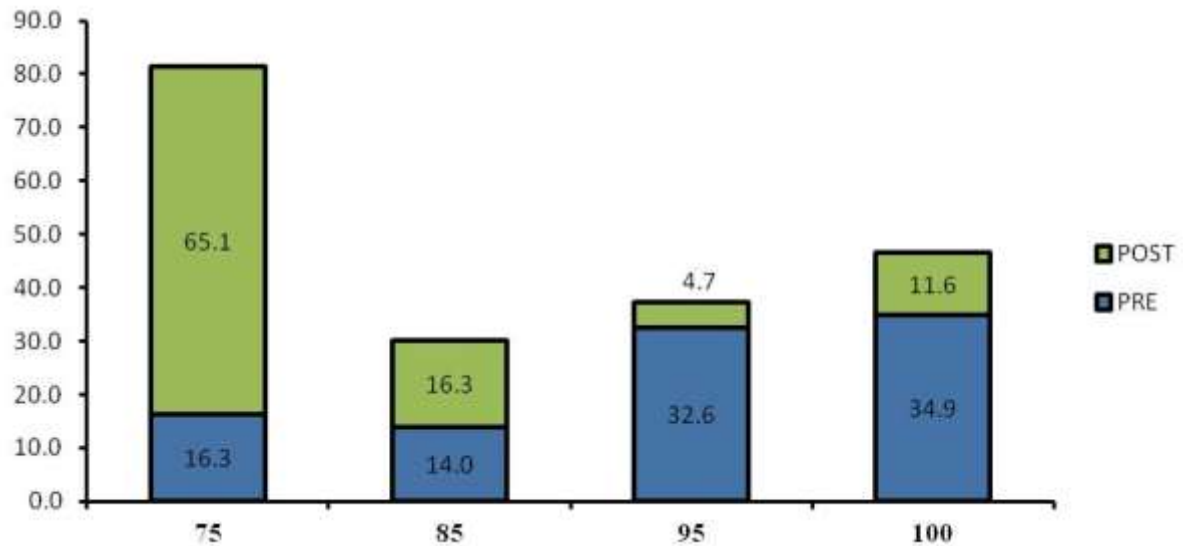
Figure 3.13 NPS awareness Post and Pre-Training

When asked about the current NPS scoring of our organization, it was found that 16.3% of them only answered the exact figure, which throws light on the awareness of the staff about the scoring system of the organization. But surprisingly, post training, it was found that 65.1% stated the correct figure of NPS score in the survey questionnaire.

This confirms of the impact the training made on the staff. It literally trained the staff and also brought awareness among the staff about the organization.

QUESTION 2:

How do you think staff behavior and communication impact customer satisfaction scores?

It was observed that, pre training, only 20.9% of them agreed that staff behaviour and communication will impact customer satisfaction scores, but post training, it was increased to 79.1% which suggests of the impact the training made.
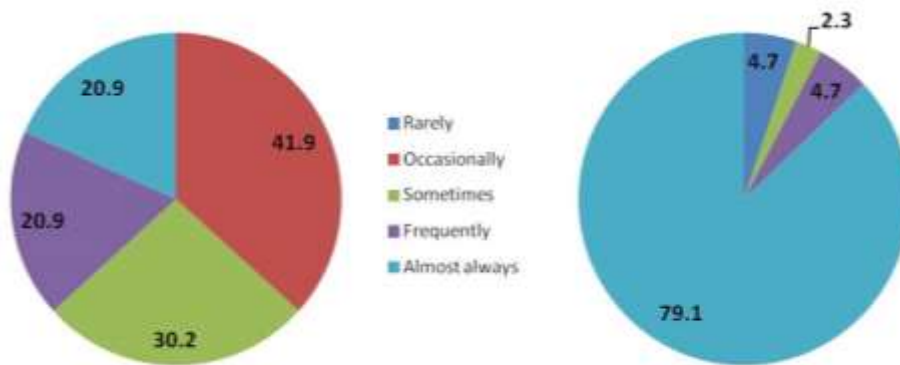
Figure 3.14 staff behavior and communication

QUESTION 3:

How confident do you feel in understanding our organization's customer service vision?

It was found from that the data, pre training, only 58.1% of them agreed that they are very much confident in understanding our organization's customer service vision, but post training, it was increased to 81.4% which suggests of the impact the training made.
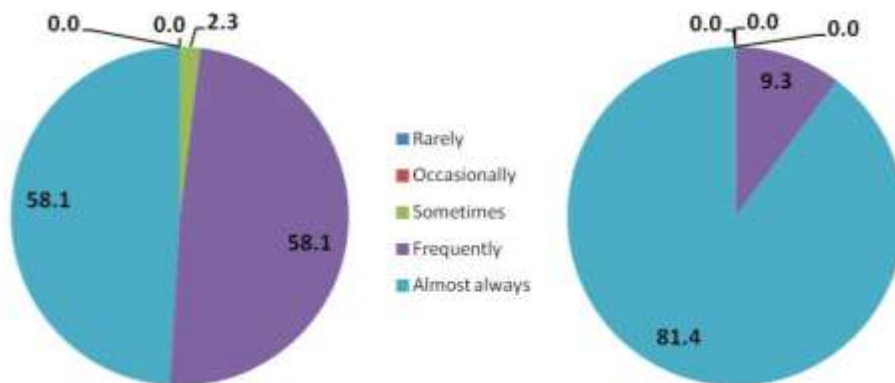
Figure 3.15 staff customer service vision

QUESTION 4:

How often do you put customer needs and preferences at the forefront of your interactions?

It was found that, pre training, only 46.5% of them agreed that they put customer needs and preferences at the forefront of their interactions, but post training, it was increased to 79.1% which suggests of the impact the training made.
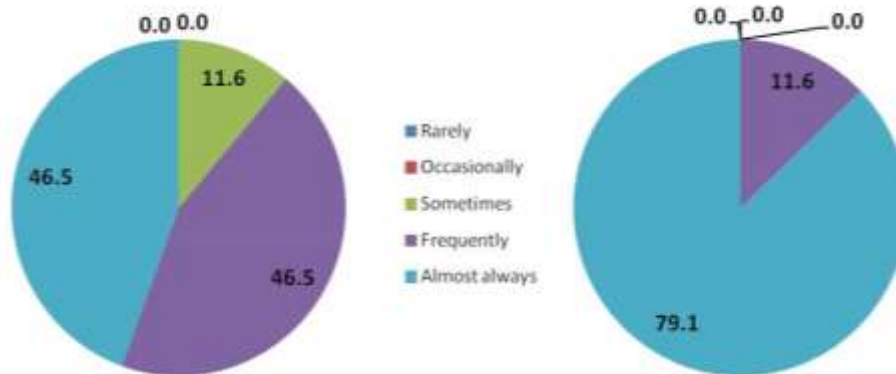
Figure 3.16 customer needs and preferences

QUESTION 5:

How comfortable are you in addressing customer complaints and concerns?

It was found that, pre training only 53.5% of them stated that they are comfortable to address the customer complaints and concerns. But post training, it was increased to 81.4% which suggests of the impact the training made.
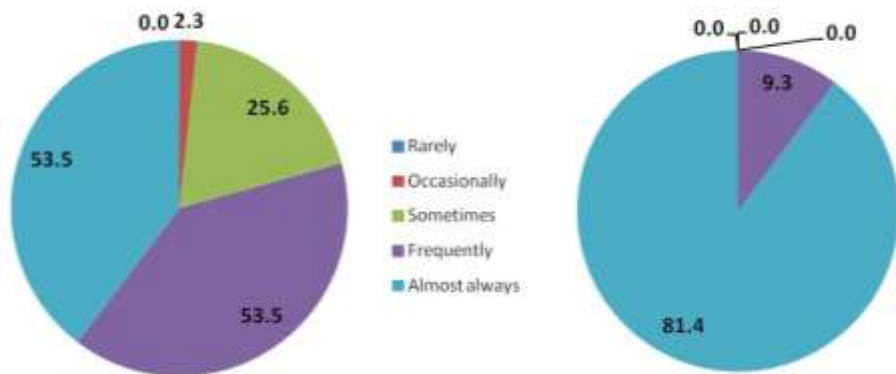
Figure 3.17 customer complaints and concerns

QUESTION 6:

How often do you use active listening skills in your interactions with customers?

It was observed, that pre training, only 32.6% of them stated that they use active listening skills when they interact with customers. But post training, it was increased to 86% which suggests of the impact the training made.
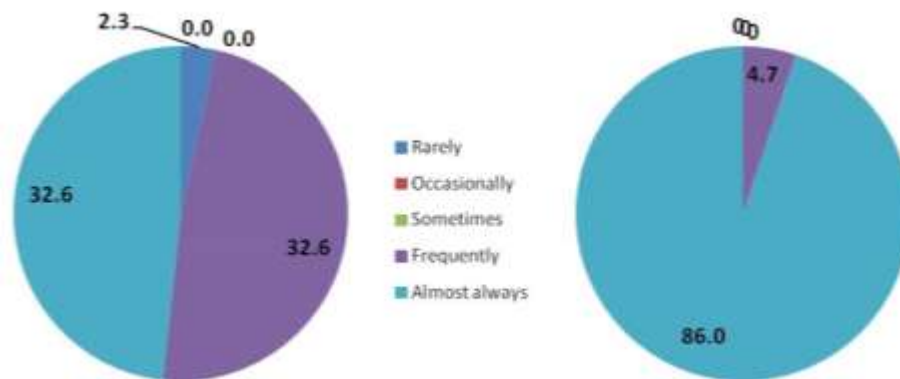
Figure 3.18 Active listening skills

QUESTION 7:

How confident are you in tailoring your communication approach to individual customer needs?

It was observed, that pre training, only 14% of them stated that they are confident to tailor their communication skills to individual customer needs which is significantly very low. But post training, it was increased to 79.1% which suggests of the impact the training made.
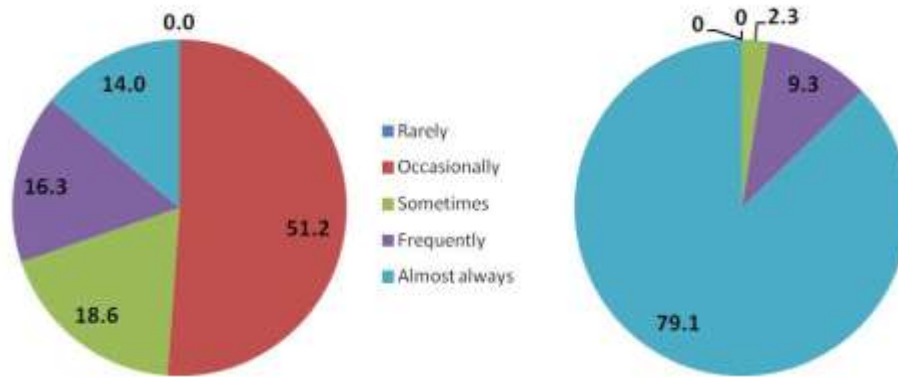
Figure 3.19 Tailoring your communication

QUESTION 8:

How often do you give proactive guidance, suggestions, directions to your patients/ customers?

It was found that pre training, a minimal amount of them (18.65%) only agreed to give proactive guidance, suggestions, directions to your patients/ customers. But post training, it was 83.7% which suggests of the impact the training made.
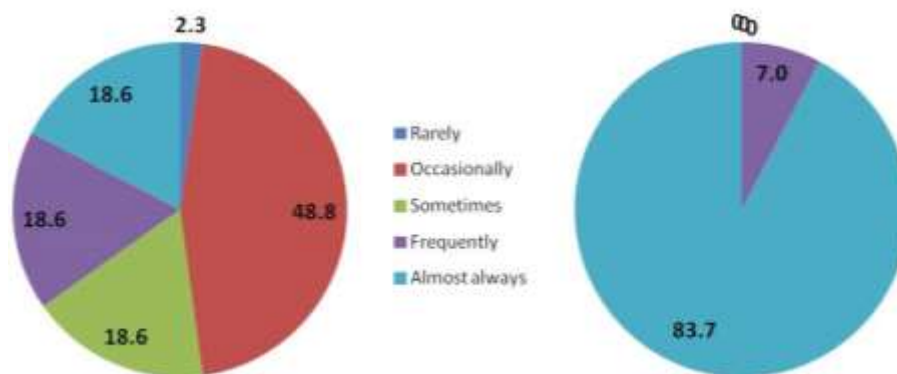
Figure 3.20 proactive guidance

| STAFF TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE	
Q2	How do you think staff behaviour and communication impact customer satisfaction scores?
Q3	How confident do you feel in understanding our organization's customer service vision?
Q4	How often do you put customer needs and preferences at the forefront of your interactions?
Q5	How comfortable are you in addressing customer complaints and concerns?
Q6	How often do you use active listening skills in your interactions with customers?
Q7	How confident are you in tailoring your communication approach to individual customer needs?
Q8	How often do you give proactive guidance, suggestions, directions to your patients/ customers?

	QUALITY BASED - PRE-TRAINING
Q1	What factors contribute to a high CSAT score/ NPS according to our organization's metrics?
Q2	Do you feel its good to have a script given to refer to adjust the communication
Q3	Do you think your behavior and communication have impacted customer satisfaction scores?

Table 3. 8 Staff Training Questionnaire

Q2: Do you feel it is good to have a script given to refer to adjust the communication
From the data analysed, it was found that about 91% (39/43) of the staff accepted to have a script prior to focus and adjust their communication skills.
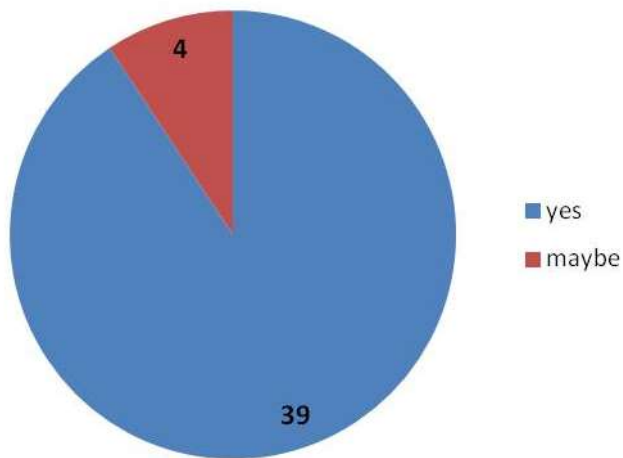
Figure 3.21 script to refer

Q3: Do you think your behaviour and communication have impacted customer satisfaction scores?

From the data analysed, it was found that about 58% (25/43) of the staff accepted that their behaviour has impacted overall customer satisfactions scores, while 42% of them stayed neutral.
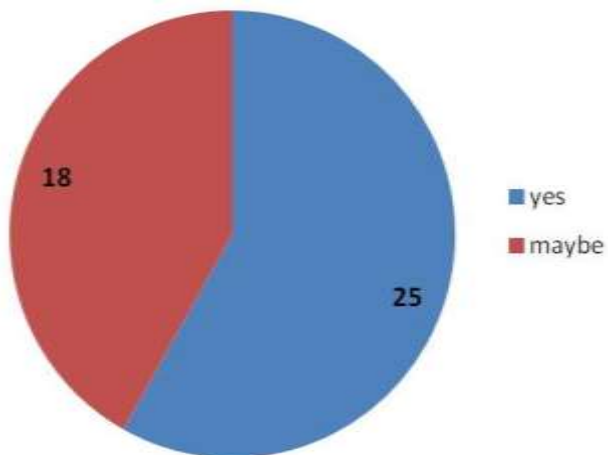
Figure 3.22 behaviour and communication

	QUALITY BASED - POST TRAINING
Q1	What factors contribute to a high CSAT score/ NPS according to our organization's metrics?
Q2:	Do you think your behaviour and communication have impacted customer satisfaction scores?
Q3	What are the key learnings from this training?

Table 3.9 Quality Based Post Training

3.12 Staff t-test:

A two tailed t test was conducted to compare the significance of the training to the staff. Data from the questionnaire (8 questions) were collected pre and post training from the staff of our organization.

Post analysis on t test it was found that a significant difference between the pre and post training remembered at $p<0.05$ level.

The significance was seen across all the 8 questions. This strongly suggests of the impact of the training made. Could reject null hypothesis at both $p<0.05$ and $p<0.01$ throughout the questionnaire.

Null hypothesis: Communication training will not improve customer satisfaction
Alternate hypothesis: Communication training will improve customer satisfaction

t-Test:		Mean	Variance	N	df	t Stat	P(T<=t) one-tail	t Critical one-tail	P(T<=t) two-tail	t Critical two-tail
	PRE	2.930233	0.923588	43	84	-8.603 09	1.86735E-13	1.663197	3.7347E-13	1.988610
Q2	POST	4.674419	0.843854	43					0.05	
	PRE	4.372093	0.286822	43	84	-5.002 972	1.52858E-06	1.663197	3.0572E-06	1.988610
Q3	POST	4.860465	0.122924	43						
	PRE	4.232558	0.420819	43	84	-5.296 729	4.65306E-07	1.663197	9.3061E-07	1.988610
Q4	POST	4.837209	0.139535	43						
	PRE	3.837209	0.520487	43	84	-7.531 862	2.60139E-11	1.663197	5.2028E-11	1.988610
Q5	POST	4.813953	0.202658	43						
	PRE	4.581395	0.534884	43	84	-2.949 857	0.002058917	1.663197	0.00411783	1.988610
Q6	POST	4.930233	0.066445	43						
	PRE	2.906977	1.181617	43	84	-10.81 879	6.80307E-18	1.663197	1.3606E-17	1.988610
Q7	POST	4.837209	0.187154	43						
	PRE	2.813953	1.059801	43	84	-12.81 982	8.94903E-22	1.663197	1.7898E-21	1.988610
Q8	POST	4.906977	0.086379	43						

Table 3.10 Staff t-Test

Distribution statistics:
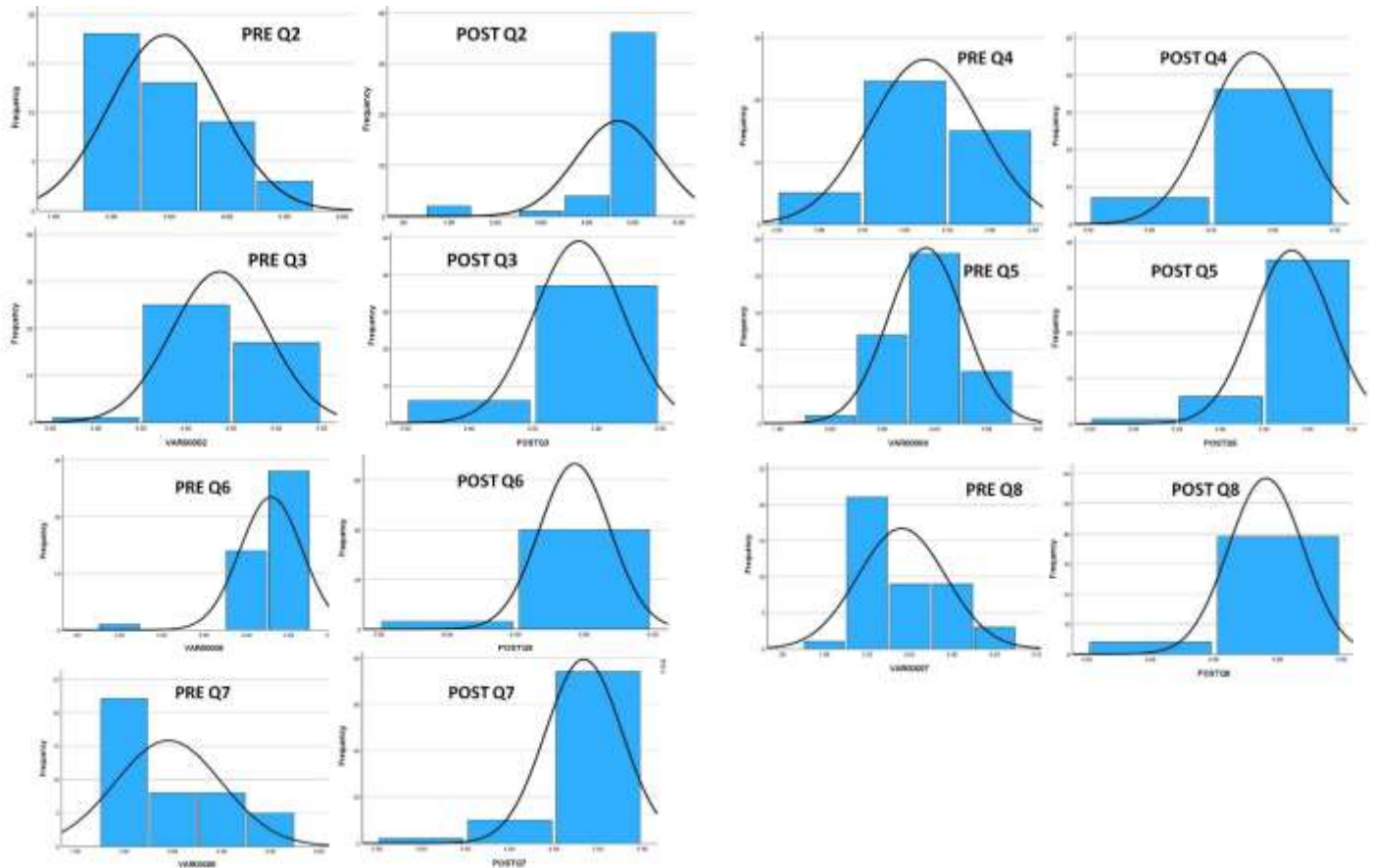
Figure 3.23 Distribution statistics

3.13   Customer Satisfaction Survey

Statistical techniques like tabulation, average mean, and frequency count were used in SPSS version 20 to summarize the data gathered from the questionnaire. Descriptive data analysis techniques were employed to examine and handle the collected data. Additionally, employed inferential data analysis approaches to demonstrate the degree of relationship and relative influence between independent and dependent variables.

Two-way ANOVA test was used to compare the statistical difference between the pre and post training program. CSAT and NPS scoring systems were evaluated.

It was hypothesized that communication skills could aid in the overall customer satisfaction survey. Collected questionnaires from over 375 customers at the time of discharge. The questionnaire included about 10 all rated from 1 to 10 (Likert scale) where 1 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. Questions can be seen from the table. This questionnaire was collected from customers (n=375) pre and post training, to find the significance and impact of the training on the overall customer satisfaction survey.

Please rate the clarity of information provided to you at the time of admission
How would you rate the responsiveness of the staff for your quires and concerns
Did the staff explain to you the protocols you need to follow while you are undergoing the treatment and were you informed about the upcoming care expectations
What was your impression of the bed booking process?
Were you satisfied with the information provided to you by the front office?
Did the Front staff address the questions and concerns you may have about the hospital charges and insurance coverage?
How would you rate the helpfulness and professionalism of the staff?
On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the overall experience of the hospital including front office
Would you recommend this hospital to your family and friends based on the communication experience you have had recently?
Please rate the communication experience you have had during your last visit.

Table 3.11 CS Survey questions

3.14 CRONBACH ALPHA

Our study includes 375 valid replies and all were used in the analysis. The results of the descriptive and inferential analyses are presented first to make the empirical analysis easier to conduct. It may be concluded that the questionnaire has sufficient reliability as the

Cronbach alpha value obtained for all items is highly significant than 0.7 (Satvati, Rabie, & Rasoli, 2016). Pre and post training survey's Cronbach alpha was found to be 0.955 and 0.986 respectively.

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
PRE-TRAINING SURVEY	0.955	10
POST-TRAINING SURVEY	0.986	10

Table 3.12 Cronbach alpha Values

Satvati, R. S., Rabie, M., & Rasoli, K. (2016). Studying the relationship between brand equity and consumer behavior. International Review (1-2), 153-163.

PRE TRAINING - Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
PRE-Q1	375	5	10	8.8907	1.14289
PRE-Q2	375	5	10	9.1387	1.40548
PRE-Q3	375	5	10	9.208	1.34619
PRE-Q4	375	5	10	8.5307	1.21861
PRE-Q5	375	5	10	8.8507	1.21007
PRE-Q6	375	5	10	9.3173	1.26791
PRE-Q7	375	5	10	8.968	1.12294
PRE-Q8	375	4	10	8.1173	1.22238
PRE-Q9	375	5	10	9.1307	1.33103
PRE-Q10	375	5	10	8.9147	1.13202
Valid N	375		TOTAL MEAN	8.90668	

Table 3.13 Pre-Training - Descriptive Statistics

The overall mean value was found to be 8.90668 (pre-training) indicative of likely to recommend the hospital and post communication training, e found significant increase in the mean score to 9.0888 (post training).

POST TRAINING - Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
POST-Q1	375	5	10	9.1813	1.03116
POST-Q2	375	5	10	9.504	1.21899
POST-Q3	375	5	10	9.5093	1.20573
POST-Q4	375	5	10	8.736	1.22241
POST-Q5	375	5	10	9.08	1.15346
POST-Q6	375	5	10	9.6027	1.0844
POST-Q7	375	5	10	9.1733	1.05938
POST-Q8	375	5	10	9.088	1.133
POST-Q9	375	5	10	9.44	1.20427
POST-Q10	375	5	10	9.144	1.06503
Valid N	375		TOTAL MEAN	9.25586	

Table 3.14 Post Training - Descriptive Statistics

The data depicted from the descriptive statistics in the above tables confirmed training program did work out of the stated ten items. The total mean was found to be 8.90668 for pre and 9.25586 for post training survey.

Net promoter score:

Regarding the questionnaire, conducted both NPS and CSAT scoring method to evaluate the efficiency of the training on communication.

NPS Classification:

Promoters (9 or 10): These are usually devoted and passionate clients.

Passives (7 or 8): They are content with our service but not so much that they qualify as advocates.

Detractors (1–6): Clients who have had a bad encounter with our business.

Figure:3.24 Mar24

Figure:3.25 Apr24

Figure 3.26 May 24

Q #	Description	Mar	Apr	May
1	Please rate the clarity of information provided to you at the time of admission	80.0	79.0	75.0
2	How would you rate the responsiveness of the staff for your quires and concerns	80.0	79.0	75.0
3	Did the staff explain to you the protocols you need to follow while you are undergoing the treatment and were you informed about the upcoming care expectations	79.2	80.8	76.8
4	What was your impression of the bed booking process?	45.6	37.6	34.4

5	Were you satisfied with the information provided to you by the front office?	79.2	80.8	76.8
6	Did the Front staff address the questions and concerns you may have about the hospital charges and insurance coverage?	87.2	84.8	79.2
7	How would you rate the helpfulness and professionalism of the staff?	87.2	84.8	79.2
10	Please rate the communication experience you have had during your last visit.	79.2	80.8	76.8

Table 3:15 NPS Score
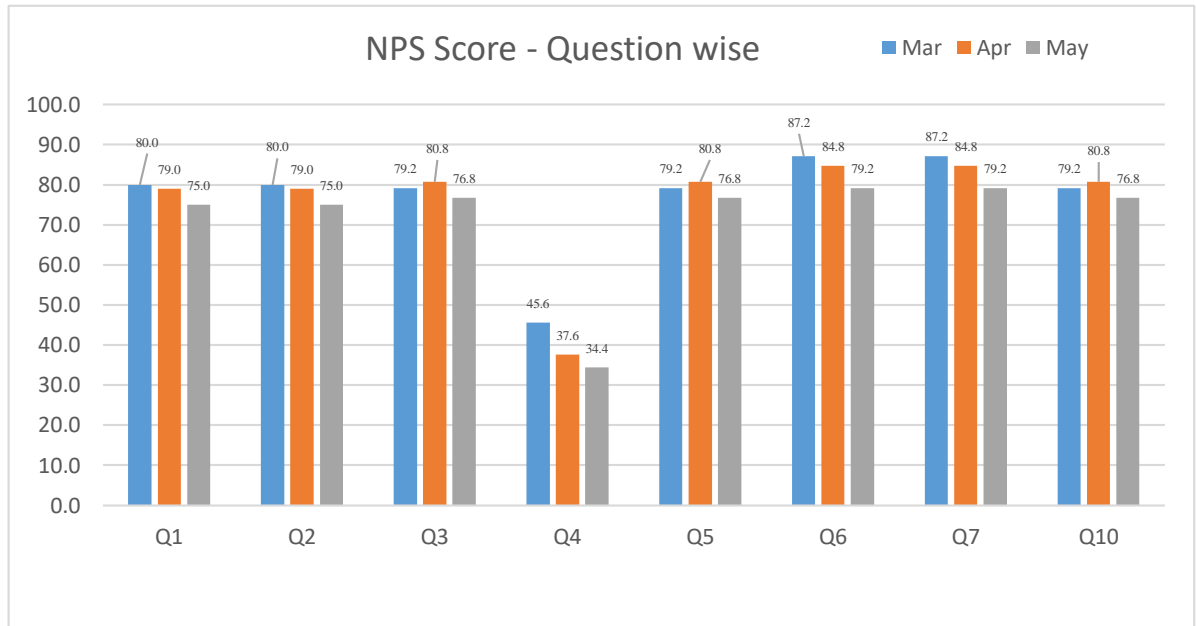
Figure:3.27 NPS Score graphical

QUESTION 8:

Regarding the question 8, conducted both NPS and CSAT scoring method to evaluate the efficiency of the training on communication.

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate the overall experience of the hospital including front office.

Anova: Two-Factor Without Replication				
SUMMARY	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Row 1	10	626.933	62.6933	230.439
Row 2	10	764	76.4	175.964
Column 1	2	155.2	77.6	75.2356
Column 2	2	143.467	71.7333	103.68
Column 3	2	145.867	72.9333	72
Column 4	2	70.1333	35.0667	34.1689
Column 5	2	148.533	74.2667	43.5556
Column 6	2	156	78	65.7422
Column 7	2	159.2	79.6	34.1689
Column 8	2	117.333	58.6667	821.476
Column 9	2	146.4	73.2	65.7422
Column 10	2	148.8	74.4	41.1022

Table:3.16 Anova Two-Factor Without Replication

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Rows	939.364	1	939.364	20.2494	0.00149	5.11736
Columns	3240.12	9	360.013	7.76063	0.0027	3.17889
Error	417.508	9	46.3897			
Total	4596.99	19				

Table:3.17 Anova distribution Q8
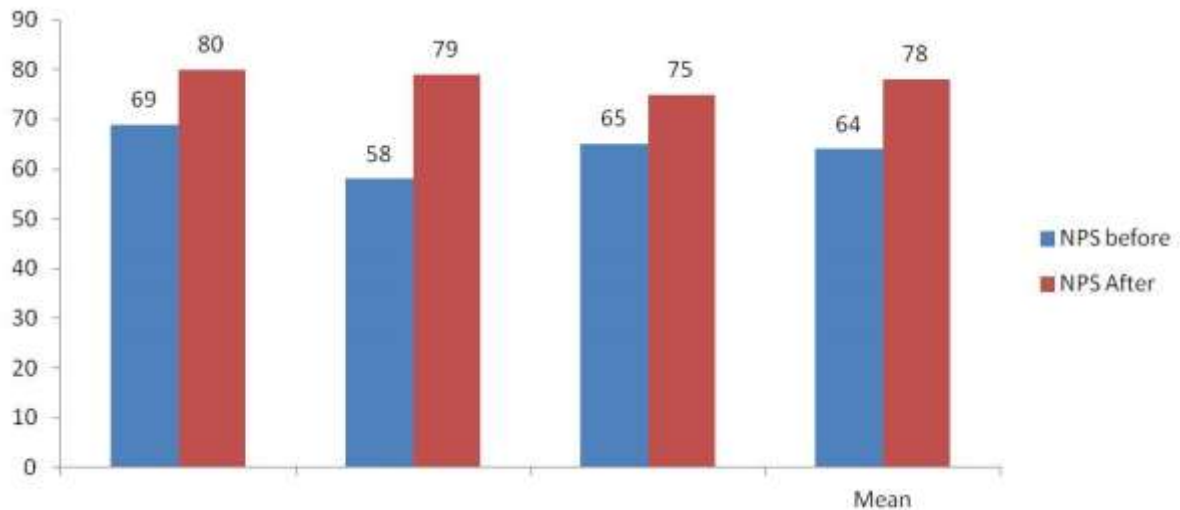
Figure:3.28 NPS Before and After Q8

Histogram presenting the NPS scores for the 3 months before and after communication training for the front office staff. Means scores can be seen from the graph.

It was found that a highly significant difference in the NPS scoring pre and post training. Calculated the NPS for 3 months and found an average NPS of 64 (P<0.05). Post training, le also found the mean NPS score to increase to 78 which was significant (P<0.05).

A two-way ANOVA between the NPS scoring and questions was conducted to compare the effect of staff training on the customer satisfaction. All effects were statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. A significant effect was seen between both the scores and the questions (p<0.05).

There was a significant effect between the NPS scores at both pre and post training remembered at the $p < 0.05$ level [F (1, 9) = 20.2494, p = 0.00149; MS = 939.364]. There was also a significant effect seen between the questions on the NPS score [F (9,9) = 7.76063, p = 0.0027; MS = 360.013].

QUESTION 9:

Regarding the question 9 also, conducted both NPS and CSAT scoring method to evaluate the efficiency of the training on communication.

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On a scale of 1-10, Would you recommend this hospital to your family and friends based on the communication experience you have had recently?
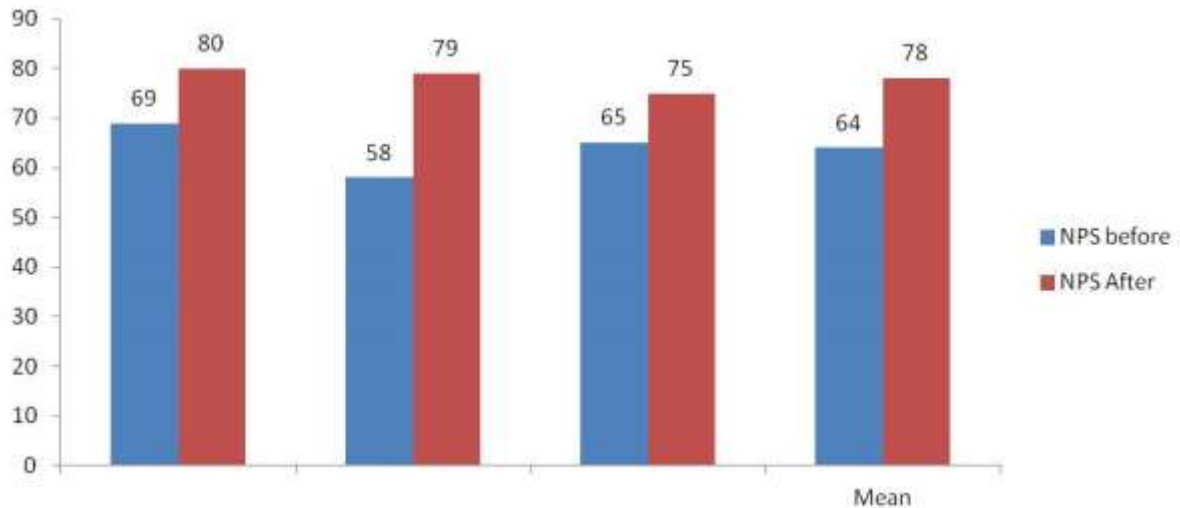
Figure:3.29 NPS Before and After Q9

Figure: NPS scoring. Histogram presenting the NPS scores for the 3 months before and after training. Means scores can be seen from the graph.

It was found that a highly significant difference in the NPS scoring pre and post training. Calculated the NPS for 3 months and found an average NPS of 64 (P<0.05). Post training, also found the mean NPS score to increase to 78 which was significant (P<0.05).

A two-way ANOVA between the NPS scoring and questions was conducted to compare the effect of staff training on the customer satisfaction. All effects were statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. A significant effect was seen between both the scores and the questions (p<0.05).

There was a significant effect between the NPS scores at both pre and post training remembered at the $p < 0.05$ level [$F_{(1, 9)} = 20.2494$, $p = 0.00149$; $MS = 939.364$]. There was also a significant effect seen between the questions on the NPS score [$F_{(9,9)} = 7.76063$, $p = 0.0027$; $MS = 360.013$].

CSAT SCORE:

For the CSAT scoring counted all those who are likely (happy customers) to recommend the hospital (9 and 10) to evaluate the impact of training. From this it was found that the mean score to be 8.93 and 9.33 for pre and post training surveys collected from the customers. CSAT score can be seen more when compared to pre training, confirming of the evaluation mode and training efficiency.
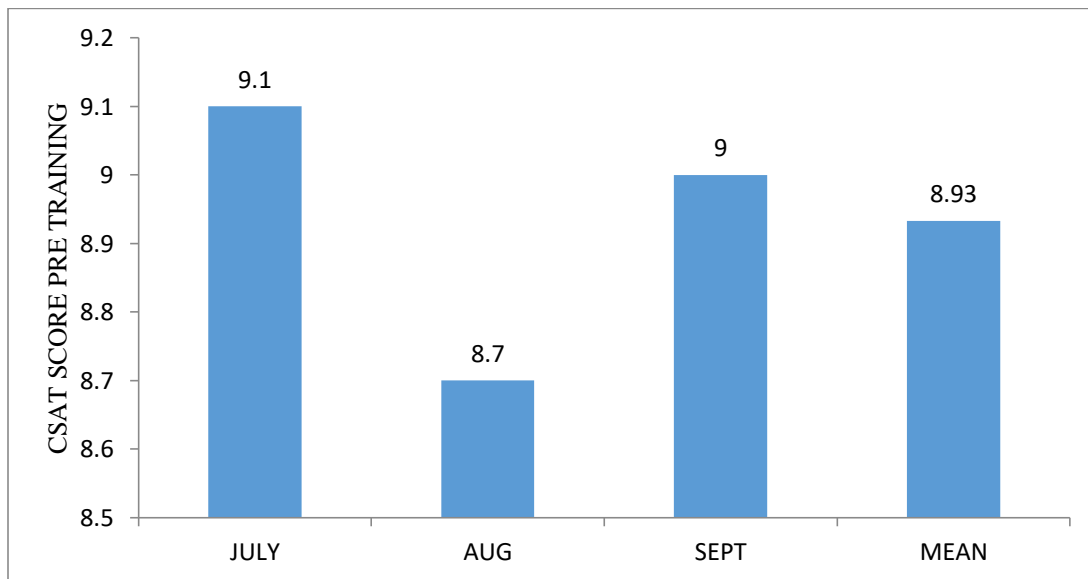
Figure:3.30 CSAT score histogram calculated for 3 months pre-training.

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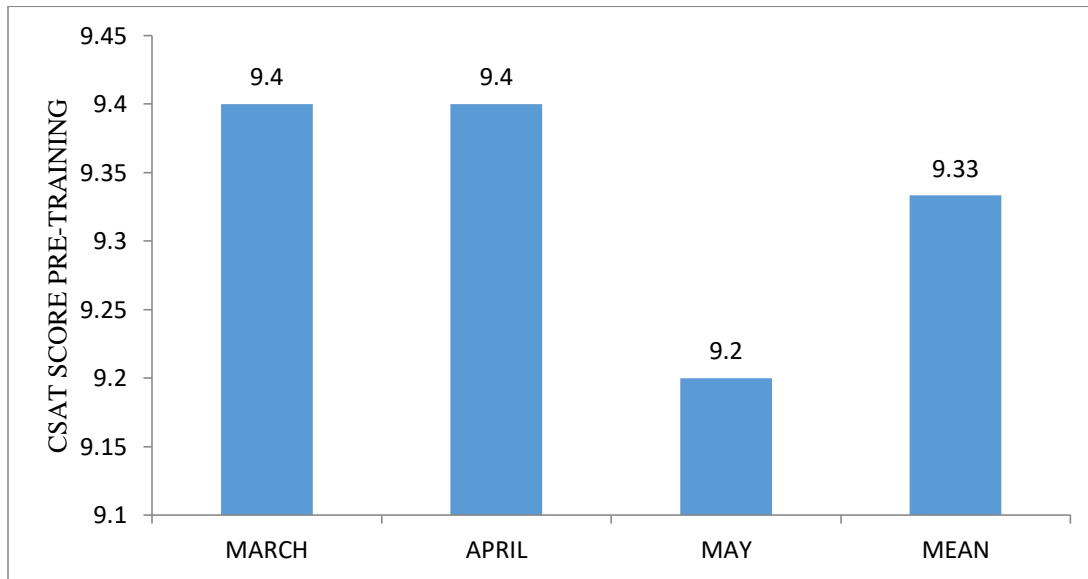
Figure:3.31 CSAT score histogram calculated for 3 months post-training

Descriptive Statistics (before communication training)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
JULY	125	6.00	99.00	8.8080	8.20572
AUGUST	125	4.00	10.00	8.1440	1.20285
SEPTEMBER	125	4.00	10.00	8.1200	1.35955
Valid N (listwise)	125				

Table:3.18 Descriptive Statistics before training

Descriptive Statistics (after communication training)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MARCH	125	5.00	10.00	9.0560	1.17298
APRIL	125	5.00	10.00	9.1120	1.16547
MAY	125	5.00	10.00	9.0400	1.24045
Valid N (listwise)	125				

Table:3.19 Descriptive Statistics after training

Anova: Two-Factor Without Replication CSAT SCORE				
SUMMARY	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Row 1	4	3.56267	0.89066	0.00018
Row 2	4	2.86933	0.71733	0.00035
Column 1	2	1.576	0.788	0.01411
Column 2	2	1.648	0.824	0.0128
Column 3	2	1.6	0.8	0.01843
Column 4	2	1.608	0.804	0.01502

Table:3.20 Anova: Two-Factor Without Replication

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Rows	0.060089	1	0.06008	650	0.00013	10.1279
Columns	0.001344	3	0.0004	4.8461	0.11373	9.27663
Error	0.000277	3	0.0000924			
Total	0.061710	7				

Table:3.21 Anova: Source Variation

A two-way ANOVA between the CSAT scoring and time period was conducted to compare the effect of training staff on communication over the customer satisfaction. All effects were statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. There was a significant effect between the CSAT scores at both pre and post training remembered at the $p < 0.05$ level [$F(1, 3) = 650$, $p = 0.00013$; $MS = 0.06008$]. There was no significant effect seen between the time periods on the CSAT score [$F(3,3) = 4.8461$, $p = 0.11373$; $MS = 0.0004$].

3.15   Research Design Limitations

The limitations of the research are:

Convenience sampling: The patient sample is limited to those who have been discharged in the last three months, which may not be representative of all patients.

Census sampling: While including 100% of front office staff and 90% top management provides a comprehensive view, it may not be feasible or generalizable to larger organizations.

Self-reported data: Questionnaires and surveys rely on participants' honest and accurate responses, which may be subject to bias. As the perceptions of the participants at that point is considered

Limited control over variables: The study may not account for factors like patient acuity, staff workload, or organizational changes that could impact communication and patient satisfaction.

Single-method bias: Relying on questionnaires, surveys, and FGDs may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues surrounding communication in the front office.

Limited generalizability: Findings may be specific to this healthcare organization or front office context, limiting transferability to other settings or organizations

Non-response bias: Patients or staff may not respond honestly or at all, leading to biased results.

Social desirability bias: Participants may respond in a way that is socially acceptable rather than honestly. Perception of the participants (Both customer and staff)

Language barrier as the questionnaire is prepared in English

One group of staff (front office staff), and one group of patients (Discharged patients) has been selected for the study

3.16 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how effective communication in the front office of a private healthcare organization influences customer satisfaction and overall patient experience. The findings suggest that key touch points, such as initial contact, proactive explanations, the communication significantly impact customer satisfaction. Current communication practices and staff behavior were found to be inconsistent, leading to missed opportunities for effective communication. "When you make things right, you increase trust, loyalty, and advocacy." - Shep Hyken.

Based on the findings, a comprehensive improvement strategy was proposed, focusing on staff training, clear communication protocols, and feedback mechanisms. Communication interventions were developed and implemented, resulting in significant improvements in customer satisfaction scores.

The study's results confirm that effective communication is crucial for achieving high customer satisfaction in healthcare settings. By identifying key touch points, evaluating current practices, and implementing targeted interventions, healthcare organizations can significantly enhance the customer experience.

There has been a notable change in the pre and post scores obtained. The staff after the training and awareness on the importance of focused communication, could easily address the customers much efficiently, keeping customer as the priority. After the training the NPS on the front office has gone beyond 75% consistently. The role of focused communication was clear in the NPS of the front office month after month.

4.1 Research Question One

How useful is focused communication to enhance customer satisfaction in a private hospital?

The results support the idea that focused communication is useful in enhancing customer satisfaction.

t-Test:		Mean	Variance	N	df	t Stat	P(T<=t) one-tail	t Critical one-tail	P(T<= t) two-tail	t Critical two-tail
Q 2	PRE	2.930233	0.923588	43	84	-8.60309	1.86735E-13	1.663197	3.7347E-13	1.988610
	POST	4.674419	0.843854	43					0.05	
Q 3	PRE	4.372093	0.286822	43	84	-5.002972	1.52858E-06	1.663197	3.0572E-06	1.988610
	POST	4.860465	0.122924	43						
Q 4	PRE	4.232558	0.420819	43	84	-5.296729	4.65306E-07	1.663197	9.3061E-07	1.988610
	POST	4.837209	0.139535	43						

		Mean	Variance	Observations	df	t Stat	P(T<=t) one-tail	t Critical one-tail	P(T<=t) two-tail	t Critical two-tail
Q 5	PRE	3.837209	0.520487	43	84	-7.531862	2.60139E-11	1.663197	5.2028E-11	1.988610
	POST	4.813953	0.202658	43						
Q 6	PRE	4.581395	0.534884	43	84	-2.949857	0.002058917	1.663197	0.00411783	1.988610
	POST	4.930233	0.066445	43						
Q 7	PRE	2.906977	1.181617	43	84	-10.81879	6.80307E-18	1.663197	1.3606E-17	1.988610
	POST	4.837209	0.187154	43						
Q 8	PRE	2.813953	1.059801	43	84	-12.81982	8.94903E-22	1.663197	1.7898E-21	1.988610
	POST	4.906977	0.086379	43						

Table 4:1 t-Test focused communication

4.2 Research Question Two

Why communication is important and what is its impact on business outcome?

They highlight the importance of communication in the healthcare industry and its positive impact on business outcomes (Research Question 2).
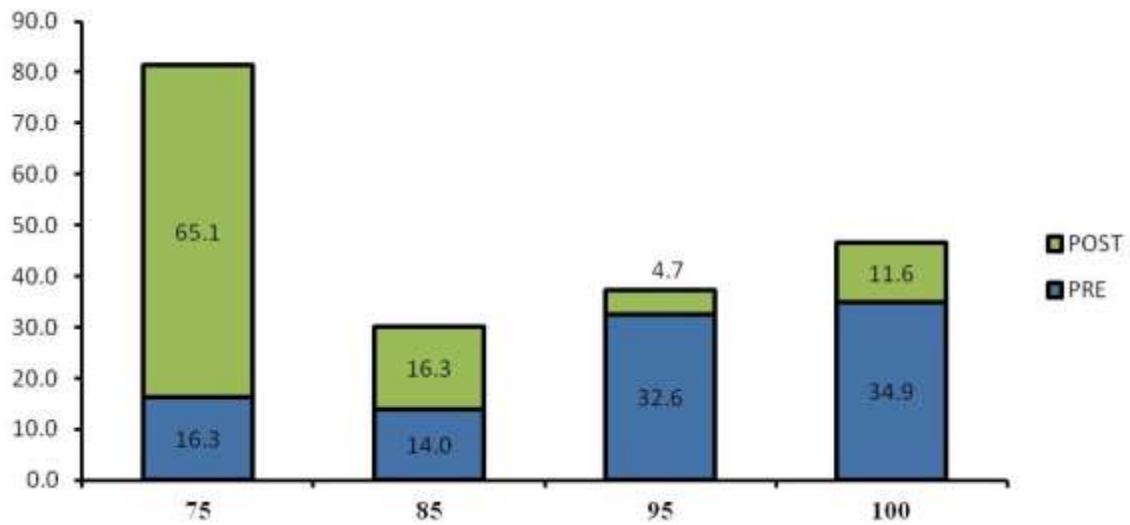
Figure 4.1 Importance of communication

4.3 Research Question Three

The findings suggest that customer satisfaction can be enhanced through focused communication at specific touch points (Research Question 3).
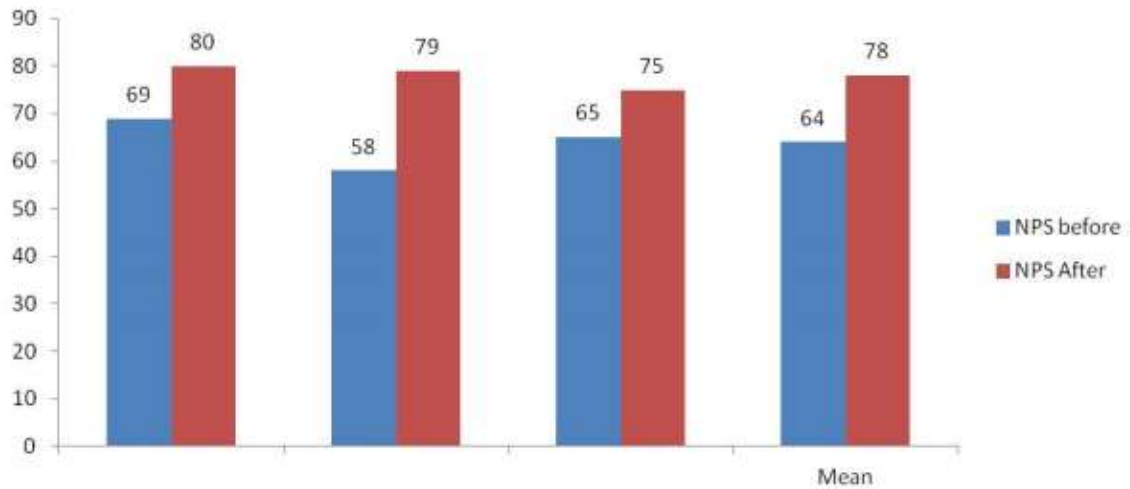
Figure 4.2 Enhancement through focused communication

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4.4 Research Question Four

The results demonstrate how communication influences customer satisfaction at specific touch points (Research Question 4).

Figure 4.3 NPS Mar 24

Figure 4.4 NPS Apr 24
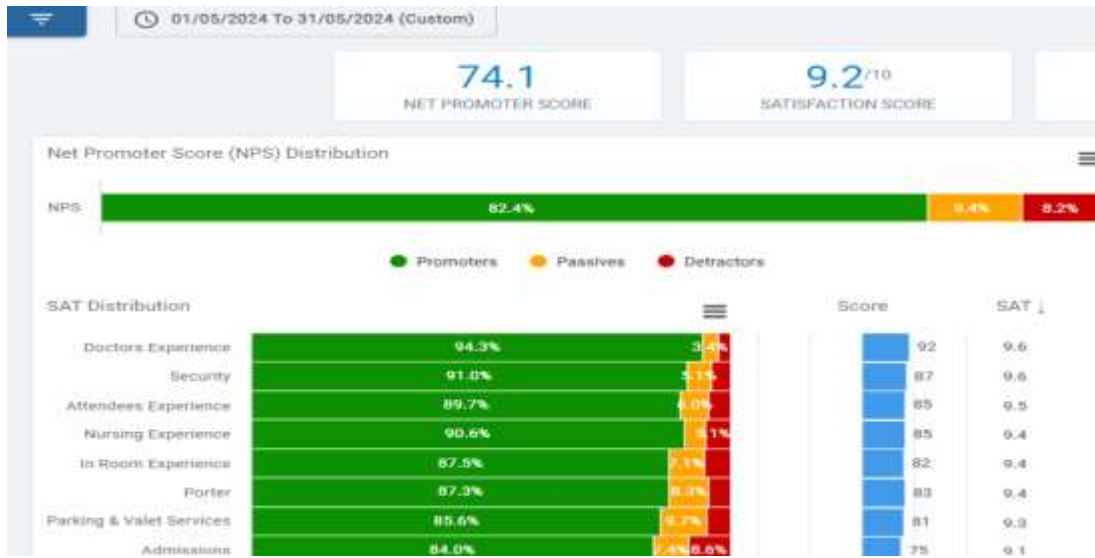
Figure 4.5 NPS May24

Sample Assuming Equal Variances

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Equal Variances

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	64	78
Variance	31	7
Observations	3	3
Pooled Variance	19	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	4	
t Stat	-3.93	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.01	
t Critical one-tail	2.13	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.02	
t Critical two-tail	2.78	

Table 4.2 t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming equal Variances

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances

	Variable 1	Variable 2
Mean	64	78
Variance	31	7
Observations	3	3
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	3	
t Stat	-3.93	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.01	
t Critical one-tail	2.35	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.03	
t Critical two-tail	3.18	

Table 4.3 t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming unequal Variances

Summary of Findings

It was found that a highly significant difference in the NPS scoring pre and post training. Calculated the NPS for 3 months and found an average NPS of 64 ($P<0.05$). Post training, also found the mean NPS score to increase to 78 which was significant ($P<0.05$).

A two-way ANOVA between the NPS scoring and questions was conducted to compare the effect of staff training on the customer satisfaction. All effects were statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level. A significant effect was seen between both the scores and the questions ($p<0.05$).

There was a significant effect between the NPS scores at both pre and post training remembered at the $p < 0.05$ level [$F_{(1, 9)} = 20.2494$, $p = 0.00149$; $MS = 939.364$]. There was also a significant effect seen between the questions on the NPS score [$F_{(9,9)} = 7.76063$, $p = 0.0027$; $MS = 360.013$].

4.5 Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of focused communication on customer satisfaction in a private hospital, specifically at the front office touch point. The results showed that a lack of explanation and deficiency in communication were primary reasons for the decline in net promoter score (NPS). Following targeted interventions, including training, coaching, and scripting, a significant upward trend in NPS was observed. This improvement demonstrates the effectiveness of focused communication in enhancing customer satisfaction. The findings suggest that prioritizing communication training and support for front office staff can lead to substantial gains in patient satisfaction and loyalty, ultimately driving business success.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion of Results

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that focused communication training for staff can significantly improve the Net Promoter Score in a private hospital setting in India. Statistically significant improvement in Net Promoter Score (NPS) and customer satisfaction (CSAT) scores after implementing focused communication interventions at specific touch points.

The negative t-statistic (-3.93) suggests that the post-intervention NPS is significantly higher than the pre-intervention NPS.

Strong evidence for the effectiveness of focused communication in enhancing customer satisfaction, as indicated by the small p-values (0.01 and 0.02).

This suggests that the observed improvement in NPS is unlikely to be due to chance.

Practical significance: The effect size is moderate to large, given the t-statistic value. This implies that the focused communication interventions had a substantial impact on NPS.

The two-way ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant effect of communication training on CSAT scores ($p < 0.05$). . The study's findings support the notion that targeted communication training can enhance patient satisfaction, thereby contributing to improved Net Promoter Scores (NPS). This suggests that the training intervention had a positive impact on patient satisfaction.

The results underscore the importance of investing in staff communication skills development to improve patient experiences. The significant difference in CSAT scores between pre- and post-training periods ($p = 0.00013$) underscores the effectiveness of the training program.

Conversely, the non-significant effect of time periods on CSAT scores ($p = 0.11373$) implies that the improvement in patient satisfaction can be attributed to the training intervention rather than external factors. The significant improvement in CSAT scores

post-training suggests that focused communication strategies can mitigate patient dissatisfaction.

5.2 Implications:

The study's findings support the notion that targeted communication training can enhance patient satisfaction, thereby contributing to improved Net Promoter Scores (NPS).

The results underscore the importance of investing in staff communication skills development to improve patient experiences.

The significant improvement in CSAT scores post-training suggests that focused communication strategies can mitigate patient dissatisfaction.

In the context of the research questions and objectives:

The results support the idea that focused communication is useful in enhancing customer satisfaction (Research Question 1).

They highlight the importance of communication in the healthcare industry and its positive impact on business outcomes (Research Question 2).

The findings suggest that customer satisfaction can be enhanced through focused communication at specific touch points (Research Question 3).

The results demonstrate how communication influences customer satisfaction at specific touch points (Research Question 4).

Overall, the test results provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of the framework in increasing NPS through focused communication at specific touch points of the private hospital setting of the study. The results clearly shows that there is direct correlation of customer satisfaction and the communication of the staff given at various areas of interaction. The chosen area of the study is the front office. As the first impression is the

best impression, and the first impression is the lasting one. This first impression might influence the attitude of the customer in gauging every experience they come across. The commodities and fungible, but the experience is intangible, and can only be felt by the customer. It is essential that the customer has a memorable experience at every touch point, where the patients and the staff make the interactions.

As the customer experience cannot be given to chance, but it needs to be taken care of. The proactive assistance, and targeted proactive sharing of information are the key determinants in creating the memorable experience. This memorable experience would result in an elevated customer satisfaction. Prior to the research it was noted that the customer satisfaction and the net promoter scores were fluctuating in the front office of the hospital. When the staff were taught about the importance of their soft skills including the greetings, their courtesy, active listening, empathetic communication, the staff could exhibit the expected behavior. This resulted in having a notable change in their behavior, and focus. This impacted the customer satisfaction, and the Net Promoter scores. However, there was a pain point noted was the delay in bed booking. This issue needs to be dealt separately.

5.2.1 Discussion of Research Question One

How useful is focused communication to enhance customer satisfaction in a private hospital?

The results support the idea that focused communication is useful in enhancing customer satisfaction (Research Question 1).

Here the key concepts considered were the focused communication and customer satisfaction in private hospital. This question examined the effectiveness of focused communication at the front office in enhancing the customer satisfaction. Few specific aspects of Staff communication like clarity, empathy, and timeliness are associated with the customer satisfaction. Which was very clearly evidenced in the result. Focused communication of at all touch points, where ever the staff encounters the patient matters to

the patient in experiencing the expected level of satisfaction. Few touch points are interactions with nursing, billing, admission. Few barriers of focused communication are lack of active listening and lack of explanation on the journey were identified during the study.

The test results show a statistically significant improvement in NPS after implementing focused communication interventions (t Stat -3.93, P(T<=t) one-tail 0.01). This suggests that focused communication is indeed useful in enhancing customer satisfaction in private hospitals. The significant effect between CSAT scores at pre and post-training (F(1,3) = 650, p = 0.00013) indicates that focused communication training for staff had a substantial and statistically significant impact on customer satisfaction. This suggests that focused communication is indeed useful in enhancing customer satisfaction.

5.2.2 Discussion of Research Question two
Why communication in the healthcare industry is important and what is its business impact on the business?

The Key concepts examined through this question is communication in health care, and its importance, and its impact on the business. The research explored the significance of effective communication in India's private healthcare sector, focusing on its impact on business performance and outcomes in a hospital setting. The consequences of poor communication, resulted in the dissatisfaction of the customer. Dissatisfied customer could go out and may act as a detractor, who could bad mouth the organization. The dissatisfied customer may not visit again. Or they could act as an opinion maker or an influencer to their friends and family. Thus, the opportunity to serve again may be lost, resulting the revenue lost, and image loss for the organization. It is critical that the customer gets a memorable positive experience at every touch points. This positive experience would add to their satisfaction, which in turn promote the brand to their friends and family, and

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acquaintances. Effective communication impacts the patient outcome and the customer satisfaction. Active listening, practicing empathy, and proactive guidance and explanation about the care and the journey through the hospital is integral part of effective communication. These elements are the determinants of patient/ customer satisfaction. When the customer is happy and satisfied, they will speak about the positive experience. They become the loyalist who could promote the brand to their friends and family. Not only the happy customer return to the organization, but also, they act as an influencer or promoter to the organization. Which is crucial for the sustainability of the business. Thus, the satisfied customers play a crucial role in bringing back the customer through their repeated visits and encounters. Effective communication makes satisfied customer, who could turn to be an ambassador for the hospital, resulting more patient flow, and causing a direct business impact. The significant improvement in NPS (939.364, F 20.2494, P 0.00149) indicates that effective communication has a substantial impact on business outcomes, specifically customer satisfaction. This highlights the importance of communication in the healthcare industry.

The significant improvement in CSAT scores after training (p = 0.00013) highlights the importance of effective communication in the healthcare industry. The business implications are clear: enhanced customer satisfaction fosters loyalty, boosts retention rates, and drives long-term growth and profitability.

5.2.3   Discussion of Research Question Three

How can customer satisfaction be enhanced through focused communication at specific touch points?

Concepts examined were customer satisfaction, focused communication, and specific touch points. Specific touch points where focused communication can become a catalyst to improve the customer satisfaction was identified as the front office. Most effective communication strategies at this touch point were discussed. It was identified that the front office as one of the key touch points of a hospital where communication can impact the customer satisfaction greatly. Specific communication strategies like active listening,

empathy, clear explanation etc. are vital to make the communication effective, and which could result in a positive experience for the customers. Training of the staff at these touch points are critical, as these staff acts as an ambassador to the brand, as the patients or the customers experience the brand or the organizations through each one of them.

The significant effect of training on CSAT scores ($F_{(1,3)} = 650$, $p = 0.00013$) suggests that focused communication training can enhance customer satisfaction when targeted at specific touch points. The results imply that identifying and addressing key touch points with effective communication strategies can lead to improved customer satisfaction. The results demonstrate that focused communication interventions at specific touch points can significantly enhance customer satisfaction (t Stat -3.93, P(T<=t) one-tail 0.01). This suggests that identifying and targeting key touch points with effective communication strategies can lead to improved customer satisfaction.

5.2.4   Discussion of Research Question four

How does communication influence customer satisfaction in specific touch points?

Key concepts examined are Communication, customer satisfaction, and touch points. Here the relationship between the communication and customer satisfaction at specific touch points were examined. The staff have been trained, as the result of the training the staff have been proactively communicating to the customer on what to anticipate, and what is the journey looks like. It was seen that the soft aspect of communication like clarity, empathy, and timeliness impact the customer satisfaction. As the result of the training and staff awareness there has been tremendous improvement in the customer satisfaction scores.

The lack of significant effect between time periods on CSAT scores ($F_{(3,3)} = 4.8461$, $p = 0.11373$) indicates that the impact of communication on customer satisfaction is consistent across time periods. This suggests that effective communication at specific touch points can lead to sustained improvements in customer satisfaction. The significant F-statistic

(20.2494) and small p-value (0.00149) indicate that communication has a substantial influence on customer satisfaction at specific touch points. The results suggest that effective communication at these touch points can lead to improved customer satisfaction. Thus, the loyalty and stickiness which in turn impact the positively to business outcome.

CHAPTER VI:
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

This study revealed a strong correlation between staff communication and customer satisfaction, significantly influencing Net Promoter Scores. The satisfied customer could be turned to an influencer for the brand, and the business. To sustain the business the business, it is essential that the customer come back to the business. If the experience received at the hospital is a memorable one, they would become the positive influencers to their friends and family. Positive word-of-mouth recommendations are vital to the long-term viability and success of the business. A positive experience matters a lot to the patients as the customer to choose the hospital again. Through the satisfied customer the brand value grows, and it attracts more customer. The satisfied customer is the brand ambassador, and they become loyal to the brand. The loyal customer stick to the brand. The life time value each satisfied customer brings to the business is central to its success. This study investigated the impact of focused communication on customer satisfaction in a private hospital setting in India. The results showed a statistically significant improvement in the Net Promoter score (NPS) and customer satisfaction scores (CSAT) through the focused communication. The interventions like training, coaching and feedback to the team members had a substantial impact on the NPS and CSAT.

6.2 Implications

The findings of this study have revealed the significance of focused communication to improve customer satisfaction and the net promoter scores in a private hospital in India. This study contributes to the understanding of how focused communication strategies can influence Net Promoter Scores (NPS) in healthcare settings. The proposed framework of SHARE model and AIDET tool provides a foundation for designing effective communication interventions in private healthcare organizations.

Focused communication training is an effective strategy to enhance customer satisfaction in private hospitals in India. Improving communication skills among staff can lead to sustained improvements in customer satisfaction. Recognizing and addressing key touch points with effective communication strategies is crucial for enhancing customer satisfaction.

The study's findings have inferences for hospital management and staff training programs, highlighting the importance of prioritizing communication skills development.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

1. Sustain and expand training programs: Continue and broaden training initiatives to ensure long-term impact and consistency across all front office staff. Implement focused communication training programs for staff, targeting key touch points and communication skills.

2. Regular feedback and coaching: Establish a regular feedback mechanism to monitor progress, address gaps, and provide ongoing coaching to front office staff. Regularly assess and evaluate the impact of communication training on customer satisfaction.

3. Develop and implement sustainable communication strategies to maintain improved customer satisfaction levels

4. Script refinement and update: Periodically review and refine scripts to ensure relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with patient needs.

5. Communication champions: Appoint communication champions to lead by example, promote best practices, and encourage a culture of effective communication. Consider incorporating communication skills development into existing staff training programs.

6. Monitor and evaluate: Continuously track NPS and patient feedback to assess the effectiveness of communication interventions and identify areas for further improvement.

7. Share best practices and findings with other healthcare organizations to promote industry-wide improvement in customer satisfaction.

8. Scale up to other departments: Consider replicating this approach in other hospital departments to drive organization-wide improvements in patient satisfaction and loyalty.
9. Longitudinal study: Conduct further research to explore the long-term effects of focused communication training on customer satisfaction and business outcomes.
10. Comparative study: Compare the effectiveness of different communication strategies across various healthcare organizations.
11. Digital communication channels: Explore various digital communication platform and channels to enhance the patient satisfaction and NPS
12. Assess various communication training and its effectiveness among staff members in various hospitals.

6.4 Conclusion

The following are the conclusion of this study

- Focused communication training improves customer satisfaction and the Net Promoter Scores: The study demonstrates a statistically significant improvement in customer satisfaction scores (CSAT) after staff received focused communication training.
- Effective communication is crucial in healthcare: These findings demonstrate that effective communication is a key driver of customer satisfaction in private hospitals, a crucial aspect of healthcare excellence.
- Identifying key touch points is essential: The study shows that identifying and addressing key touch points with effective communication strategies is vital for enhancing customer satisfaction.
- Sustained improvement in customer satisfaction: The results indicate that the impact of focused communication training on customer satisfaction is sustained over time, with no significant difference between time periods.
- Framework for improving customer satisfaction: The study provides a framework for private hospitals to improve customer satisfaction through focused communication training, targeting key touch points and communication skills.

- Staff training programs should prioritize communication skills: The findings suggest that staff training programs should prioritize communication skills development to enhance customer satisfaction.
- Communication influences business outcomes: This research suggests that effective communication is a key determinant of business success, fostering enhanced customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention.
- Generalizability to other healthcare settings: While the study focused on private hospitals, the findings may be generalizable to other healthcare settings, emphasizing the importance of effective communication in healthcare.

This study provides robust evidence for the effectiveness of focused communication training in enhancing patient satisfaction in Indian private hospitals. By investing in staff communication skills development, hospitals can improve patient experiences, ultimately contributing to better NPS scores. In conclusion, this study demonstrates the critical role of focused communication in improving patient satisfaction and NPS scores in private hospital in India. By implementing effective communication strategies, healthcare organizations can enhance patient-centered care, improve outcomes, and drive business growth.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY COVER LETTER

Shiny Varghese

No. 425/2, 5th Main B main,

2nd block, HRBR lay out, Kalyan Nagar

Bangalore, Karnataka, 560043

shinyronald@gmail.com

Mobile : 9108131836

Mentor : Dr. Atul Pati Tripati

University : Swiss School of Business Management(SSBM)

Switzerland

Dear Dr. Atul

I am pleased to submit my thesis, titled "A Framework to Improve the Net Promoter Score through Focused Communication at Specific Touchpoints in a Private Hospital in India", for the DBA program from SSBM.

This research aimed to develop a framework that enhances patient satisfaction and loyalty in private hospitals by identifying critical touchpoints and implementing targeted communication strategies. The outcomes of this research meaningfully contribute to the discourse on healthcare management and patient experience, offering fresh perspectives and practical implications.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Atul, my supervisor, for his mentorship and encouragement throughout this project.

Additionally, I acknowledge with appreciation the participation and insights shared by numerous stakeholders, whose input has greatly enriched this study.

I hope that this thesis will provide valuable insights and practical applications for healthcare professionals, administrators, and researchers seeking to improve patient satisfaction and loyalty.

I am privileged to submit my thesis for your review and evaluation. Your expert feedback, suggestions, and recommendations are invaluable in enhancing the quality, validity, and overall impact of this work.

Thank you for considering my submission. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at

Phone 9108131836 or shinyronald@gmail.com

I eagerly anticipate the prospect of exploring my research with you in greater depth.

Sincerely,

Shiny Varghese

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

I, do hereby give my consent to be enrolled in the study titled "A Framework to Improve the Net Promoter Score through Focused Communication at Specific Touchpoints in a Private Hospital". I make this decision to be enrolled in this study freely, of my own will/interest and without any external influence, force, or incentive. Name of the researcher: Ms. Shiny Varghese (Contact number: 9108131836)

Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns about this research or informed consent, please contact shinyronald@ssbm.ch or shinyronald@gmail.com.

Study Purpose: This study investigates the relationship between customer satisfaction and focused communication in healthcare.

Risks and Benefits: Participating in this study carries minimal risks. Some questions may probe personal experiences or opinions, potentially causing mild discomfort. However, you are not obligated to answer uncomfortable questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Your participation may yield a deeper understanding of focused communication's role in healthcare and contribute to service improvements.

Confidentiality: Your privacy and confidentiality are guaranteed. All collected information will be treated as strictly confidential, stored securely, and anonymized in reported findings. Data will be used solely for research purposes and not shared with third parties without your explicit consent.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw your consent, discontinue participation, or skip uncomfortable questions at any

time without reason or penalty, without affecting your relationships with the researcher or institution.

Contact Information:

Ms. Shiny Varghese

(Contact number: 9108131836

shiny@ssbm.ch or shinyronald@gmail.com.)

Mentor: Dr. Atul Pati Tripati, PhD, at 8745917777

By signing this consent form, you confirm that you have read and understood the information provided above, and you voluntarily agree to participate in the research study.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

My Name is Shiny Varghese

Current Job profile: Manager at Manipal hospital

Self-introduction: This interview is a part of my research on "A frame work to increase the Net Promoter Scores through focused communication at specific touch points in a private hospital " I shall be asking you few very simple questions related to the topic. This is to explore nuanced factors influencing attitudes towards customer satisfaction, including communication, staff behaviors, patient expectations, and organizational culture.Your support in this regard is greatly appreciated .

Opening Questions:

Main Questions:

Probing Questions:

Closing Questions:

Debriefing

Thank You and Closing:

Recording

Transcription and Analysis:

INTERVIEW QUESTION

Interview questions:

To explores nuances influencing attitudes towards customer satisfaction, including communication, staff behaviors, patient expectations, and organizational culture.

Patient Interviews:

Can you describe your recent experience with our hospital/clinic?

What factors contributed to your satisfaction or dissatisfaction?

How did our staff communicate with you, and was it effective?

Were your expectations met or exceeded? Why or why not?

Can you share an experience where you felt particularly valued or heard?

How do you think we can improve our services to better meet your needs?

What would make you recommend our hospital/clinic to others?

Top Management Interviews:

What is your vision for customer satisfaction in our organization?

How do you think customer satisfaction impacts our business outcomes?

What strategies have you implemented to enhance customer satisfaction?

How do you measure and monitor customer satisfaction?

What challenges do you face in prioritizing customer satisfaction?

Can you share an initiative that successfully improved customer satisfaction?

How do you think we can sustain a customer-centric culture?

Additional Questions:

Can you elaborate on that point?

How did that experience make you feel?

What do you think is the most important aspect of customer satisfaction?

Are there any other factors you think influence customer satisfaction?

Training program details:

Training on the focused communication begins at the induction itself.

Periodic on the job, and specific parts devised for the training program, from as soon as the scope of improvement noticed. Almost six months constant training through lecture method, coaching, and role plays were devised.

Staff interview:

Interview questions

Opening Questions (Introduction and Context)

Can you briefly describe your role and experience in the hospital?

How long have you been working in the healthcare industry?

What are your initial thoughts on Net Promoter Score (NPS) and its importance in healthcare?

Main Questions (Exploring Current State and Experiences)

Section 1: Communication and Touch Points

What are the key touch points where patients interact with hospital staff?

How do you currently communicate with patients when they are the admission and billing counter

What information do you typically share with patients during admission, treatment, and discharge?

Section 2: NPS and Patient Satisfaction

How do you currently measure patient satisfaction in the hospital?

What initiatives have been implemented to improve NPS?

What challenges do you face in improving patient satisfaction?

Section 3: Barriers and Opportunities

What barriers hinder effective communication with patients?

How do you think focused communication can impact NPS?

Are there any existing communication protocols or training programs?

Probing Questions (Clarification and Depth)

Can you give an example of a successful communication strategy?

How do you handle patient complaints or concerns?

What specific training or resources would improve communication skills?

How do you measure the effectiveness of current communication strategies?

What are the consequences of poor communication on patient satisfaction?

Closing Questions (Summary and Future Directions)

What key takeaways would you like to share on improving NPS through focused communication?

How do you envision implementing changes to communication strategies?

What support or resources would you need for successful implementation?

Debriefing Questions (Post-Interview Reflection)

Were there any questions that made you think differently about communication and NPS?

Were there any areas you felt were not adequately explored?

Is there anything you would like to add or clarify from our discussion?

ETHEICAL APPROVAL MAIL

Letter of approval from the hospital Director

Dear Shiny,

Thank you for sharing your exciting doctoral research initiative with me. I'm pleased to hear about your study to enhance our hospital's Net Promoter Score (NPS) through focused communication strategies.

Your replication of successful communication methods from the nursing team and the subsequent improvement in NPS demonstrates your dedication and innovation in improving our services.

I am happy to permit you to continue your study within our premises. Your research aligns perfectly with our commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in patient care. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you need any support or resources throughout your study.

Wishing you the best of luck with your doctoral research endeavors.

Thanks & regards,
Arnab

From: Shiny Varghese [MH-Whitefield] shiny.varghese@manipalhospitals.com
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 5:06 PM

To: Arnab Mondal [MH-Whitefield] arnab.mondal@manipalhospitals.com
Cc: shinyronald@gmail.com

Subject: Permission to do the study on "A framework to improve the net promoter score in hospital through focused communication at specific touch points in a Private Hospital"

Dear Sir,

I am thrilled to inform you about the doctoral studies I am doing on " A framework to improve the net promoter score in hospital through focused communication at specific touch points a Private Hospital"

This is the replication of the focused communication we have done with the team nursing and we have seen the result in getting a better NPS, and happy customers at the end. I wish to percolate the same on other departments to have better results on all our scores across the hospital.

I am seeking your permission to continue the study in our premises.

Thanks, and regards,

Shiny Varghese,
Student ID: 58977
DBA Student 2022-2025
SSBM

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