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The satisfaction degree of the consumers in regards to the product 'physical therapy' in rehabilitation centres

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the rehabilitation centre customer's satisfaction degree taking into consideration the characteristics for this type of services. The research was conducted in the year 2018, on a group of 43 patients, with ages between 18 and 65 years. The questionnaire aimed to assess the satisfaction degree of the kinetics consumers and to spot the elements in the specialised centres that would win the loyalty of a customer. It was structured in four sections, considering the complexity of the decisional process in managing a centre, and the complex behaviour of the consumer throughout the whole session. The interpretation of the results on the basis of satisfaction scores for all the determining attributes/factors which the consumers said they were 'very happy' about, will ease the creation of loyalty strategies, price, product and personnel strategies, and also actions with an immediate result, to diminish the clients' migration.

Keywords: The satisfaction degree, loyal consumer, physical therapy, rehabilitation centre.

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1. Introduction

Consumer satisfaction was the subject of ample disputes along the years. According to some authors, satisfaction is a simple cognitive result of the comparison between 'is' and 'must' (Datculescu, 2006), while for others, it is 'a general attitude based on a cognitive comparison and an affective component' (Homburg & Stock, 2001). Defined by some authors as 'both a final state and a continuous process' (Oliver, 1992), and at the same time a result of a complex mental process of comparableness (Herrmann & Homurg, 1999), satisfaction is a necessary but insufficient element for the making the client loyal and attached in regard to a certain product or brand. Under these conditions, satisfaction represents 'a real key for modeling the client's purchase behaviour, based on three groups of variables: cognitive (based on a qualitative superiority of the merchandise, due to its high performance), affective (based on the emotions aroused in the buyer) and conative (based on the seller-buyer interaction during the buying process' (Meyer-Waarden, 2004, as cited in Stancioiu & Pop, 2006).

Because satisfaction is mainly a specific experience and a subjective phenomenon that can be subjected to an objective determinism, an effective strategy of positioning the physical therapy product can be aimed towards positively influencing the consumers' subjective perception at different levels (for different components of the product), for increasing their satisfaction (Dobrescu, & Salgau, 2011).

Physical therapy rehabilitation is advised for all types of patients, respecting the individual characteristics of the illness. The intervention program can be individualised according to the patients' profile, their current functional capacity, state of their musculoskeletal system, level of activity and the physical effort that they wish to perform (Marza Danila, 2012; Marcu & Dan, 2006; Motet, 2009; 2010).

The motor intervention program is conceived according to the drug treatment, a multidisciplinary approach being needed: physician, physical therapist, dietician, biochemist and psychologist. After the year 2000, in Romania, rehabilitation centres have proliferated, increasingly becoming a part of everyday life, comprising increasingly better specialists, trained in the Romanian physical therapy schools.

In such centres, the necessity for assessing the consumer satisfaction appeared as the clients became more and more demanding, thus the club owners being forced to adapt and surpass the customer's expectations. The target market is represented by the persons who are concerned with improving their health, who need specific treatment to improve their injuries and increase the effectiveness of their socio-professional activities.

This research was considered to be useful from the perspective of a physical therapy teacher, and in the context in which this profession is requested on the labour market, numerous rehabilitation centres and clinics emerging in our city. Based on the patients' subjective perception of the 'physical therapy' product, one can adopt feedback strategies for improving the satisfaction of the consumers and gaining their loyalty.

2. Materials and methods

The aim of this study is to identify the rehabilitation centre customer's satisfaction degree based on their perception of the diversified dimensions of the 'physical therapy' product.

Starting from the importance of knowing the way in which the services of a rehabilitation centre offers opportunities that are favorable for patients, I have conducted a poll in a centre of this type.

Having this in mind, the following hypothesis was formulated:

1. The knowledge of the satisfaction degree of the 'physical therapy' is the starting point for an improving intervention, in the sense of applying, based on feedback, strategies for making loyal the clients of the rehabilitation centres.
2. The research was conducted in the year 2018, on a group of 33 patients, consumers of the 'physical therapy' product, aged between 20 and 65 years.

Taking into account the characteristics of the services in general, and the ones of rehabilitation programs in particular, the chosen group is composed only of loyal customers of the centre with a certain experience acquired in that location.

In order to verify the hypothesis, an inquiry was organised in two specialised centres of Bacau—the medical rehabilitation centres Physiokinesis and Kinetolex, both with five-star Google reviews, located in different Bacau neighborhoods. Both locations offer various rehabilitation services and are equipped with top of the line devices, for children, adults, elderly people and professional athletes.

The research methods used in this study were: the bibliographical documentation method, the inquiry, the statistical-mathematical method and the graphical representation method.

The purpose of the inquiry was to assess the satisfaction degree of the 'physical therapy' consumers, being conducted on a target group of 33 patients (15 females and 18 males), aged between 20 and 65 years. The questionnaire comprised 19 items with closed (Yes or No), prefigured or open answers, and was structured into four sections, considering both the complexity of the management of a rehabilitation centre, and the complicated behaviour of the consumer over the course of the treatments as follows:

- The first section contains items regarding the perception of the respondents on the information sources and their importance in choosing the rehabilitation centre;
- The second section demands the assessment of the satisfaction in regard to the services that are offered, the technical conditions of rehabilitation, and the quality of the qualified staff;
- The third section presents the qualitative dimensions of the management of making the clients loyal;
- The last one deals with the social-demographical characteristics of the subjects.

For an objective assessment of the satisfaction index, some answers demanded the use of an evaluation scale from 1 to 10, interpreted on the basis of a marketing value grid.

3. Results and discussion

In establishing the consumers' satisfaction index in regard to choosing the information source to go to a specialised rehabilitation centre, dominant are the opinions of certain colleagues, friends and acquaintances (24 VS), followed by the influence of promotional materials (17 VS), a less significant score being recorded by online sources and internet search engines (8 VS). The difference between the preferred information sources and the ones that contributed to the decision to choose a particular rehabilitation centre is minimal. It must be emphasised the fact that most respondents relied more on the influence of people that are close to them to the detriment of an internet search, which is much more accessible today. Although both centres in this research have made available on their own websites and social network pages detailed information regarding their rehabilitation activities, it can be said that there is a correlation of the clients' low interest and their age, of over 50 years, the subjects not having much experience in online searching.

The evaluation of the satisfaction regarding each of the services offered by the rehabilitation centres has emphasised the respondents' appreciation. Thus, one can see a score of 27 answers of very satisfied in regard to the quality of the services, four satisfied, and only two unsatisfied. (Figure 1).

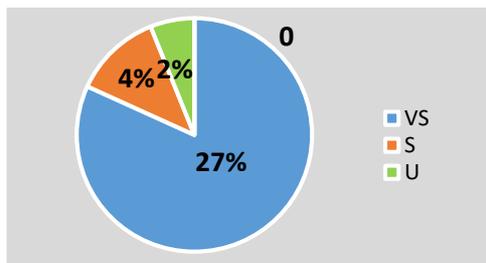


Figure 1. Results for the satisfaction regarding the quality of the services

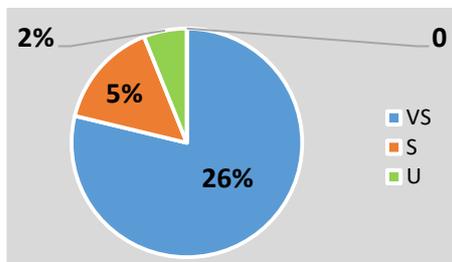


Figure 2. Results for the satisfaction regarding the technical resources

Highly valued were the material resources, meaning the quality of the specialised training devices and equipment, their condition, their variety and the possibility to dose your effort and to assess it. Thus, one can see that the logistics made available to the patients made 26 subjects very satisfied, five satisfied and two unsatisfied (Figure 2).

In regard to the psycho-social quality of the staff, the consumers of the product 'physical therapy' expressed a high degree of satisfaction (28 VS, 1S, 4U). The following were assessed: the physical therapists' availability to motivate the patients, the pleasant work environment, created by interpersonal communication, the personalisation and individualised work and the motivation of the work (Figure 3). These assessments were completed at the same value of the satisfaction score, recognising the value of the specialists' reputation (25VS, 4S, 4U), being emphasised qualities regarding the professional skills, the degree of notoriety, the unity and the common understanding (Figure 4).

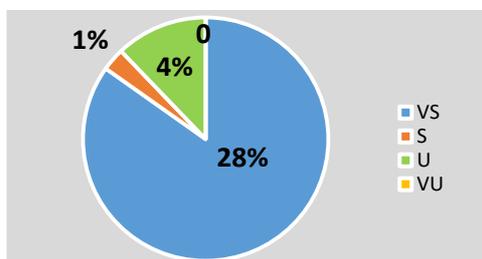


Figure 3. Results for the satisfaction regarding the quality of the human resources

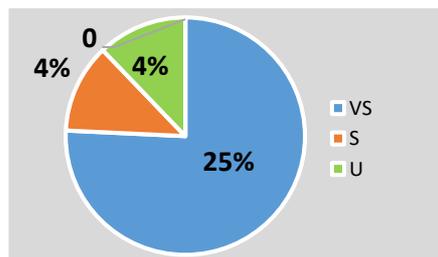


Figure 4. Results for the satisfaction regarding the staff's reputation

Among the questions, there were some regarding certain problems that can appear during the programs of the chosen rehabilitation centre, considered isolated cases, being solved promptly, the staff raising to the clients' expectations (Figure 5).

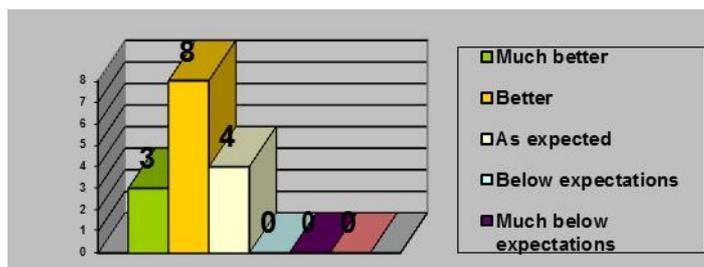


Figure 5. Results regarding the remediation of the problems

The third section of the questionnaire dealt with making the clients loyal. According to their answers, the clients have given favorable scores in regard to the development of a management that would stimulate and attract customers.

The highest number of satisfaction votes was recorded for treatment costs (23VS, 4S), payment possibilities (26VS, 7S) and the promotion of discounts (23VS, 7S). The clients have also appreciated the flexible activity during the daily program (25VS, 8S) and the social network promotion (21VS, 12S) (Figure 6).

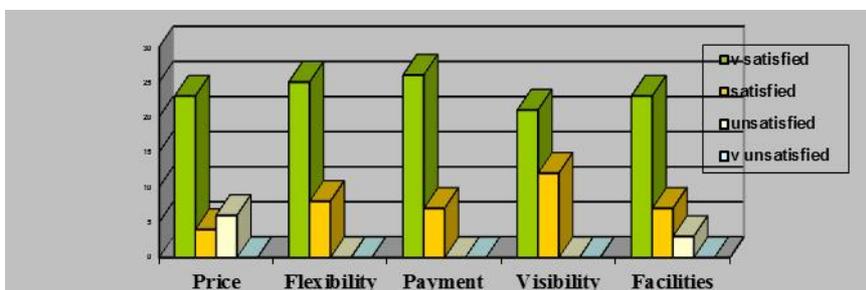


Figure 6. Results regarding the loyalty management

At the end of the inquiry, all subjects (100%) said that they will recommend the centre of their choice to their friends or to the people interested in motor treatment and rehabilitation.

The social-demographic have emphasised that the respondents' age was mostly over 46 years (22), they were mostly males (15F and 18M) and mostly from an urban environment (23 urban and 10 rural).

One can also see that they belong to various professions (based on the Romanian classification of occupations—Order 1832/856 of 6 July 2011) as follows: intellectuals (7), technicians (7), service providers (6), agriculture (4), plumbers (4), qualified (3) and unqualified workers (2).

To the penultimate item, the respondents have indicated the categories of affections for which they have requested functional reeducation and rehabilitation treatments as follows: musculoskeletal (7), cardiovascular (8), neurological (5), respiratory (10) articular (3) and endocrine (3).

In the case of repeating the rehabilitation centre experience, the respondents' motivation was stimulated by the management of making them loyal (29), location and geographical position (28), quality of services and logistics (27), reputation (26) and quality of the staff (25) (Figure 7).

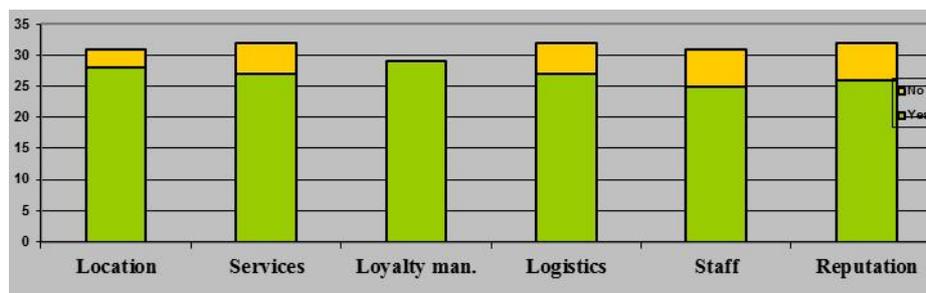


Figure 7. Dynamics of the preferences for coming back to the chosen centre

4. Conclusions

Taking into consideration, the complexity of the decisional process in managing a centre, and the complex behaviour of the consumer throughout the whole program, the questionnaire, structured into four sections, gave data regarding the marketing components.

The evaluation of the consumer based on the opportunities offered by the rehabilitation centres has captured a superior level of satisfaction in the patients.

The interpretation of the results based on the recorded scores for all the determining factors, based on which the consumers have declared themselves 'very satisfied' will facilitate the elaboration of loyalty strategies, transforming the consumer into loyal customer.

Working with a group of patients who manifest an interest towards a certain rehabilitation centre created the possibility to capture the clients' satisfaction level in order to develop strategies to make them loyal, which confirmed the initial hypothesis.

In order for the action to be effective and relevant, it is necessary for the inquiry to be conducted periodically, the subjects could represent the loyal customers, and the rehabilitation centre should have an extensive database of the clients, constantly updated.

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