

**The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction: The
Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH), Sri Lanka**

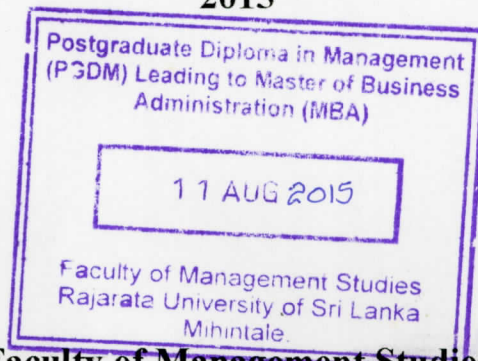
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Abstract

Sri Lankan veterinary health care sector is rapidly growing service sector in par with economic growth. High demand with increased affordability made this service lucrative and attractive among veterinary professionals. Therefore veterinary health care sector became highly competitive. In order to survive in this highly competitive environment, technical competence is must and all are well aware about it. All of the competent parties were more or less similar in this ground and sustainable competitive advantage can be obtained only by improving functional quality. Therefore it is timely decision to find out whether there is relationship exists between service quality and customer satisfaction with respect to veterinary health care in Sri Lanka.

In order to easy access to obtain data, The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) at University of Peradeniya, was selected. This is one and only veterinary teaching hospital in Sri Lanka and it is again a referral hospital. Therefore this study was conducted at the Out Patient Department (OPD), of VTH, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

The main purpose of this study was to examine extent of relationship exists between service quality offered by the VTH, with respect to dimensions tangibles, responsiveness, reliability, assurance and empathy on customer satisfaction.

Systematic Random Sampling was the preferred method to collect qualitative and quantitative data from customers of the VTH. Modified SERVQUAL used in order to obtain primary data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to describe data in the study. Inferential statistics such as Multiple Regression Analysis, Paired- Z- Test and correlation were used to test the hypotheses.

Most of the respondents were middle age, above secondary level education and from middle class families. The study showed statistically significant relationship exists between service quality and customer satisfaction. The study showed distinctive significant difference between expectations and perceptions of service quality and perceptions were significantly lower than expectations. Customer satisfaction level at the VTH was 71.45%. The most important factor for customer satisfaction was empathy-

responsiveness followed by assurance. The least important for customer satisfaction was tangibles.

Service quality with respect to dimensions empathy-responsiveness, reliability, tangibles and assurance has strong positive relationship with customer satisfaction at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH), Sri Lanka. Customers' expectations on service quality not completely fulfilled at the VTH and there is sufficient room for further improvement in service quality.

Recommendations were given on human resource development, physical facilities / infrastructure developments, technological advancement and ethical aspect of veterinary health service.

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