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# Influence of Trust on Performance of Private Hospitals in Kenya, A Case of Agakhan Hospital

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**ABSTRACT**

The general objective of the research was to determine the influence of trust on performance of private hospitals in Kenya. A cross-sectional census survey was used for the study. The total population was 1,457 employees. Out of which a sample of 304 respondents were identified through simple random sampling using the Cochran Formula. Primary data was gathered via structured questionnaires. Drop and pick later was used to manage the questionnaires. The acceptance by the responders' organizations was guaranteed using a letter of introduction from the university. Data was cleaned, validated, and edited after collection to make sure they were accurate, uniform, consistent, and comprehensive. Data descriptions was used to determine how the hospital has incorporated trust as a marketing strategies. Then multiple regression analysis was used in the study to determine how trust impacts the performance of private hospitals in Kenya. Pilot testing was done including five customer care representatives of the hospital, who were used in the research. Thereafter the questionnaire was reconstructed depending on the recommended outcomes. Validity and reliability of the data were also tested. Normality was tested through Shapiro-wilk Test with acceptable values over 0.05. Testing of multicollinearity was done through VIF, which recommends a threshold of 10 as the highest value accepted. Koenker test was used to test for heteroscedasticity, accepting values over 0.05. Durbin-Watson was used to test for autocorrelation to determine whether there is correlation between nearby residuals. To determine whether the link between the constructs were linear or not, the linearity of the relationship was tested, with acceptable values being more than 0.05. Finally, t-test and p-values were applied to assess the importance of each variable under examination. Tables and figures were used to present the findings' outcomes. The study concluded that trust had a significant effect on organization performance. Regarding implementation of relationship marketing strategies, the conclusion was that the hospital adopted the relationship marketing strategies to a moderate extent. The study recommends that the hospital should adopt relationship marketing practices, especially the use of technology orientation, trust, and commitment, since they had a significant effect on organization performance. Management should also keep on encouraging the employees to maintain a high level of commitment to clients to build a good rapport and word-of-mouth among the customers to gain a new client base.

**Key words: Trust, cross-sectional census survey, organization performance**

## INTRODUCTION

Relationship marketing strategies are approaches used to facilitate attraction, retention, strengthening, and enhanced relationship with customers. The focus is on the development, maintenance, and enhancement of how the company can relate with its prospective and existing customers (Kamal et al., 2021). Relationship marketing places a strong emphasis on the need to establish, maintain, and improve how businesses interact with their clients and other stakeholders, which increases retention capacity as well as market share and profit production potential. Relationship marketing appreciates the diversity in customer base, in terms what the customers need and their disposition (Rostami, & Mirshahi, 2022). The implication is that the implementation of relationship marketing strategies requires putting into accurate consideration the needs of customers.

Generally, relationship marketing puts emphasis on sustainable services delivery to customers and a committed relationship with customers on quality of goods and services (Khasanah, 2018). The concern is how to increase the ability of the company to compete effectively through value propositions to customers, and subsequently high profit generation and good market positioning (Spottke, Eck, & Wulf, 2016). The proxies of relationship marketing include trust.

Trust is the competence in service provision and development of a willing heart to be considerate to the consumers, so that a level of confidence is developed from the perspective of the consumer. Development of trust by customers relies on their confidence and belief that the company is offering quality goods and services, leading to improved loyalty levels (Nastasoiu & Vandenbosch, 2019). It can be notably indicated that trust significantly affect the degree of relationship marketing, since it creates an impression of satisfaction with the quality of goods and services. It improves the level of satisfaction of customer needs, maintenance, and management of how the customers relate with the organization, through adequate delivery of the promised values. (Annamária, Tibor and Renáta, 2021). Trust is important in improving the extent to which customers consume the products and services

of an organization, leading to improved relationship with the brand. The reality is that lack of trust implies reduced loyalty to an organization's product and service offer, and this affects how they perform overtime.

***Statement of the problem***

The size or range of a company's operations, loyal consumers are its lifeblood. The truth is that maintaining a customer with the utmost loyalty is essential to maximizing corporate profit. Since there is competition among private hospitals to provide healthcare, there has been a loss of clients for the already established healthcare service providers. The methods used by businesses to reduce customer attrition have been revolutionized because of this rivalry (Haris, Afiatin, & Djajanto, 2019). The issue of how private hospitals may cultivate and preserve client loyalty still exists. Relationship marketing appears to be the only choice left for these constrained businesses. Relationship marketing focuses on developing tight bonds between customers and service providers to boost commitment and trust between the parties. It also helps to acquire, keep, and enhance customer relationships. Additionally, rather than concentrating on finding new customers, it focuses more on how to create, preserve, and improve client relationships across the course of the customer life cycle (Rostami & Mirshahi, 2022).

The government acknowledges the importance of private healthcare institutions in achieving the health pillar of Vision 2030. Nearly 70% of the nation's physicians, according to Kioi, Cowden, and Karodia (2015), practice in the private sector, which restricts access to healthcare for low-income Kenyans. This explains why these healthcare facilities must enhance the client experience through a variety of strategies, such as relationship marketing. Customer loyalty can be developed, strengthened, and maintained through relationship marketing strategies that focus on establishing trust, demonstrating dedication to service quality and delivery, communicating with customers in a timely, reliable, and proactive manner, and effectively resolving conflict (Yaseen, & Siddiqua, 2019). Relationship marketing, it is emphasized, will assure hospital loyalty and patient happiness, enabling the hospital to remain open and to have an advantage over competing institutions.

Customer loyalty has been the subject of numerous research studies from a relationship marketing viewpoint because it is a new and developing concept. However, most of the research was conducted in foreign nations and involved the banking, insurance, and grocery industries. There is now a knowledge gap that needs to be bridged. Therefore, it is necessary to ascertain how relationship marketing affects client loyalty. According to the study by Yldrm, Amarat, and Akbolat (2022), relationship marketing ensures hospital loyalty and patient happiness. However, this study was carried out in Turkey. In Kenyan commercial banks, Soimo, Wagoki, and Okello (2015) found that relationship marketing increases client retention. According to Zakaria et al (2021), relationship marketing improves performance in Malaysia's timber and wood products businesses. Another study by Borishade, Ogunnaike, Kehinde, and Aka (2022) found that relationship marketing, which is based on trust, commitment, good communication, and resolution of conflicts, had a direct impact on customer loyalty among Nigerian mobile phone users. Relationship marketing, according to Yaseen and Siddiqua (2019), fosters the development of trust, demonstrates a dedication to service quality and delivery, fosters timely, dependable, and proactive customer communications, and effectively manages customer disagreement.

In terms of financial performance, the Kamau (2016) study found a positive linear association between relationship marketing and the financial viability of non-governmental organizations in Kenya. Therefore, the evaluated research highlights contextual and conceptual gaps that the current study aims to fill. By responding to the question, "What is the effect of relationship marketing on performance of private hospitals in Kenya?" the gaps were filled.

**Research Objective**

The general objective of the study was to determine the influence of trust on performance of private hospitals in Kenya.

**Scope of the study.**

The study focused on influence of trust on performance. Trust formed the independent variable. Performance of the hospital was measured using a balanced score card; proxied by customer, financial, internal business and learning and growth perspective. Agakhan Hospital in Kenya would be included in the contextual scope. Data from the staff members of the hospital was collected as part of the study's cross-sectional design. The data used was entirely primary in nature collected using structured questionnaires.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Theoretical literature review**

**Commitment-Trust Theory**

Morgan and Hunt (1994) introduced the commitment-trust theory. According to the notion, relationship marketing entails creating, growing, and maintaining fruitful relational exchanges. According to the principle, dedication and trust are essential for successful relationship marketing. The theory claims that commitment and trust are important because they motivate marketers to work to protect relationship investments by collaborating with exchange partners, resist alluring short-term alternatives in favor of the anticipated long-term benefits of sticking with current partners, and view potentially risky actions as prudent because they believe their partners won't act opportunistically (Oliveira et al., 2017). The claim is that outcomes that support efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness are produced when both commitment and trust are present. Therefore, according to the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing, trust and the corresponding sense of commitment serve as the fundamental cornerstones on which effective relationship marketing is based (Juliana et al., 2021).

The commitment-trust principle can be applied to create and maintain business connections with suppliers, customers, and staff. This is because people's desire to maintain a long-term relationship, such as one with a brand, can only be explained by the concept of trust (Erkmen & Hancer, 2015). The notion is relevant because it emphasizes commitment and trust, which are prerequisites for relationship marketing. The value of trust is founded on the favorable impression that is developed through experience. According to several studies, consumer purchase decisions are influenced by their level of confidence in brands (Margahana, 2019). The consequence is that the presence of trust will increase credibility and a feeling of security while decreasing consumers' perception of danger. On the other side, corporate commitment may be used to continuously learn how to meet consumer needs. This will improve service quality and boost customer happiness, which in turn will encourage businesses to forge close bonds with their clients. However, the notion is questioned since it ignores service quality as a factor in relationship marketing. Additionally, it hasn't adequately linked the various relationship marketing strategies to client retention (Ahamed & Noboa, 2022). To put it another way, it hasn't discussed how relationship marketing affects client retention.

**Empirical Literature**

Particularly in the consumer and corporate marketplaces, trust is still a crucial component of business interactions. Since it establishes the degree to which one party feels it can rely on the credibility of the other side, it plays a crucial role in fostering long-term relationships and loyalty (Soimo, & Wagoki, 2015). According to Omar et al. (2022), trust is a reciprocity behavior that is intended to increase the likelihood that parties will create long-term relationships. The perceived vulnerability between parties is also decreased by a close, trust-based connection between firms. Through satisfaction, trust has a large indirect impact on customer retention (CR) (Chang, 2019). The client's opinion of your credibility, honesty, and goodwill is another definition of trust. This indicates that the vendor has the skills needed to sufficiently meet the demands of the client to whom he relays accurate and pertinent information.

Trust is important in many ways. It ends up being a crucial element in the development and administration of network relationships (Amoako et al., 2019). As a result, it is now crucial for businesses looking to forge long-term connections to gain a competitive advantage by learning as much as they can about their valued consumers and cultivating trustworthy relationships by reliably fulfilling their word. Customers are more at ease knowing what to expect from a service provider they trust, which encourages them to do business with them for an extended period (Dowell et al., 2015). Customers often search for reputable businesses to lessen their exposure to vulnerability, which is why trust is important (Barra et al., 2018). However, trust grows through time and contributes to the strengthening of the bonds between the trade partners. Customer loyalty is highly influenced by consumer trust, according to Ojiaku, Aghara, and Ezeoke's (2017) research.

**Conceptual Framework**

**Independent variable** **Dependent variable**

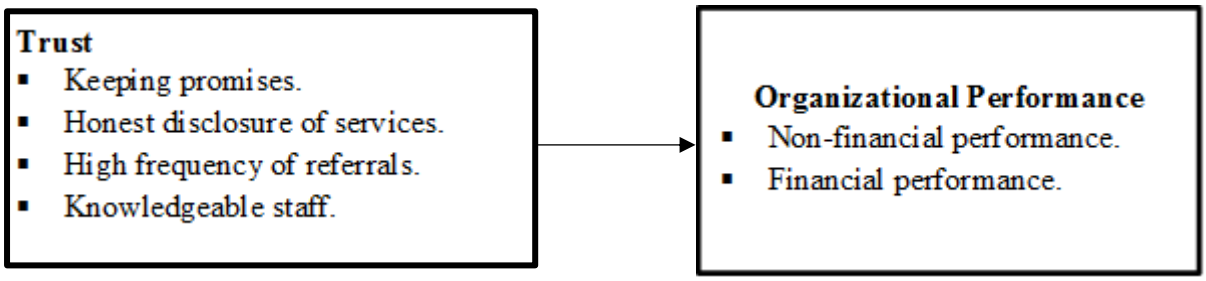


**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

**Research Design**

A cross-sectional census survey was used for the study. An examination of population data collected at a single moment in time is done using a cross-sectional design. To generate a variety of results for upcoming research, it collects data reliability (Zangirolami-Raimundo, Echeimberg, & Leone, 2018). Cross sectional studies allow researchers to determine whether there are any meaningful relationships between different dimensions at a given time (Cooper & Schindler, 2006). The design allows for the generality of the research findings since it allows the researchers to examine, interpret, and present findings exactly as they were without any manipulation (Sekaran, 2006).

**Target Population**

The people, groups, organizations, or other things that the researcher is trying to understand and to whom or to whom the study's findings might be extrapolated make up the population of the study. It is the primary group that the study focuses on (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). To provide the researcher with the right emphasis and prevent the presentation of results that are universally applicable, the population helps to define the scope of the study and helps to establish natural delimitations upon the research. It enables the researcher to precisely define subpopulations such the target population, sampling frame, and sample and to guarantee alignment between these groups throughout the research (Salkind, 2010). The study is directed at several management cadres and all Agakhan Hospital personnel. The hospital employs 1,457 people.

**Sampling Procedures and Techniques**

The act of picking a sample from a population is known as sampling. In this investigation, stratified random sampling will be used. In this method, a random sample is drawn from each subgroup once the population has been divided into strata (or subgroups). A collection of objects with a uniform

backdrop constitutes a subgroup (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Divakar, 2021). When the population is made up of diverse subpopulations, stratified sampling is frequently used. Its goal is to provide proper representation for each stratum (Hamed, 2016).

The total population include 1457 employees, and the study used simple random sampling to choose the appropriate sample size. All the personnel were included in the analysis's unit. The Cochran Formula, which is defined as follows in Cochran (1977), was used to determine the sample size.

**Research Instruments**

With the aid of a semi-structured questionnaire, primary data was gathered. It was divided into three sections. Data on the targeted hospital personnel are included in Part A of the questionnaire, and relationship marketing-related topics are covered in Section B. C wants performance information. A structured questionnaire is seen to be the most suitable since it makes it simple to gauge replies so that they may be used quantitatively. The researcher distributed the questionnaire by dropping each person off at their individual businesses and picking them up later.

**Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures**

**Response Rate**

The study targeted 304 respondents and therefore, this number of questionnaires were issued. From the 304 questionnaires distributed, 218 were filled and returned. This represented. This represented a response rate of 72% of the respondents. Ott and Longnecker (2015) asserted that response rate of over 70% is considered adequate for survey studies.

**Reliability Test**

The research tool's reliability provides an estimate of its correctness. Cronbach's alpha coefficient values between 0 and 1 was used to determine this (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Sekaran (2000) suggested that a range between 0.5 and 0.8 is reasonable, and this study employed values of 0.5 and above as a cut-off point for the items in line with his recommendation.

**Table 1: Reliability of Research Items**

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|
| Trust | .744 |

**Respondent Demographic Information**

This section presents the general information obtained from the research. The demographic information was collected because it enables determination of whether the study participants are representative of the target population.

**Length of Continuous Service with the Organization**

Data regarding length of continuous service for respondents at was sought and the results are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Length of Continuous Service with the Organization**

| Category of Years | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 Years | 44 | 20.2 |
| 5 – 10 Years | 94 | 43.1 |
| 10 – 15 Years | 59 | 27.1 |
| Over 15 Years | 21 | 9.6 |
| **Total** | **218** | **100.0** |

**Position in the Firm**

The respondents were categorized into cadres, namely administration, operations, or sales/ marketing. The findings in Table 3 indicate that majority of the respondents were in operations, making up 43.6% of the respondents, while 29.4% were from marketing/ sales department and then 27.1% of the respondents were from administration department.

**Table 3: Position in the Firm**

| Position in the Organization | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Administration. | 59 | 27.1 |
| Operations. | 95 | 43.6 |
| Marketing/ Customer care. | 64 | 29.4 |
| **Total** | **218** | **100.0** |

***Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables***

**Trust**

Trust is important since it ends up being a crucial element in the development and administration of network relationships, and subsequently relationship marketing (Amoako et al., 2019). As a result, it is now crucial for businesses looking to forge long-term connections with customers to gain a competitive advantage by learning as much as they can about their valued consumers and cultivating trustworthy relationships by reliably fulfilling their word. Customers are more at ease knowing what to expect from a service provider they trust, which encourages them to do business with them for an extended period (Dowell et al., 2015). It can also be noted that customer loyalty is highly influenced by consumer trust (Ojiaku, Aghara, & Ezeoke, 2017).

The study focused on the practice of keeping promises, honest disclosure of services offered by the hospital, high frequency of referrals from customers and the hiring of knowledgeable staff by the hospital. Table 4 indicate the summary of the views of the respondents regarding adoption of trust as a way of realizing relationship marketing.

**Table 4: Trust**

| Sub Variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The hospital ensures keeping of promises. | 2183 | .7844 | .83932 | -.236 | -.311 |
| There is honest disclosure of services offered by the hospital. | 2183 | .7615 | 1.00137 | -.590 | -.114 |
| There is high frequency of referrals from customers. | 2183 | .7064 | 1.01874 | -.546 | -.279 |
| The hospital has knowledgeable staff. | 2183 | .9404 | .88047 | -.619 | .172 |
| **Average** | **2183** | **.7982** | **0.93498** | **-0.498** | **-0.133** |

The findings in Table 4 indicate that trust was adopted to a moderate extent as a strategy for relationship marketing, given by an average mean of 3.7982 (SD=0.93498). The findings show that the hospital has knowledgeable staff, keeps promises, practices honest disclosure of services offered and has high frequency of referrals from customers all to a moderate extent given by M=3.9404, (SD=.88047); M=3.7844, (SD=.83932); M=3.7615, (SD=1.01874) and M=3.7064, SD=1.01874 respectively. The skewness value is less than -1.0, indicating that the distribution is left skewed, while the kurtosis value is less than -1.0, implying that the distribution is platykurtik.

**Inferential Analysis**

Inferential analysis was conducted to enable the drawing of inferences or conclusions from the sample about the population based on the relationship between the dependent and independent variables in the study.

**Diagnostic Tests**

Before conducting regression analysis diagnostic tests were conducted to find out whether the data fulfilled the assumptions of normality, linearity and no multicollinearity.

**Test of Normality**

A normality test is used to evaluate, within a certain tolerance, whether sample data was taken from a normally distributed population. A properly distributed sample population is necessary for many statistical tests, including the t-test and one- and two-way ANOVA (Kwak, & Park, 2019). The reasoning goes that because different statistical approaches presuppose that the population data distribution has a normal distribution, it is crucial to verify and confirm that the data meet the normality criteria.

In this test, the data are normal if the significance value of the Shapiro-Wilk Test is more than 0.05; otherwise, the data are considered to significantly depart from a normal distribution. Table 5 indicates that the data significantly depart from a normal distribution.

**Table 5: Test of Normality**

| | Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Statistic** | **df** | **Sig.** | **Statistic** | **df** | **Sig.** |
| Trust | .117 | 218 | .000 | .968 | 218 | .000 |
| Organization Performance | .101 | 218 | .000 | .973 | 218 | .000 |

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

**Test of Multicollinearity**

Multicollinearity is a statistical phenomenon that happens when there is a strong correlation between two or more independent variables in a regression model. It shows that the predictor variables have a strong linear relationship. As a result, it may be difficult to ascertain the unique effects of each independent variable on the dependent variable when performing a regression analysis. The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are used to examine the correlation between the regressor constructs. When the regressed variables have a strong correlation, this is referred to as multicollinearity. This increases the likelihood that some factors will be statistically insignificant (Shrestha, 2020).

In this study, VIF and tolerance values were employed to assess multicollinearity. According to Young (2017), VIF values should range from 1 to 10, while tolerance values of less than 0.20 suggest a major collinearity issue. Table 4.6 shows that the VIF values were between 1 and 10 while the tolerance values were above 0.20. This implied no high correlation between the regressor variables

**Table 6: Test of Multicollinearity**

| | Collinearity Statistics | |
|---|---|---|
| **Variables** | **Tolerance** | **VIF** |
| Trust | .637 | 1.569 |

a. Dependent Variable: Organization Performance

**Test of Heteroscedasticity**

When the standard deviations of a predicted variable are not constant over a range of independent variable values or when compared to earlier time periods, heteroskedasticity has occurred. Heteroskedasticity is the condition of systematic variations in the residuals' spread or the model's error term. A model's dispersion is dependent on at least one independent variable if there is residual variance present in the model. It means that the variance of the predictor variable does not vary similarly throughout the data. In this study, it was assessed using the Breusch-Pagan and Koenker test. In this test, if sig-value less than 0.05, heteroskedasticity is not present as shown in Table 7:

**Table 7: Breusch-Pagan and Koenker test**

| | **LM** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|
| Breusch-Pagan | 2.014 | .733 |
| Koenker | 1.062 | .900 |

**Test of Autocorrelation**

The degree of correlation between the same variables over two subsequent time intervals is referred to as autocorrelation. It gauges the relationship between a variable's original value and its lagged value in a time series. The autoregressive-moving-average model and the autoregressive-integrated-moving-average model both frequently use autocorrelation. Autocorrelation analysis aids in the discovery of recurring periodic patterns. It is used to spot non-randomness in the data that has been presented.

The researcher used Durbin Watson Test for autocorrelation. Table 8 shows that the value was 1.631, which is between $1.5 < d < 2.5$. The conclusion was that autocorrelation was nonexistent.

**Table 8: Test of Autocorrelation**

| **Model** | **Durbin Watson Test** |
|---|---|
| **Predictors:** (Constant) Trust | 1.631 |
| **Dependent Variable:** Organization Performance | |

**Test of Linearity**

It helps to determine whether the association between regressor and regressed parameters were linear. For regression analysis, there should be a linear relationship between regressed and regressor parameters. It is depicted when deviation from linearity is higher than 0.05.

Based on the output in Table 9, the value of significance of deviation from linearity of .579 is greater than 0.05. The conclusion was that there is a linear relationship between the variables of relationship marketing and organization performance.

**Table 9: Test for Linearity**

| | | | **Sum of Squares** | **df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Organization Performance * Relationship Marketing | Between Groups | (Combined) | 29.901 | 82 | .365 | 2.441 | .000 |
| | | Linearity | 18.312 | 1 | 18.312 | 122.578 | .000 |
| | | Deviation from Linearity | 11.590 | 81 | .143 | .958 | .579 |
| | Within Groups | | 20.167 | 135 | .149 | | |
| | Total | | 50.068 | 217 | | | |

**Regression Analysis**

To ascertain the effect of relationship marketing on the performance of Agakhan hospital in Kenya, multiple regression analysis was used. The findings are as indicated below:

**Regression Model Summary**

Table 10 show that R = 0.619 indicates a positive correlation between relationship marketing and organization performance of Agakhan hospital, Kenya. The R square is the coefficient of determination, which indicate that only 38.3% of organization performance is due to variables adopted in the regression model. According to the adjusted $R^2$ of 37.2%, relationship marketing strategies account for only 37.2% of changes in organization performance. The implication is that 62.8% of variations in organization performance of private hospitals in Kenya was not due to relationship marketing. The standard error of estimation is 0.38070 points outside the predicted range by the regression model. The better the regression model fits the data, which indicates the model's applicability, the less the value of the standard error of the estimate.

**Table 10: Regression Model Summary**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .619[a] | .383 | .372 | .38070 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Trust

b. Dependent Variable: Organization Performance

## Conclusion

Based on the objective the study concluded that relationship marketing strategies have a significant effect on organization performance of private hospitals in Kenya. The relationship marketing strategies accounted for 37.2% of changes in organization performance. It was also concluded that there is a positive correlation between relationship marketing and organization performance of Agakhan hospital, Kenya. The study further concluded that technology orientation, trust, and commitment had a significant effect on organization performance, while conflict handling did not have a significant effect on organization performance. Regarding implementation of relationship marketing strategies, the conclusion was that the hospital adopted the relationship marketing strategies to a moderate extent.

## Recommendations

Since commitment was found to be significant in affecting organization performance, customers' perception at important element to the respective variable is worth to be taken into attention whereby customers still have high regard that commitment delivered by the organization is an important elements that sustain the quality of the relationship between the hospital and the customers. Management should therefore keep on encouraging the employees to maintain a high level of commitment to clients to build a good rapport and word-of-mouth among the customers to gain a new client base.

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