ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study is to develop an analytic hierarchy process (AHP) model utilizing components, parameters, and factors of a specifically designed Integrated Quality Model for Health Care Establishment (HCE). In doing so, the authors have utilized AHP approach to identify the best health care service quality performer among alternatives of HCEs. To select the best HCE, three HCEs of North India namely: HCE-A; HCE-B; and HCE-C were chosen. The criteria components of the integrated quality model for the HCE designed and suggested by Azam, Rahman, & Talib (2012a) and Azam, Rahman, Talib, & Singh (2012b) were adopted. Further, this study has undertaken an extensive in-depth literature review about AHP and its applications for HCEs from various aspects. A specifically developed integrated quality model for HCE with its components parameters, factors thereof, duly coded as criteria and sub-criteria have been utilized. It thus, facilitates the development of an AHP model to rank the chosen HCEs helping to identify potentially the best HCE among them. On the basis of the proposed hierarchical model, the findings suggest that the HCE-A may be selected first followed by HCE-C and HCE-B based on overall rating. The study provides a mechanism through AHP model to select potentially best HCE utilizing specifically developed integrated quality model for HCE with impacts both for the clients and the patients to enjoy the service of best HCE as well as for the managers to improve the services of HCE and the business. The study thus, adds a new perspective by developing a selection process to select the best HCE through an AHP model utilizing criteria and sub-criteria of an integrated quality model specifically developed for HCE. It has practical value for maintaining service quality of HCE to benefit the clients and related stakeholders as well as the managers by improving quality, enhancing reputation and business thereof.

Keywords: Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) Model, Health Care Establishment (HCE), India, Integrated Quality Model for HCE, Selection
INTRODUCTION

Patients desire that best treatment is provided to them as and when it is required. It is a dilemma for them to choose the best among the health care establishments (HCEs) available to them. The quality components are important for any HCE and contribute significantly in the selection of potential HCE. The chances of getting good customer services are enhanced if an appropriate potential HCE is selected amongst the possible health care enterprises (Talib, Rahman, & Azam, 2010). A reliable selection mechanism is thus, required to be developed to help the customers who are seeking to find the best of the services by selecting potentially the best HCE. To achieve such a goal the present study proposes a model based on Analytical Hierarchal Process (AHP) methodology to select potentially the best HCE by utilizing components of a designed integrated quality model for HCE. It is expected that the proposed AHP model would help both the clients as well as the management.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The clients desire to search and select potentially the best HCE. To achieve this requirement the present research work has been undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To choose a quality model for HCE comprising various integrated components with clearly laid down objectives and to utilize it with the proposed empirical model. The essential quality parameters of each component should cover various important functional areas of HCE.
2. To formulate an empirical model using AHP method for evaluation and identification of potentially the best HCE among the available alternatives based on the specifically chosen quality model for HCE.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Quality for HCE has been a raging debate for long. Traditional quality parameters have been mostly imported from industry other than health sector and have not been specifically designed for HCE (Talib & Rahman, 2013; Talib, Rahman, & Azam, 2011a; Talib et al., 2010; Stelfox & Straus, 2013). Dey, Seetharam, and Naomi (2006) have recommended development of an Integrated Quality Model specifically designed for hospital. Therefore, it is considered imperative that for selecting potentially the best HCE, an integrated quality model specifically designed for HCE with clear objectives of its components covering its important functional areas is utilized as a benchmark model, which is elaborated in detail as under.

Integrated Quality Model for HCE

Azam, Rahman, Talib, and Singh (2012b) after an in depth critical review of the relevant literature regarding traditional and contemporary quality parameters with regards to healthcare including hospitals, have developed an integrated quality model specifically designed for a HCE. It covers the important functional areas of HCE with emphasis on practical utility of the components of the model especially for a multispeciality hospital. This model has been recommended to be utilized as a bench mark for quality of HCEs depending upon intensity of various services provided by the HCEs through their various functional areas. It is a flexible model due to inclusion of knowledge management techniques which may help in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).
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