Chapter 10

Beyond Digital Tools:
A Transdisciplinary Approach to Healthcare

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ABSTRACT

As the North American healthcare system moves to online value-based care, the importance of engaging patients and families continues to intensify. However, simply engaging patients and families to improve their subjective satisfaction will not be enough for providers who want to maximize value. True optimization entails developing deep and long-term relationships with patients through understanding their needs. This chapter discusses the result of a research conducted in Canada. Questionnaires were given, and the collected data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 statistical. The findings indicate that IT healthcare is rapidly growing. However, despite a significant number of initiatives in Canada related to online health information, lack of interoperability remains one of the major challenges in implementing successful health IT systems at this time.

INTRODUCTION

The management of healthcare institutions is particularly challenging because of their unique features, which include fluctuating demand, capital intensiveness, and the inability to store service capacity for future conciliation of supply and demand (Arrow, 1963; van Doren & Smith, 1987). However, the use of information technologies (IT) has been one of the most effective ways to enhance the performance of healthcare institutions, enabling them to develop and offer higher quality and more reliable healthcare services (Favela, Tentori, & Gonzalez, 2010; Lindberg & Humphreys, 1995; Menachemi, Saunders, Chukmaitov, Matthews, & Brooks, 2007; Randell Wilson, & Fitzpatrick, 2010). The importance of IT in enhancing operational effectiveness and developing the competitive advantages of organizations has drawn significant attention from researchers, and many transdisciplinary studies have focused on examining the technical dimensions of developing and implementing technology-based service tools, such as online-appointment systems, electronic medical records systems, and online medical diagnosis.

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systems. Nevertheless, very little attention has been paid to the soft side of technology-based services (Chang & Chang, 2008), which would provide us with more comprehensive answers to the question of what kinds of services actually benefit healthcare institutions.

Canada has undertaken a variety of activities related to the implementation and adoption of technology in its health care system. These efforts have been particularly successful in the primary care sector but development of health IT projects must encourage successful adoption and implementation efforts throughout Canada. The importance of various service qualities for customer satisfaction and subsequent adoption of online health services has not much been explored within the Canadian context and that’s why this chapter is focusing on that.

Information technology (IT) departments and IT professionals play a vital role in the creation, education, dissemination, and application of the information used within an organization, as well as delivering the information online (Park, Lee, & Lee, 2014). However, IT professionals lack appropriate interpersonal skills to interact with end-users/clients delivering the services in a connective manner that can have a positive impact on service quality, customer/user satisfaction, and performance (Lie & Liu, 2014). Shih, Lie, Klein, and Jiang (2014) found IT professionals are expected to parallel their technical skills with their service skills. Positive emotional intelligence traits or competence as Vaida and Opre (2014) reasoned are personality qualities that can be developed, which will influence the end-users as well.

There is a direct link between the need for an entity of change, having as its rationale its evolution, development, the gaining of new markets, or sometimes the staying in the competitive market and the influence of a strong emotional intelligence (Petrides et al., 2016). The latter may be either the key element in the transfer of the entity to another economic level, or the element that salvages the entity from a situation that might have led to its exit from the market. Under the pressure of the external and internal influences, emotional intelligence comes with a substantial contribution that guides the processes of change of entities through decisions and actions of managers (Campo et al., 2016).

BACKGROUND

Controversies about health IT implementation have been, and are still, generated by the difficulty of accurately determining demand, unequal access to participants’ information, regulated pricing and pricing mechanisms and intervention of the third paying party, as well as ethical and moral aspects related to the patient-doctor relationship, the limit between research and treatment, the perception of health and illness, etc. (Beig et al., 2007; Hallyburton & Evarts, 2014; Kontos et al., 2014).

On the one hand, online healthcare consumers differ from those of other goods and services, due to certain peculiarities that arise from the specifics of the market, the supplier-client relations, and the way of organizing the health system (Rezai-Rad, Vaezi & Nattagh, 2012). Unlike other areas where, as a rule, the number of consumers is limited in traditional health services, in online health anyone can become theoretically the consumer at some point, so the potential market is very high.

In response to the necessity of online health information, consumer behavior is structured on two basic components, with important implications for online health services, namely purchasing behavior and consumption behavior (Li et al., 2010; Kelly, Jenkinson & Ziebland, 2013). Therefore, studying the behavior of the online healthcare consumer should not be limited to the individual as the end user, but should also focus on studying the relationship between the provider and the consumer, and in particular on set of factors may influence this behavior. In online healthcare, purchasing decisions require the most
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