



Extent of Influential Factors: Client Relations, Physical Plant and Facilities, And Amenities Affecting the Buyer's Decision to Patronize a Veterinary Product or Service

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ABSTRACT

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The study aims to determine the competitive advantage of veterinary entrepreneurs in Dumaguete City. The scope of the study is based on the client's profile that visits a Veterinary Entrepreneur. The study sought the demographic profile of the clients, extent of the price affecting the buying decision of the clients, factors affecting the clients' decision in patronizing a veterinary product such as customer relations, physical plant and facilities, amenities, and significant relationship between the average price and sales. This study is a quantitative research, using a structured questionnaire to collect the data from 100 clients who have been seeking help from a veterinary entrepreneur. The researcher analyzed the data using percentages, frequencies, means, standard deviation, and Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient to test hypothesis and answer the research questions. The study finds that majority of the respondents are young adults, female, college graduates, and are employed. Majority of the clients strongly agree that the expertise of the veterinarian, courtesy of the veterinarian, cleanliness of the clinic, and ease of access to the clinic affect their buying decision in patronizing a veterinarian's product and services. The relationship between the price and average sales per week illustrates a slight or low correlation, implying that while price may be important, it is the quality of the service that the clients are interested in. Except for prices and parking lot, clients find the performance of vet clinic to be excellent.

Keywords:

Veterinary entrepreneur, quality of the service, Competitive Advantage, Dumaguete City, quantitative research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Small and big enterprises are in an era of competition that management needs to take conscious action to expose their products to a fair competition. Competitive advantage emerged as significant predictors of economic performance in any enterprises or industry. Popular author Michael Porter identified some strategic options in order for an enterprise to take advantage over its competitors.

The Philippines has a total of six hundred sixty-four (664) registered Veterinary Clinics as of the July 31, 2017 (Bureau of Animal Industry, 2017).

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In the Philippines, a write up from clarifies that there is a need of educating the youth on Veterinary Education Leading into business. It is an integrative approach to be able to produce veterinary graduates as job givers rather than job seekers. Observing at the pet industry and its customers, there has been a relative exponential increase in spending of consumers in the United States to their pets. Nearly Americans spent \$58.04 billion on their pets. The number has been continuously growing each year dated from 1994 (\$17 billion) and has increased by at least \$2.3 billion in each year since 2009. It included the entire pet industry from pet food, veterinary care, over the counter (OTC) medicine, animal purchases, and services such as grooming and boarding. Out of the \$58.04 billion (25.9%) was spent on veterinary care, and was followed up closely by the over the counter products with \$13.75 billion (23.7%) according to APPA (American Pet Products Association) (Peacock, 2016).

Elmer John S. Bangcal et al, Extent of Influential Factors: Client Relations, Physical Plant and Facilities, And Amenities Affecting the Buyer’s Decision to Patronize a Veterinary Product or Service

There are aspects to be considered that contributes to the incline and decline in client retentions and satisfaction and in turn revenue (Peacock, 2016). Cited from the report of Peacock, the Blackwell’s Five-Minute Veterinary Practice Management Consult explained different facets of veterinary business that leads to the satisfaction of a clinic’s base and overall how likely they are to succeed. Those facets include: The Veterinary Clinic, Client Services, appointment scheduling tactics, client perceptions and expectations, and client education. All of these are involved client satisfaction.

The study aims to determine the competitive advantage of veterinary entrepreneurs in Dumaguete City. The hospital image is an inclusive term which involves physical appearance of the building both inside and out, the physical appearance of the staff, sensory and auditory perception of the surrounding the clinic, staff, and client services (Ackerman, 2013). Small animal health care, are placed under an extremely competitive environment which turns out that a veterinarian does not only become a successful animal health care provider but also an entrepreneur (Thomson, 2005).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used descriptive method research design, and the main tool used in data gathering was in a form of questionnaire. Respondents were selected from the two clinics who are in operation for 5 years and above and are owned and managed by a veterinary entrepreneur. The respondents chosen from the veterinary clinics were

specifically dog owners, as the most common patients admitted in a veterinary clinic for health care. The study was conducted within Dumaguete City, the province of Negros Oriental. Only one set of questionnaires was prepared which was intended for the pet owners to answer in the two-veterinary clinic to which the study was conducted.

The researcher validated the questions using the Mega Stat software. It was found out that the Kendall’s Coefficient score was .4673 and the questionnaire was valid and is ready for pilot testing. The pilot test was conducted in Cebu City with 30 respondents. The researcher sent the questionnaires via email, and followed up with phone calls and thru Facebook messenger which was the easiest way to contact the clients who were living in Cebu City. Chronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items of the research instrument. It was found as 0.959, a highly acceptable alpha coefficient according to (Hacket, 2001; Brown, 2002; Lent 2005; Multon, 2006) which was cited from PAFTE research Journal (Philippine Association For Teachers and Educators, 2014).The researcher sought permission and approval of the veterinary entrepreneurs who are operating in Dumaguete City. A copy of the questionnaire was attached to the request letter. Confidentiality was assured to avoid biases. There was a total of 100 respondents, fifty respondents were gathered from clinic A, and fifty respondents were also gathered from Clinic B. Following to data gathering, the researcher consolidated and statistically treated the data and through the use of the SPSS and Mega Stat software.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percent
Sex		
Male	31	31.00
Female	69	69.00
Age		
11-20	41	41.0
21-30	25	25.0
31-40	13	13.0
41-50	8	8.0
51-60	6	6.0
61-70	2	2.0
71-80	1	1.0
Missing		
Educational Attainment of Pet Owners		
Highschool level	6	6.0
College level	74	74.0
Master's level	15	15.0
Doctorate's level	5	5.0

Elmer John S. Bangcal et al, Extent of Influential Factors: Client Relations, Physical Plant and Facilities, And Amenities Affecting the Buyer’s Decision to Patronize a Veterinary Product or Service

Employment Status of Pet Owners

Employed		
Unemployed	6	49.0
Self-employed	74	11.0
Others	15	26.0
	5	14.0

Table 2. To what extent do the following factors influence you to patronize a veterinary product, supply, and service?

On customer relations	wx	Verbal Description
2.1 The medical staff and doctor explains his/her medical examinations clearly.	4.57	Very Strong Influence
2.2 The clinic contacts the client for follow up vaccinations.	4.21	Very Strong Influence
2.3 The clinic contacts the client for follow up every after surgery.	4.26	Very Strong Influence
2.4 The veterinarian educates the client on the surgical procedure to be performed on my pet.	4.59	Very Strong Influence
2.5 The veterinarian educates the client on the medical drugs administered to my pet.	4.57	Very Strong Influence
2.6 The veterinarian and staff are courteous in dealing with their clients.	4.70	Very Strong Influence
Composite	4.48	Very Strong Influence

Legend:	Scale	Verbal Description
	4.20 – 5.00	Very Strong Influence
	3.40 – 4.19	Strong Influence
	2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Influence
	1.80 – 2.59	Slight Influence
	1.00 – 1.79	Very Slight Influence

In terms of Customer Relations, the highest rating to get a very strong influence with regards to what extent do customer relations influence the client’s decision to patronize a veterinary product and service is the courteousness of the

Veterinarian and Staff in dealing with their clients (4.70%), and the lowest rating is to how Veterinarian contact back their clients for follow up check - up (4.21%).

Table 3. To what extent do the following factors influence you to patronize a veterinary product, supply, and service?

On physical plant and facilities	wx	Verbal Description
3.1 The clinic provided its own pharmacy.	4.56	Very Strong Influence
3.2 The clinic has its own diagnostic imaging.	4.53	Very Strong Influence
3.3 The clinic has its own laboratory.	4.59	Very Strong Influence
3.4 The clinic is equipped with modern medical equipment.	4.59	Very Strong Influence
3.5 The clinic is maintained clean at all times.	4.75	Very Strong Influence
3.1 The clinic provided its own pharmacy.	4.56	Very Strong Influence
Composite	4.60	Very Strong Influence

Legend:	Scale	Verbal Description
	4.20 – 5.00	Very Strong Influence
	3.40 – 4.19	Strong Influence
	2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Influence
	1.80 – 2.59	Slight Influence
	1.00 – 1.79	Very Slight Influence

In terms of Physical Plant and Facilities, the highest rating to get a very strong influence with regards to what

extent do customer relations influence the client’s decision to patronize a veterinary product and service is the cleanliness

Elmer John S. Bangcal et al, Extent of Influential Factors: Client Relations, Physical Plant and Facilities, And Amenities Affecting the Buyer’s Decision to Patronize a Veterinary Product or Service

of the veterinary clinic (4.75%), and the lowest rating is referred to the diagnostic imaging (4.53%).

Table 4. To what extent do the following factors influence you to patronize a veterinary product, supply, and service?

Amenities	wx	Verbal Description
4.1 Ramps for PWD’s are provided by the clinic.	4.15	Strong Influence
4.2 There is enough parking space for two wheeled and four wheeled vehicles.	3.86	Strong Influence
4.3 The clinic has a good ambiance.	4.49	Very Strong Influence
4.4 The clinic is accessible.	4.60	Very Strong Influence
4.5 There is proper ventilation in the clinic.	4.58	Very Strong Influence
4.6 The clinic has a comfortable waiting area.	4.58	Very Strong Influence
4.1 Ramps for PWD’s are provided by the clinic.	4.15	Strong Influence
Composite	4.38	Very Strong Influence

Legend:	Scale	Verbal Description
	4.20 – 5.00	Very Strong Influence
	3.40 – 4.19	Strong Influence
	2.60 – 3.39	Moderate Influence
	1.80 – 2.59	Slight Influence
	1.00 – 1.79	Very Slight Influence

In terms of Amenities such as Hospital Image, Medical equipment used, and Parking Facilities, the highest rating to get a very strong influence with regards to what extent do customer relations influence the client’s decision to patronize a veterinary product and service is the accessibility of the Veterinary Clinic (4.60%), and lowest rating is referred to the enough parking spaces for two wheeled and four wheeled vehicles (3.86%).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are a total of 5 Veterinary Clinics in Dumaguete City, and only two of them are owned and managed by a Licensed Veterinarian. There were a total of one hundred clients in the study and the clients have the following demographic profile.

Out of 100 respondents, (4%), the clients fall within the age bracket of 11-20 years old, (41%), the clients fall within the age 21-30 years old, (25%), the clients fall within the age of 31-40 years old, (13%), the clients fall within the age of 41-50 years old, (8%), the clients fall within the age of 51-60 years old, (6%), the clients fall within the age of 61-70 years old, (2%), the clients fall within the age of 71-80 years old. It is apparent that the majority (41.0) of the pet owners falls under the age of 21 – 30 years old. It implies that majority of the pet owners are in the millennial age. A negligible 2 percent of the pet owners come from 71-80 years old which is normally composed of retirees. The result validates Chaipradernsak (2007) study where the pet owner’s age 21-30 year was the largest and the age of 40 years old formed the smallest.

The clients are dominated by (69%) female than (31%) male. reveals that majority of the pet owners who responded to the researcher’s inquiry are female; this

validates to the study of Brown (2018) which revealed that female pet owners comprised most of client visitors to each Veterinary Clinic.

As to their educational attainment, 6% are in the high school level, 74% are in the College Level, 15% are in the Master’s Level, and 5% is composed of Doctorate’s Level. The study tells that most of the pet owners are on the college level (74.00). A small number of Highschool level (6.00) have composed the pet owners. Furthermore this supports the findings of Chaipradernsak (2007) which found that majority of the clients were at the college level.

As to the client’s employment status, 49% are employed, 11% are unemployed, 26% are Self-employed, and 14% are retired individuals. It implies that pet owners who visit the veterinary clinics in Dumaguete are employed. This validates the study of Saunders, Parast, Babey, & Miles, (2017) which revealed that majority of the pet owners are employed.

All factors covered by customer relations have a very strong influence on the client’s decision to patronize a veterinarian’s product or service. The study confirms that the veterinarian and staff are courteous in dealing with their clients which have the highest rating. Results indicate that pet owners patronize a veterinary product, supply, and service in Dumaguete City where the Veterinarians deal with their clients in a courteous manner. This is supported by the study of (Karcher, 2010) which found that Doctor and Staff relationship to their clients are deemed important to patronize a veterinary product or service. It is also supported by the study Berenger (2017) that for a veterinary business to have a competitive edge it must be able to practice its values and beliefs and most importantly the authenticity when it comes

Elmer John S. Bangcal et al, Extent of Influential Factors: Client Relations, Physical Plant and Facilities, And Amenities Affecting the Buyer's Decision to Patronize a Veterinary Product or Service

to customer service. In the digital era, the positive word of mouth is still critical and it only happens when clients have an experience worth talking about.

Physical Plant and Facilities have a very strong influence on the client's buying decision. The finding indicates the Veterinary Clinics in Dumaguete City are maintained clean. This verifies the study of Pantaleon (2017) that a clean Veterinary clinic does not only attract customers but also lessens the bioburden inside a veterinary facility. An effective cleaning and disinfection creates a space of that is free of odor and pathogens, making it a better place for the animals and the care they need.

As to amenities, except for ramps for PWD's and parking spaces which have a strong influence, all the rest of the amenities have very strong influence. The study illustrates that accessibility of the clinic has the highest rating. It illustrates that clients would patronize a veterinary product, supply, and service if the Veterinary Clinic is accessible at all times. This supports the study of A.W.I. Molhoek (2009) that accessibility of the veterinary clinic is deemed important.

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