



Name of Candidate: Mohamed Omar Ahmed Sayed Ahmed **Degree: PhD.**
Title of Thesis: Food Service in Private-Sector Hospitals: A Best Practice Case Study

Supervision Committee: 1- Prof. Dr. Mahmoud Mahmoud Hewedi
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Department: Hotel Studies

Approval: 20/08/2015

ABSTRACT

Providing healthcare that is free at the point of delivery, the National Health Service is a jewel in the UK crown and the envy of many other countries. However, the quality of its food is less exemplary than its wider reputation and has been widely acknowledged as being poor. The delivery of a catering service in hospitals has become another challenge for over-stretched hospital budgets as hospital managers struggle to deliver high-quality food to patients at low cost. High-quality, low-cost food has become the holy grail of healthcare provision. This research intends specifically to develop a best practice model of hospital food production/service systems that deliver high-quality low-cost food to patients in UK private and public-sector hospitals which can enhance patient satisfaction. A conceptual framework was evolved to guide this study. It merges the application food production and service system approach considering the input, process, and output of food service, with LEAN technique and SERVQUAL model can be applied to design best practice of a food production/service systems.

This research adopts a constructionist approach as its epistemological stance using a multiple case study designed between private-sector hospitals and a comparative study designed between private and public-sector hospitals. This research adopts a descriptive approach by using case study strategy to achieve the study main aims, sub-aims and research questions to explore the best practices of food production and service system in the hospitals. Data collection involved multiple sources of evidence, i.e. semi-structured interviews, focus groups, direct observation, and document analysis.



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The results indicated the product flow, from the beginning till the end , is critical to delivering high quality of food service and achieving high levels of patient satisfaction. Various issues affected process flow, including: menu and nutritional considerations; food procurement; food production; food service; patient perceptions/ expectations. It also revealed the importance of dealing with local suppliers, fresh, organic food to provide high quality of service and support local communities.

A major contribution of this study is related to the development of a best practice model of ‘a high-quality, low-cost’ hospital food. This model will be considered an effective tool to assist the hospitals whether private or public to manage/ improve their food production and service systems to deliver high-quality, low-cost hospital food. Also, the study contributes to practice through developing a HFSSQUAL model to evaluate and measure patient satisfaction through measuring the gap between patient’s expectations and perceptions.

Keywords: Procurement, public health service, private healthcare, quality systems, patient satisfaction.
