

A STUDY ON OUTPATIENT PERCEPTION TOWARDS SERVICE QUALITY OF KMCH HOSPITAL IN KOVILPALAYAM

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ABSTRACT:

Service quality in the healthcare sector plays a crucial role in patient satisfaction and overall hospital performance. This study aims to assess the perception of outpatients regarding the service quality of KMCH Hospital in Kovilpalayam. The research focuses on various dimensions of service quality, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from outpatients visiting the hospital, and the responses were analysed to evaluate their level of satisfaction. The findings indicate that while KMCH Hospital performs well in certain aspects, such as infrastructure and medical expertise, there are areas requiring improvement, particularly in waiting time and personalized patient care. The study provides insights that can help hospital management enhance service quality and improve patient experience.

Keywords: Service Quality, Outpatient Perception, Patient Satisfaction, KMCH Hospital, Healthcare Services

INTRODUCTION:

In today's competitive healthcare environment, delivering high-quality outpatient services is essential for hospitals to maintain patient satisfaction and build a strong reputation. KMCH Hospital in Kovilpalayam, a reputed healthcare provider, prioritizes service excellence to meet patient expectations. Outpatient services play a crucial role in shaping patient perceptions, influencing their trust and overall experience with the hospital. This study explores how outpatients perceive the quality of services at KMCH Hospital, focusing on key factors such as staff behaviour, waiting time, communication, infrastructure, and overall patient experience.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The quality of healthcare services plays a critical role in shaping outpatient satisfaction and trust in medical institutions. As one of the leading healthcare providers in the region, KMCH Hospital in Kovilpalayam strives to deliver high-quality outpatient services. However, there is a growing need to assess whether outpatients' expectations align with their actual experiences. This study aims to investigate outpatient perceptions of service quality at KMCH Hospital, identify potential gaps in service delivery, and provide actionable insights to enhance outpatient satisfaction and hospital performance. Understanding these perceptions is vital for addressing concerns, improving service standards, and fostering a positive relationship between the hospital and its outpatients. This study will look at how outpatients feel about the services, find any problems in service quality, and suggest ways to improve

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify key factors influencing outpatient satisfaction with hospital services.
2. To provide insights into outpatient perception of service quality at KMCH Hospital.
3. To examine outpatient perception of Hospital staff communication and Responses.
4. To contribute to the development of strategies for enhancing outpatient satisfaction and service quality.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

- The study was restricted to a sample size of 153 respondents and conducted within a short period.
- It was challenging to collect responses as many outpatients were busy with their medical appointments.

- The study focuses only on outpatient services, excluding inpatient perspectives.+6+++++6
- The study is limited to KMCH Hospital in Kovilpalayam, and the results may not be generalized to other healthcare institutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study analyses outpatient perceptions of service quality at KMCH Hospital in Kovilpalayam. Primary data is collected through a questionnaire from 153 respondents, while secondary data is sourced from journals, articles, newspapers, and websites. A convenience sampling technique is used for easy accessibility. Data analysis methods include the simple percentage method, descriptive analysis, one-way ANOVA, and correlation. The study spans three months, from December 2024 to March 2025, focusing on patient satisfaction and service quality.

REVIEW OF LITRATURE:

Dr. S. K. Rout and Dr. S. K. Panda (2024)¹ This study examined "Hospital Service Quality and Outpatient Satisfaction in Model Hospitals in India," the researchers used a structured questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL model to assess hospital service quality across five key dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The study employed regression analysis and descriptive statistics as analytical tools. Data were collected from a sample size of 580 outpatients across 29 model hospitals in 15 Indian states. The study reveals that factors such as staff behaviour, hospital cleanliness, and appointment scheduling have a significant impact on outpatient satisfaction. It concluded that by improving staff-patient interactions, maintaining a clean and safe hospital environment, and enhancing the efficiency of appointment systems, hospitals can effectively increase patient satisfaction levels.

Hiren J. Patel and Nikunj Kumar D. Patel (2022)² In his study "Hospital Service Quality and Outpatient Satisfaction in Model Hospitals in India," the researchers conducted a cross-sectional survey using a structured SERVQUAL-based questionnaire to assess the impact of service quality dimensions on outpatient satisfaction. The survey gathered data from a sample of 316 outpatients across 29 model hospitals in 15 Indian states. The study utilized descriptive statistics and regression analysis as analytical tools to examine the data.

Suifan (2010)³ In his study "Quality of Health Services Provided to Iraqis at Jordan Red Crescent Health centres," the researcher employed a SERVQUAL-based questionnaire and survey method to assess healthcare service quality. The study focused on four key SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy, omitting the reliability dimension. Data were collected from a sample of 280 Iraqi patients attending Jordan Red Crescent health centres. The responses were analysed using descriptive statistics to evaluate patients' perceptions of service quality.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

ANOVA

PATIENT CHALLENGES IN A HOSPITAL SETTING

Statement		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I faced long waiting times before being attended to by the hospital staff.	Between Groups	6.849	4	1.712	1.090	.364
	Within Groups	232.537	148	1.571		
	Total	239.386	152			
The hospital's billing process was confusing and unclear.	Between Groups	5.367	4	1.342	.905	.463
	Within Groups	219.508	148	1.483		
	Total	224.876	152			
I found it difficult to navigate the hospital premises and find my way.	Between Groups	1.002	4	.251	.174	.951
	Within Groups	213.050	148	1.440		
	Total	214.052	152			
There were delays in getting my test results or medical reports.	Between Groups	1.451	4	.363	.215	.930
	Within Groups	249.228	148	1.684		
	Total	250.680	152			

I had trouble accessing information about hospital policies or services.	Between Groups	6.009	4	1.502	.832	.507
	Within Groups	267.337	148	1.806		
	Total	273.346	152			
I was misdiagnosed, leading to incorrect treatment or medication.	Between Groups	2.121	4	.530	.354	.841
	Within Groups	221.931	148	1.500		
	Total	224.052	152			

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

The F-values for all statements range from 0.174 to 1.090, indicating low variation between groups compared to within groups. The significance (Sig.) values for all statements are greater than 0.05, ranging from 0.364 to 0.951, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between groups for any of the statements. The mean squares within groups are consistently higher than between groups, suggesting that most of the variability comes from within-group differences rather than between-group factors.

INFERENCE:

The F-values (0.174 to 1.090) and Sig. values (> 0.05) indicate no significant differences between groups. Most variability is due to within-group differences, as shown by higher within-group mean squares.

CORRELATION

HOSPITAL FACILITIES EVALUATION

		The hospital is clean and well maintained.	The patient rooms are spacious and comfortable	The hospital's waiting areas are comfortable and well-equipped.	The hospital's sanitation and hygiene standards are up to the mark.	The hospital's overall environment is peaceful and conducive to healing.
The hospital is clean and well-maintained.	Pearson Correlation	1	.233	.061	.100	.232
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.455	.221	.004
	N	153	153	153	153	153
The patient rooms are spacious and comfortable.	Pearson Correlation	.233	1	-.038	.100	.096
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.644	.217	.240
	N	153	153	153	153	153
The hospital's waiting areas are comfortable and well-equipped.	Pearson Correlation	.061	-.038	1	.153	.365
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.455	.644		.060	.000
	N	153	153	153	153	153
The hospital's sanitation and hygiene	Pearson Correlation	.100	.100	.153	1	.259

standards are up to the mark.						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.221	.217	.060		.001
	N	153	153	153	153	153
The hospital's overall environment is peaceful and conducive to healing.	Pearson Correlation	.232	.096	.365	.259	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.240	.000	.001	
	N	153	153	153	153	153

Source: Primary data

INTERPRETATION:

The correlation table shows significant positive relationships between several variables. "The hospital is clean and well-maintained" has a significant positive correlation with "The patient rooms are spacious and comfortable" ($r = .233, p = .004$) and "The hospital's overall environment is peaceful and conducive to healing" ($r = .232, p = .004$). "The hospital's waiting areas are comfortable and well-equipped" is significantly correlated with "The hospital's overall environment is peaceful and conducive to healing" ($r = .365, p = .000$). Additionally, "The hospital's sanitation and hygiene standards are up to the mark" shows a significant correlation with "The hospital's overall environment is peaceful and conducive to healing" ($r = .259, p = .001$). Other correlations are weak and not statistically significant.

INFERENCE:

There are significant positive correlations such as between cleanliness and room comfort ($r = .233, p = .004$), cleanliness and healing environment ($r = .232, p = .004$), waiting areas and healing environment ($r = .365, p = .000$), and sanitation and healing environment ($r = .259, p = .001$). Other correlations are weak and not significant.

SUGGESTION:

- Conduct regular training programs to improve hospital staff's communication skills, empathy, and responsiveness to outpatient needs.
- Implement efficient scheduling systems, digital check-ins, and streamlined processes to minimize delays and enhance patient satisfaction.
- Invest in modern, comfortable waiting areas, well-equipped consultation rooms, and clear navigation signage for a better patient experience.
- Use clear signage, brochures, and digital platforms to provide detailed information about hospital services, billing, and treatment processes.

CONCLUSION:

The study reveals that the majority of the respondents visiting KMCH Hospital are young adults, primarily aged between 19-25 years, with a significant proportion being students and undergraduates. Most respondents belong to middle-income groups, indicating that the hospital predominantly serves this demographic. The analysis highlights that hospital facilities and infrastructure, along with the behaviour of nursing staff and doctors, play a crucial role in influencing patient satisfaction. While patients generally express satisfaction with the professionalism of doctors and the hospital's cleanliness and environment, concerns remain regarding waiting times, staff communication, and the clarity of appointment and billing processes. Despite these challenges, no significant differences were found in patient experiences across various demographic groups. Overall, KMCH Hospital demonstrates strength in its core services and infrastructure, but improvements in patient handling processes, emergency responsiveness, and communication can further enhance the overall patient experience and satisfaction.

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