THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY PRIVATE HOSPITAL USING SERVQUAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This study explores patient perceptions of healthcare service quality at Private Hospital, Coimbatore, using the SERVQUAL model, which evaluates five key dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The primary objective is to understand how patients perceive service quality, identify gaps between their expectations and actual experiences, and suggest improvements. The findings indicate strengths in assurance and empathy, reflecting trust in medical expertise and interpersonal care, but reveal gaps in tangibility, particularly in facility modernization and waiting area comfort. Reliability and responsiveness are also assessed to determine the hospital's effectiveness in delivering timely and consistent care. To enhance patient satisfaction and loyalty, the study recommends infrastructure upgrades and improved service efficiency to better align with patient needs.

KEYWORDS:- *Servqual, Quality Dimensions, Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Service Efficiency, Healthcare.*

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare is one of the most vital sectors in any society, playing a fundamental role in ensuring the well-being and quality of life of individuals. As the demands for healthcare services continue to grow, so do the expectations of patients regarding the quality of care they receive. In today's highly competitive and patient-centred healthcare environment, it is essential for healthcare providers to not only meet but exceed these expectations. This growing emphasis on quality in healthcare has led to the adoption of various models and frameworks to assess and improve service quality. Among these, the SERVQUAL model has emerged as a widely recognized and utilized tool for measuring service quality from the perspective of the patient. The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in the late 1980s, provides a structured approach to evaluating service quality across five key dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy. These dimensions cover both the tangible and intangible aspects of service delivery, offering a comprehensive view of how well a healthcare provider meets patient

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand how patients perceive the quality of services provided by Private Hospital.

- To identify any gaps between the patients' expectations and their actual experience of service quality.

- To focus on the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy.

- To suggest ways in which Private Hospital can improve its services to better meet the needs and expectations of its patients.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study encompasses an in-depth analysis of patient perceptions towards the quality of healthcare services at Private Hospital, Coimbatore, using the SERVQUAL model. This research will focus on evaluating service quality across five key dimensions: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. By collecting and analysing data from patients, the study aims to identify gaps between patient expectations and their actual experiences at Private Hospital. The findings will be used to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing service quality, improving patient satisfaction, and ultimately contributing to better healthcare outcomes at the hospital. This study is confined to the experiences of patients who have received care at Private Hospital and will not extend to other healthcare institutions, making the findings highly specific and relevant to the hospital's unique context.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The need for this study arises from the increasing emphasis on patient-centred care in modern healthcare systems. With patients becoming more informed and demanding higher quality services, it is crucial for healthcare providers like Private Hospital to continuously assess and improve their service quality. Understanding patient perceptions is essential for identifying strengths and weaknesses in service delivery, which can directly impact patient satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Moreover, in the competitive healthcare environment of Coimbatore, Private Hospital must proactively address service quality gaps to maintain its reputation and enhance patient experiences. The SERVQUAL model is particularly valuable as it encompasses not only the technical competence of medical professionals but also the human elements of care that contribute to patient satisfaction and trust.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Specific to Private Hospital: The study focuses only on Private Hospital, so the findings might not apply to other hospitals.

- Subjective Perceptions: Patients' opinions can vary greatly from person to person, and the results may not represent everyone's views.

- Time and Sample Size: Due to limited time, the number of patients surveyed may not be large enough to fully represent the entire patient population at Private Hospital.

- External Factors: Other factors such as government policies, economic conditions, or individual patient backgrounds may also influence their perceptions but are not deeply explored in this study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aagja, J. P., & Garg, R. (2010)

A study titled *"Measuring Perceived Service Quality for Public Hospitals (PubHosQual) in the Indian Context,"* published in the *International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing,* aimed to develop and test a model (PubHosQual) for measuring service quality in public hospitals in India based on patients' perceptions. The sample size consisted of survey responses from patients in various public hospitals. Key findings showed that service quality in public hospitals was largely influenced by factors such as hospital infrastructure, staff behaviour, and treatment outcomes. The study employed a quantitative methodology, using a structured questionnaire and statistical analysis to assess service quality across multiple dimensions. Data was collected from patients'

experiences and analysed to identify key areas for improvement. The study concluded that public hospitals in India need to focus on improving service delivery to enhance patient satisfaction and trust.

Pramanik, A. (2016)

A study titled *"Patients' Perception of Service Quality of Health Care Services in India: A Comparative Study on Urban and Rural Hospitals,"* published in the *Journal of Health Management,* aimed to compare patients' perceptions of service quality between urban and rural hospitals in India. The sample size consisted of survey responses from patients in both urban and rural healthcare facilities. Key findings revealed that patients in urban hospitals generally perceived higher service quality compared to those in rural hospitals, with significant differences in areas such as infrastructure, staff behaviour, and medical equipment. The study employed a quantitative methodology, using questionnaires to gather data on various aspects of service quality like cleanliness, responsiveness, and communication. Data was analysed statistically to compare the differences between urban and rural settings. The study concluded that rural hospitals need to improve their service delivery and infrastructure to match the standards of urban hospitals, ensuring better patient care across both regions.

Amin, M., & Zahora Nasharuddin, S. (2013)

A study titled *"Hospital Service Quality and Its Effects on Patient Satisfaction and Behavioural Intention,"* published in *Clinical Governance: An International Journal,* aimed to examine how hospital service quality impacts patient satisfaction and their intention to return or recommend the hospital. The sample size included survey responses from patients who had received treatment at various hospitals. Key findings showed that higher service quality, particularly in staff responsiveness, empathy, and hospital facilities, led to greater patient satisfaction and stronger behavioural intentions, such as willingness to recommend the hospital. The study used a quantitative approach, employing structured questionnaires to assess service quality dimensions and their effects on patient satisfaction and future behaviour. Data was analysed using statistical techniques to determine the relationship between service quality and patient outcomes. The study concluded that hospitals must focus on improving service quality to enhance patient satisfaction, which influences patient loyalty and positive word-of-mouth promotion.

Ampaw, E. M., Chai, J., Liang, B., Tsai, S. B., & Frempong, J. (2020)

A study titled *"Assessment on Health Care Service Quality and Patients' Satisfaction in Ghana,"* published in *Kybernetes*, examined healthcare service quality in Ghana and its impact on patient satisfaction. The sample size consisted of survey responses from patients across various healthcare facilities in Ghana. Key findings revealed that the quality of healthcare services, particularly in staff responsiveness, hospital cleanliness, and availability of medical resources, significantly influenced patient satisfaction. The study employed a quantitative methodology, using structured questionnaires to gather data on patients' experiences and perceptions of healthcare services. Data was analysed using statistical methods to assess the correlation between service quality dimensions and patient satisfaction levels. The study concluded that improving healthcare service quality in Ghana, particularly in infrastructure and staff-patient interaction, would lead to higher patient satisfaction and better overall healthcare outcomes.

Lonial, S., Menezes, D., Tarim, M., Tatoglu, E., & Zaim, S. (2010)

A study titled *"An Evaluation of SERVQUAL and Patient Loyalty in an Emerging Country Context,"* published in *Total Quality Management*, aimed to assess the relationship between service quality, as measured by the SERVQUAL model, and patient loyalty in healthcare settings within an emerging market. The sample size included responses from patients at various hospitals in an emerging country. Key findings indicated that higher service quality in dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and empathy positively influenced patient loyalty, leading to repeated visits and recommendations. The methodology involved using the SERVQUAL model, which measures service quality based on five key dimensions, along with surveys to gauge patient loyalty. Data was analysed using statistical techniques to explore the link between perceived service quality and patient loyalty. The study concluded that healthcare providers in emerging markets should focus on improving service quality to build patient trust and loyalty, which are essential for long-term success in the healthcare industry.

DATA ANALYSIS

TABLE NO.1 - Demographic Variable

CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
AGE		
Under 18	6	5.8
18-24	46	44.7
25-34	15	14.6
35-44	9	8.7
45-54	14	13.6
55-64	10	9.7
Above 65	3	2.9
Total	**103**	**100.0**
GENDER		
Male	56	54.4
Female	47	45.6
Total	**103**	**100.0**
Educational Level		
No Formal Education	3	2.9
Primary Education	8	7.8
Secondary Education	8	7.8
Higher secondary education	15	14.6
Undergraduate degree	38	36.9
Postgraduate degree	26	25.2
Others	5	4.9
Total	**103**	**100.0**

Interpretation of Mean Variables

TABLE NO. 2

S.NO	PARTICULARS	MEAN	INTERPRETATION
1	Are the hospital's facilities always clean and well-maintained?	3.592	The hospital's facilities are generally perceived as clean and well-maintained, with a mean score of 3.59 indicating satisfactory standards.
2	Does the equipment and technology used in the hospital appear modern and advanced?	3.602	The equipment and technology in the hospital are viewed as modern and advanced, reflected by a mean score of 3.60.
3	Are the hospital's waiting areas comfortable and welcoming?	3.505	The comfort and welcoming nature of the hospital's waiting areas received a mean score of 3.51, suggesting room for improvement in patient experience.
4	Does the appearance of staff and their uniforms seem professional and neat?	3.621	The appearance of staff and their uniforms is considered professional and neat, with a mean score of 3.62 reflecting positive impressions.
5	Does the hospital provide services at the time they promise?	3.534	Generally positive, indicating a good level of reliability in service timing.
6	Do the doctors and nurses give accurate and reliable medical advice?	3.738	Positive; suggests a high level of confidence in the medical advice provided.
7	Are the hospital staff consistent in their care and follow-up?	3.573	Positive; indicates a fairly reliable consistency in care and follow-up.
8	Are the hospital services dependable and trustworthy?	3.447	Moderately positive; suggests that services are generally dependable, though there may be room for improvement.

FINDINGS

The survey findings reveal a predominantly young adult demographic, with 44.7% aged 18-24, and minimal representation of respondents over 65 (2.9%), providing a primarily younger perspective. Gender representation is relatively balanced, with 54.4% male and 45.6% female respondents. Educationally, the sample is well-qualified, with 36.9% holding undergraduate and 25.2% holding postgraduate degrees, while only 7.8% have primary/secondary education and 2.9% have no formal education. Satisfaction with hospital facilities is generally positive, particularly with cleanliness (3.59), technology (3.60), and staff appearance, though comfort in waiting

areas scored lower at 3.51, indicating room for improvement. Service reliability is favourable in medical advice (3.74) but shows some gaps in consistency of care (3.45) and service timing (3.53). Staff responsiveness, especially in emergencies, received a high score of

3.71, reflecting efficient patient handling.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that patients, especially younger adults, have specific expectations for healthcare services. Since a large portion of the respondents are between 18 and 24 years old, it's essential for hospitals to understand what this age group values in their care. The balanced gender representation among respondents also helps capture a broader perspective on service quality. To improve patient satisfaction, hospitals should focus on a few key areas. Enhancing the comfort of waiting areas can make visits more pleasant, while improving communication about wait times can build trust with patients. Staff training is crucial, too, as it helps employees better understand and respond to patient's needs. By implementing these changes, healthcare facilities can create a more supportive and caring environment, leading to happier patients and better overall experiences.

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