

THE EFFECT OF SERVICE QUALITY ON PATIENT LOYALTY MEDIATED BY PATIENT SATISFACTION

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Abstract

Healthcare professionals often strive to satisfy their patients by addressing their healthcare issues. Patient satisfaction is a crucial component in evaluating the quality of healthcare because it shows how well the staff is achieving the patients' goals. It has a significant impact on patients' expectations. The hospital sector must attain service quality standards that include accurate and precise outcomes of medical examinations, as well as polite and helpful treatment. The level of patient satisfaction affected many different areas of health care organisations. Customer loyalty was thought to be mostly influenced by the caliber of the services provided. Patients who experience such contentment will feel at ease and develop a favourable opinion of the caliber of the services. A key factor in achieving patient satisfaction was service quality. As a result, the patient felt that hospital services deserved to be at the top, leading him to pledge his commitment by refusing to use hospitals run by other companies.

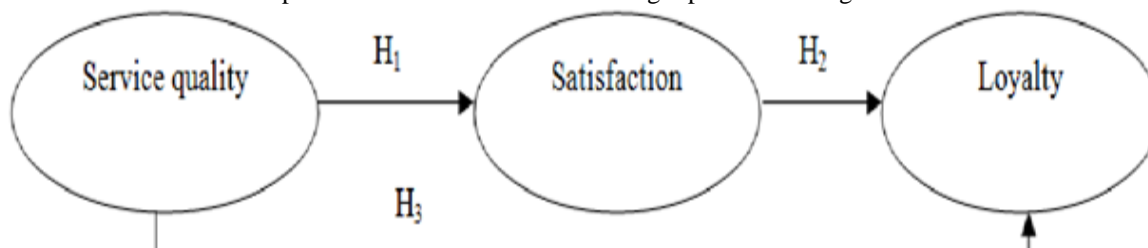
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Introduction

The perception of service quality as a key element in fostering customer loyalty. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the hospital's patient-centered service quality and assess the relative weight given to various quality indicators in predicting a patient's loyalty. Customer loyalty is said to be greatly influenced by service quality. High-quality services have the power to sway rivals' consumers as well as draw in new clients. Zeithaml et al., consumers' desired behavioural intentions are what enhance their relationship with the service provider when service quality assessment is favourable. Positive behavioural intents include praising the service provider to others, suggesting the provider or service to others, and sticking with the provider. One internal component that needed development for the health care organisations was patient happiness, in order for the administrative, nursing, and medical personnel to be as productive as possible. Hospitals and other healthcare facilities played a significant role in the quickly expanding service industry. Hospitals need to pay attention to the decrease of inpatients. To reduce patient complaints about the tardiness and lack of agility of physicians, nurses, and administrators, among other factors that influenced the caliber of hospitals. As a consequence of their increased awareness of the types of care and treatment choices available to them, people have recently begun to demand their entitlement to better service.¹ willingness to patiently explain their symptoms before providing them with

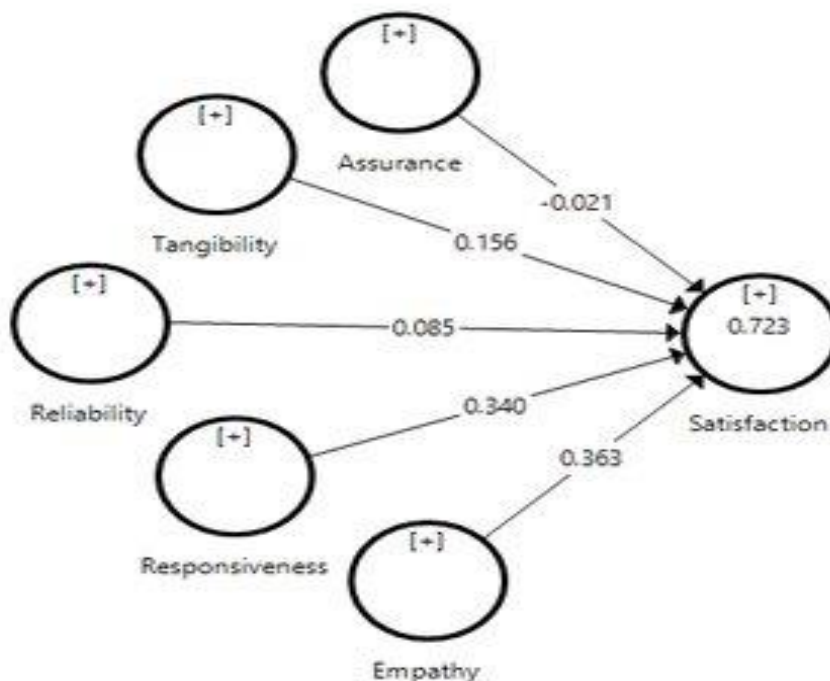
¹ Wong, EL, Coulter, A, Cheung, AW, (2013), "Validation of inpatient experience questionnaire". International Journal Quality Health Care Vol.25(4),pp.443–451

detailed information about their medications and the environment have all been found to have an impact on patient satisfaction.² All of the developed economies in the world are dominated by the service industry. India is one of the countries that competes with other countries for a larger portion of the global market.



Service Quality of Healthcare in India

One of the most challenging jobs that involves humans is the healthcare system. Hospitals are fundamentally service-oriented businesses. The level of user satisfaction affects an organization's professional area. Due to the significant financial burden that healthcare services place on the country, it is crucial to look into the type and standard of services provided. Patient satisfaction is one of the most crucial outcome factors when it comes to healthcare services. A crucial performance criterion for the delivery of high-quality medical care is patient pleasure. As a key social institution, the hospital offers the patient and society a number of advantages. A hospital's main goal is to treat sick and injured people appropriately, regardless of their social, economic, or ethnic backgrounds. Significant challenges include a lack of diagnostic tools and a rising reluctance among skilled and experienced healthcare practitioners to work in isolated, inadequately equipped, and economically unattractive places. As opposed to practitioners in the official public health care system, rural medical professionals are more financially and geographically accessible to residents in rural regions. However, physicians have been assaulted and even killed in rural India.³



² Achem, F, Canar, J, Fullam, (2014), “The relationships between HCAHPS communication and discharge satisfaction items and hospital readmissions”. Patient Experience Journal Vol. (2), pp.71–77.

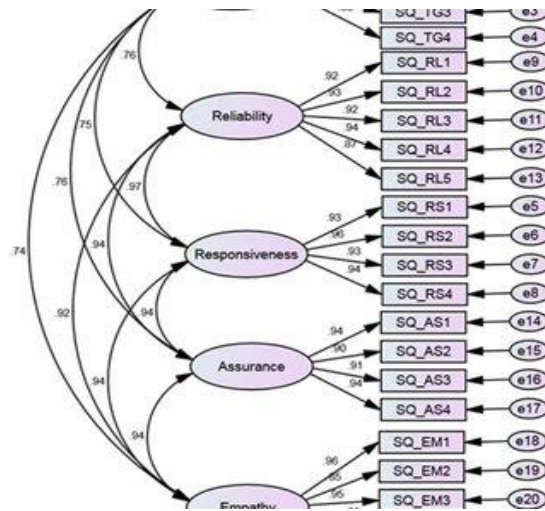
³ Ashok Panagariya (2014), “The Challenges and innovative solutions to rural health dilemma, Annals of Neurosciences”, Vol.21 (4), pp.125–127.

Martin Patrick, the chief economist of the CPPR, individuals rely more on the private healthcare sector, and households spend nearly three times as much on private services as they do on public ones. In many rural areas of India, healthcare is offered by so-called informal practitioners, who may or may not have the necessary credentials to diagnose and treat patients. These providers often give consultations for common illnesses. Particularly in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India, informal healthcare practitioners frequently give treatments in patients' homes and provide allopathic medicine prescriptions. It has been established that customers' choices of hospitals are heavily influenced by quality. If the quality is poor, they will look elsewhere for something better. So the product's quality needs to be excellent to satisfy the buyer. For a consumer to return for more of the same enjoyable experience and to develop long-term loyalty, quality is the value-added product that offers a more pleasant encounter. In the face of rivalry, it helps to increase market share. It is by itself helpful for word-of-mouth advertising. It never happens by chance and requires work to accomplish. The idea of service excellence is very new. It is how an experience is perceived. It all depends on the client's response to the treatment he received from the service provider. Depending on how quickly the patient needs the nurse to attend to her call, a minute may be either rapid or sluggish. When the time limit of one minute is exceeded, patients may repeat their requests for the nurse or even yell them. The gap between expectations and actual experiences is the quality of the service. According to this definition, every aspect of a product's or service's delivery is vital and encompasses all of its qualities and characteristics. For instance, a high-quality hospital service includes nurses, the hospital environment, including hygienic ward upkeep, the quality of food served to patients and accompanying family, and the uniforms and outfits in addition to diagnosis, treatment, and surgery. (Govind Apte, 2004)⁴.

Any effective health system must focus on quality. It shouldn't only be portrayed as causing people to feel the usage of more advanced technology. Achieving intended results in terms of those parts of the patient's health and satisfaction that can be impacted by those services entails delivering services that are suitable for each patient's condition, providing them safely, properly, and in a timely manner. Internal efficiencies in terms of greater resource utilisation and/or productivity may enhance the process or system quality but may not always increase service quality. Information technology has become a more fundamental aspect of service quality as it has grown in importance to service businesses like hospitals. Due to the improvements in information technology, the use of information technology in healthcare has gained relevance in India recently. The way we live has been changed by information technology. The economy, political system, industry, financial markets, and culture have all transformed as a result. As they have learned the value of information needed for prompt decision-making, the health care industry is not far behind in choosing information technology. Every day, doctors need to make judgments that are precise, quick, and make the most use of the resources at their disposal.

Patient satisfaction is a sign of high-quality medical care: As crucial as other clinical health indicators is patient happiness. It is a key tool for assessing how well health care is delivered. Patient satisfaction is being more frequently utilised as a gauge of healthcare quality. Patient satisfaction is primarily used as a tool to evaluate service quality and satisfaction levels. Patient satisfaction is now a significant and commonly utilised quality outcome indicator of healthcare in a hospital context. Since the patient is the ultimate authority, their happiness also reveals if the provider has been successful in living up to expectations. Patient satisfaction describes how a person feels about their entire experience receiving medical care. In addition to social networks, expectations, and prior experiences, satisfaction is reliant on both cognitive and emotional information. It is a favourable evaluation of several facets of medical care.

⁴ Govind Apte. (2004) "Services Marketing, New Delhi: OXFORD University Press"



Source: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.emerald.com%2Finsight%2Fcontent%2Fdoi%2F10.1108%2FBFJ-12-2020-1108>

Theoretical Underpinning –Review

One of the healthcare facilities where health initiatives are carried out is a hospital, which provides a variety of trained and qualified staff with the ability to handle medical issues for the recovery and preservation of good health. In this situation, the user of hospital services needs high-quality care that addresses. Due to the rise in service quality, hospital services must be improved to be more effective, efficient, and satisfying to patients, families, and society as a whole⁵. Laohasirichaikul (2010)⁶, defined customer loyalty and customer perceptions of service quality are significantly correlated the Service Quality. Public Hospital Institution has a favourable and observable impact on patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is highly impacted by service quality. In his study, it was showed how the concurrent and significant impact of tangibility, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and trust on patient satisfaction creates aspects of service quality. In India, residents may get medical attention at either a private or public hospital depending on their preferences. Public hospitals need a greater amount of financial investment in order to maintain its infrastructure and continue to provide free medical care. Because of their precarious financial circumstances, many who have a poor standard of living choose to seek treatment for their medical conditions in public hospitals. Patients who believe they are getting free care are more likely to have a feeling of social obligation and a need to safeguard public property than patients who do not believe they are receiving free services. As a result of the inappropriate use of the facilities' available resources, the staff members who are employed in public hospitals are becoming more and slacker in their performance of their duties. Because of this, the public's perception of the value and image of public hospitals is diminishing. A pace of expansion that is on par with that of hospitals in other countries may be seen in the number of private hospitals opening their doors in India. India is quickly becoming one of the most significant nations in the world in terms of its ability to deliver high-quality medical care at more affordable prices. It is one of the primary reasons why people from all over the world go to India for medical treatment. Even, it is not at a level that can be attained by the people who live in India, especially those who fall into the lower middle income bracket as well as those who are in abject poverty. Even, it is not at a level that can be reached by the people who live in India. There are certain private hospitals that are not adhering to any of the industry's ethical standards in the medical profession. They have no other objective than to maximise the amount of money they make. Patients are more likely to have a bad opinion about hospitals as a result of both of these situations, namely the reluctance of public hospitals and the greater service adjustments of private hospitals.

⁵ Made Adhi Mahendrayana Putu, Ngurah Suyatna, Yasa Luh Putu Indiani, (2018) “The Effect Of Service Quality On Patient Loyalty Mediated By Patient Satisfaction In Bali Siloam Hospital” JAGADHITA: Jurnal Ekonomi & Bisnis, Vol. 5, No 1, PP.6-7

⁶ Laohasirichaikul, B., Chaipoopirutana, S., & Combs, H. (2010). Effective Customer Relationship of Health Care: A Study of Hospitals in Thailand. Journal of Management and Marketing Research, Vol.17(1), pp.11-12.

requirements, are together referred to as empathy. Customers are less likely to have second thoughts about continuing to make use of the services that are being provided to them if they feel that employees of the company are able to show empathy for the situations in which they find themselves. The level of customer loyalty will be directly proportional to this factor. According to the results of Gunawan et al. (2011), there is a direct connection between the elements of empathy and patient loyalty.

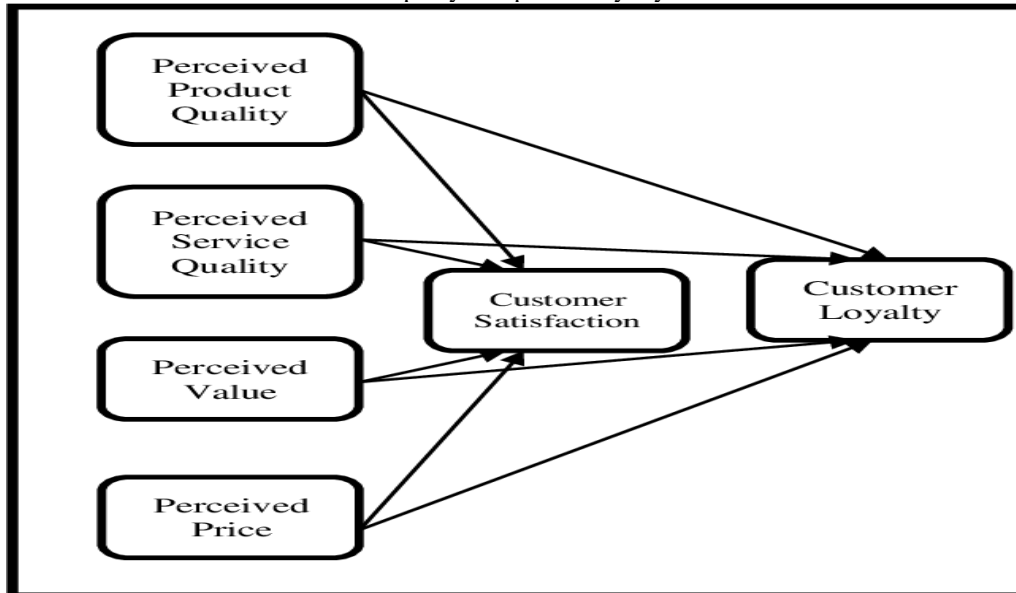


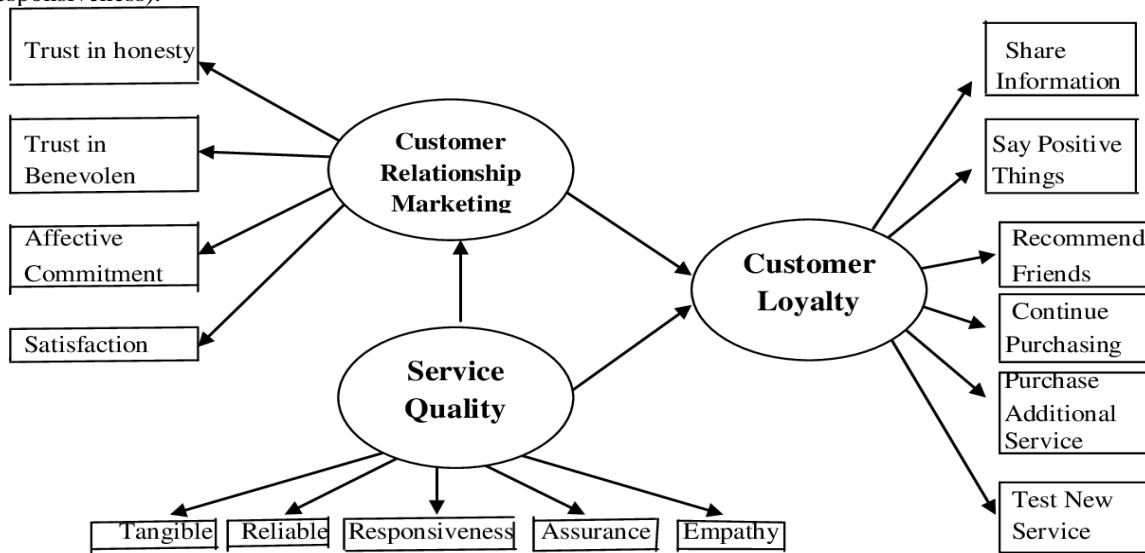
Figure 1. Research Model

Source:<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.semanticscholar.org%2Fpaper%2FCUSTOMER-SATISFACTION-AS-THE-MODERATING-VARIABLE->

Managerial Implications

This research aims to evaluate the link between the quality of the service that is given and patient loyalty, with the level of satisfaction experienced by patients acting as a mediator between the two concepts. managerial ramifications for improving service quality by the implementation of authentic suggestions produced with the use of the dimensions used in this study The first factor, known as tangibles, assesses the degree to which a hospital's physical facilities, equipment, and means of communication are capable of giving high-quality treatment to patients. This factor's name comes from the fact that it is called "tangibles." Should be the head of the hospital should pay attention to, and support, the requests for medical equipment by designing a financial budget plan with the cost to repair and increase infrastructure in hospitals. The head of the hospital's reform of the medical equipment to replace obsolete medical equipment with newer equipment that is more current in order to enhance the overall quality of the equipment. Additionally, the director of the hospital is able to design a strategy for keeping the public parts of the institution clean, which is an asset to the institution as a whole. Because the cleanliness of the hospital is the single most critical aspect in determining the degree of health and comfort that patients and visitors experience, it is imperative that the hospital develop and continue to implement an all-encompassing hygiene programme. This need to be your number one concern. It is predicted that patients who feel comfortable would produce patients who feel content, which will lead to patients who are loyal to the institution. The ability of the medical officer or a member of the non-medical staff to perform the promised service in a way that is rapid, accurate, and satisfactory are implications for the reliability dimension. The administrator in charge of the hospital in this situation has the power to monitor and modify the placement of the resource that corresponds to the job description. Because of this, human resources at the hospital will be better prepared to work anymore, which is an advantage, given that human resources will have earned employment positions according to their talents. The next phase, which is for the director of the hospital to be able to provide specialized training, is to be able to concentrate largely on the performance of staff members, regardless of whether they are medical or non-medical workers. In addition to training, the director of the hospital can also host a particular programme on the decline in performance of medical or non-medical staff and need to swiftly begin an investigation into the challenges that have been faced. The inadequate performance of medical or

nonmedical employees in the provision of services, which causes the patient to experience discomfort and dissatisfaction, ultimately leading to the patient being disloyal. One of the three characteristics that has to be addressed in order to boost the degree of service quality that is regarded to be at a higher level is the willingness of the professionals, whether they are medical or non-medical, who aid patients and provide services to respond (responsiveness).



Source: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.semanticscholar.org%2Fpaper%2FCustomer-Loyalty-the-Effects-of-Service-Quality-and-Rizka-Widji%2F62a363e469aacf2dcddd18d3b857dc8e771cd458&psig=AOvVaw0WyhdSv0ZgwRpT6>

The implications that can be drawn from this are that the head of the hospital has the ability to instil a concern for medical or non-medical personnel who work in the hospital as employees and co-workers. These implications can be drawn from the fact that the head of the hospital has the ability to instil this concern. Through activities such as hosting family reunions for the purpose of refreshing, the administrator of the hospital is able to build bonds in the working environment, foster outstanding cooperation among coworkers and superiors, and increase productivity. In addition, the administrator of the medical facility is expected to take prompt action in order to maintain the institution's level of discipline and uphold its reputation for strictness. It's possible that this will involve docking the income of certain specialists who are persistently late to their appointments with patients. In order to decrease the severity of any difficulties that may occur, the head of the hospital should think about adopting a more direct approach to the expert in order to establish up efficient channels of communication. Patients who require medical assistance should not be required to wait for an extended period of time if the head of the hospital is able to provide a physician's lounge that is fully furnished with all of the essential amenities. This will ensure that patients do not have to wait for an extended period of time. Because of this, medical professionals will be able to do their jobs in settings that put them at ease. The patient is helped to feel her attention and, more importantly, because the desire and needs met appropriately so that it may give rise to happiness by hospital staff members who have an attitude of responsiveness.

Conclusion

The happiness of the hospital's patients is the institution's first priority; this includes not only providing treatment to patients and their families but also ensuring a good result for the health of the personnel and the whole organisation. The contentment of patients has emerged as a top goal for healthcare providers and health plans all around the United States. Patient satisfaction is the strongest determinant of hospital functioning, and patients are the key players in the hospitals. Because patient satisfaction has such a direct bearing on health outcomes, evaluating the patient experience is even more important in the medical field than it is in other industries. The quality management strategy that has been suggested could be utilised by organisations in the healthcare industry as well as other organisations in the service industries. The strategy makes it possible to develop a quality management programme that will concentrate only on the areas of service quality that are

considered to be the most important in terms of the perspectives of the most important stakeholders. At this point in time, hospitals are playing a very important role for the multifaceted health welfare of the general population. In addition, the success of hospitals is dependent not only on the quality of the services provided but also on the degree to which patients are content with those services. It is difficult to conceptualize a culture that does not have hospitals. For as long as there have been sick people, hospitals have been and will continue to be a source of comfort and inspiration for them. There has been a significant shift away from hospitals' traditional three-part fundamental structure, which can be observed in many parts of the globe today. The Doctor, the Patient, and the Medication to the current condition, which is observed by the modernization of medicine as well as infrastructure and techniques of diagnostics. This would continue and hospitals in the future would continue to develop as centers of excellence in human healthcare and rehabilitation to fulfil the expanding requirements of the civilized world. Similarly, this expansion will also continue to emerge in severe rivalry among numerous multispecialty hospitals in specific countries and among other nations. It would not be inappropriate to say at this point about Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest that only those healthcare facilities with excellence in human healthcare and service quality would prevail.

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