



# AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ASSESSING QUALITY OF HEALTH – CARE SERVICES OFFERED BY PRIVATE HOSPITALS USING SERVQUAL MODEL

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## Abstract

There has been a gradual but steady shift in the perceptions of both providers and patients of health care. Data and characteristics regarding the population or phenomenon examined have been described using descriptive research. According to the researchers' findings, primary data was gathered through a self-created structured Questionnaire, while secondary data was sourced from websites and academic articles. Using the statistical approach of factor analysis, a structured questionnaire was developed to interview patients admitted to various private hospitals on 23 distinct parameters on Likert's five-point Likert scale, which was later reduced to five components. Physical facilities are visually appealing, doctors and hospital personnel are neat and professional, patients are informed, and employees and doctors of the hospital understand the individual needs of the patients deemed to be significant. Patients in private hospitals are the subject of this investigation. There may be further variables, such as the fact that one patient may be content with one element while another may be dissatisfied with that same aspect.

**KeyWords:** Patients Satisfaction, Satisfaction of Patients in Private Hospitals, Condition of Private Hospitals, Health Care, SERVQUAL

## INTRODUCTION

India's economy relies heavily on its large population to meet the country's growing need for high-quality health care services. Services cannot be kept; hence the quality of service is an important consideration.

measuring the quality of health care and patient satisfaction is a complex phenomenon that may be influenced by a variety of factors that influence the selection of a health care provider. However, research has shown quality to be an important element that can be displayed through various means such as the facilities available, the availability of health experts, the promptness of service, the cleanliness, and so on. It has always been difficult to offer high-quality care to patients, and this is especially true in countries like India where the supply and demand for healthcare are out of kilter. Because of this, it is difficult for policymakers to enforce strong standards for service quality in India's medical care system, which includes

both private and public facilities. In order to assess the quality of a provider's health care, patients must be aware of the numerous aspects that contribute to that quality, and patient satisfaction is a key criterion for doing so. SERVQUAL model is used to investigate how patients of all genders and ages perceive service quality in terms of five dimensions: tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, in this case of the patient. To attract new patients, the quality of service has a major impact on patient satisfaction, and the service quality characteristics have a big impact on analyzing the gap between actual and expected.

As a result, private hospitals make their services more widely available to the general public while maintaining a high standard of care and employing highly qualified health care professionals in order to improve patient satisfaction and build a strong brand for the hospitals. Patients' satisfaction with health care services is measured using the SERVQUAL model created by Parasuraman, et al. (1985-88). SERVQUAL – a model developed by Parasuraman, et al Service quality has been measured using a suitable sample of OPD patients utilizing the criteria of tangibility (reliability), responsiveness (empathy), and assurance (assurance). It helps to discover the service quality gap that can be analyzed to assure improvement in quality of services and patient happiness and to solve the significant challenges in healthcare.

## SERVQUAL

regardless of the nature of the product or service, consumers apply the same criteria to determine quality. A customer's perception of the quality of a service is shaped by a collection of positive or negative encounters with the company's delivery. The company's quality can be improved by addressing service gaps. Gaps aren't the only way customers evaluate a product or service.

### These dimensions are briefly commented below:

1. **Reliability:** Is the service provided by this company dependable? Is it what it claims to be? Rigidity refers to the degree to which a company's output is predictable. For the average service user, the most crucial factor is trustworthiness.
2. **Tangibility:** Physical installations, equipment, personnel, and communication materials of the service provider are all examined. Customers generally rely on the tangible proof surrounding a service because there is no physical component to evaluate.
3. **Responsibility:** Is the customer service provided by the company's workers friendly and efficient? It is tasked with gauging a company's and its employees' openness to customers.
4. **Assurance:** Does your workforce have a high level of competence and integrity? This aspect encapsulates the firm's knowledge, civility, and accuracy; and
5. **Empathy:** This is a person's ability to feel what another person is feeling. Is the service provider attentive and personal?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Hannah Vasanthan (2021)** Most of the industrialized countries' economies are service-based, accounting for two-thirds of their total output. A large portion of developing countries' GDP has come from the services sector. There is a good chance that the services sector's share of GDP and employment will rise in the near future. In order for a service to be successful, it must provide high-quality services to its customers. In Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nādu, a privately run hospital is the subject of this study, which examines service quality in that facility. 250 inpatients were asked to rate their satisfaction with hospital services using the Parasuraman & Zeithaml model of service quality with five dimensions. Empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and tangibility all have significant gaps for the hospital as well. Therefore, the hospital must take steps to create patients' trust by training staff to act nicely and courteously, as well as train them to answer all of their patients' questions.

**Khattar and Gurinder Singh (2018)**, Analyzed the service quality of Delhi NCR's private hospitals using the SERVQUAL methodology. There are positive gaps in three dimensions, namely Reliability, Assurance, and Tangibility. This suggests that patients are satisfied with the service quality qualities in these dimensions since they perceive it to be better than what they expect to receive. There is a negative gap between Responsiveness and Empathy, the other two aspects. Urmia University of Medical Sciences-affiliated teaching hospitals were evaluated using SERVQUAL to measure the service quality of their Hospital Information Systems (HIS). There were 270 participants in the study, which was conducted using multi-stage cluster sampling. (-1.52) and (-1.34) were the two dimensions with the largest quality gaps, respectively. The lowest quality gap was discovered in the tangibles dimension (-0.95). The study found that the quality of the services provided was lower than the expectations of the customers. Because of this, it is imperative that not only the services themselves but also the personnel providing those services be upgraded.

**Mohamad Jebraeily (2019)** HIS service quality assessment helps meet the needs of users, and it is a technique to increase contact between HIS developers and users of HIS. Service quality can be measured using the SERVQUAL method of service evaluation. Objectives: For this study, the SERVQUAL model was used to evaluate HIS service quality at teaching hospitals connected with Urmia University of Medical Sciences (UMSU). Methods: In 2017, researchers at the University of Michigan School of Medicine and the University of Michigan Health System conducted a descriptive analysis. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to pick 270 users at random for the study's sample. Data was gathered using a modified version of the SERVQUAL survey that contained five more dimensions. User expectations and perceptions were compared to see if there was a significant difference. Respondentness (-1.52) and reliability (-1.34) were found to have the biggest and lowest quality gaps, respectively, in the five characteristics (-0.95). Users' perceptions and expectations differed significantly across all SERVQUAL variables (P 0.001). There was a clear disconnect between what users expected and what they received. It is imperative that HIS providers focus on delivering HIS support and upgrading services and allocate IT professionals with the proper expertise and skills to offer the trust needed to use HIS services in the end customers.

**Khushboo Sharma (2021)** As profits and market share rise, so does the quality of the services provided by firms. To achieve the highest level of patient satisfaction, health care providers must continually improve the quality of their services. There is a private hospital in the city of AHMEDABAD CITY that is looking for ways to improve its service and attract more customers. In recent years, India's health business has grown in both the public and private sectors, providing high-quality medical services that are both efficient and improving all the time in order to better meet the needs of their patients. This study examines the impact of service quality on patient satisfaction in private hospitals in order to ensure the highest level of patient satisfaction. The SERVQUAL and a survey of 250 OPD patients are used in the study. The research design is a descriptive study that makes use of statistical methods like regression, ANOVA, chi square, and others to draw conclusions about the existing characteristics of service quality. The primary goal of this study is to examine how OPD patients' satisfaction levels are affected by various aspects of service quality and to establish a connection between those results. Patients at OPD are asked to fill out a survey about their knowledge about many aspects of health care quality, such as reliability, assurance, tangibles, responsiveness, and empathy. This information is gathered through a review of the literature.

**Sathanarayana & Shenoy (2019)** the research paper "Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction: Primary Health Care Centres in Rural Karnataka" highlights primary health care services in developing countries like India where the poor cannot afford health care, and thus, the stated goal of providing basic services to all is a challenge. In an attempt to identify any inconsistencies in service quality, the researcher used the SERVQUAL model to assess customer perceptions and expectations. Empathy, followed by assurance, was shown to be the most impactful quality component on patients' perceptions of service quality, according to the results of the study. In order to better understand why customers are dissatisfied, the highest priority should be given to enhancing the quality of services and identifying quality gaps. There is a direct correlation between gender and dimension tangibility in rural Karnataka, as well as between age and dimension tangibility. Furthermore, patients' opinions of the primary health care centers' quality of service were worse than expected. In the study's findings, reliability is the most important feature, and it recommended that this gap be handled appropriately in order to maximize patient happiness.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this research study is to determine the elements affecting the quality of services being delivered by the private hospital to its patients in Ahmedabad city. A SERVQUAL model is used to create the dimensions of quality, with revisions as needed. A systematic questionnaire was utilized to collect data, and SPSS version 17.0 was used to analyze the results. There were a total of 122 questionnaires sent out, however only 100 of them were used for analysis because they were completely filled out. A total of 81.96 percent of those surveyed responded. Stratified random sampling was utilized to get the data for this study. Five point likert's scale is utilized here in the questionnaire. The questionnaire relating to demographic profile was also incorporated to make the study more explorative and descriptive.

## DATA ANALYSIS

SPSS 17.0 is used to analyze the structured questionnaire data. The SERVQUAL model, t-test, and ANOVA are a few of the statistical methods employed in data analysis. It is calculated on eight aspects, i.e., tangibleness, reliability, responsiveness and empathy, as well as on 23 criteria on a five-point likert scale, on how patients expect and perceive the services given by private hospitals in the healthcare industry. An alpha of 0.724 has been determined, which is far over the 0.6 threshold for the reliability analysis on all 23 factors on eight dimensions.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PATIENTS

**Table 2: Demographic profile – Gender**

GENDER		PERCENTAGE
Male	72	72%
Female	28	28%

**Table 3: Demographic profile – Educational Qualifications**

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		PERCENTAGE
Upto Schooling	23	23%
Graduate	59	59%
Post Graduate and more	18	18%

**Table 4: Demographic Profile – Age Group**

AGE GROUP (IN YEARS)		PERCENTAGE
Below 25	24	24%
25 to 50	48	48%
50 & Above	28	28%

**Table 5: Demographic Profile – Income Group**

INCOME GROUPS (P.A.)		PERCENTAGE
Less than Rs. 3,00,000	20	20%
Rs. 3,00,000 to Rs. 5,00,000	38	38%
Rs. 5,00,000 & Above	42	42%

According to the above Servqual Model, there is a need to improve all 23 service quality aspects. In some cases, the service quality discrepancy is more than 0.5 percentage points, which equates to more than 10% on the Likert scale used here. Written materials are easy to comprehend, the same level of service is provided day and night, and staff and doctors are eager to answer questions from patients and their loved ones. The ability of the personnel to answer customers' questions and provide the same quality of service throughout the day is crucial. Decision makers in the Healthcare industry are different from those in the general public, therefore making written documents easier to grasp may not be a priority.

## CONCLUSION

It's safe to say that private hospitals in this area are doing well enough in terms of the model's dimensions for service quality. Gap scores are attributed to patients' inexperience in evaluating specific aspects. When it comes to 'experience', SERVQUAL has been repeatedly cited as one of its shortcomings, therefore the gaps may be inevitable (Buttle, 1996). A corporate strategy effort to improve quality across the board might be implemented by private hospitals because each of the twenty-three SERVQUAL assertions tested significantly. However, a more targeted strategy may be to focus on those topics that are deemed to be of the greatest relevance to the sample. A five-point Likert scale was used to find the differences in service quality, and it revealed that in some cases, the difference in quality is greater than 0.5, or more than 10%. Written materials are easy to comprehend, the same level of service is provided day and night, and staff and doctors are eager to answer questions from patients and their loved ones. The ability of the personnel to answer customers' questions and provide the same quality of service throughout the day is crucial. Decision makers in the Healthcare industry are different from those in the general public, therefore making written documents easier to grasp may not be a priority. Only the empathy component has a substantial difference between male and female, while the other elements in gender have no significant variation in gender. Physical facilities are visually appealing, doctors and staff of the hospital are neat and professional, obtain feedback and keep the patients informed and staff and doctors of the hospital understand the specific needs of the patients were all found to be significant at a 5% level of significance in a survey.

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