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Service quality and patient satisfaction: Evidence from private corporate hospitals

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between service quality of private corporate hospitals and patient satisfaction. For this purpose, we collected the data from 400 patients using a structured questionnaire. We have deployed multiple regression technique to investigate the relationship between dimensions of service quality and patient satisfaction. Using the sample of 400 patients, our result provided that dimensions of service quality of corporate hospital as follows: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility have significant predictors of patient satisfaction towards corporate hospitals. Our findings provide the unique insight and meaningful implications to private corporate hospital.

Keywords: Service Quality, Patient Satisfaction, Private Corporate Hospitals.

I. INTRODUCTION

As living standards have changed and there is a demand for better medical treatment to improve lifestyles, there has been an increase in interest in hospital services in recent years. Patients' main concern now is how to improave the quality of medical care services, and hospitals have realised the importance of service quality in terms of patient satisfaction and retention in order to better serve their patients (Arasli et al., 2008). Meehan et al. (2002), for instance, highlighted that understanding how inpatients evaluate hospital service quality performance will improve the current health care system outcome and enhance service quality, resulting in an increase in the number of satisfied inpatients and patients' continued use of the hospitals. Patients who value relationships are also more likely to remain committed to their hospital (Kessler and Mylod, 2011). In other words, customer retention and willingness to refer are both higher the more satisfied consumers are (Fornell, 1992).

Additionally, as patients get more accustomed to health care services and more receptive to competitive developments, service quality alone may not be sufficient to secure a long-lasting relationship between the patients and the hospital (Gaur et al., 2011). Many hospitals go beyond patient pleasure to cultivate loyalty in order to lower the perceived risk of utilising the service, in order to make sure patients have a long-term commitment to the hospital (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003). Hospital service quality perception is typically determined by how well people perceive the services the facility offers, such as how well they get along with the staff, doctors, and nurses (Martinez Fuentes, 1999).

Patients' perceptions of the quality of health care services are said to be based on three factors, according to Chahal and Kumari (2010): the physical environment (which includes ambient condition, social factor, and tangibles), interaction quality (which includes attitude and behaviour, expertise, and process quality), and outcome quality (comprising waiting time, patient satisfaction and loyalty). Therefore, this study attempt to investigate the relationship between service quality of private corporate hospitals and patient satisfaction.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

High-quality services give hospital administrators the ability to distinguish their facility, improve their competitiveness, and advance their skills (Olorunniwo et al., 2006). According to Grönroos (1984), evaluating perceived quality involves the client contrasting their expectations with the services they received. The discrepancy between consumer impressions and their beliefs about hospital services is known as hospital service quality (Aagja and Garg, 2010). Patients are the hospital's most valuable asset in a healthcare facility. Thus, the importance of healthcare service quality has increased significantly in order to maintain and satisfy patients (Arasli et al., 2008; Alhashem et al., 2011).

Customers can evaluate service structure, technique, and result, according to a few research on patients' assessment that were carried out in developing nations (Andaleeb, 2001; Baltussen et al., 2002). Patient satisfaction is frequently used to assess service quality in healthcare settings. According to Shabbir et al. (2016), there is a correlation between service quality and patient satisfaction. The findings indicate a favourable relationship between these two variables. The gap between perceived and intended service quality has also been used to measure patient satisfaction (Shabbir et al., 2017 Forthcoming). Positive patient attitudes will foster trust, which can result in favourable assessments of the facility (Brennan, 1998). Patient satisfaction and the quality of healthcare services were depicted by Chahal and Mehta (2013) and Naidu (2009). The relationship between service quality and behavioural intentions is mediated by patient satisfaction.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article is based on primary data collected from suvery. Before to collect the data from respondents, it is necessary to identify the target population. Therefore, target population for this article were patients and their attendants who were visited private corporate hospitals in NCR-Delhi. These individuals are perfect target population to exploring influence of service quality dimensions on patient satisfaction towards private corporate hospitals. According to MacCallum et al. (1999) "a sample size of between 100 and 200 observations is acceptable provided communalities are high, factors are well determined, and convergence to a proper solution is achieved". To collect the data, more than 500 questionnaires were distributed among patients and their attendents in the boundary of NCR-Delhi. 400 questionnaires were returned by respondents. We used the scale developed by Ramanujam (2011) to measure the service quality. In addition, the scale developed by Coutinho et al. (2019) to measure the patient satisfaction. All responses corresponding to items were recorded on five point Likert's scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In this article, we deployed multiple regression technique to examining the influence of service quality dimensions on patient satisfaction towards private corporate hospitals.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1 shows the sample descriptives. Our results show that 61% of respondents were male patients followed by 39% of female patients. Then, our findings reveal that 65% of respondents are in the age group of 40-60 years followed by 25.75% and 9.25% of respondents are less than 40 years and greater than 60 years, respectively. Moreover, our results show that 64% of respondents belongs to nuclear family followed by 36% of respondents to joint family. In addition, our findings provide that 70% of respondents have 10-20 lakh annual family income followed by 16% and 14% of respondents have more than 20 lakh and less than 10 lakh annual family income.

Table 1: Sample descriptives

Demographics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	244	61.00
	Female	156	39.00
Age	<40 years	103	25.75
	40-60 years	260	65.00

	>60 years	37	9.25
Family type	Nuclear	256	64.00
	Joint	144	36.00
Annual family income (Rs.)	<10,00,000	56	14.00
	10,00,000-20,00,000	280	70.00
	>20,00,000	64	16.00

Notes: N=400
Source: Survey.

4.2 SERVICE QUALITY AND PATIENT SATISFACTION

Table 2 shows the mean score of variables and reliability results. The mean score of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles were 4.18, 4.39, 4.31, 4.63, and 4.32, respectively. In addition, the mean value of patient satisfaction was 4.44. Further, the values of cronbach's alph corresponding to all variable exceed thresholds 0.70 which validates the reliability of variables.

Table 2: Mean and Reliability

Variables	Mean	Cronbach's alpha
Reliability (REL)	4.18	0.884
Responsiveness (RES)	4.39	0.833
Assurance (ASS)	4.31	0.901
Empathy (EMP)	4.63	0.853
Tangibles (TAN)	4.32	0.832
Patient satisfaction (PS)	4.44	0.911

Table 3 and 4 present the results of correlation and regression model, respectively. As shown in Table 4, the constant-coefficient is significant and positive, which reveals patient satisfaction will be positive in the absence service quality of corporate hospital. As per expectation, the coefficient of reliability is positive and significant, which implied that reliability positively influence the patient satisfaction towards corporate hospitals. In addition, the coefficients of responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility are positive and significant, which implied that responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility positively influence the patient satisfaction towards corporate hospitals.

Table 3: Correlation matrix

	REL	RES	ASS	EMP	TAN	PS
REL	1					
RES	0.445**	1				
ASS	0.514***	0.420**	1			
EMP	0.332*	0.432**	0.556**	1		
TAN	0.311*	0.383**	0.431**	0.444**	1	
PS	0.551***	0.503***	0.522***	0.512***	0.518***	1

Notes: *, **, *** correlation is significant at 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001, respectively.
Sources: The authors' own calculation.

Table 4: regression results

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standard error	t-value	Standardized coefficients
Constant	1.334	0.187	7.134***	-
REL	0.544	0.056	9.714***	0.521
RES	0.582	0.075	7.760***	0.443
ASS	0.522	0.060	8.700***	0.453
EMP	0.543	0.107	5.075**	0.511
TAN	0.532	0.122	4.361**	0.501

Notes: Dependent variable = PS. *, **, and *** coefficient is significant at 0.05, 0.01 and 0.001, respectively. R^2=0.672
Sources: The authors' own calculation.

V. CONCLUSION

This study aims to investigate the relationship between service quality of private corporate hospitals and patient satisfaction. Using the sample of 400 patients, our result provided that dimensions of service quality of corporate hospital as follows: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibility have significant predictors of patient satisfaction towards corporate hospitals. The survey makes it clear that corporate hospitals need to focus on areas where patients have voiced concerns about the five dimensions of service quality. For hospital staff to become more patient-oriented with personalised services, a humanitarian approach, and ethical values that would build confidence in the patients' ability to recover quickly and play a significant role in the satisfaction of patients, hospitals must provide adequate and recurring training in behavioural science. In order to expand their knowledge and give patients competent care, doctors and other medical professionals should engage in ongoing learning. Our findings provide the unique insight and meaningful implications to private corporate hospital.

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Questionnaire

Section A

Following statements measure the service quality provided by private corporate hospitals. Kindly tick your response based on your experience with service quality provided by hospital. One (1) is strongly disagree (SD), Two (2) is disagree (D), three (3) is Neutral (N), Four (4) is agree (A) and Five (5) is strongly agree (SA).

	Reliability	1	2	3	4	5
REL1	The hospital provides services as promised.					
REL2	The hospital shows great concern in solving problems or complaints.					
REL3	The hospital provides the service in a right manner for the first time.					
REL4	The hospital provides services at the time scheduled.					
REL5	The diagnosis made by the hospital is always accurate.					
REL6	The hospital maintains error-free records of the customers.					
	Responsiveness					
RES1	The paramedical staff keep the customers informed about the time when services will be provided.					
RES2	The employees give prompt services.					
RES3	The employees are always willing to listen and help you.					
RES4	The employees show readiness to respond to your request.					
RES5	The employees inform you of any changes in advance.					
	Assurance					
ASS1	The employees have the knowledge to solve your problems.					
ASS2	The employees are always friendly and courteous to you.					
ASS3	The employees connect you with the correct individual.					
ASS4	The employees instil hope and confidence in the customers.					
ASS5	The customers feel safe and confident in the hands of the employees.					
	Empathy					
EMP1	The hospital staff pays special attention to individual customers.					
EMP2	The employees understand the specific needs of the customers.					
EMP3	The employees have the customers' best interest at heart.					
EMP4	The staff is caring the customers wholeheartedly.					
EMP5	The employees remember the patients and their previous problems.					
	Tangibles					
TAN1	The hospital has sophisticated and modern equipment.					
TAN2	Waiting room and consultation rooms are visually appealing.					
TAN3	The procedures in the hospital are all computerised.					
TAN4	The physical facilities in the hospital are visually appealing.					

Section A

Following statements measure the patient satisfaction towards private corporate hospitals. Kindly tick your response based on patient satisfaction towards private corporate hospitals. One (1) is strongly disagree (SD), Two (2) is disagree (D), three (3) is Neutral (N), Four (4) is agree (A) and Five (5) is strongly agree (SA).

	Patient Satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
PS1	I'm satisfied with the medical treatment.					
PS2	I'm satisfied with the administrative service of the hospital.					
PS3	I'm satisfied with my recovery.					
PS4	In general, I'm satisfied with the service provided by hospital.					