A Study of Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction in Private Hospitals of Chopada Taluka

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Abstract: The quality of healthcare services provided in India has improved in recent years due to developments in the Indian healthcare sector. The strategic significance of quality service in hospitals is increasingly acknowledged and studied. The objective of this study is to assess the expected and perceived quality of healthcare services in private hospitals in Chopada Taluka, Maharashtra, India. Using the SERVQUAL model, a questionnaire was designed to collect data in order to achieve the study's objectives. The study sample comprised 120 Patients from ten different private hospitals in the region. The most significant conclusion of the study is that private hospitals are more dependable in terms of service quality. However, there is a difference between the actual quality of health services perceived and the quality of health services that patients anticipate. The study also revealed that patients assign varying weights to each dimension when anticipating and evaluating.

Keywords: Service quality; service quality dimensions; SERVQUAL, patient expectations; patient perception, patient satisfaction.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, one of the industries that has seen the fastest growth is the healthcare industry. It is becoming more common for medical facilities to take on the characteristics of well-organized institutions, complete with intricate protocols that must be adhered to and sufficient manpower to oversee their execution. People expect hospitals to deliver quality service 24 x 7 x 365 (Welfare, 2017). Particularly with regard to healthcare facilities, improvements are being made to the point where even people from other countries are taking notice of Indian hospitals and doctors. Private and public hospitals across the nation have both thrived, and both types of facilities now have access to cutting-edge medical technology and highly trained medical professionals (Sehat, 2017). There is a pressing need in the field of hospital administration for people who are professionally trained and competent, as these individuals are the ones who can ensure better productivity and higher quality work when it comes to the provision of healthcare services (Welfare, 2017). As it is in other service industries, ensuring that customers are happy is an important focus in the healthcare industry (Shabbir S, 2010). It is possible to achieve patient satisfaction by delivering high-quality care, remaining mindful of what patients anticipate, and working toward ongoing advancements in medical technology and practises (Zineldin, 2006). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the level of service provided by selected private hospitals in the Chopada Taluka located in the North Maharashtra Region of Maharashtra, India, and to determine the level of patient satisfaction with those hospitals.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SERVQUAL is an abbreviation of the term "Service Quality," which is also the name of a proven survey method for measuring service quality. This method focuses on five different aspects of service quality. In most cases, SERVQUAL surveys will cover 22 service areas, each of which will be distributed across one of the five service quality dimensions. The survey asks customers to give two different ratings on each attribute: one that reflects the level of service they would expect from excellent companies in a given sector, and another that reflects their perception of the service delivered by a specific company within a sector. Both ratings are intended to reflect the customer's overall satisfaction with the service. A qualified measurement of service quality is the difference between the rating given based on expectations and the rating given based on perceptions (Tazreen, 2012).

(Preeti, 2009) came to the conclusion that "In the private hospitals of the North Maharashtra region, the patients' satisfaction in a hospital consists of various quality dimensions such as, satisfaction with food, attitude of support staff and doctors, physicians att ending to the needs of patients, their efficiency in between the problems, sincerity in solving problems, and responsiveness to patient's requests." It has been observed that the empathy of nursing staff is the single most important factor in determining cumulative satisfaction, followed by the confidence, competencies, and effectiveness of physicians. "

Patients who go to certain government hospitals in the north Maharashtra region have the impression that, with the exception of the reliability dimension, no effort is made to provide better service quality in terms of the SERVQUAL dimensions of tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The mean of the items related to expectations is significantly higher than the mean of the items related to perception, with the exception of the reliability dimension (Wath Makarand, 2017).

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According to research conducted by Parasuraman A. in 1985, it was hypothesised that a customer's estimation of the quality of the service provided to them is directly related to the degree of dissatisfaction that exists between the service that the customer anticipates receiving and the service that the customer believes they have received. Therefore, service quality can be defined as the difference between what is expected and what is actually experienced. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman is the one that sees the most widespread adoption as a tool for measuring perceived service quality. He has positioned the customers' perceptions of the quality of the service along a spectrum ranging from perfect quality to quality that is completely unacceptable (Sachin S. Kamble, 2011). To begin the process of improving the quality of services, the first step is to analyse and evaluate them (Edvardsen, 1997).

The SERVQUAL model is comprised of five different dimensions and a total of 22 different statements. The following characteristics are included in this category: tangibility, dependability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman A., 1985).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study measures the perceived level of service quality and patient's satisfaction in private hospitals. The objectives of the studies were

1. To determine differences, if any, between the quality expectations and perceptions in private hospitals **Hypothesis**

H0: There exist no differences between the quality expectations and perceptions in private hospitals

H1: There exist differences between the quality expectations and perceptions in private hospitals.

Data collection and research instrument

In order to accomplish the goals of the study, a survey was carried out with the participation of 120 patients who were currently being treated in one of Chopada Taluka's 10 private hospitals. The patients who participated in the study were chosen at random. In order to get responses from a wide variety of patients, the survey was conducted over a period of thirty days. The instrument that was utilised for the purpose of data collection was a questionnaire that was developed on the basis of the SERVQUAL measure that is used for evaluating services. In order to measure both expectations and perceptions, a new version of the questionnaire with 22 pairs of questions and statements (also called items) was developed. On a seven-point Likert scale, with one representing strongly disagreeing with the statement and seven representing strongly agreeing with it, the patients of the private hospitals were polled and asked to rate the statements. The demographic information, including gender, age, occupation, income, residing area, education level, and the number of days spent in hospitals, was collected through the use of a questionnaire.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

To achieve the first two research objectives, the analysis was carried out by calculating the means, to test the significance, repeated measure ANOVA test was used. For the third objective, paired sample t-test was used. **Data Analysis and Inference**

A reliability analysis was carried out on the expectation and perception value scale comprising 44 items. Cronbach's alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.886$. **Table- I-Cronbach's Alpha**

Sr.		Expectation	-Perception- Cronbach's
#	Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Alpha
1	Tangibility	0.842	0.823
2	Reliability	0.899	0.637
3	Responsiveness	0.852	0.797
4	Assurance	0.660	0.824
5	Empathy	0.842	0.700
6	Overall	0.937	0.726

The Repeated measure ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) statistical test was carried out to test whether means of the expectation differ in at least one SERVQUAL dimensions in private hospitals. Table: II shows the mean of expectations of the SERVQUAL dimensions.

Table: II Descriptive Statistics

		Std. Deviation	
	Mean		N
Tangibility Expectation	5.24	0.84	120
Reliability Expectation	5.25	0.92	120
Responsiveness Expectation	6.07	0.76	120
Assurance Expectation	6.17	0.55	120
Empathy Expectation	6.52	0.52	120

Similarly, repeated measure ANOVA test was carried out to test whether mean of the perceptions differ in at least one. SERVQUAL dimensions in private hospitals. Table: III shows the mean of perceptions of the dimensions.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Tangibility Perception	5.14	0.85	120
Reliability Perception	5.48	0.65	120
Responsiveness Perception	5.97	0.67	120
Assurance Perception	5.98	0.71	120
Empathy Perception	5.64	0.59	120

Table: III Descriptive Statistics

The Gap between expectations and perception

To achieve the third objective of the research, the paired sample t -test was carried out to analyze whether expectation and perception differ with each dimension. Table: IX shows Paired Samples Statistics.

		Mean	Ν	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair	Tangibility Expectation	5.24	120.00	0.82	0.07
	Tangibility Perception	5.14	120	0.83	0.07
Pair	Reliability Expectation	5.25	120	0.88	0.08
	Reliability Perception	5.48	120	0.65	0.05
Pair 3	Responsiveness Expectation	6.07	120	0.75	0.06
	Responsiveness Perception	5.97	120	0.67	0.06
Pair	Assurance Expectation	6.17	120	0.55	0.05
	Assurance Perception	5.98	120	0.70	0.06
Pair 5	Empathy Expectation	6.52	120	0.52	0.04
	Empathy Perception	5.64	120	0.58	0.05
Pair	Expectation	5.85	120	0.55	0.05
	Perception	5.64	120	0.26	0.02

Table: IV Paired Samples Statistics

Table: IV provides the Paired Samples Statistics. It provides the descriptive statistics for the paired samples. Table IV provides the Paired Samples Test. The values for the Paired Samples Test are

Pair 1 t (119) = 2.384, p < 0.05

Since p-value (0.019) is less than the level of significance (0.05), hence it is concluded that expectation perception differs with respective to Tangibility in private hospitals.

From the descriptive statistics table, it can be seen that mean of expectations of tangibility is 5.24 and perception mean is 5.14, hence it can be concluded that expectations are higher compared to perception with respect to the tangibility dimension.

Pair 2 t (119) = -2.193, p < 0.05

Since p-value (0.030) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Hence it is concluded that expectation perception differs with respective to reliability.

From the descriptive statistics table, it can be seen that mean of expectations of reliability is 5.25 and perception mean is 5.48, hence it can be concluded that perception is higher compared to the expectations with respect to the reliability dimension.

Pair 3 t (119) = 1.390, p > 0.05

Since p-value (0.167) is more than the level of significance (0.05). Hence it is concluded that expectation perception does not differ with respect to Responsiveness.

Pair 4 t (119) = 2.663, p < 0.05

Since p-value (0.009) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Hence it is concluded that expectation perception differs with respective to Assurance. From the descriptive statistics table it can be seen that the mean of expectations of assurance is 6.17 and perception mean is 5.98, hence it can be concluded that expectations are higher compared to perception with respect to the assurance dimension.

Pair 5 t (119) = 13.559, p < 0.05

Since p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Hence it is concluded that expectation perception

differs with respective to Empathy. From the descriptive statistics table, it can be seen that mean of expectations of empathy is 6.52 and perception mean is 5.64, hence it can be concluded that expectations are higher compared to perception with respect to the empathy dimension.

Pair 6 t (119) = 5.171, p < 0.05

Since p-value (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.05). Hence it is concluded that expectation perception differs with respect to overall means of expectations and perceptions. From the descriptive statistics table it can be seen that the overall mean of expectations is 5.85 and the perception mean is 5.64, hence it can be concluded that the expectations are higher compared to the perception with respect to the overall expectations and perceptions.

V. CONCLUSION

The research studied the level of satisfaction of the patients from the selected private hospitals. When it comes to the reliability metric, the private hospitals are performing significantly better. Patients are content with the services provided, such as keeping error-free records, providing services at the time they promise they will, sincere interest in finding solutions to problems, performing services correctly the first time, providing services at the time they promise they will, and promising to do something by a certain time.

Patients have the impression that no real effort is made to improve service quality in terms of the empathy dimension, which is an extremely important factor in determining whether or not patients are happy with their care. The expectations are more focused on receiving individualised attention, operating hours that are convenient for the patient, having the patient's best interests in mind, and having an understanding of the specific requirements that patients have. As a result, we are able to draw the conclusion that empathy is the dimension that is the least developed and has the largest gap between expectations and perception. Patients anticipate more modern infrastructure and more aesthetically pleasing facilities. The assurance level that can be provided by the private hospitals falls short of what is expected. They are lacking in the ability to instil confidence and answer the questions that patients have. Despite the fact that all aspects of the healthcare services provided by hospitals are highly positive, but fall short of what patients expected, the reliability aspect stands out as being the most satisfactory. Patients place varying amounts of importance on each dimension, according to the various means by which they form their expectations and perceptions.

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