

Modelling the Factors Responsible for Better Health Service Quality: Perception of Service Providers

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Abstract

The aim of present study is to explore various dimensions of service quality of Indian Healthcare sector from care provider's perspective. Total of 362 healthcare providers including clinicians, staff nurses, lab & Imaging technologists, pharmacists and hospital management staff from both private and government hospitals participated in the study. The questionnaire had 5 dimensions taken from SERVQUAL along with three newly identified dimensions. Descriptive analysis of data was done besides mean for each dimension. Finally, exploratory and confirmatory analysis on SPSS 23 and AMOS version 21 was done to arrive at final set of dimensions and items under each. The findings suggested that all 8 dimensions are important for service quality of healthcare sector in India. The study adds to existing knowledge on service quality of healthcare by taking a different and unique care providers' perspective.

Keywords: Accessibility, Accreditation, Affordability, Healthcare service quality, Service providers, SERVQUAL

Introduction

The healthcare industry has emerged vastly in India and is expected to advance at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16-17 per cent during the year 2017-2022 and plays an undisputed role in improving the facilities and access to medical facilities and quality care for the people worldwide. In addition to quality healthcare services, healthcare industries are providing enormous job opportunities and playing a critical role in the country economy¹. Quality is an important aspect of the healthcare industry and is responsible for important and productive strategy for stability and profits of the industry, which ultimately affect the economy.² There are challenges in measuring healthcare service quality. Firstly, patients do not have necessary information and capability to assess technical quality. Secondly, the relationship between quality and patients' satisfaction is still not very well understood.³

Healthcare service quality is closely associated with patient satisfaction, loyalty, and healthcare organizations' productivity and profitability.⁴ There are wide spread factors that are responsible for heterogeneity and dynamism of healthcare service quality, making it very important to understand and identify them.⁵

There is a need to develop a scale that measures the quality of hospital services. Academicians, practitioners, policy and decision makers are still in the process of identifying valid tools to assess service quality.⁶ The first tool was developed by Donabedian in 1980 and it had 4 factors namely, timeliness, efficiency, effectiveness and improvement of care services.⁶ Later in 1988 Parasuraman et al. developed the famous tool SERVQUAL for service industries banking, telecom etc. This tool had 5 factors tangibility, empathy, responsiveness, reliability and Assurance.⁷ The factors are always susceptible to changes according to the economy of a country, type of service sector and development & growth of countries. Babakus 1992 and Bowers 1994 emphasised the need to tailor it according to healthcare industry.⁸

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Most of the studies have been done around the globe using SERVQUAL questionnaire to assess the quality of healthcare industry. However, studies