

IS SERVICE QUALITY KEY FOR PATIENT SATISFACTION AND REUTILIZATION IN INDONESIAN PRIVATE HOSPITALS? AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

In Indonesia's competitive healthcare perspective, the imperative for hospitals extends beyond delivering top-tier medical services; they are now challenged to surpass patient expectations. The amalgamation of impeccable service quality and the cultivation of a positive hospital reputation emerges as crucial, not only for immediate patient contentment but as a catalyst for enduring trust, familial satisfaction, and sustained patient loyalty. Aligned with national ethical codes and professional standards, the delivery of qualified services stands as a paramount objective for hospitals in Indonesia, reflecting a commitment to patient well-being and a strategic response to the burgeoning healthcare market. This research explores the dynamics of hospital performance, focusing on five Type C hospitals in Indonesia, with three situated in Jakarta and two in Batam. Methodologically, the study employs closed questionnaires, utilizing the Likert Scale to gather data from 250 inpatient respondents aged at least 17 years. Analyzed using SPSS and AMOS for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the findings indicate a good fit for the overall model, with all hypotheses supported for logical reasons. These findings contribute to increased knowledge, providing a basis and reference for other researchers and organizations. From the government perspective, as Indonesia aims to improve its economy through the hospital service sector, this study aids in achieving development plans by enhancing management and hospital personnel's commitment and performance in Indonesian hospitals.

Keywords: Service Quality, Hospital Reputation, Patients' Satisfaction, Patients' Revisit intention

INTRODUCTION

The modern era, characterised by increased life complexities, has transformed patient expectations within the healthcare sector, which operates as a vital component of the service industry. Patients, now more than ever, seek enhanced convenience and a broader array of services from hospitals. The escalating competition further propels hospital administrators to continually expand the scope of services offered, reflecting a dynamic response to the evolving needs of the community. The development of healthcare facilities, therefore, hinges not only on the establishment of hospitals and health centres but also on the efficiency and innovation embedded in their administration and management.

In this present situation, patients have become discerning consumers, increasingly sensitive in their selection of hospital services. Hospitals find themselves engaged in extreme competition, vying to attract patients by providing superior health services. Understanding the factors that influence patients in choosing a hospital becomes imperative for hospital administrators. The availability

and criteria for choosing hospitals have emerged as central considerations for patients, positioning them as informed consumers in the healthcare market. Patients, in their role as consumers, actively compare the services and facilities offered by various hospitals when making decisions about healthcare utilisation. This shift in patient behaviour underscores the importance of hospitals not only meeting but surpassing expectations in terms of service quality, accessibility, and overall patient experience.

Furthermore, the evolving phenomenon of healthcare in Indonesia is marked by a diverse array of hospitals, each navigating the challenges of competition and community expectations. The modern patient, characterised by heightened expectations and discernment, plays an essential role in shaping the curve of healthcare facilities. For hospitals to thrive in this environment, a keen understanding of marketing factors, continuous service innovation, and an acute awareness of patient preferences are essential to not only survive but stand out in the competitive healthcare arena.

In the present situation, hospitals are confronted with the dual challenge of not only delivering top-notch medical services but also aligning with technical standards and meeting the diverse expectations of their clientele. The emphasis on quality service is not limited to patient satisfaction alone but extends to encompass the well-being and contentment of their families. A strong commitment to quality services not only satisfies patients but also enhances trust, laying the foundation for enduring patient loyalty. The benchmark for qualified services is set by health services that not only meet the satisfaction levels of the population but also adhere to established national ethical codes and professional standards.

The evolving phenomenon of patient needs and desires places additional demands on hospitals, necessitating a holistic approach to service provision. Beyond the aspect of reliable medical staff, hospitals are now expected to seamlessly meet patient expectations from the moment they register, navigate administrative processes, to the time they wait for their doctors. The expectations extend to all facets of the hospital experience, including efficient laboratory and radiology examinations and swift pharmacy services. Elevating the quality of healthcare services, centring them around patients, and paying close attention to their needs and preferences have become imperative for enhancing patient treatment outcomes.

In the competitive arena of healthcare services, one effective strategy for a hospital to outshine its competitors is to provide services of superior quality that align with consumer interests and needs. The revisit intention process of consumers, in terms of choosing healthcare services, is significantly influenced by the ability of a hospital to meet and exceed their expectations. Quality of service, therefore, emerges as a potent tool for achieving a competitive advantage, forming the bedrock for providing exemplary hospital services and cultivating consumer satisfaction.

In the aspect of healthcare services, the critical decision-making process for medical services involves choosing a hospital, influenced significantly by factors such as perceived service quality and overall hospital reputation (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Zeithaml et al., 1996; Tabachnick et al., 2007; Ullah, 2014; Wu et al., 2015; Brown, 2020). Recognizing the urgency for healthcare organizations to address these aspects, hospitals increasingly emphasize the enhancement of their

reputation, provision of consistently high-quality services, and ensuring patient satisfaction (Hutcheson & Moutinho, 1998; Maria & Serrat, 2011; Cai et al., 2021). Statistics underline the vulnerability of reputation to a single poor service experience and highlight the critical role service quality plays in shaping patients' satisfaction and overall perception of a healthcare institution.

However, despite the critical nature of these variables, a significant gap exists in the literature concerning patients' perceptions of service quality, satisfaction, and revisit intention in the context of hospital reputation (Huseyin, 2005; Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010; Palese et al., 2018; Zhou et al., 2019; Mason et al., 2021). This research aims to bridge this gap by conducting an in-depth investigation into the interrelationships among service quality, hospital reputation, patient satisfaction, and their subsequent impact on patients' revisit intention (Cronin & Taylor, 1994; Al Khattab & Aldehayyat, 2011; Crick & Spencer, 2011; Murray et al., 2019). Specifically focusing on a newly established Type C hospital operational for less than two years, poised to provide limited Specialist Medical Services in every Regency Capital, this nuanced inquiry aims to contribute valuable insights enriching our understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in existing healthcare service provision (Hutcheson & Moutinho, 1998).

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for shaping policies aimed at enhancing the quality of hospitals, especially within the context of private healthcare services in Indonesia. Understanding the intricate dynamics of patients' purchasing-decision processes and their satisfaction levels can guide strategic decisions and operational adjustments within hospital management (Maria & Serrat, 2011). This strategic alignment not only fosters improved patient experiences but also contributes to the overall enhancement of healthcare service quality. For the academic community and the broader society, this study serves as a valuable reference for researchers exploring the nuanced aspects of patients' revisit intention in selecting healthcare services and gauging satisfaction levels (Cronin & Taylor, 1994). By shedding light on the interconnected variables shaping patients' choices and contentment, this study adds to the body of knowledge within healthcare research. Academic scholars can draw upon these findings to inform and enrich their own investigations, contributing to the cumulative growth of knowledge within the academic domain (Brown, 2020). As a source of knowledge, this study extends its significance to the general community, empowering consumers to make informed healthcare decisions (Boonitt & Rompho, 2012; Tham et al., 2017; Monmousseau et al., 2020). This knowledge contributes to an environment where healthcare services are more attuned to patient needs and preferences. Finally, for researchers, this study offers a fresh perspective and new insights into the intricate factors influencing patients' purchasing decisions and satisfaction levels in the aspect of healthcare services (Maria & Serrat, 2011). By revealing the complexities of these dynamics, the research community gains a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of patient experiences within healthcare settings. This study contributes to the continual expansion of knowledge within the field, acting as a catalyst for future research aimed at unraveling the intricacies of patient-provider interactions and satisfaction dynamics in the evolving phenomena of healthcare services (Hutcheson & Moutinho, 1998).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Indonesia's extensive healthcare system, serving over 240 million people across 13,000 islands, operates under primary healthcare principles with a dual public-private structure overseen by the Ministry of Health. Patient rights are protected by comprehensive legislation, ensuring transparency and entitlements. This study explores patient experiences, contrasting those under the national health insurance program (JKN) with those without coverage. The findings hold significant implications for policymakers, offering insights into healthcare accessibility, choice, and financial responsibilities. For researchers, it contributes to knowledge, while the wider community gains a more informed perspective on healthcare choices and satisfaction levels, potentially influencing improvements in service quality.

Healthcare, a diverse array of services from drug administration to physical examinations, constitutes a complex system involving organizations, individuals, and institutions dedicated to promoting physical health. Acute and planned healthcare categories exist, with planned care allowing more choice. Hospitals, as high-hazard industries, face unique challenges. The healthcare sector's complexity arises from the intricate interplay of human biology, medical technologies, and organizational structures. It can be conceptually divided into providers (hospitals, clinics) and payers (employers, insurance companies). Understanding organizational revisit intention in healthcare is crucial, requiring a holistic approach beyond traditional paradigms, as highlighted by research across disciplines.

Service quality is essential for an organization's sustained success, especially in healthcare, where its interpretation varies among stakeholders. Administrators focus on optimal resource provision, evaluation of medical services, and staff training. Patients emphasize respectful and compassionate treatment, while doctors prioritize delivering high-level expertise and care. The multifaceted nature of service quality in healthcare is explored through three dimensions: hotel service quality, health service quality, and administrative service quality. Health service quality relates to health outcomes and alignment with professional knowledge, while administrative service quality involves support services. Despite similarities with hotels, hospitals face more responsibilities, highlighting the intricate nature of healthcare service quality.

A hospital's reputation in a patient's memory holds significant organizational implications, influencing market entry, service expansion, talent attraction, and brand distinctiveness. Building a positive reputation requires strategic investment, offering a competitive edge that is hard to replicate. Researchers underscore two key components shaping organizational reputation: the functional aspect, involving tangible elements and operational efficiency, and the emotional aspect, concerning psychological dimensions like feelings and attitudes. Organizational reputation is inherently subjective, varying among individuals based on feelings, knowledge, and past experiences. Healthcare organizations must excel in both functional and emotional dimensions to create a positive and enduring reputation. This holistic approach ensures a positive impression in the minds of stakeholders and the wider community.

The debate surrounding customer satisfaction in the service environment centers on whether it is an outcome or a process. Two schools of thought exist: one views satisfaction as an outcome

derived from the consumption experience, while the other sees it as an evaluation of whether the experience met or exceeded expectations. The process-oriented perspective, emphasizing individual perceptions and expectations, seems more fitting in the service sector. Services' unique characteristics and marketing peculiarities necessitate distinguishing between overall satisfaction and transaction-specific satisfaction, often overlooked in literature. Customer satisfaction can be approached through encounter-specific and organizational perspectives. The former focuses on post-choice evaluations of specific purchase occasions, while the latter involves an ongoing assessment of a firm's ability to consistently deliver sought benefits. Regardless of the perspective, customer satisfaction remains crucial for long-term profitability in the hospital environment.

The consumer reutilization process in healthcare, akin to traditional product or service purchases, is intricate and crucial in decision-making. Defined as the selection of alternatives, it involves problem recognition, information search, alternatives evaluation, product choice, and post-purchase evaluation. Healthcare providers are adopting marketing-oriented approaches, considering factors like price transparency, location, staff behavior, tangible aspects, and technology. Healthcare's focus on curative quality distinguishes it, emphasizing not just customer satisfaction but patient well-being. Patient-centeredness, incorporating preferences, enhances healthcare quality, attracting patients and fostering referrals. Understanding this revisit intention process is vital for organizations, aligning with research questions and objectives. Hypotheses are being formulated for structured analysis.

H1a: There is a relationship between reliability and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals

H1b: There is a relationship between assurance and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals

H1c: There is a relationship between tangibility and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals

H1d: There is a relationship between empathy and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals

H1e: There is a relationship between responsiveness and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals

H2: There is a significant positive impact of service quality on patient satisfaction in Indonesian private hospitals

H3: There is a significant positive impact on patient satisfaction on reutilisation of health service in Indonesian private hospitals

H4: There is a significant positive impact of service quality on the reutilisation of health service in Indonesian private hospitals

H5: There is a significant positive impact of service quality on the reutilisation of health service mediated by patient satisfaction in Indonesian private hospitals

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a descriptive study design for a systematic exploration of variable characteristics, providing a foundation for informed decision-making (Azam et al., 2021). The inclusion of cross-sectional studies is justified for their non-contrived setting, and the hypothesis testing approach adds depth to understanding intricate relationships between variables (Azam et

al., 2023). Focusing on five Type C hospitals in Indonesia, the analysis explores factors influencing Bed Occupancy Rates (BOR), emphasizing Hospital Reputation and Service Quality's interplay with Patients' Satisfaction. Methodologically, closed questionnaires with the Likert Scale are used for 250 inpatients aged at least 17 years. Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis reveals that Service Quality and Hospital Reputation significantly impact Patients' Satisfaction, with the latter exerting more influence. Patients' Satisfaction emerges as a central variable, significantly impacting Revisit intention. The research design aligns with a quantitative strategy, providing valuable insights into hospital performance dynamics and factors influencing Patients' Satisfaction and Revisit intention.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The respondent demographic profile offers a comprehensive view of diverse characteristics, revealing potential variations in healthcare perceptions. A balanced gender distribution (53.3% female, 46.7% male) and substantial representation from middle-aged individuals (46.7%) and younger adults (40.0%) provide insights. Marital status (66.7% married, 33.3% single), educational backgrounds, and employment status unveil diverse perspectives. Income distribution (50% earning Regional Minimum Wages) and insurance coverage (53.3% Government Insurance) contribute to understanding financial considerations in healthcare satisfaction. The duration of stays and insurance use further enriches insights. This demographic overview establishes a robust foundation for interpreting study findings.

Reliability, assessed through Cronbach's alpha, yielded a satisfactory value of 0.819, indicating consistency among questionnaire items. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) tested hypotheses related to medical tourists' motivational factors and their impact on destination choice. Three fit indices, such as RMSEA, CFI, and GFI, evaluated model adequacy. Initial values prompted adjustments, achieving necessary fitness parameters (CFI = .967, GFI = .943, CMINDF = 2.915, RMSEA = .052). This confirms the model's robustness in capturing relationships among variables. The study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test its hypotheses, and the overall statistical results indicate a good fit.

During this phase, a comparative analysis was conducted between the revised model and the initial model to elucidate the causal relationships among tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, patient satisfaction, and the reutilization of health services. As outlined in Table 1, the first model demonstrated suboptimal fit in the goodness-of-fit indices [Incremental fit (CFI) = .947, (GFI) = .890; Parsimonious fit (CMINDF) = 4.257; and Absolute fit (RMSEA) = .052)]. However, the revised model showcased marginal improvement [Incremental fit (CFI) = .967, (GFI) = .943; Parsimonious fit (CMINDF) = 2.915; and Absolute fit (RMSEA) = .052)]. Consequently, it was inferred that the revised model was accurate, as it ameliorated all goodness-of-fit indices (GOF) in line with Zainudin's suggestion (2012). A succinct summary of the key findings is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of the Main Findings of the Study

H(x)	Hypothesis	Finding
H1a	There is a relationship between reliability and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H1b	There is a relationship between assurance and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H1c	There is a relationship between tangibility and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H1d	There is a relationship between empathy and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H1e	There is a relationship between responsiveness and service quality in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H2	There is a significant positive impact of service quality on Patient Satisfaction in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H3	There is a significant positive impact of Patient Satisfaction on Reutilisation of Health Service in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H4	There is a significant positive impact of service quality on Reutilisation of Health Service in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported
H5	There is a significant positive impact of service quality on Reutilisation of Health Service mediated by Patient Satisfaction in Indonesian private hospitals	Supported

5. Conclusion and Managerial Implication

This study employed a rigorous approach to data analysis, utilizing the statistical tools SPSS and AMOS, with a specific focus on Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). SEM was chosen for its ability to simultaneously explore multiple relationships between variables, making it well-suited for the nuanced dynamics within the healthcare context. The breakdown of Service Quality into sub-constructs, including Tangible, Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance, and Empathy, aligns with established models like SERVQUAL. This decomposition facilitates a detailed understanding of the distinct dimensions influencing overall service quality.

In recognizing the reciprocal nature of the relationship between service quality and patient responses, Patient Satisfaction was included as a mediating variable. This choice aligns with contemporary healthcare paradigms that emphasize patient-centered care, acknowledging the importance of satisfaction beyond clinical outcomes to encompass the entire patient experience. The study also highlights the essential role of management strategy in Indonesian hospitals, contextualizing the research within the unique healthcare perspective of Indonesia. Effective management is positioned as a linchpin for the long-term viability and success of healthcare institutions, considering cultural, economic, and systemic factors specific to Indonesia.

Emphasizing Patient Satisfaction as a critical factor influencing both immediate choices and long-term revisit decisions underscores the significance of positive patient experiences. This aligns with the evolving understanding that satisfied patients not only make immediate choices but are also

more likely to return, fostering loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. The identification of specific areas for sustained patient satisfaction provides practical insights for hospital administrators, promoting a holistic approach to patient care. Proactively addressing issues related to tangible aspects, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy contributes to positive hospital reputations and financial success.

Positioning patients as an enduring market base emphasizes a customer-centric approach in the contemporary service economy. This recognizes that patient satisfaction is not just a reactive measure but a proactive strategy for maintaining and growing market share in a competitive healthcare environment. The study serves as a roadmap for Indonesian hospitals, providing a strategic guide that emphasizes the interconnectedness of positive perceptions, revisit intentions, and loyalty. This roadmap aids hospitals in navigating the complexities of the healthcare perspective and making informed decisions for long-term success.

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations can be made to enhance the service quality and patient satisfaction in private hospitals in Indonesia. Firstly, there is a need for continuous monitoring and improvement of the tangible aspects of healthcare services, including the physical facilities and amenities. Ensuring a comfortable and well-equipped environment for patients can positively impact their overall satisfaction.

Secondly, responsiveness, which involves timely and effective communication, should be a focal point for hospital management. Implementing efficient communication channels, reducing waiting times, and addressing patient queries promptly can significantly contribute to improved service quality and patient satisfaction.

Reliability, as a crucial dimension, underscores the importance of consistently delivering accurate and dependable healthcare services. Hospitals should prioritize ongoing training for medical professionals and invest in technologies that enhance the reliability of diagnostic and treatment processes.

Assurance, encompassing the trustworthiness and competence of healthcare providers, should be emphasized. Hospitals should focus on building a strong rapport between healthcare professionals and patients, ensuring that patients feel confident in the expertise and care provided.

Empathy, which involves understanding and caring for patients' emotional needs, should be integrated into the training programs for healthcare staff. Developing a culture of empathy within the hospital can enhance the overall patient experience and contribute to higher satisfaction levels. Furthermore, considering the significant impact of service quality on patient satisfaction, hospitals should adopt a holistic approach to quality improvement. This includes regular assessments, feedback mechanisms, and a commitment to addressing identified areas for improvement.

Patient satisfaction, recognized as a key driver of the reutilization of health services, suggests that hospitals should prioritize strategies to enhance patient experiences. This involves personalized care plans, effective communication of treatment processes, and a focus on meeting not only clinical but also emotional and informational needs.

Lastly, recognizing the mediating role of patient satisfaction, hospitals should view it as an ongoing process rather than a one-time outcome. Regular assessments of patient satisfaction,

coupled with strategic interventions based on feedback, can create a positive feedback loop, reinforcing patient loyalty and the likelihood of revisits.

In conclusion, these recommendations aim to guide private hospitals in Indonesia toward a comprehensive and patient-centered approach. By addressing specific dimensions of service quality and patient satisfaction, hospitals can not only meet the immediate needs of patients but also build a sustainable and positive reputation in the competitive healthcare perspective.

The study's dual significance in contributing to increased knowledge and serving as a reference underscores its multifaceted impact. From an academic perspective, the research serves as a foundational building block for future studies in the field of healthcare management, particularly in the context of private hospitals in Indonesia. By employing rigorous statistical tools such as SPSS and AMOS and adopting a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, the study contributes to the methodological discourse within healthcare research. The identification and exploration of sub-constructs under the umbrella of Service Quality, including Tangible, Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance, and Empathy, offer a nuanced understanding that can be leveraged by researchers for further investigation and refinement of theoretical frameworks.

Practically, the study's actionable insights hold substantial value for hospital administrators and policymakers. The emphasis on a structured management process aligns with established best practices in healthcare management. The acknowledgment of specific dimensions such as tangible aspects, responsiveness, reliability, assurance, and empathy provides a targeted roadmap for administrators to enhance service quality. By focusing on these dimensions, hospitals can systematically address critical aspects of patient experience and satisfaction. The recognition of patient satisfaction as a linchpin in service-oriented industries, particularly healthcare, aligns with global trends emphasizing patient-centered care. This insight is crucial for administrators seeking to not only meet immediate patient needs but also foster patient loyalty and positive word-of-mouth, contributing to the hospital's overall reputation.

Furthermore, the study's alignment with a customer-centric approach in the 21st-century service economy signifies the enduring impact of patient satisfaction on the market position of healthcare institutions. The study's identification of specific areas within hospitals that demand attention for sustained patient satisfaction provides practical guidance for administrators. By systematically reviewing patients' feedback, decision-makers can examine critical aspects to determine appropriate decisions and actions, fostering patient satisfaction and retention.

Overall, the study's academic contribution and practical implications reinforce the importance of a structured and strategic approach to healthcare management. By leveraging the insights gained from this research, hospital administrators in Indonesia can navigate the complexities of service delivery, enhance patient satisfaction, and contribute to the long-term viability and success of their healthcare institutions.

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