

**Service Quality Assessment In Outpatient Department (OPD) Of Civil Hospital Nawabshah**

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**Abstract**

Satisfaction surveys are increasingly being suggested as a means to understand the service expectations of patients and performances of hospitals. The purpose of this research is to measure patient's expectations in public hospitals, if a service gap exists between what is expected and what is experienced. Literature recommends that service dimensions exist that can offer an explanation for the service gap. The survey conducted at Civil Hospital Nawabshah, provides useful information on the determinants of patient satisfaction across the five dimensions of service quality (SERVQUAL).

The findings suggest that a service performance gap exists for all the dimensions, specially assurance affected more due to providing poor response from doctors, nurses and other staff in sense of respecting, guiding, curing the patients. The results of the research led to the conclusion that service quality is measurable when a well-established tool is used and questions posed measure well-defined areas of service quality. The results can serve as the basis for service improvement plans on bases of findings. It is suggested that, to conduct the survey repeatedly for checking level of satisfaction of patients of organization and other public and private hospitals to compare the services with each other.

**1.1 Introduction**

A hospital is an organization of health care with dedicated specialized staff and equipment to provide treatment. Hospitals differ from another service organization in terms of their specialty, services offered, and resource availability. These services can be measured with scales from patient's perspective. Therefore, there is a need for research to develop a scale that measures hospital service quality. So for research has been conducted to assess the quality of service provided in outpatient department (OPD) at Civil Hospital Nawabshah. This research will focus on patient perspective how the patient conceives the service. An empirical study of the quality of service will be carried out by providing questionnaire to the patient. Patients will be selected randomly on the basis of the age, gender and level of the education of individual patient. Various SERVQUAL Models has considered for assessing the service quality offered by the healthcare attributed to the outpatients department in Civil Hospital Nawabshah. Dimensions of service quality (SERVQUAL) were originally introduced by Parasuraman, A, Valerie A Ziethaml and Leonard L Berry in 1955 in the area of service quality assessment. SERVQUAL was developed based on the view of the customer's satisfaction. This assessment has been conceptualized as a gap between the customer expectations and deliverance by way of SERVQUAL, from a class of service providers and their evaluation of the performance of particular service providers. In this research efforts were made to analyze the gap between perception and expectations of the patient by using modified SERVQUAL model.

Parameter to assess the service quality provided by the hospital OPD were selected on the basis of modified SERVQUAL Model.

**Tangibles:** Tangibles are the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personals dealing with the patients and way of communication.

**Reliability:** It promises delivery, service provision, problem resolving and cost intensive.

**Responsiveness:** It emphasizes attentiveness and promptness in dealing with customer's requests, questions, complaints and problems shared by the customers.

**Assurance:** Assurance is defined as firm employee's knowledge, awareness and its employee's capacity to inspire in building trust and confidence in the customer.

**Empathy:** Empathy is conveying through personalized services as attitude, behavior, confidence and way of dealing.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

The quality of health care services has remained crucial problem of underdeveloped countries, due to limited resources, bad governance and uneven increase in poor population. There is common interest among researchers and health institutions to provide better quality services to the patients at outpatients department (OPD). To date, and despite the fact that many Asian hospitals instigated many different quality improvement proposals in the last two decades, the question on patient perception about the quality of health services is still limited, especially in the public sector. This research tries to fill this gap by conducting survey by modified SERVQUAL model to measure the healthcare service quality from the point of view of outpatients at Civil Hospital Nawabshah.

## Aim Of Research

The main aim of this research work was to assess service quality provided to the patients of OPD at civil hospital Nawabshah by using SERVQUAL tool.

## Objectives Of Research

Following are the objectives of this research

1. The SERVQUAL Model Questionnaire has been selected and modified keeping in a view of ground realities and specific conditions to conduct research survey at Civil Hospital Nawabshah.
2. Service quality gap has been identified between expectation and perception of the patient by using modified SERVQUAL model at Civil Hospital Nawabshah.
3. Finally suggestions have been proposed based on research findings to overcome Weaknesses and improve service quality in dealing with outpatients.

## Methodology

Service quality seems to be a difficult task to quantify and assess due to intangible nature. The researches which form foundation of many studies in quality require system-based approach such as physical structure, clinical care process and service outcomes. At first, efforts have been made to get the clear outcome based interaction with patients in outpatient department (OPD) at Civil Hospital Nawabshah. Patients have been classified on the bases of sex, age, level of education and severity of illness. At second, service quality models have been studied and modified to assess the quality of the service provided. The SERVQUAL model is well accepted and tested in measuring service quality across service industries and healthcare organizations based on the level of service provided by the hospital. Respondents (outpatients) will be asked to indicate their degree of agreement for the 22 expectation statements based on their assessments of the services provided by the hospital. A seven-point rating scale is used to measure Patient's Expectation for service quality (ESQ) and Hospital's Performance for service quality (PSQ), In this proposed model patients could respond to the survey questionnaire (modified SERVQUAL Model) based on the range from very strongly agree to very strongly disagree (1-7). A total of 200 respondents (outpatients) among all patients who are visiting have been selected as per sample requirement. At third a gap between patient expectation and perception delivered by the hospital has been analyzed. Finally suggestions has been proposed to improve service quality in outpatient's department (OPD) at Civil Hospital Nawabshah.

## 5.1 Comparison Patients Expectations Against Related Studies

The comparison of data obtained in conducted survey with other related papers [11], the Mean and SD and Cronbach's alpha concern with performance of OPD as shown in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 Comparison OPD'S Performance against Related Studies**

SERVEQUAL	Comparison against related papers					
	Mean		SD		Cronbach's alpha	
	Obtained	B.S et al [28]	Obtained	B.S et al [28]	Obtained	B.S et al [28]
Tangible	3.88	2.2	1.28	4.55	0.778	0.91
Reliability	2.70	2.8	1.72	3.17	0.777	0.94
Responsiveness	2.56	1.8	1.68	6.34	0.782	0.86
Assurance	2.45	2.1	1.70	4.55	0.790	0.97
Empathy	2.66	2.2	1.74	8.63	0.745	0.89

## 6.1 Conclusion

This research work based on three objectives, to measure the perceived service quality and patient's satisfaction level in public hospitals; as per first objective, the study conducted and questionnaire base five dimensional SERVQUAL model was selected and modified to measure service quality gaps, for the second objective, the data has been collected by conducting interviews from visiting patients at outdoor patient department (OPD) in civil Hospital for data collection and analyses, as per third objective, the suggestions have been proposed for each findings is given below, further the quality of services has seen negative gaps between patient's expectations and OPD's performance in all of dimensions. Specially, Assurance gap received highest Disagree of dissatisfaction level by 45% respondents, so the following interventions areas for immediate attention.

**Gap 1:** The first one is Assurance, this dimension has been completely failed to attain satisfaction score from respondents, as the patients found insecure privacy, poor treatment and low grade respectful atmosphere, naturally the hopes were at high level but the OPD's management services were at bottom level.

**Recommendation:** For improving the Assurance indicators, hospital management must constitute some strong policies to provide check-up privacy, quality treatment and hospitality.

**Gap 2:** The second gap is Empathy, the expectations remain high from this dimension, in this, the hospital management have failed to serve required nursing attention, listening and curing the medical problems properly.

**Recommendation:** In this, the hospital management have to utilize its all the resources to provide high quality services, like the special attention of nursing staff to patients in short possible timings, listening and curing the medical problems professionally.

**Gap 3:** The third Gap is Responsiveness, the patient's seen average to assign score for it, somehow expectation still little bit high from performance, because of slow patient's admitting procedures, lack of early and continuous visiting the patient, nursing and other staff may not guide and help patients properly.

**Recommendation:** The hospital's administration bring enhancements in patient's admitting procedures, make early and constant visiting the patient, nursing and other staff must guide and help patients professionally.

**Gap 4:** The Fourth gap is Reliability. In this, the respondents mostly expecting high that, the doctors to make regular rounds and the nursing staff to check on their condition regularly, while the performance again seen fail to capture patient's high attention.

**Recommendation:** In this, the doctors and other staff must make regular rounds to check on patient's condition regularly

**Gap 5:** The Tangibles were well-defined that the most of respondents (patients) expected hospital to be clean and tidy and equipment must work properly so the reliability seen good as per expectation view but found not enough good in performance

**Recommendation:** The management keep watching the cleaning and technical staff via latest CCTV camera to ensure the cleaning and proper working of equipment.

## 6.2 Suggestions For Future Work

- It is suggested that, to conduct the survey repeatedly for checking level of satisfaction of patients.
- Also, conduct survey of other public hospitals to compare the services with each other.
- Moreover, conduct survey of private sector hospitals to compare the services with public sector hospitals.
- SERVQUAL survey study is very important for Future improvements of any public or private sector organization.
- SERVQUAL survey study for measuring Patient satisfaction level, should be conducted regularly of all hospitals at least twice a year.
- It will be useful for significant the issues of patients and improving the hospital services quality as per on wishes of patients for earning good name and status for the organisation.

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