

Service Quality in Practice: A Comprehensive Assessment of SERVQUAL Dimensions and Internal Competence at Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Banjarbaru

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ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction has emerged as a critical indicator for evaluating hospital service performance, particularly in the inpatient care setting, which is characterized by intensive, personalized, and prolonged interactions. Previous research has extensively examined the relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction using the SERVQUAL model, which encompasses five primary dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. However, the majority of these studies tend to emphasize patient perceptions while neglecting the strategic role of internal organizational competencies such as employee training. This research addresses this gap by exploring the contribution of training programs to patients' perceptions of service quality. This study adopts a quantitative approach using a survey design, involving 160 inpatients at Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Banjarbaru. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire based on a Likert scale and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), reinforced by Spearman correlation tests and Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA). The results indicate that all dimensions of service quality significantly influence patient satisfaction. Among these, responsiveness emerged as the most influential factor, followed by empathy and assurance. Although employee training also demonstrated a statistically significant impact, its influence was relatively moderate. This suggests that training outcomes must be internalized into consistent and standardized service behavior to yield tangible benefits. The findings highlight the need for hospitals to focus not only on service outputs but also on cultivating an organizational learning system that prioritizes patient-centered experiences.

Keywords: Service Quality, Patient Satisfaction, SERVQUAL, Healthcare Service Management

1. INTRODUCTION

Healthcare service quality serves as a fundamental component in building trust and enhancing patient satisfaction, especially in the context of inpatient services, which demand a multidisciplinary and intensive approach. In an increasingly competitive healthcare environment, hospitals are expected not only to meet high medical standards but also to address patients' subjective expectations and experiences. Inpatient care necessitates a seamless integration of medical expertise, efficient service systems, and physical facilities that support patient comfort and safety. In this regard, patients' perceptions of service quality are vital indicators for evaluating the overall performance of healthcare institutions. The SERVQUAL model comprising five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles is widely utilized as a framework for assessing service quality from the perspective of the patient.

Nevertheless, prior studies have often overlooked the importance of employee training as a crucial supporting factor in maintaining consistent service quality. Structured training for healthcare personnel plays a pivotal role in ensuring not only technical professionalism but also empathetic and patient-oriented service delivery. Targeted training programs have been shown to enhance patient experiences and foster a patient centric care environment. For instance, a study by Alghamdi et al. (2022) demonstrated that a service excellence training program significantly improved frontline clinical staff's knowledge, perception, and attitude toward patient experience, leading to enhance patient satisfaction scores. Similarly research by Boudreaux et al. (2017) highlighted that value based service education effectively motivated front line staff, improved service quality, and created value in healthcare settings.

Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by incorporating the employee training variable into the SERVQUAL model to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing inpatient satisfaction.

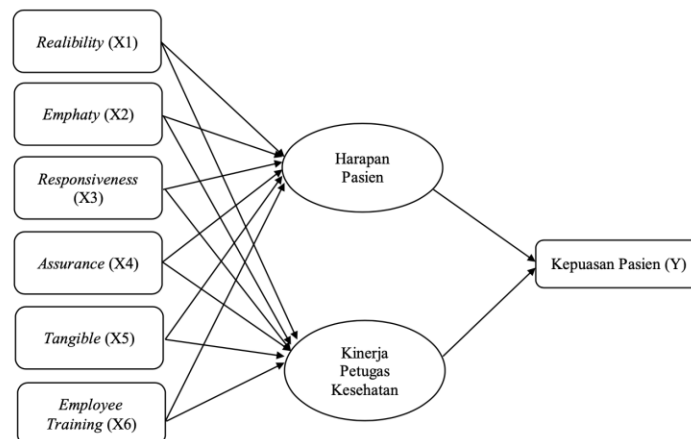


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Banjarbaru was selected as the research site, representing a growing private hospital in an urban Indonesian setting. By examining the relationship between service quality dimensions and patient satisfaction using a quantitative and multivariate approach, this research seeks to offer both theoretical and practical contributions to healthcare service management and the continuous improvement of hospital service quality.

Employee training is not merely an administrative function but a strategic pillar in managing healthcare service quality. Dong et al. (2020) demonstrated that medical staff engagement, which can be enhanced through structured training programs, positively correlates with the quality of nursing care. Similarly, Alghamdi et al. (2022) emphasized that patient-experience-centered training improves staff competencies in addressing both emotional and clinical needs of patients. These findings suggest that investments in training focused on empathy, communication, and procedural standards directly shape patients' perceptions of service quality. Furthermore, value-based training approaches have proven effective in fostering consistent service behavior. Boudreaux et al. (2017) highlighted that such training not only enhances staff motivation but also strengthens the quality of patient-provider interactions. Additionally, a review by Smith et al. (2021) indicated that training programs embedded in patient safety culture contribute significantly to trust and safety in care delivery. These insights reinforce the role of employee training as an essential element of a hospital's adaptive and sustainable quality system.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between service quality dimensions and inpatient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Banjarbaru. The primary focus was to assess the alignment between patients' expectations and their perceptions of service performance across six key variables: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles, and employee training.

A structured questionnaire, developed based on the SERVQUAL framework, was distributed to 160 inpatients who had completed their treatment and were considered capable of providing objective evaluations. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, with the inclusion criteria being patients ready for discharge.

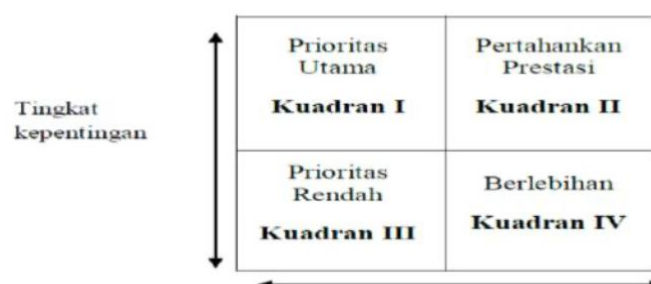


Figure 2. Cartesius Diagram

Data were gathered using a Likert scale, and the instruments underwent validity and reliability testing prior to deployment. Data analysis techniques included descriptive statistics, Spearman Rank correlation tests, Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate the simultaneous strength of relationships among variables. This comprehensive methodological approach provides insights into patients' perceptions of service quality and identifies the most influential factors impacting inpatient satisfaction in the context of a relatively new private hospital in Indonesia.

The Application of Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) in this study offers a systematic framework for evaluating patient's perceptions of the quality of service received. This Method enables the identification of service attributes deemed crucial by patients yet inadequately performed by the hospital. Izadi et al.(2017) demonstrated that IPA is effective in identifying gaps between patient expectations and perceptions, serving as a basis for service improvement. Furthermore, research by Purba et al.(2023) emphasizes that IPA assists hospital management in setting priorities for quality improvement based on patient determined priority scales. Therefore, the integration of IPA in this research adds significant value by offering a holistic understanding of patient expectations perceived service delivery.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study offer empirical evidence of the relationship between service quality dimensions and inpatient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Banjarbaru. Using the SERVQUAL framework, six main variables were analyzed: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles, and employee training. Data processing was conducted using SEM, supported by Spearman Rank correlation and Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to ensure robust statistical validity and managerial interpretation. Initial findings reveal a high level of congruence between patient expectations and perceived service performance. The average conformity level (Tki) was recorded at 98%, indicating that the hospital has consistently met patients' expectations. This reflects the effectiveness of the hospital's service implementation and the positive impact of its quality policies and accreditation efforts.

The SEM model results demonstrate that all five core SERVQUAL dimensions reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles positively and significantly affect patient satisfaction, with t-values exceeding the 1.96 significance threshold. Responsiveness was found to be the most dominant factor ($t = 4.51$), emphasizing that the speed and accuracy of staff responses are crucial in delivering satisfactory inpatient experiences. This aligns with existing literature, which underscores responsiveness as a foundational element of patient trust and comfort, particularly in vulnerable inpatient scenarios. Empathy also exhibited a strong and significant influence ($t = 2.89$), indicating that personalized attention and concern for each patient's unique needs contribute substantially to overall satisfaction. Similarly, reliability ($t = 2.46$) and assurance ($t = 2.65$) validated the importance of service consistency and confidence in the medical team's competence. Tangibles, including cleanliness, physical facilities, and the hospital's overall appearance, also showed a significant effect ($t = 3.21$), underscoring the relevance of the physical environment in supporting comfort and conveying professionalism.

In contrast to other dimensions, the employee training variable yielded noteworthy insights. Although it showed a statistically significant relationship ($t = 2.13$), its influence was relatively less pronounced. This suggests that while training is essential for enhancing competence and consistency, its impact on satisfaction is contingent on the extent to which training outcomes are manifested in tangible service behaviors. Consequently, hospital management must not only provide regular training but also ensure that its outcomes are internalized and reflected in daily service practices.

Supporting the SEM results, Spearman Rank correlation analysis also confirmed significant positive correlations between all service quality dimensions and patient satisfaction. Further IPA revealed that certain service attributes fall into the "priority for improvement" quadrant areas with high importance but relatively lower performance. For instance, despite responsiveness performing well across both axes, slight performance gaps in assurance and empathy highlight the need for continuous quality improvement. The conceptual model used in this study demonstrated a strong model fit based on goodness-of-fit indicators. Values such as CFI (0.964), TLI (0.987), and RMSEA (0.047) fall within recommended thresholds, confirming the theoretical model's suitability for representing empirical data and supporting further inferential conclusions.

Table 1. Goodness Of Fit Test Full Model

Goodness of Fit	Cut Off Value	Result	Evaluation
Chi-Square (df=27)	Kecil (<40.113)	24.874	Good
Probability	≥ 0.05	0.015	Good

RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.047	Good
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.93	Good
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.952	Good
CMIN/DF	≤ 2.00	1.143	Good
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.987	Good
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.964	Good

Overall, this study reinforces the applicability of the SERVQUAL model in the hospital service context and provides practical insights for healthcare managers, particularly in emerging private hospitals in Indonesia. The findings stress the importance of a strategic focus on enhancing responsiveness, empathy, and visibly integrating staff training into patient-facing service delivery. These measures are instrumental in building sustained patient trust and loyalty.

Moreover, the analysis indicates that patients' perceptions of assurance are closely tied to the professionalism and communication abilities of medical personnel in providing a sense of security and confidence. While medical staff may meet clinical standards, patients evaluate service quality through emotional and psychological dimension such as feeling reassured during explanations about diagnoses or treatment. This suggests that non-physical service elements, particularly those involving attitudes and information delivery, are as crucial as clinical competence in shaping overall quality perceptions. Additionally, the influence of tangibles highlights the significance of the hospital's visual and physical environment. Clean patient rooms, well-maintained facilities, and accessible infrastructure contribute to a professional image and enhance patient comfort. Although not directly linked to medical procedures, these elements affect the hospital's service image and should be integrated into a holistic quality strategy that encompasses technical, emotional, and sensory aspects at every service touchpoint.

While employee training may not be the most dominant variable affecting patient satisfaction, its role remains significant. Structured and continuous training programs contribute to improved healthcare provider-patient interactions, particularly in communication, procedural accuracy, and professional demeanor. However, training effectiveness hinges not only on its implementation but also on how well its outcomes are internalized and reflected in day-to-day service. Hospitals should develop monitoring and evaluation systems that assess not just administrative success but also behavioral changes that directly impact patient experience. Embedding training into an adaptive and learning-oriented organizational culture will enhance service quality consistency and responsiveness.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to thoroughly investigate the influence of service quality dimensions on inpatient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Banjarbaru by adopting the SERVQUAL model, encompassing reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, with the addition of employee training as a critical variable. Notably, employee training also demonstrated a significant, albeit less dominant, effect. This implies that training is an essential supporting factor in maintaining consistent service quality. However, for training to effectively enhance patient satisfaction, it must be application-oriented and integrated into the hospital's service standards. Furthermore, the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) provided strategic insights into areas requiring immediate improvement, especially service elements deemed important by patients but exhibiting underperformance.

In sum, this research contributes theoretically by extending the SERVQUAL model through the inclusion of training as a relevant factor in healthcare services. Practically, the findings offer valuable guidance for hospital management in designing sustainable, patient-focused service quality improvement strategies. By enhancing staff responsiveness, emphasizing empathy and assurance, and optimizing training outcomes, hospitals can establish adaptive, high-quality, and competitive healthcare services that meet the evolving demands of contemporary patients.

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