

Research Article

A Conceptual Model Framework: The Mediating Role of Service Quality Linking Patient Experience Management and Patient Satisfaction in Healthcare Services

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Abstract: **Introduction:** Service quality plays an important role in shaping patient experience and satisfaction in healthcare service delivery. There has been increasing pressure on healthcare management to face high competition with the increase in patient flow and intensity, where the Healthcare sector always assist to maintain optimal health of people and improving the quality of life. **Purpose:** This study aims to develop a conceptual model framework that examines the relationship between Patient Experience Management and patient satisfaction within healthcare services through service quality. While numerous studies have explored patient satisfaction and experience, there remains a need to integrate these concepts within a unified framework. **Design:** study grounded in an extensive literature review, adopts a conceptual approach on Patient Experience, Service-quality, Patient satisfaction and Healthcare quality care aspects. **Findings:** A well-structured conceptual model suggests that effective patient experience management positively influences patient satisfaction both directly and indirectly through service quality as a mediating variable. **Conclusion:** Additionally, this study contributes theoretically actionable insights for healthcare providers by managing multiple touchpoints of Patient experience to enhance patient satisfaction. It also emphasizes the importance of improving various dimensions of service quality to improve organizational excellence and achieve better patient outcomes. **Originality/Value:** This study contributes to the healthcare sector by offering a novel conceptual model that integrates service quality with patient experience management and patient satisfaction. It also provides a foundation for future empirical research to validate the proposed relationships.

Keywords: Service Quality, Patient Experience Management, Patient Satisfaction, Healthcare services, Healthcare Quality care, Conceptual Framework.

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INTRODUCTION

Health is a fundamental right of every human being and is considered a value (Cosma et al., 2020). The healthcare industry continues to evolve under conditions of intense competition in approaching health prevention, protection, and promotion in the healthcare sector (Purcarea, 2016). Continuous Evaluation of Healthcare facilities and healthcare provisions is essential, which influences quality improvement in medical services. Measuring the quality and performance of health care is a major challenge in improving the efficiency of a health system (Fernandes et al., 2019). The Healthcare sector always assist to maintain optimal health of people and improving the quality of life. The consequences of this situation can affect the hospital's ability to provide safe and quality services for patients (Sediawan et al., 2023).

Continuous Evaluation of Healthcare facilities and healthcare provisions is essential, which influences quality improvement in medical services. This study offers a foundational reference model framework with actionable insights for clinicians, healthcare managers and decision-makers committed to improving service quality care in the healthcare system. Patients who have experienced hospitalization can offer unique insights into the quality of care, which can be used for improvement (Beattie et al., 2015). Thus, a patient refers to a person suffering from a disease before and after they begin receiving or are

Statement of Problem

What are the various service quality dimensions that influence patient experience and patient satisfaction in hospitals?
Is there a significant relationship between service Quality, patient experience management and patient satisfaction?

3. Research Framework

3.1 Aim:

The aim of this study is,

- To examine the wider concept of Service Quality, Patient Experience Management and Patient Satisfaction
- To develop a comprehensive conceptual model framework based on the literature review for linking Patient Experience Management and patient satisfaction within healthcare, with Service Quality as a Mediating Mechanism

Identify research gaps from existing literature review and future directions

3.2 Research Gap

- Limited integration of Patient Experience Management, Service Quality, and Patient Satisfaction into a single conceptual framework
- Insufficient exploration of service quality as a mediating variable
- Lack of conceptual studies explaining the underlying mechanism linking PEM to patient satisfaction

3.3 Research Objectives

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To develop a conceptual model that explains the relationship between Patient Experience Management and Patient Satisfaction in healthcare services through the mediating role of Service Quality.
- To explore the relationship between Patient Experience Management and patient satisfaction in healthcare services.
- To examine the role of Service quality as a mediating variable between patient experience management and patient satisfaction

3.4 Research Design

This study adopts a conceptual/literature-review-based research design to analyze existing studies on Service Quality, patient experience management and patient satisfaction.

3.5 Data Collection

Secondary data were collected from different sources, as listed below:

- Research papers
- Reports
- Textbooks
- Published materials
- Magazines and newspapers

LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Patient

S. A. Cosma, M. Bota, C. Fleşeriu, C. Morgovan, M. Văleanu, and D. Cosma (2020) suggested that patients, just like any individual customer, are unique because of their differing diseases and treatments. Thus, a patient refers to a person suffering from a disease before and after they begin receiving or are registered to receive medical Treatment (Oben, 2020).

4.2 Concept of “patient experience management”

There is no longer a question that patient experience matters in healthcare today (Wolf, 2014). The patient experience is a multidimensional, multifaceted, and intimately connected concept with several subsections (Oben, 2020). Patient experience has become a critical differentiator for healthcare organizations, and it will only grow in importance as transparency and consumerism dominate the healthcare landscape (Guler, 2017).

Patients judge the service they have received by their experience, so providing a quality patient experience is vital (Negus & Howat, 2010). As a patient’s experience can only be fully understood by each patient through a set of unique feelings, hospitals must engage with and interact with patients to improve care quality (Cosma et al., 2020).

4.3 Concept of “patient satisfaction”

The field of patient satisfaction has been extensively studied, with various authors contributing to its understanding and development. Patient satisfaction combined with other aspects of care, such as safety, quality, and clinical effectiveness, informs the overall patient experience (Jha et al., 2017). Therefore, measuring patient satisfaction with healthcare service quality represents a significant element of a healthcare system’s (HS) overall evaluation, and it is the starting point for creating policies in national healthcare (Cosma et al., 2020). Patient satisfaction is the gap between patient expectations and experience (Beattie et al., 2015).

4.4 Concept of “Service Quality”

Based on earlier studies and an extant literature review, it is evident that a larger number of research studies are undertaken to measure service quality and the measurement of patient satisfaction in a hospital using the SERVQUAL model, SERVPREF model, both internationally and in the context of Indian Hospitals. In the healthcare service design process, consideration of patients’ experience is a priority since the improvement of care quality can be achieved only through an understanding of patients’ requirements (Cosma et al., 2020). In developing and underdeveloped parts of the world, the experience of patients has been used limitedly when assessing the quality of healthcare due to lesser importance on patient-centered care (Barnali & Basu, 2020). Lack of expertise in Quality Improvement and confidence in interpreting patient experience data effectively may continue to be a barrier to a successful shift towards a more patient-centered healthcare service (Gleeson et al., 2016). There is an increasing support for the use of patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient-reported experience measures (PREMs) in measuring the quality of care across all areas and to guide service improvement (Kingsley & Patel, 2017).

4.5 Relationship Between Patient's Experience and Patient's Satisfaction

In the healthcare service design process, consideration of patients’ experience is a priority since the improvement of care quality can be achieved only through an understanding of patients’ requirements (Lee, 2019).

Patient satisfaction and experience are the terms that are frequently used interchangeably (Sediawan et al., 2023). Patient experience is one important measure of the quality of health care, and the use of patient-reported experience measures (PREMs) is recommended (Fernandes et al., 2019). Patient experience and patient satisfaction, the two recognized indicators for assessing the quality of healthcare, are related but distinct concepts (Kumah, 2017).

Thus, patients' experiences represent a rich source of invaluable information for designing effective healthcare services (Cosma et al., 2020). Building trust between the patient and healthcare provider can directly improve patient experience (Jha et al., 2017). Despite its importance, the patient experience lacks a standardized definition, suggesting a need for consensus in future research (Beattie et al., 2015).

Patients’ experience of a healthcare service is crucial to healthcare service design because of its effect on care quality and patient satisfaction through value cocreation (Lee, 2019).

Research Insights

The SERVQUAL model, developed to measure service quality across five dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—has been extensively applied in healthcare research as a mediating variable.

Some empirical studies confirm the continued relevance of the SERVQUAL model in assessing healthcare service quality.

Table 1 represents details of empirical studies that confirm the continued relevance of the SERVQUAL model

Author(s) & Year	Year	Theme	Key Insight
Farrokhi et al. (2026) [17]	2026	SERVQUAL Model	SERVQUAL model is widely used to measure quality gaps and the link between service quality and patient satisfaction
Alfatafta et al. (2025) [18]	2025	SERVQUAL Model	Tested service Quality as a mediating variable. Service quality significantly impacts satisfaction - Service quality strongly influences patient experience & loyalty
Rahmatia et al. (2025) [19]	2025	SERVQUAL Model	Studied SERVQUAL Model dimensions, and All 5 SERVQUAL dimensions significantly influence satisfaction
Cai et al. (2025) [20]	2025	SERVQUAL Model	SERVQUAL dimensions used to measure satisfaction outcomes confirm that Service quality helps evaluate hospital performance
Singh and Sidhu	2023	SERVQUAL	SERVQUAL Model declared Gap between

(2023) [21]		Model	expectations & perceptions affects satisfaction
Alumran et al. (2021) [22]	2021	SERVQUAL Model	Compare the service quality of public and private hospitals
Haming et al. (2019) [35]	2019	SERVQUAL Model	SERVQUAL is effective for evaluating patient satisfaction
Javed et al. (2019) [24]	2019	SERVQUAL Model	SERVQUAL Model to measure the quality of services rendered by patients from two different areas, which are Private Hospitals and Public Hospitals
Alijanzadeh et al. (2016) [25]	2016	SERVQUAL Model	Evaluated the comprehensive relationship between patient satisfaction and five dimensions of health care service quality
Ramez, (2012) [11]	2012	SERVQUAL Model	The relationship between service quality dimensions and the overall patient satisfaction, and analyzing behavioral intention of patients
Yesilada & Direktör, (2010) [26]	2010	SERVQUAL Model	Identify the service quality dimensions that play an important role in patient satisfaction
Andaleeb, (2000) [27]	2000	SERVQUAL Model	measured the different levels of satisfaction
Lee (2019) [3]	2019	Service Design	Patient experience is central to healthcare service design
Gleeson et al. (2016) [14]	2016	Quality Improvement	Highlighted attention required the use of experience data for improving healthcare practices
Oben (2020) [7]	2020	Conceptual Understanding	Highlighted the need for a clear understanding of patient experience
Kumah (2017) [16]	2017	Conceptual Distinction	Differentiated patient experience and patient satisfaction
Ross & Venkatesh (2016) [28]	2016	Patient Loyalty	Positive experience enhances patient loyalty
Ahmed et al. (2014) [29]	2014	Healthcare Quality	Established importance of patient experience in quality assessment
Sediawan et al. (2023) [5]	2023	Service Quality	Identified dimensions reflecting patient experience in healthcare
Wolf, (2014) [12]	2014	Importance of PEM	Patient experience remains a viable, respected and highly embraced part of the healthcare conversation
Bull (2021) [29]	2021	Concept of PEM and PS	'patient satisfaction' and 'patient experience' are not interchangeable concepts

Source: Author's Own Elaboration

Figure 1 illustrates the Key Insights from the Literature Review



Source: Author's Own Elaboration

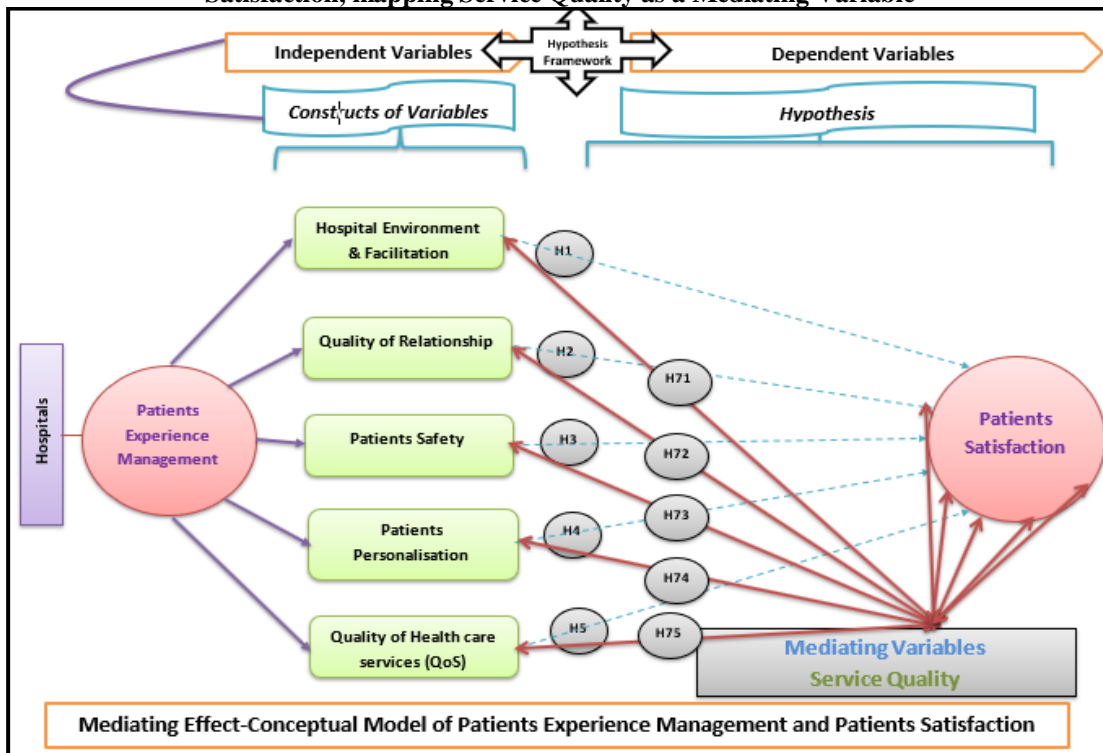
Figure 2 illustrates the Research Model, which represents details of the constructs of the variables



Source: Author's Own Elaboration

Theoretical Foundation

Figure 3 illustrates the Conceptual Model of Impact of Patients Experience Management and Patients Satisfaction, mapping Service Quality as a Mediating Variable



Source: Author's Own Elaboration

Conceptual Model Development

- PEM = Independent Variable
- Service Quality = Mediator
- Patient Satisfaction = Dependent Variable

Propositions

- P1: Patient Experience Management has a significant positive effect on patient satisfaction in the healthcare sector
- P2: Patient Experience Management has a significant positive effect on Service Quality in the healthcare sector
- P3: Service Quality has a significant positive effect on Patient Satisfaction in the Healthcare Sector
- P4: Service Quality mediates the relationship between Patient Experience Management and Patient Satisfaction

DISCUSSION

Statement of Principal Findings

This study investigates how hospital-provided service quality dimensions improve the patient experience across multiple touchpoints in the context of Patient experience management and Patient satisfaction. The findings confirm that Patient Experience Management is a strategic capability that enhances patient satisfaction.

Prior Studies (Gleeson et al., 2016) improvement in healthcare from a patient experience perspective is an emergent field with further research needed to develop a comprehensive body of evidence to suggest what approaches are most effective. It would be necessary to conduct an empirical study to confirm the causal relationships among the various components of quality healthcare delivery (Lee, 2019).

Improving and sustaining the quality of hospital care is an international challenge. Patient experience data can be used to target improvement and research (Beattie et al., 2015).

The suggested model in the study also recommends the relationship between patient experience and patient satisfaction, the relationship between patient experience and service quality, the relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction and the mediating impact of service quality in relation to patient experience and patient satisfaction. This aligns with previous research (Alfatafta et al., 2025 and Rahmatia et al., 2025). Tested service Quality as a mediating variable and SERVQUAL Model dimensions, which significantly influence satisfaction.

Strengths and weaknesses of the study in relation to other studies

Strengths of the study:

Patient experiential quality is an important determinant of patient satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, thus emphasizing the importance of patient experience as a decision-making variable (Sediawan et al., 2023). There are various authors (Hanggiasyifa, 2020) studied the SERVQUAL model to measure quality gaps, and the link between service quality and patient satisfaction, but a limited number of authors have studied the relationship and impact between these two different but interconnected concepts, as the author (Bull, 2021) supported that patient satisfaction and patient experience are not interchangeable concepts, but it is interrelated concepts.

Not enough studies are undertaken to compare the patients' satisfaction and patient experience with the mediating impact of service quality.

Limitations of the study:

This study is conceptual in nature and is based on an extensive review of existing literature; therefore, it has certain inherent limitations:

Secondary Data: The findings are derived from secondary sources and do not involve primary empirical data, which may limit the ability to validate the proposed relationships in real-world healthcare settings.

Publication Bias: The study relies on previously published research, which may be subject to publication bias and variations in research design, context, and methodology across studies.

Meaning of the study:

In developing and underdeveloped parts of the world, the experience of patients has been used limitedly when assessing the quality of healthcare due to lesser importance on patient-centered care (Barnali & Basu, 2020). There are huge studies regarding service quality, patient satisfaction and patients' experiences abroad. But this major issue is not yet effectively addressed in our country. In the Indian context, very few empirical studies are undertaken to study the service quality and patient satisfaction.

This study, therefore, focuses on the development of a fresh conceptual model showing the relationship between different variables of patients' experience, service quality dimensions (Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and

Empathy), and aims to identify the factors associated with patient satisfaction.

Unanswered questions

There are contextual gaps in this field of study, which focuses on measuring patient satisfaction based on different variables of patients' experience with the mediating impact of service quality dimensions in Healthcare. Moreover, this study is unique in the sense that it provides a conceptual model that evaluates patients' satisfaction by evaluating various dimensions of patient experience from patient perspectives.

Future research (broader aspects)

This section describes the potential of further research in various papers. Every research has its own limitations, owing to different constraints. Each research article includes a note about these limitations.

Table 2 represents details of future research (broader aspects)

Author(s) & Year	Focus Area	Future Research Direction
Lee (2019) [3]	Service Design	Further scope to explore relationships among care quality, satisfaction, and value co-creation
Gleeson et al. (2016) [14]	Quality Improvement	Limited studies; need more research on use of experience data in practice
Ramez (2012) [11]	Measurement Tools	Need development of tools to measure experience and satisfaction
Kingsley & Patel (2017) [15]	Measurement Tools	Need validated tools for experience measurement
Wolf & Jason (2014) [12]	Conceptual Clarity	Need for a clear definition of patient experience and satisfaction
Oben (2020) [7]	Conceptual Framework	Need standardized approach to measure patient experience
Bull (2021) [29]	Conceptual Distinction	Shift needed from satisfaction to experience-based measures
Cosma et al. (2020) [1]	Patient Satisfaction	Requires more in-depth and context-specific studies
Beattie et al. (2015) [6]	Instrument Development	Need for new and improved measurement instruments
Kumah (2017) [16]	Framework Development	Scope to refine models distinguishing experience and satisfaction
Birkelien (2017) [14]	Expectation Gap	Need to bridge gap between experience and expectations

Source: Author's Own Elaboration

Managerial Implications

As anticipated, the study likely emphasizes the importance of excellent care in improving patients' overall experience, service quality, and satisfaction within the healthcare system. The findings of this study offer several significant theoretical and practical implications for Policy-makers, healthcare service delivery, patient relationship management, and strategic planning in hospitals, particularly within the healthcare sector. The fresh conceptual model showcases various variables framed for patient experience that directly impact patient satisfaction, with service quality dimensions serving as a mediating role. When healthcare providers prioritize these small yet meaningful details and requirements of the patient, they foster a sense of connection and trust that makes patients feel valued and understood and indirectly increases patient satisfaction. Creating a patient-focused organizational culture and focus on service quality dimensions can significantly improve interaction quality and, in turn, patient satisfaction. This not only enhances satisfaction but can also lead to better health outcomes.

The findings demonstrate that patient experience is crucial in enhancing patient satisfaction and delivering better service quality. This study highlights the need for a truly patient-centric approach, where patient experience, service quality and patient satisfaction are not abstract concepts but measurable and strategically important components. Hospitals should establish systems to regularly monitor patient satisfaction by using different suggested variables, using Service quality dimensions as a core input for continuous quality improvement and decision-making. Lastly, this study is helpful for planners and policy-makers in making appropriate policies to improve the situation prevailing in hospitals. Hospital Administration and Ethical Committee of the hospitals are to implement those policies in the most efficient way possible. The Healthcare Quality and Accreditation Bodies should review the existing policy and framework for fresh amendments

CONCLUSION

This study provides a comprehensive framework for future empirical research and practical implementation. Linking Patient Experience Management and Patient Satisfaction in Healthcare Services with Service Quality as a Mediating Variable is the topic of this study. According to the article, there are a number of Variables available to measure Patient Experience. This variable can be further divided into two parts. The first part evaluates the main Constructs covering various variables of patients' experience that influence patients' level of satisfaction in the healthcare system. It contains the basic information for the research, such as: Evaluation of Hospital Environment and Facilitation, Evaluation of Quality of Relationship, Evaluation of Patients Safety, Evaluation of Patients Personalisation and Evaluation of Quality of Health care services (QoS). The second part has other questions used to create the Service Quality Dimensions (Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy) as a mediating factor, aiming to identify the factors associated with patient satisfaction.

Furthermore, there are empirical studies on models to measure patients' satisfaction level routed through service delivery and patients' preferences. There is a noticeable lack of context-specific research that systematically examines how different components of patient experience are managed within hospitals and how these components relate to service quality dimensions and influence patients' overall satisfaction. It will be helpful for policymakers and the administration of hospitals to provide effective patient-centered care services. Prior research largely examines individual determinants of patient satisfaction, but fails to capture the holistic and multidimensional nature of patient experience, service quality and patient satisfaction.

Ethics Approval

This study is based entirely on a conceptual analysis and review of existing literature. It does not involve any primary data collection from human participants, patients, or animals. Therefore, ethical approval from an institutional review board or ethics committee was not required. All sources of information used in this study have been appropriately cited and referenced to ensure academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

Author Contributions

Mr Jignesh H. Rana and Dr Belur O. Baxi contributed to the conceptualization, supervision, and critical revision of the manuscript and solely responsible for the conceptualisation, literature review, analysis, and writing of the manuscript and approved the final version.. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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Originality/value

The insights into various aspects of patients' experiences and patient satisfaction were explored in general to achieve a better, deeper understanding. The outcomes of the study may form a basis for deciding the direction of future research.

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