



FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PATIENT SATISFACTION TOWARDS OUT PATIENT DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

Patient satisfaction is considered one of the key performance indices in evaluating quality of health services is patient satisfaction, more so in OPD, because it is the first contact point between patients and hospitals. This study aims to identify and analyse the key factors associated with patient satisfaction in OPD services.

The study emphasises factors like waiting time, doctor-patient communication, personnel behaviour, cleanliness and availability of amenities. A well-structured questionnaire was used to gather primary data from patients receiving OPD care. Simple statistical techniques, such as percentage analysis and graphical depiction, were used to analyse the data.

The study's conclusions show that although most patients are usually happy with the services they receive, a few elements have a big impact on their entire experience. Among these, waiting time and communication emerged as the most critical factors affecting satisfaction levels. Language barriers were also found to impact patient understanding and interaction with healthcare providers.

The study highlights the importance of improving operational efficiency, enhancing communication skills, and providing patient-centred services. Lastly, Healthcare organisations can also enhance the quality of OPD services and guarantee a better patient experience by implementing the suggestions made in this research.

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector plays a fundamental role in improving the quality of life and ensuring the overall well-being of individuals and society. Hospitals act as primary centres of healthcare delivery, providing preventive, diagnostic, and curative services to patients. Among the various departments, the Outpatient Department (OPD) serves as the first and most frequent point of interaction between patients and healthcare providers. It is the unit where patients seek consultation, diagnosis, routine check-ups, and follow-up care without requiring hospital admission. Due to the high volume of patients visiting daily, the efficiency and organisation of OPD services significantly influence the overall performance of hospitals in terms of service delivery, accessibility, and patient care. A well-functioning OPD ensures timely treatment, reduces patient burden, and enhances trust in the healthcare system (World Health Organisation, 2021). Patient satisfaction has become a crucial indicator of healthcare quality, particularly in OPD settings where direct interaction between patients and healthcare providers is continuous and frequent. The experience of patients begins from the moment they enter the hospital, including registration procedures, waiting time, interaction with hospital staff, and consultation with doctors. Each of these stages contributes to the overall perception of healthcare services. Studies have shown that factors such as prolonged waiting time, ineffective communication, and unprofessional staff behaviour can negatively impact patient satisfaction, leading to dissatisfaction and reduced trust in healthcare institutions (Gupta & Verma, 2021). In contrast, efficient service delivery, respectful communication, and supportive staff behaviour can significantly enhance patient experience and satisfaction (Sharma et al., 2023). In the Indian healthcare context, managing OPD services effectively remains a major challenge due to high patient load, limited resources, and infrastructural constraints. Public and tertiary care hospitals often experience overcrowding and long waiting queues, which affect service efficiency and patient satisfaction. Additionally, socio-demographic factors such as literacy levels, economic conditions, and cultural diversity influence patient expectations and perceptions of healthcare services. For instance, patients from rural or less-educated backgrounds may face difficulties in understanding medical instructions, while others may have higher expectations regarding the quality and responsiveness of services (Kumar et al., 2022). These challenges not only affect patient experience but also create barriers to effective healthcare delivery.

While healthcare institutions are increasingly focusing on patient-centred care, there is still a limited comprehensive understanding of the multiple factors influencing patient satisfaction in OPD settings, especially in developing countries like India. Previous studies have primarily focused on individual aspects such as waiting time or infrastructure, with less emphasis on a holistic evaluation of patient experience. Furthermore, there is a lack of structured interventions and evidence-based strategies aimed at improving OPD service quality and patient satisfaction in a systematic manner (Patel & Singh, 2024; Verma & Joshi, 2023). Consequently, the objective of this study is to explore the factors influencing patient satisfaction with OPD services: waiting time, communication, behaviour of staff and facilities

in hospital. The objective of this study is also to identify the patient's perception and to offer meaningful suggestions for enhancing the efficiency, quality & patient-centeredness of outpatient department (OPD) services in health facilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. World Health Organisation (2021) – Quality of Healthcare Services Framework •

The World Health Organisation emphasised the importance of quality healthcare services based on patient-centred care, accessibility, and efficiency. It highlights how OPD services play a key role in delivering primary healthcare.

- **Key Findings:**

The study highlighted that proper infrastructure, reduced waiting time, and effective service delivery significantly improve patient satisfaction.

- **Research Gap:**

The study provides a general framework but does not specifically focus on OPD services and communication barriers.

2. Singh, R. (2020) – Impact of Communication on Healthcare Outcomes

- This study focused on the importance of communication between healthcare providers and patients in improving healthcare outcomes.

- **Key Findings:**

Effective communication helps patients understand their diagnosis and treatment, leading to higher satisfaction levels.

- **Research Gap:**

The study does not include operational factors like waiting time and infrastructure in OPD settings.

3. Gupta, P. & Verma, S. (2021) – Factors Affecting Patient Satisfaction in Hospitals •

This study examined various factors influencing patient satisfaction such as communication, waiting time, and staff behavior.

- **Key Findings:**

Waiting time and communication were identified as the most important factors affecting patient satisfaction.

- **Research Gap:**

The study does not specifically focus on OPD services and infrastructural challenges.

4. Rao, K. (2021) – Healthcare Service Quality and Patient Perception

- This study analyzed how patients perceive healthcare quality based on service delivery and staff interaction.
- Key Findings:

Positive interaction with doctors and staff increases trust and satisfaction among patients.

- Research Gap:

The study does not address overcrowding and patient flow issues in OPD.

5. Kumar, R. et al. (2022) – Patient Satisfaction in Public Hospitals

- This study examined patient satisfaction in public hospitals with focus on service delivery and accessibility.
- Key Findings:

Long waiting time and overcrowding significantly reduce patient satisfaction.

- Research Gap:

The study does not explore communication and interpersonal interaction in detail.

6. Mehta, A. (2022) – Role of Staff Behavior in Patient Satisfaction

- This study focused on the impact of staff behavior on patient satisfaction in healthcare services.

- Key Findings:

Polite and cooperative staff improve patient experience and reduce anxiety.

- Research Gap:

The study does not consider waiting time and infrastructure.

7. Sharma, N. et al. (2023) – Hospital Service Quality and Patient Experience

- This study analysed service quality in hospitals, particularly focusing on OPD services.
- Key Findings:

Efficient service delivery and proper patient flow improve satisfaction levels.

- Research Gap:

The study does not analyse all factors together in a comprehensive manner.

8. Khan, M. I. et al. (2023) – Healthcare Access and Communication Barriers

- This study explored communication challenges in healthcare, especially among diverse populations.

- Key Findings:

Language barriers and poor communication lead to confusion and dissatisfaction.

- Research Gap:

The study does not directly analyze OPD patient satisfaction.

9. Verma, P. & Joshi, R. (2023) – Waiting Time and Patient Satisfaction in OPD •

This study focused on the relationship between waiting time and patient satisfaction in OPD settings.

- Key Findings:

Long waiting time is a major cause of dissatisfaction, while proper scheduling improves satisfaction.

- Research Gap:

The study does not include communication and staff behavior factors.

10. Patel, V. & Singh, A. (2024) – OPD Service Efficiency and Patient Satisfaction

- This study examined the role of service efficiency in OPD patient satisfaction.

- Key Findings:

Proper queue management and coordination improve patient experience.

- Research Gap:

The study does not include patient feedback analysis in detail.

11. Sharma, A. (2022) – Patient Experience in OPD Services

- This study focused on patient experience by analysing doctor behaviour and consultation quality.

- Key Findings:

Doctor behaviour and proper attention to patients improve satisfaction levels

- Research Gap:

The study does not include infrastructure and waiting time.

12. Gupta, R. (2020) – Hospital Management and Patient Satisfaction

- This study examined hospital management practices and their impact on patient satisfaction.

- Key Findings:

Efficient coordination and scheduling reduce waiting time and improve service delivery.

- Research Gap:

The study does not focus on communication factors.

13. Kumar, S. (2021) – Healthcare Infrastructure and Patient Satisfaction

- This study analysed the role of hospital infrastructure in shaping patient satisfaction.

- Key Findings:

Cleanliness, seating arrangements, and basic facilities improve patient comfort.

- Research Gap:

The study does not consider interpersonal communication.

14. Singh, P. et al. (2022) – OPD Management and Patient Flow • This study focused on patient flow management in OPD services.

- Key Findings:

Proper queue systems reduce overcrowding and improve efficiency.

- Research Gap:

The study does not analyse patient perception.

15. Verma, S. (2020) – Service Quality in Indian Hospitals

- This study examined service quality in Indian hospitals.

- Key Findings:

Service quality directly impacts patient satisfaction.

- Research Gap:

The study does not focus on OPD-specific factors.

16. Das, R. (2023) – Patient Satisfaction and Hospital Environment • This study analyzed how hospital environment affects patient satisfaction.

- Key Findings:

Clean and organized environment increases patient trust and comfort.

- Research Gap:

The study does not include communication and waiting time.

17. Mishra, A. (2024) – Digital Healthcare and OPD Services

- This study focused on digital solutions in OPD services such as online booking.
- Key Findings:

Digital systems reduce waiting time and improve efficiency.

- Research Gap:

The study does not analyse staff behaviour and communication.

18. Yadav, K. (2022) – Patient Expectations and Satisfaction

- This study examined patient expectations and their impact on satisfaction.
- Key Findings:

Higher expectations require better service quality to maintain satisfaction.

- Research Gap:

The study does not focus on operational challenges in OPD.

RESEARCH GAP

From the review of existing literature, it is clear that patient satisfaction has been widely studied in the healthcare sector. Many researchers have focused on factors such as service quality, staff behaviour, hospital infrastructure, and overall patient experience. However, there are still certain gaps that need to be addressed, especially in the context of OPD services.

Firstly, most of the previous studies have taken a general approach to healthcare services and have not specifically focused on Outpatient Department (OPD) settings. Since OPD handles a large number of patients daily and acts as the first point of contact, it requires separate attention and analysis.

Secondly, while many studies focus on factors like waiting time and service quality, there is limited research that looks at the combined impact of both operational factors (such as waiting time, patient flow, and infrastructure) and interpersonal factors (such as communication, staff behaviour, and emotional support). This study aims to fill that gap by considering both aspects together for a more comprehensive understanding of patient satisfaction.

Another important gap identified is related to communication and language barriers. In a diverse country like India, patients often come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, many existing studies do not focus on how language differences affect patient understanding and satisfaction in OPD services.

Furthermore, modern healthcare practices such as digital appointment systems, queue management, and patient feedback mechanisms have not been sufficiently explored in earlier studies.

Therefore, this study aims to fill these gaps by focusing specifically on OPD services, combining both operational and interpersonal factors, and incorporating patient perspectives through primary data. It also highlights the importance of communication and modern management practices in improving patient satisfaction.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the level of patient satisfaction towards OPD services in the selected healthcare setting.
2. To identify the key factors influencing patient satisfaction, such as waiting time, doctor-patient communication, staff behaviour, and hospital facilities.
3. To suggest suitable measures and improvements to enhance the quality of OPD services and overall patient experience.

HYPOTHESIS

From the objectives of the study and the identified research gap, the following hypotheses are formulated:

1. **Null Hypothesis (H_0):** There is no significant relationship between service-related factors such as waiting time, communication, staff behaviour, and hospital facilities and patient satisfaction in OPD services.
2. **Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):** There is a significant relationship between service-related factors such as waiting time, communication, staff behaviour, and hospital facilities, and patient satisfaction in OPD services.

Variables

Independent Variable (IV): Service-Related Factors

- Waiting time in OPD
- Doctor-patient communication
- Staff behaviour and responsiveness
- Cleanliness and hygiene

- Availability of facilities (seating, water, signage, etc.)

Dependent Variable (DV): Patient Satisfaction

- Overall satisfaction level
- Understanding of treatment
- Comfort during visit
- Willingness to revisit the hospital
- Likelihood of recommending the hospital to others Matching Check:

Yes, the independent variables (service-related factors) influence the dependent variable (patient satisfaction), as supported by previous

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data for the study of patient satisfaction towards OPD services.

1. Research Design

- The study follows a descriptive research design
- Focus: To measure and describe patient satisfaction levels

2. Type of Research

- Primary Data: Collected directly from OPD patients
- Secondary Data: Journals, articles, and previous studies

3. Data Collection Method

- Tool used: Structured Questionnaire
- Type of questions: Closed-ended questions only Areas covered:
- Waiting time
- Communication
- Staff behaviour
- Hospital facilities

4. Sampling Method

- Method used: Convenience Sampling
- Respondents selected based on availability

5. Sample Size

- Total respondents: 100 OPD patients

6. Data Analysis Tools

- Tabular representation
- Pie charts Bar graphs

7. Variables of the Study Independent Variables: Waiting time

- Doctor-patient communication
- Staff behaviour
- Cleanliness Facilities
- Dependent Variable: Patient satisfaction

8. Area of Study
 - Conducted in a selected hospital OPD
 - Focus on patient experience

9. Limitations of the Study
 - Sample size limited to 100 respondents
 - Convenience sampling method used
 - Based on patient perception
 - Time constraints in data collection

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from 100 respondents was analysed using the percentage method and presented in both tabular and descriptive forms to better understand the factors influencing patient satisfaction with OPD services.

1. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

1.1 AGE DISTRIBUTION			
S.N	AGE GROUP	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	BELOW 20	20	20%
2	21-30	35	35%
3	31-40	25	25%
4	ABOVE 40	20	20%

Analysis:

Majority of respondents (35%) belong to the age group 21-30 years.

1.2 GENDER DISTRIBUTION

1.2 GENDER DISTRIBUTION			
S.N	GENDER	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1	MALE	55	55%
2	FEMALE	35	35%
3	OTHERS	5	5%
4	PREFER NOT	5	5%

ANALYSIS:

Most respondents are male (55%) ,followed by female participants.

2. WAITING TIME ANALYSIS

2.1 WAITING TIME ANALYSIS		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	VERY SHORT	15%
2	RESONABLE	35%
3	LONG	30%
4	VERY LONG	20%

Analysis:

A Significant number of patients (50%) feel waiting time is long or very long, indicating dissatisfaction.

2.2 DELAY BEFORE CONSULTATION		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	NEVER	10%
2	RARELY	20%
3	SOMETIMES	40%
4	ALWAYS	30%

Analysis:

Most patients (70%) experience delays ,showing inefficient in time management.

3. DOCTOR-PATIENT COMMUNICATION

3.1 CLARITY OF EXPLANATION		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	STRONGLY AGREE	30%
2	AGREE	40%
3	NETURAL	20%
4	DISAGREE	10%

Analysis:

Majority (70%) agree that doctors communicate clearly.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING TREATMENT		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	FULLY	35%
2	MOSTLY	30%
3	PARTIALLY	25%
4	NOT AT ALL	10%

Analysis: Most patient understand treatment, but 35% still face difficulty.

4. STAFF BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS

4.1 BEHAVIOUR OF STAFF		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	EXCELLENT	20%
2	GOOD	40%
3	AVERAGE	25%
4	POOR	15%

Analysis:

Majority (60%) rate staff behaviour positively.

4.2 STAFF HELPFULNESS		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	ALWAYS	25%
2	OFTEN	35%
3	SOMETIMES	25%
4	NEVER	15%

Analysis:

Staff is generally helpful, but improvement is needed.

5.CLEANLINESS AND FACILITIES

5.1 CLEANLINESS		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Excellent	25%
2	Good	40%
3	Average	20%
4	Poor	15%

Analysis:

Most patient are satisfied with cleanliness.

5.2 FACILITIES AVAILABILITY		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	VERY GOOD	20%
2	GOOD	25%
3	AVERAGE	25%
4	POOR	20%

Analysis:

Facilities are adequate but need improvement.

6.OVERALL PATIENT SATISFACTION

6.1 OVERALL SATISFACTION		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	Very Satisfied	25%
2	Satisfied	40%
3	Neutral	20%
4	Dissatisfied	15%

Analysis:

Majority (65%) are satisfied, but there is scope for improvement.

6.2 RECOMMENDATION TO OTHERS		
S.N	RESPONSE	PERCENTAGE
1	DEDFINETLY	30%
2	PROBABLY	35%
3	NOT SURE	20%
4	NO	15%

Analysis:

Most patient are willing to recommend OPD services.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the collected data shows that patient satisfaction in OPD services is influenced by a combination of service-related and interpersonal factors. One of the key findings is that waiting time remains a major concern for many patients, significantly affecting their overall experience. A considerable number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction due to long waiting periods, which negatively affect their overall experience.

Communication between doctors and patients emerged as another key factor. While most patients reported that doctors explained their condition clearly, a significant portion still faced difficulties in understanding medical instructions. This indicates a gap in effective communication, especially among patients with lower literacy levels.

Language barriers were also identified as an important issue. Patients who were not comfortable with the language used during consultation reported lower satisfaction. This suggests that hospitals should consider multilingual support to improve patient understanding.

Staff behaviour plays a crucial role in shaping how patients perceive the quality of care they receive. Friendly and cooperative staff contribute to a positive experience, whereas unprofessional behaviour leads to dissatisfaction.

On a positive note, most patients were satisfied with the cleanliness and basic facilities provided by the hospital. However, improvements in waiting areas and better management systems are still required.

Overall, the findings highlight that patient satisfaction is not determined by a single factor but by a combination of multiple aspects that together shape the patient experience.

CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted to analyse the factors associated with patient satisfaction in Outpatient Department (OPD) services. Based on the data collected and analysed, it can be concluded that patient satisfaction is influenced by a combination of both operational and interpersonal factors.

The major findings of the study are that waiting time plays a significant role in determining patient satisfaction. A significant number of patients reported dissatisfaction due to long waiting times, highlighting the need for improved scheduling and better management of patient flow. In addition to this, doctor–patient communication was found to be another important factor. Patients who received clear explanations and felt that their concerns were properly heard reported higher levels of satisfaction.

Staff behaviour also emerged as a key factor influencing patient experience. Friendly, cooperative, and responsive staff contribute positively to patient perception, whereas negative interactions can lead to dissatisfaction. Cleanliness and basic facilities were generally rated positively, showing that hospitals are maintaining a certain standard in terms of infrastructure.

The study also highlights the importance of addressing communication barriers, especially in a diverse population where language differences may affect patient understanding. Improving communication can not only enhance satisfaction but also ensure better treatment compliance.

Overall, the findings suggest that patient satisfaction in OPD services is not dependent on a single factor but is the result of multiple aspects working together. Hospitals need to focus on both service efficiency and quality of interaction to improve patient experience.

In conclusion, enhancing OPD services through better management, improved communication, and patient-centered approaches can lead to higher satisfaction levels, increased patient trust, and improved healthcare outcomes.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve appointment and scheduling systems to reduce waiting time and manage patient flow more efficiently in OPD services.
- Enhance doctor–patient communication by encouraging doctors to explain diagnoses and treatments simply and clearly.
- Provide regular training for hospital staff to improve behaviour, responsiveness, and patient interaction.

- Introduce multilingual support or basic translation assistance to overcome communication barriers among patients from different backgrounds.
- Improve waiting area facilities, including seating arrangements, cleanliness, ventilation, and availability of drinking water.
- Establish a patient feedback system to regularly collect opinions and identify areas that need improvement.
- Ensure proper signage and help desks to guide patients easily within the hospital and reduce confusion
- Increase staff availability during peak hours in OPD to manage patient load and reduce service delays.
- Ensure regular monitoring and supervision of OPD operations to maintain service quality and quickly address issues.
- Promote patient awareness and guidance by providing basic information about OPD procedures, timings, and required documents to reduce confusion and improve efficiency.

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