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A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING PATIENT SATISFACTION IN EYE CARE HOSPITALS OF SELECTED CITIES IN TAMIL NADU

Dr. G. Sasikumar[1] Research Supervisor, Assistant Professor & Head, Department of Commerce, Sun Arts and Science College, Keeranoor Village, Rajapalayam Post, Tiruvannamalai District – 606755.

E. Venkatachalapathy[2] Research Scholar (Part-Time), Department of Commerce, Sun Arts and Science College, Keeranoor Village, Rajapalayam Post, Tiruvannamalai District – 606 755.

Abstract

Patient satisfaction has become a vital measure of healthcare quality, especially in specialized services such as ophthalmology, where both clinical excellence and service delivery influence patient perceptions. Tamil Nadu has emerged as a prominent hub for eye care services, hosting several reputed hospitals across major cities. Despite technological advancements and affordable treatments, variations in patient satisfaction are evident due to differences in service quality, accessibility, and transparency. The present study aims to identify the key factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care hospitals of selected cities in Tamil Nadu, namely Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai. The study is based on primary data collected from 600 patients treated in four leading eye care hospitals using a structured questionnaire. Stratified random sampling was adopted, and statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, Chi-square test, and factor analysis were employed for data analysis. The findings reveal that patient satisfaction is predominantly influenced by three major dimensions: affordability and transparency, accessibility and convenience, and service quality and infrastructure. The study highlights the importance of transparent pricing, reduced waiting time, courteous staff behaviour, modern diagnostic facilities, and a clean hospital environment in enhancing patient satisfaction. The findings provide valuable insights for hospital administrators and policymakers to improve patient-centred service delivery in eye care hospitals.

Key Words: Eye Care Hospitals, Factors Influencing and Patient Satisfaction.

Introduction

In the contemporary healthcare environment, patient satisfaction has gained considerable importance as a comprehensive indicator of service quality and hospital performance. Beyond clinical outcomes, patient satisfaction reflects the effectiveness of service delivery, communication, accessibility, and overall patient experience. In specialized healthcare domains such as ophthalmology, patient satisfaction assumes greater significance, as eye care services involve continuous interaction between patients and healthcare providers, ranging from consultation and diagnostics to surgical intervention and post-treatment care. Eye care hospitals play a critical role in addressing visual impairments and promoting eye health across all age groups. With rising awareness about eye-related disorders and advancements in medical technology, the demand for quality eye care services has increased substantially. Tamil Nadu, particularly cities such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, has emerged as a leading destination for advanced and affordable eye care services. The presence of reputed eye care hospitals equipped with modern technology and skilled professionals has positioned the state as a major contributor to medical tourism in India.

However, despite the availability of technologically advanced facilities and specialized treatments, patient satisfaction levels vary across hospitals and locations. Patients today expect more than clinical competence; they demand efficient appointment systems, shorter waiting times, transparent billing procedures, empathetic communication, courteous staff behaviour, and effective post-treatment support. Any inadequacy in these service dimensions may lead to dissatisfaction, reduced trust, and negative word-of-mouth, thereby affecting the hospital's reputation and patient retention. Although several studies have examined service quality and patient satisfaction in the healthcare sector, limited empirical research has focused specifically on eye care hospitals across different urban centres in Tamil Nadu. Moreover, comparative studies analysing the underlying factors influencing patient satisfaction in ophthalmology services remain scarce. This research gap restricts hospital administrators from identifying critical service gaps and implementing targeted improvement strategies. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to analyse the factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care hospitals of selected cities in Tamil Nadu. By identifying the

key dimensions shaping patient perceptions, the study aims to contribute to improved service quality, enhanced patient trust, and sustainable performance of eye care hospitals.

Patient Satisfaction in Eye Care Hospitals

Patient satisfaction is a key indicator of healthcare quality and service effectiveness. In eye care hospitals, satisfaction is influenced by both clinical outcomes and non-clinical service experiences. Theoretical frameworks from healthcare management, service marketing, and patient-centered care explain these influencing factors.

- **Service Quality and Responsiveness**

According to the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), service quality significantly impacts patient satisfaction. In eye care hospitals, aspects such as prompt appointment scheduling, waiting time, timely consultations, and responsiveness of staff influence patients' perceptions. Patients often evaluate hospitals based on empathy, reliability, assurance, and the tangibility of facilities, such as cleanliness and modern equipment.

- **Clinical Competence and Outcomes**

The theory of Healthcare Quality emphasizes that patient satisfaction is closely linked to clinical competence (Donabedian, 1980). In eye care hospitals, factors such as accuracy in diagnosis, effective treatment, surgical success, and postoperative care enhance patient confidence and satisfaction. Positive health outcomes and perceived improvements in vision are critical determinants.

- **Communication and Patient-Centered Care**

Patient-centered care theory suggests that effective communication and active involvement of patients in decision-making improve satisfaction (Stewart, 2001). Eye care patients value clear explanations about procedures, risks, and post-treatment care. Doctors' ability to address patient queries empathetically and provide emotional support strengthens trust and satisfaction.

- **Hospital Environment and Infrastructure**

Environmental factors, derived from the Service Environment Theory, also affect satisfaction (Bitner, 1992). Factors such as cleanliness, hygiene, lighting, waiting area comfort, and accessibility of diagnostic equipment contribute to a patient's overall

experience. A well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing environment can reduce anxiety and enhance perceived quality.

☯ **Administrative Processes and Affordability**

Operational efficiency theories highlight the role of administrative processes in patient satisfaction. Efficient billing systems, insurance support, ease of follow-up appointments, and affordability of services influence patients' willingness to return and recommend services. Transparent and patient-friendly procedures minimize frustration and improve satisfaction levels.

Review of Literature

Aarthi, S. (2021) investigated the factors influencing patient satisfaction in paediatric ophthalmology departments across Chennai city hospitals. The study utilized responses from 250 parents of child patients, revealing that waiting time, doctor–child interaction, and clarity in explaining eye conditions significantly influenced satisfaction. Parents appreciated hospitals that maintained child-friendly infrastructures such as play areas, colourful signage, and staff trained to handle anxious children. Affordability significantly influenced family satisfaction, especially for families with repeated follow-up needs for conditions like squint, amblyopia, and refractive errors. Transparency in treatment plans and counselling about long-term therapy expectations improved trust. Accessibility was another influential factor; parents preferred hospitals with convenient appointment systems and weekend clinics to reduce school absenteeism. The study concluded that paediatric eye care satisfaction depended not only on clinical quality but also on emotional support, communication clarity, and supportive hospital environments catering to children's needs.

Bose, M. (2017) Bose (2017) examined the factors influencing patient satisfaction in private eye hospitals in Kolkata. Using data from 300 respondents, the study identified doctor–patient interaction, clarity of diagnosis explanation, and technical competence as primary satisfaction determinants. Patients appreciated modern equipment and shorter waiting times in premium hospitals. However, they expressed dissatisfaction with billing clarity, as hidden costs related to medications and additional tests were common. The study also found that staff courtesy and cleanliness of the hospital environment significantly contributed to satisfaction levels. Bose suggested that hospitals adopt transparent pricing,

structured counselling sessions, and improved communication protocols to enhance patient trust and satisfaction.

Brown, H. (2018) investigated key drivers of patient satisfaction across eye hospitals in Europe. The study analysed responses from 300 patients in Germany, France, and Italy, identifying several major factors influencing satisfaction: doctor expertise, technological advancement, appointment convenience, and clarity of communication. European patients placed strong emphasis on digital integration, including online booking, electronic medical records, and automated reminders. However, despite advanced infrastructure, the study found that long waiting times and high surgical packages were major sources of dissatisfaction. Transparency in cost estimates and treatment outcomes significantly improved trust, particularly in private hospitals. Brown concluded that patient-centred communication and digital accessibility are essential for enhancing satisfaction in technologically advanced healthcare systems.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, patient satisfaction has emerged as a crucial indicator of healthcare quality, hospital performance, and service effectiveness, complementing traditional clinical outcome measures. In the field of ophthalmology, eye care hospitals play a significant role in meeting preventive, diagnostic, and corrective vision needs of patients across all age groups. Tamil Nadu, particularly cities such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, has gained prominence as a major centre for advanced and affordable eye care services, attracting patients from within and outside the state. Despite the availability of technologically advanced treatments and reputed eye care hospitals, variations in patient satisfaction levels are increasingly observed across hospitals and urban locations.

Patients today expect not only clinical excellence but also efficient appointment systems, reduced waiting time, transparent pricing, effective communication, courteous staff behaviour, and quality post-treatment care. Any shortcomings in these service dimensions may adversely affect patient trust, treatment adherence, and hospital reputation. Although several studies have examined service quality in healthcare, empirical research focusing specifically on factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care hospitals across selected cities in Tamil Nadu remains limited. This lack of comparative evidence restricts hospital

administrators from identifying critical service gaps and improvement areas. Hence, the present study seeks to analyse the key factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care hospitals of selected cities in Tamil Nadu..

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the key factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care hospitals.

Scope of the Study

The present study examines patient satisfaction with services provided by selected eye care hospitals in three major cities of Tamil Nadu, namely Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai. The scope is confined to four leading ophthalmology hospitals operating in these cities. The study evaluates patient satisfaction across various service dimensions, including appointment scheduling and waiting time, staff behaviour and communication, patient–doctor interaction, clarity of medical information and pricing, availability of advanced technology, cleanliness and safety, post-treatment care, and overall service efficiency. Both outpatients and surgical patients are included to enable comparison of service experiences. Data are collected exclusively from patients who have received treatment in the selected hospitals during the study period. The research focuses on patients' perceptions and satisfaction levels rather than clinical outcomes. The geographical scope is limited to the selected cities, and therefore the findings may not be generalized to rural areas or other regions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Methodology

The present study was conducted across three major cities of Tamil Nadu, namely Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, to assess patient satisfaction towards selected eye care hospitals. The hospitals included in the study were Aravind Eye Hospital, Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital, Vasan Eye Care Hospital and The Eye Foundation, , which are well-established and widely recognized in the field of ophthalmology.

Population and Sample Size

The study targeted population was the patients that received treatment in the chosen eye care hospitals within the three cities. The study involved 600 respondents, including 50 respondents of each hospital, to ensure that there was good representation. The distribution was structured such that it was comparable across the districts as well as giving a data set that was large enough to analyze.

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Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used in the research. The cities were regarded as distinct strata, with the same representation in the three places. In every stratum a random selection procedure was adopted to select the patients in the selected hospitals. This method reduced sampling limitations and made the respondents a sample of a cross-section of the patients in terms of age, sex and treatment type received.

Data Collection Method

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources to ensure comprehensive and reliable findings.

☯ **Primary Data**

Direct observation of the patients in the chosen eye care hospitals at Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai was used to gather primary data. The structured questionnaire was developed to bring details of different areas of patient satisfaction such as the quality of the service, the way the staff behaved, effectiveness of the treatment, hospital facilities, waiting time, and experience. The respondents reached the hospital premises once they had availed their services, their consent was sought and then the survey was administered. A total of 600 responses (50*4 hospitals =200*3 City =600) were collected using random sampling technique as explained in the sampling design.

☯ **Secondary Data**

Secondary data were gathered from reliable published sources to provide contextual background and support the analysis. These included: Research articles and academic journals as to patient satisfaction and the quality of healthcare. The selected eye care institutions are hospitals, brochures, and official websites. Government reports, industry reports, databases in the area of healthcare services in Tamil Nadu.

Study Area

The research was conducted across three major cities of Tamil Nadu: Chennai, Coimbatore, and Madurai, which are well-known hubs for healthcare and eye care services.

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DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S. No	Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Age Group	Less than 35 years	226	37.7
		35–45 years	165	27.5
		More than 45 years	209	34.8
2	Gender	Male	242	40.3
		Female	358	59.7
3	Educational Qualification	School level	99	16.5
		UG	287	47.8
		PG	192	32.0
		Professional	12	2.0
		Others	10	1.7
4	Occupation	Employed	131	21.8
		Business	51	8.5
		Housewife	96	16.0
		Student	132	22.0
		Agriculture	97	16.2
		Profession	93	15.5
5	Annual Income	Below ₹2 Lakh	133	22.2
		₹2–3 Lakh	93	15.5
		₹3–4 Lakh	143	23.8
		Above ₹4 Lakh	231	38.5
6	Frequency of Visit	First time	355	59.2
		Occasionally	121	20.2
		Frequently	124	20.7

Source: Primary Data

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates a fairly balanced representation across different socio-economic groups. A majority of the respondents (37.7%) belong to the age group of less than 35 years, followed by those above 45 years (34.8%), showing that eye care services are utilized across age groups. Female respondents (59.7%) outnumber males, indicating higher utilisation of eye care services among women. In terms of educational qualification, most respondents are graduates (47.8%) and postgraduates (32.0%), suggesting a relatively well-educated patient population. With regard to occupation, students (22.0%) and employed respondents (21.8%) form the major groups, while agriculture, housewives, and professionals also constitute a notable share. Income-wise, a significant proportion of

respondents (38.5%) fall under the above ₹4 lakh category, reflecting affordability of services among higher-income groups. Further, the majority of respondents (59.2%) are first-time visitors, indicating growing demand and outreach of eye care hospitals among new patients.

FACTORS ANALYSIS (Key Factors Influencing Patient Satisfaction in Eye Care)

Patient satisfaction in eye care services is shaped by multiple interrelated factors that influence perceptions and decision-making. Among these, three dimensions emerge as particularly significant: affordability and transparency, accessibility and convenience, and service quality and infrastructure. Affordability and transparency determine the financial feasibility of services and the level of trust patients place in hospitals through clear communication about costs and procedures. Accessibility and convenience reflect how easily patients can reach and utilize services, including location, appointment systems, and waiting times. Service quality and infrastructure encompass the competence of medical staff, the availability of modern equipment, and the overall hospital environment, all of which directly affect patient confidence and treatment outcomes. To identify and validate these dimensions, factor analysis is applied, helping to reduce a wide range of service-related variables into core factors that best explain patient satisfaction. This approach not only highlights the most influential determinants but also provides a scientific basis for improving eye care service delivery and patient-centered health management.

Table 2: KMO Andbartlett's Test

KMO.		.899
BTS	Approx. Chi-Square	5069.541
	difference	78
	Sig.	.000

The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity confirm the suitability of the data for factor analysis in identifying the key factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care. The KMO value of 0.899 is considered excellent, as values closer to 1.0 indicate higher sampling adequacy. This suggests that the patterns of correlations among the variables are strong and reliable, making the dataset highly appropriate for extracting meaningful factors. A KMO value above 0.80 is typically categorized as “meritorious,” showing that the variables share common variance and can be

grouped effectively. In addition, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity yielded a Chi-Square value of 5069.541 with 78 degrees of freedom and a significance level of p = 0.000. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, it rejects the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. This means that the variables are sufficiently correlated with one another to justify the use of factor analysis. Together, these results strongly validate the appropriateness of conducting factor analysis. They indicate that the dataset has both statistical adequacy and meaningful inter-variable relationships, which will help in identifying the underlying dimensions that shape patient satisfaction in eye care.

Table 3: Principal Component Analysis

S.No	Factors	Initial	Extraction
1	Accessibility for elderly and differently-abled	1.000	.906
2	Comfort and safety of hospital environment	1.000	.745
3	Cleanliness and hygiene of premises	1.000	.908
4	Clarity of billing and payment process	1.000	.628
5	Availability of modern diagnostic/eye care technology	1.000	.906
6	Availability of appointments without long delays	1.000	.707
7	Affordability of medicines and diagnostic tests	1.000	.783
8	Smooth and efficient registration process	1.000	.798
9	Reasonableness of consultation and treatment charges	1.000	.981
10	Empathy and personal attention from doctors	1.000	.765
11	Ease of reaching hospital location	1.000	.954
12	Courtesy and helpfulness of nurses/assistants	1.000	.970
13	Advance communication of treatment costs	1.000	.810
14	Waiting time for consultation/treatment	1.000	.707
	Extraction Method: PCA.		

The communalities after extraction indicate how much variance in each variable is explained by the extracted factors. Most values are above 0.70, which reflects strong representation in the factor solution. The highest communalities are observed for reasonableness of consultation and treatment charges (0.981)**,** courtesy and helpfulness of nurses/assistants (0.970)**,** and ease of reaching hospital location (0.954), suggesting these variables are very well explained by the factors. Similarly, cleanliness and hygiene (0.908) and availability of modern diagnostic technology (0.906) also show strong contributions.

Moderate communalities are seen for clarity of billing and payment process (0.628) and comfort and safety of hospital environment (0.745), indicating these variables are explained to a slightly lesser degree but still remain significant. Overall, the high extraction values demonstrate that the selected variables contribute meaningfully to the factor structure, validating the suitability of the data for Principal Component Analysis (PCA).

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen Values			Sums of Squared Loadings			Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% (V)	Cumulative %	Total	%	Cumulative %	Total	%	Cumulative %
1	6.059	37.870	37.870	6.059	37.870	37.870	4.756	29.725	29.725
2	4.699	29.370	67.239	4.699	29.370	67.239	4.689	29.306	59.031
3	2.152	13.451	80.691	2.152	13.451	80.691	2.516	15.725	74.756
4	1.086	6.789	87.480	1.086	6.789	87.480	2.036	12.724	87.480
5	.661	4.129	91.609						
6	.438	2.740	94.349						
7	.295	1.847	96.196						
8	.225	1.407	97.603						
9	.143	.894	98.497						
10	.070	.439	98.935						
11	.069	.430	99.365						
12	.056	.348	99.712						
13	.032	.202	99.915						
14	.014	.085	100.000						
Extraction Method: PCA									

The results of the Total Variance Explained table demonstrate the effectiveness of Principal Component Analysis (PCA) in reducing the dataset into meaningful components. The initial eigenvalues show that out of 14 variables, only four components have eigenvalues greater than 1, making them significant for extraction. The first component explains 37.87% of the variance, indicating it captures the largest proportion of information from the dataset. The second component contributes 29.37%, while the third component accounts for 13.45%**.** The fourth component explains 6.79% of the variance. Together, these four components explain a total of 87.48% of the variance, which is considerably high and indicates that most of the variation in patient satisfaction is captured by these factors. The rotated solution distributes the variance more evenly, with the four components explaining 29.73%, 29.31%, 15.73%, and 12.72% of the variance respectively. This balanced distribution suggests that no

single factor dominates excessively, and each extracted factor contributes meaningfully to explaining the structure of patient satisfaction in eye care. Overall, these results validate that four key components relating to affordability and transparency, accessibility and convenience, and service quality and infrastructure are sufficient to represent the underlying dimensions influencing patient satisfaction.

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix

FACTORS		Component		
		1	2	3
Reasonableness of consultation and treatment charges	Affordability & Transparency	.721		
Affordability of medicines and diagnostic tests		.802		
Clarity of billing and payment process		.869		
Advance communication of treatment costs		.720		
Ease of reaching hospital location	Accessibility & Convenience		.617	
Availability of appointments without long delays			.753	
Waiting time for consultation/treatment			.766	
Accessibility for elderly and differently-abled			.743	
Cleanliness and hygiene of premises	Service Quality & Infrastructure			.780
Availability of modern diagnostic/eye care technology				.767
Smooth and efficient registration process				.635
Comfort and safety of hospital environment				.742
Empathy and personal attention from doctors				.766
Courtesy and helpfulness of nurses/assistants				.891
Extraction Method: PCA. Rotation Method: VKM.				

The rotated component matrix reveals three distinct factors that represent the underlying dimensions of patient satisfaction in eye care. These factors align with the conceptual framework of Affordability & Transparency, Accessibility & Convenience, and Service Quality & Infrastructure.

☯ **Factor 1: Affordability & Transparency**

This factor is strongly defined by variables such as clarity of billing and payment process (0.869), affordability of medicines and diagnostic tests (0.802), advance

communication of treatment costs (0.720), and reasonableness of consultation and treatment charges (0.721). These loadings highlight the importance of financial clarity and cost-effectiveness in shaping patient satisfaction.

- **Factor 2: Accessibility & Convenience**

This factor is explained by waiting time for consultation/treatment (0.766), availability of appointments without long delays (0.753), accessibility for elderly and differently-abled (0.743), and ease of reaching hospital location (0.617). The loadings indicate that patients value timely, convenient, and inclusive access to services.

- **Factor 3: Service Quality & Infrastructure**

This factor is represented by variables such as courtesy and helpfulness of nurses/assistants (0.891), cleanliness and hygiene (0.780), empathy and personal attention from doctors (0.766), availability of modern diagnostic technology (0.767), comfort and safety of hospital environment (0.742), and efficient registration process (0.635). These emphasize the role of professional care, supportive staff, and modern infrastructure in ensuring satisfaction.

Overall Summary

The factor analysis conducted to identify the key determinants of patient satisfaction in eye care yielded meaningful and reliable results. Preliminary tests confirmed the suitability of the data for factor analysis, with the KMO value (0.899) indicating excellent sampling adequacy and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 5069.541$, $p < 0.001$) confirming sufficient inter-variable correlations.

The communalities revealed that most variables had high extraction values, demonstrating that they were well represented by the factor solution. The Total Variance Explained showed that four components together accounted for 87.48% of the total variance, reflecting the robustness of the model in capturing patient satisfaction dimensions. After rotation, three dominant factors were identified, providing a clearer structure.

- **Affordability & Transparency** emerged as a crucial factor, highlighting the role of cost-effectiveness, billing clarity, and communication of expenses.

- **Accessibility & Convenience** underscored the importance of timely appointments, reduced waiting times, inclusive facilities, and ease of reaching the hospital.

- **Service Quality & Infrastructure** emphasized cleanliness, modern diagnostic facilities, empathetic medical staff, supportive nurses, and a safe hospital environment.

Conclusion

The present study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing patient satisfaction in eye care hospitals of selected cities in Tamil Nadu. The findings confirm that patient satisfaction in ophthalmology services is multidimensional and extends beyond clinical outcomes. Through factor analysis, three dominant determinants were identified: affordability and transparency, accessibility and convenience, and service quality and infrastructure. These factors collectively explain a significant proportion of variation in patient satisfaction. Affordability and transparency emerged as crucial elements, emphasizing the importance of reasonable treatment charges, clear billing procedures, and advance communication of costs. Accessibility and convenience highlighted the role of reduced waiting time, easy appointment scheduling, and inclusive facilities for elderly and differently-abled patients. Service quality and infrastructure underscored the significance of cleanliness, modern diagnostic technology, empathetic doctors, and courteous nursing staff. The study concludes that eye care hospitals focusing on these core service dimensions can significantly enhance patient satisfaction, trust, and likelihood of recommendation. Although the study is limited to selected cities, the findings offer meaningful implications for hospital administrators and policymakers to strengthen patient-centred care and improve overall service excellence in the eye care sector.

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