

The linkage between Hospital Service Quality Factors and Cancer Patient Satisfaction: A Moderating Role of Price Perception

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Abstract

Purpose: Hospitals should prioritise fostering a positive experience for patients, as they are the valued customers of the healthcare industry. Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of service quality factors, such as interaction quality, hospital admission process, and safety and privacy, on patient satisfaction, with trust playing a mediating role. This study also examined the moderating role of price perception. This study employed a quantitative research approach. **Methodology:** Data was gathered from patients at hospitals in Saudi Arabia through the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was created based on a thorough review of existing literature. Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The data from the study was analysed using SPSS. **Findings:** The study's findings indicate that factors such as the hospital admission process, safety and privacy measures, and the quality of interactions with healthcare providers have a positive impact on patients' trust. In addition, trust plays a crucial role in determining satisfaction. The relationship between trust and satisfaction is influenced by how customers perceive the price. The results of the study further validate the role of price as a mediating factor. The study thoroughly examines the limitations and potential future directions. The research findings are valuable for policymakers in the hospital sector in KSA.

Keywords: Patient Trust, Satisfaction, Hospital Admission, Safety and Privacy, Interaction Quality.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring patients' well-being is a critical responsibility in medicine and nursing. Patients' satisfaction determines the evaluation of care within a hospital.^[1] In the medical profession, ensuring patient satisfaction entails providing services that exceed the patient's expectations. Decision-makers can easily pinpoint any deficiencies and address them by evaluating the patient's satisfaction.^[2] Research focused on patient satisfaction has become increasingly important in recent years, as patients play a crucial role in generating revenue for the healthcare industry. In simple terms, they are the individuals in the healthcare sector who drive the majority of the profit and revenue. When well-informed, people choose the service provider they know best. The satisfied patient will return to the healthcare provider and will also share positive feedback about the doctor and the healthcare facility. In addition, the patient's satisfaction has an impact on the reimbursement rate for the healthcare service provider.^[3] Compared to other industries, this aspect stands out for its significant impact on

the services provided by healthcare providers.

The foundation of the patient-physician relationship lies in the trust of the patient. It has a significant impact on patient health and satisfaction. When a patient undergoes medical treatment, there is always an inherent level of uncertainty and potential for risk.^[4] The programs of medical services should be examined with a focus on risk, distrust, and trust. In order to effectively address the potential risks, it is crucial for patients to have confidence in their doctors and other healthcare professionals. Patients undergoing medical treatment may perceive it as risky due to the complexity of the procedures involved. It is crucial for healthcare service providers to receive proper training in order to establish trust with patients.^[5]

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Submitted: 10th April, 2024

Received: 15th April, 2024

Accepted: 20th August, 2024

Published: 24th August, 2024

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How to cite this article: Muthuswamy V V, Dilip D. The linkage between Hospital Service Quality Factors and Cancer Patient Satisfaction: A Moderating Role of Price Perception. *J Nat Sc Biol Med* 2024;15:309-322

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:

www.jnsbm.org

DOI:

https://doi.org/10.4103/jnsbm.JNSBM_15_2_16

The patient holds utmost significance in the realm of healthcare. Recent studies have primarily focused on improving the quality of interaction between healthcare staff and patients within hospital settings. The foundation of a patient's experience lies in the quality of interaction between the patient and the staff member.^[6] It greatly impacts the outcomes of patients' health treatments. When an individual seeks medical care, the overall experience is greatly influenced by the level of interaction they have with healthcare professionals. Effective communication is crucial for ensuring high standards of care in patient treatment.^[7] Effective communication between patients and doctors is crucial for managing symptoms and illnesses.^[8] The primary objective of healthcare is to provide high-quality healthcare services to the citizens. It is crucial for healthcare to be readily available, reliable, and of high quality, among other essential considerations. Mutual respect between patients and doctors is essential. The actors within the healthcare system must prioritise patient privacy and treat them with the utmost respect. Put simply, those involved in the healthcare system should prioritise the protection of patient privacy and safety.^[9] The first impression of patients is formed upon their arrival at the hospital. During this stage, it is crucial to gather precise medical history and information from the patient. This information plays a vital role in coordinating care and efficiently managing the necessary resources for their treatment.^[10] Overall, the patient's hospital experience and satisfaction are closely tied to the process of hospital admission.

In the healthcare sector, price perception plays a crucial role in patient psychology. Customers, or patients, are primarily concerned about the cost of the services they receive. This aspect holds significant importance in the context of the healthcare industry.^[11] Customers will have a greater sense of satisfaction when the pricing of the healthcare system is made transparent. When the pricing is made clear, customers can stay well-informed and ready for the costs associated with the healthcare system. Understanding the pricing of healthcare items and services is crucial prior to their delivery to customers.^[12] The primary goal of hospitals should be to ensure patient satisfaction by delivering high-quality services. Thus, this study aims to evaluate how various factors related to the quality of hospital services impact patients' trust and satisfaction. This model is influenced by how customers perceive the price and is based on the SOR model proposed by Mehrabian *et al.*^[13].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Patient Trust and Patient Satisfaction

Satisfaction plays a crucial role in the realm of management studies. In the field of healthcare studies, patient satisfaction is a crucial factor to consider. The study examines the satisfaction level of patients with healthcare services.^[14] The satisfaction of the patient refers to the happiness or pleasure that individuals experience when utilising healthcare services. Essentially, the patient's case forms the foundation of the healthcare services provider. It is also

a key factor in evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of quality care and service delivery.^[15]

In the realm of literature, patient trust is described as the patient's conviction that their healthcare needs will be met by the provider, fostering enduring relationships.^[16] The foundation of a patient's trust is built upon the genuine emotions that arise from the dependability, uprightness, and sincerity of the doctor.^[16] There are various elements to consider when discussing the concept of trust. These factors encompass communication provision, information provision, services and products of health care, effectiveness of health system policies, expertise of the doctors, care quality, and the doctors' genuine concern for the health of the patients.^[17] Trust plays a crucial role in the bond between physicians and patients. When there is a strong bond of trust between patients and physicians, patients have confidence in their doctors and believe that their doctors have their best interests at heart. There are various factors that contribute to the development of trust, such as communication channels, advertising, and word of mouth, which can significantly impact patients' personal experiences.^[18] Trusting one's physician is crucial for the well-being of the patient.

Scholars have observed that patient expectations are influenced by trust. The level of trust a patient has in their physician influences their adherence to treatment and self-care management.^[19] Empirical studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between the level of trust and the effectiveness of patient treatment. Mistrust negatively affects customer satisfaction and loyalty.^[20] Researchers have also discovered a significant positive relationship between trust and customer satisfaction.^[21] H1: Patient trust has positive effect on patient satisfaction.

Interaction Quality and Patient Trust

The services are economic activities characterised by specialised features such as interactivity, variability, simultaneity, perishability, and intangibility. Healthcare quality in literature is defined as the extent to which health services produce desired outcomes.^[22] Interaction quality refers to the functional quality that reflects the level of interaction among users during the delivery of a service.^[23] The quality of interaction is determined by the problem-solving ability, expertise, and attitude of the customers. The interaction between customers and service providers occurs during service delivery.^[24]

Interaction quality in the healthcare sector refers to the satisfaction and effectiveness of communication between healthcare providers and patients. The quality of healthcare services is crucial for ensuring sustainability and satisfaction.^[25] Increased interactivity can foster the development of trust. Information and communication exchange play a crucial role in fostering trust during interactions. Regular stakeholder interaction enhances trust.^[26] Research has shown that the quality of interaction is a crucial factor in determining patients' trust, particularly in hospitals located in Tehran. The primary concern for decision makers should be the provision of services to

improve the level of trust. The level of service delivery can be improved by accurately and promptly scheduling these services. Improving the communication skills of staff, nurses, and doctors is crucial.

The trust patients have in healthcare is greatly influenced by the quality of interactive service.^[27] A strong level of information between patients and physicians fosters a sense of reliability and trust. Individualised attention and clear communication are crucial elements of building trust. Trust between a patient and their physician is strengthened when the patient feels that their voice is truly heard.^[28] Establishing trust between patients and physicians is crucial for effective treatment plans. In addition, prompt responses to various concerns and enquiries, concise explanations about medical treatments and conditions, and empathetic and courteous behaviour from the healthcare staff foster a sense of trust.^[29] Conversely, a lack of interactive quality can result in customer distrust and dissatisfaction. Similarly, a study conducted by Chen *et al.*^[30] found that the quality of interaction has a significant positive impact on employee trust.

H2: Interaction quality has positive effect on trust.

The quality of interaction is crucial in fostering trust among patients. The quality of interaction relies on effective communication between patients and hospital staff. Through effective communication, a sense of empathy and reliability is fostered, which in turn helps to cultivate trust among the patients of the hospital. Consequently, the patients' satisfaction level is improved.^[31] In addition, the patient expresses satisfaction with the hospital staff due to their positive expectations and the sense of security that arises from effective communication. Patients experience a greater sense of value when trust is established. The satisfaction level of the patients is also increased as a result. However, dissatisfaction can arise when patients do not interact with each other, leading to a sense of distrust. Therefore, trust plays a crucial role in establishing a strong connection between the quality of interaction and satisfaction. In addition, previous literature has also explored the role of trust as a mediator. The study conducted by Hussein *et al.*^[32] highlighted the role of trust as a mediator between experience and quality. The current model of the study is based on the Stimulus Organism Response model (SOR) proposed by Mehrabian *et al.*^[13]. This model suggests that the stimulus is an external factor that influences the organism. This organism can undergo emotional or cognitive development as a result of external factors, commonly referred to as stimuli. Later, the organism develops the response of the respondents. This response can have a favourable or unfavourable tone. The favourable reaction is referred to as the respondent's approach behaviour. On the other hand, the respondents' negative response can be seen as an avoidance behaviour. In the context of the current study, there are three external factors referred to as Stimulus (S). Three important factors to consider are hospital admission, safety and privacy, and interaction quality. The quality of interaction refers to the external stimuli that foster trust in individuals, as discussed by Chen *et al.*^[30]. This trust ultimately leads to

satisfaction, as explained by the SOR model. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H3: Trust mediates among interaction quality and satisfaction.

Hospital Admission and Patient Trust

The examination of services provided to patients is crucial in the context of SERVQUAL for patient treatment. The admission process is a crucial component of service quality in hospitals.^[33] The factors influencing hospital admission include staff awareness of social responsibility, hospital documentation procedures, patient discharge processes, and the availability of paramedic staff and doctors. Hospital admission in literature is considered as a measure of service quality that contributes to the overall effectiveness and experience of the patient's admission process for a specific treatment. The effects of this phenomenon extend to various aspects, such as patient satisfaction.^[34] Prior research on health care service quality has identified hassle-free admission and ease of obtaining admission as crucial factors in hospital service quality. Several previous studies have examined the impact of hospital service quality.^[35]

The hospital admission process has a significant impact on the service quality of the hospital.^[36] Efficient and empathetic patient admissions can reduce anxiety, improve the patient experience, and establish a foundation for overall care. The patient's satisfaction with the overall treatment is contingent upon their happiness and satisfaction with the treatment process, including discharge and admissions. As a result, the patient's intention to revisit the same hospital will increase. The patient's satisfaction with the healthcare institute's overall services and admission criteria is the reason.^[37]

The process of hospital admission has an impact on the level of trust of the patient.^[34] The patient's confidence upon admission can be enhanced through empathetic and efficient care. The hospital's tone was positive, creating a favourable experience. The patient's confidence and trust can be negatively impacted by a lack of compassion, delays, and disorganisation.^[38] Hence, ensuring respectful and efficient admissions is crucial for fostering patient satisfaction and trust in physicians. The hospital's admission process plays a crucial role in the development of trust, as it represents the initial experience for patients. The transparency, compassion, and efficiency of hospital admissions positively impact patient confidence, while delays in the admission process have a negative effect on trust. Hassan *et al.*^[39] emphasised the significance of a streamlined admission process in fostering patient trust. H4: Hospital admission has positive effect on trust.

The patient's trust is a crucial result of their hospital admission experience, ultimately contributing to their overall satisfaction. The admission process of the patient is determined by a series of steps that individuals must complete when being admitted to a hospital. If the process is efficient and the wait time for admission is minimal, patients will develop trust in the hospital's healthcare system. Trust plays a crucial role in ensuring patient satisfaction, as it alleviates the stress of undergoing a lengthy admission

process. Additionally, the procedural plans of the doctors are also accepted by them. On the other hand, if the admission process and experience of the patient is not satisfactory, it can result in a lack of trust and have a negative impact on overall satisfaction. Therefore, trust plays a crucial role in connecting the hospital admission process and satisfaction. In addition, the significant discussion on the mediating role of trust has been proven by the research conducted by Raesi Ziarani *et al.*^[40]. Additionally, according to the SOR model proposed by Mehrabian *et al.*^[13], the hospital admission process serves as a stimulus that fosters trust in the patient. This, in turn, leads to the development of satisfaction as a response.

H5: Trust mediates among hospital admission and satisfaction.

Patient Safety and Privacy and Patient Trust

When it comes to health information systems, one often encounters the pressing issue of security, confidentiality, and privacy.^[41] Due to these challenges, the safety of the patients is at risk. It leads to the disability and injury of the patients. In certain instances, it can also result in fatality.^[42] In literature, privacy is often discussed as the patient's right to safeguard sensitive information from being disclosed to other parties. Furthermore, security is defined as "information protection against unauthorized access, with some including explicit mention of integrity and availability".^[43]

Scholars in the field can define patient safety as the provision of opportunities to patients while ensuring their care by providing accurate information and safeguarding their privacy.^[44] Protecting sensitive patient information is critical for healthcare institutions' well-being. In addition to these details, there are other factors that contribute to patients' safety, such as medical errors and human errors. It is clear that this term is primarily associated with patient information. Managing patient information is crucial for enhancing patient safety and improving the quality of care. The confidentiality of patient information is of utmost importance. It is of utmost importance to safeguard this information from unauthorised access in order to prioritise the privacy and well-being of the patients. Establishing trust with patients is crucial in the healthcare field.^[45] Ensuring the privacy of patients is a fundamental commitment of healthcare providers. It is an agreement between healthcare professionals and patients that any information shared during consultations will be kept strictly confidential, with no unauthorised disclosure to third parties.^[43]

The well-being of patients is of utmost importance for their overall health. The perception of service providers regarding safety greatly impacts the trust of the patients.^[46] Hence, the confidentiality and well-being of patients are intricately connected to their personal information.^[47] In the field of health practices, ensuring the privacy of patients is of utmost importance from a legal standpoint. This element is crucial for establishing trust with patients. If a patient suffers harm due to medical errors, it can significantly erode the level of trust. Ensuring safety is crucial for maintaining trust between physicians and patients. All these factors contribute

to enhancing satisfaction and other outcomes. Ensuring safety not only reduces harm to patients, but also fosters trust. A recent study conducted by Bani Issa *et al.*^[47] found that patients' trust in healthcare providers and physicians can be enhanced by ensuring the security of their information. H6: Safety and privacy has positive effect on trust.

Ensuring the safety of patients is of utmost importance. Essentially, it is crucial to ensure the security of information pertaining to health and personal matters.^[48] Access to this information should be restricted to authorised individuals only. Patients' trust is strengthened when they are assured that their sensitive and private information will be kept confidential. Only authorised individuals will have access to the information. Maintaining the wellbeing of the patient is of utmost importance, as is safeguarding the privacy of their personal information. When trust is established, patients' confidence levels are boosted. However, if confidential patient information is compromised, it can undermine trust and lead to dissatisfaction.^[49] The study conducted by Khan *et al.*^[50] explores the role of trust as a mediator between CRM and Loyalty. Furthermore, when considering the SOR model, the safety and privacy of the patient are key factors that contribute to the development of trust and ultimately lead to satisfaction.

H7: Trust mediates among safety and privacy and satisfaction.

Price Perception as Moderator

If a customer believes that the price they are paying for a product is fair in relation to its quality and comparable products, they will be satisfied with that particular product and the organisation selling it.^[51] In addition, the perception of price is a crucial factor in the context of patients and the healthcare system. Patients will experience greater satisfaction when they perceive that the healthcare services, they receive exceed the cost. Put simply, just like regular customers, patients are also highly price-conscious as they compare prices with other hospitals. When considering which healthcare service to use, the price plays a significant role in the decision-making process.^[52]

Healthcare service providers face increased challenges when there is a limited patient base and a high level of competition. There is a competition among healthcare service providers to offer various benefits to ensure customer satisfaction.^[53] In addition, the importance of pricing cannot be overstated when it comes to satisfying customers. The pricing factor plays a crucial role in making the final decision when it comes to utilising specific services. Occasionally, customers may seek out products or services that come with a higher price tag but offer additional perks.^[54] The cost determined by the organisation or health service provider determines the patient's willingness to pay for the healthcare services. Setting the pricing of healthcare related services can be quite challenging.^[55]

In their research, the study conducted by Khan *et al.*^[56] emphasised the significant role of price perception as a moderator. Healthcare service providers have various strategies at their disposal when it comes to determining

the prices of their services. However, the crucial aspect is the shared agreement on the price between patients and healthcare providers.^[57] There is a strong possibility that patients may seek alternative healthcare facilities if the cost of services is exorbitant. However, if the levels are

too low, it can still have a negative impact.^[58] Put simply, when healthcare service providers prioritise fair pricing, it fosters trust and satisfaction among patients.

H8: Price perception moderates the path of trust and satisfaction.

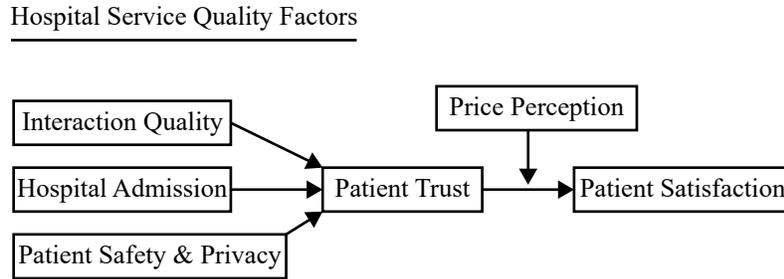


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework.

METHODOLOGY

The target population refers to the group from which the researcher chooses to collect data.^[59] Researchers now prioritise analysing data collected from the target population and studying recent trends.^[60] The focus of this study was on the patients in the hospitals of KSA. In order to gather the necessary data, the researcher made visits to several hospitals and interacted with patients across various sections of the facilities. The goal was to gain insight into the factors that impact patients' satisfaction with the healthcare services offered by hospitals. The researcher gathered the data through direct interaction, employing the purposive sampling technique to select the samples. The purposive sampling technique is highly effective and efficient, ensuring the collection of reliable information about the target audience.^[61] In total, 250 questionnaires were distributed, with a strong emphasis on maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the information provided by each respondent. The researcher outlined the research objective and emphasised that the study's sole focus was on improving the quality of service in hospitals. Information was gathered by conducting a survey using a carefully crafted questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first section focusses on gathering information about the respondents' demographics, while the second section is dedicated to measuring the construct variables.

Measurement

All the scales have good validity and reliability in previous researches, five points Likert scale was used for the measurement of variable, 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree.

Interaction quality measured with four items scale used by Zarei *et al.*^[62]. Patient trust measured with four items scale used by Lien *et al.*^[63]. Patient satisfaction measured with four items scale used by Zarei *et al.*^[62]. Price perception measured with three items scale utilising research of Lai

et al.^[64]. Patient privacy and safety measured with three items scale used by Swain *et al.*^[65]. Admission measured by five items scale used by Swain *et al.*^[65]. After data collection researcher cleaned the data using data screening methodologies for the enhancement and efficiency of the data analysis. Outliers were deleted, missing value analysis was conducted and repeated responses were deleted from analysis.

Analysis

SPSS was used to analyse the data and test the hypothesised model. SPSS allows researchers to analyse multiple hypotheses simultaneously. Furthermore, it serves as a powerful tool for data manipulation, estimation, and management.

Demographics

It is crucial to analyse the demographics of the respondents in order to assess the applicability, validity, and integrity of the research findings.^[66] The analysis of demographics is crucial for ensuring the clarity and practical application of research findings. The study found that 55.6% of the respondents were male patients, while 44.4% were female. Of the respondents, 12.5% were aged between 17 and 27 years, 23.6% were aged between 27 and 37 years, and 25.3% were aged between 37 and 47 years. 21.3% of the individuals fell within the age range of 47 to 57 years. 17.3% of the individuals were aged 57 years or older.

Table 1: Demographic of Respondents.

Categories	Number of Respondents	%age
Gender		
Male	125	55.6%
Female	100	44.4%
Age		
17–27 years	28	12.5%
27– 37 years	53	23.6%
37– 47 years	57	25.3%
47– 57 years	48	21.3%
> 57 years	39	17.3%

Correlation and Descriptive

A correlation table summarises the correlation between construct variables. The correlation table is a useful tool in predictive analysis for efficiently analysing data. The analysis of correlation is effective for understanding the structure of data.^[67]

Table 2: Correlation and Descriptive.

	1	2	3	4	5	α
IQ	1					0.89
PT	0.48**	1				0.78
AD	0.30**	0.29*	1			0.88
PP	0.46**	0.51**	0.39**	1		0.86
PPS	0.38**	0.49**	0.29*	0.41**	1	0.81
PS	0.46*	0.32**	0.56**	0.33**	0.43*	0.79

*Significant at 5% **significant at 1%

The table above indicates significant correlations among all variables. The correlations between IQ and PT (0.48), IQ and AD (0.30), IQ and PP (0.46), IQ and PPS (0.38), PT and PP (0.51), PT and PPS (0.49), PT and PS (0.39), AD and PP (0.39), AD and PS (0.56), PP and PPS (0.39), PP and PS (0.56), and PPS and PS (0.41) are significant at the 1% level. The correlations between IQ and PS, PT and AD, and AD and PPS are significant at the 5% level. All variables exhibit a reliability level exceeding 0.70.^[68]

Factor Loading

CFA (Confirmatory factor analysis) is used to assess the loadings of factors for confirmation purposes. The CFA is used to calculate factor loadings and determine the contribution of individual items to the dependent variable. The researcher performed confirmatory factor analysis using AMOS to analyse the data. The loading of factors should exceed 0.60.^[69]

Table 3: Factor Loadings, Construct Reliability and Validity.

Measure	IQ	PT	PP	PPS	AD	PS	CR	AVE
<i>Interaction Quality</i>							0.94	0.72
<i>IQ1</i>	.881							
<i>IQ2</i>	.824							
<i>IQ3</i>	.890							
<i>IQ4</i>	.789							
<i>Patient Trust</i>							0.92	0.65
<i>PT1</i>		.828						
<i>PT2</i>		.811						
<i>PT3</i>		.792						
<i>PT4</i>		.839						
<i>Price Perception</i>							0.86	0.69
<i>PP1</i>			.789					
<i>PP2</i>			.866					
<i>PP3</i>			.831					
<i>Patient Privacy and Safety</i>							0.86	0.60
<i>PPS1</i>				.725				
<i>PPS2</i>				.844				
<i>PPS3</i>				.619				
<i>PPS4</i>				.887				
<i>Admission</i>							0.90	0.65
<i>AD1</i>					.795			
<i>AD2</i>					.853			
<i>AD3</i>					.880			
<i>AD4</i>					.799			
<i>AD5</i>					.695			
<i>Patient Satisfaction</i>							0.89	0.68
<i>PS1</i>						.754		
<i>PS2</i>						.866		
<i>PS3</i>						.792		
<i>PS4</i>						.891		

Table 3 shows that 7 items have loadings, while 2 factors have loadings below 0.60 and are thus excluded from the analysis. Patient trust was assessed using a 6-item scale, with all factor loadings exceeding 0.60, as defined by Hair *et al.*^[69]. The values obtained were all greater than 0.642 and 0.897. The factors loading for price perception range from 0.789 to 0.866. The privacy and safety of patients were assessed using a 4-item scale, with scores ranging from 0.619 to 0.887. The factor loadings for all items of hospital admission range from 0.695 to 0.880.

The factor loadings for all items of patient satisfaction range from .754 to .891.

Construct reliability and validity

The reliability of results can be assessed using the concept of consistency,^[70] while validity ensures that the items accurately measure the intended constructs of the scale. The assurance of quality and accuracy of a construct relies on both validity and reliability. In order to establish discriminant validity of the construct, it is necessary for

all values on the diagonal to be greater than the squared values of the correlations below the diagonal.^[71]

Table 4: Discriminant Validity.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
IQ	0.72					
PT	0.23**	0.65				
AD	0.09**	0.08*	0.65			
PP	0.21**	0.26**	0.15**	0.69		
PPS	0.14**	0.24**	0.08*	0.17**	0.60	
PS	0.21*	0.10**	0.31**	0.11**	0.18*	0.68

Values of AVE's are at the diagonal while squared correlations below diagonal

The discriminant validity of the construct is explained in Table 4 above. According to the criteria defined by Hair Jr *et al.*^[72], all variables must have AVEs greater than 0.50. According to Hair *et al.*^[73], the construct reliability should exceed 0.70.

All variables have AVE values greater than 0.50: IQ=0.72, PT=0.65, AD=0.65, PP=0.69, PPS=0.60, and PS=0.68. Hence, verify the accuracy of the data. Furthermore, the diagonal values of AVEs are higher than the squared correlations, indicating the presence of discriminant validity.^[71]

Hypothesis Testing

The proposed model was tested using SPSS. The researcher initially tested the direct hypothesis regarding the impact of interaction quality, hospital admission, and patient safety and privacy on patient trust. The study examined the direct influence of patient trust on patient satisfaction. The second stage involved testing the indirect hypotheses, specifically examining the indirect effects of interaction quality, hospital admission, and patient privacy and safety on patient satisfaction through the mediating factor of patient trust. The study examined the impact of perceived price on trust and satisfaction through moderation analysis.

Table 5: Direct Effects.

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Standardized β	Sig	T value
1	Interaction Quality	Patient Trust	0.21	0.000	3.36
	Hospital Admission		0.26	0.000	4.13
	Patient Safety and Privacy		0.42	0.001	7.36
	Patient Trust	Patient Satisfaction	0.47	0.000	8.73

Table 5 shows that all direct effects are significant. Specifically, the interaction quality has a significant positive effect on patient trust ($\beta=0.21$; $P=0.00$). The T-value is 3.36 and $p=0.000$, indicating that the effect size is 0.21 and is significant at the 1% level. Hospital admission has a significant positive effect on trust ($\beta=0.26$, $P=0.00$). The effect size is 0.26 and is statistically significant at the 1%

level, with $p=0.000$ and $T=7.36$. The impact of patient safety and privacy on trust is positive and significant ($\beta=0.42$; $P=0.00$). The result is statistically significant at the 1% level, with a p-value of 0.000 and a test statistic of 7.36. The variable of trust has a positive and significant effect on patient satisfaction ($\beta=0.47$, $P=0.000$). The effect size is 0.47, and the significance level is 1% ($p=0.000$, $T=8.73$).

Table 6: Indirect Effects of Mediation on Job Performance.

	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mediator	Standardized β	Sig	T value
3	Interaction Quality	Patient Satisfaction	Patient Trust	0.09	0.002	4.05
	Hospital Admission			0.12	0.041	2.52
	Patient Safety and Privacy			0.19	0.000	2.98

The relationship between interaction quality and patient satisfaction is positively and significantly mediated by trust ($\beta=0.09$, $p=0.002$, $T=4.05$). The relationship between hospital admission and patient satisfaction is mediated by trust, with a significant positive effect ($\beta=0.12$, $p=0.041$, $T=2.52$). The relationship between patient safety and privacy and patient satisfaction is positively and significantly mediated by trust ($\beta=0.19$,

$p=0.000$, $T=2.98$, significant at 1%).

Moderation Analysis

The researcher utilised the Hayes process macros model^[74] to test the moderation of perceived price on the relationship between trust and patient satisfaction. This model was chosen for its efficiency and effectiveness in calculating moderation.

Table 7: Moderation of Coercive Pressure.

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Moderator	Effects	T-value	P-value	LLCI	ULCI
Patient Trust	Patients satisfaction	Low value of PP	0.29	4.59	0.000	0.1657	0.4239
		High Value of PP	0.46	7.82	0.000	0.2760	0.7653

Above table 7 explain that the patient trust positively significantly moderates the effects of trust on patient satisfaction. At low value of moderator effect magnitude

is 0.29 that is significant $p=0.000$ and the values of LLCI=0.1657 and ULCI= 0.4239, are both in same direction having no zero. At the high value of moderator

effect is 0.46 significant at 1% with $T=7.86$ and $P=0.000$, values of $LLCI=0.2760$ and $ULCI=0.7653$ are in same

direction containing no zero. Thus trust positively moderates the relationship of trust and satisfaction

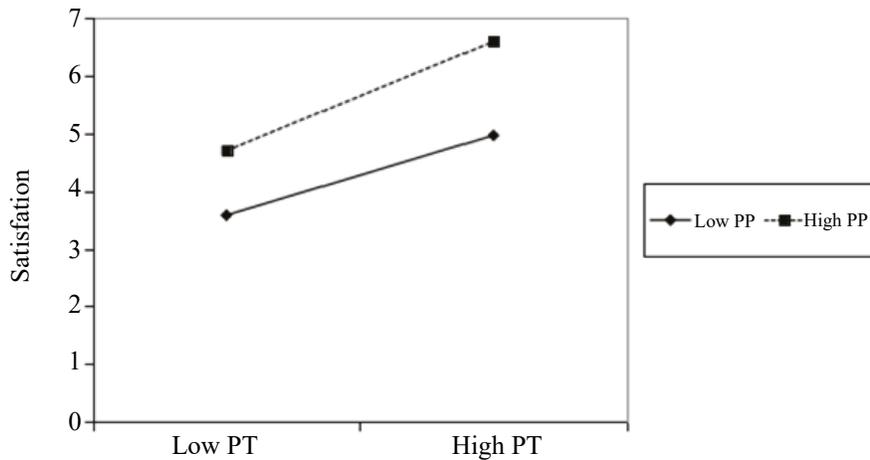


Figure 2: Moderation Testing.

Moderation graph explain the positive moderation of price perception on the relationship of patient trust and satisfaction.

Table 9: Relationship Summary.

	Relationships	Type	Result
1	Patient trust positively significantly effects the patient satisfaction.	Direct	Supported
2	Interaction quality positively significantly affects the patient trust.	Direct	Supported
3	Hospital admission positively significantly affects the patient trust.	Direct	Supported
4	Patient privacy and safety positively significantly affects the patient trust.	Direct	Supported
5	Patient trust positively significantly mediates the relationship between interaction quality and the patient satisfaction.	Indirect	Supported
6	Patient trust positively significantly mediates the relationship between patient safety and privacy and the patient satisfaction.	Indirect	Supported
7	Patient trust positively significantly mediates the relationship between hospital admission and the patient satisfaction.	Indirect	Supported
8	Perceive price positively moderates the effect of patient trust on the patient satisfaction.	Indirect	Supported

DISCUSSION

Patients play a crucial role in the healthcare sector as they are considered valuable customers. Thus, it is crucial to prioritise their satisfaction. This study aimed to analyse the hospital service quality factors that contribute to patient trust and satisfaction. Patient satisfaction is a significant emotion. Patient satisfaction with hospital services is positively correlated with receiving care that exceeds expectations. The study's findings suggest that trust in patients positively impacts patient satisfaction. Aladwan *et al.*^[21] also obtained a similar result in their previous study. One possible explanation for these findings is that patients perceive their physician as the most competent option. Furthermore, the physician is administering optimal treatment to their patients. However, the hospital is also providing excellent medical service. The study participants also believe that the hospital they selected for their medical treatment is highly dependable. Ultimately, they expressed complete confidence in the hospital's services. These patients feel satisfied with the hospital's overall services due to these trust factors. The patients express satisfaction with their choice of this hospital. The individuals believe that their choice to be admitted to this hospital was prudent.

The study findings indicate a significant positive effect of interaction quality on patient trust. Multiple factors may account for the observed results in this study. One possible explanation for these findings is that patients perceive physicians as having their best interests in mind during examinations. In addition, physicians consistently prioritise the emotional well-being of their patients during their visits. Furthermore, healthcare providers prioritise the beliefs of patients and refrain from expressing any views that contradict those beliefs. The hospital's physicians and staff are knowledgeable about the various needs of patients. The doctors and hospital staff demonstrate friendly and polite behaviour when interacting with patients. As a result of these gestures, patients develop trust in physicians and hospital staff. This finding aligns with the previous literature by Chen *et al.*^[30].

The results of this study indicate that the trust level of patients is significantly influenced by factors such as safety and privacy. The patients are confident in the hospital's provision of sufficient hygienic care. In addition, the hospital has implemented a commendable procedure to effectively safeguard patients against infections. It also emphasised the importance of safety measures in hospitals, such as lifts, hand railings, and ramps, to prevent patients from falling.

Additionally, the hospital management has implemented robust security measures to safeguard the personal belongings of patients and prevent any instances of theft or robbery. They also believe that patient confidentiality and privacy are properly maintained. Overall, the patients express contentment with the safety and privacy measures implemented by hospitals. The findings of Bani Issa *et al.*^[47] align with the results of the present study.

Being admitted to the hospital marks the initial encounter between the patient and the healthcare facility. This marks the commencement of the entire journey. If patients do not have a positive experience during their admission, it may lead to a negative perception of the hospital's services. The results of the current study indicate that the admission process has a beneficial impact on the patients' trust. Patients and their loved ones found it convenient to schedule appointments with the doctor for treatment. Overall, the process was straightforward for the hospital management to follow. The admission process established by the management is considered to be straightforward and efficient. Several patients in the emergency sections expressed that they found it convenient to access emergency services from the healthcare service provider. In addition, obtaining beds, private rooms, and wards is a straightforward process. When beds are available, the hospital staff is highly cooperative in assigning them, whether it's in the ward or a private room. In addition, the transition from outpatient department to the private room or wards is also seamless and straightforward. The study conducted by Hassan *et al.*^[39] also yielded similar results in their research.

Ultimately, the study's findings confirm the significant influence of price perception on trust and satisfaction. The pricing of the hospital helps to improve patient satisfaction with the hospital services. The connection between trust and satisfaction is growing stronger as patients perceive the services they receive from the hospital as reasonable in relation to the price. They also believe that the medical cost they are paying at the hospital sets their services apart from competitors. In addition, they believe that the hospital's medical costs are quite fair. Due to the increased pricing, individuals have expressed a willingness to revisit the hospital if necessary, indicating a positive intention to seek further medical care. The hospital's patients will share positive feedback through word of mouth. They will choose the same hospital for themselves due to the affordable medical expenses, and for the same rationale, they will recommend this hospital to other patients from their social circle. The study participants also mentioned that the hospital provides various treatment options. They offer a wide range of medical expertise and can treat various conditions. The hospital also offers lab facilities to patients. Most of the services are conveniently available within the hospital. Consequently, the patients' trust and satisfaction will be enhanced. Increased trust levels will have a positive impact on patient satisfaction. In previous research, Khan *et al.*^[56] also found evidence supporting the positive moderating role of price perception in their studies.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study addresses several theoretical and practical gaps, which has significant implications. The proposed model of the study is supported by the SOR model,^[13] which has significant theoretical implications. In previous discussions, the SOR model has explored various factors related to service quality. This study has expanded upon the existing research on hospital admission, safety and privacy, and interactive quality as factors in the SOR model. In addition, the SOR model examines satisfaction as the response (R) in relation to customers or employees. The satisfaction of patients is often overlooked. In this current research, we address the gap by examining patients' satisfaction as a measure of response (R).

Regarding practical implications, the study's findings offer guidance to hospital decision-makers on how to improve patients' emotional well-being by prioritising factors such as admission procedures and staff training. Training of the patients will provide guidelines to the staff and physicians to interact with patients in a respectful manner. In addition, the establishment of trust among patients will be fostered through a focus on ensuring the safety and privacy of each individual. Hospitals should prioritise enhancing their infrastructure to ensure the security of patient information. The study findings emphasise the significance of the organisational process in ensuring the safety of patient information. Only authorised individuals will have access to the patients' information. The administrators of the hospitals should ensure that the admission process is efficient to foster a favourable perception. The findings of the study can be utilised by researchers for future studies as well.

Limitations and Future Guidelines

Although considerable effort was invested in this study, there are a few limitations that should be acknowledged in the present research. The data for the study was collected from patients who were admitted to hospitals in KSA. It is recommended to include data from patients in other countries, such as Jordan and Egypt. In addition, the current study examined how various factors related to service quality affect patient satisfaction. It is suggested that the proposed model has the potential to be extended to the revisit intention. This is because the willingness to reconsider one's intentions forms the foundation of patients' loyalty to the hospital. Having a comprehensive understanding of loyalty factors is crucial for hospitals from a business perspective.

In the present study, the researchers also explored the role of price perception as a moderator. Technology in social media plays a crucial role in providing information in the modern era. Thus, it is recommended to investigate the moderating role of e-WOM in the current model. An analysis of the study was conducted using SPSS. Future studies should consider utilising PROCESS MACROS, a more advanced analysis tool available through SPSS. Ultimately, the sampling strategy employed in this study was purposive sampling. For future studies of this nature, it is recommended to gather data using stratified random sampling.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported through the Ambitious Funding track by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [Grant A509]

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Table: Details of Items of Variables.

S.No	Variables	Items	Scaling	Reference
1	Interaction Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having patients' best interest at heart • Attention to the patients' beliefs and emotions • Understanding the specific needs of patients • Polite and friendly dealing of personnel with patients • I believe the physicians in this hospital offer the best treatment for me 	4	Zarei <i>et al.</i> ^[75]
2	Patient Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This hospital provides the best medical care for me • This hospital is reliable • Overall, I fully trust this hospital • Overall satisfaction with the services provided by the hospital 	4	Lien <i>et al.</i> ^[63]
3	Patient Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction of selecting this hospital for hospitalization • Making a wise decision for being hospitalized in this hospital • Positive feeling about relationship with this hospital • The medical cost of this hospital allows me to distinguish its services from other hospitals 	4	Zarei <i>et al.</i> ^[62]
4	Price Perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I think the medical cost is reasonable, I will have a higher willingness to visit this hospital. • I will prefer this hospital because the medical cost is reasonable and there are many lines of treatments in this hospital. 	3	Lai <i>et al.</i> ^[64]
5	Patient Privacy and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate hygienic care and procedure to prevent infections. • Presence of safety measures like ramps, hand rails, elevators to prevent fall • Adequate security to prevent theft of personal belongings • Maintenance of patient's privacy and confidentiality. • Convenience in getting appointment with doctors • Prompt and simple admission process 	4	Swain <i>et al.</i> ^[65]
6	Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of availing emergency service of the hospital • Short and simple process of allocation of beds or wards • Smooth transition from OPD to wards 	5	Swain <i>et al.</i> ^[65]