



Analysis of Health Workers' Professionalism in Improving Service Quality

Apriyaldi Monoarfa*, Lindanur Sipatu, Rosida Adam, Arie kurniawan

Universitas Tadulako, Indonesia

Email : apriyaldimonoarfa4@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i6.1418>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Quality of Service, Health Services, Professionalism

***Corresponding Author**

This study aims to explore the influence of hospital service quality on patient satisfaction at Ampana Regional Hospital, focusing on the role of healthcare professionals in improving this quality. Using a qualitative case study design, this study analyzed the five SERVQUAL dimensions reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles that influence patient satisfaction in the inpatient ward. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with ten informants and participant observation. The results showed that services at Ampana Regional Hospital generally met patient expectations, particularly in terms of reliability and responsiveness. However, there were still shortcomings in initial communication regarding hospital facilities and a lack of written information, such as leaflets. This study also highlighted the importance of therapeutic communication and empathetic care in improving patient satisfaction. Practical implications of this study include the importance of hospitals maintaining facility quality and improving communication to enhance the patient experience. At the same Time, theoretically, it strengthens the SERVQUAL model in the context of hospital services.

Article History:

Received: August 2025; Revised: September 2025; Accepted: November 2025

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Monoarfa, A., Sipatu, L., Adam, R., & Kurniawan, A. (2025). Analysis of Health Workers' Professionalism in Improving Service Quality. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(6), 2681-2693.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of public services, particularly in the health sector, is an important indicator in assessing government performance (Latupeirissa et al., 2024). Hospitals, as healthcare providers, play a vital role in ensuring the public receives services that meet standards (Asamoah, 2025). Good service quality leads to patient satisfaction, which builds trust in healthcare institutions (Tessema et al., 2024). This study aims to assess the influence of hospital service quality on patient satisfaction, focusing on the role of healthcare workers in improving this quality. Optimal service quality will enhance positive public perception, while poor service can damage the hospital's image (Chen et al., 2024).

The public is often dissatisfied with the quality of hospital services, especially during inpatient care. Common problems include delays in providing information, lack of attention from healthcare workers, and suboptimal communication between medical personnel and patients (Holmer et al., 2023). Uncertainty regarding follow-up care after hospital discharge is also a problem, leading to patient dissatisfaction even when service standards are met (Omonaiye et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of research exploring the factors influencing service quality and the relationship between healthcare professionals and patients, in order to improve patient satisfaction.

Field observations indicate a discrepancy between patient expectations and the reality they receive. Despite good medical care, many patients feel that explanations regarding medical procedures or follow-up care are inadequate (Mulaku et al., 2023). This lack of clear communication leads to confusion regarding the steps to take after hospital discharge. This suboptimal communication exacerbates the problem and decreases patient satisfaction (Atinga et al., 2024). Therefore, improvements in therapeutic communication and the provision of clearer information are essential to improve service quality (Amara et al., 2024).

Previous research has shown that the quality of healthcare services is highly dependent on effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients (Sharkiya, 2023). Sani (2024) stated that good communication increases patient satisfaction, yet many medical personnel do not provide optimal information. Krismanto & Irianto (2024) emphasized the importance of prompt and responsive service in inpatient care. However, this study focuses more on aspects of therapeutic communication in specific phases, which have received less attention in previous studies, making an important contribution to understanding the role of communication in inpatient care.

While numerous studies examine the quality of hospital care, few specifically examine therapeutic communication in inpatient care. This study aims to fill this gap by highlighting factors that influence service quality, particularly communication between patients and healthcare professionals, and its impact on patient satisfaction. This research is expected to provide a better understanding of hospital service standards and how their implementation can improve service quality and patient satisfaction.

This study provides novelty by exploring the role of therapeutic communication in improving service quality, particularly in inpatient care. The main focus of the study is to analyze how improved communication between healthcare professionals and patients can contribute to patient satisfaction, an area not widely discussed in previous studies. This research will provide important insights into the importance of communication in improving the

quality of hospital care and is expected to inform hospital policies to improve overall healthcare delivery.

The primary question addressed is how therapeutic communication between healthcare professionals and patients can impact the quality of hospital care and contribute to patient satisfaction. This research will identify the relationship between communication quality and patient satisfaction and provide recommendations for improving healthcare professionals' communication skills. These findings will also be relevant for developing healthcare professional education curricula, ensuring that therapeutic communication is an integral part of their training, to improve both service quality and patient satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative case study approach to understand the phenomenon of service quality at Ampana Regional Hospital, focusing on the professionalism of healthcare workers and its influence on patient perceptions and satisfaction. The case study design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of interactions between patients and healthcare workers, as well as the factors that influence service quality in the hospital. Ampana Regional Hospital was chosen as the research location because it is a primary healthcare facility in the area, facing challenges in providing adequate services amidst limited resources.

Data collection techniques involved in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews were conducted with seven informants representing various perspectives, including patients and hospital staff, using a purposive sampling technique. Participant observation was conducted to observe direct interactions between healthcare workers and patients. These two techniques were chosen to obtain in-depth data on patient experiences and perceptions, as well as social phenomena occurring in the field, providing richer insights into the quality of service provided.

Data analysis was conducted using the Nvivo 12 Plus application for Windows to systematically manage qualitative data. The analysis process followed interactive stages: first, data condensation to filter relevant information; second, data reduction by grouping data into specific themes; third, data display in an organized form such as a table or diagram to facilitate analysis; and fourth, data verification to ensure the validity and validity of the data by checking consistency between interviews, observations, and documentation. This process ensures the accuracy and reliability of research findings that describe phenomena in the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with ten informants selected using a purposive sampling technique. The informants consisted of seven inpatients who had received healthcare services at Ampana Regional Hospital, two nurses working in the inpatient ward, and one ward manager. The selection of informants was based on their direct experience with healthcare services at the hospital, both as recipients and providers. The classification of the number of informants can be seen in the following Table 1,

Table 1. Informant Classification

Informant Code	Age	Role	Type of Service
1	46 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
2	36 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
3	60 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
4	28 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
5	29 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
6	40 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
7	30 years	Patient's Family	Inpatient Services
8	43 years	Nurse	Providing inpatient care services
9	30 years	Nurse	Providing inpatient care services
10	46 years	Person in Charge of Inpatient Care	Supervise and coordinate inpatient services

To identify the main focus in the research data, researchers used Word Frequency Query analysis, a feature that analyzes text and calculates how often certain words appear in the interview transcript data set, using Word Cloud visualization, which is a visualization of a collection of words with the highest frequency of occurrence in a discussion topic. After the information obtained, researchers identified themes and subthemes which were then analyzed using software in the Nvivo 12 plus application for Windows. The results of the analysis that have been managed can be seen and described as follows:

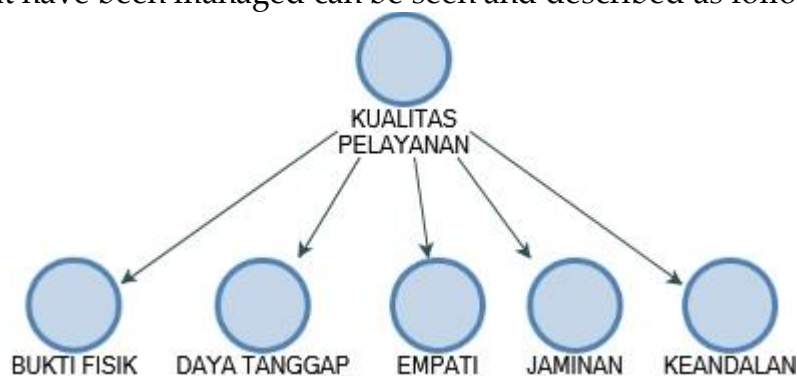


Figure 2. SERVQUAL Model

The quality of healthcare services in the inpatient wards of Ampana Regional Hospital through the five main dimensions of the SERVQUAL model: tangibles, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and reliability. Each dimension covers important aspects of service assessment, such as facility conditions, speed of response from medical personnel, patient attention, healthcare personnel competence, and consistency of care according to procedures. These five dimensions are interrelated and together provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of care patients receive at Ampana Regional Hospital.

Reliability

Reliability in the SERVQUAL model assesses the ability of healthcare workers to provide services that are accurate, timely, and in accordance with procedures. At Ampana Regional Hospital, reliability means that medical personnel carry out their duties professionally, without errors, and in a timely manner in every medical procedure. This dimension is important for assessing the consistency and responsibility of medical personnel in meeting patient needs. Reliable service reflects the professionalism of nurses and healthcare workers in carrying out their duties in a timely and error-free manner, a key indicator in evaluating the quality of hospital services.

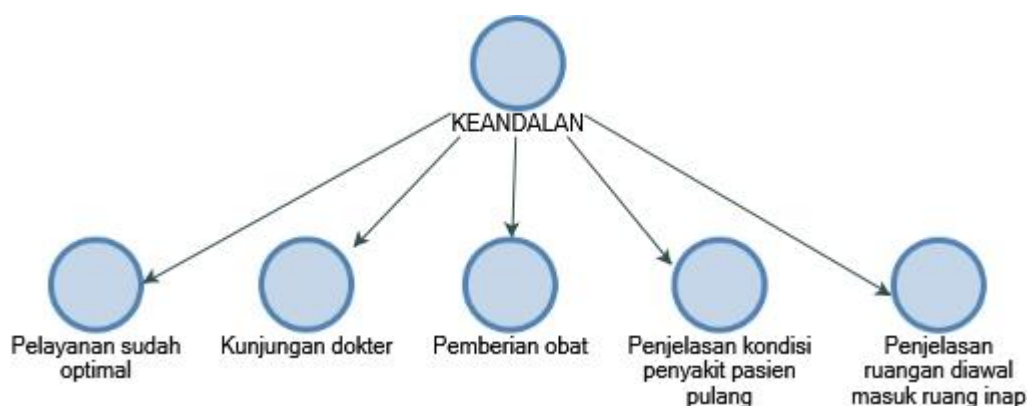


Figure 3. Reliability

The majority of patients at Ampana Regional Hospital felt the service they received was optimal, prompt, friendly, and in accordance with procedures, reflecting the hospital's reliability in providing timely care. However, some patients felt they lacked detailed information about hospital facilities, such as the pharmacy or laboratory, upon their initial admission. Although basic facilities were explained, more detailed information was only provided when needed. The lack of written information suggests room for improvement in initial communication and the delivery of more comprehensive information to help patients understand treatment procedures their health after discharge.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness in the SERVQUAL model reflects the readiness of healthcare workers to respond quickly and appropriately to patient needs or complaints. In inpatient services at Ampana Regional Hospital, this dimension indicates the speed and accuracy of healthcare workers' responses to patient complaints, both medical and non-medical. A quick and appropriate response significantly impacts patient satisfaction and their perception of service quality. Response speed also reflects the level of professionalism of healthcare workers in handling patient complaints, serving as an important indicator in assessing the quality of hospital services.

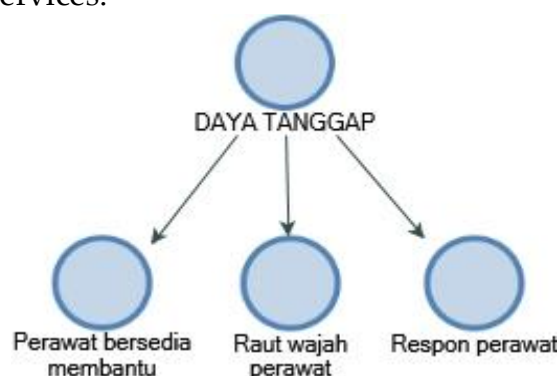


Figure 4. Responsiveness

The majority of patients at Ampana Regional Hospital are satisfied with the speed and responsiveness of the healthcare staff, especially the nurses, who are always present with a friendly and responsive attitude. Nurses are committed to providing fast, responsive, and courteous service and regularly monitor patients' conditions to ensure that complaints are addressed promptly. The hospital's monitoring system ensures that all patient complaints are addressed professionally, ensuring patient comfort and safety. Interviews and observations indicate that the healthcare staff at Ampana Regional Hospital exhibit excellent responsiveness, which significantly contributes to patient satisfaction and positive perceptions of the hospital's service quality.

Guarantee

Assurance in the SERVQUAL model refers to patients' sense of security and trust in the ability of healthcare professionals to provide care. This aspect encompasses medical competence, courtesy, clear communication, and the ability to build trusting relationships with patients. Good assurance plays a crucial role in creating positive perceptions of the hospital and increasing patients' sense of security during treatment, which in turn directly impacts patient satisfaction and their perception of the quality of hospital care.

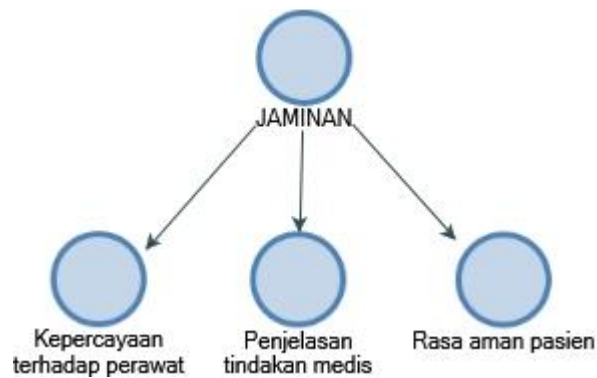


Figure 5. Guarantee

Although medical explanations are often brief, patients at Ampana Regional Hospital feel reassured and trust the medical staff, thanks to the hospital's reputation and previous positive experiences. Explanations, adequately tailored to the situation and the number of patients, do not diminish their sense of security, which is supported by regular monitoring and the competent attitude of the nurses. While medical information is not always detailed, clear communication, professionalism, and attention to detail foster a sense of security and trust among patients, contributing to their satisfaction with the quality of hospital care.

Empathy

Empathy in the SERVQUAL model refers to the ability of healthcare workers to understand and genuinely respond to patients' emotional needs. This aspect encompasses caring attitudes through friendly speech, support, and attention to the patient's physical and psychological condition. Empathy is crucial for creating patient comfort and trust in hospital services, enhancing the emotional connection between healthcare workers and patients, and positively impacting perceptions of service quality. This empathetic attitude contributes significantly to a positive patient experience in the hospital.

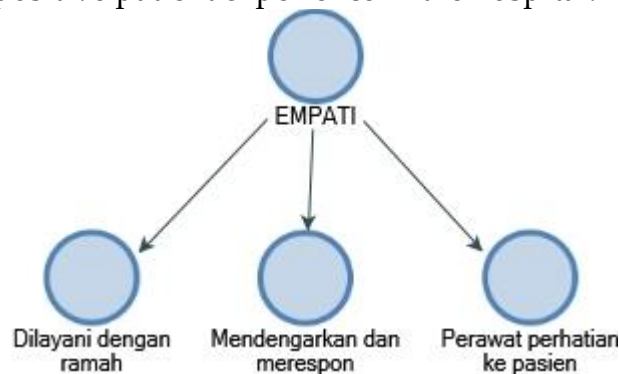


Figure 6. Empathy

The majority of patients at Ampana Regional Hospital felt well cared for by nurses, who focused not only on physical needs but also provided emotional care, such as encouragement, careful listening, and friendly service. Healthcare workers emphasized that caring for patients is a professional responsibility, regardless of social status. Nurses actively listened to complaints and responded quickly, creating a comfortable and safe environment. While the primary focus was on physical conditions, emotional care remained a priority, demonstrating that empathy and therapeutic communication play a crucial role in improving the quality of care and patient satisfaction.

Physical evidence

The tangibles dimension in the SERVQUAL model encompasses the condition of facilities, infrastructure, and the appearance of medical personnel, which are directly visible to patients. This includes cleanliness, comfort, and adequate supporting facilities. Good tangibles reflect the hospital's readiness to provide a clean, comfortable, and professional environment, as well as adequate medical equipment. The neat and professional appearance of medical personnel also strengthens patient trust, provides a sense of security, and contributes to patient satisfaction with hospital services.

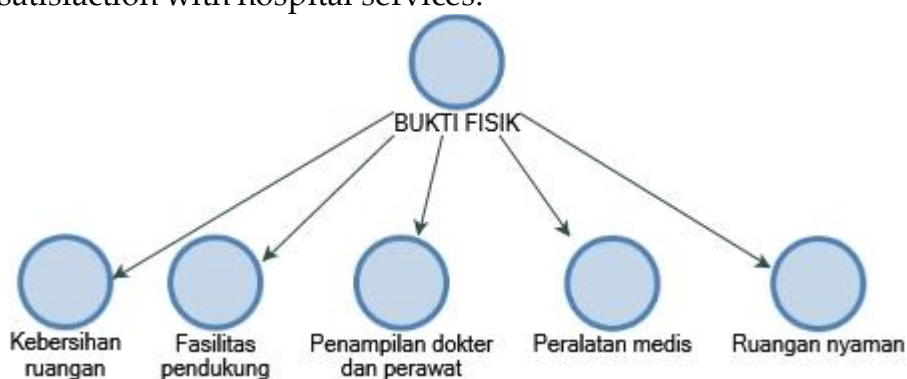


Figure 7. Physical evidence

Interviews and observations indicate that the cleanliness and comfort of the inpatient rooms at Ampana Regional Hospital are well maintained, significantly contributing to patient comfort. Rooms are cleaned twice daily, and amenities such as fans, toilets, beds, and trash cans are in good condition. Although some medical equipment requires maintenance, the overall facility supports optimal service delivery. Healthcare workers maintain a neat and professional appearance, reinforcing the hospital's positive image. Despite these shortcomings, the cleanliness, comfort, and professionalism of healthcare workers play a significant role in increasing patient satisfaction and positive perceptions of the hospital's service quality.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that hospital services, based on the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, were well received by patients. Findings regarding service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles received by patients align closely with the SERVQUAL theory developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (Julianty, 2025). For example, regarding reliability, this study indicates that patients perceived services were provided according to procedures and in a timely manner, consistent with findings in the literature that consistency and timeliness in medical services are important aspects of patient satisfaction (Alibrandi et al., 2023; Kraiwanit & Limna, 2023). However, there was a small discrepancy related to the lack of detailed explanations regarding hospital facilities, which could potentially reduce patient understanding (Witkowski et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of improving initial communication regarding hospital facilities, which aligns with the theory that clear and complete information plays a crucial role in patient satisfaction (Chowdhury et al., 2024).

Regarding responsiveness, interview results indicated that patients were satisfied with the prompt and friendly response of nurses (Idealistiana, 2023). This is consistent with literature findings, which show that the speed and accuracy of medical personnel's response to patient needs are key factors in enhancing positive perceptions of hospital services (Liet al., 2024). Nurses at Ampana Regional Hospital not only responded quickly to patient complaints but also regularly monitored patients' conditions, reflecting their professionalism. This aligns with previous research findings highlighting the importance of responsiveness in improving patient satisfaction and demonstrating that ongoing monitoring is crucial in ensuring good service quality (Han et al., 2023).

Regarding assurance, even though medical explanations were often brief, patients still felt safe and trusted in the medical personnel treating them (Fionda et al., 2024). These findings align with literature emphasizing that the sense of security and trust provided by medical personnel significantly influences patient perceptions of hospital service quality (Groves et al., 2023). Patient trust in the competence of medical personnel, although not always in-depth, is fostered by clear communication and professionalism demonstrated by medical personnel (Mohd Salim et al., 2023). This supports the SERVQUAL theory, which states that a sense of security, fostered through the competence and professionalism of medical personnel, is key to creating a positive patient experience (Ali et al., 2024).

Regarding empathy, research findings indicate that patients feel emotionally cared for by medical personnel, with nurses actively listening to their concerns and responding promptly (Efthymiou, 2024). This attitude aligns

with literature indicating that empathy in medical care not only improves patient physical comfort but also strengthens the emotional bond between patients and healthcare providers (Nembhard et al., 2023; Saharani & Diana, 2024). At Ampana Regional Hospital, empathy is an integral part of care, contributing to increased patient satisfaction. This aligns with the SERVQUAL concept, which considers empathy a crucial dimension in creating positive patient relationships (Cadet et al., 2023).

Physical evidence indicates that the cleanliness and comfort of the inpatient wards at Ampana Regional Hospital are well-maintained, significantly contributing to patient comfort. Although some medical equipment requires maintenance, overall, the medical and supporting facilities support optimal service (Massimino Ucin et al., 2024). This finding aligns with the literature stating that the physical condition of a hospital, including cleanliness, facilities, and the appearance of medical personnel, is a key indicator in determining patient satisfaction (Alibrandi et al., 2023). The practical implication of this finding is the importance of hospitals continuing to maintain facilities and cleanliness, as well as improving the quality of medical equipment, to maintain a positive image of the hospital in the eyes of patients. As a theoretical implication, this study strengthens the SERVQUAL model in the context of hospital services, highlighting the importance of the five dimensions in determining patient satisfaction holistically.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study revealed that the quality of service at Ampana Regional Hospital, based on the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, generally met patient expectations, particularly in terms of reliability, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, and tangibles. One of the most important findings was the importance of personalized attention provided by medical personnel, which addressed not only patients' physical needs but also their emotional aspects. Prompt, friendly, and procedurally sound service, along with clear, though sometimes limited, communication, fostered a sense of security and trust among patients. The key takeaway from this study is that effective communication, empathetic attention, and improved physical facilities are key to increasing patient satisfaction and fostering positive relationships between patients and medical personnel. This research not only confirms existing theory but also offers insight into the importance of balancing verbal and nonverbal communication in creating quality medical services. Furthermore, this study provides empirical evidence regarding the influence of SERVQUAL dimensions on patient satisfaction, which can serve as a reference for other hospitals in improving their service quality.

The main limitation of this study is the limited number of informants (only ten), which may not fully represent the entire patient and medical staff population. Future research is recommended to expand the number of informants and expand the scope of the study to other hospitals to better represent the diversity of patient experiences, also explore the role of written information, in improving patients' understanding of their medical care.

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