
Service Quality of Hospitals : A Bibliographic Review

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Abstract

Hospital service quality has emerged as a critical area of healthcare research, driven by increasing patient expectations, policy reforms, and the need for competitive differentiation. This study analyses 768 Scopus-indexed journal articles published between 1951 and 2024, the longitudinal scope captures the evolution of key themes over seven decades of the research domain allowing a robust analysis. The data has been retrieved using a structured search strategy targeting publications with "service," "quality," and "hospital" in the title. Co-authorship, keyword co-occurrence, bibliographic coupling, and co-citation analyses have been performed to uncover collaboration patterns, thematic clusters, and influential contributions using VOSviewer (v1.6.20). Findings indicate significant growth in research output post-2000, with the U.S., India, and Iran as top contributors. Key thematic clusters reflect a mature yet evolving domain encompassing human-centric care, healthcare delivery, methodological approaches, healthcare systems, and economic considerations. The network analyses highlight influential authors and collaboration groups driving the intellectual landscape. This study provides a comprehensive map of hospital service quality research, presenting critical insights into its evolution and identifying promising avenues for future interdisciplinary exploration.

Keywords: Service Quality, Bibliometric Analysis, VOSviewer, Hospital

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Introduction:

Healthcare services play a vital role in determining a country's social welfare and economic productivity, making the sector one of the most critical priorities for both governments and citizens (Coutinho et al., 2019). Beyond its contribution to national well-being, the healthcare industry also generates substantial revenue from domestic and international sources, reinforcing its significance as a service sector. The uniqueness of healthcare lies in the severity and complexity of medical cases, where the stakes are high, and patients are often willing to invest significant financial resources in pursuit of quality treatment (Ahmed et al., 2017). In such situation, quality becomes a key differentiator and a source of competitive advantage (Yeilada & Direktör, 2010).

The concept of service quality in healthcare has evolved over decades, with contributions by scholars such as Gronroos (1984), Lehtinen & Lehtinen (1991), and Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) laying the groundwork for its measurement and interpretation. Later contributions, such as SERVPERF by Cronin & Taylor (1992), emphasized performance-based assessment of service quality. In the healthcare context, while several studies have assessed service quality from clinical or administrative standpoints (Asnawi et al., 2019; Almomani et al., 2020), there is growing consensus that patients' perceptions offer more reliable insights into service effectiveness (Ibrahim, 2020). While much research has investigated healthcare service quality conceptually and empirically, less attention has been paid to understanding how this field has evolved over time from a bibliometric perspective. In recent years, bibliometric analysis has emerged as a valuable tool for systematically examining research trends, productivity, and scholarly influence across disciplines. However, within the domain of service quality research, there remains an incomplete understanding of how the field has developed and evolved over time, since the inception of the concept. Although several bibliometric studies have explored aspects of service quality, most fail to provide a comprehensive mapping of its intellectual landscape-particularly regarding influential authors, key journals, major themes, collaboration strength, and thematic shifts across decades. Thus, the following research questions have been developed:

1. How has research on hospital service quality evolved over time in terms of publication trends and patterns?
2. Which research papers, authors, and journals have been most influential in shaping this field based on citation analysis?
3. What are the major co-authorship collaboration patterns among researchers working on hospital service quality?
4. What are the key thematic clusters identified through keyword co-occurrence, and how have these themes evolved over time?
5. What are the bibliographic coupling and co-citation relationships among authors and sources in hospital service quality research, and what do they reveal about the intellectual structure of this domain?

The present study employs a bibliometric tool i.e., VOSviewer to map research development in hospital service quality. The study aims to analyse the depth and breadth of existing literature, identify major contributors and research clusters, and suggest future directions for advancing this field.

Review of Literature

The concept of service quality has undergone an extensive theoretical development and subsequently has gone through several empirical testing all over the world since the past few decades. The concept of service quality has seen tremendous development in various sectors providing services like hospitality, hospital, restaurants, airlines, etc. The foundational seminal work by Grönroos (1984) established quality as a multidimensional construct comprising functional and technical aspect of service delivery. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) developed the most notable work where service quality could be measured using the measurement model SERVQUAL. Since then, based on the SERVQUAL, several other models measuring the service quality in different sectors have been developed by notable scholars leading to further development of the field of service quality like EduQUAL for education sector (Mahapatra & Khan, 2007), LODSERV for lodging industry (Knutson, et al, 1990), DINESERV for restaurants (Knutson et al, 1996), HEALTHQUAL (Lee, 2017), and HOSPITALQUAL (Itumalla, 2014) for healthcare sector.

In Healthcare sector context, service quality has been examined using various instruments like HEALTHQUAL, HOSPITALQUAL, PubHosQUAL, etc. These models have been developed to assess patients' perceptions of service delivery. Empirical studies consistently confirm that service quality perceptions are a strong predictor of patient satisfaction and behavioral intentions such as hospital revisits and word-of-mouth recommendations (Almomani et al., 2020; Asnawi et al., 2019). Despite rich empirical contributions, service quality in healthcare as a body of research lacks holistic view of the global landscape. Moreover, the integration of the service quality concept in healthcare sector being at a nascent stage, very little efforts have been made to systematically map the research trends. Since then bibliometric analysis has gained traction employing bibliometric tools like VOSviewer, Biblioshiny, Bibliometrix, etc.

Recent bibliometric studies have shed valuable light on the evolving landscape of hospital service quality research. Ali et al. (2021) conducted a bibliometric study on Scopus-indexed publications from 1969 to 2019, analyzing global patterns in research on healthcare service quality using VOSviewer and Bibliometrix. The study revealed rapid growth in service quality publications post-2000, emphasizing the prominence of SERVQUAL-based studies, operational performance, and technology interventions. Valencia-Arias et al. (2018) observe a similar pattern, noting widespread reliance on the SERVQUAL framework yet signaling the need for novel approaches beyond traditional models. This aligns with Fadhal and Dioso's (2025) focus on nursing

service quality, patient safety, and professional development, underscoring diverse but interconnected research domains. However, Yas et al. (2020) performed a bibliometric review of 2,782 Scopus indexed publications from 2009 to 2019 focusing on service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. The study remind us that while theoretical connections between service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty are well established, important nuances in empirical validation remain.

Meanwhile, Afriyanti et al. (2024) zoomed in on patient-centric factors such as satisfaction and inpatient room standards, showing that these practical aspects dominate much of the current discourse. Marlina et al. (2024) addressed this by linking service quality to physician performance determinants such as competence, communication, and staffing, highlighting contexts like India and Indonesia as research hotspots. This prompts us to consider geographic disparities in research productivity and thematic focus. Among such patient centric studies, Wilanda et al. (2024) focused more closely on hospital performance management, using co-authorship analysis to identify influential research groups working on technology integration and quality management. This suggests that collaboration patterns may significantly impact how innovations diffuse across the healthcare sector. Yarmak and Rolnik-Sadowska (2022) analyzed a massive dataset of over 25,000 Scopus-indexed publications (2012-2022) to explore research themes on public service quality and healthcare service using VOSviewer. The study revealed thematic clusters that directly connect to hospital service quality, and pointed out interesting underexplored areas like digital innovation and citizen engagement.

Previous bibliometric analyses highlighted the evolution of concept service quality of hospital and have illuminated important thematic patterns, influential authors, and collaboration networks but are yet to fully integrate these insights into a comprehensive, long-term mapping of hospital service quality research. This fragmentation calls for the need of holistic bibliometric explorations that highlight systematic and longitudinal examination of the field. To overcome existing gaps, this study utilizes the bibliometric software VOSviewer to systematically analyze the intellectual structure, collaboration networks, and thematic evolution of hospital service quality research from its inception in 1951 through 2024 by systematically identifying dominant research clusters, emerging topics, and influential authors and documents, and provide a quantitative and visual understanding of the field's development.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the trend and pattern of publications of research work on service quality of hospitals over the years.

2. To identify the influential research papers in this study area on the basis of citation.
3. To study the co-authorship collaborations, co-occurrence patterns of keywords, bibliographic coupling and co-citation relationships among authors.

Research Methodology

In this study, literature on service quality in hospital settings has been collected from the Scopus Core Collection database maintained by Elsevier. Scopus has been selected for its comprehensive indexing of peer-reviewed journals across disciplines, particularly in healthcare and social sciences. A structured search has been conducted using the keywords "service" and "quality" in conjunction with "hospital" within the title field. This initial search has yielded 912 records spanning from 1951 to 2024. The results reveal that documents of 1951 has been the earliest available indexed record which can aptly portray the evolution of the hospital service quality concept. After applying a series of refinement criteria-including limiting the publication stage to final publications, restricting the source type to journals, and selecting only English-language documents, the dataset has been narrowed to 774 records. This refinement has been done to ensure quality, reliability and standardisation or accessibility of the documents within our database. Further filtering for document type has resulted in 768 journal articles excluding conference proceedings. These 768 articles have formed the basis for subsequent bibliometric analysis. The selection has focused on ensuring high-quality, peer-reviewed research, excluding conference proceedings and non-English texts to maintain consistency. The filtered dataset has been analyzed for publication trends, key journals, leading authors, and leading country. The data tables have been developed using Microsoft Excel, and visual bibliometric maps have been generated using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20) to examine the Co-Authorship, Co-Occurrence, BibliographicCoupling andCitation Analysis. The four bibliometric analysis has been specifically selected because they collectively cover the most critical dimensions of understanding the research field comprehensively. Co-authorship analyze social collaboration, keyword co-occurrence covers thematic structure, bibliographic coupling covers current research alignment and co-citation provides foundations for theoretical and empirical studies.

Table1 : Selection Criteria for Article Selection

Refining Criteria	Refinement	Justification	Final Results
Terms searched in Title	TITLE(service AND quality) AND TITLE(hospital)	Targets the study on Service Quality of Hospitals	912
Year	1951-2024	Timeframe captures the full evolution of the research domain allowing robust analysis	912
Publication stage	Final	Including only final-stage publications ensures high reliability and academic rigor	910
Source type	Journal	Inclusion contributes to the reliability and credibility of the findings	836
Language	English	Standardize the dataset and facilitates accessibility and global comparability	774
Document type	Article	Limiting to articles for maintaining consistency and a high level of scientific quality	768

Scope of the Study

1. The study uses Scopus database as the source of data retrieval.
2. The study covers research work published from 1951 to 2024.
3. The study analyses only Articles published in journals of English Language.

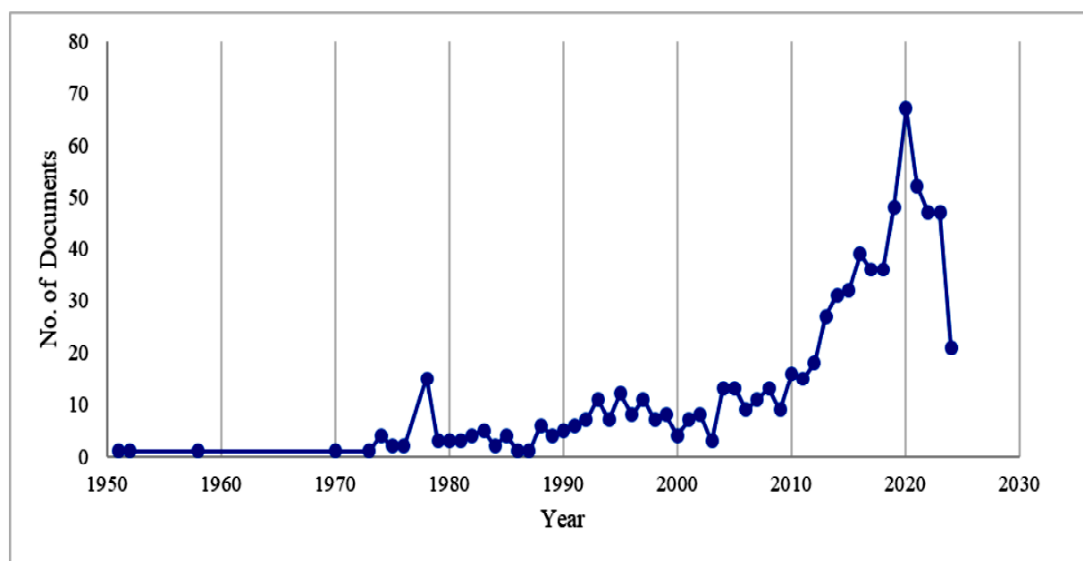
Results and Discussion

Trend and Pattern of Publications of Research Work

The publication trend of research on service quality in hospitals has been illustrated in Figure 1. In the initial years (1951-1977), the output was minimal, typically ranging between 1 to 4 documents annually, with the exception of 1978, which saw a notable rise to 15 publications. A gradual increase is evident from the 1990s, with years like 1995 (12 documents) and 1997 (11 documents) reflecting early signs of growth. Research activity accelerated significantly from the 2000s onward, culminating in a peak of 67 documents in 2020. Notably, the period from 2014 to

2021 consistently recorded over 30 documents each year. The years 2019 to 2024 maintained a high output (ranging from 48 to 67 documents), indicating sustained and active interest in this field in recent times.

Figure 1: Total Publications from 1951-2024 in the area of Service Quality of Hospitals



Source: Generated from Scopus Database

Table 2 highlights the top ten journals publishing research on service quality in hospitals over the years from 1951-2024. Leading the list is the International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance, with 21 documents, underscoring its strong emphasis on healthcare quality research. It is followed by World Hospitals (14 documents) and BMC Health Services Research (12 documents), indicating their significant contributions to hospital and health service literature. Journals such as Total Quality Management and Business Excellence (11) and Journal of Health Management (10) reflect an intersection of quality management and healthcare administration. Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development (9) and International Journal for Quality in Health Care (8) further demonstrate the diverse platforms supporting health-related research.

Beyond the top ten, 17 journals have published between 5 and 7 documents each, indicating moderate yet consistent engagement. Additionally, 61 journals contributed 2 to 4 documents, reflecting a broad dissemination across various

domains. Notably, 106 journals published only a single document, suggesting a wide but fragmented distribution across niche or less frequent publication venues. Overall, the data points to a concentrated interest in healthcare quality and service research, supported by a long tail of specialized and interdisciplinary journals.

Table 2: Top Ten Journals in the area of Service Quality of Hospitals from 1951-2024

Name of the Journal	No. of Documents Published
International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance	21
World Hospitals	14
BMC Health Services Research	12
Total Quality Management and Business Excellence	11
Journal of Health Management	10
Indian Journal of Public Health Research and Development	9
International Journal for Quality in Health Care	8
International Journal of Healthcare Management	8
Federal Register	7
Hospital Topics	7

Source: Compiled by authors from Scopus Database

The analysis of author productivity in table 3 reveals a diverse landscape of contributions to research on hospital service quality over the years from 1951-2024. Zarei, E. leads with the highest number of documents (7), reflecting substantial research activity in the field followed by Arab, M. with 5 documents, and both Amiresmaili, M. and Andaleeb, S.S. with 4 documents each, marking them as key contributors. A group of authors including Rivai, F., Choi, M., Daneshkohan, A., among others, have published 3 documents each, indicating moderate but consistent involvement. Apart from those mentioned in the table, 71 authors have contributed 2 documents, suggesting a broad base of moderately active researchers. This distribution highlights a core group of prolific researchers (with 4-7 documents) surrounded by a long tail of less frequent contributors (with 1-2 documents), representing a mix of sustained and occasional engagement.

Table 3: Top Ten Authors in the area of Service Quality of Hospitals from 1951-2024

Name of the Author	No. of Documents Published
Zarei, E.	7
Arab, M.	5
Amiresmaili, M.	4
Andaleeb, S.S.	4
Rivai, F.	4
Choi, M.	3
Daneshkohan, A.	3
Darmawansyah	3
Hashjin, A.A.	3
Hegji, C.E.	3

Source: Compiled by authors from Scopus Database

The geographical distribution of research on hospital service quality reveals a strong concentration in a few leading countries as depicted in Table 4. The United States of America tops the list with 103 contributions, proving its dominant presence in the field. India (72), Iran (62), and Indonesia (56) also emerge as major contributors, reflecting robust regional research engagement in Asia. The United Kingdom (48), Australia (28), and China (27) demonstrate substantial outputs, aligning with their roles as established research hubs. Countries such as Turkey (25), Spain (24) and France (19) indicate consistent but moderate levels of contribution. Overall, the data reflects a strong concentration of research activity in North America, Asia, and parts of Europe, alongside emerging participation from regions in Africa and the Middle East.

Table 4: Top Ten Productive Countries in the area of Service Quality of Hospitals from 1951-2024

Country	No. of Documents Published
United States of America	103

India	72
Iran	62
Indonesia	56
United Kingdom	48
Australia	28
China	27
Turkey	25
Spain	24
France	19

Source: Compiled by authors from Scopus Database

Influential Research Papers

Table 5 depicts the top 10 most cited studies on hospital service quality. The most cited paper (523 citations) by Shieh et al. (2010) used a DEMATEL method to find key success factors in hospital service quality. Other highly cited works examined patient satisfaction, service quality in public vs private hospitals, patient loyalty, nursing services, and specialist palliative care. These studies were published in respected journals like BMJ, Social Science and Medicine, and Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, and reflect global interest, including data from developing countries, Cyprus, India, and Hong Kong.

Table 5: Top Ten Influential Research Papers in terms of Citations

Authors	Year	Title	Journal	Citations
Shieh J.-I.; Wu H.-H.; Huang K.-K.	2010	A DEMATEL method in identifying key success factors of hospital service quality	Knowledge-Based Systems	523
Andaleeb S.S.	2001	Service quality perceptions and patient satisfaction: A study of hospitals in a developing country	Social Science and Medicine	426
Meesala A.; Paul J.	2018	Service quality, consumer satisfaction and loyalty in hospitals: Thinking for the future	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	338

Gaertner J.; Siemens W.; Meerpohl J.J.; Antes G.; Meffert C.; Xander C.; Stock S.; Mueller D.; Schwarzer G.; Becker G.	2017	Effect of specialist palliative care services on quality of life in adults with advanced incurable illness in hospital, hospice, or community settings: Systematic review and meta-analysis	BMJ (Online)	257
Lam S.S.K.	1997	SERVQUAL: A tool for measuring patients' opinions of hospital service quality in Hong Kong	Total Quality Management	223
Fatima T.; Malik S.A.; Shabbir A.	2018	Hospital healthcare service quality, patient satisfaction and loyalty: An investigation in context of private healthcare systems	International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management	185
Arasli H.; Haktan Ekiz E.; Turan Katircioglu S.	2008	Gearing service quality into public and private hospitals in small islands: Empirical evidence from Cyprus	International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance	144
Amin M.; Nasharuddin S.Z.	2013	Hospital service quality and its effects on patient satisfaction and behavioural intention	Clinical Governance	140
Lee M.A.; Yom Y.-H.	2007	A comparative study of patients' and nurses' perceptions of the quality of nursing services, satisfaction and	International Journal of Nursing Studies	136
		intent to revisit the hospital: A questionnaire survey		
Padma P.; Rajendran C.; Lokachari P.S.	2010	Service quality and its impact on customer satisfaction in Indian hospitals: Perspectives of patients and their attendants	Benchmarking	135

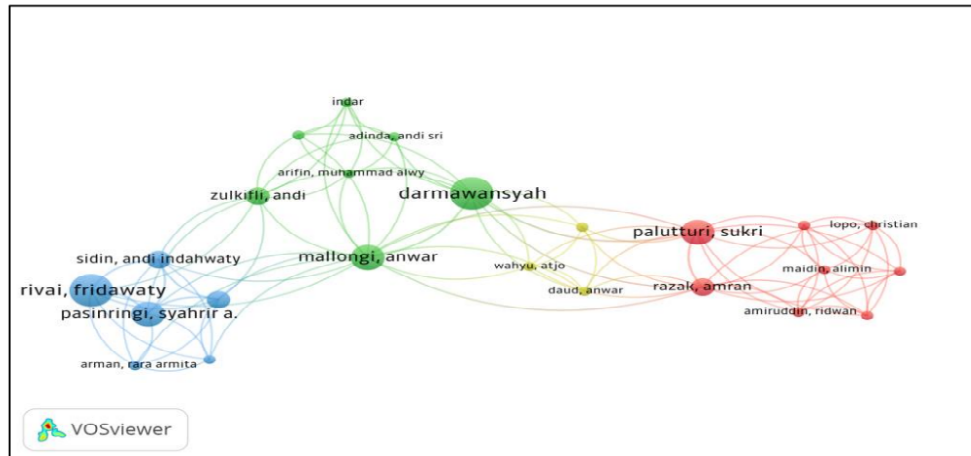
Source: Compiled by authors from Scopus Database

Co-authorship Analysis

To understand collaborative patterns among individual researchers, a co-authorship network was developed using VOSviewer (Figure 2). The analysis included 24 authors who met the minimum threshold of at least one co-authored publication. In the network visualization, nodes represent individual authors, and the links between them indicate co-authorship relationships. The connecting lines, or edges, represent co-authorship links, and their thickness and density illustrate the strength and frequency of collaboration among authors. Cluster analysis revealed four distinct collaborative groups, shedding light on the field's research communities.

The analysis reveals four prominent clusters. The Darmawansyah-Mallongi Cluster emerges as the largest and most centrally positioned, with Darmawansyah acting as a key node. This suggests a highly collaborative and possibly well-established research group. This cluster's density suggests well-established partnerships likely driving high-impact publications and shaping research agendas in the field. Palutturi Sukri stands out as a key influencer, with Razak Amran and Maidin Alimin as major collaborators. This cluster also exhibits moderate connectivity with the Darmawansyah group, suggesting overlapping research interests and some degree of cross-group collaboration. The Rivai-Fridawaty Cluster is the smallest and most isolated of the four, centered around Rivai, Fridawaty and Pasirringi, Syahira A. The limited external links suggest that this group may be engaged in niche or emerging research topics with minimal collaboration outside their immediate team. A small cluster of Wahyu Atjo and Daud Anwar, acts as an intermediary, forging occasional links between the larger Darmawansyah-Mallongi cluster and Palutturi Sukri cluster, potentially facilitating information flow and interdisciplinary collaboration. Overall, the author-level co-authorship network reveals a mix of large, central research groups and smaller, more specialized teams. Key authors anchor their respective clusters, supporting both intensive in-group collaboration and, to a lesser extent, cross-group knowledge exchanges.

It highlights the collaborative dynamics within the field and points to key researchers who may serve as influential nodes in the development of hospital service quality literature. However, there is still scope for collaborative work among the groups, include newer researchers, and encourage a wider variety of ideas and methods for future studies in this field.

Figure 2: Co-Authorship Analysis among Authors

Source: Generated using VOSviewer

Co-Occurrence Analysis

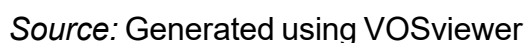
A keyword co-occurrence map was generated using VOSviewer to explore thematic groupings within healthcare-related literature (Figure 3). A total of 95 keywords met the minimum occurrence threshold of 20. In VOSviewer, clusters are formed by grouping keywords based on their co-occurrence patterns, where the proximity of nodes reflects the frequency with which those terms appear together. These clusters help reveal relationships among different research themes. Further interpretation is supported by examining overlaps and interconnections between clusters.

The keyword analysis revealed five distinct clusters. These thematic evolution of hospital service quality research represent different evolutionary phases of research focus from 1951 to 2024.

Cluster 1 (Human-Centric Cluster): It includes keywords such as humans, adult, female, middle aged, adolescent, aged, nurse, patient, empathy, and manager. This cluster emphasizes the human element of healthcare, encompassing both patients and providers across various age groups and demographic factors.

Cluster 2 (Healthcare Delivery Cluster): It features terms like patient satisfaction, perception, expectation, service quality, satisfaction, and hospital service, highlighting studies focused on how healthcare services are delivered and perceived by patients.

Figure 3: Co-Occurrence Analysis of Keywords



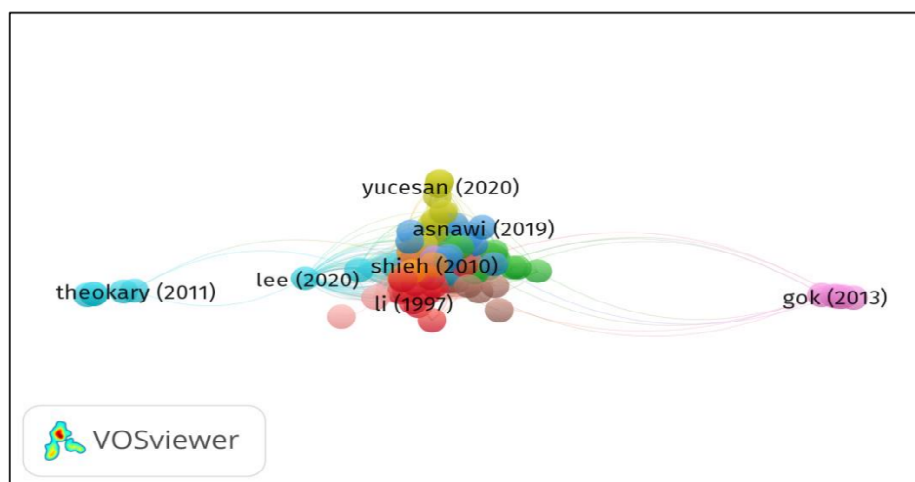
Bibliographic Coupling

A bibliographic coupling analysis was conducted to examine thematic similarities among highly cited documents in the field of hospital service quality (Figure 4). The analysis includes 99 documents that meet the threshold of having received at least 20 citations. Bibliographic coupling occurs when two documents cite the same third source, indicating a potential alignment in research themes or theoretical foundations. In the resulting network, each node represents a document, typically identified by its author and year of publication, while the edges illustrate the strength of coupling based on shared references.

At the center of the network lies a prominent cluster anchored by Shieh (2010). Closely associated with it are documents such as Asnawi (2019), Lee (2020), and Li (1997). This grouping forms a dense core, suggesting a well-defined research thread that spans across time, with Li (1997) possibly serving as a foundational work for the more recent studies. Their close proximity suggests that they share similar topics or have collectively shaped the direction of hospital service quality studies.

In contrast, Yucesan (2020) appears as a distinct node positioned away from the central cluster. Its weaker coupling with the rest of the network suggests that it represents a relatively independent research trajectory or a newer contribution that does not yet share many references with the dominant group.

Similarly, Gok (2013) is located at the periphery of the network, connected by a single weak tie to the central cluster. Its relative isolation may reflect a unique perspective or methodology that distinguishes it from more closely coupled works. Theokary (2011) also occupies a peripheral position, indicating a distinct citation pattern, potentially rooted in an alternative theoretical framework or domain focus. The network, therefore, reveals a core set of foundational studies that heavily influence ongoing work, surrounded by a few peripheral but notable publications that contribute distinct perspectives or innovations. The bibliometric relationships reveal that the domain is mature, collaborative, and methodologically sophisticated, enriched by foundational theories and continuously evolving through applied, technology-driven, and cross-national lenses. The inclusion of 99 documents with substantial citation counts highlights the significance of these works within the broader literature, while the network structure itself offers insights into the intellectual coherence and diversity within the field.

Figure 4: Bibliographic Coupling among the Journals

Source: Generated using VOSviewer

Co-Citation Analysis:

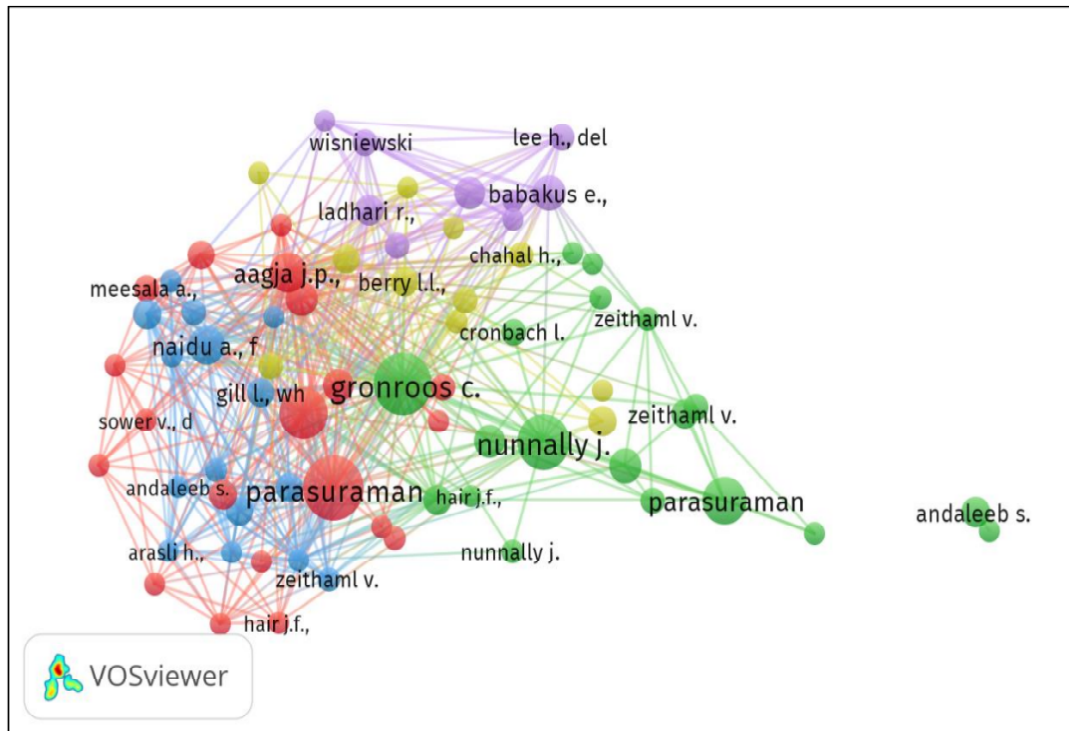
A co-citation analysis was conducted on hospital service quality research (Figure 5). The analysis includes 74 cited references, each cited at least five times within the dataset.

The central and most prominent grouping in the network is the Gronroos Cluster, anchored by the seminal works of Gronroos C., Parasuraman, Nunnally J., and Zeithaml V. This cluster, located at the core of the diagram, is characterized by dense co-citation patterns, especially within service quality and customer satisfaction literature. The frequency with which these authors are cited together indicates their foundational role in shaping theoretical and empirical approaches in the domain. Another substantial grouping is the Andaleeb Cluster, which features a wide array of authors such as Andaleeb S., Meesala A., Naidu A., Gill L., etc. This cluster is marked by strong connections and widespread co-citation, suggesting a broad and multifaceted influence. The central position of Andaleeb highlights the significance of this author's work in integrating service quality frameworks with healthcare delivery research.

A more distinct grouping is the Cronbach Cluster, centered on Cronbach L., and including authors such as Zeithaml V., Hair J.F., Arasli H., Sower V., and Parasuraman. This cluster appears to align more closely with methodological contributions, particularly those related to scale development and reliability analysis. Overall, the co-citation network reveals a concentration of influential references that collectively form the conceptual and methodological backbone of hospital service

quality research by a select group of influential scholars, around whom various research communities and citation practices are organized.

Figure 5: Co-Citation Analysis of Cited References



Source: Generated using VOSviewer

Conclusion

The present bibliometric study provides a comprehensive overview of the research landscape on hospital service quality, revealing key patterns, contributors, and thematic developments. The analysis of publication trends shows a steady growth in research interest since 1990s, with a significant surge in output from 2014 onward, indicating sustained academic engagement in this domain. Journals like the International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance and BMC Health Services Research have emerged as leading platforms for disseminating related studies. At the author level, researchers such as Zarei, E. and Andaleeb, S.S. have made substantial contributions, while the United States, India, and Iran dominate in terms of national research productivity. Influential studies particularly those using established

models like SERVQUAL or advanced methods like DEMATEL (Decision-Making Trial and Evaluation Laboratory) have significantly shaped the knowledge base in the field of service quality of hospital.

Network analyses further enrich the understanding of this domain. Co-authorship mapping revealed four key collaborative clusters, suggesting a mix of well-established research groups. Keyword co-occurrence analysis highlighted five dominant thematic clusters, spanning human-centered care, healthcare delivery, research methodologies, healthcare systems, and economic aspects. Bibliographic coupling illuminated strong intellectual alignment among certain documents with core clusters anchored by foundational works. The co-citation network highlights a strong conceptual foundation in hospital service quality research, anchored by seminal service quality theories and supported by influential empirical and methodological works.

Future exploration in hospital service quality research should focus on interdisciplinary approach integrating digital health technologies, behavioral sciences, health economics, workforce education and mixed-method approaches to holistically improve patient care and operational efficiency. The present study points to integration of Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence, Patient Experience and Behavioral Sciences, Health Economics and Policy Research, Healthcare Workforce Education and Training, Systems Engineering and Quality Improvement, etc.

Overall, the findings point to a mature yet evolving field, characterized by diverse themes, international participation, and interconnected scholarly contributions. This study not only maps the current state of research on hospital service quality but also identifies key factors, trends, and areas for future exploration.

Limitations of the Study

1. The research is based exclusively on Scopus-indexed journal articles, excluding works from other databases, which could limit the global representation and diversity.
2. The structured keyword approach might exclude many relevant documents or interdisciplinary works.
3. Inclusion of some more bibliometric methods may enhance the qualitative dimensions of research.
4. The study focuses up to publications from 2024 and may not fully reflect the very latest advances.

Scope for Future Research

1. Future studies may focus on interdisciplinary approach integrating digital health technologies, behavioral sciences, health economics, etc.
2. Studies relating to model development and validation may be conducted to reflect evolving hospital service quality constructs.
3. Conducting studies specific to certain regions to understand disparities and suggest quality improvements.

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