CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK
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3.1 Research Objectives

1. To study on the Medical Tourism as an Industry.

2. To identify the critical dimensions of service quality in Hospitals from the perspective of Omani Medical Tourists.

3. To develop an instrument to measure customer–perceived service quality in hospitals based on the identified dimensions with a specific focus on Medical tourists.

4. To measure the Omani Medical tourists’ perception of service quality in Indian Hospitals.

5. To investigate the relationship between the dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction with a focus on the Medical Tourism, with reference to Omani medical tourist.

6. To understand the behavioural consequences of the Omani medical tourists, based on their perceived service quality in Indian hospitals.

7. To suggest suitable measures based on the research findings for Indian hospitals in order to improve their service quality for attracting Omani medical tourists.

3.2 Research Model

Based on an extensive survey of the literature the researcher has developed a research model which was presented in the previous chapter, chapter 2. Since this model is developed solely for understanding the medical tourist’s perception of service quality in Indian hospitals, it is appropriate to name it as MED TOUR Service quality model. MED TOUR symbolises
Medical Tourism. Hence the researcher presents the MED TOUR model for further testing and adoption.

![Fig 3.1 MED TOUR Service Quality Model]

3.3 Research questions

Research questions are broad based inquiries which are framed from the theoretical and research knowledge of the researcher in the chosen field of study. Based on the literature review and theoretical insights drawn on the research theme (Service quality and Medical Tourism) the following research questions are framed

1. What are the determinants of customer perceived service quality?
2. How to develop a tool for measuring customer perceived service quality?
3. What is the perception of Omani Medical tourists’ on service quality in Indian Hospitals?
4. Is there any difference in the perception of Omani medical tourist on service quality provided in Indian Hospitals across demographic variables?
5. What is the extent of influence of the dimensions of service quality on the Omani medical tourist’s satisfaction?

6. What are the behavioural responses of Omani medical tourists of Sultanate of Oman based on their perceived service quality of Indian Hospitals?

7. What is the growth potential of medical tourism promoting hospitals in India?

3.4 Hypotheses

To support the objectives 4 and 5 of the research the following hypotheses statements are framed by the researcher which are tested using appropriate tools.

**Hypotheses related to service quality dimensions as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists**

**H1₀**: There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of tangibility dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

**H1ₐ**: There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of tangibility dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

**H2₀**: There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of reliability dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

**H2ₐ**: There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of reliability dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

**H3₀**: There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of responsiveness dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

**H3ₐ**: There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of responsiveness dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.
H4₀ : There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of assurance dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H4ₐ : There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of assurance dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H5₀ : There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of empathy dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H5ₐ : There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of empathy dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H6₀ : There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of core service dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H6ₐ : There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of core service dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H7₀ : There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of systematization of service delivery dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H7ₐ : There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of systematization of service delivery dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H8₀ : There is no significant difference between mean rank towards factors of social responsibility dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.

H8ₐ : There is significant difference between mean rank towards factors of social responsibility dimension of service quality as perceived by Omani Medical Tourists.
Hypotheses related to Demographic variables and Service Quality dimensions

H9₀ : There is no significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists Gender and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H9ₐ : There is significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists Gender and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H10₀ : There is no significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists age group and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H10ₐ : There is significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists age group and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H11₀ : There is no significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists types of employment and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H11ₐ : There is significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists types of employment and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H12₀ : There is no significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists educational qualification and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H12ₐ : There is significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists educational qualification and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H13₀ : There is no significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists Income and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H13ₐ : There is significant difference between Omani Medical Tourists Income and their perception of Service Quality dimensions.

Hypotheses related to Omani Medical Tourists treatment related issues

H14₀ : There is no significant difference between period of treatment and Omani Medical Tourists perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H14ₐ : There is significant difference between period of treatment and Omani Medical Tourists perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H15₀ : There is no significant difference between the place of treatment and Omani Medical tourist’s perception of Service Quality dimensions.

H15ₐ : There is significant difference between the place of treatment and Omani Medical tourist’s perception of Service Quality dimensions.
Medical tourist’s perception of Service Quality dimensions.

**Hypotheses related to Tourism related issues**

**H16o**: There is no significant association between Age group of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H16a**: There is significant association between Age group of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H17o**: There is no significant association between Gender of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H17a**: There is significant association between Gender of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H18o**: There is no significant association between income level of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H18a**: There is significant association between income level of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H19o**: There is no significant association between educational qualification of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**H19a**: There is significant association between educational qualification of the Omani Medical Tourists and visiting tourist places.

**Hypotheses related to the relationship between Service Quality dimensions and customer (Medical Tourist) satisfaction**

**H20o**: There is no significant relationship between tangibility dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

**H20a**: There is significant relationship between tangibility dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

**H21o**: There is no significant relationship between reliability dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

**H21a**: There is significant relationship between reliability dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

**H22o**: There is no significant relationship between responsiveness dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.
H22a : There is significant relationship between responsiveness dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H23\textsubscript{0} : There is no significant relationship between assurance dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H23\textsubscript{a} : There is significant relationship between assurance dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H24\textsubscript{0} : There is no significant relationship between empathy dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H24\textsubscript{a} : There is significant relationship between empathy dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H25\textsubscript{0} : There is no significant relationship between Core service dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H25\textsubscript{a} : There is significant relationship between Core service dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H26\textsubscript{0} : There is no significant relationship between Systematization of service delivery dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H26\textsubscript{a} : There is significant relationship between Systematization of service delivery dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H27\textsubscript{0} : There is no significant relationship between Social responsibility dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.

H27\textsubscript{a} : There is significant relationship between Social responsibility dimension of service quality and Omani Medical tourists’ satisfaction.
3.5 Scope of the study

This study provides information about medical tourist behaviour in the fast changing medical tourism scenario of the country.

People from many countries visit India as medical tourists. Medical tourist from Sultanate of Oman is an important target customers for the Indian hospitals promoting medical tourism. This study is from the perspective of Omani medical tourist exploring how the Omani medical tourists perceive service quality in Indian hospitals? To answer the above question the dimensions, scale for measuring and approach used for measuring perceived service quality were identified. Furthermore, using the identified scale and approach, the Omani medical tourist perception of service quality in Indian hospitals were assessed. Also the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction was investigated. The behavioural consequences of satisfied medical tourists were also explored.

This study significantly contributes to the existing literature of medical tourism and service quality, as it is done in Sultanate of Oman, a foreign country. A study of this kind will certainly help the Indian hospitals to assess their service quality, identify the area for improvement and develop suitable improvement measures.

Being a multi dimensional study, the researcher is highly confident of contributing significant and pragmatic directions to the Indian hospitals promoting medical tourism in particular and medical tourism sector in general which are not only capable of enhancing their revenues but also identify future business avenues.
3.6 Challenges of the study

There were few stumbling blocks experienced in the conduct of the research. They are:

a) Questionnaire Preparation
b) Cultural blocks
c) Cross-country understanding
d) Women respondents

a) Questionnaire preparation

As we have discussed earlier, our final questionnaire was translated into Arabic. It took lot of time and effort for completing the task successfully. It was difficult to find a person who is well versed in both the languages. Finally the task was completed with the help of a fellow colleague in Sultanate of Oman.

b) Cultural blocks

Research concept is new to the Omani culture. Their development history is hardly 40 years. Some respondents were initially hesitant to talk about their experience.

In Omani culture, they don’t easily allow strangers into their residence. Hence the option for the researcher is very limited to meet them and get the responses.

c) Cross-country understanding
Being a researcher from India, researching the attitude of a foreigner, needs a lot of cross
country, cross cultural understanding. The researcher needs to be very sensitive to the
culture and customs of the foreigners. This was a big hurdle for the researcher. With the
support of the Omani colleagues the researcher crossed the hurdles.

d) Women respondents

Nearly 33% of our respondents are Female. It is very difficult to get responses from
women. They are culturally, religiously very sensitive. You need to understand their
customs, culture in order to interact with them to get the response. The researcher had a
difficult time in accomplishing this task. This hurdle was crossed with the help of Omani
colleagues.

e) Distance Coverage

The researcher travelled across the length and breadth of Oman to meet the respondents.
This task was time consuming and resource consuming.

Otherwise the whole experience was pleasant for the researcher.

3.7 Limitations of the study

- Outcome of the research is limited to Sultanate of Oman and India on the Medical
  Tourism sector. It can be generalised to customers coming out with similar
  requirements across the globe.
- Medical tourism in a broad sense involves different stake holders like Hospitals,
  Travel operators, Hospitality Sector and so on. This study is limited to “Hospital”
  Service Quality, which the researcher considers as the core of the medical tourism
  offering.
Research on perceived service quality in the Medical tourists is still at nascent stage. Hence few related studies were reviewed during the research.
### 3.8 Research Plan

#### Table 3.1: Plan of Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Objectives</th>
<th>Relevant items in the questionnaire</th>
<th>Research Question(s)/Hypothesis</th>
<th>Statistical tools used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To study on the Medical Tourism as an Industry.</td>
<td>Items in section A,B,C</td>
<td>Research Question 7</td>
<td>Net Promoter Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To identify the critical dimensions of service quality in Hospitals from the perspective of Omani Medical Tourists’</td>
<td>Items in the section B, C and D</td>
<td>Research Question 1</td>
<td>Delphi Technique, Mean score ranking, and Multiple Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To develop an instrument to measure customer–perceived service quality in hospitals based on the identified dimensions with a specific focus on Medical tourists</td>
<td>Section D (items 1 to 39 and 46)</td>
<td>Research Question 2</td>
<td>Delphi Technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To measure the Omani Medical tourists’ perception of service quality in Indian Hospitals.</td>
<td>Section B, C and D</td>
<td>Research Question 3 &amp; Hypothesis statements 1 to 8</td>
<td>Mean Score Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To investigate the relationship between the dimensions of service quality and customer satisfaction with a focus on the Medical Tourism, with reference to Omani Medical tourists.</td>
<td>Section D (1 to 40 and 46)</td>
<td>Research Question 5 &amp; Hypothesis statements 20 to 27</td>
<td>Multiple Regression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To understand the behavioral consequences of the Omani Medical tourists’ based on their perceived service quality in Indian hospitals.</td>
<td>Section D (items 41 – 45)</td>
<td>Research Question 6</td>
<td>Percentage Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To suggest suitable measures based on the research findings for Indian hospitals in order to improve the service quality for attracting Omani medical tourists.</td>
<td>Section D (1 -46)</td>
<td>Research Question 7</td>
<td>ANOVA, F-Test, Student t-Test, Chi-square, Multiple Regression.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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