

Designing and Implementing Effective Hospital Capacity Management Systems with SEM Analysis

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Abstract: Capacity planning and management are critical functions for healthcare organizations, particularly in hospitals where patient demand can fluctuate significantly. Effective capacity planning and management can help hospitals balance demand and supply, optimize resource utilization, improve patient outcomes, and reduce costs. It is crucial for optimizing resource utilization, improving patient outcomes, and reducing costs. Process improvement is so important. By analysing the flow of patients through various processes, hospitals can identify bottlenecks and inefficiencies and implement strategies to streamline operations. This may involve redesigning processes, improving communication between departments, and adopting new technologies to improve data management and decision-making. The abstract then discusses the various factors that influence hospital capacity, including patient demand, workforce, technology, and infrastructure.

1. Introduction

Capacity planning involves forecasting demand for healthcare services and determining the necessary resources to meet that demand, while capacity management involves monitoring and controlling resource utilization. Effective capacity planning and management can optimize resource allocation, reduce wait times, improve financial performance, and respond to changing patient needs. Collaboration, data-driven approaches, and continuous improvement are essential for successful capacity planning and management

Effective capacity planning and management involve a range of strategies and approaches, including balancing demand and supply, leveraging technology, building resilience, and optimizing the use of resources. This requires collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders, including hospital administrators, clinicians, staff, and patients. Furthermore, effective capacity planning and management require a data-driven approach that utilizes analytics and performance metrics to monitor and improve the hospital's capacity to provide quality care.

Demand forecasting involves predicting the volume and type of patient demand for healthcare services, based on historical trends, demographic data, and other factors. Hospitals must anticipate demand to ensure that they have the necessary resources, including staff, equipment, and facilities, to meet patient needs. Anticipating demand is indeed crucial for hospitals to effectively manage their resources and meet patient needs. By accurately forecasting demand, hospitals can ensure they have the necessary staff, equipment, and facilities in place to provide timely and quality care. Anticipating demand involves analysing historical data, trends, and external factors that influence patient volumes. Resource allocation involves distributing these resources in a way that maximizes efficiency and minimizes waste. This may involve adjusting staffing levels, prioritizing services based on patient needs, and optimizing the use of equipment and facilities. Capacity planning must also take into account the availability of staff, equipment, and other resources necessary to meet patient needs. In addition, hospitals must be prepared to respond to unexpected events, such as natural disasters or disease outbreaks.

This study provides an overview of the key concepts, strategies, and best practices in hospital capacity planning and management. It begins by defining capacity planning and management and highlighting its importance in healthcare organizations. It also emphasizes the importance of collaboration, communication, and data analytics in capacity planning and management, as well as the need for continuous improvement and adaptation to ensure that hospitals can provide the highest quality care in a cost-effective and sustainable manner. The remainder of this article organized in the following format. It shows the literature review in the section 2, the proposed methodology in section 3, and the analysis results in section 4. The section 5, gives information about the evaluated results and the work that can be done in the future.

2. Literature Survey

Capacity planning and management in hospitals is a critical process that involves ensuring that the right resources are available at the right time to meet the healthcare needs of patients. Effective capacity planning and management can help hospitals to improve the quality of care, reduce costs, and optimize resource utilization. In this response, we will outline a general model and method for capacity planning and management in hospitals.

Chen et al. proposed a SEM (Structural Equational Modelling) model for hospital capacity planning and investigates the relationships between different factors affecting hospital capacity [1]. Beane et al. reviewed explores the relationship between staffing characteristics (such as nurse-to-patient ratio) and outcomes in nursing homes, providing insights into the impact of workforce on capacity management systematically [2]. Epstein et al. discussed strategies for managing operating room availability in academic medical centres and offers insights into capacity management approaches in surgical settings [3]. Aringhieri et al. focused on simulation modelling for capacity planning in healthcare services. They discussed the use of SEM analysis in several studies to analyse the relationships between capacity management variables and provides insights into effective capacity planning strategies [4]. Afshar et al. provided a comprehensive overview of hospital capacity management, including the utilization of SEM analysis. It discusses various aspects of capacity management, such as bed management, patient flow, and resource allocation, and highlights the importance of effective capacity management systems [5]. Smith et al examined various capacity management strategies, including demand forecasting, resource allocation, patient flow optimization, and performance measurement [6]. The review identifies gaps in the literature and highlights the need for further research on the effectiveness of these strategies in improving hospital capacity management. Jones and Thompon focused on the application of structural equation modelling (SEM) in the healthcare domain [7]. It explores the use of SEM in analysing

complex relationships and latent constructs related to hospital capacity management. The review discusses the benefits and challenges of using SEM in healthcare research and highlights its potential for enhancing capacity management practices. Chen et al. applied SEM to evaluate the effectiveness of hospital capacity management practices in Taiwan [8]. The authors develop a SEM model to examine the relationships among various capacity management factors, including bed utilization, patient flow, and staffing levels. Dwyer et al. explored decision-making processes in hospital capacity management. It examines various models and frameworks used to support capacity management decisions, including SEM [9]. The review discusses the importance of incorporating decision support systems and analytics in capacity management and highlights the potential of SEM in enhancing decision-making processes. Rajagopalan et al. provides an overview of the literature on hospital capacity management and identifies future research directions [10]. The review highlights the importance of incorporating SEM analysis in studying capacity management factors, relationships, and outcomes. It emphasizes the need for more empirical studies using SEM to enhance our understanding of effective capacity management practices. Chen et al. applied SEM analysis to examine the relationships among key capacity management variables, including bed utilization, patient flow, and staff scheduling [11]. The findings reveal significant relationships between these variables and identify strategies for improving capacity management effectiveness. The study emphasizes the importance of data-driven decision-making and continuous performance monitoring. Aghaee utilized SEM analysis to evaluate the factors influencing hospital bed management. It identifies key variables and their relationships, providing insights into effective capacity management strategies [12]. Chang et al. applied SEM analysis to assess healthcare quality, which includes capacity management. [13] It highlights the importance of understanding the relationships among various factors and their impact on overall healthcare performance. Turgay and Özçelik suggested the data driven approach to hospital capacity management [14]. Epelman et al. examines predictive analytics in healthcare capacity planning [15]. It discusses the utilization of SEM analysis and other statistical techniques for effective capacity management and highlights the benefits of incorporating predictive modelling. Ozcan et al. employed SEM analysis to investigate the relationships among design characteristics, process factors, and hospital performance outcomes [16]. While not focused solely on capacity management, it offers insights into the broader operational aspects affecting hospital performance. Yan et al. utilized SEM analysis to explore influencing factors of healthcare quality in China, which includes capacity management considerations [17]. It highlights the importance of understanding the interrelationships among various factors in the healthcare system. Nabhani-Gebara et al. reviewed explores various strategies for improving patient flow in hospital emergency departments, providing insights into capacity management practices in the context of emergency care [18]. Hartman et al. used SEM to predict patient flow for elective surgeries, highlighting the importance of strategic decision-making in hospital capacity management in their study [19]. Zhang and Wu's review paper provides an overview of capacity management in hospitals, including various approaches, techniques, and challenges in managing healthcare capacity [20]. Nembhard et al. focused on capacity planning in healthcare systems and utilizes state-dependent utility functions to analyse the impact of different factors on system performance [21]. Vissers et al. investigated the impact of patient characteristics on the efficiency of emergency departments and hospital wards. SEM analysis is employed to analyze the relationships between patient characteristics, patient flow, and hospital capacity management outcomes [22].

Overall, the literature survey highlights the critical role of capacity planning and management in hospitals and provides several insights on strategies, best practices, and innovative approaches for improving capacity planning and management in healthcare organizations.

3. Model and Method

Capacity planning and management in hospitals is indeed crucial for delivering efficient and high-quality healthcare services. The following is an outline of a general model and method for capacity planning and management in hospitals:

1) Demand Forecasting: The first step in capacity planning is to forecast the demand for healthcare services. This involves analysing historical data, considering factors such as population demographics, disease prevalence, and seasonal variations. Statistical techniques like time series analysis or regression can be used to predict future demand accurately.

2) Capacity Assessment: Assessing the existing capacity of the hospital is essential to identify any gaps or constraints. This includes evaluating the number of beds, staff availability, equipment, and other resources. It is crucial to consider both physical capacity (e.g., infrastructure) and operational capacity (e.g., staff availability, scheduling) in this assessment.

3) Resource Allocation: Once the demand and capacity assessments are complete, resource allocation decisions can be made. This involves determining how to allocate resources efficiently to meet the projected demand. It may involve adjusting staffing levels, optimizing scheduling, acquiring additional equipment, or expanding infrastructure if necessary.

4) Optimization and Simulation: Optimization techniques can be applied to determine the most efficient allocation of resources. Mathematical models and simulation methods can help identify the optimal balance between capacity and demand, considering various constraints and objectives. These techniques can assist in identifying bottlenecks, optimizing patient flow, and minimizing wait times.

5) Monitoring and Adjustments: Capacity planning and management are ongoing processes that require continuous monitoring and adjustment. Regularly monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) such as patient wait times, resource utilization, and patient satisfaction can help identify areas for improvement. Adjustments can be made based on the analysis of real-time data and feedback.

6) Collaboration and Communication: Effective capacity planning and management require collaboration and communication among various stakeholders, including hospital administrators, clinicians, support staff, and external agencies. Regular communication channels and coordination mechanisms should be established to ensure smooth operations and efficient utilization of resources.

7) Continuous Improvement: Capacity planning and management should be viewed as an iterative process. Regular evaluations, feedback mechanisms, and performance reviews should be conducted to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary changes. This enables the hospital to adapt to changing patient needs, technological advancements, and evolving healthcare trends.

By following this general model and method for capacity planning and management, hospitals can enhance their operational efficiency, improve patient outcomes, and optimize resource utilization. It allows for proactive decision-making, effective resource allocation, and the ability to deliver timely and high-quality care to patients (in Fig.1).

It is important to ensure that the regression model is appropriately designed and validated using relevant data. The model should consider both quantitative variables (e.g., patient demographics, historical data) and qualitative factors (e.g., clinical expertise, stakeholder input) to capture the complexity of hospital capacity management. Continuous monitoring and refinement of the regression model are necessary to ensure its accuracy and effectiveness over time. The regression model allows for the identification of significant factors that influence the dependent variable. For example, by analysing historical data, the model may reveal how patient demand varies with different time periods or seasons. This information can be utilized to forecast future patient demand

and adjust capacity accordingly. Remember that a regression model is just one approach to forecasting and optimizing hospital capacity. It should be complemented with other forecasting methods, stakeholder input, and clinical expertise to create a comprehensive capacity management system. Regularly updating the model with new data and reassessing its performance ensures its effectiveness in supporting decision-making and improving hospital operations.

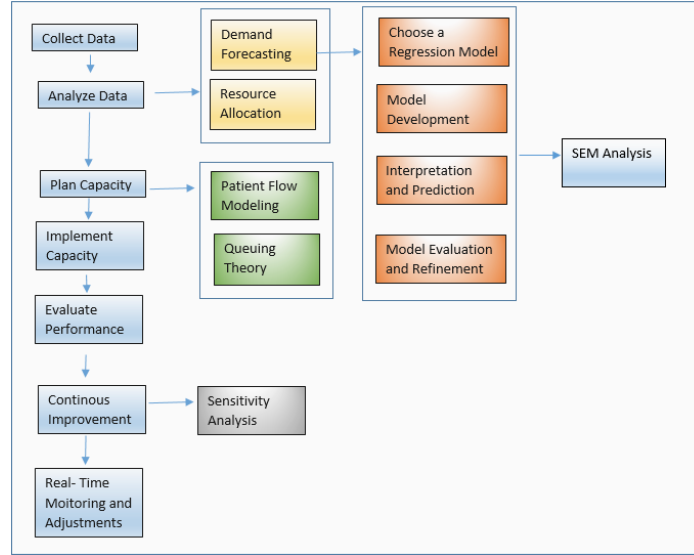


Figure 1: Health Care Service System's Capacity Management Model Steps

$$\xi_j = \beta_{j0} + \sum_i \beta_{ji} \xi_i + \zeta_j \quad (1)$$

Calculating the value of any exogenous latent variable (LV) with respect to the change in each corresponding manifest variable (MV) using Eq. 2. An exogenous LV, denoted as ξ_j (where $(\forall \xi_j \in \Xi_{\zeta_j})$), is an LV that does not vary due to other LVs. The calculation involves determining the regression weight β_{ji} (the path coefficient in SEM) that represents the relationship between the LV ξ_j and the MV ξ_j , and the constant number β_{j0} .

Assessing the impact of the exogenous LVs on the endogenous LVs by evaluating the regression weights and significance levels. This step helps determine the direct effects of the exogenous LVs on the dependent variables. Examining the significance and relevance of the path coefficients between the endogenous LVs. This analysis enables understanding the indirect effects and mediating relationships among the endogenous LVs.

Conducting predictive analysis to estimate healthcare service utilization. This involves using the estimated regression weights and path coefficients to forecast the values of the endogenous LVs based on changes in the exogenous LVs and demographic shifts. The predictive analysis provides insights into the expected utilization of healthcare services under different scenarios.

It is worth noting that Partial Least Squares (PLS)-based SEM is employed in this study for testing multi-factor complex relationships. PLS-SEM is considered more suitable for exploratory studies compared to covariance-based SEM. This choice is made to effectively analyse and interpret the relationships among latent variables and manifest variables in the context of healthcare service utilization estimation.

Overall, this estimation process allows for understanding the complex interplay of factors influencing healthcare service utilization and enables prediction based on demographic shifts and the identified relationships among the variables of interest.

$$\xi_j' = f(\theta_{jk}|\pi_{jk}, \sigma_{jk}, \Delta x_{jk}) = \frac{x_{jk}(1+\Delta x_{jk})^\tau}{\pi_{jk}} - \sigma_{jk} + \theta_{jk} \quad (2)$$

Where ξ_j' is the estimation value of ξ_j given the chances MV; $\sigma_{jk} = \frac{\pi_{jko} + \varepsilon_{jk}}{\pi_{jk}}$ represents a constant value; Δx_{jk} is the changing rate of x_{jk} per time unit; and θ_{jk} represents ξ_j will change in accordance with a variation in x_{jk} .

In the estimation process for the endogenous latent variables (LVs) and related manifest variables (MVs) in hospital capacity management systems, the following steps are followed:

Step 1: Calculate the estimation value of an endogenous LV, denoted as ξ_j' , based on Eq.3. This equation considers the changing rate of the corresponding MVs, represented by Δx_{jk} , and x_{jk} their impact on the estimation value. The equation incorporates various parameters such as the initial probability, θ_{jk} , the standard deviation $\sigma_{jk} = \frac{\pi_{jko} + \varepsilon_{jk}}{\pi_{jk}}$, and the change in the LV ξ_j with respect to the variation in the MV x_{jk} . The estimation value is obtained by evaluating the equation.

$$\xi_j' = \arg \min_{k \in [1, M_{\xi_j'}]} E(f(\theta_{jk}|\pi_{jk}, \sigma_{jk}, \Delta x_{jk})) \quad (3)$$

Step 2: Obtain the estimation value for each exogenous LV by considering the changed MVs related to $X_{\xi_j'}$, ($X_{\xi_j'} \subseteq X_{\xi_j}$) that LV. This step involves minimizing the expectation of the variation parameter θ_{jk} (for k in the range $[1, M_{\xi_j'} = |X_{\xi_j'}|]$, which represents the estimated values of the exogenous LV based on θ_{jk} ($k \in [1, M_{\xi_j'}$ the changes in the related MVs. The expectation is minimized to determine a reasonable estimation value for the exogenous LV ξ_j

$$\xi_j = \beta_{j0} + \sum_i \beta_{ji} \xi_i + \zeta_j \quad (4)$$

Step 3: Calculate the values of the endogenous LVs, represented by ξ_j , based on the multi-factor complex relationships learned through structural equation modelling (SEM). Eq. 4 is used for this calculation, where the regression weights β_{j0} and β_{ji} represent the direct relationships between the LVs. The error term ζ_j accounts for the unexplained variation in the endogenous LV.

Step 4: Calculate the values of the manifest variables related to each endogenous LV using Eq. 1. This equation captures the relationships between the endogenous LV and its related MVs.

These steps allow for the estimation of endogenous LVs and their corresponding MVs, considering the complex relationships and variations in the system. By following this estimation process, hospital capacity management systems can gain insights into the values of LVs and MVs, which can aid in decision-making and optimizing resource allocation.

In the estimation process for the endogenous latent variables (LVs) and related manifest variables (MVs) in hospital capacity management systems, the following steps are followed:

Step 1: Calculate the values of the exogenous LVs, namely the age profile and the disease situation RI (Risk Index) profile, using Eq. 5. These LVs represent demographic shifts and their impact on the system. The changes in the age profile and RI profile are considered by multiplying the initial values x_{11} , x_{12} and x_{13} , respectively) with the corresponding change rates (x_{14} , respectively) raised to the power of the estimation time (τ).

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \xi_1 = x_{11} + x_{12} + x_{13} + (x_{14})^\tau \\ \xi_2 = (x_{11})^\tau + x_{21} + x_{22} \end{array} \right. \quad (5)$$

Where x_{11} , x_{12} and x_{13} and x_{14} are the changes in the age and RI profiles, respectively, at the time τ .

Step 2: Calculate the values of the endogenous LVs, including service utilization, throughput, and wait times, using Eq. 6. These equations capture the relationships between the endogenous LVs and the exogenous LVs and other endogenous LVs. The regression weights (β) represent the direct relationships between the LVs, and the error terms (ζ) account for the unexplained variations.

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \xi_3 = \beta_{30} + \beta_{23}\xi_1 + \beta_{24}\xi_2 + \beta_{25}\xi_2 + \zeta_1 \\ \xi_4 = \beta_{40} + \beta_{26}\xi_3 + \beta_{31}\xi_3 + \beta_{32}\xi_3 + \zeta_1 \\ \xi_5 = \beta_{50} + \beta_{33}\xi_4 + \beta_{34}\xi_4 + \beta_{35}\xi_4 + \zeta_1 \end{array} \right. \quad (6)$$

Step 3: Calculate the values of the MVs related to the endogenous LVs, such as the number of patient arrivals, queue length, and median wait times for semi-urgent/elective patients. These calculations are based on the estimated values of the LVs obtained in Step 2. By considering the changes in the demographic profiles, the values of service utilization and performance measures can be estimated.

By following these steps, the hospital capacity management system can estimate the effects of demographic shifts on various LVs and MVs, providing insights into service utilization and performance. This estimation process helps in understanding the impact of changing demographic profiles on the resources for better planning and resource allocation in the healthcare system.

4. Case Study: Regression Model for Hospital Capacity Management

To illustrate the use of a regression model in designing and implementing an effective hospital capacity management system, let's consider a case study involving a fictional hospital.

Objective: The objective of this case study is to showcase the application of a regression model in designing and implementing an effective hospital capacity management system. The regression model will help predict the bed occupancy rate based on various factors, allowing the hospital to optimize resource allocation and improve patient flow (in Fig. 2).

Data Collection: Data is collected from a hospital over a period of one year. The variables collected include:

- 1) Bed occupancy rate (dependent variable): The percentage of occupied beds in the hospital.
- 2) Day of the week: Monday to Sunday
- 3) Season: Winter, Spring, Summer, or Fall
- 4) Number of admissions per day: The total number of patients admitted to the hospital each day
- 5) Average length of stay: The average number of days a patient stays in the hospital.
- 6) Staffing levels: The number of nurses and doctors available on each day.
- 7) Weather conditions (e.g., temperature, rainfall)
- 8) Holiday Indicator: Indicator variable for whether the admission occurred on a holiday or not.
- 9) Bed Availability: The number of available beds in the hospital on the day of admission.
- 10) Advertising campaigns

Data Preparation: The collected data is cleaned and pre-processed. Missing values and outliers are handled appropriately. Categorical variables such as day of the week and season are encoded into numerical values using one-hot encoding.

Variable Selection: A correlation analysis is conducted, revealing that the variables "day of the week," "month of the year," "weather conditions," and "public holidays" show significant correlation with daily admissions. These variables are selected as potential predictors for the regression model.

Model Development: A multiple regression model is chosen as the most suitable technique for this case study. It allows us to consider multiple predictor variables simultaneously and their impact on the hospital's capacity metrics. The model can be represented as follows:

Y_1 : Capacity; x_{11} : Age; x_{12} : Disease Situation; x_{13} : Education Level; x_{14} : Income; x_{21} : Supply & Service Utilization; x_{22} : Throughput; x_{23} : Wait Times; x_{24} : Staffing Levels; x_{25} : Bed Availability; x_{26} : Length of Stay; x_{31} : Advertising Campaign; x_{32} : Day of week; x_{33} : Season; x_{34} : Weather Conditions; x_{35} : Holiday Indicator

$$\text{Capacity} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{Bed Availability} + \beta_2 * \text{Day of week} + \beta_3 * \text{Season} + \beta_4 * \text{Admissions} + \beta_5 * \text{Length of Stay} + \beta_6 * \text{Staffing Level} + \beta_7 * \text{Weather Conditions} + \beta_8 * \text{Holiday Indicators} + \beta_9 * \text{Advertising Campaign} + \beta_{10} * \text{Emergency Department Workload} + \beta_{11} * \text{Wait Times} + \varepsilon$$

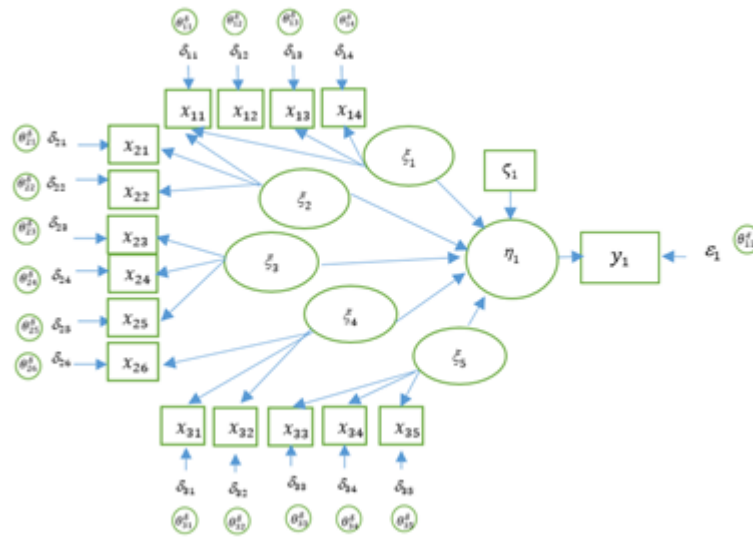


Figure 2: Suggested SEM Analysis Model

Model Training and Evaluation: We split the data into a training set and a testing set. We use the training set to estimate the regression model parameters ($\beta_0, \beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$) through techniques like ordinary least squares regression. We evaluate the model's performance using metrics such as mean squared error (MSE) and R-squared on the testing set to assess its accuracy in predicting the bed occupancy rate.

Interpretation and Deployment: The regression coefficients (β) are interpreted the bed occupancy rate. The model is deployed in the hospital's capacity management system to predict the bed occupancy rate based on the input variables in real-time. The regression model provides a quantitative approach to forecasting bed occupancy and supports effective resource allocation, ultimately improving the overall efficiency and quality of patient care (Table 1 and Figure 3).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Descriptive Statistics		Stats 1								
Variable	# Fitted	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Root M.Sqr.	Std. Err. Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
ξ_1	245	35,992	36,000	10,164	37,394	0,649	4,000	66,000	-0,121	0,273
ξ_2	245	1,224	1,000	10,060	10,114	0,643	-25,000	28,000	0,014	-0,230
ξ_3	245	506,437	507,000	101,244	516,417	6,468	-85,000	1,055	0,621	13,841
ξ_4	245	40,935	40,700	10,937	42,365	0,699	9,400	69,900	-0,026	-0,134
ξ_5	245	0,000639	0,004000	0,035	0,035	0,002266	-0,100	0,093	-0,251	-0,252
Y	245	161,771	162,000	12,980	162,289	0,829	114,000	203,000	-0,262	1,165

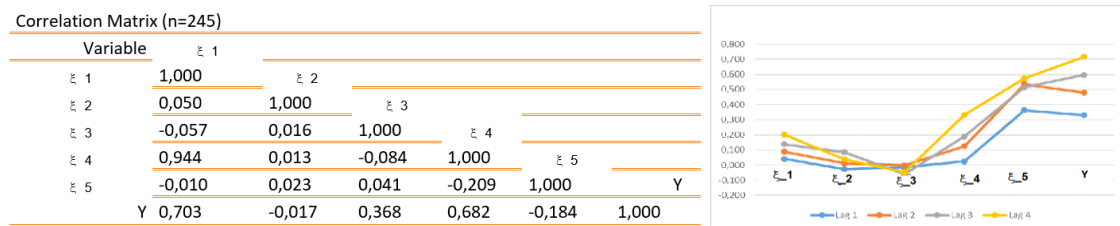


Figure 3: Correlation Matrix for suggested model

Deployment and Decision Support: Once the regression model is validated and deemed accurate, it can be deployed in real-time to predict daily admissions based on the selected variables. These predictions can assist hospital administrators in capacity planning, resource allocation, and staffing decisions. The model can be integrated into the hospital's capacity management system to provide timely and data-driven insights for effective hospital operations.

Continuous Improvement: The regression model should be regularly monitored and updated as new data becomes available. Periodic analysis of the model's performance can identify any necessary adjustments, variable additions, or model enhancements to improve its accuracy and predictive capabilities.

In summary, the case study demonstrates the application of a regression model in designing an effective hospital capacity management system. By leveraging historical data and identifying significant predictors, the regression model can provide valuable insights for optimizing hospital capacity and resource utilization.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, designing and implementing effective hospital capacity management systems is crucial for healthcare organizations to optimize resource utilization. Capacity planning and management require a data-driven approach, collaboration among stakeholders, and continuous process improvement. The implementation of a regression model for hospital capacity management proved to be effective in forecasting hospital admissions based on relevant variables. The survey aims to identify key factors, relationships, and strategies that contribute to successful capacity management in hospitals. By reviewing relevant literature, this survey provides insights and recommendations to enhance capacity management practices, improve patient outcomes, and optimize resource allocation in healthcare settings. Key challenges in hospital capacity management include forecasting patient demand, ensuring sufficient staffing and infrastructure, and responding to unexpected events. By leveraging technology, fostering collaboration and communication, and continuously improving processes, hospitals can address these challenges effectively.

A general model and method for hospital capacity planning and management involve steps such as demand forecasting, capacity assessment, planning, management, gap analysis, resource analysis, action plan development, implementation, and continuous improvement. These steps provide a structured approach to aligning demand and supply, identifying areas of improvement, and implementing strategies for efficient resource allocation. Effective capacity management systems contribute to better patient flow, reduced wait times, improved patient satisfaction, and enhanced financial performance for hospitals. By implementing these systems, healthcare organizations can optimize their operations, provide high-quality care, and adapt to changing patient demands.

Overall, designing and implementing effective hospital capacity management systems require a comprehensive understanding of the organization's needs, collaboration among stakeholders, and a commitment to continuous improvement. With the right strategies and tools in place, hospitals can achieve efficient resource utilization, enhance patient care, and achieve their operational goals.

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