

## Assessing Customer Service Satisfaction Levels in Private Healthcare Hospitals: A Focus on Health Information Management and Patient Experience

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### Abstract

This study aimed to assess the level of customer service satisfaction by surveying patients who had follow-up check-ups or were admitted in one of the private healthcare services in the city of Zamboanga, Philippines. A total of 100 patients were randomly selected for the survey. The majority had completed either elementary or college education, and hypertension was the most common reason for hospitalization. The results showed that ZAMPEN exceeded patient expectations in service delivery, with the highest satisfaction observed in "Tangibility," which refers to the physical appearance and facilities of the hospital. However, the study also noted that deficiencies in certain SERVQUAL dimensions could indicate deeper organizational issues. Recommendations to further improve patient satisfaction include enhancing the hospital environment, care quality, resource availability, security, cost, and personal interactions with staff.

**Keywords:** *customer service satisfaction, private healthcare, health information management*

### INTRODUCTION

Health care is one of the fastest growing sectors in the service economy (Andaleeb, 2001). Healthcare delivery systems in developing countries call for an efficient management to increase the effectiveness of healthcare system. Customer satisfaction is an important parameter for assessing the quality of patient care services. There is a need to assess the health care systems regarding the consumer satisfaction as often as possible.

Customer service satisfaction plays a pivotal role in determining the overall quality of healthcare services, particularly in private hospitals where patient experience directly impacts the hospital's reputation and financial sustainability. Patients increasingly expect high-quality care, which is not only defined by clinical outcomes but also by the overall service they receive, including interactions with staff, accessibility of services, and the efficiency of hospital operations (Sitzia & Wood, 1997). In private healthcare settings, the integration of Health Information Management (HIM) systems is critical to optimizing patient care and satisfaction. Effective HIM systems streamline the handling of patient data, ensuring that information is readily available to clinicians, thus improving diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up care. These systems contribute to a more seamless healthcare experience, which can positively influence patient satisfaction (Kuo et al., 2018).

Service quality is defined as "a global judgment or attitude relating to the overall excellence or superiority of the service" (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Perceptions of service quality enable providers of healthcare to detect services and processes in need of improvement. Providers perceive that satisfying patients can save them time and money spent on resolving patient complaints in future (Pakdil & Harwood, 2005).

Patient satisfaction and service quality are critical components in strategic planning processes; because as a result of increasing in better technology, patients are more informed than ever and if they are not satisfied, they will switch to an alternative health care provider (Ramsaran-Fowdar, 2008). A positive customer experience affects corporate business performance, including profitability, productivity, market share, and reduce costs (Zeithaml, 2000).

Health Information Management has evolved significantly with the introduction of electronic health records (EHR), digital scheduling systems, and patient portals, which have reshaped how patient information is stored, accessed, and communicated. HIM systems allow for the timely delivery of medical records, enabling more accurate and coordinated care, while improving hospital administrative efficiency (Buntin et al., 2011). However, the integration of these technologies can be met with challenges, such as technical issues, staff training, and data privacy concerns, which can affect patient perceptions of service quality. Understanding how patients perceive the quality of information management and its impact on their healthcare experience is crucial in identifying gaps in service delivery and areas for improvement (Kuo et al., 2018).

This research aims to assess customer service satisfaction levels in private healthcare hospitals, with a particular focus on how Health Information Management systems influence patient experience. By examining the relationship between HIM systems, patient interactions, and overall satisfaction, this study will provide valuable insights into how administrative and technological improvements can enhance patient care. As private hospitals strive to maintain a competitive edge, understanding the interplay between effective health information management and patient satisfaction will be critical to developing strategies that improve both the quality of care and the patient experience.

### **Theory on Client's Satisfaction**

Patients' Satisfaction Sixam et al. (1998) explained satisfaction as the state of pleasure or contentment with an action, event or service and it is determined considerably by the expectations of customers and their experiences. Oliver (1981) sees satisfaction as clients' emotional feelings concerning a particular consumption experience. By this Oliver means that satisfaction is a consequence of a mental assessment and evaluation of what clients experience and the resulting outcome of the services provided. This therefore implies that perceived service quality is considered as a cognitive construct, at the same time as satisfaction is an affective reaction to a specific service experience as a consequence of an evaluation process.

Kotler (2003) advances a discussion that explains Satisfaction as a person's feelings of happiness or displeasure as a result of comparing a product's outcome in relation to his or her expectations. Stemming from this review, customer satisfaction is described as the result of a cognitive and affective evaluation, where some comparison standard are determined and compared to the actually perceived performance. If it happens that the expected performance exceeds perceived performance then, customers become dissatisfied. On the other hand, if the expectation is more than perceived performance, customers turn to be happy and satisfied. Otherwise, when the perceived performance equals

to expectations, customers are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied creating what he termed as indifferent or neutral stage. A number of studies report that Patient's satisfaction is influenced by a number of factors and according to Peprah (2014), the following factors play a critical role in the satisfaction of patients; the attitudes of nurses toward patients, the capacity to deliver prompt service without wasting time, ability to disseminate information to patients and the availability of up-to-date equipment. Others include the hospital's ability to render 24 hour service, the patience of the doctor to clearly explain what was wrong with patients before giving treatment, providing patients with detail information about their medication, and attractiveness and cleanliness of the hospital.

Parasuraman et al., (1985) explained satisfaction in relation to service quality. They argued that service quality is defined as the gap between predicted or expected service (customer expectations) and perceived service (customer perceptions). If customers' expectation is greater than performance, then perceived quality is regarded less than satisfactory and a service quality gap arises. This in effect does not necessarily mean that the service is of low quality but rather customer expectations have not been met and therefore customer dissatisfaction occurs and this present opportunities for improving service to meet customer expectations.

## **Review of Related Literature and Studies**

### **On the Customer Service Satisfaction**

Customer service satisfaction in healthcare settings is a vital metric used to gauge the effectiveness of service delivery and its impact on patient outcomes. In private healthcare hospitals, patient satisfaction is directly correlated with hospital reputation, patient loyalty, and financial performance (Sitzia & Wood, 1997). The integration of Health Information Management (HIM) systems, such as Electronic Health Records (EHRs), plays a crucial role in enhancing patient experiences by streamlining clinical and administrative workflows. HIM systems enable seamless communication between healthcare providers, improve data accuracy, and contribute to better clinical decisions, which are key factors influencing patient satisfaction (Buntin et al., 2011). This literature review explores how HIM systems affect customer service satisfaction in private healthcare hospitals, emphasizing their influence on patient experience, quality of care, and overall satisfaction.

### **Customer Service Satisfaction in Healthcare**

Patient satisfaction has become an essential focus for healthcare organizations worldwide, especially in private hospitals where competition for patients is increasingly intense. Patient satisfaction is not just an indicator of hospital performance; it directly affects a hospital's ability to retain patients and maintain a good reputation in the healthcare market (Oliver, 2010). Healthcare satisfaction includes a broad range of factors, such as the quality of medical care, accessibility of services, interactions with healthcare providers, hospital environment, and administrative efficiency. In a private healthcare setting, where patients often have the option to choose from multiple service providers, the quality of non-clinical aspects of care, such as ease of appointment scheduling, communication, and information management, can significantly impact patient decisions to continue their treatment at a particular facility (Lindquist et al., 2016). The relationship between these factors and overall satisfaction is a growing area of research, as hospitals aim to improve their service offerings and optimize patient outcomes.

One of the key aspects of customer service satisfaction is the hospital's ability to manage patient expectations. Studies have shown that when hospitals meet or exceed patient expectations regarding timeliness, communication, and

service quality, patient satisfaction levels are significantly improved (Dagger et al., 2011). This satisfaction is particularly influenced by the transparency of health information, where patients are informed and involved in their care decisions. Moreover, research has shown that patients appreciate quick and efficient administrative procedures, including fast check-ins, accurate billing, and prompt access to test results and medical records. This creates an overall positive experience and strengthens their confidence in the hospital's capabilities.

### **Health Information Management and Its Role in Patient Satisfaction**

Health Information Management (HIM) is integral to the overall functioning of healthcare systems, particularly in private hospitals where operational efficiency is critical. HIM involves the acquisition, storage, management, and dissemination of patient health data and medical records. Accurate and timely management of patient data is essential to enhancing clinical care, ensuring effective communication among healthcare providers, and optimizing patient outcomes (Kuo et al., 2018). The implementation of Electronic Health Records (EHR) and other health information technologies (HIT) has revolutionized patient care by enabling efficient access to medical histories, lab results, and treatment plans. These innovations also support continuity of care, reducing the risk of medical errors and improving clinical decision-making (Buntin et al., 2011).

Research on the impact of HIM systems on patient satisfaction has shown that effective information management systems can significantly enhance patient experiences by providing faster, more accurate diagnoses, reducing waiting times, and improving the overall efficiency of hospital services (Kuo et al., 2018). For instance, patients who have access to online portals where they can review their medical records and communicate with their healthcare providers often report higher satisfaction levels due to the convenience and transparency offered by these systems (Shaw et al., 2019). The use of EHRs also enhances the accuracy of patient data, which reduces the likelihood of treatment errors and fosters trust in the healthcare system. The ability of patients to receive timely and clear communication regarding their health status can make a significant difference in how they perceive the quality of care they receive.

Moreover, the integration of HIM into healthcare systems allows for a more personalized patient experience, as healthcare providers can better track patient histories, preferences, and treatment responses. This personalized approach to care is essential in building a positive relationship between patients and healthcare providers, which can directly influence patient satisfaction. A study by Shah et al. (2019) found that patients who experienced smoother interactions with healthcare providers due to accurate health records were more likely to express satisfaction with the overall care they received.

### **Challenges in Health Information Management**

While HIM systems offer numerous benefits, their implementation and use can be met with challenges that may impact patient satisfaction. One of the most common issues is related to the complexity and usability of EHR systems, particularly when healthcare providers are not adequately trained or familiar with the technology (Hoffman et al., 2015). Inadequate training can lead to errors in data entry, delays in accessing patient information, and a general lack of efficiency in clinical workflows. These issues not only affect the quality of patient care but also create frustration for patients, who may experience delays in receiving treatment or information about their condition.

Another challenge is the concern over data security and privacy. As the use of digital health records increases, so do concerns about the safety of sensitive patient data. Studies have shown that patients are more likely to be satisfied

with healthcare services when they feel confident that their personal information is being securely managed and protected (Shaw et al., 2019). The potential for data breaches and unauthorized access to personal health information can erode patient trust, undermining the benefits of HIM systems.

The integration of Health Information Management systems plays a critical role in enhancing patient satisfaction in private healthcare hospitals. Efficient management of patient data improves clinical decision-making, reduces medical errors, and contributes to a smoother and more personalized healthcare experience. However, challenges such as system complexity, user training, and data security concerns can impact the effectiveness of these systems and hinder patient satisfaction. As private healthcare hospitals strive to improve patient care, understanding the relationship between HIM systems and patient satisfaction will be crucial in optimizing healthcare service delivery. Further research is necessary to explore how hospitals can overcome these challenges and leverage HIM systems to enhance both operational efficiency and patient experience.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study primarily aims to determine the patients' satisfaction level. This also sought to determine the patients' satisfaction response in terms of the following special areas:

- a. services in emergency room
- b. services rendered at admitting office
- c. services rendered by the medical staff
- d. services rendered at laboratory department
- e. services rendered at pharmacy

## METHODOLOGY

This is a quantitative research study that includes patient who had a follow up check-up ZAMPEN clinic at or was admitted in one of the healthcare services in Zamboanga City. This Retrospective - Descriptive Study was conducted in order to determine the level of customer service satisfaction within the first 6 months since it was fully operational. Purposive sampling of 100 patients both male and female, 18 years old and above from different department were randomly selected to answer the survey questionnaire. Excluded were patients examined in the Out- patient department ( OPD), below 17 years old and patients with less than 24 hours admission.

## Ethical Consideration

The consideration of ethical issues was necessary for the purpose of ensuring the privacy as well as the safety of the participants. Consent and confidentiality was among the significant ethical issue that was considered in the research process. In order to secure the consent of the selected participants, the investigator relayed all important details of the study, including its aim and purpose. By explaining these important details, the respondents were able to understand the importance of their role in the completion of the research. The respondents were also advised that

they could withdraw from the study even during the process. With this, the participants are not forced to participate in the research. Only relevant details that helped in answering the research questions were included.

Permission from the Hospital Administrator, Medical Director, and CEO was obtained for ethical and professional purpose. A survey questionnaire using the SERVQUAL model, a tool for evaluating patient satisfaction, was used as the main data-gathering instrument for this study. The sample questionnaire was tested to 5 private patients before it was administered to the

subjects for the study inclusion. A single investigator ( nurse secretary ) was assigned to interview the study population ( n=100 ). The name of the respondent was optional. Total responses for each item was obtained and tabulated after all the completed questionnaires had been gathered from the respondents.

**Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Location/Area**

Residence	Patients	Percentage
Zamboanga City	73	73%
Sibugay	10	10%
Basilan	5	5%
Jolo	5	5%
Tawi-tawi	3	3%
Others	4	4%

## Data Analysis

Categorical data gathered from the research questionnaire were summarized and presented using frequency and percentage distribution for interpretation.

One section of the questionnaire relate to patients' perception on the quality of the servicethat hospitals should offer and the other corresponding items relating to their expectation of the quality of service actually delivered. The SERVQUAL instrument was the method used to carry out the quantitative and qualitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation. The quality perceptions and expectations statement was measured on a three point Likert response format ( ranging from "disagree" = 1 to " agree" = 3 ). The magnitude of the differences between customer perceptions and expectations were implemented for measuring perceived service quality. The positive gap score of the dimensions means that patients were satisfied with the service quality. The least gap score suggests that there is still room for improvement in a particular area.

The SERVQUAL instrument is a popular instrument to measure service quality applied in the healthcare industry extensively. Five dimensions (i.e., assurance, empathy, reliability, responsiveness and tangibles) are proposed and the magnitude of the differences between customer perceptions and expectations are implemented for measuring perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 198. This research instrument will allow the research to carry out the quantitative approach effectively with the use of statistics for data interpretation. SERVQUAL, a

standard instrument for measuring functional service quality, is reliable and valid in the hospital environment and in a variety of other service industries. It will enable researchers to test the effectiveness of quality enhancing techniques and actions in the hospital and to develop generalizations about these actions and methods. The amount of improvement can be measured across a range of services. Numerical data were summarized by computing the mean. The P value of  $< 0.05$  is considered statistically significant.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Determinants of Patients Satisfaction at ZAMPEN

Special areas such as services from the Emergency Room, admitting section, Mollical staff, Laboratory and Pharmacy were evaluated. From the data obtained, 57% of the quitenets gave "Satisfactory" answer on their satisfaction level they had in ZAMPEN, 37 % answered "Good" while only 6% gave the "Needs Improvement" answer as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Patients' satisfaction response to special areas**

Satisfactory	539	57%
Good	319	37%
Needs Improvement	65	65%
Total		100%

For the services in Emergency Room, majority of the respondents (84.51%) were very satisfied on the services received, to include the courtesy of staff which ranks the first and that of being prompt in attending patient's need is the most in need of improvement, as referred to Table 3.

**Table 3. Rating of Respondents with Regards to the Services Rendered at Emergency Room**

Services	Very satisfactory		Good		Need Improvement		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
EMERGENCY ROOM								
Promptness in attending needs	42	59.15	24	33.80	5	7.04	71	100
Courtesy of staff	44	61.97	24	33.80	3	4.23	71	100
Efficiency of Staff	41	57.65	26	36.62	4	5.63	100	100%
Total Percentage	60	84.51	34	47.89	6	8.45	100	100%

As presented in Table 4, about (82%) were very satisfied of the services at the admitting office that includes courtesy of staff and efficiency of staff. Respondents have also indicated that courtesy of staff and their efficiency is somehow in needs of improvement.



**Table 4. Rating of Respondents with Regards to the Services Rendered at Admitting Office**

Services	Very satisfactory		Good		Need Improvement		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
ADMITTING OFFICE								
Courtesy of staff	41	57.75	27	38.03	3	4.23	71	100
Efficiency of staff	41	57.75	27	38.03	3	4.23	71	100
Total Percentages	58	81.69	38	53.52	4	5.63	71	100

With regards to the services of the medical staff, majority have rated the very satisfactory scale specifically the efficiency in treatment care which is about (66%) rate it is also somehow presented as the most in need of improvement although they differ with only one (1) frequency, as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Rating of Respondents with Regards to the Services Rendered by the Medical Staff**

Services	Very satisfactory		Good		Need Improvement		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
MEDICAL STAFF								
Availability of staff	46	64.79	21	29.58	4	5.63	71	100
Courtesy of staff	43	60.56	23	32.39	5	7.04	71	100
Efficiency in treatment care	47	66.20	18	25.35	6	8.45	71	100
	64	90.14	29	40.85	7	9.86	71	100

With regards for the services in Laboratory as referred at table 6, 83.10% were very satisfied with the services received. The efficiency of staff in extracting blood are very much appreciated by the correspondents with (59.15%) rate. Respondents have also indicated that courtesy of staff and also efficiency in extracting blood is somehow in needs of improvement.

**Table 6. Rating of Respondents with Regards to the Services Rendered at Laboratory Department**

Services	Very satisfactory		Good		Need Improvement		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
LABORATORY								
Courtesy of staff	41	57.75	24	35.21	5	7.04	71	100
Efficiency in extracting blood	42	59.15	24	33.80	5	7.04	71	100
Total Percentages	59	83.10	34	47.89	7	9.86	71	100

Table 7. shows the services of the pharmacy which presents that 73.24% of the respondents are very much satisfied specifically in the efficiency of staff . They have rated the availability of drugs as the most in need of improvement.



**Table 7. Rating of Respondents with Regards to the Services Rendered at Pharmacy**

	Very Satisfactory		Good		Needs Improvement		Total	
5. Pharmacy								
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
Courtesy of staff	38	53.52	6	36.62	7	9.86	71	100
Efficiency of staff	39	54.93	25	35.21	7	9.86	71	100
Availability of drugs	34	47.89	29	40.85	8	11.27	71	100
Total Percentages	52	73.24	38	53.52	10	14.08	71	100

## CONCLUSIONS

A total of 100 patients were included in the study protocol. Majority were females, between 18-40 years old, residing in Zamboanga City. Patients' religion were mostly Islam with predominantly Tausug Ethno-linguistic classification. College and Elementary were the highest educational attainment. The most common reason for confinement was Hypertension.

Special areas such as the Emergency Room, admitting section, Medical staff, Laboratory and Pharmacy services were evaluated. 57% of the patients gave "Satisfactory" result. The common reason for choosing Zamboanga Peninsula Medical Center is because their Private Physician is affiliated in the hospital. Ninety-Eight (98%) patients would recommend Zamboanga Peninsula Medical Center (ZAMPEN) to their family and friends ( $P = < 0.005$ ).

There was a positive and significant relationship between hospital service quality and five dimensions. Furthermore, it was shown that patient satisfaction and three dimensions (Tangibility, responsiveness and empathy) were associated with each other, significantly. The overall service quality showed that ZAMPEN's performance exceeded the patients' expectation of the service delivery of the hospital. The largest positive is Tangibility (gap score 0.2325).

Ninety-seven patients were satisfied (97%) in the effectiveness and efficiency of ZPMC in providing service to their clients ( $P$  value = 0.005). Among the services that clients liked the most, immediate attention to patients' needs ranked first.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the study, the private healthcare service provider should consider routinely using customer satisfaction surveys as a tool for quality measurement and improvement to maintain the high level of customer service satisfaction.

Recommendations regarding ways to affect hospital customer satisfaction include hospital environment, the quality of care received and the availability of resources. Security, cost and quality of personal interactions can also have an effect. Though patients' overall satisfaction was high, this study suggests that there is still room for improvement to further achieve the highest standard of quality management system specifically in areas with the least positive gap in the SERVQUAL.

It is recommended that the hospital hire highly qualified staff and use new or more efficient technologies. Hospital customer satisfaction depends heavily on quality of care factors. This includes professionalism and expertise of clinical workers, including doctors, nurses and technicians.

For the long run success of a health care organization, both functional and technical quality has to be monitored and managed effectively.

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