

## SERVICE QUALITY TOWARDS PATIENTS SATISFACTION OF A DENTAL CLINIC IN TANZA CAVITE; BASIS FOR ENHANCEMENT PLAN

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### ABSTRACT

The study focused on determining the patients' satisfaction on the service quality given by the dental clinic. It employed a descriptive research design using a survey questionnaire administered through in-person survey and Google Forms. For this study, the research used the purposive sampling technique to consider 100 patients of the dental clinic. Data were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS. The results revealed that patients are very satisfied with the dental services in terms of reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy, and responsiveness. Meaning, patients who expressed more satisfaction with dental care showed improved compliance, fewer missed appointments, and reduced discomfort and anxiety. Results also show no significant difference in the profiles of the participants regarding their satisfaction in the service quality except for their sex, age, civil status, monthly income, and frequency of visiting the dental clinic.

**Keywords:** Patient satisfaction, dental clinic

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Patient is one of the most crucial aspects of patient care in a dental clinic is establishing a rapport with the patient. Patients need to feel comfortable and at ease with their dental provider in order to have a successful and satisfying experience. This can be achieved through effective communication, active listening, and empathy on the part of the dentist and their staff. According to studies, building a strong patient-dentist relationship leads to improved patient satisfaction and better treatment outcomes (Cooper et al., 2019).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), access to dental care is a significant determinant of oral health and overall well-being (WHO, 2020). With a dental clinic in the area, residents can easily seek professional dental services without the need to travel to neighboring towns or cities. This accessibility is crucial, especially for individuals who may have limited mobility, transportation, or financial resources. Additionally, the clinic can provide education and awareness programs on proper oral hygiene and dental care practices, further promoting preventive measures among the residents.

Moreover, a dental clinic in Tanza, Cavite, can contribute to the prevention and early detection of dental issues. Regular dental check-ups are essential in identifying dental problems such as

cavities, gum diseases, and oral cancer. Through preventive care and early intervention, the dental clinic can help in reducing the prevalence of oral health issues within the community. Additionally, the clinic can provide education and awareness programs on proper oral hygiene and dental care practices, further promoting preventive measures among the residents.

The key areas of research for future researchers in a dental clinic are to study the prevalence and incidence of oral diseases among the population in Tanza, Cavite. This includes conducting surveys and clinical examinations to determine the most common oral health problems in the community. These studies are essential for identifying the specific oral health needs of the population and for developing targeted prevention and treatment programs.

In addition to studying the prevalence of oral diseases, future researchers in dental clinics can also investigate the effectiveness of various dental treatments and interventions. This may include clinical trials to evaluate the outcomes of different dental procedures, such as the use of dental implants, orthodontic treatments, or the impact of different oral hygiene practices on oral health.

In general, this study aimed to determine the patient's perception and satisfaction on the service quality of dental clinic services in Tanza, Cavite. Thus, the study results have proposed an enhancement plan for dental clinic services providers in Tanza, Cavite.

In view of the preceding statements, this study was conducted to:

1. Determine the socio-demographic profile of the participants in terms of:
  - a. Age;
  - b. Sex;
  - c. Civil status;
  - d. Monthly income;
  - e. Frequency of availing dental services
2. Identify the patient satisfaction in dental services in terms of;
  - a. Reliability;
  - b. Assurance;
  - c. Tangibility;
  - d. empathy; and
  - e. Responsiveness
3. Propose a service enhancement plan based on the result of the study.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

This study used the descriptive research design. The descriptive design was used to describe the demographic profile, patient's satisfaction on dental clinic services in Tanza, Cavite. For this study, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique to consider 100 patients in the dental clinic in Tanza, Cavite. The researcher used an adapted survey questionnaire administered through Google Forms and face to face to collect the data from patients of the dental clinic in Tanza, Cavite.

Data were analyzed using statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, and means to describe the participants' demographic profiles, patient satisfaction on the dental clinic services in Tanza, Cavite. The researchers used the descriptive method to describe the satisfaction using determining their level of agreement on their service quality towards patient' satisfaction using a 5-point Likert scale. The following conversion scales were used in interpreting the data.

**Table 1. Descriptive interpretation for the patient’ satisfaction on the dental clinic services**

<b>NUMERICA L RANGE</b>	<b>VERBAL INTERPRETATION</b>	<b>DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION</b>
4.21 - 5.00	Very Satisfied	The participant is very satisfied with the service quality of the dental clinic services
3.41 - 4.20	Satisfied	The participant is satisfied with the service quality of the dental clinic services.
2.61 - 3.40	Slightly Satisfied	The participant is slightly satisfied with the service quality of the dental services.
1.81 - 2.60	Dissatisfied	The participant is dissatisfied with the service quality of the dental clinic services.
1.00 - 1.80	Very Dissatisfied	The participant is very dissatisfied with the service quality of the dental clinic services.

### 3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Demographic Profiles of the Participants

Table 2 shows that most participants (44%) belong to the age bracket of 18-24 years old and are female (63%). Majority (70%) of the participants are single with majority monthly income of (35%) below 10,000. Also, most participants visit the dentist (37%) once a month.

Nowadays, health concerns and issues are more acknowledged and people are getting educated especially on their dental health, young adults is the leading age group that visits the dentist frequently. Young adults are often more anxious than younger children, teenagers and middle-aged people. The incidence of dental anxiety seems to develop between 18 and 26 years, and this may be attributed to the psychological influences associated with becoming an adult.

As mentioned by Relax Dental (2023), young adulthood is the period when proper early care makes the most significant impact, for many people, this is the point at which they find themselves away from home for reasons such as college, work, or relationships. Many people will decide not to get their teeth cleaned because they want to save money. Some people have avoided wisdom tooth extractions in the past and now find themselves having to take time off work or school to pursue extractions and recovery.

There is stereotyping in today's world whether women care more about their health, especially their hygiene. Based on Su et al. (2022), oral health and oral health behaviors differ by gender, with men reporting poorer oral health, poorer oral hygiene habits, and fewer dental visits. Studies also show that women have higher oral health literacy and more positive attitudes toward dental visits than men. In terms of oral health habits, 8 percent more women brushed their teeth twice a day and 26 percent more likely to floss daily.

As mentioned by Hamasha et al. (2018), female patients exhibit more positive oral health behaviors, such as brushing, flossing, and visiting the dentist on a regular basis, than male patients do. It also showed that female participants in general are more positive about oral health than males. The study provides valuable information about the differences between Saudis' beliefs and behaviors. Health care providers should focus more on improving oral health behaviors and practices, particularly among men. Furthermore, oral health campaigns should shift their emphasis from people's education to oral health practices and behaviors.

Oral health in our society has been overlooked from the past years and most people fail to prioritize one of the most important aspects of our body, which is our teeth. But recently, oral health care is getting noticed. Dentists suggest we must get our teeth checked frequently. As mentioned by Portal Family Dentistry & Orthodontics (2024), adults with significant oral disease or an oral genetic condition may need to see the dentist as often as once a month. Advanced diseases, such as severe gingivitis or periodontal disease, require a deep cleaning once a month. These conditions involve bacterial growth in areas of the mouth that are difficult to reach with a toothbrush and dental floss. In this scenario, going to the dentist every month is essential for anyone who wants to keep their natural teeth. It is important to note that going to the dentist once a month is unlikely to be a long-term commitment. After the dentist cleaning treatments have removed the disease, the individual will most likely be able to space out their dentist visits. Make sure to follow the advice.

Visiting a professional dentist is essential for ensuring that teeth are cleaned on a regular basis. While regular brushing and flossing are essential for preserving tooth enamel and removing bacteria, toothbrushes and dental floss cannot reach certain areas of the mouth. Bacteria can accumulate in these crevices and harden into plaque and tartar, causing gum tissue and tooth structure damage.

**Table 2. Distribution of participants in terms of their socio-demographic profile**

<b>DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	44	44.00
25-31	26	26.00
32-38	10	10.00
39-45	12	12.00
<b>Sex</b>		

Female	63	63.00
Male	37	37.00
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	70	70.00
Married	30	30.00
<b>Monthly Income</b>		
Below 10,000	35	35.00
10,001-20,000	17	17.00
20,001-30,000	9	9.00
30,001-40,000	7	7.00
40,001 and above	32	32.00
<b>Frequency of Availing Dental Services Per Week</b>		
Once a month	37	37.00
More than once a month	1	1.00
Once every 3 months	23	23.00
More than once every 3 months	9	9.00
Once a year	16	16.00
More than once a year	14	14.00

### 3.2 Patients Satisfaction on Dental Clinic Services

Table 3 presents the service quality towards patient's satisfaction of a dental clinic regarding reliability. As a result, the study revealed that they are very satisfied with the service quality given by the dental clinic in terms of reliability.

It is without a doubt that first impression is the most important of all, as mentioned by Akbar et al. (2019), reliability is one of the important dimensions and quality of service. Patients would most likely make a decision if they will avail the service again based on their initial experience, Sewon Park et al. (2021) the study analyzed the impact of health communication and medical service quality, service value, and patient satisfaction on the intention to revisit dental clinics. One of the factors influencing service value is reliability, and high service value and raised patient satisfaction influence the intention to revisit dental clinics.

As cited by Akbar et al. (2019) the dimension of reliability is the ability of service providers to provide services safely and efficiently. This describes the consistent performance, appropriate procedures and acceptable to the patient. Service providers must comply with what is promised, without the need to rework. Health services must be effective, this means having to be able to treat or reduce existing complaints, prevent the occurrence of disease and the development and / or extension of existing diseases.

**Table 3. Patients' Satisfaction in terms of reliability**

<b>RELIABILITY</b>	<b>WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
1. The service expectation Was met after the procedure.	4.97	Very Satisfied
2. The dental clinic has the capacity to accommodate case by case situation request	4.95	Very Satisfied
3. The scheduled procedure is prompt and efficient.	4.95	Very Satisfied
4. The dental clinic is able to perform the promise service dependably and accurately.	4.97	Very Satisfied
<b>OVER-ALL</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>

Table 4 presents the service quality towards patient' satisfaction in terms of assurance. Overall, it can be seen that all of the patients had an excellent dental experience in terms of the service provided

Htang Ttang (2019) mentioned that trust in the service quality provided by the service providers can influence revisiting the clinic and creating loyal customers also service quality of structure, process, and outcomes have a positive influence on patient satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Therefore, the quality of dental care service items with physical, staff, professionalism, interaction, reactivity, administration, and outcomes of the services must be improved.

A well-equipped dental clinic must also be accompanied by a team of highly skilled professionals who possess a deep understanding of the dental field. Dentists and staff members must undergo rigorous educational and practical training to ensure their proficiency in various dental procedures. Continuous education, attending seminars, and staying updated with the latest research and techniques further enhance the dental team's expertise (MacEntee, 2016, p. 235). Patients can benefit from this expertise through accurate diagnosis, personalized treatment plans, and the application of evidence-based techniques.

Beyond the technical aspects, a well-equipped and experienced dental team can significantly improve the overall patient experience. The utilization of modern equipment often minimizes pain and discomfort associated with various dental procedures. For instance, the use of rotary endodontic instruments can enhance the efficiency of root canal therapies while decreasing the time spent in the dental chair (Jain, Lincy, Jain, & Jain, 2016, p. 91). Moreover, the experience of the dental staff in handling anxious patients can help create a welcoming environment, promoting patient confidence and satisfaction.

A well-equipped dental practice also emphasizes patient safety and follows stringent infection control measures. Proper sterilization procedures, disposable materials, and aseptic techniques are critical components of an effective infection control program (Al-Khatib et al., 2016, p. 547). By adhering to these practices, the dental team ensures the well-being of their patients, reducing the risk of cross-contamination and the spread of infectious diseases.

**Table 4. Patients' Satisfaction in terms of assurance**

ASSURANCE	WEIGHTED MEAN	REMARKS
1. The dental clinic is reputable in oral health care.	4.96	Very Satisfied
2. I feel comfortable and safe when undergoing a procedure with the dentist and staff.	4.95	Very Satisfied
3. The dentist explains diagnosis and treatment intimately	4.98	Very Satisfied
4. The dentist and staff are well equipped and experienced in the service provided.	4.99	Very Satisfied
<b>OVER-ALL</b>	<b>4.97</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>

Table 5 presents the patient satisfaction towards the tangibility of the dentist and staff. Overall, the study revealed that the dentist and staffs' instruments used was properly dressed and had a hygienic appearance that had a high effect on patients' satisfaction.

The result of the study was justified by the study of Sara Alijani et al. (2022) who figured out that to lay out a decent and compelling connection between a specialist and his/her patient, certain non-verbal principles are pretty much as essential as information and skills. According to evidence, one of these standards may be the dentist's attire. Patients in dental clinics are very satisfied with the healthcare services towards tangibility, staff and dentists' attire that have a highly significant effect on how satisfied patients are.

Writer (2017) strengthened the study's result by mentioning that the media reports of infection control failures have led to increased patient knowledge about dental sterilization, highlighting the importance of instrument cleanliness and the state of the sterilization process. Most of the patients were very satisfied that the condition of the instruments used was good by the dental clinic. Developing patient satisfaction instruments to evaluate and enhance the quality of dental care and comprehending patient satisfaction in dental care.

According to Vinodh Bhoopathi (2005) revealed in their study that the dental hygiene patients were satisfied with the clinic. As patients' needs are prioritized in this customer-driven industry, such positive patient satisfaction data can be used for the welfare of the patients, the care providers, and the healthcare organization. Patients who were more satisfied with the healthcare services of the dental clinic. Keeping up with cleanliness in medical care offices is critical for patient fulfillment. When seeking medical care, patients expect a clean and secure environment, and any lack of cleaning can lower their satisfaction.

Mohammadkarim Bahadori et al. (2015) Measuring dental clinic service quality is the first and most important factor in improving care. Overall, it had a positive result. They are very satisfied with the total of 4.99. It shows that quality provided plays an important role for dental clinics to pay attention to the physical environment of their facilities to improve patient satisfaction.

**Table 5. Patients' Satisfaction in terms of tangibility**

TANGIBILITY	WEIGHTED MEAN	REMARKS
1. The dentist and staff are properly dress.	4.99	Very Satisfied
2. The instruments used by dental clinic are in good condition.	4.99	Very Satisfied
3. The dental clinic has a modern-looking and visually appealing facility.	4.98	Very Satisfied
4. The dental clinic has a clean and hygienic appearance	4.99	Very Satisfied
<b>OVER-ALL</b>	<b>4.99</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>

Table 6 presents the patients satisfaction on dental clinic in terms of empathy. The study's result revealed that the participants had excellent satisfaction in a dental clinic regarding empathy.

The result of patient satisfaction is crucial for the success of an oral health service, with a ratio between a patient's assessment of treatment and their expectations being a measure of service quality. The weighted mean of 4.99 that Göran Friman et al. (2013) justified found out that patients perceived dental service medical screenings as positive, consistent and needing medical knowledge. Regular patients are very satisfied on their dental clinic when it comes to the empathy of service quality. Also, Göran Friman et al found out that they desired regular screenings for cardiovascular disease and diabetes risks and desired collaboration between dental and healthcare services.

Overall, the result is also justified when Lin Y et al. (2020) found out that online patient reviews can also provide performance feedback reflected in dental care quality and patient experience. Online patient's reviews could be used as a data source in dentistry to better understand patient experience and healthcare quality.

**Table 6. Patients' Satisfaction in terms of empathy**

EMPATHY	WEIGHTED MEAN	REMARKS
1. The dentist acknowledge patients feelings.	4.93	Very Satisfied
2. The dentist ask permission before proceeding to the treatment.	4.90	Very Satisfied
3. The dentist and staff handles with care during the treatment.	4.96	Very Satisfied
4. The dentist and staff gives tips/advice to maintain healthy dental habits.	4.95	Very Satisfied
<b>OVER-ALL</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>

Table 7 shows the patient satisfaction towards the responsiveness of the dentist and staff. Overall, the study revealed that the dentist and staffs' courtesy and genuine care have a high effect on patients' satisfaction.



As mentioned by Akbar et al. (2017) patient satisfaction as it relates to service quality is a relationship between his perceptions of the care he/she received and his/her expectations prior to receiving the service. As mentioned by Chu et al. (2020) patients who were more satisfied with their dental care had better compliance, fewer missed appointments, and less pain and anxiety.

As mentioned by Sulaiman et. al (2021) patients were found to have a stereotypic idea of how clinicians should dress that portrays professionalism, enhances the positive Responses from patients and improves the doctor-patient relationship. Clinicians have been advised. On their mode of dressing since the time of hippocrates due to sanitary or functional reasons. Although psychologists and sociologists have stated the significance of physical appearance and its impact on first impressions .29 clinician who is carefully dressed is considered meticulous. Knowledgeable and compassionate, unlike an An unkempt appearance may convey disorganization.

Satisfied patients are more inclined to adhere to healthcare professionals' treatment recommendations, revisit the same healthcare facility when necessary, and recommend it to others seeking care. Consequently, patient satisfaction serves as a valuable metric for assessing the quality of care, bringing a consumer viewpoint into healthcare policy considerations, and valuing patients' rights and perspectives; hence, it holds a crucial role in improving any healthcare services

As cited by Akbar et al. (2017) dimensions responsiveness refers to the willingness of service providers to attend to users, providing careful service with quick precision and response. This entails the availability of institutional employees to assist users and immediately provide such services. In this study, responsive dimensions had the least impact on dental clinic service quality in Kecamatan Bantaeng and Pajukukang. This is consistent with research conducted at Al-Bashir Hospital in Jordan, which found that respondents rated responsive assessment as a medium criterion. This study also found that responsive dimensions have a lower impact than guarantees, reliability, and tangibility dimensions, with statistically insignificant differences. This is due to a lack of staff in the hospital and a heavy workload.

**Table 7. Patients’ Satisfaction in terms of responsiveness**

<b>RESPONSIVENESS</b>	<b>WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>REMARKS</b>
1. The dental clinic is punctual on the given appointment schedule.	4.90	Very Satisfied
2. The dentist and staff showed honesty, courtesy, and professionalism.	4.98	Very Satisfied
3. The dentist and staff showed genuine dental care before and after the service.	4.99	Very Satisfied
4. The dental clinic is swift and actively listen to patients' request, feedback, questions and issues.	4.95	Very Satisfied
<b>OVER-ALL</b>	<b>4.96</b>	<b>Very Satisfied</b>

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study determined the patients' satisfaction on the service quality given by the dental clinic. Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the participants belong to the age bracket of 18-24 years old and are female. Most participants are single with a monthly income of 10,000. Also, most participants visit the dentist once a month.
2. The patients' satisfaction with the service quality given by the dental clinic was very excellent. This means that the participants are very satisfied with the service quality given their case to case treatment. The study's findings showed that every participant had a high level of satisfaction with the dental clinic's level of service. Therefore, an enhancement plan is not necessary. Results also show no significant difference in the profiles of the participants regarding their satisfaction in the service quality except for their sex, age, civil status, monthly income, and frequency of visiting the dental clinic.

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The study results have highlighted the dental clinic's impressive track record of providing excellent services and satisfying its customers. To build on this success, it is recommended that the clinic should continue to maintain or strive for improvement. The clinic could ensure that its services are up-to-date and of the highest quality. By doing so, the clinic can get the customers receive the best possible care and experience. By taking these steps, the dental clinic can maintain and even surpass its reputation for providing high-quality care, leading to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.
2. Future researchers may use the study as a reference in further studying the satisfaction of participants. They may also include other factors like service quality affecting patients' experiences.
3. Dental clinics may use the study results for crafting or improving their services.

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