

Clients' Satisfaction with Services of Outpatient Departments of a Private Hospital of Lalitpur, Nepal

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Client satisfaction is a multidimensional phenomenon that reflects the clients' healthcare experiences and the effectiveness of healthcare delivery. This study aimed to assess clients' satisfaction with hospital services in a private hospital in Lalitpur. A cross-sectional analytical research design was adopted for the study. A convenience sampling technique was used to select the sample. Face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire will be conducted to collect data. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Committee (IRC) of B & B Hospital. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Out of 72 respondents, 62.5% were from the age group 21 to 40 years. More than half (56.9%) of respondents were female. Nearly one-third of respondents (29.8%) had visited outpatient departments for less up to two times. Most of the respondents reported being satisfied with hospital services (65.3%). No socio-demographic variables were found to be significantly associated with client satisfaction. The majority of clients using outpatient services were satisfied with the health care received and with the facilities, such as drinking water, cleanliness, and the doctor's explanation of their condition. However, a few of the respondents were dissatisfied with the wait time before seeing a doctor and the hospital charges. A similar type of study could be replicated with a large sample for the generalization of the findings.

Keywords: clients, hospital, satisfaction, services.

Clients carry certain expectations before their visit, and the resultant satisfaction or dissatisfaction is the outcome of their experience. The purpose of health care services is to improve the health status of the population.¹ Clients' satisfaction refers to clients' value judgments and subsequent reactions to what they perceive in the health environment just before, during, and after the course of their inpatient stay or clinical visit.² Patient satisfaction is one proximate measure of the quality of health treatment.³ Yet, because of the lack of resources and patients' low health literacy, improving patient happiness in low-income settings is extremely difficult.⁴

Studies conducted among OPD patients suggest that the lower client satisfaction with different domains of hospital services. The satisfaction level is significantly associated with the long waiting time and other demographic variables.⁵ Most of the studies in Nepal were conducted to assess patient satisfaction at public healthcare institutions.^{6,7} Therefore, we aimed to assess clients' satisfaction with hospital services in a private hospital in Lalitpur.

Materials & Methods

A cross-sectional analytical study was conducted at Baidya and Banskota (B&B) Hospital in Lalitpur, Nepal. B&B is a 300-bed private hospital providing emergency

to advanced medical and surgical care. The hospital consults more than 90,000 cases in outpatient departments (OPDs) annually.

A total of 72 patients included in the study, calculated using Cochrane's formula, considering the prevalence of 74.47% from the previous literature⁸ and an error of 10%. Patients attending the OPDs of general medicine, orthopedics, general surgery, gynecology, obstetrics, and urology OPD of B&B Hospital were included. Respondents who were not willing to participate in the study, younger than 18 years, and with communication issues were excluded from the study.

A semi-structured questionnaire was developed by reviewing related literature. The tool had two parts. Part I consisted of questions related to socio-demographic characteristics, i.e., age, gender, level of education, religion, place of residence, occupation, and total OPD visits. Part II consisted of 21 items, rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The overall obtained score was categorized into two groups, considering the cutoff of the mean score. Respondents scoring more than the mean score (≥ 4.32) were identified as satisfied, while those below the mean (< 4.32) were categorized as dissatisfied.⁹ The questionnaire was pretested among 10 OPD patients at Alka Hospital, Jawalakhel, and the tool was revised accordingly. Using the final tool, face-to-face interviews were conducted

with conveniently selected respondents from April to May 2024.

Ethical approval was obtained from the B&B Institutional Review Committee (Ref: B&BIRC-24-29). For the data collection, the B&B Hospital administration provided the approval. Informed consent was taken from all the respondents. Privacy and confidentiality of the information were maintained throughout the study.

All the collected data were checked and verified for completeness, consistency, and accuracy each day. Data coding was done, then entered into Microsoft Excel, and imported to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 20.0 for further statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were calculated for socio-demographic variables. Pearson's Chi-Square was used to find out the association between the level of satisfaction and socio-demographic variables at a p-value less than 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Socio-demographic Information

The current study revealed that out of 72 respondents, the majority (62.5%) were from the age group 21-40 years with a mean age of 37.93 ± 14.98 . More than half (56.9%) were female, and the majority (69.4%) were Hindu. Regarding the level of education, respondents who completed up to ten classes

and higher were in equal proportion (38.3%). Most (76.4%) of the respondents were from urban settings. Concerning the total OPD visit, (29.8%) of the respondents visited the OPD up to two times. Regarding occupation, an equal proportion of respondents were students and businessmen (24.6%), as shown in **Table 1**.

Satisfaction with Hospital Services

Table 2 indicates a high mean score (4.44, 88.8%) for satisfaction with overall services. Among specific components of hospital services, communication skills (4.38, 87.6%), consultation services (4.36, 87.2%), and waiting time (4.34, 86.8%) were rated at the highest possible satisfaction level. The results highlighted slightly lower satisfaction for reception services (4.21, 84.2%) and pharmacy services (4.07, 81.4%), in comparison to other services.

Satisfaction Levels

Figure 1 shows that, among 72 respondents, the majority (65.3%) were satisfied with hospital services, whereas the remaining 34.7% reported dissatisfaction with the overall hospital services.

Association between Socio-demographic Variables and Satisfaction Levels

Table 3 illustrates no significant association of satisfaction levels with age, gender, religion, education level, occupation, place of residence, or OPD visit.

Table 1: Socio-demographic variables of the respondents (n=72)

Variables	Number	Percent
Age (in completed years)		
0-20	3	4.2
21-40	45	62.5
41-60	17	23.6
≥61	7	9.7
Mean ±SD (37.93±14.98; 18-77 years)		
Gender		
Male	31	43.1
Female	41	56.9
Religion		
Hindu	50	69.4
Buddhist	15	20.8
Muslim	2	2.8
Christian	5	6.9
Level of education		
Up to 10 classes	36	38.3
Higher education	36	38.3
Place of residence		
Urban	55	76.4
Rural	17	23.6
Total OPD visits		
≤2 times	42	29.8
>3 times	30	21.3
Occupation		
Student	19	26.4
Teacher	6	8.3
Health worker	9	12.5
Businesses	19	26.4
Civil servant	10	13.9
Others	9	12.5

Table 2: Respondents' Mean Satisfaction Score Regarding Components of Hospital Services (n=72)

Hospital Services	Obtained range	Mean± SD	Mean (%)
Reception Services	2.67-5	4.21±0.53	84.2
Waiting Time	3.33-5	4.34±0.38	86.8
Consultation services	3.40-5	4.36±0.43	87.2
Pharmacy Services	2.50-5	4.07±0.66	81.4
Communication Skills	3.00-5	4.38±0.50	87.6
Overall Services	3.00-5	4.44±0.47	88.8

Mean score ±Standard Deviation (4.32±0.27), min 3.42, max 4.81

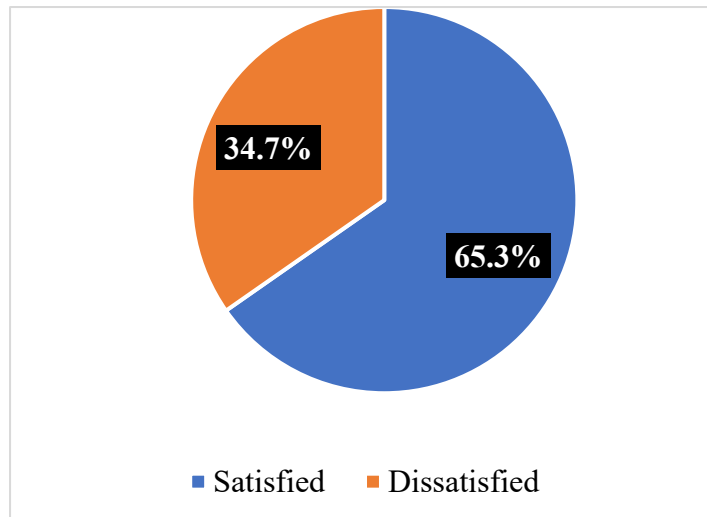


Figure 1: Respondents' level of satisfaction with hospital services

Table 3: Chi-square test results between socio-demographic variables and satisfaction levels (n=72)

Variables	Level of satisfaction		X ² value	p-value
	Satisfied n (%)	Dissatisfied n (%)		
Age				
≤40	32 (66.7)	16 (33.3)	0.123	0.0.726
>40	15 (62.5)	9 (37.5)		
Gender				
Male	23 (72.4)	8 (25.8)	1.909	0.167
Female	24 (58.5)	17 (41.5)		
Religion				

Hindu	33 (66.0)	17 (34.0)	0.038	0.846
Non-Hindu	14 (63.6)	8 (36.4)		
Level of Education				
Up to 10 classes	25 (69.4)	11 (30.6)	0.551	0.458
Higher education	22 (61.1)	14 (38.9)		
Place of Residence				
Urban	35 (63.6)	20 (36.4)	0.277	0.599
Rural	12 (70.6)	5 (29.4)		
Total OPD Visits				
≤ 2 times	30 (71.4)	12 (28.6)	1.682	0.195
>3 times	17 (56.7)	13 (43.3)		
Occupation				
Students	13 (68.4)	6 (31.6)	0.113	0.737
Others	34 (64.2)	19 (35.8)		

Pearson Chi-Square, Significant at p-value <0.05

Discussion

The present study examined the level of satisfaction with hospital services among 72 clients receiving OPD services at the B&B Hospital. Findings show that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the hospital services (65.3%). A study conducted at Bir Hospital, Kathmandu, Nepal, also revealed a slightly higher overall satisfaction of 74.78%.⁸ This may be due to the different study sites included. The finding is consistent with a similar study conducted in India and Ethiopia, where 64.0% and 66.5% of the respondents were satisfied with OPD services, respectively.^{9,10} In contrast to our findings, Boakye et al. reported that 90.9% of the participants were satisfied with the OPD services they received in Ghana.¹¹ The

results might vary because the study in Ghana included multiple health institutions, while our study was single-centered. A study conducted by Shrestha et al. in Nepal also revealed that the majority (86.0%) of participants were satisfied with the hospital services.¹² The slight difference in results might be due to the different study sites and sample sizes. Shrestha et al. conducted their study at a Teaching Hospital with 470 participants, whereas we included 72 patients visiting a private hospital. Unlike our findings, another study conducted by Dhungana et al. also reported that 91.25% of participants were satisfied with the hospital services at OPDs.¹³ This variation may be because of the different study sites included. In our findings, the highest satisfaction score was observed for Communication Skills

(4.38±0.50), supporting the findings of a study by Poudel et al. in Nepal.⁸ Other previous studies had also reported the highest satisfaction scores for the Interpersonal Domain, which closely relates to Communication Skills.^{6,14} However, Subedi et al. showed the highest score for satisfaction with technical skills.¹⁵ The discrepancy in the results might be due to the inpatient clients included in the previous study. We found that participants had higher satisfaction scores for waiting time (4.34±0.38). However, the waiting time was a major dissatisfaction in a study conducted by Bhatt et al. in Nepal.⁷ The variation in results is likely due to differences in study sites. The previous study was conducted among participants attending the OPDs of the Mental Hospital in Lalitpur, Nepal.

We found no association between socio-demographic variables and satisfaction levels. In line with our findings, Shrestha et al. also reported no significant relationship between socio-demographic variables and patient satisfaction.¹² Similarly, Banstola Bidhya also showed no association of patient satisfaction with socio-demographic variables.¹⁴

However, a study conducted in Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH), Maharajgunj in Kathmandu showed a significant association between age, gender, religion, level of education, place of residence, total OPD visit time, and

occupation with clients' satisfaction.¹⁵ Our findings also differ from a study conducted by Adhikari et al. at a public hospital in Nepal, where age, gender, and ethnicity were significantly associated with patient satisfaction.⁶ Another study conducted in north India showed a significant association between age, caste, and occupation were significantly and clients' satisfaction.¹⁶ The possible explanation of the difference in the association is the variation in study sites and sample size between the present study and previous studies.

Although this study provides new insights into patient satisfaction by exploring the satisfaction with healthcare services at a private hospital in Nepal, there are limitations to be noted. First, this study was conducted at a single center, with including small sample size. Therefore, results might not represent the overall population of private healthcare centers. Future studies should aim to explore patient satisfaction, including a large sample size from multiple centers.

Conclusion

The majority of respondents using outpatient services were satisfied with the health care received, with most of them being satisfied with the communication skills of doctors. Whereas, the satisfaction level was lower for Reception and Pharmacy Services. The study showed no significant association between the level of

satisfaction of clients with socio-demographic variables. Results suggest efforts for improvements in reception and pharmacy services.

Conflict of interest: None

Source of research fund: None

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