

Service Quality, Patient Satisfaction, and Challenges of Multi-Specialty Dental Clinics in Highly Urbanized Cities in Western Visayas

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Introduction: This study evaluates service quality and patient satisfaction in multi-specialty dental clinics within highly urbanized cities in Western Visayas. It assesses variations in service quality dimensions based on clinic characteristics—such as specialization, personnel, and patient volume—while analyzing satisfaction across diverse patient demographics. Furthermore, the research correlates overall quality with satisfaction and identifies unique operational challenges, aiming to guide strategic enhancements in both clinical and operational dental practices.

Methodology: Employing a multi-method research design, this study integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess service quality and client satisfaction in multi-specialty dental clinics. Grounded in the SERVQUAL Framework comprising tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy the quantitative component gathered data from 360 respondents, including dental personnel and patients, through standardized instruments. The data were then analyzed using inferential statistical techniques such as the Mann-Whitney U test, Chi-square test, and Spearman's correlation to explore patterns and relationships across the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Complementing this, the qualitative component employed descriptive phenomenology to gain deeper insights into operational challenges and lived experiences. In-depth interviews were analyzed through bracketing, horizontalization, clustering, and textualization, allowing for a richer understanding of how service quality is experienced and perceived within the clinical setting.

Results: Findings revealed uniformly high service quality ratings across all assessed dimensions (mean ~3.92) and consistently high patient satisfaction, irrespective of demographic variables. A significant positive correlation was found between overall service quality and satisfaction ($r_s = 0.567$, $p = 0.000$). Qualitative analysis identified three core themes: Clinic Operation Management, Quality and Safety Procedures, and Regulatory Compliance, highlighting the importance of efficient scheduling, infection control, interdisciplinary collaboration, and legal adherence.

Conclusion: The study concludes that multi-specialty dental clinics in highly urbanized cities in Western Visayas achieve exceptional service quality, which is strongly linked to high patient satisfaction. The integration of operational efficiency, rigorous quality assurance measures, and strict regulatory compliance is essential for sustaining clinical excellence and fostering patient trust.

Practical Value: This research provides actionable insights for clinic administrators, dental professionals, and policymakers. By highlighting the critical roles of efficient workflows, robust quality and safety protocols, and regulatory adherence, the study offers a practical framework for implementing Continuous Improvement Plan and elevating dental service standards across diverse patient populations.

Direction for Future Research: Future research should employ longitudinal designs to monitor evolving service quality and patient satisfaction, while expanding geographic scope to rural and suburban areas to enhance generalizability. Additionally, researchers should apply Heideggerian phenomenology to explore how emerging digital technologies reshape the lived experience of clinical routines. These inquiries would be further enriched by complementary focus group discussions to capture collective insights and operational nuances across diverse settings.

Keywords: multi-specialty dental clinics, service quality, patient satisfaction, multimethod research, Philippines

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