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The Relationship Between Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction at the General Clinic of Mamburungan Public Health Center, Tarakan City

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Abstract

The quality of healthcare services at Puskesmas significantly influences patient satisfaction. Service quality is determined by five elements: Responsiveness, Assurance, Tangible, Empathy, and Reliability. This study aims to examine the relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction at the General Clinic of Mamburungan Public Health Center, Tarakan City. This research is a quantitative descriptive study with a cross-sectional approach. The study population comprises all patients who visited and received healthcare services at the General Clinic of Mamburungan Public Health Center, totaling 240 people. The sample size is 165 respondents, who were selected using purposive sampling. The study identified that the overall service quality at the General Clinic of Mamburungan Public Health Center is generally good (57.6%), with 64.8% of respondents expressing satisfaction with their healthcare services. Statistical analysis using the Chi-Square test obtained p = 0,032 with a Correlation Coefficient of 0.409, concluding a significant relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction. However, the strength of the relationship is weak.

Keywords: *Healthcare services; satisfaction; service quality*

INRODUCTION

The Indonesian Health Workforce Law of 2014 emphasizes that the quality of healthcare services aims to enable the public to optimize their understanding, expectations, and abilities to adopt healthy behaviors, thus establishing optimal health standards. Health is crucial in building a socially and economically active society, contributing to collective well-being. Good and quality services will ultimately bridge the achievement of optimal public health while ensuring patient satisfaction. Patients receive healthcare services and can also be regarded as consumers or customers. As consumers of healthcare services, patients interact daily with healthcare providers, seek treatment, require care, and have the right to receive and experience optimal quality healthcare services (Sumiati et al., 2023). Consumer protection, medical practice, and hospital laws also protect patients as consumers. Patients' rights include receiving quality healthcare services by professional standards and standard operational procedures.

Improving the quality of healthcare services is one of the main focuses in efforts to enhance the national health system. Puskesmas, as primary healthcare facilities, play a strategic role in

providing quality healthcare services to the community. One of the critical indicators in assessing the success of healthcare services at Puskesmas is patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction reflects the patients' perceptions and experiences of the services they receive, which ultimately can influence patient loyalty and the image of Puskesmas itself. The quality of healthcare services encompasses various aspects, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. Previous research has shown that improving the quality of healthcare services is positively related to patient satisfaction. According to Kalaja (2023), the reliability and empathy of healthcare workers are dominant factors influencing patient satisfaction in primary healthcare facilities. At Mamburungan Public Health Center in Tarakan City, the quality of services at the general clinic is a primary focus in improving community services.

Patient satisfaction is generally influenced by factors such as communication between healthcare providers and patients, waiting times, and the comfort of facilities. Effective communication between healthcare providers and patients and short waiting times significantly enhance patient satisfaction (Xie & Or, 2017). It is essential to evaluate the quality of services provided, including at the General Clinic of Mamburungan Public Health Center, to identify areas that need improvement and enhancement. Understanding the factors influencing patient satisfaction is hoped to provide helpful input for the health center to improve service performance. Patient satisfaction is one of the leading performance indicators in healthcare services. High patient satisfaction reflects effective and efficient services and can increase public trust in healthcare services (Hendrawan et al., 2021).

The quality of healthcare providers in primary health facilities such as community health centers (Puskesmas) dramatically influences the assessment and satisfaction of every patient as a service recipient. When healthcare services are of good quality and satisfactory, patient satisfaction increases accordingly, and vice versa. According to Saputra et al., (2023), there are five dimensions or standards for measuring service quality and patient satisfaction that service providers must consider, including the physical appearance of services (tangibles), reliability, responsiveness in service delivery, assurance of service, and understanding of consumer conditions (empathy).

Service rated as highly satisfying will positively impact achieving standards of patient or service recipient satisfaction, where such positive experiences are shared and passed on to others to be understood and utilized appropriately (Alhajri et al., 2023). Factors contributing to patient dissatisfaction with healthcare services include poor communication, long waiting times, suboptimal service delivery, service quality, and issues related to pricing and costs not meeting standards. The primary cause of patient dissatisfaction with healthcare services is the low quality of service that fails to meet the expectations of these patients (Ihsan et al., 2021).

The meaning of customer satisfaction arises from the comparison between expectations or expectations and the performance received. This means that customer satisfaction as healthcare service recipients emerges when the service outcomes meet their expectations. Satisfaction

encompasses feelings of pleasure or disappointment when customers compare their expectations or impressions with the results of work, products, services, or services. Customer satisfaction after receiving services depends on the alignment between products/services and their expectations; customers will feel satisfied if the services received are equal to or exceed their expectations (Ferreira et al., 2023). The general outpatient clinic, as the unit with the highest number of visits at the community health center, significantly determines overall patient satisfaction at the health center. The general outpatient clinic is the primary place where patients receive essential medical services, so the quality of services provided in the general outpatient clinic will shape patients' initial perceptions of the community health center as a whole. When the general outpatient clinic unit provides adequate services that meet patient expectations, this will increase patient satisfaction levels, thereby enhancing the overall image of the community health center.

METHODS

This study is a quantitative descriptive study with a cross-sectional approach. The independent variable in this study is service quality, and the dependent variable is patient satisfaction. The study population comprises all patients who visit and receive healthcare services at the General Outpatient Clinic of Puskesmas Mamburungan. The population size was determined based on the number of visits to the General Outpatient Clinic in the last two weeks, totaling 240 individuals. A sample size of 165 respondents was obtained using Slovin's formula. Sampling was conducted using a purposive sampling technique, considering inclusion criteria: patients aged 19-59 years, able to communicate effectively, literate, and willing to participate as respondents. Exclusion criteria included visitors seeking health certificates and patients returning for follow-up visits.

Service quality was measured using a questionnaire instrument adopted from Rofiah (2019) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.753. The measurement of service quality was structured based on the SERVQUAL concept using the RATER principle: responsiveness, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and reliability. Patient satisfaction was assessed using a questionnaire instrument adopted from Purwoastuti et al. (2015) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.782. The measured patient satisfaction included six components: communication, empathy, cost, physical appearance, comfort, and reliability in handling all patient needs and conditions. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square test. This study met ethical standards based on the ethical clearance certificate from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Borneo Tarakan, Number 001/KEPK-FIKES UBT/V/2023.

RESULTS

The research was conducted at Puskesmas Mamburungan, Tarakan City. Data collection took place from May to June 2023. The research findings are presented in the table format below. Table 1 depicts the characteristics of the respondents in this study, predominantly female, primarily

between 19 and 28 years old. The respondents generally have a good level of education, with most having completed high school. They have diverse occupations, but the majority are private-sector employees or unemployed.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	42,4
	Female	95	57,6
Age	19 - 28 years old	116	70,3
	29 - 38 years old	30	18,2
	≥ 39 years old	19	11,5
Education	Elementary School	6	3,6
	Junior High School	18	10,9
	Senior High School	108	65,5
	Diploma	3	1,8
	Bachelor's Degree	29	17,6
	Master's Degree	1	0,6
Occupation	Civil Servant	13	7,9
	Laborer/Employee	33	20
	Private Sector	14	8,5
	Student	31	18,8
	Unemployed	74	44,8

The description of the quality of service at the General Clinic of Mamburungan Community Health Center and the level of patient satisfaction with the healthcare services they received are shown in Table 2 below. Based on the table, it is noted that the quality of service in the general clinic is generally deemed suitable, although not yet optimal, considering the somewhat close range between excellent and poor assessments. Nevertheless, the majority of res-pondents express satisfaction with the services provided. These findings indicate inconsistencies among respondents in providing objective assessments.

Table 2. Overview of General Practice Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Quality of Service	Good	95	57,6
	Poor	70	42,4
	Total	165	100
Patient Satisfaction	Satisfied	107	64,8
	Dissatisfied	58	35,2
	Total	165	100

Table 3 below shows the statistical analysis results of the relationship between service quality at the General Practice Clinic of Mamburungan Public Health Center and patient satisfaction. Based on the table, it is found that service quality is significantly associated with patient satisfaction, although the strength of the relationship is weak.

Table 3. Analysis of the Relationship Between Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction Based on the Chi-Square Test

Variable		Patient Satisfaction		p	Correlation Coefficient
		Satisfied	Dissatisfied		
Quality of Service	Good	69	26	0,032	0,409
	Poor	38	32		
	Total	107	58		

Although weak, the finding that there is a significant relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction suggests that while service quality influences patient satisfaction, other factors also play crucial roles. Factors such as patients' expectations, their health condition upon visiting the health center, perceptions of interactions with healthcare providers, and prior experiences can influence patient satisfaction. Variability in individual standards for assessing service quality may also contribute to the observed weak relationship. Therefore, efforts to enhance patient satisfaction need to consider these multidimensional factors for more comprehensive and effective outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that most respondents were female, reflecting patterns of healthcare service utilization at the community health center (Puskesmas). According to Novitasari (2022), women tend to use healthcare services more frequently than men due to biological and social factors, including reproductive health needs and childcare. Women are typically more proactive in maintaining health and accessing healthcare services. The dominance of younger age groups among respondents suggests that younger generations are becoming more aware of the importance of healthcare maintenance and accessing primary healthcare services (Abdulsalam & Khan, 2020). Most respondents have a high level of education, indicating a relationship between education and understanding the importance of healthcare services. Education is critical in increasing awareness and knowledge about health, encouraging individuals to utilize healthcare services more frequently (Jannati et al., 2022). The varied occupations among respondents, with the majority working as private sector employees or being unemployed, indicate that access to healthcare services at the Puskesmas is inclusive and serves diverse segments of society. It is essential to ensure that healthcare services are accessible to all groups, including those who may not have formal employment or steady income.

In community health centers (Puskesmas), providing quality service enhances patient satisfaction, making them more likely to continue using the available healthcare services at Puskesmas. Efforts to improve service quality at Puskesmas are crucial for building trust and satisfaction among patients and enhancing overall public health. Improving service quality at the General Clinic of Puskesmas can enhance the center's image in the community's eyes and increase patient confidence in the healthcare services provided. This, in turn, can boost visitor numbers and strengthen the relationship between Puskesmas and the local community.

The quality of service at the General Clinic of Puskesmas Mamburungan is generally good, although it has yet to be optimal. The range between excellent and poor assessments of the services provided is relatively narrow, indicating significant room for improvement in service quality. Health services that are considered good but have yet to be optimal are often due to various factors, including inadequate resources, insufficient training for healthcare staff, and inefficient management (Jannati et al., 2022). When the range between good and poor assessments is not too wide, it reflects variability in patient experiences that may stem from inconsistencies in service delivery. Gore et al., (2022) emphasize the importance of effective communication, reducing waiting times, and enhancing healthcare staff skills as critical factors in improving service quality.

Furthermore, the study by Bhatt et al., (2024) suggests that patient satisfaction can increase with improved service management, including ongoing monitoring of performance and feedback from patients for service improvement. To achieve optimal service quality at the General Clinic, Puskesmas should focus on continuous training for healthcare staff, improving service management systems, and implementing consistent operational standards. This effort aims to increase the number of good assessments and reduce poor assessments, thereby optimizing service quality as perceived by most patients. This will enhance overall patient satisfaction and trust, strengthening Puskesmas's role as a reliable primary healthcare provider.

The majority of respondents in this study expressed satisfaction with the healthcare services at the General Clinic. This satisfaction reflects that the services provided by healthcare professionals at the General Clinic meet most patients' expectations. According to Satpathy et al., (2022), patient satisfaction is often influenced by several critical factors, including healthcare staff competence, quality of interaction between patients and service providers, and the conditions and physical facilities of the healthcare centre itself. This satisfaction can also be linked to positive experiences patients have while receiving services, such as reasonable waiting times, responsiveness of healthcare professionals, and clear and comprehensive provision of information. However, it is essential to realize that high satisfaction only sometimes means there is room for improvement, as specific elements of services can still be enhanced to ensure consistent and optimal service quality. Factors such as timeliness of service, friendliness and empathy of healthcare staff, and efficiency in administrative processes can continue to be improved to maintain and enhance patient satisfaction. Furthermore, Woo & Choi (2021) research emphasizes the importance of patient feedback as a tool for evaluation and continuous improvement, where Puskesmas can identify areas needing improvement and implement more effective strategies to enhance service quality. This effort will maintain patient satisfaction and enhance the reputation of Puskesmas as a reliable and high-quality healthcare provider.

Research findings indicating moderate service quality but high patient satisfaction suggest inconsistency in respondents' attitudes when providing assessments. This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors. According to Thuy et al., (2021), inconsistency in patient satisfaction

ratings may arise from individual differences in expectations and experiences. Patients may have different standards for evaluating services, influenced by their educational background, previous experiences with healthcare services, and subjective perceptions of the services received. Emotional and psychological factors also play a significant role in satisfaction assessments. For example, friendly and empathetic interactions from healthcare professionals can satisfy patients despite shortcomings in technical aspects of service. This underscores that the interpersonal aspects of healthcare services significantly impact patient satisfaction, sometimes more so than technical quality itself. Biases in patient satisfaction assessments often stem from patients' need to understand the expected service quality standards. Patients may feel satisfied simply because they are unaware of what can and should be expected from quality service. This highlights the importance of patient education on healthcare service standards so that they can provide more accurate and consistent assessments.

This study's results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction, although the strength of this relationship is identified as weak. This suggests that service quality influences patient satisfaction, but other factors also play crucial roles in determining satisfaction. Research by Shrestha and Devkota (2017) shows that healthcare service quality encompasses various aspects such as reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. While these aspects are essential, patient satisfaction is also heavily influenced by other factors such as patient expectations, personal experiences, and socio-cultural contexts. Effective communication between healthcare providers and patients and reasonable waiting times are two additional factors that significantly affect patient satisfaction. Even if service quality is technically sound, poor communication or long waiting times can significantly reduce patient satisfaction. Therefore, improving service quality should also include interaction and time management enhancements.

Furthermore, Li et al., (2015) state that patient satisfaction is often influenced by subjective perceptions that can vary widely among individuals. Emotional factors, such as feeling valued and listened to, can enhance satisfaction even when technical aspects of service are not optimal. Healthcare providers must understand that a holistic approach addressing both technical and emotional aspects of healthcare service is crucial for enhancing patient satisfaction. They should be open to continuous evaluation and feedback from patients to identify areas needing improvement.

Five indicators can be used to explain the relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction: reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. These five indicators play a significant role in shaping perceptions of satisfaction based on the quality of service received. Reliability refers to the ability of healthcare providers and service facilities to deliver consistent and dependable services. Research by Astier et al., (2020) shows that reliability is a crucial factor influencing patient satisfaction, as patients expect consistently available services of high quality every time they visit. Reliability includes diagnosis accuracy, treatment effectiveness, and service

delivery timeliness. The assurance indicator encompasses competence, politeness, and the ability of healthcare providers to instill confidence in patients. This assurance is crucial in building patient trust in healthcare services. Patients feel more satisfied when they believe they are in the hands of competent and professional healthcare providers. This also includes aspects of medical safety and the protection of patient's personal data, all of which enhance patient trust and satisfaction.

The tangible indicator refers to the physical aspects of healthcare facilities, including cleanliness, medical equipment, and comfort in waiting areas. Good physical conditions and adequate equipment significantly enhance patient satisfaction. According to Zhou et al., (2021), patients rate higher service quality when they perceive facilities as clean, modern, and equipped with the latest medical technologies. A well-maintained physical appearance reflects the seriousness and professionalism of healthcare services. The empathy indicator reflects the extent to which healthcare providers understand and consider the needs and feelings of patients. Empathy is one of the most influential factors in improving patient satisfaction. Healthcare providers who demonstrate genuine concern and compassion towards patients can create a more positive experience, making patients feel valued and respected. According to Altin & Stock (2016), empathy greatly helps build better relationships between patients and healthcare providers, increasing patient loyalty. The responsiveness indicator refers to the willingness and ability of healthcare providers to assist patients and provide prompt service. Responsiveness is critical to patient satisfaction (Ahmadi Kashkoli et al., 2017). Patients appreciate quick and efficient service, especially in emergencies. Responsiveness includes how quickly healthcare providers respond to patient requests and complaints and their ability to provide needed information promptly. Respond promptly to avoid frustration and dissatisfaction among patients.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully identified that the quality of service at the General Clinic of Puskesmas Mamburungan is generally good, with most patients expressing high satisfaction levels. Statistical analysis using the Chi-Square test proved there is a significant relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction, although the strength of this relationship was identified as weak. This study is limited by its relatively small population size, considering it only covers one service unit, specifically the general clinic, representing the community health center.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors have no conflicts of interest related to this research.

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