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**Factors Influencing Patients Satisfaction in Healthcare - A  
Systematic Literature Review**

Masters in Management (Health Care)

Dissertation made under the supervision:

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**FACTORS INFLUENCING PATIENTS SATISFACTION IN HEALTHCARE - A  
SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW**

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## **DEDICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## RESUMO

Os cuidados de saúde englobam a melhoria ou manutenção da saúde através do diagnóstico, prevenção, tratamento e gestão da doença, bem como a preservação do bem-estar mental e físico através dos serviços oferecidos pelos profissionais de saúde. A prestação de serviços de saúde de qualidade, como a prestação de cuidados seguros, eficazes, centrados nas pessoas de forma eficiente, integrados, oportunos e equitativos, que contribuam para a satisfação e o bem-estar do paciente. Assim, a qualidade do cuidado refere-se à medida em que os serviços de saúde para populações e indivíduos aumentam a probabilidade de resultados de saúde desejados.

Um serviço de saúde de alta qualidade implica responder às necessidades e preferências do cliente, fornecendo os cuidados certos no momento certo, minimizando os danos e o desperdício de recursos. Os cuidados de saúde de qualidade caracterizam-se pela pontualidade, segurança, centrados nas pessoas, eficácia, integração dos cuidados, equidade e eficiência. Nesse sentido, as intervenções necessárias para melhorar a qualidade dos cuidados de saúde incluem a prestação de informação e educação sanitária dos profissionais de saúde, o uso contínuo de métodos e programas de melhoria da qualidade, o estabelecimento de incentivos baseados no desempenho (financeiros e não financeiros) e o estabelecimento de padrões.

Na maioria dos países em desenvolvimento, a satisfação dos pacientes tem sido notavelmente baixa, levando à competição entre instituições de saúde públicas e privadas. As instituições de saúde privadas são conhecidas por oferecer serviços de saúde de qualidade em comparação com as instituições de saúde pública. Consequentemente, verificou-se que a maioria dos estudos realizados em África adotou e implementou inquéritos de satisfação do cliente e o sector da saúde não foi exceção. No entanto, ainda há uma escassez de bibliografia sobre os fatores que influenciam a satisfação dos pacientes que precisam de ser abordados.

O presente estudo tem como objetivo compreender as medidas de variáveis de qualidade de saúde centradas na pessoa e como elas afetam a satisfação e a capacidade de resposta do paciente. Portanto, o estudo desenvolveu três objetivos específicos que incluem examinar as variáveis/fatores que têm sido indicados pela literatura para influenciar a satisfação do paciente em saúde, determinar como as dimensões da qualidade afetam a satisfação do paciente e

determinar a relação entre fatores socioeconómicos e qualidade do serviço em prestação de cuidados de saúde.

Para atender a estes objetivos, o estudo adotou uma abordagem sistemática da literatura como projeto do estudo e abordagem qualitativa de pesquisa na recolha e análise dos dados. O estudo teve como objetivo fazer uso apenas de dados secundários de estudos relacionados encontrados em jornais, livros e artigos online. Para realizar a pesquisa literária, foram utilizados mecanismos de busca específicos para auxiliar na identificação dos estudos para a revisão. Os motores de pesquisa utilizados incluíram “Google Scholar”, “ScienceDirect”, “PubMed” e “Cochrane Library”. Para identificar os estudos, este estudo utilizou operadores booleanos que facilitaram a pesquisa. Ao utilizar operadores booleanos, o investigador conseguiu restringir o alcance da pesquisa. Para utilizar os operadores booleanos, o estudo utilizou conjunções como “OU”, “E”, “NÃO” e “E/OU”. Além disso, para restringir a busca, palavras-chave como “pdf”, “tese”, “texto completo” e “revista” foram adicionadas à pesquisa.

Outras palavras-chave utilizadas derivaram dos objetivos da pesquisa e incluem “Satisfação do paciente em saúde”, “dimensões de qualidade que afetam a satisfação do paciente”, “relação entre fatores socioeconómicos e qualidade do serviço” e “qualidade do serviço em saúde”. Além disso, os estudos foram selecionados com base nos critérios de inclusão e exclusão e no fluxograma PRISMA. Ao todo, foram incluídos na revisão 20 estudos relacionados.

Os dados obtidos na revisão foram analisados através da análise temática, que é uma forma de análise que se concentra em identificar, analisar e interpretar padrões de significado em dados qualitativos. O estudo adotou uma análise temática porque ajudou o investigador a dividir os dados em diferentes conjuntos, o que evita distrações associadas a grandes conjuntos de dados. Na análise dos dados, estes foram primeiramente codificados e depois identificados os temas.

Os temas identificados foram então agrupados em dois grandes temas e subtemas. Estes temas foram apresentados sob objetivos específicos e foram aprofundados, sustentando-os com citações diretas dos estudos revisados.

Os resultados do estudo mostraram que fatores como o ambiente hospitalar, a comunicação médico-paciente, a atitude da equipa e da administração foram os fatores institucionais que influenciaram a satisfação do paciente nos cuidados de saúde.

Além disso, o estudo revelou que as dimensões da qualidade tiveram um efeito positivo na satisfação do paciente na assistência à saúde, pois os pacientes tinham intenção de recompra, envolveram-se em falar sobre o serviço de saúde no boca-a-boca e houve um aumento da confiança entre os pacientes.

Mais uma vez, o estudo revelou que havia uma relação positiva entre os fatores socioeconômicos e a qualidade do serviço na prestação de cuidados de saúde. Isto porque houve influência de fatores socioeconômicos na percepção dos pacientes, na qualidade do serviço e nas experiências de cuidados dos pacientes.

Com base nas descobertas feitas, o estudo concluiu que existem fatores institucionais que influenciam a satisfação do paciente na assistência à saúde. Os fatores institucionais incluem administração, comunicação médico-paciente, atitude da equipe e configurações do hospital, como privacidade, conveniência e limpeza.

O estudo também concluiu que dimensões de qualidade como capacidade de resposta, confiabilidade, garantia, tangibilidade e empatia têm um efeito positivo na satisfação do paciente na assistência à saúde. Isto porque, quando os pacientes estão satisfeitos com a qualidade do serviço de saúde que recebem, têm intenção de voltar, confiam nos sistemas hospitalares e também recomendam os serviços a familiares e amigos. Por fim, o estudo concluiu que existe uma relação positiva entre os fatores socioeconômicos e a qualidade do serviço na prestação de serviços de saúde. Isto porque os fatores socioeconômicos dos pacientes influenciam a sua percepção, experiências de cuidado e a qualidade do serviço que recebem.

Com base em descobertas, o estudo recomendou que a gestão dos hospitais considere fatores socioeconômicos como idade, crenças culturais, escolaridade, renda e ocupação dos pacientes na prestação dos serviços. Ao considerar os fatores socioeconômicos, os profissionais de saúde terão uma melhor compreensão dos pacientes e os tratarão com base nas suas necessidades específicas do que na prestação de serviços gerais. Ao fornecer serviços baseados em necessidades específicas, os pacientes ficarão satisfeitos com o serviço que recebem e isso afetará o seu nível de satisfação. Mais uma vez, as sugestões dos pacientes devem ser solicitadas para fornecer ideias práticas para a prestação eficaz de serviços de qualidade que atendam às especificações dos pacientes. Noutras palavras, o hospital deve promover a recepção do feedback dos pacientes para orientar a gestão

sobre como fornecer serviços de qualidade aos pacientes, independentemente de sua condição socioeconómica.

**Palavras-chave:** Serviços de qualidade, Cuidados de saúde, Satisfação, Experiências.

## ABSTRACT

The study aimed to understand the measures of person-centred healthcare quality variables and how they affect patient satisfaction and responsiveness. To address the objective, the study adopted a systematic literature approach as the study design and qualitative research approach in data collection and analysis. The study aimed at the use of only secondary data from related studies found in journals, books and online articles. In all, 20 related studies were included in the review, selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as the PRISMA flowchart and analysed using thematic analysis. From the thematic analysis, themes were identified and categorised as major and minor themes which were presented under the specific objectives.

The study revealed that the institutional factors that influenced patient satisfaction were administration, doctor-patient communication, the attitude of staff and hospital settings like privacy, convenience and cleanliness. Also, the quality dimension had a positive effect on patient satisfaction. Additionally, the study concluded that quality dimensions like responsiveness, reliability, assurance, tangibles and empathy have a positive effect on patient satisfaction in healthcare. This is because when patients are satisfied with the quality of healthcare service they receive, they have a repurchase intention, have trust and confidence in the hospital systems and also recommend the services to family and friends.

Finally, the study concluded that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. This is because socioeconomic factors of patients influence their perception, care experiences and the quality of service they receive. Therefore, it was recommended that management of hospitals consider socioeconomic factors like age, cultural beliefs, level of education, income and occupation of patients as by considering these socioeconomic factors, health personnel will have a better understanding of patients and treat them based on their specific needs when providing general services.

**Key words:** Service quality, Healthcare, Satisfaction, Experience

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

The satisfaction of clients is one essential factor to the success of every organisation. This is because when a client is satisfied there is the tendency for the client to repeat the services being provided. In the health sector, client or patient satisfaction is used to measure whether available health care systems meet the health needs and expectations of patients (Adua *et al.*, 2017).

According to Adhikary *et al* (2018), patient satisfaction is a valuable indicator of quality and effective health services as it affects the health outcome of patients. Patient satisfaction is described as the measure of the extent to which a patient is content with the kind of services, they received from their health care provider (Yaya *et al*, 2017). In other words, when the services rendered by healthcare providers exceeds the expectation of a patient then patient satisfaction is said to be achieved. Patients have become knowledgeable about health care in recent times and most cases expect to be included in the planning of their healthcare (Yaya *et al*, 2017). Based on this, patients now require higher standards of health-staff services, expenditure as well as medical effectiveness among healthcare service providers (Yaya *et al*, 2017).

As a key determinant of quality in healthcare delivery, patient satisfaction has been accepted worldwide and is continuously becoming a part of standards for training healthcare providers and health institutions. In developed countries, healthcare providers are expected to be patient-focused as it promotes patient satisfaction (Amporfro *et al*, 2021). This is because satisfied patients are more likely to be loyal to health service providers, build a good relationship with health systems leading to improved services and high patient satisfaction and loyalty rate.

Thus, Woldeab *et al* (2018) explain that in developed countries, one of the ways satisfaction is improved is by paying attention to feedback from patients who visit health facilities. On the other hand, patient satisfaction is remarkably low in most developing countries because most healthcare facilities in Africa are not patient-centred (Kokou, *et al*, 2015). This has led to poor quality healthcare resulting in loss of trust and respect, resources, community apathy, patient lives, time

as well as negative hospital reputation. In other words, a high satisfaction rate means better patient health outcomes, fewer complaints as well as medical disputes.

Consequently, various studies (Yaya *et al*, 2017; Zhang *et al*, 2016; Bruyneel *et al*, 2015) have been conducted on patient satisfaction in healthcare where these studies explored the role of patient satisfaction in quality and effective healthcare delivery. In one of the studies Bruyneel *et al*, (2015) revealed that patient satisfaction is a reflection of their perceptions and needs towards health service utilisation. Therefore, assessing patients' satisfaction is relevant as it helps to determine the quality of health system responsiveness. Consequently, the study revealed that the level of satisfaction is influenced by factors like privacy setting and opening time and this is because health facilities are private and not public. In other words, private facilities promote patient satisfaction more than government facilities.

Also, Zhang *et al* (2016) study revealed that there is wide diversity when it comes to patient satisfaction and this can be seen in the area of emergency patients, inpatients and outpatients but the study focused on inpatient satisfaction. Thus, the study revealed that doctor's service attitudes, environment, nurse's attitudes, expenditures and sex were factors that influenced the rate of patient satisfaction in China.

In Ghana, there is a competition between the private and public health institutions when it comes to patient satisfaction as private institutions are found to attain high rates of patient satisfaction due to factors like a clean environment and positive attitude of healthcare staff as compared to government institutions (Yaya *et al*, 2017).

These studies suggest that high patient satisfaction can be attained if factors that influence patient satisfaction are identified and implemented or avoided. Based on this, the current study seeks to understand how person-centred healthcare quality variables influence patient satisfaction.

## **1.2 Problem statement**

Patients' satisfaction has been remarkably low in most developing countries leading to competition between private and public health institutions. Woldeyohanes *et al*. (2015) stated that private health institutions are noted to deliver quality health services as compared to public health institutions. Consequently, it has been found that most studies conducted in Africa have adopted and implemented customer satisfaction surveys and the health sector is not exempted (Zhang *et al*,

2016; Salehi *et al*, 2018; Chandra *et al*, 2019). However, there is still a scarcity of literature on factors influencing patients' satisfaction that needs to be addressed.

In a study by Zhang *et al* (2016), although the study was conducted on factors influencing patients' satisfaction, the study focused on only inpatients leaving out emergency patients and outpatients, therefore, limiting the scope of the study which can limit generalisation of results. Similarly, Salehi *et al* (2018) also conducted a study on the factors that influences patients' satisfaction and the focus was on inpatient only. Even though the study adopted a systematic literature review, limiting the review to only inpatients meant the study did not explore every aspect of a health system to ascertain all the factors influencing patients' satisfaction. Again, Chandra *et al* (2019) study on the factors influencing patient satisfaction also focused only on out-patients, therefore, limiting identifying factors across health systems that influences patient satisfaction.

From the above discussion, there is a need to conduct this study to ensure that every aspect of a health system is captured in identifying the factors that influence patient satisfaction. The results from the study will not only reveal the factors but will also explain why private health facilities in African countries are preferred more than government hospitals. Based on this, stakeholders will identify ways of improving their services to increase patient satisfaction. Therefore, this study seeks to explore by conducting a systematic review of person-centred healthcare quality variables and how these variables affect patient satisfaction and responsiveness.

### **1.3 Objective**

The general objective of the study is to understand the measures of person-centred healthcare quality variables by conducting a systematic literature review and meta-analysis on how these variables influence/affect patient satisfaction and responsiveness.

#### **1.3.1 Specific objective**

- i. To examine the variables/factors that have been indicated by literature to influence patient satisfaction in healthcare
- ii. To determine how quality dimensions, affect patient satisfaction in healthcare.
- iii. To determine the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

- i. What determines patients' satisfaction in general healthcare practice?
- ii. Do quality dimensions/variables affect patient satisfaction?
- iii. Do socioeconomic factors determine the provision of quality healthcare services?

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study aims to explore the factors influencing patient satisfaction in healthcare thus the results from the study will be significant to stakeholders in the health sector like the Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Health, management of hospitals as well as policymakers. The results from the study will reveal the factors that determine patients' satisfaction in general healthcare practices, the quality dimension affecting patient satisfaction as well as how socioeconomic factors determine the provision of quality healthcare services. Identifying these factors will influence the decision of stakeholders to consider the factors in ways that will increase patients' satisfaction. An increase in patient's satisfaction will lead to an improvement in the health outcome of patients, therefore, making this study important. Consequently, in the area of academics, the results from the study will serve as a source of reference for future studies where researchers can either conduct the same study to ascertain if the results are similar or other variables will be included in the study.

#### **1.6 Scope of the study**

The study aimed at exploring the factors influencing patients' satisfaction in healthcare, a systematic literature review was conducted. Hence, only secondary data was used for the analysis. The secondary data included related studies found in journals, books and online articles. The study made use of related studies that were selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as the PRISMA flow chart.

## **1.7 Organisation of the study**

The study is divided into five chapters with the first chapter covering the introduction of the study. In chapter one, the study presents the background to the work, problem statement, research objectives as well as research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study and organisation of the study. Chapter two presents a preliminary literature review where studies related to the topic are reviewed under the specific objectives of the study. Chapter three presents the selected studies for the review as well as how the studies were selected and analysed. In chapter four, the results from the review are presented and discussed under the specific objectives. Chapter five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the results obtained from the review.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter two of the study provides a review of literature from relevant documents that relate to the current study topic. The study will gather information mainly from books, articles, journals and online sources. The chapter synthesises information from existing literature into a summary. The chapter also consists of the conceptual definition, theoretical review, empirical review and conceptual framework.

### **2.2 Conceptual Definition**

The conceptual definition provides a detailed analysis and observation of facts already presented in the existing literature on a given topic. The section consists of the meaning of patient's satisfaction and the meaning of healthcare.

#### **2.2.1 Meaning of patient's satisfaction**

In contemporary times, patients assume a more active role in healthcare. As such, patients are aware of their rights, they educate themselves, demand better quality of service, and ask for more information if necessary (Manzoor et al., 2019). Patient satisfaction is the state of happiness or pleasure that the patients experience while utilising a health service. Thus, patient satisfaction is a renowned standard to evaluate the effectiveness of health services being provided in hospitals (Mindaye & Taye, 2012). The expectations of a patient regarding hospital service could be influenced by previous experience or based on information obtained from others (Vaz, 2018). According to Heidari et al. (2017), patient satisfaction is stimulated by giving powerful training to service providers including all staff of the hospital, medical or non-medical on realistic communication and interpersonal skills.

Talias (2018) believes that a patient's expectation at a public hospital is lower than a patient's expectation at a private hospital. This is because the government funds public hospitals, but patients at private hospitals must pay full amounts to receive the same level of care. Also, satisfied

patients are more likely to continue using medical care services and stay within a health provider, comply with treatment, take an active role in their healthcare and maintain with a specific system whereas unsatisfied patients would miss more appointments, fail to follow through on treatment plans and live against advice (Whitford, 2016).

### **2.2.2 Meaning of healthcare**

Healthcare can be explained as the improvement or maintenance of health through diagnosis, prevention, treatment and management of illness as well as preservation of mental and physical well-being through the services offered by the health professionals (Thompson et al., 2020). Thus, it focuses on providing quality health services such as providing safe, effective, people-centred care that is efficient, integrated, timely, and equitable that contributes to the patient's satisfaction and wellbeing (Kruk et al., 2018). Busse et al. (2019) define the quality of care as the extent to which health services for populations and individuals increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes. Also, Mosadeghrad (2013) indicates that high-quality health services involve responding to the client's needs and preferences, providing the right care at the right time, while minimising harm and resource waste. Again, Offei et al. (2004) assert that quality healthcare is characterised by timeliness, safety, people-centredness, effectiveness, integration of care, equity and efficiency. According to Escribano-Ferrer et al. (2016), the interventions necessary to improve the quality of healthcare include the provision of health information and education of healthcare workers, continuous use of quality improvement methods and programmes, the establishment of performance based-incentives (financial and non-financial) and setting standards.

## **2.3 Theoretical Review**

This section covers the examination of theories underpinning the study. This study adopted the SERVQUAL model.

### **2.3.1 SERVQUAL model**

The SERVQUAL model was postulated by Parasuman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985 to measure service quality. This model is used in understanding the needs and experiences of customers and their satisfaction level against the services provided by organisations (Souca, 2011). Again, the model was introduced after ten elements were identified to assess customers' opinions towards service quality and their expectations (Watiki, 2014). According to Watiki (2014), the ten elements

identified are competence, credibility, reliability, access, security, communication, tangibles, courtesy, responsiveness and understanding the customer. Thereafter, Parasuman et al. (1985) reduced the elements into five which are reliability, assurance, empathy, tangibles and responsiveness to measure the quality of service delivered by organisations.

**Reliability:** Reliability as a measure of service quality is the capability to accomplish the suggested service responsibly and precisely without lapses (Kitapci et al., 2014). Thus, reliability is about the capability of employees, and management of the health facility to perform the services promised to clients precisely and reliably. Also, Amporfro et al. (2021) noted that reliability is about delivering service correctly, paying attention to details as well as fulfilling promises.

**Assurance:** Assurance refers to the knowledge and general attitude of workers required to deliver excellent service to customers thus, making customers feel respected and satisfied (Goula et al., 2021). Assurance encompasses characteristics such as effective communication, politeness, proficiency and the ability to encourage trust and confidence in serving customers effectively and efficiently (Mmutle, 2017).

**Empathy:** Empathy as a measure of service quality refers to the act of workers caring and showing concern towards customers in the use of services and providing customers with individualised attention when assistance is needed (Tahir, 2019). According to Katuti (2018), empathy is about the effort taken by the worker in understanding the needs of the customer.

**Tangibles:** Tangibles in service quality refers to the physical aspects of the service delivery which includes the equipment, materials and facilities (Peprah & Atarah, 2014).

**Responsiveness:** Responsiveness is the willingness of workers to provide rapid service to customers and the willingness of workers to help customers in times of need when assessing service (Azmi et al., 2017).

The SERVQUAL model is used in measuring service quality in service industries to obtain credible and genuine results (Ghotbabadi et al., 2015). However, Chingang and Lukong (2010) criticised the SERVQUAL model for not matching performance to promises and rather recommended the SERVPERF model in measuring service quality. Relating the model to this study, the model supports the topic by measuring service quality and patient satisfaction in

healthcare. Also, management of the health facilities would understand the needs of clients (patients) and how to assess service quality in satisfying them.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

The empirical review presents several studies that have been carried out concerning the variables/factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare, how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare and the relationship between service quality and socio-economic factors in healthcare delivery.

### **2.4.1 The variables/factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare**

Patient satisfaction has become a crucial concern for understanding the needs and expectations of the patient concerning the services offered at the health facilities. Amporfro et al. (2021) indicate factors such as communicating information to patients, delivering instantaneous service without delay, the environment of the health facility, attitude of the healthcare providers and availability of modern equipment among others influence patient satisfaction in healthcare. In line with this, Adhikary et al. (2018) conducted a study in Bangladesh on the factors influencing patients' satisfaction at different levels of health facilities. Using a quantitative approach, information was gathered from 2207 patients attending selected health facilities in two administrative divisions through questionnaire surveys. According to the results of the study, most of the patients were satisfied with the healthcare service received and this was associated with factors such as facility cleanliness, convenient opening hours, privacy settings and interpersonal skills with healthcare providers.

Similar to the previous study, Liu and Fang (2019) carried out a study on the potential factors of patient satisfaction in China. This study also adopted a quantitative research approach. In collecting information, questionnaire surveys were given to 2626 patients in urban public hospitals to complete. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicated that convenience, quality and price of medical services influenced patient satisfaction in healthcare.

In another study, Katuti (2018) examined patient levels of satisfaction with perceived health service quality in Kenya using a descriptive cross-sectional study. The study aimed at examining the factors or variables that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare. However, this study

adopted a mixed-method technique in collecting information. Interviews and questionnaires were used to obtain information from 334 patients in Nyandarua County Referral Hospital.

From the analysis, the study revealed that the factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare include patient privacy during treatment, the competence of staff in handling patient problems, availability of prescribed drugs in the hospital pharmacy, patient waiting time, and health staff friendliness.

Thus, these studies (Adhikary et al., 2018; Liu & Fang, 2019; Katuti, 2018) reviewed used the primary data sources in providing valuable data on the factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare although the study was carried out in different settings. However, this study seeks to adopt a secondary data source in gathering information for the study using books, journals, and online articles.

#### **2.4.2 How quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare**

According to the World Health Organisation (2018), quality of health service refers to all characteristics of the service associated with the potential to satisfy the needs of its customer. Thus, quality in healthcare is the provision of best results with minimal medical risk including enhancing patient satisfaction concerning procedures, relationships and results (Mosadeghrad, 2014). Various studies have examined how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare. One of such is by Kalaja et al. (2016) on service quality assessment in the health care sector in Albania. The study aimed at assessing how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare. The study collected information from 200 hospitalised patients using questionnaires in Albania. Regression analysis was used to analyse the collected data. The findings indicated that responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy and tangibles are the quality dimensions that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare.

In Turkey, Kitapci et al. (2014) adopted a mixed-method approach in examining the impact of service quality dimensions on patient satisfaction, repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth communication. The study aimed at investigating how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare. In collecting data, interviews and questionnaires were given to 369 patients utilising a range of services at the hospital and analysis was performed. According to the

results of the findings, the quality dimensions that affect patient satisfaction include assurance and empathy.

Furthermore, in Greece, Georgiadou and Maditinos (2017) carried out a study on examining the quality of hospital services provided at a Greek public hospital through patient satisfaction. The study aimed at investigating how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare. Similar to Kalaja et al. (2016)'s study, this study also utilised questionnaires in gathering information from 245 patients in a public regional hospital. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics. The study found that staff quality, hospital reliability, clinical care infrastructure, and social responsibility are the quality dimensions that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare.

From the studies (Kalaja et al., 2016; Kitapci et al., 2014; Georgiadou & Maditinos, 2017) reviewed, it is evident that patient satisfaction is influenced by quality dimensions. The quality dimensions identified include assurance, empathy, responsiveness, infrastructure, clinical care, tangibles, reliability, staff quality, social responsibility, and hospital reliability. Based on this, this study seeks to examine how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare.

### **2.4.3 The relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery**

Service quality can be explained as the provision of care that exceeds the expectations of the patient and attains the highest possible clinical results with the available resources (Yeilada & Direktör, 2010). As such, Watiki (2014) indicates that service quality is characterised by availability, accuracy, timeliness, responsiveness, confidentiality, amenities, facilities among others. Again, socio-economic factors refer to the drivers of the conditions in which people play, work, live and learn and thus, are denoted with income level, education, age, gender, marital status, and occupation (Omorogbe, 2017). In line with this, various studies have examined the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

One of such is by Aloh et al. (2020) who conducted a cross-sectional study design on the impact of socio-economic status on patient experience on the quality of care for ambulatory healthcare services in Nigeria. The study aimed at examining the relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. A quantitative research approach was adopted where

data was obtained from 422 patients in three tertiary hospitals using questionnaires. ANOVA and Z-test were used to analyse the collected data. The study found that the employment status of the patient influenced their perception of quality healthcare delivery. Also, education was found to influence patients' perception of the healthcare provided. This suggests a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

Using a qualitative approach, Arpey et al. (2017) carried out a study on how socioeconomic status affects patient perceptions of healthcare in the USA. The study looked at the relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. Information was gathered using interviews from 80 patients at the University of Iowa hospital and clinics.

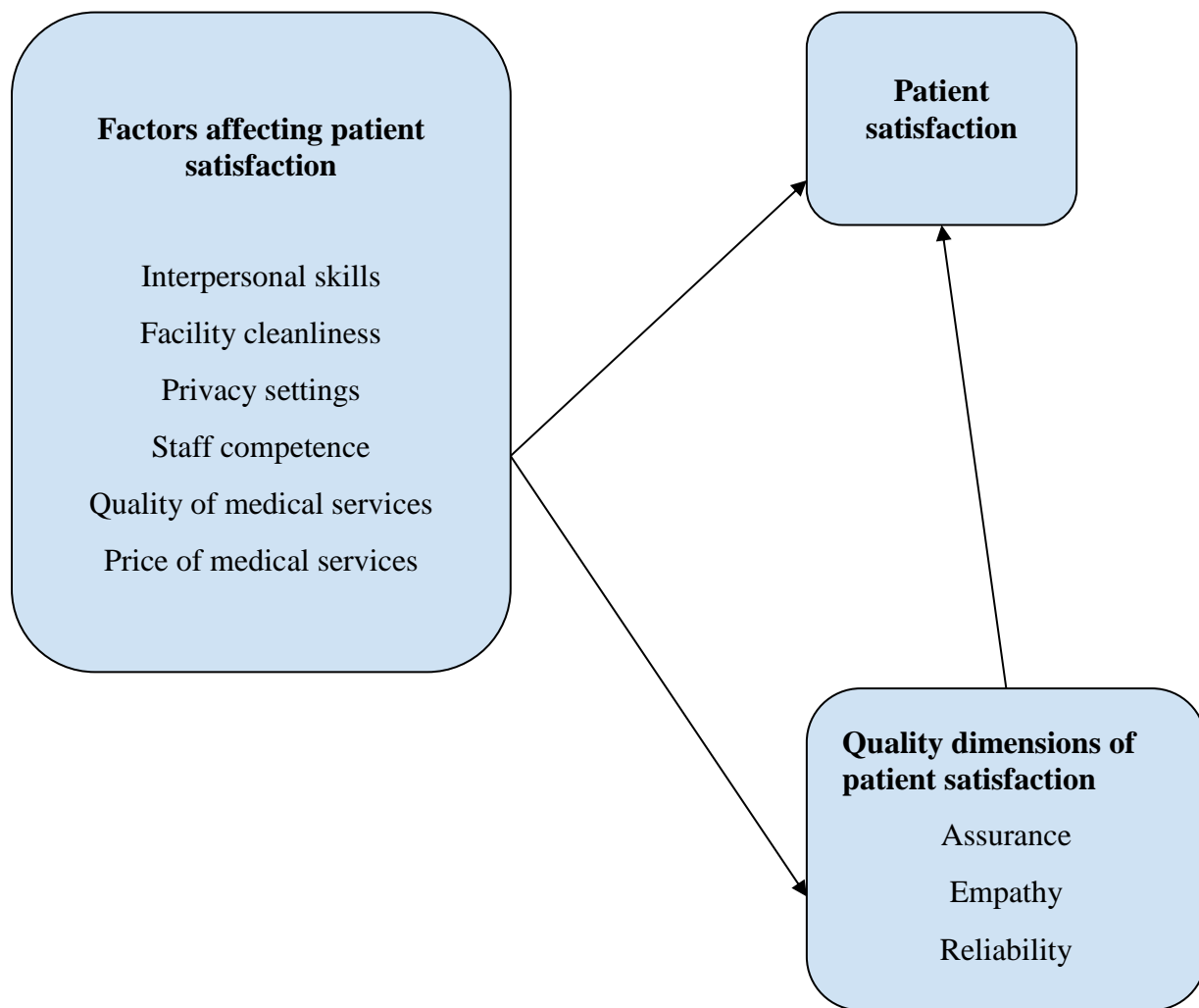
Data analysis was performed thematically using Nvivo 10. The findings indicated that patients with low socioeconomic status such as education and income have poor perceptions regarding the quality of service offered whilst patients with high socioeconomic status have high perceptions regarding the delivery of healthcare service. This implies that there is a positive relationship between socio-economic status and service quality in healthcare delivery.

Also, Xesfingi and Vozikis (2016) conducted a study on patient satisfaction with the healthcare system in Greece. The study aimed at assessing the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. A systematic literature review was used in obtaining information for the study. According to the results of the study, it found that age is the socio-economic factor that influences patient satisfaction in healthcare. This suggests that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

In general, the existing literature revealed that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery although they were carried out in separate study settings and with different approaches. However, this study seeks to provide further data on the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

This section presents the illustration of the relationship existing between patient satisfaction and healthcare delivery. The relationship is however diagrammatically represented below.



**Source: Author's construct (2021)**

*Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of the factors influencing patient satisfaction in healthcare.*

Figure 2.1 shows the factors influencing patient satisfaction in healthcare. In other words, it illustrates the influence factors/socio-economic and quality dimensions have on the satisfaction of patients. The framework also suggests that patient satisfaction represents the dependent variable whose outcome is dependent on the variables associated with it (independent). Thus, the independent variable is that which causes the patient satisfaction level to change. Thus, according to the framework, the variables are represented by the factors/socio-economic of patient satisfaction and service quality dimensions of patient satisfaction. The illustration is in line with studies (Liu & Fang, 2019; Adhikary et al., 2018; Katuti, 2018) whose results identified privacy settings, facility cleanliness, interpersonal skills, quality of medical services, price of medical services, staff competence, patient waiting time, and convenient opening hours among others as the key drivers of patient satisfaction in healthcare.

Similarly, the framework also suggests that socio-economic variables such as income, education, age, and occupation influence patient's satisfaction regarding healthcare delivery which agrees with study results by Aloh et al. (2020), Arpey et al. (2017), as well as Xesfingi and Vozikis (2016). In the nutshell, the two (socio-economic factors and service quality dimensions) have a relationship that significantly influences patient satisfaction.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The chapter aimed at reviewing related studies on the topic which are found in journals, online articles, and books. As a result, the review was structured to elaborate on key terms and concepts associated with the study topic. The concepts include the meaning of patient's satisfaction and the meaning of healthcare. Moreover, the chapter reviewed and proposed the SERVQUAL model to support this current study.

The use of the model suggested that healthcare institutions could utilise service quality to boost patient satisfaction thereby creating a lasting relationship between providers and clients. The chapter also presented an empirical review section where related studies were reviewed under the specific objectives. From the reviews, it was found that facility cleanliness, convenient opening hours, privacy settings, interpersonal skills, quality and price of medical services, the competence of staff in handling patient problems, patient waiting time and health staff friendliness were some of the factors that influenced patient satisfaction in healthcare.

Consequently, some of the quality dimensions that affect patient satisfaction in healthcare include responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Finally, the review revealed a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare. Based on this, the study seeks to examine the factors influencing patient satisfaction in healthcare using a systematic literature review.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methods that are used to collect and analyse data to answer the research questions. In this chapter, a research design is presented as well as a section on quality assessment. The chapter also covers the inclusion and exclusion criteria used in selecting studies, research evidence, selected studies, data analysis and ethical consideration.

### **3.2 Research design**

The study adopted an exploratory research design to understand the measures of person-centred healthcare quality variables. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), an exploratory research design is a research design that explores a topic with varying levels of depth. The study adopted an exploratory research design because it laid the foundation for the research that makes room for effective future research. With the exploratory research design, the study adopted a systematic literature review in data collection and analysis. A systematic literature review is a critical and reproducible summary of findings from published studies on a specific topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study adopted a systematic literature review because it allowed identification of studies, evaluation of the studies and summarising the results obtained from the studies.

### **3.3 Quality assessment**

To assess the quality of the studies used for the review, the study adopted a quality assessment tool known as the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP). CASP is a checklist that is used to assess the quality of the studies being included in a review, thus, it is used in studies like qualitative studies, systematic studies, case-control studies, randomised controlled trials and cohort studies (CASP, 2018).

The study made use of the CASP tool because it helped the researcher avoid the situation of including low-quality studies that can affect the outcome of this research. Also, with the CASP

tool, the researcher was able to identify only relevant studies that can address the research questions.

### 3.4 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This section presents the inclusion and exclusion criteria that were used to select studies that are relevant to this study. Bryman and Bell (2015) describe inclusion criteria as characteristics a researcher looks out for in prospective studies to justify their inclusion in a study whereas exclusion criteria are characteristics that disqualify studies from being included in a review as they do not meet the characteristics a researcher wants in prospective studies. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were used because they helped the researcher identify only relevant studies for the review. The inclusion and exclusion criteria for the research is presented in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

<b>Inclusion criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion criteria</b>
Research conducted from 2010 to 2021	Research conducted before 2010
Full-text studies that are presented in the English language only	Studies with only abstract and are presented in either English language or other languages
Studies that address the research objectives which includes the variables/factors that have been indicated by literature to influence patient satisfaction in healthcare, how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare and the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery	Studies that do not address the research objectives which includes the variables/factors that have been indicated by literature to influence patient satisfaction in healthcare, how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare and the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery

### **3.5 Research evidence**

To conduct the literature search, specific search engines were used to help identify the studies for the review. The search engines used included Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, PubMed and Cochrane Library. To identify the studies, the study made use of Boolean operators that made the search easier. By using Boolean operators, the researcher was able to narrow the scope of the search. To use the Boolean operators, the study made use of conjunctions like “OR”, “AND”, “NOT” and “AND/OR”.

Also, to narrow the search, keywords like "pdf", "thesis", "full-text" and "journal" were added to the search. Other keywords used were derived from the research objectives and they include "Patient satisfaction in healthcare", "quality dimensions that affect patient satisfaction", “relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality” and “service quality in healthcare”.

In Table 3.2, a breakdown of the search engines used is presented as well as phrases or words used for the searches, the number of hits and the number of studies selected from the search engines.

Table 3.2: Data search

Database	Search word	Scope for search	Number of hits	Studies included in review
Google Scholar, Cochrane Library, PubMed, ScienceDirect	Service quality dimensions that affect patient satisfaction Relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality Service quality in healthcare pdf journal full-text Service quality and healthcare thesis pdf Service quality and patient satisfaction pdf journal	Full-text studies in the English language conducted from 2010 to 2021	68	20

The study also made use of the PRISMA flow chart to give a visual presentation of how the studies were selected for the review. According to Faggion et al (2014), a PRISMA flow chart is a presentation of the flow of information at the different stages of a systematic review that maps out the number of studies that were included in the review, the number of studies excluded and why they were excluded. The flow chart is in four stages which includes, the identification stage, screening stage, eligibility stage and the inclusion stage.

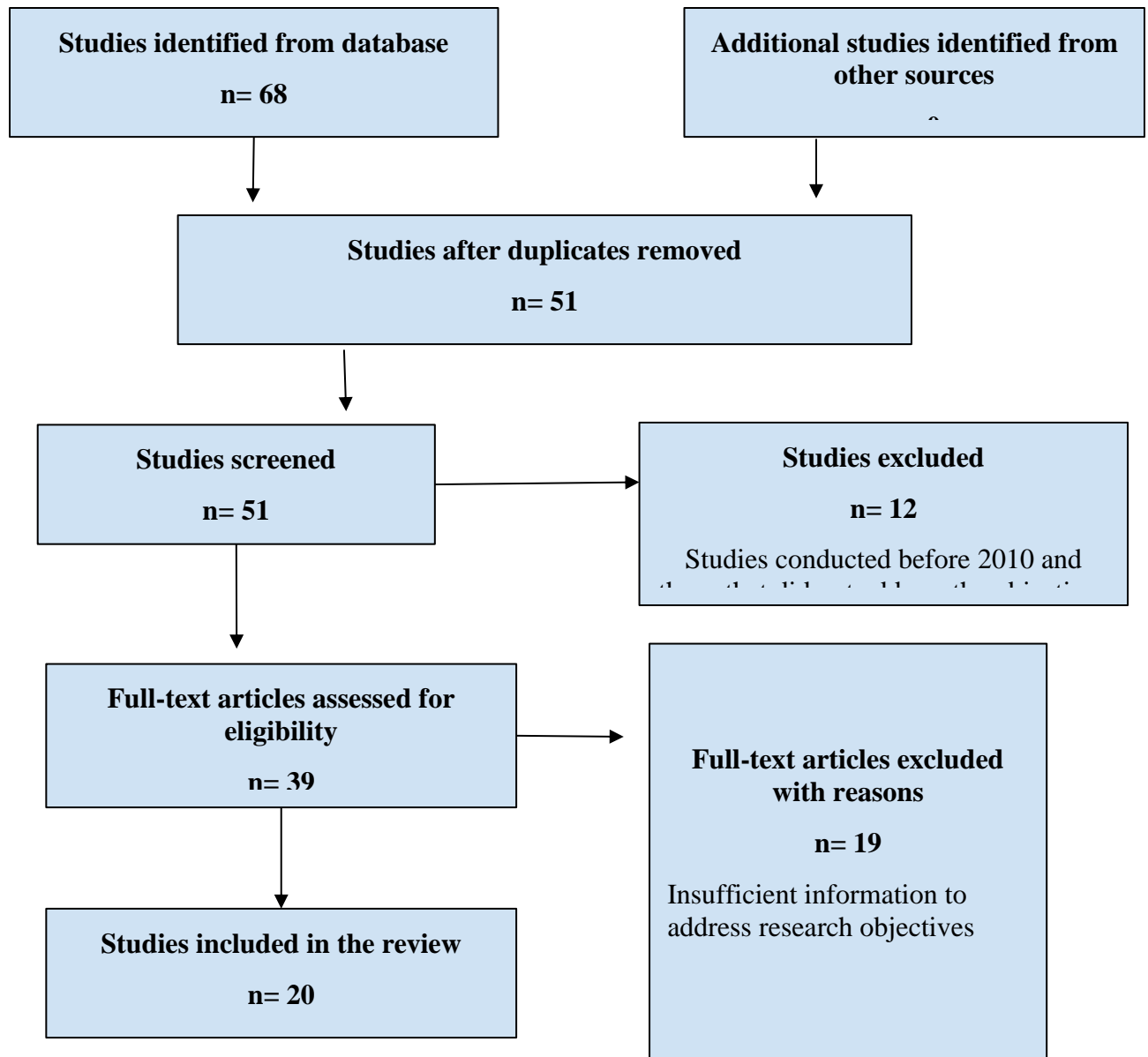


Figure 3.2: PRISMA flow chart

### 3.6 Selected studies

This section presents the selected studies after the study applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as the PRISMA flow chart. The studies selected for the review are presented in Table 3.3 which comprises the names of the author, title of study, the objective of the study, methodology, findings and conclusions made. Also, the table is divided based on the three specific objectives.

Table 3.3: Selected studies

<b>Objective 1: Factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare</b>							
<b>Date</b>	<b>Author (Name)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Journal Name</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
2018	Adhikary G, et al	Factors influencing patients' satisfaction at different levels of health facilities in Bangladesh: Results from patient exit interviews.	PLoS ONE	To determine which factors influence this satisfaction level in Bangladesh	Quantitative research approach:	The study revealed that the factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare include convenient opening hours, privacy setting, facility cleanliness and asking related questions to the providers.	The study concluded that a significant portion of patients in Bangladesh were not satisfied with the care they received. Therefore it was recommended that to increase patient satisfaction, the focus should be on improving providers' interpersonal skills, cleanliness

							and privacy setting.
2019	Manzoor F et al,	Patient Satisfaction with Health Care Services; An Application of Physician's Behavior as a Moderator	International Journal Environmental Research and Public Health	To determine patient satisfaction with healthcare services and encompass the physician's behaviour as a moderation between patient satisfaction and healthcare services in Pakistan.	Descriptive survey research design	The study revealed that the behaviour of physicians and the availability of health care services in the hospital were the factors that affected the level of patient satisfaction	The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between physicians behaviour, availability of health care services and patient satisfaction
2019	Hussain A	What factors affect patient satisfaction in public sector hospitals: evidence from an emerging economy	International Journal Environmental Research and Public Health	To explore the performance of public healthcare systems in Pakistan by interacting with physical services (tangible and environmental), doctor-patient communication,	Quantitative research approach	The study revealed that healthcare services available like pharmacy and laboratory, doctor-patient communication and physical facility were	The study concluded that communication gaps exist in the doctor-patient setting and the healthcare system is deprived of physical facilities thus the need to improve these

				and pharmacy and laboratory services based on patient satisfaction		factors that influence patient satisfaction	areas.
2018	Aydin, S.	Factors affecting patient satisfaction with the healthcare system of Turkey	Doctoral dissertation	To identify factors affecting patient satisfaction with the healthcare system in Turkey	Quantitative research approach	The study found that service accessibility and quality of service provided were the factors that affected patients satisfaction with a healthcare system	The study concluded that understanding patient perspectives can help improve the quality of health
2019	Upadhyai et al	A review of healthcare service quality dimensions and their measurement	Journal of Health Management	To explore knowledge as to understand what comprises healthcare service quality, the underlying dimensions of healthcare service quality,	Literature review	The study revealed that the factors that influence patients satisfaction are education, a consumers stage in service being received	The study concludes that dimensionality in the healthcare service quality is context-specific and patients weigh them differently.

				and how it is measured		and information shared during and after the treatment.	
2018	Fang et al	What is the most important factor affecting patient satisfaction – a study based on gamma coefficient	Patient Preference and Adherence	To analyse the influencing factors of patients satisfaction and find out the key factors, to provide suggestions for improving health policy	Quantitative approach	The study revealed that medical staff service attitude, technology, hospital convenience, medical service utilisation, hospital facilities and environment, medical expense and reimbursement ratio for medical expenses were the factors that influence patient satisfaction.	The study concludes that medical staff service attitude, medical staff services technology and hospital convenience were the three most important factors. Therefore, Health managers should focus on the three factors and implement appropriate management decisions to improve patient satisfaction.

2017	Georgiadou, V, A & Maditinos, D	Measuring the quality of health services provided at a Greek public hospital through patient satisfaction: Case study: the general hospital of Kavala.	International Journal of Business and Economic Sciences Applied Research	To examine the quality of hospital services as perceived by patients in terms of patient satisfaction with services.	Survey (Case study)	The study found that the factors that influence patient satisfaction include hospital reliability, clinical care process, infrastructure, staff quality and social responsibility	The study concludes that the factors influencing patient satisfaction are indicators of the kind of service quality of the hospital.
2016	Kamra V, et al	Factors affecting patient satisfaction: an exploratory study for quality management in the health-care sector.	Total Quality Management & Business Excellence	To examine the factors affecting patient satisfaction and their relationships with respondent demographics for tertiary-level healthcare services in Northern India	Quantitative research approach	The study revealed that the factors affecting patient satisfaction include affordability and convenience, general behaviour of doctors, nurses and staff care and fulfilment of clinical requirements. Other factors are professional behaviour of	The study concludes that patient satisfaction is influenced by institutional factors thus the need to address them

						doctors, registration and administrative procedures, infrastructure and amenities and facilities at reception and out-patient department area.	
<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Journal Name</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
2017	Al-Damen R	Health Care Service Quality and Its Impact on Patient Satisfaction “Case of Al-Bashir Hospital”	International Journal of Business and Management	To measure the impact of perceived health care service quality on patient satisfaction at a major government hospital in Jordan.	Case study research design	The study found that reliability, empathy and assurance as perceived health care service quality have the most impact on patient satisfaction. Therefore, perceive that hospital workers have knowledge and skills. Also, patients can inspire, trust and have confidence	The study concluded that moderate levels of both perceived healthcare service quality practises and overall patient satisfaction at Al-Basher hospital should be improved by getting health workers to be committed to their duties.

						in the hospital workers. Patients are also assured that they are receiving the best healthcare services from the best doctors and nurses.	
2019	Ingy S, Jan W & Ahmed T,	Verifying alternative measures of healthcare service quality.	International Journal of Health Care Quality Assurance	To determine the best measure among several alternatives (SERVQUAL, weighted SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, weighted SERVPERF) and develop a scale that healthcare providers can use for measurement of healthcare service quality	Mixed method	The study revealed that reliability, assurance and tangibility influence patient perception and their positive behavioural intention to return to the service provider.	The paper concludes that enhancing satisfaction will generate patient loyalty and positive recommendation behaviour.
2019	Haryeni N, Y	Impact of service quality dimensions on patient	Advances in Economics, Business and Management	To examine the direct effect of service quality (Servqual)	Quantitative research approach	The study found that service quality influences	The study concludes that a higher satisfaction felt by patients

		satisfaction and repurchase intentions in the public health industry	Research	dimension on patient satisfaction in the public health industry in Padang City		customer repurchase intentions	will increase purchase intentions.
2017	Maqsood M et al	Effects of hospital service quality on patients satisfaction and behavioural intention of doctors and nurses	Saudi Journal of Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences	To investigate the effect of service quality on patient satisfaction and behavioural intention of doctors and nurses in Lady Willingdon Hospital, Lahore	Cross-sectional study design	The study revealed that service quality increases patient satisfaction and behavioural intention	The study concluded that a better service quality satisfies patients and makes them recommend services to family and friends.
2020	Bentum-Micah, G, Zhiqiang M, Wenxin W, Atuahene, S, A. & Bondzie-	Perceived service quality, a key to improved patient satisfaction and loyalty in	Journal of Health and Medical Sciences	To determine how hospital service quality affects patient satisfaction and loyalty.	Quantitative research approach	The study found that patient satisfaction and loyalty are affected by hospital service quality which	The study concluded that patient satisfaction and loyalty are influenced the quality of medical

	Micah, V	healthcare delivery: The Servqual Dimension Approach				includes reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness.	services
2014	Kitapcia O, et al	The Impact of service quality dimensions on patient satisfaction, repurchase intentions and word-of-mouth communication in the public healthcare industry.	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences	To investigate the effect of service quality (SQ) dimensions on satisfaction, identifying the effect of satisfaction on word of mouth (WOM) communication and repurchase intention (RI)	Quantitative research approach	The study revealed that the service quality dimension affects satisfaction which leads to word-of-mouth and repurchase intentions	The study concluded that service quality can be improved by modernising hospitals.
<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Journal Name</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
2020	Aloh H, E, et al	Impact of socioeconomic status on patient experience on the quality of	BMC Health Services Research	To determine how socioeconomic factors, such as level of	Cross-sectional research design	The study revealed that education and employment status affects	The study concluded that full concentration should be given to patients

		care for ambulatory healthcare services in tertiary hospitals in Southeast Nigeria.		education and employment status, affect patient experiences on quality of care for ambulatory healthcare services in teaching hospitals in southeast Nigeria.		patients' experiences on the quality of care for ambulatory services.	socioeconomic status while instituting patient-centred care
2016	Xesfingi S & Vozikis A	Patient satisfaction with the healthcare system: Assessing the impact of socio-economic and healthcare provision factors	BMC Health Services Research	To examine to study the relationship between patient satisfaction of healthcare system and a set of socio-economic and healthcare provision indicators	Empirical analysis	The study revealed that there is a strong positive association between patient satisfaction levels and healthcare provision indicators, such as nurses, public health expenditure, physicians per 100,000 inhabitants and	The study concludes that there is a strong positive association between patient satisfaction and public health expenditures, number of physicians and nurses, and the age of the patient, while there is negative evidence for private health spending and number of

						the elderly	hospital beds
2017	Arpey et al	How Socioeconomic Status Affects Patient Perceptions of Health Care: A Qualitative Study	Journal of Primary Care & Community Health	To explore how and if low SES patients perceive clinician bias might affect their health care	Qualitative research approach	The study revealed most of the participants perceived that their SES affected their health care	The study concluded that patients perceived that the treatment provided by their physicians, access to health care, and the relationship they had with their provider were affected by their SES
2017	Swain G, R	How does economic and social disadvantage affect health?	Focus	To explore Social determinants and their effect on health and life outcome	Literature review	The study revealed that income level, education level and social status affects the quality of health outcome as it can support or constrain healthful behaviour	The study concluded that these factors are more strongly associated with quality of health outcome than clinical or behaviour care
2017	Omorogbe C, E	Socio-economic factors influencing in-	International Journal of Nursing,	To investigate the socioeconomic	Cross-sectional	The study found that economic constraints, staff-	The study concludes that it is important for

		patient satisfaction with health care at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Benin City, Nigeria	Midwife and Health-Related Cases	factors that influence service quality and determine in-patient satisfaction with care at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Benin City, Nigeria.	survey	patient relationship, occupation, income, spousal role, health education and cultural beliefs influences their use and satisfaction with the health care provided	health care professionals to consider economic issues and cultural beliefs of recipients who seek health care in the hospital
2021	Caballo B, Dey S, Prabhu P, Seal B, & Chu P	The effects of socioeconomic status on the quality and accessibility of healthcare services	Across the Spectrum of Socio-Economics	To examine race and income as socio-economic factors influencing the quality and accessibility of healthcare services	Quantitative research approach	The study revealed that SES factors had significant correlations with healthcare quality and accessibility	The study concluded people with a lower SES experienced lower quality of medical care and faced more difficulties in accessibility than their counterparts with higher SES

### **3.7 Data analysis**

For qualitative research, the data analysis available to a researcher includes narrative analysis, discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, ground theory and interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) but for this study, the data obtained from the review was analysed using thematic analysis (Patel & Patel, 2019). Creswell and Creswell (2018) describes thematic analysis as a form of analysis that focuses on identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning in qualitative data.

The study adopted a thematic analysis because it helped the researcher divide data into different data sets which prevent distractions that are associated with large data sets. In analysing the data, the data were first coded after which the themes were identified. The themes identified were then grouped into two namely major themes and sub-themes. These themes were presented under specific objectives. The themes were further elaborated on, supporting them with direct quotes from the studies reviewed.

### **3.8 Ethical consideration**

In conducting qualitative research, one of the ethical issues to consider is plagiarism and this is because of the use of only secondary data. Therefore, to address this ethical issue, the study ensured that all sources included in the review were paraphrased. Information that could not be paraphrased were directly quoted and appropriately referenced. Again, the study ensured that all sources were referenced in the main work (in-text referencing) and a full reference list was presented on the last pages of the study.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the data analysed which are presented under themes. The chapter also presents discussions of the results in line with results from related studies. The results and discussions are presented under the specific objectives.

### 4.2 Results

This section presents the results obtained from the analysis. The results are presented in the form of major themes and minor themes. The results are first presented in Tables after which they are elaborated on and supported with direct quotes from the studies. The results are also presented under the specific objectives of the study.

#### 4.2.1 The variables/factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare

In this section, the first objective which is the factors influencing patient satisfaction in healthcare is presented. The major and minor themes identified are presented in Table 3.4

Table 3.4: Major and Minor theme for objective 1

Objective	Major Theme	Minor Theme
The factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare	Institutional factors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Hospital setting</li><li>ii. Doctor-patient communication</li><li>iii. Attitude of staff</li><li>iv. Administration</li></ol>

The analysis revealed that there were factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare. From the analysis, the factors are institution-related factors that are affecting patients' health care and this constitutes the major theme under this objective.

Consequently, the institution-related factors include hospital setting, doctor-patient communication, the attitude of staff and administration. These factors constitute the minor themes.

**a. Institution-related factors**

The study found that patient satisfaction is based on factors that are related to the institution. These factors determine how the hospital delivers its services to the patients which in the long run affects their level of satisfaction.

This result is supported by some quotes from the studies reviewed which includes:

*“Patients attending the private facilities had the highest level of satisfaction (i.e. 73%) and patients attending the primary care facilities had the lowest level of satisfaction (i.e. 52%). Being satisfied with facility cleanliness (multivariable OR 4.30; 95% CI: 3.29-5.62) and privacy settings (multivariable OR 1.68; 95% CI: 1.28-2.21) were the strongest predictors of patients' satisfaction” [Adhikary, et al, 2018];*

*“The regression analysis validates that health care services, such as laboratory and diagnostic care, preventive healthcare, and prenatal care, have a significant and positive effect on patient satisfaction” [Manzoor et al, 2019]*

The study further revealed that the institution-related factors are hospital setting, doctor-patient communication, the attitude of staff and administration. These factors were identified as the minor themes and are supported by direct quotes from the studies reviewed below:

### **i. Hospital setting**

The study found that the hospital setting is one of the factors that influence patients' satisfaction. From the studies, facility cleanliness, privacy setting and availability of services like laboratory and diagnostic care, preventive healthcare, and prenatal care were factors that influenced patient satisfaction.

*“Factors like convenient opening hours, asking related questions to the providers, facility cleanliness and privacy settings were significantly associated with patients' satisfaction.”*

[Adhikary, et al, 2018]

### **ii. Doctor-patient communication**

Another institution-related factor identified was doctor-patient communication. The study found that good doctor-patient communication increases patient satisfaction whereas poor doctor-patient communication decreases patient satisfaction.

*“It is suggested that a significant communication gap exists in the doctor-patient setting”*

[Hussain et al, 2019]

### **iii. Attitude of staff**

The attitude of health personnel also influences patient satisfaction. From the study, it was found that the attitude of staff had a significant effect on patient satisfaction thus being mentioned as one of the factors affecting patient satisfaction.

*“The study suggests that the physician's behaviour significantly moderates the effect of health care services on the satisfaction of patients”* [Manzoor et al, 2019]

### **iv. Administration**

The study also revealed that administration procedures are a factor that influences the satisfaction of patients. The study found that waiting time, convenient opening time and reimbursement of medical bills were factors that influenced patients' level of satisfaction in healthcare.

*“The study has revealed that factors which affect patient satisfaction are affordability, convenience, registration and administrative procedures and infrastructure and amenities”*

[Kamra et al, 2016]

#### **4.2.2 How quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare**

This section presents the themes identified under the second objective which is how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare. The major and minor themes identified are presented in Table 3.5

Table 3.5: Major and Minor theme for objective 2

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Major Theme</b>	<b>Minor Theme</b>
How quality dimension affect patient satisfaction in healthcare	Positive effect on patient behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Repurchase intention</li> <li>ii. Word-of-mouth</li> <li>iii. Increase trust and confidence</li> </ul>

From the analysis, it was found that the quality dimension has a positive effect on patient behaviour and this is identified as the main theme. Consequently, the positive effect is translated as repurchase intention of patients, word-of-mouth and an increase in trust and confidence of patients. These were also identified as minor themes.

##### **a. Positive effect on patient behaviour**

The study found that the quality dimension has an effect on patient behaviour and the effect was found to be positive. This result is supported by some quotes from the studies reviewed which includes:

*“For the R-square value of the Servqual dimension variable for the satisfaction of 0.291, it means that 29.10% patient satisfaction in the city of Padang can be explained by the servqual*

*dimension variable, and the R-Square value of 28.40% repurchase intentions can be explained by the variable patient satisfaction” [Haryeni, 2019];*

*“Results show that there is an impact of perceived health care service quality on overall patient satisfaction. Reliability had the most influence, followed by empathy and assurance”*  
[Al-Damen, 2017]

The study further revealed that the effect of the quality dimension in patient satisfaction is evident in the actions or behaviours of the patients. These behaviours are identified as minor themes.

#### **i. Repurchase intention of patients**

The study found that when patients are satisfied with the services they receive, it influences their repurchase intentions. In other words, patients are willing to engage in future services by the health care facilities.

This result is supported by some quotes like:

*“Better Service quality is important for any organisation, especially in a healthcare organisation. They play important roles in customer/patient satisfaction and behavioural intention. Better Service quality has a positive effect on patient satisfaction and behavioural intention”* [Maqsood et al, 2017];

*“Satisfaction significantly influences Repurchase Intentions”* [Al-Damen, 2017];

*“The study incited that patients’ satisfaction and loyalty are influenced by the quality of medical/hospital services through its five components: reliability, assurance, tangibility, empathy and responsiveness”* [Bentum-Micah et al, 2020]

#### **ii. Word-of-mouth (WOM)**

The study also found that when patients are satisfied, it is easy for them to recommend the services of the healthcare centre to family and friends.

This is supported by some quotes which includes:

*“The results of this show that any hospital providing good service to their patients then will be satisfied and recommend their friends and neighbours for treatment to this hospital”*

[Maqsood et al, 2017];

*“Empathy and assurance dimensions are positively related to customer satisfaction. However, customer satisfaction has a significant effect on WOM and RI which are found highly related”*

[Kitapcia, et al, 2014]

### **iii. An increase in trust and confidence of patients**

The study found that when patients are satisfied with the service they receive, it increases their trust and confidence in the healthcare system and personnel. This is supported by the quote that states that:

*“From the results, it can be concluded that patients perceive the hospital workers to acquire knowledge, and skills as well as their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Patients are assured that they are getting the best healthcare services from best doctors and nurses”*

[Al-Damen, 2017]

### **4.2.3 The relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery**

This section presents the themes identified under the third objective which is the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. The major and minor themes identified are presented in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Major and Minor theme for objective 3

Objective	Major Theme	Minor Theme
The relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery	Positive relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Influences care experiences of patients</li> <li>ii. Influence on patients perception of healthcare</li> <li>iii. Influence on the quality of service</li> </ul>

The analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery and this result is identified as the main theme. Also, the study found that a positive relationship is seen in the care experience of patients, the perception of patients and the quality of service. These results are identified as minor themes.

**a. Positive relationship**

The study found that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. This means that patients with lower socioeconomic factors had low-quality healthcare whereas those with high socio-economic factors had high-quality healthcare.

This result is supported with quotes from studies like:

*“Social and economic factors can support or constrain healthful behaviours. For example, people with social or economic disadvantage may not be able to easily eat a healthful diet, or provide this to their families, if they live in a neighbourhood where such food is not easily available or affordable” [Swain, 2016];*

*“Our findings support that there is a strong positive association between patient satisfaction level and healthcare provision indicators, such as nurses and physicians per 100,000 habitants, public health expenditures and age” [Xesfingi & Vozikis, 2016]*

**i. Influences care experiences of patients**

The study revealed that the care experiences of patients are influenced by socio-economic factors. According to some of the studies reviewed, patients' care experiences can be positive or negative based on their level of socio-economic factors.

This is supported by some quotes from the studies which includes:

*“The mean rating of patient experience for the quality of care for ambulatory healthcare services (outpatients' care) was  $74.31 \pm 0.32\%$ . Moderate differences were observed between the hospitals assessed for various levels of patients' care, especially for waiting time, quality of doctors' care and overall quality of care. Employment status was a statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) determinant of overall patient experience rating for the quality of care” [Aloh et al, 2020]*

**ii. Influence on patient's perception of healthcare**

The study found that patients' perceptions about quality healthcare service are influenced by their socio-economic factors. This is supported by some quotes from the studies reviewed which includes:

*“Most subjects perceived that their SES affected their health care. Common themes included treatment provided, access to care, and patient-provider interaction” [Arpey et al, 2017]*

*“The level of patient's education was an influence on the perception of waiting by the patients and their rating of care from nurses/other healthcare providers (apart from medical doctors)”*  
[Aloh et al, 2020]

**iii. Influence on the quality of service**

The study also found that socioeconomic factors influenced the quality of service received by patients. According to the studies, the socio-economic state of a patient determines the kind of quality of health care service they receive

*“Social or economic disadvantage also affects the ability to access clinical care, as well as the quality of care received. Work hours, work sick-leave policies, clinic hours, and transportation and childcare issues can make seeing a health care professional very difficult” [Swain, 2016].*

### **4.3 Discussion**

This section presents the discussion of the results obtained from the analysis. The results are discussed in line with findings from related studies. The discussions are presented under the specific objectives of the study.

#### **4.3.1 The variables/factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare**

The study revealed that the factors that influenced patient satisfaction in healthcare were institutional factors which included hospital setting, doctor-patient communication, the attitude of staff and administration. The results imply that patient satisfaction in healthcare is a result of hospital settings like cleanliness and privacy. In other words, when a hospital is clean and respects the privacy of patients, the patients are more likely to be happy with the service which will translate to satisfaction.

Consequently, having effective doctor-patient communication makes patients comfortable and this also leads to patient satisfaction. Likewise, the attitude of staff leads to patient satisfaction as a positive attitude of staff encourages patients to want to come back to the health facility as compared to poor attitude of staff which discourages patients. The existence of effective administration and easy flow of procedures like less waiting time encourages patients to seek healthcare services on time. These results explain why patient satisfaction has become a crucial concern for understanding the needs and expectations of patients concerning services being offered at health facilities.

These results are also in line with results from related studies like Amporfro et al (2021) who found that communicating information to patients, delivering instantaneous service without delay, the environment of the health facility, attitude of the healthcare providers and availability of modern equipment among others influence patient satisfaction in healthcare. Liu and Fang (2019) also revealed that convenience, quality and price of medical services influenced patient satisfaction in healthcare.

Consequently, Katuti (2018) factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare include patient privacy during treatment, the competence of staff in handling patient problems, availability of prescribed drugs in the hospital pharmacy, patient waiting time, and health staff friendliness. These results suggest that the patients are concerned about healthcare facilities and the personnel which plays a role in their level of satisfaction with the quality of services they receive.

#### **4.3.2 How quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare**

The study found that quality dimensions had a positive effect on patient satisfaction in healthcare. Thus, because patients were satisfied with the quality dimension, there was repurchase intention, patients engaged in word-of-mouth and there was an increase in trust and confidence among patients. In other words, the quality dimension like responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy and tangibles affects patient satisfaction in healthcare. For instance, how a healthcare facility administration responds quickly to the concerns and feedback from patients determines if the patient will return for future services or not. Also, having a clean and well-structured hospital where patients can easily access wards and departments encourages patients to come back for services. By implementing some of these quality dimensions, patients are willing to repurchase services, recommend services to family and friends and also trust the medical team.

These results also supported some studies which revealed how the quality dimension affects patient satisfaction in healthcare. One such study is by Kalaja et al. (2016) which revealed that responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy and tangibles are the quality dimensions that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare. Similarly, Georgiadou and Maditinos (2017) found that staff quality, hospital reliability, clinical care infrastructure, and social responsibility are the quality dimensions that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare. These results suggest that quality in healthcare provides the best results with minimal medical risk which enhances patient satisfaction concerning procedures, relationships and results.

#### **4.3.3 The relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery**

The study found that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. The positive relationship was associated with the influence socioeconomic factors had on the perception of patients, influences on the quality of service and

influence care experiences of patients. According to Watiki (2014), service quality is characterised by availability, accuracy, timeliness, responsiveness, confidentiality, amenities, and facilities among others.

Thus, the results from the current study imply that patients with high socio-economic factors like education, occupation and income are more likely to have or experience high service quality in healthcare delivery whereas patients with low socio-economic factors have or experience low service quality in healthcare delivery. Additionally, having high socio-economic factors influences one's perception of service quality in healthcare delivery. These results are in line with results from some studies which include Aloh et al. (2020) who found that the employment status of the patient influenced their perception of quality healthcare delivery.

Furthermore, education was found to influence patients' perception of the healthcare provided. Suggesting a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. Arpey et al. (2017) also found that patients with low socioeconomic status such as education and income have poor perceptions regarding the quality of service offered whilst patients with high socioeconomic status have high perceptions regarding the delivery of healthcare service. These results suggest that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study which includes the findings presented under the specific objectives. The chapter also covers the conclusions based on the results obtained from the study as well as recommendations that are also made based on the results obtained from the study.

### 5.2 Summary

The study aimed to understand the measures of person-centred healthcare quality variables and how they affect patient satisfaction and responsiveness. Therefore, the study developed three specific objectives which include examining the variables/factors that have been indicated by literature to influence patient satisfaction in healthcare, determining how quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare and determining the relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery.

To address these objectives, the study adopted a systematic literature approach as the study design and qualitative research approach in data collection and analysis. The study made use of only secondary data from related studies found in journals, books and online articles. The studies were selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as the PRISMA flow chart.

In all, 20 related studies were included in the review and presented in a Table under the specific objectives. To analyse the data obtained from the studies reviewed, the study made use of thematic analysis. Based on the thematic analysis, themes were identified and categorised as major and minor themes which were presented under the specific objectives. The themes were further elaborated on, supporting them with direct quotes from the studies reviewed.

## **Findings**

The findings obtained from the review are presented as:

### **The variables/factors that have been indicated by literature to influence patient satisfaction in healthcare**

The study found that institutional factors which included hospital setting, doctor-patient communication, the attitude of staff and administration were the factors that influenced patient satisfaction in healthcare.

### **How quality dimensions affect patient satisfaction in healthcare**

The study revealed that quality dimensions had a positive effect on patient satisfaction in healthcare as patients had repurchase intention, patients engaged in talking about the healthcare service and there was an increase in trust and confidence among patients.

### **The relationship between socio-economic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery**

The study revealed that there was a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. This is because there was an influence of socio-economic factors on the perception of patients, on the quality of service and the care experiences of patients.

## **5.3 Conclusion**

The study aims to understand the measures of person-centred healthcare quality variables and how they affect patient satisfaction and responsiveness. Therefore, the following conclusions are made based on the findings, the study concludes that, there are institutional factors that influence patient satisfaction in healthcare.

The institutional factors include administration, doctor-patient communication, the attitude of staff and hospital settings like privacy, convenience and cleanliness

The study also concludes that quality dimensions like responsiveness, reliability, assurance, tangibles and empathy have a positive effect on patient satisfaction in healthcare. This is because when patients are satisfied with the quality of healthcare service they receive, they have repurchase

intention, have trust and confidence in the hospital systems and also recommend the services to family and friends.

Finally, the study concludes that there is a positive relationship between socioeconomic factors and service quality in healthcare delivery. This is because socioeconomic factors of patients influence their perception, care experiences and the quality of service they receive.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are given based on the findings obtained from the study

##### **Practice**

- i. The study revealed that socioeconomic factors have a positive effect on service quality in healthcare delivery. It is therefore recommended that management of hospitals consider socioeconomic factors like age, cultural beliefs, level of education, income and occupation of patients when delivering services. By considering socioeconomic factors, health personnel will have a better understanding of patients and treat them based on their specific needs than providing general services. By providing services based on specific needs, patients will be pleased with the service they receive and this will affect their level of satisfaction.
- ii. The study also found that quality dimensions had a positive effect on patient satisfaction in healthcare. Therefore, it is recommended that suggestions from patients should be solicited to provide practical ideas for effective delivery of quality services that meet the specifications of patients. In other words, taking feedback from patients should be promoted in the hospital to guide management on how to provide quality services for patients irrespective of their socioeconomic status.

##### **Future studies**

- iii. The use of only secondary data had limitations such as the dimensions of quality service in healthcare, which could not be fully explored. This is because not all the studies reviewed explored all the dimensions of quality service. Based on this, the study recommends that future studies should make use of primary data by adopting qualitative or quantitative

research approaches in data collection and analysis. With these approaches, the researcher can explore all the dimensions of quality service in healthcare.

- iv. Also, by using a systematic literature review, the study had limitations such as not fully exploring all domains of patient care or addressing specific areas of patient care. Thus, the results cannot be generalised. Based on this, the study recommends that future studies should consider either qualitative or quantitative approaches as by collecting primary data, the study can focus on all domains or specific areas of patient care. This will make it easier for the generalisation of results.
- v. The studies reviewed were carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic thus they did not include the effect of the crisis on hospitals' ability to provide quality service. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies should explore the role of COVID-19 on service quality and how it affects patient satisfaction.

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