



ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTION OF STAKEHOLDERS TOWARDS THE SHINE DENTAL CLINIC

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ABSTRACT

Background: For the betterment of an organisation, stakeholder's perception plays a vital role by helping to alter the environment of the workplace as well as the overall operation and management of the organisation. This study aims to explore the stakeholders' perceptions about services and management from every aspect by studying the positive and negative remarks given by them.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional research design was used among 68 respondents which included- patients, parents, institutional clients and employees.

Results: It was found that the stakeholders of the Shine dental clinic, both the staff and clients/customers were satisfied with the by the clinic. Customers mainly build their perception to be positive or negative in terms of the factors such as the clinic's environment, effective service delivery, maintenance of the clinic, the treatment and communication of the health workers and timely delivery of the service. Meanwhile, the staff determined the perception of the clinic in terms of salary and benefits, friendliness of top management, scope of learning and self-development, and so on.

Conclusions: The stakeholders of the clinic perceived the clinic as a promising clinic and were satisfied with all the services and facilities provided to them. More people are becoming aware about the clinic with time, but it is needed for the clinic to be more visible in the social media for additional brand awareness.

INTRODUCTION

In a world of open platforms and great new services, it is important for a health-related service provider to collaborate and form alliances with the different players involved in order to sustain. Each of these players will have their own interests or 'stakes' involved in the work and performance of the workplace. These players are known as stakeholders and the interaction among them define the success of the workplace.¹ Freeman defines stakeholder as "an organisation... [or] any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives".²

The perceptions held by the stakeholders challenge managers to examine their firm's activities and its impact created on the people related to the organisation in order to ensure their well-being. More importantly, it allows the top-level management to understand how the people that are directly or indirectly involved with the workplace are perceiving the activities of the workplace, which helps the management to make informed choices and strategic guidelines for further improvement.

For a service provider, understanding the perception of the stakeholder revolves around the idea of improving branding and visibility along with identify-

ing possible avenues for refining and smoothing service delivery.³ When dealing with stakeholders, healthcare services are an exceptional case. The environment they have to operate in is not an entirely free market as they have to work under many government regulations that are extremely complex. They have to work in a constricted environment whilst providing patient-centred services which are often very sensitive. While the cost of healthcare service increases, the increase in competitiveness pressurizes healthcare organisations to maintain its service price. Schunselaar therefore provides that a healthcare organisation could benefit in terms of financial performance by including the stakeholders.⁴

In the local context, it is very rare to find literatures specific to the management practices and stakeholder management of the dental clinics. As such, this study would be a first of its kind in the local context to explore the perception of the stakeholder whose satisfaction is instrumental to the success of the clinic. The Shine Dental Clinic is a clinic designed to cater for pediatric patients. However, a smaller percentage (<5%) of its clients are adults and are specifically those highly apprehensive about dental treatment. Through this study, the Shine dental clinic aims to understand the perception of its key stakeholders which includes clients, and staff. The overall objective of the study was to receive feedback from all the stakeholders of the clinic to provide better service to the clients through efficient operation and for proper future planning of service expansion along with an improved human resource management.

METHODS

After the ethical committee clearance for the study was taken from National Health Research Council(NHRC)- proposal ID 6622018. The study was conducted in The Shine Dental Clinic inside Shaligram Hotel Complex, Jawlakhel, Lalitpur, Nepal from 1st of January 2019 to 21st of January 2019. Data collection was done by trained individuals from FACTs Research and Analytics Company. Data was collected by using self- developed Likert scale, observation checklist and open ended questionnaires collected through face-to-face interviews & observation.

Total sample size of 68 was taken consisting of 10 child patients, 10 adult patients and 30 parents of

the child patients, 16 staff and 2 institutional clients. Simple random technique was used to select the study respondent.

RESULTS

The results of this study have been divided into five broader headings that provide insights into specific stakeholder – staff members, client – child patients and their parents, adult patients, institutional client; and mystery patients.

Staff Members

Analysing the perception of the staff regarding their work satisfaction, it was seen that 81.25% of the respondents were satisfied and the other 18.75% chose to remain neutral on the question (Figure 1). However, through the qualitative interviews it was seen that the staff members needed clear explanation of overtime rules. Although the provision of overtime compensation was there, the work on few days of the week was being overwhelmingly hectic.

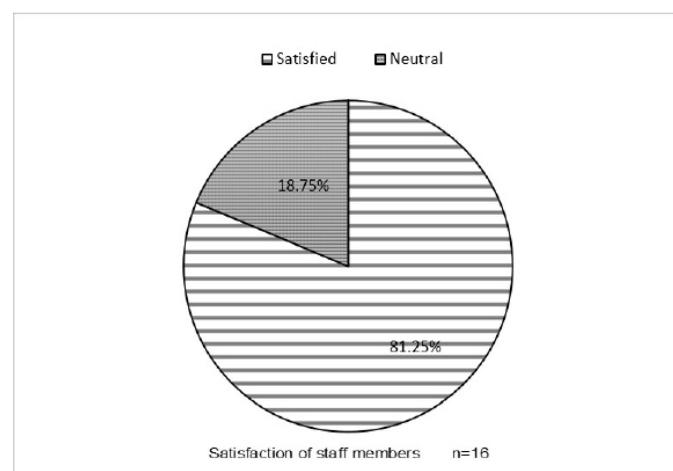


Figure 1: Satisfaction of staff members with their work

Majority (93.75%) of the respondents agreed that there is a good environment to work. The staff were never short of office supplies and resources for doing their task. 87.5% of the staff members agreed that all the resources they need are available. On the other hand, more than half of the respondents (85%) agreed that their skills were fully utilized. Contrarily, staff administered through qualitative interview provided that there was very limited space for them to implement their full knowledge within the

working criteria of the clinic. In regards to their roles in the clinic, the staff members at times lacked cohesion (especially in the rush hour) and found it more difficult to handle child patients than adult patients. 50% of staff members agreed and 43.75% strongly

agreed that their jobs provided them an opportunity to learn more. Overall, the staff perceived that their workplace has a positive environment to learn new things and gain new experience (Table 1).

Table 1: Agreements/Disagreements of Staff over Different Statements (n=16)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
There is a good environment among the staff to work	0%	0%	6.25%	68.75%	25%
There is a proper environment to express our problems	0%	12.5%	18.75%	43.75%	25%
My skills are fully utilized in the clinic	6.25%	6.25%	12.5%	50%	25%
All resources needed by me are made available	6.25%	6.25%	0%	50%	37.5%
My job provides me opportunity to learn more	0%	6.25%	0%	50%	43.75%

Staff of the Shine Dental Clinic also had positive perception towards their top management. They agreed that the top management had a frank and helping behaviour. 62.5% of the staffs agreed that there was a good environment to express their problems.

Child Patients and Their Parents

Through the quantitative study it was seen that the majority (80%) of the patients felt positive during the treatment and liked it (Figure 2).

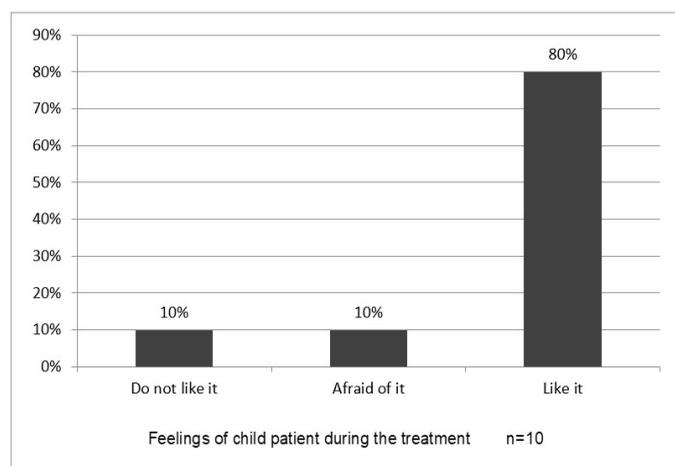


Figure 2: Feeling of child patients during their treatment

Concerning the outfits worn by doctors, 80% of the child patients said that they preferred coloured outfits, 50% of them particularly chose blue, while the

other 50% preferred pink while given a choice (Figure 3).

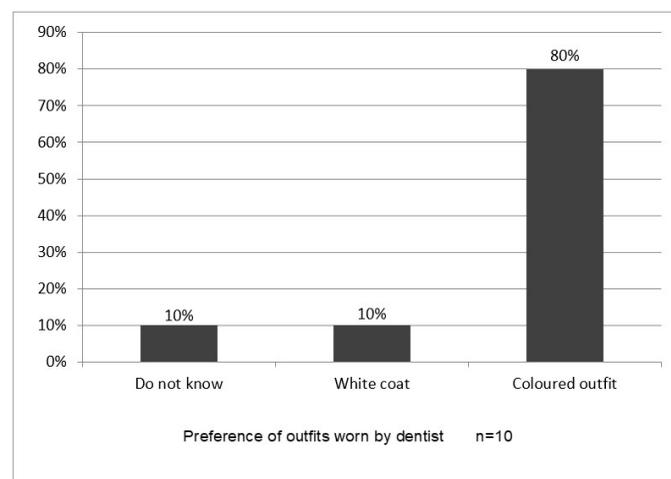


Figure 3: Preference of child patients towards the outfits worn by dentist

The study also showed that the perception of the majority (80%) of the child patients about being gifted post-treatment was positive and almost half of the respondents (40%) favoured toys as gifts. However, rather than gifts, a larger number of the child patients (80%) were more attracted to the colourful walls of The Shine Dental Clinic. In fact, in comparison to the other clinics the respondents had visited before, the main difference maker in The Shine Dental Clinic were the walls and the toys. As 80% of the

respondents said that they would like to visit the clinic again and they responded that they would like to see more toys in the future.

When it came to the parents of the child patients, among the 30 respondents, three quarters of the respondents (67%) had brought their children to the clinic for more than three times, 17% had brought only once, 13% twice whereas 3% responded that they had brought their child 3 times (Figure 4).

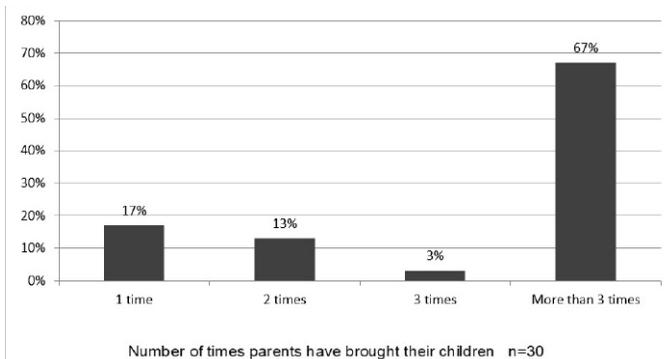


Figure 4: No. of times parents have brought their children to the Clinic

Most of the respondents (73%) said that they had brought their child for a follow-up, while more than half of the respondents (77%) reasoned that they were pleased by the service of the clinic the first time. 40% brought because the dentist available was a pediatric dentist whereas 7% said because the price is as per the service. 3% of the client resorted to multiple other answers like because its near to their residence, or their child’s school, etc (Table 2).

Table 2: Reasons for bringing your children to the clinic again (n=30)

Statements	Percentage
Follow-up	73%
Because I was pleased by the service, the first time	77%
Because the dentist is a pediatric dentist	40%
Because the price is as per the service	7%
Others	3%

More than half the parent respondents (63%) had taken their children to other clinics before coming to The Shine Dental Clinic. Furthermore, 80% percent agreed that there was a difference between

children’s and adult’s dentists. This realisation came after the direct observation of the treatment procedures.

Regarding the appointment procedure, a majority of the respondents (80%) agreed that it was easy to make their first appointment. 87% also received a reminder for each of their appointments. Moreover, 57% remarked that the appointment secretary was polite and helpful. Concerning the appointment times, 83% respondents agreed that the appointment times were well managed and they had to wait for less than 15 minutes for their turn (Figure 5).

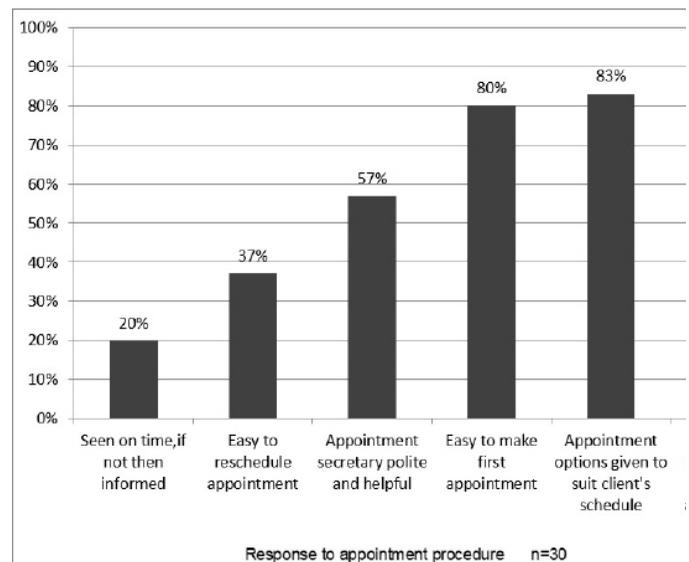


Figure 5: Response to appointment procedure

In the context of brand awareness, most of the respondents had come to know about the clinic through their friends, whereas, only 10% came to know about the clinic from social media platforms.

When the respondents were asked about the main reason of visiting the doctor, most of them said (80%) that it was due to the need for treatment. On a positive note, almost half of the respondents (57%) reasoned that it was because they found The Shine Dental Clinic to be a child-friendly clinic. However, only 7% come to the clinic because it was near their residence (Figure 6).

The environment of the clinic was the aspect that more than two-third of the respondents (70%) liked, followed by 67% of the respondents liking the dentist’s expertise. 47% were pleased with the way their child was handled, 27% appreciated cleanliness of the clinic and 20% liked the parking space.

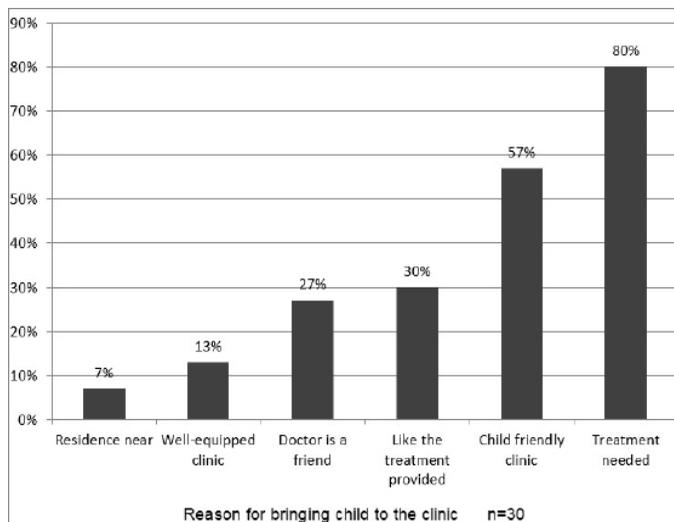


Figure 6: Reasons for bringing child to the clinic

Half of the respondents (53%) had no aspects that they didn't like about the clinic. On the contrary, 20% of the respondents thought that the price was very high, while 23% argued that the space was small (Figure 7). As the positive remarks outnumbered the

negative ones, a majority of the respondents (87%) were willing to bring their children to the clinic again for future treatments. 57% of the respondents also strongly agreed that they would recommend the clinic to other friends and family.

It was found that a majority (60%) strongly agreed that the treatment completion time was as projected. 40% agreed that the clinic also explained about alternative treatments and helped in decision-making, while 50% strongly agreed that the treatment plan was clearly explained prior to the treatment. In regards to cost, 60% strongly agreed that the cost breakdown was clearly explained. On the other hand, majority (80%) of respondents strongly agreed that the dental equipment used were clean and properly arranged. 60% of them also strongly agreed that the treatment was done on time and efficiently. More than the half of the respondents (60%) strongly believed that they were satisfied with the treatment (Table 3).

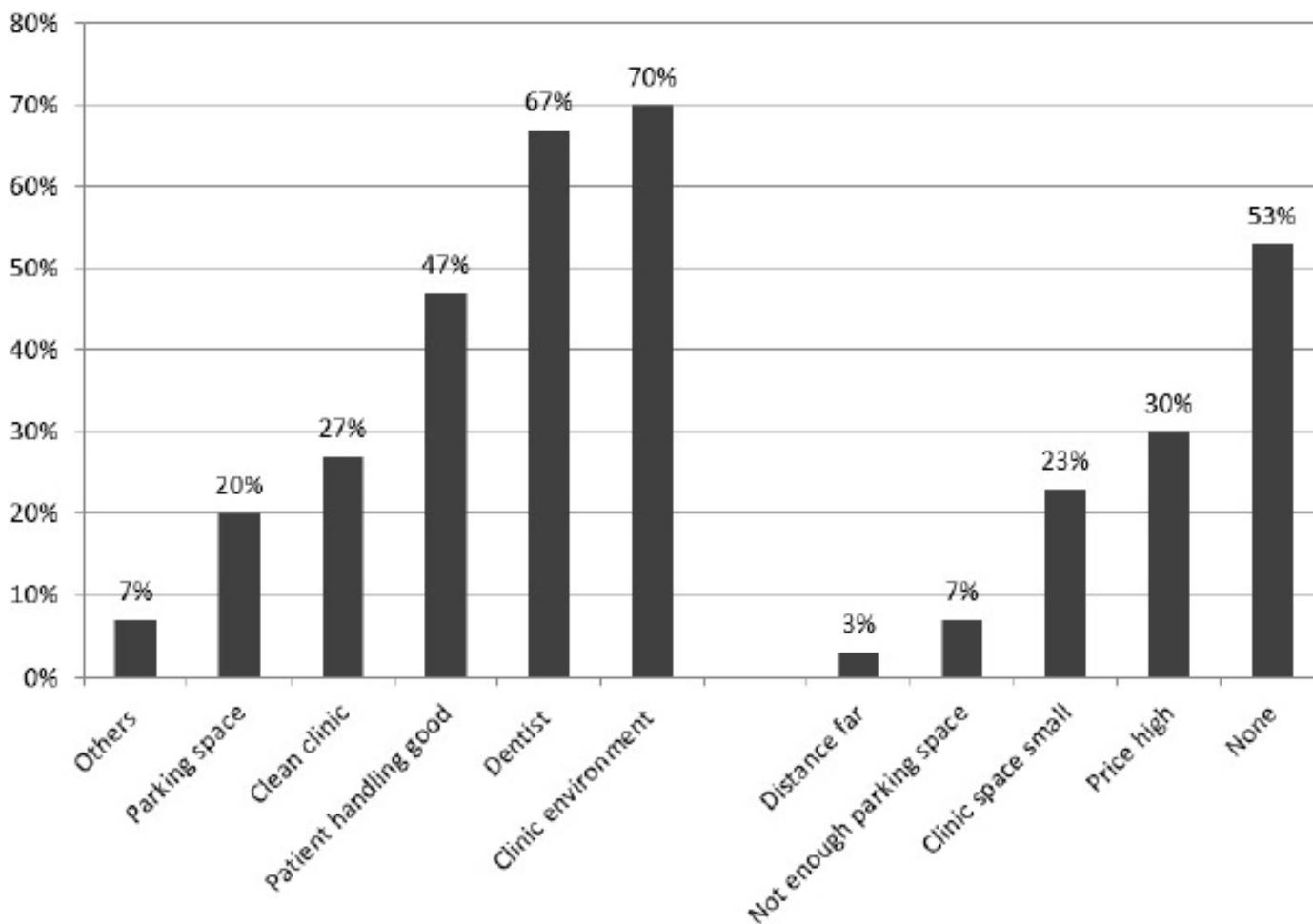


Figure 7: Aspects liked/not liked about the clinic by parents of child patients

Table 3: Agreements/Disagreements of staff over different statements (n=30)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Treatment completion time was as projected	0%	0%	10%	30%	60%
The clinic explained about alternative treatments and helped in decision-making	0%	0%	20%	40%	40%
The treatment plan was clearly explained prior to the treatment	10%	0%	3%	40%	50%
The testament cost breakdown was clearly explained	0%	0%	10%	30%	60%
The dental equipment's used were clean and properly arranged	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Treatment was done on time and efficiently	0%	0%	10%	30%	60%
I am satisfied with the treatment	0%	0%	0%	40%	60%

Adult Patients

The responses given by the adult patients were considered of great importance considering their maturity as a majority (50%) of the 10 respondents were between the age of 26 to 40. In respect to brand awareness, the main point of contact with the clinic was found to be their relatives for more than half (60%) of the respondents, friends for 30% opposing to which social media was seen to be least used (10%) point of contact which suggests that Shine Dental Clinic needs more visibility in such platforms.

Maximum number (70%) of adult patient respondents had visited The Shine Dental Clinic more than three times, and nearly two-third of them (60%) had a repeat visit due to the staff members being friendly and the patients liking the treatment provided by the clinic. Moreover, more than half of the respondents were visiting the clinic because they believed that the clinic was well-equipped.

Justifying the efficient management of time among the patients by the clinic, majority (50%) of the respondents believed that they had met the doctor at the scheduled time and 40% of them agreed that they had to wait for less than 15 minutes in the waiting room. However, 10% of the respondents had to wait for more than 15 minutes and were exceptional cases. 90% of them also mentioned that doctors gave enough time for the service (Figure 8).

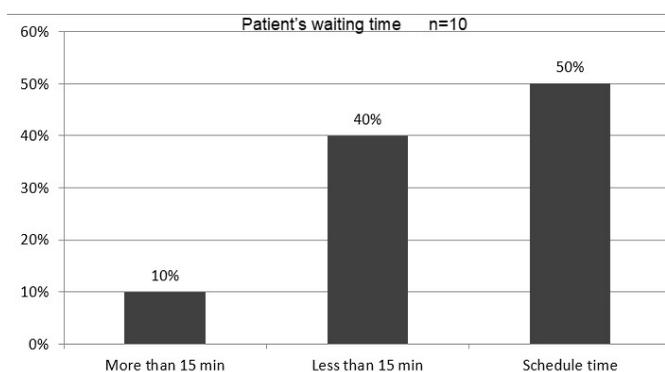


Figure 8: Patient's waiting time

Almost all the adult patient respondents (90%) liked the hygiene and cleanliness aspect of the clinic. Meanwhile, 80% liked the dentist's expertise. 60% of the adult patients also mentioned that the behaviour of the staff in the Shine Dental is another factor that they like about the clinic whereas decoration of the rooms and parking space were liked by 50% and 40% of the clients respectively.

Talking about the least liked factors, 20% of the respondents didn't like the small space of one of the rooms. 20% of adult patients thought the price of the clinical services were too high. Nevertheless, 60% of the respondents had no negative comments about the clinic, which resulted in majority (90%) of the respondents willing to come for future treatments (Figure 9).

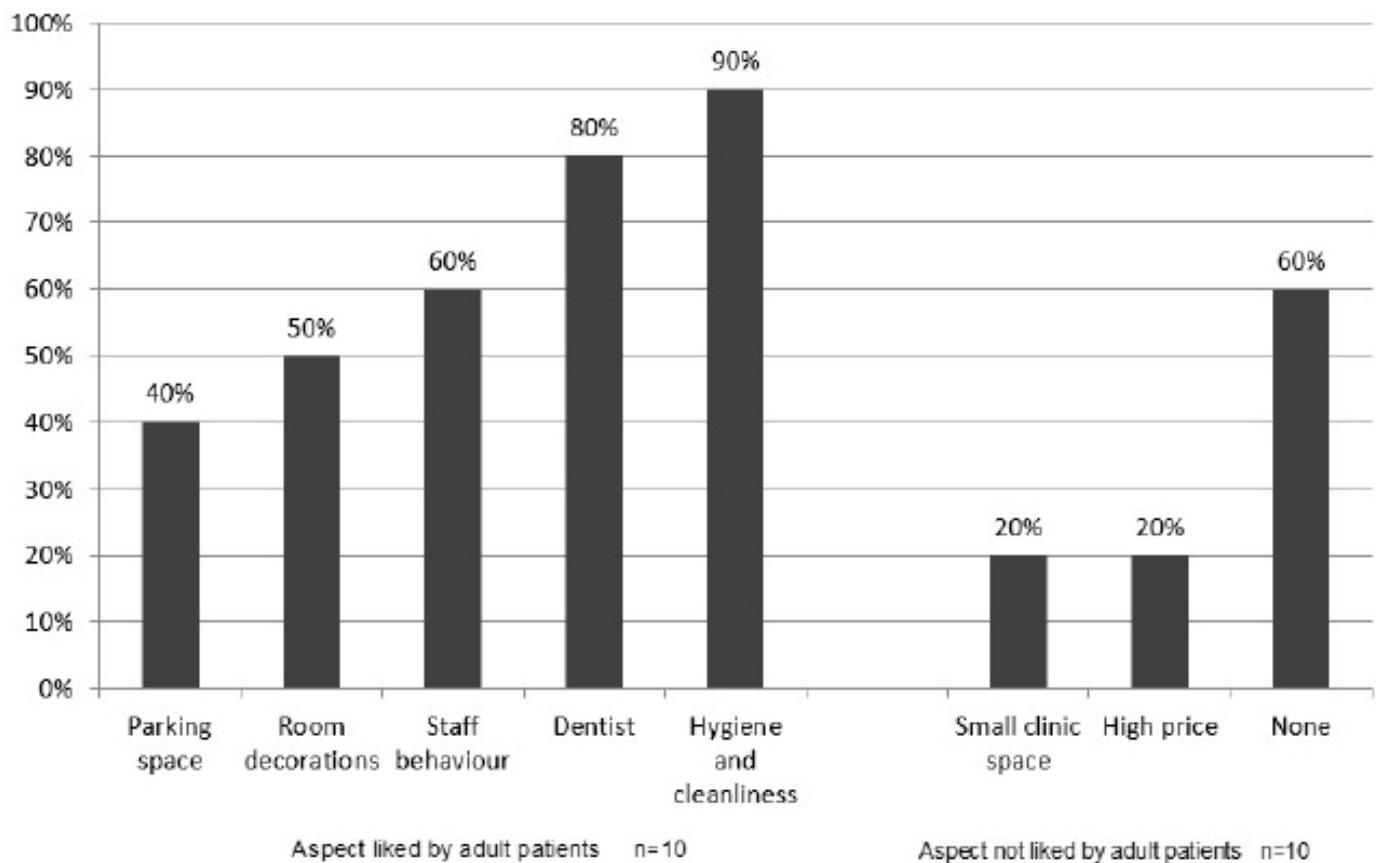


Figure 9: Aspects liked/not liked by adult patients

Table 4: Agreements/Disagreements of adult patients over different statements (n=10)

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Doctors were professionals and courteous	10%	10%	0%	10%	70%
Treatment completion time was as projected	10%	0%	0%	30%	60%
The clinic explained about alternative treatments and helped in decision-making	10%	20%	0%	20%	50%
The treatment plan was clearly explained prior to the treatment	10%	0%	0%	20%	70%
The treatment cost breakdown was clearly explained	10%	10%	20%	20%	40%
The dental equipment's used were clean and properly arranged	10%	0%	0%	30%	60%
Treatment was done on time and efficiently	10%	0%	0%	30%	60%
I am satisfied with the treatment	0%	0%	20%	10%	70%

It could be analysed that more than three-fourths of the respondents strongly believed that the doc-

tors were professionals and courteous. On the same note, 70% strongly agreed that the treatment plan

was clearly explained to them before their treatment procedure. 50% even said that the clinic explained about alternative treatments and helped in decision-making. Similarly, 60% strongly agreed that the treatment completion time was as projected (Table 4).

In terms of satisfaction, a majority (70%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the treatment, and 60% of the respondents said they would recommend Shine Dental to their family and friends.

Institutional Clients

The two institutional clients confirmed that The Shine Dental Clinic had good equipment and facilities in the clinic. One respondent particularly mentioned about the availability and use of Nitrous-Oxide in the clinic, which is not found in many dental clinics of Nepal. Both the clients gave a positive feedback about the interior decorations and wall colours, and remarked that it gave a child-friendly vibe. They also praised the smooth and efficient management of patient time, admirable time duration per client and service management. At the same time, according to one of the respondents the costs charged by the clinic tended to be high at times. Considering that the institution had given some amount of discount, the charges would sometimes exceed the budget separated by the institution for the dental treatment of their clients.

Mystery Patients

From the mystery patient's observation, the receptionist was welcoming and polite upfront as well as on the phone. Wi-fi facilities were available and the password was well-displayed and very contextual. However, the signal was not very strong. Particularly for child patients, the staff members gave extra attention and there were various toys and games placed around for them but at the same time, the clinic lacked enough space in one of the rooms. The clinic had no refreshment facilities such as tea or coffee. In regards to marketing and publicity, they lacked initiation in displaying their leaflets and brochures about the clinic, which could be a major possible advertisement tool for the clients to take back home.

DISCUSSION

As provided earlier, for any health care provider to become a leading health care organisation, stakeholders' satisfaction is a must. Stakeholders' satisfaction is created through a combination of receptiveness to their perception and needs.⁵ It is therefore essential to identify and address the factors that drives the perception and satisfaction of the stakeholders not only for a health clinic but for every business institution. Specifically, with respect to a health clinic it is more important to understand the things valued by the stakeholders, how the quality of care is observed by them and to know where, how and when services should change and improvements can be made because it is a very sensitive service area.⁵

Through the findings of this study it is clear that the quality of service, infrastructure of the clinic, medical equipment's play a crucial role in defining their perception for a clinic. With respect to staff, the major factors driving their perception included work environment, pay and benefits, work hours, adequacy of the resources required to complete the work and scopes of learning.⁶

For child patients, the treatment and friendliness of the doctors, their outfits (dress), child friendly environment, gifts and toys and so on determine their perception. Similarly, the major factors driving the perception of the parents of the child patients and adult include the expertise of the dentist, information about the treatment and time it will take, cleanliness and hygiene, friendliness of doctor, clinic infrastructure and so on.

Considering various aspects of the clinic, some of the clients made some good recommendations. For eg- the clinic focuses on pediatric dentistry especially on cases that come from referrals. As such clinics are rare in Nepal and having the head-doctor as a pediatric dentist was an advantage, they suggested that the clinic should work on building a team of doctors by passing on the knowledge so that in case of the absence of the head doctor, the functioning of the clinic still remains smooth. The clinic should also organize workshops and seminars to generate more attention towards itself.

Since this type of research has not been conducted in Nepal, it will help other private dental clinics to know the factors people consider while selecting a

dental clinic. Also, it helps to understand what type of relation management needs to maintain with its employees. It will also help professionals in the field of medicine and well as medical and dental college students in understanding the management perspective of the medical field.

LIMITATIONS

There were certain limitations related to this study. With the institutional clients, unfortunately, only telephonic interviews could be conducted.

Although the study of staff perception includes the views of all the staff members who were working at the clinic at the time of study, two staff members had joined the organisation for less than a month. Hence, their views may not depict the actual view of the clinic.

Also, the sample size could have been more. Such researches are very expensive and time consuming. Hence, the sample size had to be limited to 68.

CONCLUSION

The perception study of The Shine Dental Clinic has provided major insights for clinics as such. It has been found that customers of a health clinic build their perception towards a clinic in terms of effective service delivery, maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene in the clinic, the treatment and communication of the health workers, timely delivery of the service. Similarly, it has been found that the clinic's environment also plays a crucial role in building the stakeholders' perception and their level of satisfaction. So, as a health clinic, it is essential that they take care of these factors in deriving good perception of stakeholders about them.

In conclusion, the stakeholders of The Shine Dental Clinic view the clinic as a promising clinic and are satisfied with all the services and facilities provided by the clinic. More people are becoming aware about the clinic and with time. If the clinic is able to process the recommendations of their stakeholders, then it can reach greater heights.

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