



Case Report

Customer Complaints in a Dental Department within a Healthcare Center (Dubai)

Fatima Hassan*

Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University, University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

***Corresponding author:** Fatima Hassan, Hamdan Bin Mohammed Smart University, University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

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Executive Summary

This project analyzed the customer complaints for a dental department in X healthcare center, a healthcare center in Dubai. The study adopted secondary research methods by collecting customer complaints data from a confidential Excel sheet compiled by the call center department. The top three complaints identified from the data included (1) long waiting times to receive services, (2) high treatment and dental service costs, and (3) health insurance not covering a dental procedure. From this analysis, long waiting time emerged as the top complaint. A drill-down of this top complaint revealed monthly variations, with December 2022 registering the highest complaint frequency. A cause-and-effect analysis established five possible categories causing long waiting times among patients, including customers, resources, human factors, equipment, process, and procedure. This report recommends increasing staffing ratios, formalizing the patient check-in process, establishing guidelines for the patient check-in, streamlining the patient registration process to minimize delays, targeted staff training, and equipment upgrades.

Introduction

This report aims to analyze and report findings based on customer complaints for a dental department in X healthcare center, a healthcare center in Dubai. Customer complaints offer businesses and organizations excellent insights that guide process and quality improvement measures. Complaints highlight the customer's perception and experience with a service or product. Addressing customer concerns helps organizations build brand loyalty, boost client retention, and enhance satisfaction. The process improves an organization's responsiveness and communication capabilities (internal and external). The report structure contains various parts,

including (1) a background section describing the organization and explaining the importance of quality in healthcare, (2) a research method section explaining data collection procedures, (3) a findings section discussing the analysis, (4) implementation and results, and (5) recommendations and conclusions.

Background

As established, this report will analyze customer complaints for a dental department in X healthcare center, a healthcare center in Dubai. The dental clinic performs specialized dental procedures and checkups for diverse customers, whether local or non-local. Typical procedures include fillings, periodontal surgeries, orthodontic treatments, scaling and polishing, dental whitening, prosthodontic treatments, extraction, and endodontic treatments. The clinic serves patients from different backgrounds, cultures, and socio-economic statuses. Quality is essential for dental practice in general. Also, it is vital to have higher quality standards to make the patient feel more protected and therefore ensure that the patient is satisfied [1]. Quality remains an essential measure for dental practices. First, service quality directly impacts treatment outcomes. For example, poor quality could lead to post-treatment complications that could increase the cost of care and diminish customer satisfaction [2]. Second, adverse treatment outcomes could pose significant ethical and legal consequences [3]. Third, quality is essential since dental clinics must meet regulatory and ethical care standards developed to uphold patient safety [4]. The clinic's reputation is the most crucial aspect of any dental clinic to attract clients and retain them. That is why continuously focusing on quality can affect productivity and profitability by increasing them sustainably [3].

Research Method and Data Collection

The study adopted secondary research methods by collecting customer complaints data from a confidential Excel sheet the call center department collected. Call center employees use the document to log and track customer complaints. The collected dataset contained records recorded from December 2022 to March 2023. All data received is organized by the complaint date with the complainer’s name and all complaint-related details in a highly confidential Excel sheet obtained from the line manager of the Complaints and Suggestions Section. Thematic analysis is used to establish and gather patterns and trends in recorded customer complaints. The study adopted a mixed design to organize and analyze the emerging data quantitatively and qualitatively.

Findings

Check Sheet

Table 1 below presents a check sheet listing the identified complaints, tallies, and frequencies. A thematic analysis of the call center dataset revealed twenty-one complaints registered by different customers. Examples include long waiting times, treatment delays, uncomfortable procedures, high treatment costs, and slow response when scheduling appointments. The table shows the tally for each customer complaint and its associated frequency. Based on the check sheet, the call center logged 109 customer complaints within four months.

No.	Customer Complaint	Tally	Frequency
1	Long waiting time.		15
2	Treatment and diagnosis delays.		9
3	Uncomfortable dental examination process.		6
4	Medical insurance did not cover the procedure.		12
5	Unexpected high treatment and dental service costs.		13
6	High consultation fees.		6
7	The call center did not answer calls.		9
8	Slow response when trying to schedule an appointment.		5
9	Provider canceled an appointment on short notice.		6
10	Faced difficulties rescheduling an appointment.		4
11	Pain during the dental procedure.		1
12	Poor communication about patient symptoms.		4
13	Rude staff.		3
14	Post-treatment complications.		1
15	Lack of sufficient information about treatment options.		3
16	Adverse reactions during a dental procedure.		1
17	Hygiene concerns.		3
18	Lack of patient follow-up.		1
19	Dental services offered fell below expectations.		5
20	The provider did not explain the treatment risks.		1
21	The provider did not explain the treatment benefits.		1
Totals			109

Table 1: Check sheet listing the identified complaints, tallies, and frequencies.

Pareto Diagram

The Pareto chart below presents the top three complaints based on their associated frequencies. Based on the chart, the top three complaints include (1) long waiting times to receive services, (2) high treatment and dental service costs, and (3) health insurance not covering a dental procedure. The chart was created using Microsoft Excel. The line indicates the cumulative frequency for the top three complaints. It indicates the top three reasons accounted for 40 complaints.

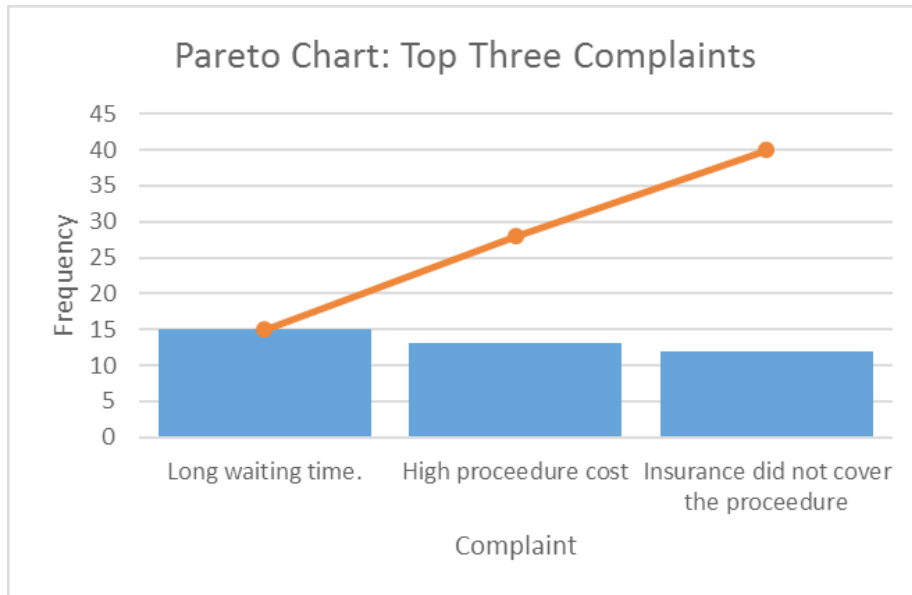


Chart 1: Pareto chart showing the top three complaints.

Fishbone Diagram

Chart 2 presents a fishbone diagram identifying the cause and effect of long waiting times at the dental clinic. The diagram identifies five possible categories of causes, including customers, resources, human factors, equipment, process, and procedure. The chart was created using Microsoft Visio.

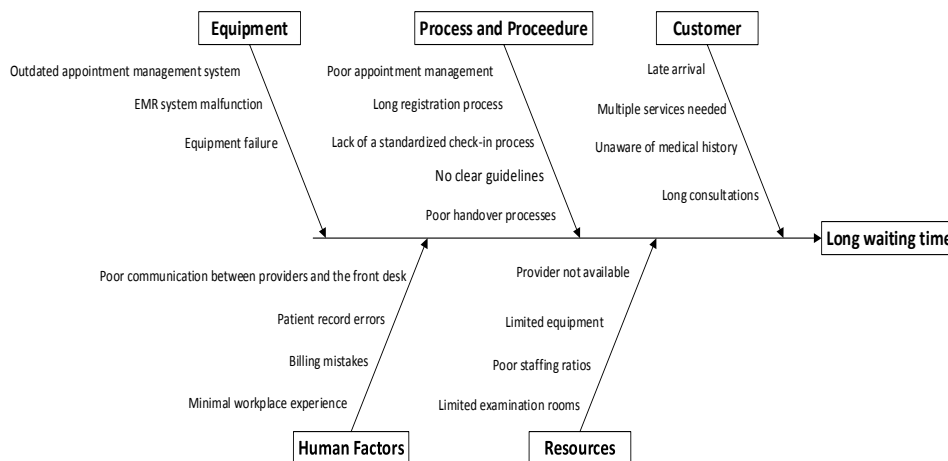


Chart 2: Fishbone diagram for long waiting time.

Drill Down Pareto Diagram: Top Complaint by Time

Chart 3 shows a drill-down Pareto chart for long waiting time complaints by month. From the chart, five patients complained of long waiting times, four in February, three in March, and two in January. The line indicates the cumulative frequency for the top complaint by month.

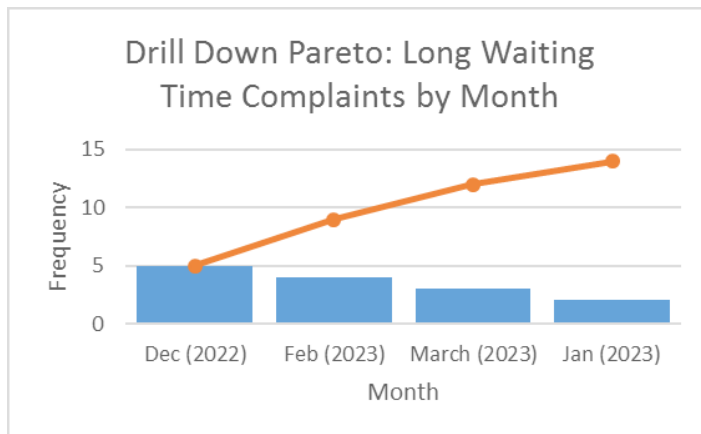


Chart 3: A drill-down Pareto chart for long waiting time complaints by month.

Implementation and Results

The results indicate that the top three complaints include (1) long waiting times to receive services, (2) high treatment and dental service costs, and (3) health insurance not covering a dental procedure. Fifteen customers complained about long waiting times, thirteen complained of high procedure costs, and twelve complained that their insurance provider did not cover the dental procedure performed at the clinic (see chart 1). From this analysis, long waiting time emerged as the top complaint. A drill-down of this top complaint revealed monthly variations, with December 2022 registering the highest frequency (see chart 3).

The cause-and-effect analysis of the long waiting times revealed five possible categories of causes, including customers, resources, human factors, equipment, process, and procedure (see chart 2). Under human factors, patients experience long waiting times due to poor communication between providers and the front desk, errors in the patient record, billing mistakes, and minimal work experience among interns. For resources, patients may experience long waiting times due to limited examination rooms, poor staffing ratios, limited equipment, and unavailable health providers.

Patients experience long waiting times because some customers arrive late for appointments, require multiple services, are unaware of their medical history, and have lengthy consultations. Policies and procedures contribute to the problem since the facility (1) lacks effective appointment management practices, (2) has a

lengthy registration process, (3) lacks a standardized check-in process, (4) has no clear patient check-in guidelines, and (5) has poor patient handover processes. Lastly, equipment failures and malfunctions are possible causes of long waiting times for the equipment category (see chart 2). Through the use of quality tools, many problems emerged that had to be intervened to solve in order to avoid exacerbating them. The management has worked hard to reduce these problems, especially the long waiting time. To solve this problem, the administration has allocated the appropriate time for each patient by increasing the treatment time commensurate with the appointments. However, this way of improvement was unsuccessful, as the long waiting time is still one of the most common complaints in the dental department. Therefore, the management is still working hard to solve all complaints effectively and efficiently.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The analysis revealed that the dental department in X healthcare center faces significant quality issues based on the identified patient complaints. Long waiting times emerged as the top complaint reported by fifteen patients between December 2022 and March 2023. The analysis showed seasonal variations in customer complaints, with some months registering more complaints than others. The analysis revealed that multiple factors contribute to this problem, including poor communication between providers and the front desk, human errors in record management, limited resources, poor staffing ratios, and limited equipment. This disposition means the facility must adopt a multi-faceted approach to addressing patient concerns. Improving service quality will positively impact the clinic by increasing customer satisfaction and ensuring effective treatment outcomes.

The collected data can help the clinic improve service delivery. Quality improvement projects play an important role in modern organizations. The following recommendations can improve quality management at the dental clinic:

1. Increase staffing ratios by adopting floating staffing strategies to ensure responsiveness based on changes in service demand.
2. Formalize and standardize the patient check-in process.
3. Establish and print guidelines for the patient check-in process.
4. Review and streamline the patient registration process to minimize delays.
5. Provide staff training on communication, patient check-in guidelines, accurate patient records management, and effective patient handover.
6. Update the facility's appointment management system.
7. Capital investments in equipment and examination rooms.

Quality tools and techniques have proven their effectiveness by making the most significant issues more prominent to the management so they can work in a planned and organized manner to find solutions and implement the improvement.

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