



## THE EFFECT OF OUTPATIENT MEDICAL CONSULTATION EXPERIENCE ON OVERALL SATISFACTION AND INTENTION TO RECOMMEND

Lydia Priscillia Pomantouw\*, Ferdi Antonio

Department of Hospital Administration, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Pelita Harapan, Jl. Boulevard Diponegoro No.1100, Kelapa Dua, Tangerang, Banten 15811, Indonesia

\*[lydianauer.md@gmail.com](mailto:lydianauer.md@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

Patient-centred care has increased the importance of understanding patient experience during outpatient medical consultations, particularly in primary care clinics where doctor–patient interaction plays a central role in service quality. While patient satisfaction is known to influence recommendation behaviour, most studies rely on general service quality dimensions rather than consultation-specific experiences, especially in the Indonesian clinical context. This study aims to examine the effect of outpatient medical consultation experience on overall satisfaction with medical consultation and to analyse its impact on patients’ intention to recommend the clinic. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted among outpatients at XYZ Clinic in Manado, Indonesia. Data were collected from 168 respondents using a structured questionnaire developed by synthesising domains from the Medical Interview Satisfaction Scale (MISS) and Consultation Satisfaction Scale (CSQ), namely communication comfort, rapport, length of consultation time, distress relief, and professional care. Construct validity and reliability were assessed using factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), composite reliability, and Cronbach’s alpha prior to structural model testing. Data were analysed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings demonstrate that all five consultation experience dimensions have a significant and positive influence on overall satisfaction with medical consultation. Communication comfort emerged as the strongest predictor.

Keywords: consultation satisfaction; outpatient consultation; patient-centred care; patient experience; primary care clinic; recommendation intention

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## INTRODUCTION

Primary healthcare plays a strategic role in the health system, particularly as the frontline in delivering medical services to the community. Primary care clinics, as one form of primary healthcare facility, serve as the initial point of interaction between patients and healthcare professionals, especially general practitioners (Bawakid et al., 2017; Gao et al., 2022; Manzoor et al., 2019). In this context, service quality is determined not only by clinical aspects but also by the quality of interaction between doctors and patients during the medical consultation process. Medical consultation constitutes the core of clinic services, as it involves anamnesis, examination, information provision, and medical decision-making processes that directly influence patients’ perceptions and experiences (Chegini et al., 2022; Larson et al., 2019; Prakash & Srivastava, 2018).

Along with the development of the patient-centred care paradigm, patient satisfaction has increasingly been regarded as a crucial indicator for assessing healthcare service quality (Deng et al., 2024; Okonta & Ogaji, 2020; Yang et al., 2025). This paradigm positions patients as the central subjects of care, emphasizing the importance of communication, empathy, and understanding patients’ needs and expectations (Dobrin & Dinulescu, 2020; Senitan & Gillespie, 2019). In primary care clinic services, patient satisfaction not only affects therapeutic success and patient adherence to treatment but also influences patient loyalty and the sustainability of healthcare services themselves (Aoki et al., 2020; Dobrin & Dinulescu, 2020).

Numerous previous studies have shown that patient satisfaction is closely associated with positive behavioural intentions, such as the intention to reuse services and to recommend healthcare facilities to others (Chegini et al., 2022; Dobrin & Dinulescu, 2020). Intention to recommend represents a tangible form of word of mouth that is highly valuable, particularly for private clinics operating in competitive environments. Patients who are satisfied with the services they receive tend to voluntarily share positive experiences, thereby helping to enhance the clinic's image and competitiveness (Dobrin & Dinulescu, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2021).

However, research on patient satisfaction in healthcare facilities has often relied on general service quality approaches, such as service quality (SERVQUAL) dimensions. Although useful, such approaches are less capable of capturing patients' specific experiences during medical consultations, which are in fact the core of clinic services. Services in primary care clinics are highly dependent on interpersonal interactions between doctors and patients; therefore, instruments and models that are specifically designed to measure patient satisfaction with medical consultations are required.

The Medical Interview Satisfaction Scale (MISS) and the Consultation Satisfaction Scale (CSQ) have been widely used to measure patient satisfaction in medical consultations, with MISS emphasizing the humanistic aspects of doctor–patient interactions (Meakin & Weinman, 2002) and CSQ focusing on perceptions of professional competence and consultation duration (Maurice-Szamburski et al., 2017). However, their application in the Indonesian clinical context remains limited, and each instrument has its own strengths and limitations, indicating the need for a synthesis-based approach. Based on this need, the present study develops a patient satisfaction model based on outpatient medical consultation experience by integrating the main domains of MISS and CSQ, including communication comfort, rapport, length of consultation time, distress relief, and professional care, which are cognitively and affectively believed to influence overall patient satisfaction. In addition, this study positions overall satisfaction with medical consultation as a mediating variable linking medical consultation experience to the intention to recommend the clinic. This approach is grounded in satisfaction and consumer behaviour theories, which posit that satisfaction is a primary prerequisite for the formation of positive behavioural intentions.

This study is conducted in the context of XYZ Private Clinic in Manado, Indonesia. The selection of this context is based on the clinic's characteristics as a long-established facility with a diverse patient base and ongoing challenges in maintaining patient satisfaction and visit rates. Furthermore, this study is expected to enrich the empirical literature on primary healthcare services in Indonesia, particularly with regard to medical consultation experiences and their impact on patient behaviour. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to analyse the effect of outpatient medical consultation experience on overall patient satisfaction and its impact on patients' intention to recommend the clinic. The findings of this study are expected to provide not only theoretical contributions to the development of a consultation-based patient satisfaction model but also practical implications for clinic management in improving service quality and the competitiveness of healthcare service institutions.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, aiming to analyse the causal relationships between outpatient medical consultation experience, overall patient satisfaction, and the intention to recommend the clinic. This approach is chosen because it allows for objective and measurable testing of relationships among variables based on empirical data obtained from respondents. The research location is XYZ Clinic in Manado, Indonesia, which is purposively selected on the grounds that it is a primary care clinic actively providing outpatient services and has a relatively stable volume of patient visits. The study population consists of all outpatients who have undergone medical consultations with doctors at the clinic. The research sample is determined using purposive sampling, with respondent criteria including a minimum age

of 18 years, prior experience of outpatient medical consultation at XYZ Clinic, and willingness to complete the research questionnaire in full.

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire instrument developed through a synthesis of the Medical Interview Satisfaction Scale (MISS) and the Consultation Satisfaction Scale (CSQ). The medical consultation experience variable is measured using five dimensions: communication comfort, rapport, length of consultation time, distress relief, and professional care. Overall patient satisfaction with medical consultation and intention to recommend are measured as separate variables. All statement items are measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Data analysis in this study is conducted in several stages to ensure measurement quality and the accuracy of testing relationships among variables. Instrument validity and reliability tests are performed prior to the main analysis to ensure data quality. To ensure measurement quality, validity and reliability were rigorously evaluated prior to hypothesis testing. Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), with all values exceeding the recommended thresholds (factor loadings > 0.70; AVE > 0.50). Internal consistency reliability was confirmed using composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha, with all constructs demonstrating values above 0.70. These results indicate that the measurement model satisfied the required standards of validity and reliability. Data that meet the validity and reliability criteria are then analysed through direct effect testing, indirect effect testing, and hypothesis testing using Partial Least Squares–based Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), given its ability to test complex structural models and its lack of requirement for normally distributed data.

## RESULT

Table 1.  
Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Communication Comfort	0,825	0,835	0,740
Distress Relief	0,860	0,878	0,784
Intention to ecommend_The Clinic	0,856	0,866	0,776
Length of Consultation Time	0,728	0,770	0,650
Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,888	0,892	0,817
Professional Care	0,902	0,903	0,774
Rapport	0,910	0,911	0,847

Table 1 shows that all research variables meet the criteria for good measurement quality. The Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability values for each construct are above the minimum required threshold of 0.7, indicating adequate internal consistency and instrument reliability. In addition, the AVE values for all variables exceed 0.5, confirming that each construct demonstrates strong convergent validity. Therefore, the data are suitable for further analysis in the structural model.

Table 2.  
R Squared

Variable	R-squared (R2)
<i>Intention to Recommend the Clinic</i>	0,491
<i>Overall Satisfaction on Consultation</i>	0,745

Table 2 shows that overall satisfaction with consultation has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.745, indicating that a substantial proportion of the variance in patient satisfaction can be explained by the medical consultation experience measured in this study. Meanwhile, the intention to recommend the clinic variable has an R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.491, suggesting that nearly half of the variance in patients’ intention to recommend the clinic can be explained by patient satisfaction and medical consultation experience. These findings confirm that the research model has strong explanatory power in explaining patients’ evaluations and behavioural intentions regarding medical consultation services.

Tabel 3.  
Nilai f-squared

Variable	f <sup>2</sup>	P-values	Results
Communication Comfort ->Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,151	0,011	Moderate effect size
Distress Relief -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,083	0,070	Small effect size
Length of Consultation Time -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,045	0,048	Small effect size
Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,966	0,000	Large effect size
Professional Care -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,078	0,058	Small effect size
Rapport -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,079	0,075	Small effect size

The f-squared values in Table 3 indicate that the effect of communication comfort on overall satisfaction with consultation has a medium effect size, underscoring the importance of communication comfort in shaping patient satisfaction. Meanwhile, distress relief, length of consultation time, professional care, and rapport exhibit small effect sizes on patient satisfaction, indicating that although they contribute, the individual influence of each of these variables is relatively limited. In contrast, overall satisfaction with consultation shows a very large effect size on the intention to recommend the clinic, confirming that patient satisfaction is the primary determinant in driving patients' intention to recommend the clinic to others.

Tabel 4.  
Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Std. Coefficient	P-values	Corrected P-Values	Confidence Interval (CI)		Results
				5.0% Lower	95.0% Upper	
H1 Rapport -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,215	0,000*	0,000**	0,111	0,320	Supported
H2 Communication Comfort -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,275	0,000*	0,000**	0,191	0,357	Supported
H3 Length of Consultation Time -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,156	0,000*	0,000**	0,089	0,227	Supported
H4 Distress Relief -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,201	0,000*	0,000**	0,100	0,294	Supported
H5 Professional Care -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation	0,216	0,000*	0,000**	0,111	0,321	Supported
H6 Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,701	0,000*	0,000**	0,638	0,762	Supported

The results of the hypothesis testing presented in Table 4 show that rapport has a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction with consultation, with a standardized coefficient of 0.215 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates that a good interpersonal relationship between doctors and patients plays an important role in enhancing patient satisfaction during medical consultations. Communication comfort is shown to have a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction with consultation, with a standardized coefficient of 0.275 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding confirms that comfort in communication during the consultation process is a key factor in shaping patient satisfaction. Length of consultation time has a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction with consultation, with a standardized coefficient of 0.156 and a p-value of 0.000. This result suggests that a consultation duration perceived as sufficient by patients contributes to increased satisfaction with medical services. Distress relief has a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction with consultation, with a standardized coefficient of 0.201 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that the physician's ability to reduce patients' anxiety and discomfort plays a role in improving consultation satisfaction.

Professional care shows a positive and significant effect on overall satisfaction with consultation, with a standardized coefficient of 0.216 and a p-value of 0.000. This confirms that patients'

perceptions of physicians' competence and professionalism are important determinants of satisfaction with medical consultations. Overall satisfaction with consultation has a positive and significant effect on the intention to recommend the clinic, with a standardized coefficient of 0.701 and a p-value of 0.000. This finding demonstrates that higher patient satisfaction is associated with a stronger intention to recommend the clinic to others.

Table 5.  
Mediation Analysis

Path	Indirect Coefficient	P-values	Direct Effect Coefficient	P-values
Rapport -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,151	0,000	0,570	0,000
Communication Comfort -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,193	0,000	0,638	0,000
Length of Consultation Time -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,110	0,000	0,504	0,000
Distress Relief -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,141	0,000	0,575	0,000
Professional Care -> Overall Satisfaction on Consultation -> Intention to Recommend the Clinic	0,151	0,000	0,519	0,000

The analysis results in Table 5 show that rapport has a positive and significant indirect effect on the intention to recommend the clinic through overall satisfaction with consultation, with an indirect coefficient of 0.151 and a p-value of 0.000. In addition, the significant direct effect ( $\beta = 0.570$ ; p-value = 0.000) confirms that consultation satisfaction serves as a partial mediator. Communication comfort has a positive and significant indirect effect on the intention to recommend the clinic through overall satisfaction with consultation, with a coefficient of 0.193 and a p-value of 0.000. The significant direct effect ( $\beta = 0.638$ ; p-value = 0.000) indicates that consultation satisfaction strengthens this relationship as a partial mediator.

Length of consultation time has a positive and significant indirect effect on the intention to recommend the clinic through overall satisfaction with consultation, with a coefficient of 0.110 and a p-value of 0.000. The direct effect remains significant ( $\beta = 0.504$ ; p-value = 0.000), indicating that consultation satisfaction partially mediates this relationship. Distress relief shows a positive and significant indirect effect on the intention to recommend the clinic through overall satisfaction with consultation, with a coefficient of 0.141 and a p-value of 0.000. The significant direct effect ( $\beta = 0.575$ ; p-value = 0.000) further confirms the role of consultation satisfaction as a partial mediator in this relationship. Professional care has a positive and significant indirect effect on the intention to recommend the clinic through overall satisfaction with consultation, with a coefficient of 0.151 and a p-value of 0.000. The significant direct effect ( $\beta = 0.519$ ; p-value = 0.000) indicates that consultation satisfaction partially mediates this relationship and strengthens patients' intention to recommend the clinic.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that among the five antecedents or independent variables, communication comfort provides strong evidence as the variable with the greatest influence on patient satisfaction with medical consultations in primary care clinics. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Kalaja, 2023; Wu et al., 2023). As patients' perceived comfort during consultations with doctors increases, their level of satisfaction also rises. The results further show that effective communication is particularly important for patients who, in addition to experiencing physical complaints, may also be in a psychologically uncomfortable condition due to their illness. This is in line with evidence from clinical settings indicating that the way communication is conducted can have a greater impact than the content of the communication itself (Dobrin & Dinulescu, 2020; Kalaja, 2023; Moslehpour et al., 2022). Open communication becomes possible when patients feel comfortable speaking openly with their doctors. These results are consistent with prior studies that highlight the critical role of this variable (Chen et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2025).

Accordingly, clinic management needs to pay close attention to this factor in evaluating healthcare services. General practitioners working at the clinic should be provided with feedback regarding patient expectations during consultations, and the performance evaluation of doctors should be measurable and systematic.

The novel contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that, in shaping patient satisfaction, the overall process of consulting with a doctor is a vital element. The  $R^2$  value for overall satisfaction of 0.741 confirms that patients in the clinic evaluate consultation experiences holistically, encompassing communication comfort, rapport, distress relief, length of consultation time, and professional care. Therefore, these findings identify specific stages or domains within the consultation process that require greater attention and improvement. Three variables stand out as particularly important such as communication comfort, professional care, and rapport which should receive greater emphasis from both doctors and clinic management. Furthermore, the study finds a large effect size of overall satisfaction with consultation on the intention to recommend the clinic. This indicates that patient satisfaction has a strong impact on encouraging patients' intention to recommend the clinic to others.

The results of this study indicate that, in addition to communication comfort, other variables that also require attention are professional care and rapport. These findings show that both variables play an important role in determining patient satisfaction. This is consistent with previous studies indicating that patients also assess the extent to which physicians deliver care in a professional manner (Stark et al., 2021). As patients generally have limited medical knowledge to evaluate the technical competence of healthcare professionals, they tend to place greater emphasis on the attitudes demonstrated by medical staff, such as empathy, friendliness, and courtesy.

Patients who seek medical care are not only physically unwell but may also experience psychological distress. For example, patients may feel anxious, impatient, or easily irritated. Therefore, a humane approach that reflects empathy, respect, and politeness toward patients can have a substantial emotional impact. These findings reinforce previous research (Aoki et al., 2020; Stark et al., 2021). Based on patients' attitudes toward their consultation experiences, trust in the physician providing care is strengthened. Accordingly, this study highlights the need for primary care clinic management to pay close attention to the attitudes displayed by physicians during direct interactions with patients. In addition to enhancing professional competence, healthcare providers should also receive feedback to help maintain their motivation to deliver high-quality patient care.

The findings of this study support service management theory, which posits that value or benefits are perceived directly at the moment the service is delivered (*value in use*). When direct interaction occurs between service providers and consumers (patients), perceptions and evaluations of service quality are formed (Noventika et al., 2025). This is consistent with the characteristics of services consisting of perishability (cannot be stored), intangibility (cannot be seen), and inseparability (cannot be separated) which also apply to healthcare services in clinics.

Healthcare services are delivered by humans, namely physicians, who possess different experiences, personalities, and backgrounds. These differences influence how they communicate. Often, communication styles may not align with patient expectations; therefore, feedback on communication is necessary. This type of feedback should be distinguished from feedback related to clinical quality. When clinical quality is evaluated, the source of assessment should come from the medical profession itself, peers, or individuals with the authority to assess physicians' scientific competence or expertise.

Overall satisfaction with consultation can be explained by 74% of the variables included in the model, while the remaining variance is explained by other variables outside the model. The intention to recommend variable can be explained by 45% of patient satisfaction in this study.

However, as this study is based on respondents' subjective perceptions, the R<sup>2</sup> values should be interpreted with caution. Based on the PLS-POS results, data heterogeneity was identified, which may affect the predictive capability of the research model. Certain respondent segments were identified that, if used as samples, would yield higher R<sup>2</sup> values. This finding provides a recommendation for further analysis of the attributes or characteristics of these segments that were not previously detected or anticipated.

A further novel finding of this study is the presence of direct effects from communication comfort, rapport, distress relief, length of consultation time, and professional care on the intention to recommend the clinic. The data indicate that the type of mediation in this model is partial mediation. On the other hand, it was found that the direct effects are stronger than the indirect effects through the mediator. Therefore, these findings confirm the Net Promoter Score (NPS) concept proposed by Reichheld (2011) for measuring service performance. Evaluation of responses to service delivery can be adequately captured using a single NPS item, namely the extent to which respondents would recommend the clinic. Accordingly, intention to recommend can be viewed as a construct that represents overall responses to consultation services in clinics, indicating that recommendation intention can serve as a proxy for patient satisfaction.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that outpatient medical consultation experience plays an important role in shaping overall patient satisfaction, which subsequently becomes a key factor in driving patients' intention to recommend the clinic. All dimensions of medical consultation experience, namely rapport, communication comfort, length of consultation time, distress relief, and professional care are proven to have positive and significant effects on overall satisfaction with consultation, with communication comfort showing the relatively strongest influence.

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