

**A STUDY OF MYANMAR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE AND
SATISFACTION AT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALS IN
BANGKOK**



KHIN THIRI AYE

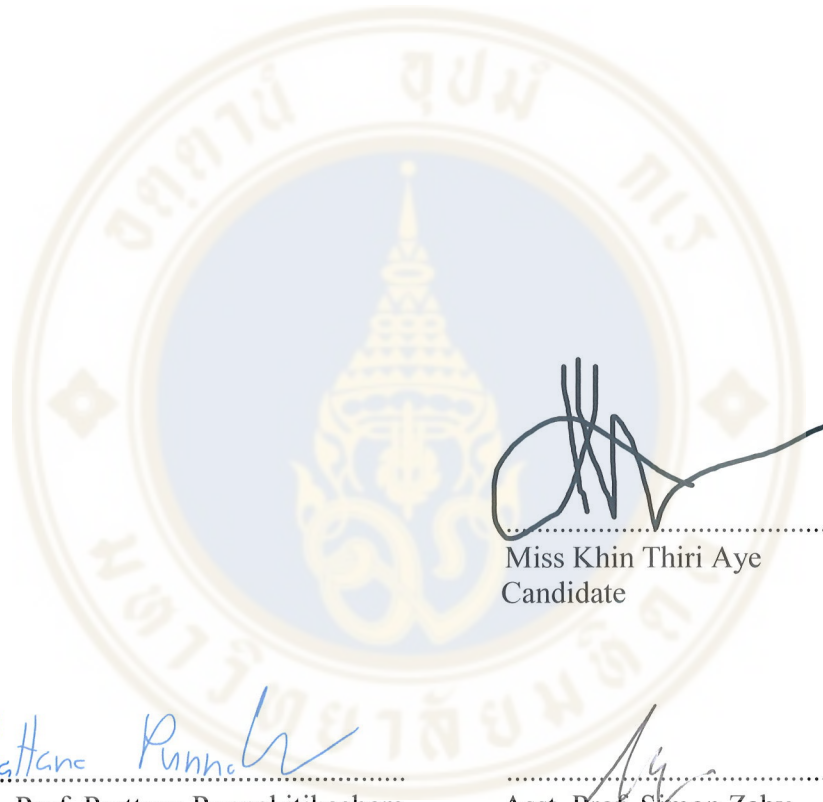
**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
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BANGKOK**

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A STUDY OF MYANMAR PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE/SATISFACTION AT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALS IN BANGKOK

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, the healthcare service industry in Bangkok has been growing rapidly and most international hospitals are trying to achieve global healthcare certificates by providing the high-quality services. This study aims to analyze the reasons why Myanmar patients choose international hospitals in Bangkok for their medical treatment and the experiences and satisfaction regarding the healthcare services of international hospitals in Bangkok, Thailand. This study aims to find out the expectation, experience, outcome, and satisfaction of Myanmar patients in Bangkok international hospitals.

This research used three main concepts regarding patient experience, including pre-service, in-service and post-service at the hospitals to clarify the patients' journey. This study used the qualitative method via in-depth interviews with 30 people from different backgrounds, most are patients at hospitals, but to illustrate different perspectives, the others are a senior executive officer and customer service manager. In terms of data analysis, all respondents expressed their opinions openly with their points of view and experiences. According to the analysis, the main reasons why Myanmar patients come to Bangkok for medical attention are mainly due to quality of care and services, followed by travel convenience, cost effectiveness and hospital reputation.

KEY WORDS: Patients' Experience / Patients' Satisfaction / International Hospitals / Bangkok / Healthcare Services

32 pages

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The experience and satisfaction of patients is a key indicator of the quality and outcome in healthcare industry. The healthcare service industry has been growing rapidly and most of the international hospitals are trying to achieve global healthcare certificates by providing the high-quality services. Bangkok is one of the most popular places for medical tourism nowadays.

Medical tourism in Bangkok has been growing rapidly within the past few years. Many people who can afford it seek for high-quality healthcare service in foreign countries. The purchasing power of these people is high standard not only in medical facilities but also in hotels, restaurants, shopping and so on. The factors that cause patients to get medical attentions in Bangkok are because of its lower costs of care, high quality services, advanced technology with good reputation and many others positive factors. The medical tourism in Asia has been already developing in countries such as Singapore, Thailand, India and Malaysia. These countries redesigned their hospitals and health infrastructure for international patients as destination of medical services. (MedEx, 2022)

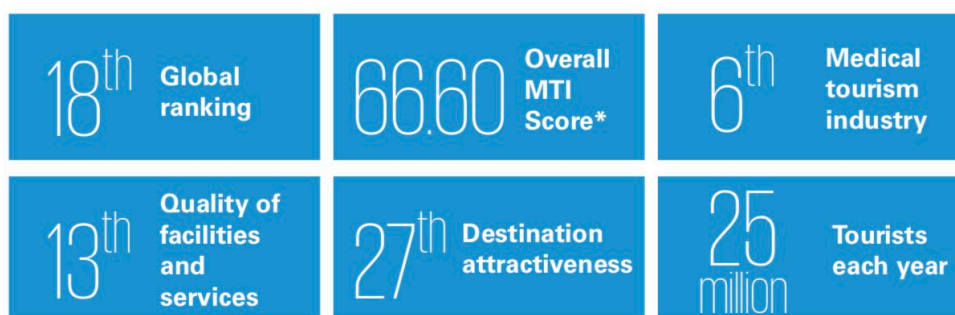


Figure 1.1 Medical Tourism in Thailand

Thailand's government has a policy for the country to become a world-class medical hub and "Medical and Wellness" destination for international patients. According to the International Healthcare Research Center (IHRC), Thailand's medical tourism has been growing 14% annually in combination with the result of the increasing income and middle-class populations, leading to higher spending power on medical tourists. As shown in figure 1.1, according to the Medical Tourism Index (MTI) conducted by the IHRC, Thailand was ranked 18th globally as the most popular medical tourism destination with 25 million tourists each year. (Thailand, 2016)

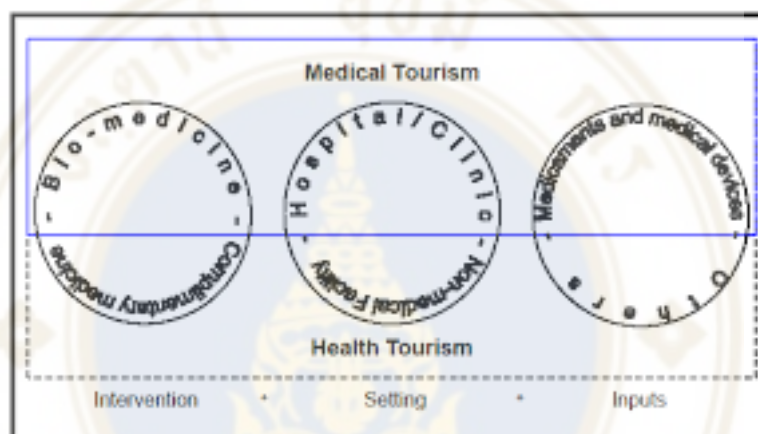


Figure 1.2 Health and Medical Tourism

As shown in figure 1.2, medical tourism is distinguished from health tourism in regard to the types of intervention, setting and inputs. (Carrera, 2010) Health tourism is defined as travelling from one place of residence to another place for the purpose of health-related services. It mainly refers to physical, mental, spiritual, or biological well-being, promoting a general healthy lifestyle rather than curing a specific disease or medical illness. On the other hand, medical treatment can be identified as any other medical treatments (surgical or non-surgical) except the treatments and facilities related to wellness. Medical tourism is quite different and more specific than the term health tourism. (Smith, 2009)

The number of international tourists visiting Thailand for medical purposes doubled despite the length of stay and average daily spending, remained the same. The number of Myanmar patients coming to Thailand rose from 75,000 in 2008 to 120,000

in 2015 according to International Medical Travel Journal. The average daily expenditure of Asian tourists can be compared to that of medical tourists from developed countries such as United Kingdom, in terms of medical purposes. (Maung, 2014)

Nowadays, Myanmar patients are one of the top market potentials for the medical tourism in Asia since middle- and high-income individuals seek their medical attentions by travelling around. Bangkok is at the top priority list for Myanmar patients due to its good reputation regarding to service industry with high quality care. The largest private hospital in Asia is also located in Bangkok. Thailand also has the first ISO 9001 certification and 37 private JCI accreditation hospitals. Western consumers are also choosing Thailand as their healthcare providers nowadays because of its cheaper cost than their own countries. (health-tourism, 2008)

All of the healthcare services have influence on patient satisfaction since the patients get treatment from the hospitals depend on their services and quality. The patients are the capital of the hospital in the healthcare sector. The quality of healthcare service is the difference between patient perceptions and their assumptions regarding services. It indicates that there is a strong connection between patient satisfaction and healthcare service quality. (Manzoor, 2019)

1.2 Problem Statement

Due to the lack of belief in the healthcare system of Myanmar, middle- and high-income groups of people seek their medical attentions in some other countries such as Thailand, Singapore, India, Taiwan and so on. There are several reasons that Myanmar patients seek medical attentions in Thailand, such as they do not really have faith in getting treatment from hospitals in Myanmar, based on the reputation. One of the most possible reasons is that the patients want the best and high-quality care, but they cannot find that medical care from local hospitals due to the lack of advanced technology and services. The outcomes as well as the experience of Myanmar patients in local hospitals do not really reach their expectations, which is also one of the reasons to choose international hospitals in Bangkok as their healthcare providers. Thailand, specifically Bangkok is one of the most popular destinations among Myanmar patients in terms of healthcare services. Even though Bangkok is famous for its medical tourism,

there is still some problems that Myanmar patients usually encounter. Some of those problems include miscommunication because of language barrier and cultural difference. Therefore, this study will explore the experience and satisfaction of Myanmar patients at international hospitals in Bangkok.

1.3 Research Question

What are the Myanmar patients' experience and causes of their satisfaction at international hospitals in Bangkok?

1.4 Research Objectives

The followings are the research objectives in this paper:

1. To identify the reasons that Myanmar patients choose international hospitals in Bangkok for their medical treatment
2. To explore the experience of Myanmar patients, including pre-service, in-service and post-service at international hospitals in Bangkok
3. To explore the causes of satisfaction of Myanmar patients in Bangkok international hospitals

1.5 Expected Benefit

The results from this research study can help build better understandings of Myanmar patients on international hospitals in Bangkok and find out their wants and needs. From this analysis regarding to Myanmar patients' experience and satisfaction, the hospitals can also improve their services in the required sectors based on this research. This study helps Myanmar patients to get to know the quality of healthcare services in Bangkok, whether they should come to Bangkok for their medical reasons. It also helps to get the better understanding of Myanmar patients' experience and their feedback regarding to the services of international hospitals in Bangkok.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the international healthcare service industry, patients' experience and their satisfaction play as major roles in terms of quality and standard. The terms patient experience and patient satisfaction are not the same thing even though they are often used interchangeably (Rockville, 2022). As for the assessment of patient experience, one has to determine whether something that should happen in a healthcare industry (for example, clear communication with a provider) actually happened or how often it happened. On the other hand, patient satisfaction is about a patient's expectations regarding to the health services he/she receive from the service providers. Different patients have different expectations despite receiving the exact same care and can give different satisfaction ratings due to these different expectations.

2.1 Patient Experience

In this study, patient experience is the description of how a person feels about their experience of receiving care and it is associated with the patient's perception of care. Patient experience describes the range of interaction that patients have with the healthcare service industry, including healthcare services from doctors, nurses, other healthcare providers, hospitals' staffs, and other healthcare facilities. In addition to the healthcare services, it also includes several aspects of healthcare delivery when patients seek and receive care, such as timely appointments, accessible information and good communication with the healthcare providers. It is also one of the important parts in order to move toward patient-centered care. By analyzing the various aspects of patient experience, one can assess what are the patients' preferences, needs and values, depends on each patient experience. (Rockville, 2022)

Enhancing patients' health care experiences is not only providing the best clinical care but also addressing every aspect that the patients' encounter at the clinic,

including physical and emotional comfort. The factors that are important of patients' experience are improving the patient experience of care, improving the health of populations and reducing the per capita costs of care. By improving patient experience, it will benefit not only patients, but also the clinics that are treating them. The better the patient experience, the better the clinical and business outcomes as well. Nowadays, patients choose their healthcare providers not only based on clinical outcomes, but also if their healthcare providers can deliver compassionate patient-centered care. (Integrated Behavioral Health Partners , 2023) One of the most important indicators for patient experience is patient satisfaction. Patient experience as well as patient satisfaction is influenced by every interaction and patient engagement opportunity. Therefore, the feedback system from the patients is important to be able to align experiences with expectations and can improve the healthcare sector. Patient loyalty, improved clinical outcomes, financial success, improved reputation, charging more for better care, improved patient retention and attracting new patients are the importance of patient experience in hospitals. (Bhawika, 2022)

Technology and government policy are the two primary factors that matter the patient experience. Technology has been developing with accessible information which has an impact on healthcare providers. The seven key factors that influence patient experience are feeling understood, convenience, integrative health services, the clinical atmosphere, waiting time, transparency and relational follow-through. (Flavin, 2018)

There are five principles to improve the patient experience. The first principal is that patients are consumers all the time when they make decisions about their health. The second one is the consumer experience is more than technology. For example, since technology has been developing, consumers use their mobile device to make appointment and judge a provider based on the accessibility of care, the technical and human components of care delivery, and the management of payment. An ideal consumer experience must have thoughtful analysis of the core processes and the skilled application of technology, process change, cultural change and the strengthening of accountability. The third principle is the range of consumer or Patient-centric processes. The fourth one is that technology advances create opportunities to deliver exceptional

experiences. The fifth one is to be careful about the meaning of terms in strategy discussion. (Glaser, 2021)

Easy and timely access to appointments, information, and communication with healthcare providers are some examples of patient experience goals. In order to improve patient experience, one needs to assess operational and patient flow to maximize efficiencies and prevent the patients' waiting time. They also need to deliver effective, caring and compassionate with the patient and their families. Healthcare providers also need to listen to the patients without interruption and also assure the patient's knowledge of the treatment plan. The first priority is the patient's comfort by providing thorough, clear instructions and explaining the patients about the process at the hospitals. The last but not least, the wellness of the healthcare staffs also influence the health outcomes since the happy staffs may equal to happy patients. (Jepsen, 2023)

2.2 Patient Satisfaction

In this study, patient satisfaction is a subjective measure whether a patient is happy when they encounter with the expectation of the healthcare services. Patient satisfaction is a performance indicator that measures in a self-report study and a specific type of customer satisfaction matrix. It is also one of the most important and commonly used indicators in the evaluations of healthcare quality. Patient satisfaction affects not only clinical outcomes, patient retention, and medical malpractice claims, but also the timeliness, efficiency and patient-centered delivery of quality health care. (Andrea Eisenberg, 2020)

Satisfaction is defined as the psychological measure derived from confirmation or disconfirmation of expectations with reality. Patient satisfaction is also an indispensable factor as for the assessment of quality and measurement of healthcare system. It is subdivided into two factors which are orientation towards care and conditions of care. Orientation towards care is the patient's response from the experience of a hospital in their point of view of hope and expectation, measured by client satisfaction questionnaire. The conditions of care represent the certain processes at the hospital that includes the method of treatment, the location of the care institution,

waiting time, payment and the treatment results, which are measured by community interest company questionnaire. (Haftom Desta, 2018)

The satisfaction of the patient that encounters with healthcare service is mainly dependent on the duration and efficiency of care, and how the healthcare providers show empathy and proper communication. It is also influenced by a good doctor-patient relationship. Patients who are well-informed about the processes and procedures at their clinical encounter, are generally more satisfied even if they have to wait longer than they expect. The job satisfaction experienced by the care-provider is another critical factor that influence patient satisfaction. (Michael Pulia, 2011)

There are many strategies that can use in the improvement of patient satisfaction. The healthcare providers can try to get the heart of the patient's expectations by asking open-ended questions and allowing them to talk about their concerns. They should also actively participate in patient care and encourage patients to take part in the decision-making process. They also need to emphasize communication clearly and respond to patients in a kind, friendly, and dignified manner which is crucial in-patient care. The hospitals must maintain a hygienic practice that are applied everywhere, starting from the lobby area, hallways, and restrooms to the examination rooms, the laboratories, wards and operation theaters. And another important point is time management which mainly focuses on time for appointments, or if there is any delay or late, needs to inform the patients in advance. They need to make sure to be responsive to the phone calls as well as inform the patients about the investigation results in a timely manner. The last but not least, every healthcare provider's attire should always be professional, neat and clean. Patient satisfaction is a critical piece of patient care since patients are demanding a bigger role for themselves in their healthcare by getting assessed to more information that include physician rating scores as well. (Andrea Eisenberg, 2020)

According to evidence-based practice, patient satisfaction can be affected by every single interaction or communication in the examination room or hospital. Starting from how the waiting area looks, to how the receptionists greet the patients and what they are wearing, affect patient satisfaction. It can also be affected by expectations of care, communication and responsiveness of healthcare providers, cleanliness,

timeliness of phone calls, appointments and results. However, the most crucial factor is communication, specifically between doctor and patient. (Andrea Eisenberg, 2020)

The healthcare industry can make necessary adjustments that help them achieve high quality care by assessing patient satisfaction. Measuring patient satisfaction is always a challenge since everyone has different expectations and it is not easy to deliver a perfect encounter every time. Healthcare quality is the main point that the patients emphasize so, healthcare providers should ask the patients about their healthcare journey and get their feedback to improve patient satisfaction.

2.3 Healthcare Services

Healthcare services represent the care that are provided by medical professionals, healthcare personnel, and healthcare organizations to the patients. The services include emergency, preventive, rehabilitative, long-term, primary, diagnostic, palliative and home care. These services are mainly focused to make the healthcare accessible, high quality, and patient centered. In order to deliver satisfactory healthcare services, varieties of services and providers are necessary. The healthcare system offers four types of services such as health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis and treatment, and rehabilitation. (Unfried, 2022)

There are two main categories of healthcare service which are public healthcare service and private healthcare service. When it comes to the healthcare services, there are several types in accordance with individual's medical issues. Most of the people think of primary care, outpatient care, and emergency care when they are seeking for medical attentions. Moreover, there are more healthcare services in addition to those ones that are specialized to certain illness or problems. These health services include mental health care, dental care, laboratory and diagnostic care, substance abuse care, preventive care, physical and occupational therapy, nutritional support, pharmaceutical care, prenatal care, transportation and so on. Some patients might need more than one services in order to solve their health issues, but not everyone is going to need each health service.

The healthcare service has significant effect not only on each individual but also on public health, economic growth and development by providing social health

protection and equal access to quality health care. All of the healthcare services have influence on patient satisfaction since the patients get treatment from the hospitals depend on their services and quality. The patients are the capital of the hospital in the healthcare sector. The quality of healthcare service is the difference between patient perceptions and their assumptions regarding services. It indicates that there is a strong connection between patient satisfaction and healthcare service quality. (Manzoor, 2019)

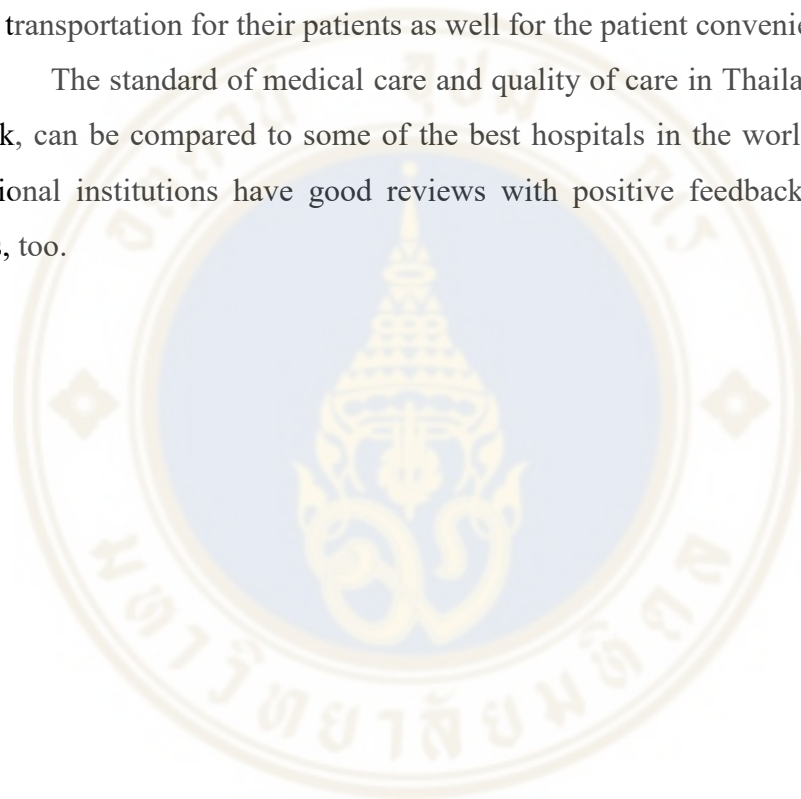
2.4 International Hospitals in Bangkok

Thailand, especially Bangkok is one of the most popular medical tourism destinations with high reputation and wide variety of international hospitals, with advanced medical technology, qualified healthcare professionals and expertise, and extensive tourism infrastructures. The international hospitals in Thailand are definitely outstanding in terms of medical tourism, as the doctors are very well trained with the latest treatments and procedures. In addition to that, the international hospitals offer the best customer service that can resemble that of world class hotels. (Travis, 2022) By the year of 2019, Thailand was ranked as the sixth safest country out of 195 nations by the World Health and Safety Index. In addition to that, it was named as an excellent place for medical tourism by the John Hopkins University Research Report. There are several reasons that make Thailand becomes a popular medical tourism destination. Some of these factors include price, quality of treatment, Western accreditations, accessible visa, tourist attractions and their marketing strategies. International hospitals in Thailand are also accredited by reputed organizations like Joint Commission International (JCI) of the United States.

There are many international hospitals in Bangkok that are famous for medical tourism. Among them, Bangkok Hospital, Siriraj Pyiamaharajkarun Hospital and Bumrungrad International Hospital were ranked as the best three for foreigners in 2022, according to the Bangkok Tourism Journal. (Bangkok Tourism , 2022) As for Myanmar patients, there are so many popular hospitals including Bumrungrad Hospital, Bangkok Hospital, Samitivej Hospital, Vejthani Hospital, Thonburi Hospital, BNH Hospital, MedPark Hospital and so on.

All of the international hospitals offer a wide range of healthcare services and have a good reputation in terms of high-quality care. These hospitals offer variety of services, such as general medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology and pediatrics, and also other sub-specialties as well. Most of the staffs can speak adequate English and they also provide assistance with visa and travel arrangements. They also have international medical coordinators for several countries so that the patients don't have to worry about the language barrier and misunderstanding for the communication issues. Most of the international hospitals locate at the accessible locations and they also provide transportation for their patients as well for the patient convenience.

The standard of medical care and quality of care in Thailand, especially in Bangkok, can be compared to some of the best hospitals in the world. Most of these international institutions have good reviews with positive feedback regarding their services, too.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter is to describe about the research method, sample size, data collection and data analysis procedure used to conduct this research paper.

3.1 Research Design

In this study, the exploratory type of qualitative research method will be used for this study of Myanmar patients' experience and satisfaction regarding to international hospitals in Bangkok. This methodology can help the researcher to work with Myanmar patients in terms of their experience and satisfaction in Bangkok. In other words, the researcher chose to use the in-depth interviews method suitable for this study to get the opinions of the interviewees because this paper focuses on the corporate perspective. One of the benefits of an in-depth interview is that it can get more detailed information than a survey method because the interviewee can be more comfortable answering open-ended questions and interacting with them. A qualitative research method is generally aims to understand the experiences and attitudes of people regarding their social context or phenomenon. It helps to deliver information about human behaviors, beliefs, values, opinions, emotions and the relationships of individuals. In terms of interview questions, it will be able to identify how Myanmar patients have been experiencing regarding their medical tourism in Bangkok and whether they are satisfied with the services or not. Then, the researcher combined all the data obtained from the interview and analyzed them.

3.2 Sampling Method

The data for this research was collected via interviews, from which 30 respondents were selected. These respondents were patients and their family members

from various international hospitals in Bangkok. However, in order to get into more details, the researcher will conduct interview with some internal people with multiple perspectives in the hospitals such as higher-level executive and manager.

3.3 Data Collection

This research is divided into primary and secondary methods of data collection. The primary data was gathered in the form of direct face-to-face interviews with the patients and their families at the hospitals. The researcher has conducted an interview from various international hospitals in Bangkok. Each interview took around 15-20 minutes, where questions were asked, and answers were noted. In addition to this primary method, the researcher will also collect data through online channels such as virtual meeting, along with telephone conversation as well. The choice of the platform to interview depended on the respondents for their convenience.

3.4 Interview Question

The writer has split the **interview questions parts** to two main areas: general questions and specific questions.

The **general questions' section** is the first part which identifies the interviewees' background and their company background. The participants introduce themselves and tell the interviewer about their background such as gender, nationality, position, work experience, type of business, and company location. This section took around 5 minutes to complete.

Second section is the **specific questions section**, which are questions related to the research topic. This section inquired about patients' experience during their medical tourism at international hospitals in Bangkok and their satisfaction regarding pre-service, during service, and post-service situation in hospitals. The duration was about 15 minutes for this interview.

3.5 Question List for Interview

Table 3.1 Qualitative Interview Questions

Topics	Questions
Screening Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are you from Myanmar? Is your nationality Myanmar? 2. Have you ever been to one of the international hospitals in Bangkok for medical purpose?
General Questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you briefly describe about yourselves? (Name, Age, Gender, Education, Occupation) 2. Which hospital do you usually go for the purpose of medical tourism in Bangkok? 3. What kind of treatment do you usually go for medical tourism in Bangkok? 4. How often do you go to international hospitals in Bangkok for medical purposes?
Specific Questions	
Pre-service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do you choose international hospitals in Bangkok for your medical tourism? Please kindly share your decision-making process of choosing this hospital. 2. What are the sources of information that help you to choose this hospital for your medical attention? 3. What are the main factors that encourage you to choose this hospital for your medical tourism? (Hospital accreditation, cost effectiveness, quality of care and services, travel convenience, facilities and medical equipment?)

Table 3.1 Qualitative Interview Questions (cont.)

Topics	Questions
Specific Questions	
In-service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of medical service do you usually do at the hospital? 2. How was your last experience regarding the overall services at the hospital? Can you share with me about your experiences? 3. Do you satisfy with the services at the hospital? What aspects of the service affect your satisfaction and loyalty? 4. Are there any problems/issues that you encounter during your medical journey at the hospital? If yes, please kindly explain. 5. How did the hospital manage your problem? How did you satisfy with the hospital?
Post-service	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do the hospital staffs follow up about your conditions after the medical attention at the hospital? What is your opinion about the follow up service of the hospital? 2. What factors drive you to revisit the hospital? 3. Would you like to recommend the hospital to your family and friends? Why/Why not?

3.6 Data Analysis Method

After completing the interview process, the researcher analyzes the results obtained from 30 interviewees, according to each individual question that was shown in table 3.1. However, the data given by the respondents were coded and analyzed with thematic analysis (e.g., respondent A1, B2, C3, etc.) in order to understand the different perspectives of the participants regarding their experience and satisfaction at

international hospitals in Bangkok. The further details would be clarifying in the following chapter.



CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Interview respondents' profile

There were total of 30 interviewees that participated from various platforms such as in-person interviews, through telephone conversations and virtual meetings. All of the 30 respondents are Myanmar patients who are seeking medical attentions in Bangkok for their health check-up and different kind medical problems. The other respondents are senior executive and managers at the hospital to illustrate different perspectives and their opinions properly. Each interview took about 15-20 minutes for the researcher to complete, and it took place during the period starting from February 23rd to February 28th, 2023.

Table 4.1 Demographic of the interviewees

Participant Code & NO.	Gender	Nationality	Age	Education	Occupation	Location
A1	Male	Myanmar	32	Bachelor's degree	Business	Bangkok
B2	Male	Myanmar	53	Bachelor's degree	Doctor	Bangkok
C3	Female	Myanmar	33	Bachelor's degree	Student	Bangkok
D4	Female	Myanmar	41	Bachelor's degree	Dependent	Bangkok
E5	Female	Myanmar	35	Master's degree	Pharmacist	Bangkok
F6	Male	Myanmar	26	Bachelor's degree	Business	Bangkok

Table 4.1 Demographic of the interviewees (cont.)

Participant Code & NO.	Gender	Nationality	Age	Education	Occupation	Location
G7	Female	Myanmar	36	Bachelor's degree	Medical Officer	Bangkok
H8	Female	Myanmar	41	Bachelor's degree	Researcher	Bangkok
I9	Female	Myanmar	37	Bachelor's degree	Business	Bangkok
J10	Female	Myanmar	27	Bachelor's degree	Education consultant	Bangkok
K11	Male	Myanmar	55	Master's degree	Marketing Director	Bangkok
L12	Female	Myanmar	30	Master's degree	Business	Bangkok
M13	Female	Myanmar	36	Master's degree	Tour Operator	Bangkok
N14	Male	Myanmar	25	Bachelor's degree	Product specialist	Bangkok
O15	Male	Myanmar	49	Master's degree	Operation Manager	Bangkok
P16	Female	Myanmar	33	Master's degree	Business	Bangkok
Q17	Female	Myanmar	43	Bachelor's degree	Business	Bangkok
R18	Male	Myanmar	31	Master's degree	Business	Bangkok
S19	Male	Myanmar	27	Bachelor's degree	Marketing officer	Bangkok
T20	Male	Myanmar	33	Master's degree	Medical Correspondence	Bangkok
U21	Female	Myanmar	26	Bachelor's degree	Business	Bangkok
V22	Male	Myanmar	39	Master's degree	Doctor	Bangkok
W23	Female	Myanmar	23	Bachelor's degree	Coordinating officer	Bangkok
X24	Male	Myanmar	54	Master's degree	Business	Bangkok
Y25	Female	Myanmar	39	Bachelor's degree	Product manager	Bangkok
Z26	Female	Myanmar	42	Master's degree	Business	Bangkok

Table 4.1 Demographic of the interviewees (cont.)

Participant Code & NO.	Gender	Nationality	Age	Education	Occupation	Location
Z27	Male	Myanmar	32	Master's degree	Medical representative	Bangkok
Z28	Male	Myanmar	67	Bachelor's degree	Business	Bangkok
Z29	Female	Myanmar	63	Bachelor's degree	Dependent	Bangkok
Z30	Male	Myanmar	37	Master's degree	Sales manager	Bangkok

In summary, there are total of 14 males and 16 female respondents. All of the respondents are Myanmar who have experienced the medical treatment in Bangkok international hospitals. Most of them come from Myanmar to Bangkok for medical tourism. According to the results from the interview, most of the respondents are middle aged working professionals, who live in Yangon, Myanmar. Most of the Myanmar patients go to Bumrungrad Hospital, Samitivej Hospital, Bangkok Hospital, Vejthani Hospital and Thonburi Hospital for medical purposes. Only a few patients go to the other hospitals. More than half of the respondents are for the purpose of annual medical checkup, while the others are for other medical purposes such as chronic medical problems, surgeries, and so on. Most of the Myanmar patients come to Bangkok for medical purposes once a year, while the others come every 6 months or every 5 years.

4.2 Research findings (Interview Results)

Medical tourism has always been one of the most popular tourist attractions in Thailand, especially in Bangkok. So, patients' experience as well as their satisfaction is the key factor in the healthcare industry. In this study, the patients' experience and their satisfaction have been classified into 3 parts: pre-service, in-service, and post-service.

4.2.1 Pre-service

For this pre-service stage, it mainly includes the reason why Myanmar patients choose the hospitals in Bangkok for their healthcare services and also the sources of information that help them to choose these hospitals for their medical attention. It also includes the main factors that encourage Myanmar patients to choose these hospitals as target destination for their medical tourism.

According to the interview, 80% of respondents choose international hospitals in Bangkok because of their *services and quality of care*. Most of the patients believe that healthcare services in Bangkok are accurate and correct with reasonable prices and also healthcare personnel including doctors really take good care of the patients. And also, Thailand is also one of neighboring countries of Myanmar and it is convenient for the travel with reasonable prices compared to other developed countries as well. In addition to that, all the healthcare providers give timely and adequate quality of care to the patients with reliable medical services as well. Most of the patients feel comfortable because doctors give enough time for them to explain and answer all of their questions without hesitation. And also, Myanmar patients have a very good impression of the advanced and up-to-date medical technologies and diagnostic investigations of Thailand as well.

“Because they are generally convenient, offering good quality care, accurate diagnoses, and assistance from cutting-edge technology and skilled personnel.” C3 said.

“It’s quite close to Myanmar with affordable prices & have advanced diagnostic investigations available” E5 said.

“Doctors from Bangkok generally treat patients better compared to those in Myanmar. They are relatively more punctual compared to those in Myanmar too.” M13 said.

“All the doctors give enough time to me, they answer all the questions that I ask, all the stuffs including doctors really care about patients.” R18 said.

“Quality of care and reliable medical services and easy making appointment, travel convenient.” Z27 said.

After the patients have already searched for the required information related to the hospitals in Bangkok, they will try to make decisions according to their favorable

factors such as hospital accreditation, travel convenience and facilities. The important factors that influence the respondents in order to choose the hospitals are the quality of care and services, hospital accreditation, facilities, advanced and innovative medical equipment, and also due to travel convenience. 20% of the respondents mentioned that *travel convenience is* important for choosing Bangkok hospitals for Myanmar patients and. Thailand is one of the neighboring countries of Myanmar and they can travel directly by plane easily within a short period of time which is very convenient for them. And also, the facilities and services that the patients get back are effective and reasonable with the prices they have to pay.

“I choose this hospital because of hospital accreditation, quality of care and services.” A1 said.

“The factor that encourage me to choose this hospital is due to travel convenience, along with its service quality and cost effectiveness” E4 said.

“The main factor for choosing this hospital is because of hospital accreditation, facilities, quality of care and services” K11 said.

“I choose this hospital because of the recommendation from my friends and also because of hospital’s reputation and quality of care” P16 said.

“I search for all factors to choose this hospital, including hospital reputation, facilities, doctors, quality of care and services, cost effectiveness and also travel convenience as well” Z29 said.

As for the sources of information for choosing the hospitals for their medical attention, 80% of the respondents actually searched for information directly from the social media, especially from the Facebook and the website. Other sources of information include **word of mouth** from their relatives and friends, hospital reputation and also from the feedback of the previous patients. Some patients search the information directly from their websites and call to their representative offices in Myanmar for the further information for their convenience.

“I directly search through social media and word of mouth from acquaintances” D4 said.

“I usually search Facebook, Google and asking some friends from Bangkok” G7 said.

“I just search for the information through website, call to the respective Hospital Myanmar Center and local offices staff and ask for the information” J10 said.

“I ask for the recommendation from my friends and relatives, and search from online as well” O15 said.

4.2.2 In-service

As for the in-service stage, it is going to be accordant after evaluation of choices. It tells about the medical services that patients usually do at the hospitals and also about their experience and satisfaction, regarding their medical journey. More than half of the respondents come for annual medical check-ups and some respondents come for other medical problems such as chronic medical conditions, surgical procedures and also for diagnostic investigations and cancer treatments.

As for the patients’ experience regarding the overall services at the hospital, all of the respondents are satisfied with the services with different level of satisfaction. 90% of the patients are satisfied with the *services and quality* that they received from the hospitals. Also, the customer service including the attitude of the staffs and the care given to the patients and their families reach the expectation as well. Myanmar patients are also very satisfied with the services such as transportation, accommodation, coordination and interpretation that are arranged by the hospital which is very convenient for them.

“It was perfect. My parents received good quality care and services with convenient accommodation.” B2 said.

“The doctors and technicians care more than those in Myanmar. My baby was just 2 days old when we had to do ultrasound in Myanmar and the doctor there couldn’t care less. I felt as if the doctors in Myanmar have no sympathy for anyone whereas the doctors that I met so far in Bangkok express their care better.” D4 said.

“The quality of service, the customer service, the attitude of staffs, the care given to the patients are great and perfect as well” H8 said.

“They really surprised me. They picked me up from airport, arranged residence for me to stay, made appointment for me, arranged interpretor and arranged everything for me. I am really satisfied with their care.” Q17 said.

“My mother was treated for cancer at this hospital, and now I am doing tests regarding my uterus. There have been no problems so far and the services are fast and perfect” Z30 said.

After the patients’ experience at their respective hospitals, there is customer satisfaction regarding the services and also what aspects of the service affect their satisfaction and loyalty. 100% of respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied according to their experiences and the main aspect of the services that affect the satisfaction and loyalty are ***care for the patients, doctors’ competency*** and also quality of services. Patients are satisfied with the punctuality and competency of the doctors, the care and services from the nurses and also with the advance medical devices and technologies. And also, timely responses from the healthcare providers is also one of the patients’ satisfaction as well.

“I satisfy with their customer care services and treatment for the patients.” I9 said.

“The punctuality of the doctors, the nurses’ services and also the advanced medical devices are the factors that drive me to loyal to this hospital.” B2 said.

“I’m very satisfied with the cost effectiveness and quality of services at this hospital.” L12 said.

“I come and loyal to this hospital because of the prompt and timely after service responses, like following up for lab tests and getting opinions from specialists by email.” V22 said.

After accessing patients’ experience and their satisfaction, the respondents were asked for the problems or issues that they encountered during their medical journey at the hospitals and also, how the hospitals manage those problems. 90% of respondents answered there was no problems, while few patients have problems with **waiting time, and communication issues** due to language barrier. Whenever the patients are facing with the problems, staffs are ready to solve those problems and show alternative ways and reassure the patients. Due to these factors, patients are satisfied with the quality of care they received, with the effectiveness of the treatment and the supportive environment as well.

“In general, they assessed my parents’ conditions, made diagnoses, and created a treatment plan. Most of the time, we are pleased with the quality of care we

received, the effectiveness of the treatment, and the environment that was supportive of us.” A1 said.

“Whenever we have difficulties, they are ready to solve for us, shows alternatives ways and they always reassure the patient.” G7 said.

“They call the myanmar translator for communication and make me feel relaxed.” R18 said.

“We don't have any unusual problems”. S19 said.

4.2.3 Post-service

The results from the interview described that the patients' experience touchpoint in the post-service stage was not too different from the pre-service and in-service stages. The main touchpoints are still **quality of care and services, convenience and also cost-effectiveness** according to the answers from 90% of the respondents. After receiving the treatments and services at the hospitals, all of the respondents said that the hospitals followed up about their conditions and also explained about the factors that drive them to revisit the hospital.

“I'm going to come again for follow up in this hospital because of the pickup service at the airport, quality care and services, accommodation, transportation convenience, easily contact with Myanmar Agent via Viber” C3 said.

“I will surely revisit again due to well experienced doctors and great services of the staffs” F6 said.

“I'm going to come again because of its customer service and contents of the medical package.” T20 said.

“I will surely come because of its convenience, and relatively good service quality as well” Z29 said.

As for the questions regarding the recommendation of the hospital to the patients' family and friends, 100% of the respondents said that they will recommend because of the hospital's reputation with reasonable prices. The **credibility of the hospital**, care for the patients, availability of experienced doctors, one-stop services, proficiency in English, clean and well-maintained facilities with modern equipment are the factors for the recommendation to their families and friends.

“Yes, of course! This hospital comes highly recommended by numerous relatives and close friends.” E5 said.

“Yes because of the hospital’s credibility, care for the patients, availability of experienced doctors and great service.” I9 said.

“Yes, i would like to recommend because the doctors are really caring and well qualified. Everything will be ok with one stop. Our friends and family will get best services definitely.”N14 said.

“Yes. Bangkok Hospital is good for English speaking patients as most of hospital staffs, from Receptionist to nurse aids can understand English well, and their relative good after-services.” S19 said.

“I would highly recommend this hospital to my family and friends. The staff here is incredibly friendly and professional, providing the highest quality of care possible. They are very knowledgeable in their field, so you can trust that they will provide excellent advice when it comes to medical issues. Additionally, the facility is always clean and well-maintained with modern equipment for a safe experience every time you visit. All in all, I'm confident that anyone who visits this hospital will have an amazing experience.” Y25 said.

4.3 Causes of Patient Satisfaction

According to the research, the patients’ satisfaction and touchpoint that drive to the loyalty are mainly due to **quality of services, expertise of healthcare providers, travel convenience and cost effectiveness.**

Due to the answers from the respondents regarding their satisfaction, 90% of the respondents are satisfied with customer care services and treatment they received from hospitals. And also, the punctuality of doctors, care given by nurses and advanced medical devices are the factors that drive patients to loyal to the hospital. Patients are also satisfied with the fact that the quality of services and care they get are cost effective with prompt and timely responses. In addition to that, services provided by hospitals such as transportation and interpretation are also factors that drive the patient satisfaction.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research aims to (1) identify the reasons that Myanmar patients choose international hospitals in Bangkok for their medical treatment and (2) explore the experience and causes of satisfaction of Myanmar patients in Bangkok international hospitals.

The conclusion will be divided into 3 parts according to the findings from the respondents in chapter 4 as follows;

- Part I Respondent Profile
- Part II Patients' Experiences during pre-service, in-service and post-service
- Part II Touchpoint Driving Patients' Satisfaction and Loyalty

5.1.1 Respondent Profile

According to the analysis, the majority of the respondents were middle-aged working professionals, with regular income. Most of the respondents came for an annual medical check-up while the others came for chronic medical problems and surgical procedures. Most respondents come once a year for medical check up and few others come every 6 months or every 5 years and so on.

5.1.2 Patients' Experiences during Pre-service, in-service and post-service

The experiences of the patients are mostly affected by the quality of care and services that they encounter during their journey at the hospitals. Patients' experiences during their hospital journey were divided into pre-service, in-service and post-services.

1. Quality of Care and Services

The quality of care and services involve a major part in all three stages of the patient's journey. It plays as a main factor that encourages patients to come to Bangkok for medical tourism and also as a point of satisfaction, too. Most of the patients want to revisit because of the excellent quality of care and services according to the research.

2. Hospital Accreditation and Reputation

The accreditation and reputation of the hospitals also one of the major factors that drive the patients to choose the hospitals for their healthcare services. Most of the international hospitals in Bangkok provide high standard and quality of medical equipment and facilities with their outstanding reputation. The hospitals also receive good feedback regarding their services and facilities. Most hospitals are also acknowledged by the international organizations due to their outstanding quality of care and services.

5.2 Recommendation

This research points out the patients' journey that include their experiences and also the touchpoints driving patients' satisfaction and loyalty toward the international hospitals in Bangkok. The researcher would like to recommend the hospitals to imply the following recommendations in order to motivate the patients to revisit their hospitals and also promote it to their families and friends.

5.2.1 Services

Firstly, the hospitals should provide the premium healthcare services to their patients since it is the basic requirement of the patient's expectation which could develop the patient's satisfaction. Since the quality of care and services is the most important factor for Myanmar patients, hospitals should provide the best quality of care with expert healthcare providers and modernized facilities. And also, the hospitals should offer transportation services for patients for their convenience as well. They should provide hospital booths at the airport so that patients can contact directly to their preference hospitals upon their arrival and will have more customers' engagement, too.

In addition to that, the hospitals should be careful with the waiting time and queue system since it is the major issue for patients at most of the hospitals. The hospital should implement well-managed queuing system in order to provide high quality services and arrange the waiting time as less as possible. Another important thing is the expertise of the healthcare professionals. The hospital should pay attention to all of the healthcare providers including doctors, nurses, medical technologists, pharmacists, and hospital staffs since they have major influence regarding patients' satisfaction and loyalty. The recruitment of the healthcare providers should be assessed carefully under the supervision of the higher-level healthcare professionals.

5.2.2 Recognition and Engagement

In addition to the improvement of the healthcare services, the hospitals should maintain a high level of patients' satisfaction regarding services. The hospital should be able to reach to more patients by creating good brand image and reputation. Furthermore, the hospital needs to be more effective and responsive to the patient's wants and needs so that it would be more recognized by the patients and gain more satisfaction.

5.3 Limitation

In this study, the researcher used only the qualitative method, including the qualitative questions which could not cover every aspect of the variables due to the time limitation.

The sampling frame was not likely to come from a variety of respondents since most of the respondents are middle-aged working professionals, with their regular income. The respondents might not precisely reflect the overall population.

This research was conducted by the interviews and data collection from the patients at most visited international hospitals in Bangkok. So, there might be some different perspective if the experience of the patients is from the other hospitals that are not famous among Myanmar patients.

5.4 Future Research

This is the thematic paper studying on the Myanmar patients' experience and satisfaction at international hospitals in Bangkok. If the researcher has a chance for future study to acquire more findings, the recommendations are as follows ;

1. In this research, the researcher has used a qualitative method to collect the data. If the author has a chance, she will take those key factors and implement a questionnaire or survey method because it can help to access wide range of people and gain more insight.
2. In this thematic paper, the researcher focused only on the respondents in Bangkok regarding healthcare services. The researcher would expand studying in other areas in Thailand in order to understand patient wants and needs.
3. The understanding of individual patient's experience not only from the patient's perspective, but also from the healthcare service provider's perspective would help to get the better understanding of the experiences, satisfaction, and loyalty touchpoints at the hospitals.

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