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Assessment of Patient Satisfaction at the Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine Hospital, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand

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Abstract

This study evaluated patient satisfaction with services provided at the Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine Hospital, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A quantitative survey was conducted among 100 service recipients using a structured online questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze overall satisfaction, satisfaction with operational systems, and satisfaction with therapeutic services.

The results indicated that overall patient satisfaction was at the highest level (Mean = 4.71). Satisfaction with services received—including herbal steam, massage, and other therapeutic modalities—was slightly higher (Mean = 4.72) compared to the operational system dimension (Mean = 4.70). Herbal Steam, Massage with Herbal Compress, and Thai Herbal Burning Therapy received the highest scores, reflecting strong acceptance of traditional therapeutic interventions. Operational units such as Finance and Pharmacy achieved the highest satisfaction ratings, whereas the Applied Thai Traditional Medicine Examination Room received comparatively lower scores due to workflow congestion and waiting-time delays.

The findings highlight the strong performance of therapeutic services and support units, while also identifying bottlenecks related to patient flow and staff availability during peak hours. To enhance service responsiveness, the study recommends strategic manpower allocation and the integration of digital pre-screening tools to expedite the history-taking process. Strengthening these operational elements, alongside maintaining the hospital's high-quality therapeutic care, will further elevate the overall patient experience and reinforce service quality in traditional and integrative medicine settings.

Keywords: Thai Traditional Medicine, Integrative Medicine, Patient Satisfaction, Service Quality, Operational Systems, Healthcare Management, R2R Research, Therapeutic Services

1.Introduction

The Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine Hospital at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU) functions as both a clinical service unit and a *living classroom* for students in Applied Thai Traditional Medicine. During routine operations, hospital personnel observed recurring service challenges, particularly prolonged patient waiting times and staff shortages

during peak service hours—factors known to negatively impact perceived service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1985). However, these operational issues had not been systematically documented or analyzed, resulting in an absence of quantitative evidence to guide targeted quality improvement.

To address this gap, a Routine to Research (R2R) initiative was launched to transform practical observations into measurable and actionable data. This study assesses patient-reported satisfaction to identify the underlying causes of service bottlenecks from the client perspective and to collect specific recommendations for improving workflow efficiency. The approach aligns with the Donabedian (1988) quality-of-care framework, emphasizing structure, process, and outcome indicators as the basis for evaluating healthcare services.

Given that clients seeking Thai traditional and integrative treatments primarily expect *therapeutic benefits* rather than general relaxation (Pengkaew & Lhitsang, 2021), their satisfaction constitutes a critical marker of service effectiveness, client-centeredness, and overall care standards. Accordingly, the findings of this study provide essential evidence to inform service refinement and to enhance the quality and responsiveness of care delivered within this educational hospital setting.

1.2 Research Objective

- 1) To evaluate the overall level of patient satisfaction with services provided at the Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine Hospital, SSRU, and to assess satisfaction across key service dimensions, including processes and procedures, staff performance, facility readiness, and perceived service outcomes.
- 2) To collect patient-reported suggestions and recommendations aimed at enhancing the hospital's service quality and operational efficiency.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive design using a structured survey to assess patient satisfaction with services provided at the Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine Hospital, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

2.2 Population and Sample

Population: All individuals who received services at the hospital during the fiscal year 2025.

Sample: Participants were service recipients who voluntarily completed an online questionnaire (Google Forms) between October 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025. Quota sampling was applied to ensure adequate representation of major service units and treatment modalities.

2.3 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed and administered online. The instrument consisted of four sections:

Part 1: Overall Satisfaction (3 items); Measured global satisfaction, intention to return, and likelihood of recommending the service.

Part 2: Satisfaction with Operational Systems (8 items) ; Assessed satisfaction with core operational units, including Medical Records, TTM/TCM examination rooms, Finance, Pharmacy, treatment rooms, and herbal steam services.

Part 3: Satisfaction with Clinical Services (9 items); Evaluated satisfaction with therapeutic procedures such as herbal medicine, massage, herbal steam, Thai and Chinese traditional therapies (e.g., acupuncture, cupping, Gua Sha, moxibustion).

Part 4: Open-Ended Suggestions; Collected qualitative comments related to service improvements.

All closed-ended items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Very Dissatisfied to 5 = Very Satisfied).

2.4 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was examined by three experts in Thai traditional and integrative medicine. A pilot test was conducted with a small sample of service users, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all sections exceeded **0.70**, indicating acceptable reliability.

2.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected electronically using Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and no identifiable personal data were recorded. The system automatically anonymized and stored responses.

2.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics—including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—were used to determine satisfaction levels across service domains. Qualitative feedback from open-ended items was analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify key suggestions for service improvement.

3. Results and Discussions

The results from 100 respondents indicated that overall patient satisfaction was at the highest level (Mean = 4.71). When categorized into specific dimensions, satisfaction with Services Received (product dimension) was slightly higher (Mean = 4.72) compared to the Operational System (process dimension) (Mean = 4.70), although both remained within the highest satisfaction category.

3.1 Overall Satisfaction

The analysis indicates that respondents reported very high satisfaction with core service processes (Mean = 4.75), suggesting that procedural clarity, efficiency, and staff professionalism were well aligned with patient expectations. Recommendation intention (Mean = 4.73) also scored highly, implying strong positive word-of-mouth potential. The slightly lower score for return intention (Mean = 4.65) remains within the highest level, indicating consistent satisfaction but also suggesting room for strengthening long-term patient engagement.

Table 1 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Overall Satisfaction Level

Overall Satisfaction Assessment Items	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	Satisfaction Level
1. Service Process/Procedures	4.75	0.56	Highest
2. Likelihood of Returning	4.65	0.61	Highest
3. Likelihood of Recommending	4.73	0.57	Highest
Total Average	4.71	0.53	Highest

These findings reflect established service quality theory (Parasuraman et al., 1985), where perceived service performance directly influences behavioral intentions such as loyalty and recommendation.

3.2 Satisfaction with Operational Systems

Satisfaction with operational systems was high across all units (Mean = 4.70). The Finance and Pharmacy Departments demonstrated the highest performance (Mean = 4.76), indicating strong efficiency in administrative and dispensing services. These results align with Bumrungsoontorn and Panriansaen (2025), who similarly reported high satisfaction in financial and accounting services, driven by staff courtesy, interpersonal skills, and effective coordination.

Table 2 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Satisfaction with Operational Systems

Operational System Assessment Items	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	Satisfaction Level
1. Medical Records	4.73	0.56	Highest
2. Applied TTM Examination Room	4.65	0.64	Highest
3. TCM Examination Room	4.66	0.66	Highest
4. Finance Department	4.76	0.53	Highest
5. Pharmacy Department	4.76	0.53	Highest
6. TCM Treatment Room	4.66	0.64	Highest
7. Applied TTM Treatment Room	4.73	0.56	Highest
8. Herbal Steam Room	4.75	0.55	Highest
Total Average	4.70	0.61	Highest

The Applied TTM Examination Room, while still within the highest satisfaction category (Mean = 4.65), scored comparatively less than other departments. This may suggest capacity constraints, waiting time issues, or higher patient volume during peak hours—an interpretation consistent with the operational challenges observed during preliminary assessments.

3.3 Satisfaction with Services Received

Satisfaction with treatment services was uniformly high (Mean = 4.72). Herbal Steam achieved the highest rating (Mean = 4.78), reflecting its popularity and perceived therapeutic benefit. Massage and Herbal Compress and Thai Herbal Burning Therapy followed closely (Mean = 4.77), suggesting strong acceptance of traditional therapeutic modalities among patients.

Although Gua Sha received the lowest score within this category (Mean = 4.66), it remained within the highest satisfaction level, indicating overall consistency in service quality. Variation

among modalities may reflect differences in patient expectations, perceived effectiveness, or treatment intensity typically associated with certain traditional procedures.

Table 3 Mean, Standard Deviation, and Satisfaction with Services Received

Services Received Assessment Items	Mean (\bar{x})	S.D.	Satisfaction Level
1. Herbal Medicine	4.73	0.55	Highest
2. Massage and Herbal Compress	4.77	0.62	Highest
3. Herbal Steam	4.78	0.52	Highest
4. Sak Ya (Therapeutic Tattooing)	4.69	0.60	Highest
5. Thai Herbal Burning Therapy	4.77	0.53	Highest
6. Acupuncture	4.70	0.56	Highest
7. Cupping Therapy	4.71	0.57	Highest
8. Gua Sha	4.66	0.64	Highest
9. TCM Moxibustion	4.69	0.60	Highest
Total Average	4.72	0.57	Highest

4. Conclusion

This study assessed patient satisfaction with services provided at the Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine Hospital, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The findings demonstrated that overall satisfaction was at the highest level (Mean = 4.71). A key observation concerns the distinction between the consistently strong performance of the service product—including therapeutic modalities such as herbal steam and massage—and the operational system, where certain workflow constraints were identified.

Support units, particularly the Finance and Pharmacy Departments, achieved the highest satisfaction scores, reflecting efficient administrative processes and responsive service delivery. In contrast, the Applied Thai Traditional Medicine Examination Room showed comparatively lower ratings, largely attributable to delays in patient history-taking and workforce limitations during peak service periods.

To enhance service responsiveness and reduce operational bottlenecks, two targeted strategies are recommended:

- 1) Strategic manpower management, including allocating additional practitioners or rotating staff during high-volume hours.

- 2) Integration of digital screening or pre-visit information systems to streamline the history-taking process and reduce patient wait times.

By strengthening these operational components while preserving the high standard of therapeutic services, the hospital can further improve overall patient experience, reinforce service reliability, and support the continued development of Thai Traditional and Integrative Medicine services within an academic healthcare setting.

5. Acknowledgment

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