

Factors Affecting Client Satisfaction with Medical Social Work Services in Public Level 5 And Level 6 Hospitals in Nairobi City County, Kenya

JOSEPH KIMANZI KAVUWA
Maseno University

Abstract- This study examined factors influencing client satisfaction with medical social work services in selected public Level 5 and Level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. Medical social workers play a critical role in addressing the emotional, psychological, and social needs of patients and their families; however, empirical evidence on client satisfaction with these services remains limited, particularly within the sub-Saharan African context. The study assessed the influence of gender, hospital service section, type of social work service accessed, and source of information on client satisfaction. A descriptive quantitative research design was adopted. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to patients and relatives who accessed medical social work services in three public referral hospitals. A sample size of 377 respondents was determined using Cochran's formula, and multi-stage sampling techniques were applied. Of the targeted sample, 364 completed questionnaires were returned, yielding a high response rate of 96.55%. The respondents comprised 188 males (51.6%) and 176 females (48.4%), indicating balanced gender representation. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The study was guided by Expectation Confirmation Theory, which posits that satisfaction results from the comparison between expected and actual service performance. The research instrument demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89. The findings indicate that overall client satisfaction with medical social work services was moderate to high. More than half of the respondents expressed satisfaction with key aspects of service delivery, including listening to client issues (56.0%), provision of adequate information (56.0%), professionalism (54.9%), knowledge and competence (57.1%), accessibility (54.9%), and overall service quality (54.9%). However, lower satisfaction levels were reported in prompt service delivery (45.1%), problem resolution (47.3%), and follow-up of client issues (47.3%), highlighting gaps in continuity of care and service responsiveness. Inferential analysis revealed that gender did not significantly influence client satisfaction (Mann-Whitney $U = 16,323$, $p = 0.36$). In contrast, hospital service section significantly influenced satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 32.784$, $p < 0.05$), with higher satisfaction reported in wards and

Accident and Emergency departments, and lower satisfaction in emotionally demanding areas such as funeral home services. Satisfaction also varied significantly by type of service accessed ($\chi^2 = 11.636$, $p < 0.05$), with GBV and Child Protection services recording the highest satisfaction despite low utilization, while psychosocial counseling services recorded the lowest satisfaction. Additionally, the source of information significantly influenced satisfaction ($\chi^2 = 11.413$, $p = 0.010$), with clients referred by hospital staff reporting higher satisfaction compared to those referred by external agencies such as political or church organizations. The study concludes that while medical social work services in Nairobi County public hospitals are generally effective, targeted improvements are required in service timeliness, follow-up, and problem resolution. The study recommends strengthening case management systems, employing additional medical social workers, improving referral and information dissemination mechanisms, and enhancing Continuous Professional Development and research through the Kenya Medical Social Workers Association. These interventions are essential for improving service quality, aligning service delivery with client expectations, and enhancing overall client satisfaction within medical social work practice.

I. INTRODUCTION

Medical social work services are recognized globally as integral to healthcare and play a key role in addressing emotional, psychological, and social needs of clients. These are essential services that facilitate the navigation through challenges posed by illness, such as financial hardship, trauma, and social isolation. Social workers help clients address the broader social consequences of their illnesses, thus facilitating better engagement with healthcare systems. Evidence has shown that medical social workers have significant impacts on client outcomes, including better treatment adherence and good mental health, both important for recovery processes. Despite their importance, research studies that have

specifically focused on satisfaction with the services offered by medical social workers remain relatively scant, with only a limited number of studies available in sub-Saharan Africa. At the continental level, there has been increased emphasis on integrating the services of medical social work into public health systems, especially in efforts toward addressing the broader social causes of illnesses. Nonetheless, much research is focused on general health care services rather than the specialized role of medical social work in sub-Saharan Africa. While previous research has emphasized the importance of the role that medical social work plays in enhancing client outcomes through holistic support, there remains a notable gap in research regarding how such factors as gender, service type, and service area impact satisfaction with medical social work services within public health care settings across the region.

Public level 5 and level 6 hospitals are a core feature in the provision of various social work services in Kenya. The spectrum of services at the hospital includes counseling, material support, referrals, and advocacy, all aimed at addressing the social complications surrounding the medical conditions. In Kenya, social workers help these disadvantaged clients to make their way through the most complex healthcare systems (Karani & Daria, 2015). Despite the wide variety of services that medical social workers offer in Nairobi County, little empirical evidence exists on client satisfaction with these services. Specifically, this study investigates whether gender, service type, and service area are associated with client satisfaction regarding medical social work services in Kenyan hospitals (Chege, 2023).

Gender has been a point of focus in healthcare research for a long time, and studies have indicated that it influences the way clients interact with health care and, consequently, their satisfaction with services offered. Male and female clients may have different expectations and needs from the medical social work services, hence eliciting varying levels of satisfaction from them (Dixon et al., 2018). Most times, gender roles and expectations shape the experiences that clients have during access to healthcare services in Kenya, influencing the way services are accessed and perceived. Despite this fact, there is an important lacuna in the literature on whether gender differences

affect satisfaction with medical social work services in Kenya (Wells et al., 2019). Studies have shown that women may seek more emotional support, while men may seek more practical assistance, a factor that might influence their satisfaction levels (Green & Ritchie, 2017).

Furthermore, the kind of service provided by social workers, be it financial assistance, psychosocial counseling, or referrals, may affect the reported levels of satisfaction from clients. Previous studies have suggested that diverse types of services are likely to satisfy the needs of clients differently, with some clients finding greater satisfaction in services that directly address their financial or psychological needs, while others may be more concerned with practical support, such as referrals to specialized healthcare providers (Wells et al., 2019). Various studies conducted across different settings reveal a positive correlation between perceived usefulness of the type of service and client satisfaction (Hawkins, 2020).

Apart from service type, the area of service provision also influences client satisfaction. The expectations of clients receiving services from various areas of the hospital, including the outpatient department, emergency care, and inpatient wards, could be different, leading to varying degrees of experiences and perceptions of the social work services provided. The ease of access and relevance of services in each area of the hospital would also affect overall satisfaction ratings. There is evidence from studies that the setting of care, for example, whether it is provided on an inpatient or outpatient basis, impacts client satisfaction, especially regarding perceived quality of care (Wells et al., 2019). The current study will examine if satisfaction varies based on the type of service area in which the social work services were delivered. Another important factor touches upon the source of information relied upon by clients in learning about medical social work services. Sources could include hospital staff, family members, community outreach programs, or even sources external to them like NGOs, politicians, or religious organizations. The manner in which clients learn about social work services influences their expectations and will then influence their satisfaction with the services they receive. Studies argue that a client's knowledge and understanding of the services available

significantly determine their level of satisfaction (Hawkins, 2020). Evidence from Kenya has also identified community-based outreach and information sharing to be greatly helpful in improving service uptake and client satisfaction rates (Chege, 2023). This study tries to fill the gap in the literature by examining those factors that influence client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. This study will establish whether gender, type of service offered, area of service, and source of information determine client satisfaction with medical social work. By investigating whether male clients differ in their reported satisfaction and how type of service and sources of information shape satisfaction, this study will add value to the existing literature that may be used in reorienting social work practices to be more appropriate and responsive to the gender dimensions of clients' needs in Kenyan hospitals. This study, therefore, promises to fill the critical gap in understanding the perceptions of clients about medical social work services in Kenya by offering context-specific insights into what influences satisfaction. By situating the research within Nairobi County's public healthcare system, findings will be applicable not only in Kenya but also in other sub-Saharan African nations seeking to advance healthcare delivery and client outcomes.

1.1 Problem statement

Client satisfaction with the provision of medical social work services is an important area that enhances health outcomes, which is yet to be fully addressed in teaching and referral hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. Satisfaction may be influenced by gender, type of service, service area, and source of information, among other things, but little empirical evidence exists on how these factors relate to satisfaction in the Kenyan context. Research has shown that gender significantly determines satisfaction, as it defines the kind of help that patients seek or receive. According to Dixon et al. (2018), "Gender influences how patients interact with healthcare providers, and how they perceive the quality of care." Despite this fact, little research has been carried out on how gender influences satisfaction with medical social work services, more so in Kenya. Satisfaction is also linked with the type of service offered, whether financial,

psychosocial counseling, material, or referrals. As Wells et al. (2019) note, "The type of service directly influences patient satisfaction, since certain services respond to more imperative or emotive needs than others."

The other important factor is the area of service within the hospital setting, such as outpatient, inpatient, or emergency care, in which the services of social work are provided. Green and Ritchie (2017) comment, "Generally, satisfaction is influenced by the environment of service provision, since different areas of care give varied experiences that shape the overall satisfaction." There is a shortage of research relating the area of service with clients regarding their satisfaction in public hospitals in Kenya. The source of information about medical social work services affects patients' expectations and satisfaction. Hawkins (2020) explains, "How patients learn about available services—whether through staff, family, or community outreach—can influence their perceptions and satisfaction levels." There is also a shortage of studies done to determine how the source of information impacts satisfaction with social work services among Kenyan hospitals. While several studies identify the importance of gender, service type, service area, and sources of information as some of the factors that may shape patient experiences, there is a particularly glaring lacuna in the literature on how these actually affect the satisfaction with medical social work services in hospitals in Kenya. Chege (2023) informs, "Few empirical studies have been conducted to influence satisfaction with medical social work services in Kenya, hence a need to study how these variables interplay to influence patient satisfaction." This study explores the interplay between these factors, their impact on client satisfaction, and the implications for more effective and equitable social work practice in the Kenyan healthcare system.

1.2 Study Objectives

Main objective

Factors Affecting Client Satisfaction with Medical Social Work Services in Public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County.

Specific objectives

1.To investigate whether gender affects client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County.

2.To examine whether the service area influences client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County.

3.To assess whether the type of service affects client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County.

4.To evaluate whether the source of information shapes client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Does gender affect client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County?

2. How does the service area influence client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County?

3. How does the type of service affect client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County?

4. Does the source of information shape client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on client satisfaction in healthcare, specifically focusing on the role of medical social work services. It explores the factors influencing patient satisfaction, including gender, service area, type of service, and sources of information about services. The chapter also discusses the importance of these factors in healthcare,

emphasizing the role of social work in improving patient outcomes and enhancing service delivery.

2.2 Patient Satisfaction In Healthcare

Patient satisfaction is a key indicator of quality care and is usually associated with positive patient outcomes, treatment compliance, and overall well-being (Davis et al., 2018). There are studies that confirm the fact that with increased levels of satisfaction come increased positive health outcomes (Green & Ritchie, 2017), while in medical social work, satisfaction is used as one of the primary mechanisms of assessment for interventions. Hawkins (2020) echoes that social workers are very instrumental in ensuring that the patients' psychosocial and emotional needs are addressed, which has a direct connection with their feelings of satisfaction. Satisfaction can also be measured along various dimensions, including but not limited to accessibility, communication, professionalism, and emotional support. Medical social workers, as direct providers of such services, will have a bearing on these dimensions and therefore hold a critical position in influencing satisfaction.

2.3 The Impact Of Gender On Health Care Satisfaction

Gender is a salient factor in healthcare experiences and satisfaction levels along various dimensions. On one aspect, Dixon et al. (2018) showed that women generally report lower satisfaction with healthcare than men. The reasons for this gender gap could be linked to gendered expectations about care, differential communication styles, and the purpose of care. Within the context of medical social work, gender impacts the perceived emotional support. For instance, while women are more likely to seek and expect psychosocial counseling, cultural factors may well act as barriers to the expression of emotional distress among men (Wells et al., 2019). Understanding these gendered expectations is critical in informing medical social work services to meet the diverse needs of patients and make men and women feel supported and understood.

2.4 Service Area And Patient Satisfaction

The service area within a hospital shapes patient satisfaction with regard to their experience, as patients across different settings often report different experiences. Young and Harris (2019) found that patients in acute care settings, such as wards or accident and emergency (A&E) departments, reported higher satisfaction because of interaction intensity with healthcare providers, including social workers. On the other hand, patients treated in outpatient clinics or receiving ambulatory care generally have more brief and transactional contacts, potentially experiencing less satisfaction (Fowler, 2020). These differences further call for assessing satisfaction with the Medical Social Work services across various service areas, with consideration to the intensity and type of interactions across each setting.

2.5 Type Of Service And Client Satisfaction

The scope of services offered by medical social workers influences the level of patient satisfaction. Psychosocial counseling, financial assistance, referrals, and material support have different effects on satisfaction. It is clear from the studies that specialized services, such as GBV and child protection, normally elicit higher ratings of satisfaction because of their focused and personalized nature (Wells et al., 2019). Generalized services, such as financial aid, do not have an emotional impact and therefore would lead to a lower satisfaction rating (Bateh et al., 2019). Another critical factor is quality. As supported by Green & Ritchie (2017), inadequate emotional support or lack of culturally competent care may be associated with dissatisfaction more for patients with complex social and emotional needs.

2.6 Source Of Information And Client Satisfaction

The source of information on social work services greatly impacts patients' satisfaction levels. Davis et al. (2018) establish that those informed directly by staff in hospitals are more satisfied, arguably because the approach is personal and instills a sense of trust. On the contrary, patients who are informed through external sources, including political or church organizations, might express low satisfaction due to

possible mismatched expectations from what they might have been told and the services offered (Fowler, 2020). This disparity draws on the need to ensure that patients are provided with substantial and accurate information through the appropriate channels that improve their level of satisfaction.

2.7 Gender and Service Delivery

In Kenya, gender dynamics play a major role in service delivery and access to medical social work services. Cultural norms and expectations dictate how men and women use healthcare services. For instance, psychosocial counseling might be sought more by women in Kenya than by men, as men generally do not easily express their emotional difficulties due to culturally instilled aspects of masculinity. On the other hand, services to do with GBV and child protection are more in demand from them, areas where medical social workers play a very key role. Their understanding of these gender-specific dynamics is thus vital to any attempt at matching medical social work services for both improved accessibility and appropriateness to all patients.

2.9 Theoretical Framework.

This study is based on Expectation Confirmation Theory, which was developed by Oliver in 1980. ECT suggests that satisfaction is influenced by the alignment between a person's pre-service expectations and the actual outcomes they experience. If the actual service meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction is confirmed; if it falls short, dissatisfaction occurs. In a context of medical social work services, clients build up expectations about the support they will receive from prior experiences, cultural norms, and information received from various sources. Such expectations sculpt perception about the service and influence satisfaction.

It was Oliver who defined the concept of consumer satisfaction: "Satisfaction is a post-purchase evaluation that consumers make after comparing the product or service performance with their expectations" (Oliver, 1980, p. 460). This indicates that consumers' satisfaction results from the comparison between prior expectations and actual

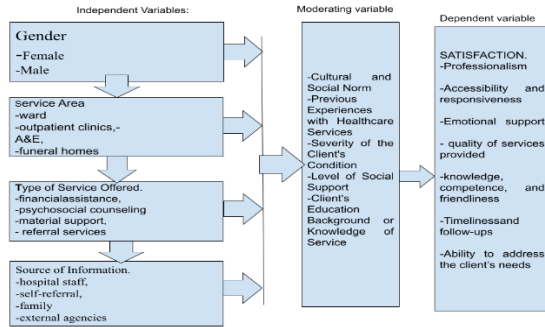
service outcomes. ECT focuses on two important phases: pre-service expectations and post-service perceptions. Pre-service expectations are clients' beliefs before receiving a service; post-service perceptions are clients' evaluations of the service provided. The greater the incongruence between perceptions and expectations, the lower the overall satisfaction. This theory allows examining how factors such as gender, service area, type of service, and information source relate to satisfaction with the medical social work services.

The gender of the client often plays an important role in shaping expectations, as men and women have different needs for emotional support. For instance, women might often expect more emotional support, especially in psychosocial counseling services. On the other hand, men may often expect less. Satisfaction increases if these are met during the provision of service, but dissatisfaction will result if it is otherwise. Service area also influences expectations. Clients attending high-intensity care areas like wards or A&E do expect more frequency of support. Satisfaction is greater if the service area meets this expectation. For example, the type of service, which can be either emotional or instrumental, generates satisfaction. That of an emotional service, such as counseling, often generates high satisfaction, while the instrumental service like financial support may not necessarily do the same.

Another factor that shapes the expectations is the source of information about the services. In most cases, clients who get direct information from the staff within the same hospital end up developing more realistic expectations that lead to higher satisfaction. Those informed by sources outside the service provision may develop inflated expectations that lead to dissatisfaction. Based on Expectation Confirmation Theory, this framework postulates that the congruence of the expectations developed prior to the services with the experiences afterward determines the satisfaction of the client with the medical social work services. The study aims at deciphering how gender, service area, type of service, and source of information influence satisfaction and how best health providers can improve to please their clients.

2.10 Conceptual Frame Work.

The primary aim of this study is to explore the factors influencing client satisfaction with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County. Precisely, the study aims at finding whether gender determines satisfaction with the services offered by medical social workers. This is based on the perception that gender may influence a client in either positive or negative ways about the services provided. The study will also determine the impact of the service area, whether ward, outpatient clinics, A&E, or funeral homes, on the level of satisfaction among clients, given that different service areas have different experiences and expectations created for their clients. It will also investigate the influence of the type of service offered, such as financial assistance, psychosocial counseling, material support, and referral services, on client satisfaction, bearing in mind that clients have diverse needs, which may influence perceptions about the services. The study also aims to determine how the source of information, such as hospital staff, self-referral, family, and external agencies, influences client satisfaction with medical social work services, since the source of information affects one's expectation and perception. Besides these, other moderating factors will be studied, which may affect the magnitude of satisfaction levels in clients. These include cultural and social norms, previous experiences about healthcare services, the severity of the client's condition, the level of social support, and the client's education background or knowledge about available services. These moderating variables may enhance or lower the satisfaction levels of clients, depending on one's circumstances. By both understanding primary variables and these moderating variables, this study aims to establish major determinants of client satisfaction with medical social work services within public healthcare systems in Nairobi County.



2.11 Gaps In The Literature

While the body of literature on patient satisfaction in healthcare has grown over the years, there is still a significant gap regarding the contribution of medical social work services to the satisfaction of clients. Most existing studies focus on general health satisfaction and do not probe into the contribution of social work services. Moreover, although many studies on patient satisfaction have been carried out in developed countries, empirical studies in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Kenya, are few. Most of the literature does not address whether gender, service area, type of service, and source of information are factors that influence client satisfaction with medical social work services. This study, therefore, investigates whether these factors influence client satisfaction in Kenyan public hospitals. The study will add empirical evidence as regards how gender, service area, type of service, and source of information shape satisfaction with medical social work services, an area that has not been sufficiently researched in the African context.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter outlines the methodology to be used in the study to determine the satisfaction of the clients with medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. Some of the factors that might affect client satisfaction are explored in the study and include gender, service area, service type, and source of information. The major goal is to comprehend whether these variables influence the experiences of patients and their families who are offered the services of social workers. The chapter will present; the research design, the study

population, the sampling procedures, the data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and the ethical considerations observed in implementing the research so as to help in ensuring that the findings are up to date and reliable.

3.2 Research Design.

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design to investigate whether gender, service area, service type, and source of information influenced client satisfaction with the medical social work services in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County. The research sought to establish whether gender was an influencing factor in the satisfaction of clients, whether the area of service provision, such as outpatient departments, wards, or specialized clinics, had different impacts on the satisfaction level, and if indeed the type of medical social work service provided, for example, counseling, assistance with referrals, or financial advice, played any role in satisfaction. It sought to establish whether the source of information about available services had an influence on the satisfaction of the clients. In this cross-section design, quantitative data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire with Likert scale measurements and frequency distribution, allowing a detailed analysis of such influences.

3.3 Population and Sample

3.3.1 Target Population

The target population for this study consisted of patients and their families who have received medical social work services at public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County. The hospitals included in the study are Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), Kenyatta University Teaching, Referral & Research Hospital (KUTRRH), Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital, National Spinal Injury Referral and Teaching Hospital, Bagathi County Referral Hospital, and Pumwani Maternity Referral Hospital. These hospitals were selected due to their prominent role in providing medical social work services in the region. The total estimated number of patients and families receiving these services across these hospitals is

approximately 21,000 per year as reported by the Ministry of Health 2023.

3.3.2 Sample Size Calculation.

The study used Cochran's formula to determine the appropriate sample size for the research. The formula, commonly applied to large populations, was:

- $Z=1.96$ (for 95% confidence),
- $p=0.5$ (maximizing variability),
- $e=0.05$ (5% margin of error).

Using these values, the study calculated the sample size to be 384 respondents. Since the population size was 21,000, the study applied the Finite Population Correction (FPC) to adjust the sample size. After applying the FPC, the final sample size was 377 respondents

3.3.3 Sampling Method

A multi-stage sampling method was used to select the participants for this study. In the first step, the hospitals were divided into two clusters based on their level of referral: Level 6 (National Referral Hospitals) and Level 5 (county Referral Hospitals). From these clusters, one Level 6 hospital (Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital) and two Level 5 hospitals (Bagathi and Pumwani) were randomly selected using systematic sampling, ensuring a balanced representation of hospital types. In the second step, stratified sampling was applied within each hospital by service area, such as wards, outpatient departments, clinics, and Accident & Emergency (A&E). This ensured that various social work services, which vary by department, were adequately represented. Finally, within each stratum, random sampling was used to select individual participants, ensuring that every patient had an equal chance of being included in the study, thus minimizing selection bias.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

3.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection (Questionnaires)

The primary data collection tool for this study was a structured questionnaire designed to measure client satisfaction with medical social work services. The questionnaire was structured to capture both demographic information and the specific factors influencing client satisfaction. It comprised several sections, including questions on gender, service type, service area, and source of information, as well as a series of statements to evaluate satisfaction levels regarding social work services. Client satisfaction was measured using a Likert scale, where respondents indicated their level of agreement with various statements related to the medical social work services they received. These statements addressed key aspects of service delivery, such as professionalism, accessibility, responsiveness, emotional support, and the overall quality of services. Sample statements included, "The social worker listened carefully to your issues," "The social worker was very professional," "The social worker provided timely follow-ups," and "The social worker was easily accessible." Other statements assessed the social worker's knowledge and competence, friendliness, and ability to address the client's needs. In addition to the core satisfaction statements, the questionnaire also gathered data on the type of service received (e.g., financial assistance, psychosocial counseling, material support, or referral services) and the source of information (e.g., staff, relatives, or external agencies).

3.4.2 Pilot Testing, Validity, and Reliability

A pilot test was first conducted before the main data collection to ensure that the questionnaire had clarity and reliability. In this, 10% of the sample size—that is, about 38-respondents of the sample size of 384—received the pilot test. This pilot test would identify issues related to wording, structure, and clarity of the questions.

3.4.2.1 Validity of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was subjected to expert reviews from the field of social work and healthcare in

ensuring that the items were measuring what they were purported to measure: client satisfaction with medical social work services. Expert feedback confirmed that the questionnaire had adequate face validity, as the questions seemed to align with the research objectives.

Validity was checked to ensure that the questionnaire captured the theoretical construct of client satisfaction. The statements on satisfaction were written to reflect important dimensions of the service quality, such as professionalism, accessibility, and emotional support—all very important in describing the effectiveness of the services provided by medical social work. Factor analysis was done based on how the items would group together along these dimensions.

3.4.2.2 Reliability of the Questionnaire

In measuring the reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used as a way of estimating the internal consistency of the scale of satisfaction. For the satisfaction statements, Cronbach's Alpha was estimated to be 0.89, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This value suggests that the items on the questionnaire were reliably measuring the same underlying concept of client satisfaction.

This was followed by a test-retest method, with the questionnaire being administered at two different times to a small group of participants ($n=10$), separated by a two-week period. The correlation between the two response sets was strong, $r = 0.85$, which indicated that the questionnaire yielded stable results over time.

Based on the responses from the pilot test and the validity and reliability analyzed, the wording of some statements was slightly adjusted to increase clarity and the ability of respondents to understand the question more easily. The purpose of these adjustments was to refine the questionnaire so that it would be valid and reliable for the main data collection phase.

3.4.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection period lasted for four weeks. Research assistants underwent training to standardize the way the questionnaires would be administered.

The purpose and procedures of the study were explained to all the participants before data collection, with written informed consent obtained from all the respondents. All surveys were administered in service areas like wards, outpatient departments, and clinics, where research assistants were always ready to clarify any misunderstandings. In addition, follow-ups were made to ensure that all questions were answered and that responses were complete to enhance the response rate..

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize demographic data and client satisfaction levels. Inferential statistics were also employed to explore relationships between the variables. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare satisfaction levels between male and female respondents, while the Kruskal-Wallis H Test was employed to examine satisfaction differences across service areas and service types. To explore the relationships between satisfaction and various factors, Spearman's Rank Correlation was used. These statistical techniques allowed for a comprehensive understanding of how different factors influence client satisfaction with medical social work services.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical guidelines to protect the rights and well-being of participants. Ethical approval was obtained from NACOSTI, the Mathari National Teaching Hospital Ethics Committee, and the Nairobi County Health Ethics and Research Committee. For hospitals under Nairobi County Health jurisdiction, approval was also obtained from the respective Ethics and Research Committees at Bagathi and Pumwani hospitals.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. All personal information collected was kept confidential, with data anonymized to prevent identification of individual respondents. Participation was voluntary, and

participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The study was designed to ensure no harm to participants, and every effort was made to minimize discomfort during survey administration.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations. First, it was conducted in urban hospitals in Nairobi County, limiting the generalizability of the findings to rural settings, where healthcare delivery may differ. Second, the study focused on public hospitals and did not include private hospitals, meaning the findings may not apply to the private healthcare sector. Finally, the study only considered Level 5 and Level 6 hospitals, excluding Level 3 and Level 4 hospitals, which may have different service capacities and social work structures. These factors may restrict the applicability of the study's findings to other hospital types or settings.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the study based on data collected from respondents in the selected public level 5 and 6 hospitals. The analysis was guided by the study objectives and focused on assessing client satisfaction with medical social work services. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the data, and the results are presented using tables to enhance clarity and understanding. The chapter begins by presenting the response rate achieved during data collection, which demonstrates the adequacy of the sample and the reliability of the study findings. This is followed by an analysis of respondents' demographic characteristics and a detailed examination of satisfaction with medical social work services. The chapter further explores the influence of gender, hospital service section, type of service accessed, and source of information on client satisfaction. Where appropriate, the findings are discussed in relation to existing literature and relevant empirical studies.

4.1 Response Rate

Table 1 presents the response rates across the three study facilities.

Table 1: Respondent Response Rate.

Facility	Target Sample Size	Actual Respondents	Response Rate (%)
Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital	160	152	95.00%
Bagathi County Referral Hospital	107	104	97.00%
Pumwani County Referral Hospital	110	108	98.18%
Total Response Rate	377	364	96.55%

Source: Field Data (2025)

The study targeted a sample size of a total of 377 participants across three sampled facilities and successfully collected responses from 364 individuals, yielding an overall response rate of 96.55%. This response rate far exceeds the 70% threshold suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) for ensuring the reliability of research findings. The high response rate reflects robust participation across all facilities, ensuring that the data collected was valid and representative of the target population.

4.2 Demographic Characteristic

Table 2 : Gender Distribution Of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	188	51.6
Female	176	48.4
Total	364	100

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 1 presented the gender distribution of the study participants. Of the 364 respondents, 188 (51.6%) were male and 176 (48.4%) were female, showing a slightly higher number of male participants. This distribution was fairly balanced, ensuring that both genders were well-represented in the study. According

to Creswell (2014), balanced gender representation is crucial for ensuring that research findings are generalizable to both male and female populations.

4.3 Satisfaction With Social Work Services

Table 3: satisfaction with social work services

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Mean
The social worker listened carefully to your issues.	60 (16.5%)	20 (5.5%)	80 (22%)	84 (23.1%)	120 (33%)	364	3.62
The social worker gave adequate information on how you can be assisted.	56 (15.4%)	28 (7.7%)	76 (20.9%)	88 (24.2%)	116 (31.9%)	364	3.59
The social worker was very professional.	48 (13.2%)	28 (7.7%)	88 (24.2%)	92 (25.3%)	108 (29.7%)	364	3.57
The social worker had knowledge and competence in the services they offered.	48 (13.2%)	32 (8.8%)	76 (20.9%)	100 (27.5%)	108 (29.7%)	364	3.57
You felt confident in giving the social worker your issues.	64 (17.6%)	8 (2.2%)	88 (24.2%)	84 (23.1%)	120 (33%)	364	3.56
The social worker was friendly and courteous.	60 (16.5%)	28 (7.7%)	80 (22%)	84 (23.1%)	112 (30.8%)	364	3.55
The social worker was easily accessible.	56 (15.4%)	28 (7.7%)	80 (22%)	108 (29.7%)	92 (25.3%)	364	3.52
You were given prompt services.	68 (18.7%)	32 (8.8%)	100 (27.5%)	68 (18.7%)	96 (26.4%)	364	3.51
The quality of social work service was very good.	68 (18.7%)	24 (6.6%)	72 (19.8%)	116 (31.9%)	84 (23.1%)	364	3.51
The social worker was able to solve your problem.	68 (18.7%)	36 (9.9%)	88 (24.2%)	80 (22%)	92 (25.3%)	364	3.5
The social worker made a follow-up on your issues until the matter was finalized.	80 (22%)	40 (11%)	72 (19.8%)	88 (24.2%)	84 (23.1%)	364	3.5
Mean							3.5

Source: Field Data (2025)

The study sought to find out the level of satisfaction with social work services among clients/patients by

examining specific aspects of service delivery, as outlined in Table 3. Regarding listening to clients'

issues, 56.0% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the social worker listened carefully, indicating that a majority felt heard and understood. However, 22.0% were neutral, while another 22.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that attentive listening was not consistently experienced by all clients. On the provision of adequate information, 56.0% of respondents expressed satisfaction, implying that social workers generally explained how clients could be assisted. Nonetheless, 20.9% were neutral and 23.1% were dissatisfied, which may reflect gaps in clarity, depth, or consistency of information sharing. Concerning professionalism, 54.9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social workers were professional in their conduct. This demonstrates that professionalism was largely upheld, although 24.2% of respondents were neutral and 20.9% expressed dissatisfaction, indicating room for improvement in maintaining professional standards across all interactions. With respect to knowledge and competence, 57.1% of respondents were satisfied, showing that most clients perceived social workers as knowledgeable and capable in delivering services. However, 20.9% remained neutral and 22.0% were dissatisfied, highlighting the need for continuous skills enhancement and specialization. In relation to clients' confidence in sharing their issues, 56.0% reported satisfaction, suggesting that social workers were able to build trust and create a safe environment. Despite this, 24.2% were neutral and 19.8% dissatisfied, pointing to lingering concerns such as confidentiality or fear of judgment among some clients. Regarding friendliness and courtesy, 53.8% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social workers were friendly and courteous. While this reflects positive interpersonal relations, 22.0% were neutral and 24.2% dissatisfied, indicating variability in staff attitudes and client experiences. On accessibility of social workers, 54.9% of respondents expressed satisfaction, suggesting that social workers were generally available when needed. However, 22.0% were neutral and 23.1% dissatisfied, which may be associated with workload pressures or limited staffing.

Concerning promptness of services, satisfaction was comparatively lower, with only 45.1% agreeing or strongly agreeing that services were provided promptly. In contrast, 27.5% were neutral and another 27.5% dissatisfied, indicating delays in service

provision that could affect client outcomes. With respect to the overall quality of social work services, 54.9% of respondents rated the quality as very good, reflecting general approval of the services received. Nevertheless, 19.8% were neutral and 25.3% dissatisfied, suggesting that quality varied across clients and settings. Regarding the ability of social workers to solve clients' problems, only 47.3% of respondents expressed satisfaction. Meanwhile, 24.2% were neutral and 28.6% dissatisfied, implying that while social workers offer support, not all client problems are fully resolved, possibly due to systemic or resource constraints. Finally, on follow-up of client issues until finalization, 47.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that social workers made appropriate follow-ups. However, 19.8% were neutral and a relatively high proportion (33.0%) were dissatisfied, highlighting weaknesses in continuity of care and the need to strengthen follow-up and case management practices.

Based on the overall findings, the strongest aspects of social work service delivery were related to interpersonal skills and professional conduct. High satisfaction was reported in knowledge and competence, listening to clients' issues, provision of adequate information, professionalism, accessibility, confidence in sharing issues, and overall service quality. These findings indicate that social workers were generally approachable, ethical, and supportive, contributing to positive client experiences.

Despite the generally positive findings, several areas recorded comparatively lower satisfaction levels. Follow-up of client issues until finalization, problem resolution, and promptness of service delivery were the most poorly rated aspects. These weaknesses suggest challenges related to continuity of care, delays in service provision, and limited effectiveness in fully addressing client needs, possibly due to high caseloads, limited resources, or systemic constraints.

Overall, the study found that social work services performed best in professionalism, communication, trust-building, and technical competence, while performing poorly in timeliness, follow-up, and complete resolution of client issues. Addressing these gaps would significantly enhance client satisfaction

and improve the effectiveness of social work services. The findings concur with recent studies indicating higher satisfaction with social workers' professionalism and communication, but lower satisfaction with timeliness and follow-up, as reported by Bogo et al. (2019), Muliira et al. (2020), Smith et al. (2021), and Abuya et al. (2022).

4.4 Gender And The Clients Satisfaction

The study aimed to assess whether gender influences patient satisfaction with medical social work services in Nairobi County's public level 5 and level 6 hospitals. The survey involved 364 respondents, split between 188 male and 176 female participants. Satisfaction was measured across key service dimensions, including professionalism, communication, and emotional support. To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels between male and female respondents, the Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted. The results of the test are summarized in the table below:

Table 4: Mann-Whitney for Gender Satisfaction.

Group	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U-Statistic	Asymptotic Significance (p-value)
Male	188	182.6	33,293	16,323	0.36
Female	176	182.4	33,215		
Total	364				

Source: Field Data (2025)

The U-statistic for the test was 16,323, and the p-value was 0.36, which is greater than the common significance threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in satisfaction between male and female respondents. Therefore, the null hypothesis (which states that there is no significant difference in satisfaction levels between male and female patients) was not rejected.

Both the descriptive and inferential statistics show that gender does not significantly influence patient satisfaction with medical social work services in the hospitals studied. Both male and female patients expressed similar levels of satisfaction, suggesting that the services are perceived as equally effective by both genders. These findings align with the study by Duffy et al. (2001), which concluded that gender did not significantly impact overall patient satisfaction with healthcare services. Instead, other factors such as service quality and communication were found to be more influential in determining patient satisfaction.

4.5 Service Section And The Client Satisfaction

The study sought to find the social work services accessed by patients and their relatives in Level 5 and Level 6 hospitals in different service section. Ward services were the most sought, with 50.55% of respondents seeking support. This high utilization reflects the need for emotional support, counseling, guidance on treatment, financial assistance, and care coordination among inpatients and their relatives. Outpatient services were sought by 19.78%, indicating that patients visiting for routine consultations or follow-ups also required assistance with referrals, navigating hospital procedures, and psychosocial support. Funeral home services were sought by 13.19%, primarily by relatives, with social workers providing bereavement counseling. Both Accident and Emergency (A&E) and clinic services had 6.59% each, showing that social work support is also important in crisis situations, trauma counseling, and urgent patient advocacy. Other services, including specialized programs or community outreach, accounted for 3.30%. Overall, the data indicates that patients and relatives mainly sought social work services in wards and outpatient departments (combined 70.33%), highlighting the critical role of social workers in addressing medical, emotional, financial, and bereavement concerns across hospital settings.

To determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels across the different service areas, a Kruskal-Wallis H Test was conducted. The results of the test are summarized in

the table below, which includes the mean ranks for each service area.

Table 5:Kruskal Wallis Test For The Satisfaction Of The Service Section.

Service section	Number Respondents	of percentage	Mean Rank	Satisfaction Level
Ward	184	50.55%	211.28	Highest Satisfaction
Accident and Emergency (A&E)	24	6.59%	178.17	High Satisfaction
Clinic	24	6.59%	163.17	Moderate Satisfaction
Outpatient	72	19.78%	159.61	Moderate Satisfaction
Funeral Home	48	13.19%	127.33	Lowest Satisfaction
Others	12	3.30%	146.5	Low to Moderate Satisfaction

Source: Field Data (2025)

The Kruskal-Wallis H Test results showed a Chi-Square value of 32.784, with 5 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.000, which is significantly lower than the conventional threshold of 0.05. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in client satisfaction across the various service areas. These findings suggest that the type of service area plays a key role in determining satisfaction with medical social work services. Specifically, patients in areas offering more continuous or urgent care, such as the Ward and Accident and Emergency (A&E), reported higher satisfaction, while those in more emotionally charged service areas, like the Funeral Home, reported lower satisfaction. The results are in line with previous research, such as a study by Williams et al. (2015), which found that satisfaction with social work services is often higher in areas where there is more direct and ongoing patient interaction, compared to areas that involve emotionally stressful or one-time services. These findings underline the importance of tailoring social work interventions to the unique needs of patients in different service areas to improve overall satisfaction.

4.6 : Type Of The Service And The Client Satisfaction.

This study examined how the type of service provided by the Medical Social Work Department affects client

satisfaction. Among the 364 respondents, the majority of clients, 67.03%, sought Financial Assistance services, indicating that economic support is the primary concern for most patients and relatives. Referral and Follow-up services were the next most accessed, with 13.19% of respondents, highlighting the importance of guidance in continuing care and navigating hospital systems. Material Support services and Other services were each accessed by 7.69%, reflecting needs for tangible support such as food, transport, or specialized programs. Psychosocial Counseling services were sought by 3.30% of respondents, while GBV and Child Protection services had the least utilization at 1.10%, suggesting that fewer clients seek support for sensitive cases or that such cases may be underreported. Overall, the distribution shows that client tend to seek most influential services that directly address immediate financial and follow-up needs, with lower sought services potential linked to less accessed services such as counseling and protection programs. These findings highlight the critical role of the Medical Social Work Department in prioritizing services that respond to the most pressing client need

The Kruskal-Wallis H Test revealed a statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels across service types, with a Chi-Square value of 11.636 and

a p-value of 0.040. The table below summarizes the satisfaction levels across different service types:

Table 6: Kruskal-Wallis H Test for satisfaction by the service type

Service Type	Number of Respondents	Percentages	Mean Rank	Satisfaction Level
GBV and Child Protection services	4	1.10%	304.5	Highest Satisfaction
Other services	28	7.69%	209.36	Moderate Satisfaction
Financial Assistance services	244	67.03%	183.94	Moderate Satisfaction
Referral and Follow-up services	48	13.19%	173.17	Moderate Satisfaction
Material Support services	28	7.69%	164.79	Lower Satisfaction
Psychosocial Counseling services	12	3.30%	128.5	Lowest Satisfaction

Source: Field Data (2025)

The results show that GBV and Child Protection Services received the highest satisfaction (mean rank of 304.50), while Psychosocial Counseling Support received the lowest satisfaction (mean rank of 128.50). Other services like Financial Assistance and Referral Services showed moderate satisfaction levels.

The study demonstrates that satisfaction levels significantly differ based on the type of service. GBV and Child Protection Services yielded the highest satisfaction, while Psychosocial Counseling Support received the lowest. Tailoring services to client needs is crucial for enhancing satisfaction. This study found that client satisfaction with medical social work services varies significantly across different service areas. Specifically, patients in wards and emergency settings reported higher satisfaction than those in emotionally charged areas like funeral services. These results align with previous research by Williams et al. (2015), which emphasizes the importance of ongoing patient interaction and the emotional complexity of different healthcare services in shaping satisfaction.

4.7: Source Of The Information And The Client Satisfaction

This study examined how the source of information (Self, Relative/Friend, Staff, External Agency – Political or Church) influences client satisfaction with the Medical Social Work services. A total of 364 respondents participated. The largest group, 168 respondents (46.15%), learned about the services through staff. The second largest group consisted of 100 respondents (27.47%) who discovered the services on their own (self), while 80 respondents (21.98%) learned about the services through a relative or friend. The smallest group, consisting of 16 respondents (4.40%), was referred by external agencies, such as political or church organizations. This distribution highlights that staff referrals were the most common source of information, followed by self-discovery, with relative/friend and external agency referrals representing smaller proportions of the respondents.

To determine if there was a statistically significant difference in satisfaction based on the source of information, a Kruskal-Wallis H Test was conducted.

The results of the test are summarized below, which includes the satisfaction levels based on the source of information:

Table 7: Kruskal-Wallis Test for the satisfaction of the source of the information

Source of Information	Number of Respondents	Percentage	Mean Rank	Satisfaction Level
Staff	168	46.15	188.83	Highest Satisfaction
Self	100	27.47	184.98	Moderate Satisfaction
Relative/Friend	80	21.98	183.3	Moderate Satisfaction
External Agency - Political/Church	16	4.40	96.5	Lowest Satisfaction

Source: Field Data (2025)

The Kruskal-Wallis H Test produced a Chi-Square value of 11.413, with 3 degrees of freedom, and a p-value of 0.010, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels based on how clients learned about the services. The results show that staff referrals yielded the highest satisfaction levels, followed by self referrals. Clients who learned about the services through relative/friend referrals reported slightly lower satisfaction, and those referred by external agencies such as political or church organizations had the lowest satisfaction levels.

The study found that the source of information plays a significant role in client satisfaction with the Medical Social Work services. Clients who learned about the services from staff had the highest satisfaction, while those referred by external agencies had the lowest satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance of direct communication from staff in enhancing client satisfaction. Tailoring referral processes and ensuring clarity and alignment of information from external agencies may help to improve satisfaction levels across all referral sources. This study aligns with previous research, such as that by Morrow and Weigel (2019), which found that referrals from healthcare

providers typically result in higher satisfaction compared to informal sources like family and friends. Similarly, Burgess and Mattingly (2018) showed that personal interaction and direct communication from healthcare professionals play a significant role in shaping patient expectations and enhancing their satisfaction with services.

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study sought to assess client satisfaction with medical social work services in selected public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. It specifically explored how client satisfaction was influenced by demographic factors such as gender, service section within the hospital, the type of social work service accessed, and the source of information about the services. A total of 364 respondents participated in the study, yielding a high overall response rate of 96.55%. This exceeds the 70% benchmark recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) for reliable research data, reflecting strong engagement and ensuring that the findings are

representative of the target population. The respondents comprised 188 males (51.6%) and 176 females (48.4%), indicating a fairly balanced gender representation, which supports the generalizability of the findings across both genders. The study examined satisfaction using multiple dimensions of social work service delivery, including the social worker's attentiveness to client issues, adequacy of information provision, professionalism, knowledge and competence, accessibility, friendliness, promptness, ability to resolve problems, and follow-up of client issues. Satisfaction levels were measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

Key findings from the study are summarized as follows:

The mean satisfaction score across all service delivery aspects was 3.5, suggesting moderate to high levels of satisfaction among clients. Highest satisfaction scores were observed in areas of professionalism, knowledge and competence, interpersonal communication, and trust-building. These findings indicate that medical social workers are generally perceived as ethical, knowledgeable, and approachable by their clients.

Lower satisfaction was reported for timeliness of service delivery, follow-up of client issues, and the ability of social workers to fully resolve client problems. This highlights gaps in continuity of care and the responsiveness of services, possibly influenced by high caseloads, resource limitations, or systemic inefficiencies.

Gender and client satisfaction, using the Mann-Whitney U Test, no statistically significant difference was observed between male and female respondents ($U = 16,323$, $p = 0.36$). This suggests that social work services are perceived similarly by both genders, indicating equity in service provision.

Service section and satisfaction, the Kruskal-Wallis H Test revealed statistically significant differences in satisfaction across service sections (Chi-Square = 32.784, $df = 5$, $p < 0.05$). Wards and Accident & Emergency (A&E) recorded the highest satisfaction, while Funeral Home services recorded the lowest. This variation underscores the role of direct

interaction, continuity of care, and emotional complexity of service areas in shaping client satisfaction, consistent with findings by Williams et al. (2015).

Type of service and satisfaction: Satisfaction also varied across service types (Chi-Square = 11.636, $p < 0.05$). GBV and Child Protection services recorded the highest satisfaction despite low utilization, suggesting that targeted interventions in sensitive cases are highly valued. Psychosocial counseling services recorded the lowest satisfaction, highlighting potential gaps in staffing, training, or resource availability. Frequently accessed services, such as Financial Assistance and Referral/Follow-up, recorded moderate satisfaction, indicating room for improvement in high-demand service areas.

Source of information and satisfaction, the study found significant differences in satisfaction based on the source of information (Chi-Square = 11.413, $df = 3$, $p = 0.010$). Clients who learned about services through staff reported the highest satisfaction, followed by self-referrals. Those referred by relatives or friends reported slightly lower satisfaction, while referrals by external agencies (political or church organizations) recorded the lowest satisfaction. This finding emphasizes the importance of direct communication and accurate referral pathways in enhancing client satisfaction.

In general, the study provides strong evidence that medical social work services in Nairobi County are effective in promoting client satisfaction in areas of professionalism, communication, and trust-building, but there are clear opportunities to strengthen timeliness, follow-up, and problem resolution to improve overall client experiences.

5.2 Conclusions.

Based on the findings of the study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding medical social work services in the selected public level 5 and level 6 hospitals. Medical social work services were found to be generally effective. Clients reported relatively high satisfaction with professionalism, communication, competence, and interpersonal skills, indicating that

social workers provide client-centered care and are able to establish trust with service users. These attributes significantly contribute to positive client experiences and overall satisfaction with services.

Despite the overall effectiveness of services, notable gaps in service delivery were identified. Lower satisfaction was reported in areas related to timeliness of service provision, follow-up of client issues, and resolution of client problems. These gaps suggest challenges associated with case management, workload pressures, and resource constraints, which may hinder the provision of timely and comprehensive support.

The study further concludes that gender does not significantly influence client satisfaction with medical social work services. Both male and female respondents expressed similar levels of satisfaction, indicating equitable service provision across gender groups within the hospitals studied.

Client satisfaction was also found to vary according to the hospital service section. Higher satisfaction levels were reported in areas involving continuous patient interaction, such as wards and Accident and Emergency departments, while lower satisfaction was observed in emotionally demanding or episodic service areas, particularly funeral home services. This variation highlights the importance of tailoring social work interventions to the specific context and emotional demands of each service section.

Additionally, the type of social work service accessed influenced client satisfaction. GBV and Child Protection services, although accessed by a relatively small proportion of clients, recorded high satisfaction, reflecting effective and sensitive service delivery. In contrast, Psychosocial Counseling services recorded the lowest satisfaction, indicating a need for strengthened capacity, resources, and specialized skills in this area.

Finally, the source of information about medical social work services was found to play an important role in shaping client satisfaction. Clients who accessed services through direct communication from hospital staff reported higher satisfaction, while those referred

through external agencies reported lower satisfaction. This underscores the importance of accurate, consistent, and proactive information dissemination within healthcare facilities.

Overall, the study concludes that while medical social work services are largely effective and positively perceived, targeted improvements in timeliness, follow-up, case management, and high-demand services are necessary to further enhance client satisfaction and strengthen the effectiveness of medical social work practice

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made, hospitals should strengthen follow-up and case management mechanisms within Medical Social Work Departments. The study found that only 47.3% of respondents were satisfied with follow-up of client issues, indicating gaps in continuity of care. Establishing structured follow-up procedures and clear case management protocols would improve problem resolution and overall client satisfaction.

There is a need to improve the timeliness of medical social work services. Findings showed that only 45.1% of respondents were satisfied with the promptness of services. Hospitals should therefore review workflow processes and coordination mechanisms to reduce delays in service delivery.

The high-demand services such as Financial Assistance (67.03%) and Referral and Follow-up services (13.19%) should be prioritized. Adequate allocation of resources and attention to these service areas is necessary to improve service efficiency and satisfaction among the majority of service users

Social work interventions should be tailored to specific service sections. The study revealed significant differences in satisfaction across service areas, with lower satisfaction reported in emotionally demanding sections such as Funeral Home services. Targeted approaches in these areas would enhance responsiveness to client needs.

Referral and information dissemination mechanisms should be strengthened. Clients who accessed services through hospital staff reported higher satisfaction than those referred by external agencies. Improving internal referrals and standardizing information shared by external referral sources would enhance client expectations and satisfaction.

The study recommends the employment of additional medical social workers in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals. Lower satisfaction with service promptness (45.1%), problem resolution (47.3%), and follow-up (47.3%) suggests that current staffing levels may be inadequate. Increasing staffing would help reduce workload pressures and improve service delivery.

The Kenya Medical Social Workers Association should start and strengthen Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and promote more research in medical social work. Although respondents expressed general satisfaction with professionalism and communication, lower satisfaction in areas such as problem resolution and psychosocial support indicates the need for continuous skills enhancement and evidence-based practice.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abuya, T., Maina, T., Chuma, J., & Musyimi, C. (2022). Client experiences and satisfaction with public sector service delivery in Kenya. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 21(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12939-022-01641-9>
- [2] Bateh, J., et al. (2019). The impact of psychosocial counseling services on client satisfaction. *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, 7(3), 1-9.
- [3] Bogo, M., Regehr, C., Katz, E., Logie, C., & Mylopoulos, M. (2019). Developing a tool for assessing students' reflective practice in social work. *Social Work Education*, 38(5), 656–672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2018.1540400>
- [4] Burgess, S. L., & Mattingly, S. M. (2018). Patient satisfaction and the role of direct communication in healthcare. *Journal of Healthcare Management*, 63(6), 372-380.
- [5] Chege, M. (2023). Investigating client satisfaction with social work services in public hospitals. *Journal of Social Work in Healthcare*, 42(5), 350-367.
- [6] Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- [7] Davis, A., et al. (2018). Patient satisfaction and the role of medical social work services. *Journal of Healthcare Quality*, 39(2), 99-106.
- [8] Dixon, J., et al. (2018). Gender differences in patient satisfaction with healthcare: A review of literature. *Health Psychology and Behavioral Medicine*, 6(1), 45-61.
- [9] Duffy, M. E., et al. (2001). The influence of gender on patient satisfaction with healthcare services. *Journal of Gender and Health*, 8(3), 234-239.
- [10] Fowler, L. (2020). Healthcare satisfaction and service areas: The role of emergency care and inpatient services. *Journal of Patient Experience*, 5(3), 210-215.
- [11] Green, S., & Ritchie, P. (2017). Gender, social support, and satisfaction with healthcare services: A cross-national comparison. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 31(4), 470-480.
- [12] Hawkins, T. (2020). Patient satisfaction and the role of social work in healthcare settings. *Social Work in Healthcare*, 58(2), 140-152.
- [13] Healy, K., & Mulholland, J. (2021). *Writing skills for social workers* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- [14] Karani, A., & Daria, G. (2015). The role of social workers in addressing social challenges in healthcare: A case of Kenyan public hospitals. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 16(2), 110-120.
- [15] Kavuwa, J. K., & Wafula, H. K. (2025). Assessing challenges facing Health Information Management Systems (HIMS) in the performance of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in public level 5 and level 6 hospitals in Nairobi County, Kenya. Maseno University.
- [16] Kavuwa, Joseph Kimanzi. "A Comparative Analysis of Factors Influencing the Timely Completion of Postgraduate Programs in Public and Private Universities in Kenya." *JENER*

Journal of Empirical and Non-Empirical Research, 1(3), 447–454, 2025. ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/398188177_A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Factors_Influencing_the_Timely_Completion_of_Postgraduate_Programs_in_Public_and_Private_Universities_in_Kenya. Accessed 23 Dec. 2025.

- [17] Morrow, A., & Weigel, R. (2019). The impact of referral sources on patient satisfaction. *Social Work in Healthcare*, 57(2), 119-132.
- [18] Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Acts Press.
- [19] Muliira, J. K., Ssendikadiwa, V. B., & Kizza, I. B. (2020). Nursing and social support services and patient satisfaction in public health facilities. *BMC Health Services Research*, 20(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-020-05189-3>
- [20] Oliver, R. (1980). A cognitive model of the antecedents and consequences of satisfaction decisions. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 17(4), 460-469.
- [21] Smith, B. D., Donovan, S. E. F., & Taussig, H. N. (2021). Service timeliness, caseloads, and client satisfaction in public human services. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership*