



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The study's main objective is to find the influence of length of stay on specific patient satisfaction items with hospital care. To date, length of stay (LOS) has mainly been described and analyzed in terms of hospital expense in the context of how to contain or reduce health care costs (Tokunaga & Imanaka, 2002). There had been even less focus on the relationship between length of stay (LOS) and quality of care, especially in terms of patient satisfaction (Tokunaga & Imanaka, 2002). There were no studies of patient satisfaction and influence of length of stay performed in Thailand to date where the average length of stay in hospital ranges from 3.1 days (Private for profit hospital) to 8.74 days (Public University Hospital). (Tangcharoensatgien et al., 1999)

Patient satisfaction survey is becoming the primary tool of accessing this aspect of health care. As stated in the Health Evidence Network report August 2003 by WHO, "Measurement is central to the concept of hospital quality improvement; it provides means to define what hospitals actually do, and to compare that with the original targets in order to identify opportunities for improvement. Likewise the WHO 2000 report further stated that, "the organization, configuration and delivery of services impact on the performance of the overall health system" (WHO, 2000).

Patients are the best and sometimes the only source of information when it comes to evaluating health care services. The truth about patient satisfaction surveys is that they can help identify ways of improving the practices to better serve the patients in the future. Ultimately, that translates into better care and happier patients (White, 1999).

Customer satisfaction is an important measure of quality service in health care organizations (Gadallah et al., 2003). From a management perspective, patient satisfaction with health care is important for several reasons where management can identify sources of patient dissatisfaction and can organize to address system's weaknesses. On the other hand, this benefits the patients as well as they are getting better quality service. Previous studies have shown that "satisfied patients are more likely to follow specific medical regimens and treatment plans for better outcome" (Gadallah et al., 2003).

2. Academic Background

The content of my literature review under this topic is to view various academic researches that have made conclusion regarding measurement of patient satisfaction and its use in current situations. The researcher has tried to show this by quoting various authors work in this area of study.

2.1 Measurement of patient satisfaction and incorporating such results to learn where service is deemed important should be a strategic goal for all healthcare organizations. (Stavins, 2006)

2.2 Patients are the best and sometimes the only source of information (White, 1999)

2.3 Customer satisfaction is an important measure of quality service in health care organizations (Gadallah et al., 2003)

2.4 Satisfied patients are more likely to follow specific medical regimens and treatment plans for better outcome (Gadallah et al., 2003)

2.5 Management perspective: Patient satisfaction with health care is important for several reasons:-

2.5.1 Can identify sources of patient satisfaction and dissatisfaction

2.5.2 Satisfied patients are more likely to follow specific medical regimens and treatment
(Gadallah et al., 2003)

3. Relative Background

When conducting literature review for the topic of interest to see the influence of length of stay (LOS) to patient satisfaction, the researcher was able to find only one such study which was conducted in Japan in the year 2002.

Nevertheless there had been numerous patient satisfaction studies performed in the years till date looking at various variables such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, income, occupation, insurance policy and more to name a few here in Thailand and around the world. The researcher has attempted to show this by quoting the various studies in the area of interest topic.

3.1 To date Length of Stay (LOS) is compared against hospital expense (Tokunaga & Imanaka, 2002)

3.2 Less focus on Length of Stay (LOS) and patient satisfaction (Tokunaga & Imanaka, 2002)

3.3 Clear and significant differences emerged in patient satisfaction between groups of hospitals with different ownership. Non-profit hospitals were most highly rated for both inpatient and outpatient care. For inpatient care public hospitals had higher levels of satisfaction amongst clientele than private for-profit hospitals. For example 76% of inpatients at public hospitals said they would recommend the facility to others compared with 59% of inpatients at private for-profit hospitals. (Tangcharoensatgien et al., 1999)

3.4 Basic characteristics of sample hospitals Average length of stay in Thailand (Tangcharoensatgien et al., 1999)

<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Bed #</u>	<u>Average LOS</u>	<u>Occupancy Rate</u>
Public (BMA)	438	5.01	54.5
Public (MOPH)	428	5.39	80.6
Public (university)	832	8.74	72.7
Pvt. for-profit (SET)	315	3.1	57.0
Pvt. for-profit (SET)	184	3.2	69.4
Pvt. for-profit	146	5.2	59.7
Pvt. non-profit	171	4.3	59.5
Pvt. non-profit	402	4.7	66.5
Pvt. non-profit	312	4.3	70.6

Note: BMA = Bangkok Metropolitan Authority; MOPH = Ministry of Public Health; SET = Stock Exchange of Thailand; LOS = Length of stay

3.5 Satisfaction exhibits a complex relationship with age, with scores increasing until age 65 to 80 and then declining. This relationship was consistent across individual satisfaction scales, but was modified by health status. The result suggests that age

and health status should be taken into account when interpreting patient satisfaction data. (Jaipaul & Rosenthal, 2003)

3.6 For overall patient satisfaction, it is essential to satisfy specific items related to the aspect of hospital care emphasized by the patients. Specific significant predictors of overall satisfaction (e.g. Doctor's clinical competence) were indispensable measures of professional performance in hospital care, irrespective of the patient's emphasis. A positive perception of hospital reputation items might increase overall patient satisfaction with Japanese hospitals. (Tokunaga et al., 2000)

3.7 There is evidence that patient socio-demographic characteristics affect patient satisfaction levels. In addition, it is logical that previous admissions and the length of the current admission also affect the patient response. (Quintana et al., 2006)

3.8 Overall findings indicated that customers in Kangtand Hospital trust technical quality of services, but believe that staff should improve on delivery of services, espically regarding manner. (Thahanthai, 2003)