

CLIENTS' PERCEPTION OF QUALITY OF VETERINARY CARE IN OGUN STATE: A CASE STUDY IN A VETERINARY TEACHING HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Veterinary care quality significantly influences animal welfare and client satisfaction, making it essential to evaluate client perceptions for service improvement. This study assessed the quality of veterinary services provided by the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH), Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. A web-based survey using the Kobo Toolbox application collected data from eighty-two respondents, focusing on service availability, clinical care, waiting times, facility hygiene, and cost. Analysis with Epi Info version 7.1 revealed that 98.8% of clients were either satisfied or very satisfied with the veterinary care, 78% of clients were satisfied with service availability, and 85% rated clinical care as excellent or good. However, 18% expressed dissatisfaction with waiting times, and only 37% were not aware of the hospital's boarding services. Additionally, 85.3% of respondents commended the facility's hygiene as excellent or good, and 65% found the cost of services reasonable. The study identifies both strengths and areas for improvement, emphasizing the need for enhanced communication and waiting area comfort to elevate client satisfaction and veterinary care delivery and these findings underscore the importance of addressing client feedback to enhance service delivery and strengthen the role of tertiary veterinary institutions in advancing animal welfare and public health.

Keywords: Client satisfaction, Nigeria, Service quality, Tertiary institution, Veterinary care

INTRODUCTION

Veterinary care is essential for ensuring the health and welfare of animals, which significantly impacts public health and food security (Raber *et al.*, 2018). Globally, the veterinary care market has been expanding, driven by increasing pet ownership, rising awareness of animal welfare, and the growing incidence of chronic diseases in animals (Quain *et al.*, 2021). In 2023, the global veterinary care market was valued at approximately USD 87.3 billion and is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.0% through 2030 (Grand View Research, 2024). This growth is bolstered by initiatives such as the One Health approach, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health, leading to

improved healthcare standards worldwide (Danasekaran, 2024)

Research on clients' perceptions of veterinary care quality has gained attention in various regions (Turkson, 2009). For instance, studies in developed countries have highlighted the importance of preventive healthcare and the humanization of pets, where owners increasingly treat their pets as family members (Philpotts, 2019). This trend has led to greater expenditures on veterinary services as pet owners seek high-quality care for their companions. In contrast, many developing countries face challenges in accessing adequate veterinary services due to limited resources and a shortage of trained professionals (Pasteur, 2024). For example, while the United States boasts over 100,000 active veterinarians,

countries like Kenya have only a few hundred (American Veterinary Medical Association, 2022)

The veterinary sector in Africa is currently experiencing a transformative evolution, yet it remains hindered by significant barriers that impede its overall effectiveness and accessibility. According to the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, 2019), while there have been notable advancements in certain areas, many countries continue to struggle with the quality of veterinary services. A study conducted in South Africa by Catley and Leyland (2001) revealed that clients often perceive these services as lacking due to inadequate facilities and limited access to essential medications. Such perceptions not only undermine trust in veterinary care but also highlight critical gaps in infrastructure, human resources, and on-going professional training. These challenges are compounded by a shortage of qualified veterinarians, particularly in rural areas, where the need for effective animal health management is most acute. As the continent seeks to improve livestock health and productivity, addressing these systemic issues will be crucial for enhancing the quality of veterinary services and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices across Africa.

In Nigeria, the quality of veterinary care has been a subject of growing concern, particularly in the context of client perceptions and service delivery. Studies highlight that across the country, veterinary services are often hindered by insufficient infrastructure, limited access to essential drugs, and a shortage of trained personnel, all of which influence how clients perceive the care they receive (Kwaghe *et al.*, 2015, Edeme, 2023). In a different context, Chu *et al.* (2019) reported that clients in both rural and urban clinics often expressed dissatisfaction with waiting times, highlighting how the waiting experience significantly influences overall perceptions of care quality. Within veterinary teaching hospitals, which are expected to set the standard for clinical excellence and professional training, these perceptions become even more critical. Negative client experiences can reflect broader systemic issues and impact trust in veterinary institutions. Clients' perceptions of veterinary care quality are vital for evaluating service effectiveness and satisfaction, yet limited research has explored these views within Nigerian veterinary institutions. This gap poses a challenge for enhancing service delivery and meeting client expectations. Specifically, there is a lack of research on perceptions of care quality in Nigerian tertiary institutions, such as the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta — a key provider of veterinary services. Understanding client perceptions in this context is essential for identifying strengths and weaknesses in service provision. This study aims to fill that gap by examining factors such as service availability, clinical care, waiting times, facility hygiene, and cost accessibility.

Insights gained will inform strategies to improve client satisfaction, strengthen veterinary practices, and promote better animal health outcomes. Ultimately, this research supports the development of more effective veterinary services in Nigeria, fostering trust, enhancing animal welfare, and contributing to broader public health goals.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

STUDY DESIGN AND AREA

A web based cross sectional online survey was performed among the clients of Veterinary Teaching Hospital (V.T.H), College of Veterinary Medicine (COLVET), FUNAAB and Veterinary Teaching Hospital Extension, Kemta, Abeokuta, Ogun State. The College of Veterinary Medicine, FUNAAB is a college located in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State Nigeria. The Veterinary Teaching Hospital (V.T.H), College of Veterinary Medicine (COLVET), FUNAAB is located in the Northern and Eastern Hemispheres of the Earth with the coordinates of 7°14'17.3°26'19. The V.T.H, COLVET, FUNAAB was first established at the Isale-Igbein Mini-Campus of the University in May, 2005, to facilitate easy accessibility of the local community to its services, on the 20th January 2014 the V.T.H moved to its permanent site at the Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta, along Alabata, Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State, and commenced its operations. However, the Isale-Igbein clinic was retained as its annex. The annex is now located at Kemta Housing Estate, along Ogin State Television Ajebo Road, Idi-Aba, Abeokuta South Local Government Area. The various Departments in the College under the umbrella of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital render specialized Veterinary consultation, clinical and diagnostic services to the livestock, agro-allied and health sectors, the local community as well as the University farms.

STUDY POPULATION

The clients of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (V.T.H), College of Veterinary Medicine (COLVET), FUNAAB and Veterinary Teaching Hospital Extension, Kemta, Abeokuta, located at Odeda LGA and Abeokuta South LGA respectively (Figure 1) in Ogun State.

SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION, DATA COLLECTION, AND MANAGEMENT

Using a population size of 120 consistent clients from the past year, the sample size for questionnaire administration was calculated with Epi Info software. The parameters used were: expected frequency of 50%, margin of error of 5%, design effect of 1.0, one cluster, and a 95% confidence level. The resulting sample size was 91. A web-based cross-sectional online survey of clients of the veterinary teaching

hospital was conducted between May, 2023 and September, 2023, using Kobo Toolbox application (Cambridge, MA) to gather information on the quality of veterinary care in the veterinary teaching hospital. The link to the application was sent to the clients for them to fill and there was also an interactive section to collect data in the course of the survey. The data collected was exported from Kobo Toolbox application (Cambridge, MA) into Microsoft Excel® spread sheet (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA, USA) and variables was analysed using Epi info version 7.1. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and proportions and percentages were calculated.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval for the present study was obtained from the College Research Ethical Committee (CREC) with the Approval reference number: FUNAAB/COLVET/CREC/2023/09/06. Informed written consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary based on individual’s availability and willingness to be part of the study. All participants were notified of their right to discontinue at any stage of the survey (World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki, 2013).

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was exported from the Kobo Toolbox application into Microsoft Excel® 2016 spread sheet (Microsoft Corporation, Redmond, WA, USA) and variables was analysed using Epi info version 7.1 Results was presented in percentages and frequencies.

RESULTS

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 82 questionnaires were completed by clients of the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at the College of Veterinary Medicine, Federal College of Agriculture, Abeokuta, as well as its annex located at Kemta, Idi-Aba, within the Odeda and Abeokuta South Local Government Areas (Figure 1), giving a non-response rate of 30% based on the sample size calculated. Among the respondents, 64 individuals (78.1%) were under the age of 40, while 18 individuals (22.0%) were aged 40 or older. Of the total respondents, 63 (76.8%) identified as male and 19 (23.2%) as female. In terms of marital status, one respondent (1.2%) was divorced, 34 (41.5%) were married, 46 (56.1%) were single, and one individual (1.2%) was widowed. Employment status revealed that 14 respondents (17.1%) were government workers, 53 (64.6%) were self-employed, and 15 (18.3%) were unemployed. Regarding educational attainment, two respondents (2.4%) had no formal education, ten (12.2%) had completed secondary education, and 70 (85.4%) had

attained tertiary education. The distribution of respondents by Local Government Area included 24 individuals (29.3%) from Abeokuta North, 31 (37.8%) from Abeokuta South, one individual (1.2%) from Akinyele, three (3.7%) from Obafemi Owode, 21 (25.6%) from Odeda, and two respondents (2.4%) from Yewa South. The duration of clinic usage among respondents varied: eight individuals (9.8%) had utilized the clinic for over two years; 22 respondents (26.8%) had been using the clinic for one to two years; 17 individuals (20.7%) had accessed services for six months to one year; 23 respondents (28.1%) had been clients for less than a month; and twelve individuals (14.6%) had used the clinic for one to six months (Table I).

TABLE I: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Variable (n=82)	Proportion (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Age in years		
<40	64 (78.1)	67.5-86.4
≥40	18 (22.0)	13.6-32.5
Gender		
Male	63 (76.8)	66.2-85.4
Female	19 (23.2)	14.6-33.8
Marital Status		
Divorced	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Married	34 (41.5)	30.7-52.9
Single	46 (56.1)	44.7-67.0
Widowed	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Occupational status		
Government Worker	14 (17.1)	9.7-27.0
Self-employed	53 (64.6)	53.3-74.9
Unemployed	15 (18.3)	10.6-28.4
Educational status		
None	2 (2.4)	0.3-8.5
Secondary	10 (12.2)	6.0-21.3
Tertiary	70 (85.4)	75.8-92.2
LGA		
Abeokuta North	24 (29.3)	19.7-40.3
Abeokuta South	31 (37.8)	27.3-49.2
Akinyele	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Obafemi Owode	3 (3.7)	0.8-10.3
Odeda	21 (25.6)	16.6-36.4
Yewa South	2 (2.4)	0.3-8.5
Clinic visit duration		
>2years	8 (9.8)	4.3-18.32
1-2 years	22 (26.8)	17.6-37.8
6 months-1 year	17 (20.7)	12.6-31.1
Less than a month	23 (28.1)	18.7-39.1
One month - 6 months	12 (14.6)	7.8-24.2

According to responses from 82 participants, the grooming services provided by the clinic were rated as "Excellent" by 39.0%, "Fair" by 9.8% and "Good" by 51.2%. The comfort of the waiting area received ratings of "Excellent" from 24.4% of respondents, "Fair" from 19.5%, "Good" from 52.4%, and "Poor" from 3.7%. Regarding the overall hygiene of the clinic, perceptions were as follows: "Excellent" (32.9%), "Fair" (14.6%), and "Good" (52.4%). Out of the total respondents, only 52 individuals (63.4%) were aware that the clinic offers a boarding facility; 17 respondents (20.7%) expressed uncertainty, while 13 individuals (15.9%) reported being unaware of this service.

Among those who perceived the boarding facilities, 53 respondents indicated their opinions: three individuals (5.7%) stated "No", ten (18.9%) were "Not Sure", and forty (75.5%) affirmed "Yes". A significant portion of respondents (33 individuals, or 40.2%) reported that the waiting period before receiving attention was "Short," followed by 31 respondents (37.8%) who rated it as "Average". Fourteen individuals (17.1%) described the waiting period as "Long", while four respondents (4.9%) characterized it as "Very Long".

The effectiveness of the treatment provided was perceived positively, with only four respondents (4.9%) indicating "No", four (4.9%) expressing uncertainty and a substantial majority of 74 individuals (90.1%) affirming that it was effective. Regarding the availability of medications used in treatments, perceptions were as follows: "No" (14.6%), "Not Sure" (14.6%), and "Yes" (70.7%).

Furthermore, a majority of respondents rated the equipment and materials used in animal treatment as "Good" (73.2%), while a smaller portion rated them as "Fair" (26.8%). The cost associated with opening a file at the clinic was distributed across various categories: "High" (14.6%), "Low" (6.1%), and "Moderate" (79.3%). In terms of drug and treatment costs, clients perceived them as "Low" (7.4%), "High" (27.2%), and "Moderate" (65.4%) (Tables IIa and IIb)

RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION TO CLIENT-PATIENT-RELATIONSHIP

This section examines the relationship among clinicians, clients, and patients. It begins with an assessment of the love and affection demonstrated towards the animals, which was perceived as "Excellent" by 54.9% of respondents, "Fair" by 1.2%, "Good" by 42.7%, and "Poor" by 1.2%. A significant majority of respondents (93.9%) expressed confidence in the skills and abilities of the clinicians, while a smaller proportion (6.1%) were uncertain. Satisfaction with the treatment provided to animals by clinicians was reported as "Always" by 62.2% of respondents, "Often" by 32.9%, "Less Often" by 3.7%, and "Rarely" by 1.2%. The attitudes of

clinicians and other staff members towards animals were rated as "Excellent" by 43.9%, "Fair" by 9.8%, and "Good" by 46.3%. When considering preferences for home service clinicians based on gender, a majority of respondents (49 individuals, or 60.5%) preferred both genders, followed by male clinicians (22.2%) and female clinicians (17.3%). In terms of the usefulness of clinician guidance for home treatment, 48 respondents (58.5%) found it "Useful", 29 (35.4%) rated it as "Very Useful", and five individuals (6.1%) considered it "Somehow Useful". Regarding feelings of intimidation related to home treatment procedures, 31 respondents (37.8%) reported "Often" feeling intimidated, while 22 individuals (26.8%) felt "Always intimidated". Additionally, 14 respondents (17.1%) indicated they were "Less Often" intimidated, nine (11.0%) stated they were "Never intimidated", and six individuals (7.3%) reported feeling "Rarely" intimidated. In evaluating overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, 46 respondents (56.1%) expressed being "Very Satisfied" with the services rendered, while 35 individuals (42.7%) indicated they were "Satisfied", and one respondent (1.2%) reported being "Not Satisfied" (Table III).

TABLE IIA: PERCEPTION OF VETERINARY CARE

Variable (n=82)	Proportion (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Grooming practice in the clinic		
Excellent	32 (39.0)	28.4-50.4
Fair	8 (9.8)	4.3-18.3
Good	42 (51.2)	39.9-62.4
Comfort of the waiting room		
Excellent	20 (24.4)	15.6-35.1
Fair	16 (19.5)	11.6-29.7
Good	43 (52.4)	41.1-63.6
Poor	3 (3.7)	0.8-10.3
General hygiene of the clinic		
Excellent	27 (32.9)	22.9-44.2
Fair	12 (14.6)	7.8-24.2
Good	43 (52.4)	41.1-63.2
Availability of boarding facilities in the clinic		
No	13 (15.9)	8.7-25.6
Not sure	17 (20.7)	12.6-31.1
Yes	52 (63.4)	52.1-73.8
If yes, are the boarding facilities in good condition (n=53)		
No	3 (5.7)	1.2-15.7
Not sure	10 (18.9)	9.4-32.0
Yes	40 (75.5)	61.7-86.2
The waiting period before being attended to		
Average	31 (37.8)	27.3-49.2
Long	14 (17.1)	9.7-27.0
Short	33 (40.2)	29.6-51.7
Very long	4 (4.9)	1.3-12.0

TABLE IIB: PERCEPTION OF VETERINARY CARE (CONTINUED)

Variable (n=82)	Proportion (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Effectiveness of the treatment given		
No	4 (4.9)	1.4-12.2
Not sure	4 (4.9)	1.4-12.2
Yes	73 (90.1)	81.5-95.6
Availability of needed medications		
No	12 (14.6)	7.8-24.2
Not sure	12 (14.6)	7.8-24.2
Yes	58 (70.7)	59.7-80.3
Equipment and materials used in the treatment of animals		
Fair	22 (26.8)	17.6-37.8
Good	60 (73.2)	62.2-82.4
The cost of opening a file for your animal in the clinic?		
High	12 (14.6)	7.8-24.2
Low	5 (6.1)	2.0-13.7
Moderate	65 (79.3)	68.9-87.4
The cost of drugs and treatment		
High	22 (27.2)	17.9-38.2
Low	6 (7.4)	2.8-15.4
Moderate	53 (65.4)	54.0-75.7

RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION TO CLIENT-PATIENT-RELATIONSHIP

This section examines the relationship among clinicians, clients, and patients. It begins with an assessment of the love and affection demonstrated towards the animals, which was perceived as "Excellent" by 54.9% of respondents, "Fair" by 1.2%, "Good" by 42.7%, and "Poor" by 1.2%. A significant majority of respondents (93.9%) expressed confidence in the skills and abilities of the clinicians, while a smaller proportion (6.1%) were uncertain.

Satisfaction with the treatment provided to animals by clinicians was reported as "Always" by 62.2% of respondents, "Often" by 32.9%, "Less Often" by 3.7%, and "Rarely" by 1.2%.

The attitudes of clinicians and other staff members towards animals were rated as "Excellent" by 43.9%, "Fair" by 9.8%, and "Good" by 46.3%.

Table III: Perception of Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR)

Variable (n=82)	Proportion (%)	95% Confidence Interval
Love and affection shown to the animal at the clinic		
Excellent	45 (54.9)	43.5-65.9
Fair	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Good	35 (42.7)	31.8-54.1
Poor	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Confidence in the clinicians' skills and abilities		
Not sure	5 (6.1)	2.0-13.7
Yes	77 (93.9)	86.3-98.0
How often are you satisfied with the treatments given to your animal by the clinician		
Always	51 (62.2)	50.8-72.7
Less often	3 (3.7)	0.8-10.3
Often	27 (32.9)	22.9-44.2
Rarely	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Attitude of the clinician and other staff towards your pets		
Excellent	36 (43.9)	33.0-55.3
Fair	8 (9.8)	4.30-18.3
Good	38 (46.3)	35.3-57.7
Gender of clinician preferable for home services		
Both	49 (60.5)	49.0-71.2
Female	14 (17.3)	9.8-27.3
Male	18 (22.2)	13.7-32.8
How useful is the clinician's guidance for home treatment after boarding?		
Somehow useful	5 (6.1)	2.0-13.7
Useful	48 (58.5)	47.1-69.3
Very useful	29 (35.4)	25.1-46.7
How often are you intimated with the type of treatment given to your animal by the clinician		
Always	22 (26.8)	17.6-37.8
Less often	14 (17.1)	9.7-27.0
Never	9 (11.0)	5.1-19.8
Often	31 (37.8)	27.3-49.2
Rarely	6 (7.3)	2.7-15.3
Generally speaking, how satisfied are you about the veterinary care you receive for your animals		
Not satisfied	1 (1.2)	0.0-6.6
Satisfied	35 (42.7)	31.8-54.1
Very satisfied	46 (56.1)	44.7-67.1

When considering preferences for home service clinicians based on gender, a majority of respondents (49 individuals, or 60.5%) preferred both genders, followed by male clinicians (22.2%) and female clinicians (17.3%). In terms of the usefulness of clinician guidance for home treatment, 48 respondents (58.5%) found it "Useful", 29 (35.4%) rated it as "Very Useful", and five individuals (6.1%) considered it "Somehow Useful". Regarding feelings of intimidation related to home treatment procedures, 31 respondents (37.8%) reported "Often" feeling intimidated, while 22 individuals (26.8%) felt "Always intimidated. Additionally, 14 respondents (17.1%) indicated they were "Less Often" intimidated, nine (11.0%) stated they were "Never intimidated", and six individuals (7.3%) reported feeling "Rarely" intimidated. In evaluating overall satisfaction with the services provided by the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, 46 respondents (56.1%) expressed being "Very Satisfied" with the services rendered, while 35 individuals (42.7%) indicated they were "Satisfied", and one respondent (1.2%) reported being "Not Satisfied" (Table III).

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated client perceptions regarding the quality of veterinary services received at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. In this study, clients assessed various aspects of service quality, including service availability, clinical care, time efficiency, and cost. Overall, the availability of services and clinical care were deemed satisfactory; however, the boarding facilities were considered unsatisfactory. This perception may be attributed to a lack of awareness among many respondents regarding the clinic's boarding services. The majority (37.8%) of respondents were from Abeokuta South Local Government Area, followed by Abeokuta North and Odeda. It is believed that this distribution is significantly influenced by the proximity of clients to the teaching hospital.

The present study indicated that the majority of respondents were male, single, self-employed, and possessed tertiary education, suggesting that male clients utilized the veterinary clinic more frequently than their female counterparts. This finding contrasts with a previous study conducted in Calabar Municipal, which reported a higher utilization of primary health care centres by females compared to males (Ehiri *et al.*, 2005). Client perceptions of the quality of veterinary care provided by a clinic serve as a critical indicator of client satisfaction (Ofili & Ofovwe, 2005). Given the positive correlation between client satisfaction and health outcomes, the assessment of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the facilities offered by the clinic presents opportunities for improvement and change (Ofili & Ofovwe, 2005). Notably, more than half of the respondents expressed high levels

(56.1%) of satisfaction with the quality of care received. Similar studies have reported generally high levels (78%) of satisfaction with healthcare services, indicating that a significant proportion of respondents were satisfied with their experiences (Oredola & Odusanya, 2017).

A significant portion (58.5%) of respondents found the clinician's guidance for home treatment after boarding—including drug usage, feeding regimens, and bathing procedures—useful or very useful. This highlights the importance of post-treatment communication in reinforcing client confidence and ensuring continuity of care. This finding aligns with a previous study indicating that a considerable number of patients in Ilorin, Nigeria, received adequate information regarding drug administration procedures (Babatunde *et al.*, 2013). In terms of medication availability within the clinic, most respondents affirmed that all necessary medications were accessible. This supports the findings of a related study, which noted that a significant number of respondents expressed satisfaction with the availability of medications (Ehiri *et al.*, 2005). Additionally, this study indicates that the treatments provided to clients' animals were perceived as effective by a large majority (90.1%) of respondents. This is comparable to findings regarding the effectiveness ($p=0.024$) of treatment and care provided in both public and private health facilities in Abeokuta South Local Government Area, Ogun State (Oredola & Odusanya, 2017). Regarding the costs associated with opening a file, treatment, and other related services offered by the clinic, many respondents indicated that these costs were moderate. This is consistent with findings from a survey conducted in a healthcare center in Calabar, where a significant number of respondents expressed satisfaction with the fees charged for services (Ehiri *et al.*, 2005).

Furthermore, while hygiene standards received high ratings, feedback on the comfort of waiting areas points to the importance of creating a welcoming environment for clients. Studies on healthcare service quality emphasize that physical comfort and a pleasant atmosphere are critical components of client satisfaction, even in veterinary settings. This finding is consistent with another study that reported a lower percentage (46%) of patients expressing satisfaction with the sanitation levels of waiting rooms, toilets, and bathrooms (Ofili & Ofovwe, 2005). This dissatisfaction may be attributed to the prolonged construction period of the clinic and the absence of renovations aimed at creating a more pleasant waiting environment and enhancing other facilities. Simple improvements, such as comfortable seating and clean waiting spaces, can make a significant difference in client perceptions.

Nearly all respondents expressed confidence in the skills and abilities of the clinician, who provided a detailed explanation of the illness and its treatment. This finding aligns with a

previous study indicating that a significant number of patients received adequate information from their physicians regarding the management of their illnesses (Babatunde *et al.*, 2013). In terms of medication availability within the clinic, most respondents affirmed that all necessary medications were accessible, which subsequently enhances the overall quality of service delivery. This finding corroborates previous research that has demonstrated a positive association between medication availability and overall patient satisfaction in various healthcare settings. For instance, studies have shown that when patients perceive medications to be readily accessible, their satisfaction with pharmaceutical services tends to increase significantly (Mahmoud *et al.*, 2018).

A significant number of respondents expressed confidence in the clinicians' skills and abilities, indicating a strong belief in the professional competence of the veterinary staff. This level of confidence is consistent with findings from studies that highlight the significance of veterinarians' communication styles in shaping client perceptions and satisfaction (Pun, 2020). The positive perception of clinician skills may also contribute to higher adherence rates to treatment recommendations, as clients are more likely to follow through when they trust their veterinarian's expertise. When asked about gender preferences for home services, responses were relatively balanced between both genders. This is contrary to a previous study where gender influenced veterinarian-client-patient communication (Shaw *et al.*, 2012). This finding may reflect changing attitudes towards gender roles within veterinary practice, as clients increasingly prioritize skills over gender when selecting service providers.

The limited awareness of boarding facilities among clients suggests inadequate communication about the range of services offered by the hospital. Effective communication strategies, including informational brochures, social media campaigns, and direct client engagement, can enhance awareness and utilization of underutilized services. This finding underscores the need for veterinary institutions to actively promote their full range of services to ensure clients make informed decisions about animal care.

In terms of client perceptions regarding veterinary care services, this study indicated a general satisfaction with service provision, particularly concerning the consultations provided by clinicians and other staff at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Clients expressed appreciation for being informed about their animals' illnesses, receiving guidance on whether to return with their animals to the facility, and experiencing effective treatment. Furthermore, the majority of respondents rated the quality of service, the clinician's expertise and competency, and the client-animal interaction as either good or exceptional, thereby reflecting overall

satisfaction. These findings align with those reported in human healthcare settings by Ferreira *et al.* (2023), where patient satisfaction was strongly linked to favourable assessments of service-related factors such as timeliness of care, the professional competence of healthcare providers, respect for patients' views, and the effective resolution of complaints. Furthermore, it is essential to continuously assess client expectations through regular surveys. When expectations are not met, improvements can be realized through the implementation of total quality management programs. For instance, effective information sharing and communication among staff have been shown to enhance total quality management within organizations, as client satisfaction can be significantly improved through strong interpersonal relationships between clients and staff (Padma *et al.*, 2009; Mahmoud *et al.*, 2018).

This study provides valuable insights into clients' perceptions of veterinary care quality at a tertiary veterinary institution in Nigeria. The high levels of satisfaction reported in areas such as clinical care, staff expertise, and hygiene standards reflect the Veterinary Teaching Hospital's commitment to providing professional and effective services. These findings align with studies that underscore the importance of skilled personnel and clean facilities in enhancing client trust and satisfaction with veterinary services.

However, notable gaps were identified in certain aspects of service delivery. Dissatisfaction with waiting times highlights the need for more efficient appointment scheduling and resource allocation to minimize delays. Similar concerns about waiting times have been reported in other veterinary institutions, where overcrowding and under-resourced facilities often hinder service efficiency. Addressing this challenge is essential to improving the overall client experience and reducing frustration.

This present study was restricted to the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) in Ogun State, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to veterinary hospitals operating under different contexts or conditions. Future research could expand by incorporating data from other veterinary hospital environments. Overall, the study highlights the strengths and areas for improvement in veterinary service delivery at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. By addressing these gaps, the hospital can further enhance client satisfaction, build trust, and set a benchmark for quality veterinary care in Nigeria. Future studies should focus on assessing client perceptions across multiple institutions and regions to provide a more comprehensive understanding of veterinary service delivery nationwide.

CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the importance of understanding client perceptions to improve the quality of veterinary care in tertiary institutions. The findings reveal high levels of satisfaction with key aspects such as clinical care, staff expertise, and hygiene standards at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. However, areas like waiting times, awareness of boarding services, and the comfort of waiting areas require targeted improvements. Addressing these gaps can enhance client satisfaction, strengthen trust in veterinary services, and promote better utilization of animal healthcare facilities. These insights emphasize the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of veterinary services to meet client expectations and ensure high standards of animal welfare. Future research should explore similar assessments across multiple institutions to provide a broader perspective on veterinary care delivery in Nigeria.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare they have no conflict of interest.

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