

Impact of Health Information Managers as the First Point of Contact on Patient Experience at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital, South South, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to evaluate patients' perceptions of the efficiency of registration services, the timeliness of medical records retrieval, the quality of communication, the professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness of Health Information Managers, and the overall influence of these services on patient experience. A descriptive cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The study population comprised patients attending the Medical Outpatient (MOP II) and Surgical Outpatient (SOP II) clinics of the Consultant Outpatient Department (COPD) at UBTH. Using Cochran's formula with a 7% margin of error, a sample size of 200 respondents was determined and proportionately allocated across the two outpatient units using a stratified sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics comprising frequencies, percentages, and mean scores were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to determine the relationship between Health Information Managers' services and patients' overall experience. The findings revealed that patients had a positive perception of the efficiency of registration services (grand mean = 3.17), the timeliness of medical records retrieval (grand mean = 3.06), the quality of communication (grand mean = 3.21), and the professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness of Health Information Managers (grand mean = 3.25). The study further established that Health Information Managers' services had a positive influence on patients' overall experience (grand mean = 3.24), indicating that the quality of services provided during patients' first contact with the hospital significantly contributes to patient satisfaction and perceptions of healthcare quality. The study concluded that Health Information Managers play a vital role in shaping patients' experiences by ensuring efficient registration, timely records retrieval, effective communication, and professional service delivery. It was recommended that the management of UBTH should strengthen patient registration processes, improve medical records retrieval systems, provide continuous training for Health Information Managers on communication and customer relations.

Keywords: Health Information Managers, First Point of Contact, Patient Experience, University of Benin Teaching Hospital.

I. INTRODUCTION

Healthcare systems worldwide are increasingly being evaluated not only by their ability to diagnose and treat diseases but also by the quality of experiences patients have while receiving care. Over the years, healthcare delivery has shifted from a provider-centered approach to a patient-centered approach that emphasizes respect for patients' needs, preferences, expectations, and experiences. This shift recognizes that healthcare quality extends beyond clinical outcomes to include how patients are treated throughout their interactions with healthcare institutions (World Health Organization (WHO), 2021). Consequently, patient experience has become an important indicator of healthcare quality and performance in many healthcare systems. Patient experience refers to the range of interactions that patients have with healthcare organizations and the healthcare system throughout the continuum of care. These interactions include communication with healthcare professionals, administrative procedures, access to services, waiting times, responsiveness of staff, and the overall healthcare environment (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), 2022). Positive patient experiences have been associated with improved patient satisfaction, greater trust in healthcare providers, increased adherence to treatment plans, improved health outcomes, and enhanced patient safety (Wolf *et al.*, 2021). For this reason, healthcare organizations around the world are implementing various strategies aimed at improving patient experience as part of quality improvement initiatives. One of the key principles guiding modern healthcare delivery is patient-centered care. Patient-centered care focuses on respecting patients' values, preferences, and individual needs while ensuring that patients actively participate in decisions concerning their health. Effective communication, emotional support, responsiveness, and respect for patients are essential elements of patient-centered care (WHO, 2021). Within this framework, the patient's first encounter with a healthcare facility becomes extremely important because it often shapes the patient's perception of the entire healthcare experience. Research has shown that first impressions significantly influence customer perceptions in service organizations, including healthcare institutions. Patients often form opinions about the quality and efficiency of healthcare services based on their initial interactions with hospital personnel. A positive first encounter characterized by courtesy, professionalism, empathy, and prompt service can create trust and confidence in the healthcare system. Conversely, negative experiences such as long waiting times, poor communication, unfriendly attitudes, and administrative delays can create dissatisfaction and influence patients' perceptions of care quality even before they meet healthcare providers (Beckett *et al.*, 2024). In most hospitals, Health Information Managers are among the first professionals' patients encounter upon arrival. Health Information Management is a specialized healthcare profession concerned with the collection, organization, storage, retrieval, protection, and management of health information. The profession plays a critical role in supporting healthcare delivery by ensuring that accurate and reliable patient information is available whenever needed for patient care, administration, research, and policy formulation American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA), 2021). Health Information Managers are responsible for several important functions within healthcare institutions. These functions include patient registration, appointment scheduling, medical records creation, records retrieval, health data management, information dissemination, health statistics generation, and patient navigation within healthcare facilities. Through these activities, Health Information Managers serve as a link between patients and healthcare providers. In many healthcare facilities, especially in outpatient departments, patients must first interact with Health Information Managers before accessing clinical services. The role of Health Information Managers as the first point of contact places them in a strategic position to influence patient experience. During registration, they collect demographic and medical information, create or retrieve patient records, and provide information regarding hospital procedures. The manner in which these services are delivered can significantly affect patients' perceptions of healthcare quality. Patients who experience efficient registration processes, courteous communication, and prompt assistance are more likely to report positive healthcare experiences than those who encounter delays and poor interactions. Communication is one of the most important factors influencing patient experience. Effective communication by Health Information Managers helps patients understand hospital procedures, appointment schedules, registration requirements, and service processes. Clear communication reduces uncertainty and anxiety while promoting trust and cooperation. According to Oehlert *et al.* (2023), effective communication and coordination by non-clinical healthcare personnel contribute significantly to improved patient experiences and satisfaction levels. Their study demonstrated that structured patient support services enhanced patients' perceptions of healthcare quality and improved their overall hospital experience. Apart from communication, professionalism and empathy are equally important. Patients expect healthcare personnel to treat them with dignity, respect, and compassion. Health Information Managers who demonstrate empathy and professionalism during patient interactions contribute to creating a positive healthcare environment. Popoola *et al.* (2023) found that patients generally perceived Health Information Professionals as important contributors to healthcare delivery and recognized their role in ensuring smooth administrative processes within healthcare institutions. The study further reported that positive interactions with Health Information Professionals enhanced patients' confidence in healthcare services. Waiting time is another major determinant of patient experience. Long waiting times have consistently been identified as one of the most common causes of patient dissatisfaction in healthcare facilities. Since Health Information Managers are responsible for registration and records retrieval, their efficiency directly affects patient flow and waiting times. Efficient records management systems help reduce delays and improve service delivery. A study conducted at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital by Ikpoko-Ore-Ebiriien Dike *et al.* (2025) reported that effective health records management contributed positively to patient satisfaction by facilitating timely access to patient information and reducing delays in healthcare delivery. Globally, there is increasing recognition of the role played by frontline and non-clinical healthcare personnel in shaping patient experience. While physicians and nurses remain central to patient care, studies have shown that patients evaluate healthcare services based on their interactions with all categories of staff, including administrative personnel. Beckett *et al.* (2024) reported that organizational factors such as staff responsiveness, communication quality, service coordination, and administrative efficiency significantly influence patient experience outcomes. In Africa, healthcare institutions continue to face numerous challenges, including inadequate healthcare infrastructure, limited

technological resources, workforce shortages, and increasing patient populations. These challenges often affect service delivery and patient experience. Studies conducted in several African countries have demonstrated that staff attitudes, communication quality, administrative efficiency, and waiting times significantly influence patient satisfaction and perceptions of healthcare quality (Atinga *et al.*, 2020; Waweru *et al.*, 2021). These findings highlight the importance of strengthening frontline healthcare services to improve patient experiences. In Nigeria, healthcare delivery is provided through a combination of public and private healthcare institutions. Despite ongoing healthcare reforms, many public hospitals continue to experience challenges such as overcrowding, inadequate infrastructure, shortage of healthcare personnel, and limited technological capacity. These challenges frequently affect administrative processes, including patient registration, records management, appointment scheduling, and information dissemination. As custodians of patient health information, Health Information Managers play a vital role in addressing these challenges and ensuring continuity of care. The introduction of electronic medical records and digital health technologies has further increased the importance of Health Information Managers in healthcare delivery. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to the improvement of healthcare service delivery and support efforts aimed at enhancing patient-centered care in Nigerian hospitals.

Objectives

1. To assess patients' perception of the efficiency of registration services provided by Health Information Managers at UBTH.
2. To determine patients' perception of the timeliness of medical records retrieval services at UBTH.
3. To assess the quality of communication between Health Information Managers and patients at UBTH.
4. To examine patients' perception of the professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness of Health Information Managers at UBTH.
5. To determine the overall influence of Health Information Managers' services on patient experience at UBTH.

Research Questions

1. How do patients perceive the efficiency of registration services provided by Health Information Managers at UBTH?
2. How do patients perceive the timeliness of medical records retrieval services at UBTH?
3. What is patients' perception of the communication quality of Health Information Managers at UBTH?
4. How do patients perceive the professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness of Health Information Managers at UBTH?
5. What influence do Health Information Managers' services have on overall patient experience at UBTH?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Health Information Managers (HIMs) play a central role in healthcare delivery by ensuring that health information is properly managed, accessible, secure, and useful for patient care and administrative functions. In contemporary healthcare systems, the effective management of health information is essential for achieving quality care, improving patient outcomes, and supporting evidence-based decision-making. As healthcare becomes increasingly data-driven, the roles of Health Information Managers have expanded beyond traditional record-keeping to include data governance, health informatics, and quality assurance (Kemp *et al.*, 2021; Heshajin *et al.*, 2024). Scholars generally agree that Health Information Managers serve as custodians of healthcare information, ensuring that accurate and reliable data are available to support clinical care and organizational operations (Ojiakor *et al.*, 2025). In the Nigerian healthcare context, their roles are particularly important due to challenges such as high patient volumes, limited infrastructure, and increasing demand for efficient healthcare services (Adeleke *et al.*, 2025). The major roles of Health Information Managers in healthcare delivery are discussed below.

Patient Registration: Patient registration is one of the most fundamental roles of Health Information Managers and represents the first point of contact between patients and healthcare facilities. During registration, Health Information Managers collect, verify, and document patients' demographic and administrative information, assign unique identification numbers, and create or retrieve patient records. Accurate registration is critical for ensuring proper patient identification and continuity of care. Errors at this stage may lead to duplication of records, misidentification, and delays in treatment (Adeleke *et al.*, 2025). In Nigerian hospitals, registration units managed by Health Information Managers serve as the entry point into the healthcare system. Efficient registration processes contribute to reduced waiting times, improved patient flow, and enhanced patient satisfaction. Therefore, patient registration plays a vital role in shaping the overall healthcare experience.

Medical Records Management: Medical records management is a core responsibility of Health Information Managers. This involves the creation, organization, storage, retrieval, and preservation of patient records in both paper-based and electronic formats. Proper records management ensures that accurate and complete patient information is available when needed for clinical care (Kemp *et al.*, 2021). According to Kemp *et al.* (2021), effective records management contributes directly to patient safety by reducing errors and ensuring continuity of care. In Nigerian healthcare facilities, poor records management has been linked to delays in service delivery

and loss of patient information. Therefore, Health Information Managers play a critical role in maintaining the integrity and accessibility of health records.

Appointment Scheduling and Patient Flow Coordination: Health Information Managers are responsible for coordinating patient appointments and managing patient flow within healthcare facilities. This includes scheduling outpatient visits, managing referrals, and organizing clinic sessions. Efficient scheduling systems help reduce overcrowding, minimize waiting times, and improve service delivery (Adeleke et al., 2025). Poor appointment systems can lead to congestion, delays, and patient dissatisfaction. In contrast, effective coordination enhances operational efficiency and ensures that healthcare services are delivered in a timely manner.

Health Data Management: Health data management is a critical function of Health Information Managers, particularly in modern healthcare systems where large volumes of data are generated daily. This role involves the collection, processing, validation, storage, and analysis of healthcare data. Health Information Managers ensure that data are accurate, complete, and reliable for use in clinical care and administrative decision-making (Ojiakor et al., 2025).

Generation of Health Statistics and Reports: Health Information Managers are responsible for compiling and analyzing healthcare data to produce statistical reports. These reports include information on patient attendance, disease patterns, mortality rates, and service utilization. Such data are essential for monitoring healthcare performance and supporting decision-making at both institutional and national levels (Ojiakor et al., 2025).

Confidentiality, Privacy, and Security of Health Information: Maintaining confidentiality and security of patient information is a critical responsibility of Health Information Managers. Healthcare data are highly sensitive and must be protected from unauthorized access, disclosure, or misuse. Health Information Managers implement policies and procedures to ensure data privacy and compliance with legal and ethical standards (Dogiye et al., 2025). With the increasing use of electronic health records, issues such as cybersecurity, data breaches, and unauthorized access have become more significant. Ensuring data security is therefore essential for maintaining patient trust and supporting safe healthcare delivery.

Clinical Coding, Classification, and Indexing: Health Information Managers are responsible for coding and classifying diseases, procedures, and healthcare services using standardized systems such as the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Coding enables healthcare data to be organized systematically and used for reporting, research, and reimbursement purposes (Burns et al., 2025). Accurate coding improves data quality, supports health statistics, and enhances comparability of healthcare information across institutions. It also plays an important role in healthcare financing and planning.

Quality Assurance and Improvement: Health Information Managers contribute significantly to quality assurance and quality improvement in healthcare. They ensure data accuracy, conduct record audits, monitor documentation standards, and support accreditation processes. Through these activities, they help healthcare organizations identify gaps and implement improvements (Kemp et al., 2021). Quality healthcare depends on reliable information. By ensuring data integrity and completeness, Health Information Managers support patient safety, reduce errors, and enhance healthcare outcomes.

Support for Clinical Decision-Making: Although Health Information Managers are not directly involved in patient diagnosis or treatment, they play an indirect but crucial role in clinical decision-making. They ensure that healthcare providers have access to accurate and complete patient information required for diagnosis and treatment (Kemp et al., 2021). Incomplete or inaccurate information can lead to poor clinical decisions and adverse patient outcomes. Therefore, Health Information Managers contribute to effective healthcare delivery by supporting evidence-based clinical practice.

Recent developments in healthcare have significantly transformed the roles of Health Information Managers. One major trend is the increasing adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and digital health technologies. Health Information Managers are now expected to possess skills in health informatics, data analytics, and information governance (Heshajin et al., 2024). Another emerging trend is the use of healthcare data analytics and artificial intelligence to support decision-making and improve patient outcomes. Health Information Managers are increasingly involved in managing large datasets, ensuring data quality, and supporting interoperability across health systems (Alkan et al., 2025). In Nigeria, efforts are being made to digitize health information systems and improve data management practices. Health Information Managers play a key role in implementing these digital systems and ensuring their effective use in healthcare delivery (Ojiakor et al., 2025).

The concept of the first point of contact in healthcare refers to the initial interaction that patients have with a healthcare facility when seeking medical attention. This interaction often occurs before patients meet physicians, nurses, or other clinical personnel. In many hospitals, particularly in outpatient departments, the first healthcare personnel encountered by patients are Health Information Managers (HIMs), who are responsible for patient registration, appointment scheduling, records retrieval, information provision, and patient guidance. As a result, Health Information Managers play a significant role in shaping patients' initial perceptions of healthcare services and influencing their overall healthcare experience (Wolf et al., 2021; Guan et al., 2024). The importance of the first point of contact has received increasing attention in healthcare quality studies because patients often form opinions about a healthcare facility within the first few minutes of arrival. According to Wolf et al. (2021), patient experience begins long before clinical treatment is provided and is influenced by every interaction that occurs throughout the care process. Similarly, Sun et al. (2021) argued that the quality of non-clinical interactions can significantly affect patient satisfaction, trust, and willingness to utilize healthcare services in the future. This suggests that the role of Health Information Managers extends beyond administrative duties to include contributing directly to patient-centered care. One of the primary functions performed by Health Information Managers as the first point of contact is patient registration. Patient registration involves collecting demographic information, verifying patient identity, assigning hospital numbers, creating new records, and updating existing patient information. Accurate registration serves as the foundation for effective healthcare delivery because all subsequent clinical and administrative activities depend on the availability of correct patient information. According to Adeleke et al. (2025), efficient registration processes contribute to reduced waiting times, improved patient flow, and enhanced patient satisfaction. Conversely, delays, errors, or inefficiencies during registration can create frustration and negatively affect patients' perceptions of the healthcare facility before treatment even begins. Beyond registration, Health Information Managers perform the important role of patient navigation. Patient navigation refers to assisting patients in understanding hospital procedures and directing them to appropriate service points within the healthcare facility. Hospitals can be complex environments, especially

for first-time visitors, elderly patients, and individuals with limited health literacy. Health Information Managers help patients locate clinics, diagnostic units, laboratories, pharmacies, and other service areas. According to Jesus et al. (2025), effective patient navigation reduces confusion, minimizes delays, and contributes to positive patient experiences. In large healthcare facilities where multiple departments operate simultaneously, patient navigation services help improve efficiency and patient confidence in the healthcare system. Another critical responsibility of Health Information Managers is information provision. Patients frequently require information regarding hospital procedures, appointment schedules, service availability, payment processes, and healthcare policies. Health Information Managers serve as information intermediaries by providing clear, accurate, and timely information to patients and their relatives. Guan et al. (2024) observed that effective communication and information sharing are among the strongest determinants of positive patient experiences. When patients receive adequate information, they are more likely to feel informed, respected, and involved in their healthcare journey. In contrast, poor communication can lead to confusion, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and mistrust. Health Information Managers are also responsible for appointment management, which includes scheduling, rescheduling, confirming, and coordinating patient appointments. Appointment management is particularly important in healthcare facilities with large patient populations because it helps regulate patient flow and reduce overcrowding. According to Batbaatar et al. (2021), efficient appointment systems contribute significantly to patient satisfaction by minimizing waiting times and ensuring timely access to healthcare services. In many hospitals, appointment management is increasingly supported by electronic systems; however, Health Information Managers remain responsible for coordinating and monitoring these processes to ensure effectiveness and continuity of care. Closely related to appointment management is the role of records retrieval and accessibility. Health Information Managers ensure that patient records are available when required for clinical consultations, investigations, and treatment decisions. Efficient records retrieval contributes to continuity of care and facilitates timely clinical decision-making. Kemp et al. (2021) noted that delays in retrieving patient records can negatively affect service delivery, increase waiting times, and compromise patient safety. Therefore, Health Information Managers play an essential role in ensuring that healthcare providers have access to the information needed to deliver quality care. The effectiveness of Health Information Managers as the first point of contact depends not only on the tasks they perform but also on the manner in which these tasks are carried out. One important factor influencing patient perceptions is communication skills. Effective communication involves listening attentively, providing clear explanations, responding appropriately to questions, and ensuring that patients understand relevant information. Studies have consistently shown that positive communication experiences contribute significantly to patient satisfaction and trust (Sun et al., 2021; Guan et al., 2024). When Health Information Managers communicate effectively, patients are more likely to feel respected, valued, and confident in the healthcare system. Another essential attribute is empathy. Empathy refers to the ability to understand and respond appropriately to the emotions, concerns, and needs of patients. Many individuals seeking healthcare services may be anxious, fearful, stressed, or uncertain about their health conditions. Health Information Managers who demonstrate empathy can help reduce these negative emotions and create a supportive environment for patients. According to Jesus et al. (2025), empathetic interactions contribute to positive patient experiences and strengthen trust between patients and healthcare providers. Empathy is therefore a critical component of patient-centered care and an important determinant of patient satisfaction. Another factor that influences patient experience is responsiveness. Responsiveness refers to the willingness and ability of Health Information Managers to attend promptly to patient needs, inquiries, and concerns. Patients generally expect timely assistance when seeking healthcare services. Delayed responses, prolonged waiting times, and lack of attention can create dissatisfaction and frustration. According to Sun et al. (2021), responsiveness is strongly associated with patient perceptions of service quality and organizational efficiency. Therefore, Health Information Managers who respond promptly and effectively to patients contribute significantly to positive healthcare experiences. Research indicates that high patient volumes and workforce shortages can place considerable pressure on frontline healthcare workers and negatively affect patient experiences (Waweru et al., 2021). In many Nigerian public hospitals, Health Information Managers are expected to manage registration, records retrieval, information services, and appointment scheduling simultaneously. While these responsibilities are essential for healthcare delivery, excessive workload may affect responsiveness, communication quality, and patient satisfaction. Nevertheless, studies suggest that positive interpersonal skills, effective workflow management, and adequate institutional support can help mitigate these challenges and improve patient experiences despite resource limitations (Ojiakor et al., 2025). Recent studies reviewed reveals a growing consensus that the first point of contact plays a crucial role in shaping patient perceptions of healthcare quality. While earlier healthcare studies focused primarily on clinical interactions involving physicians and nurses, recent literature increasingly recognizes the importance of administrative and information management personnel in influencing patient experiences (Wolf et al., 2021; Jesus et al., 2025). Scholars agree that patient experience is influenced not only by clinical outcomes but also by how patients are treated during their interactions with frontline staff. However, while substantial attention has been given to doctors, nurses, and reception personnel, relatively few studies have specifically examined the role of Health Information Managers as the first point of contact in hospitals. Several scholars have defined patient experience from different but related perspectives. According to Wolf et al. (2021), patient experience represents the totality of interactions between patients and healthcare providers, including both clinical and non-clinical encounters, which collectively influence how patients perceive the quality of care received. Similarly, Sun et al. (2021) describe patient experience as a multidimensional construct that captures patients' perceptions of care processes, communication quality, respect, dignity, and involvement in decision-making. From another perspective, Guan et al. (2024) emphasize that patient experience reflects both objective events (what actually happened during care) and subjective interpretations (how patients felt about those events). Across these definitions, a common understanding emerges: patient experience is holistic, continuous, and shaped by every interaction within the healthcare system. Medical records retrieval refers to the process of locating, accessing, and delivering patient records for clinical use during consultations and treatment. It is a critical function of Health Information Management that ensures continuity of care and supports clinical decision-making. The availability of accurate and

complete patient records at the point of care is essential for effective healthcare delivery (Kemp et al., 2021). Timely retrieval of medical records is particularly important in influencing patient experience. Delays in retrieving records can lead to prolonged waiting times, disrupted clinic schedules, and frustration among patients. According to Sun et al. (2021), delays in service delivery, especially those caused by administrative inefficiencies, significantly reduce patient satisfaction and trust in healthcare systems. Similarly, Guan et al. (2024) report that patients often perceive delays in accessing their records as a sign of poor organization and inefficiency within the healthcare facility. In many public hospitals in Nigeria, medical records retrieval is often challenged by poor filing systems, missing records, and inadequate storage facilities. Paper-based systems, which are still widely used, are particularly prone to misplacement and duplication of records (Ojiakor et al., 2025). These challenges not only delay service delivery but also compromise the quality of care, as clinicians may lack access to complete patient information. The transition to electronic health record (EHR) systems has improved records retrieval in some settings by enabling faster access to patient information. However, the effectiveness of these systems depends on the availability of reliable infrastructure, including electricity, internet connectivity, and technical support. Studies have shown that network failures and system downtimes can disrupt access to electronic records, thereby affecting patient experience (Heshajin et al., 2024). In resource-limited settings, such challenges may negate the benefits of digital systems. Communication, professionalism, and responsiveness are key interpersonal dimensions of Health Information Management services that significantly influence patient experience. These factors determine how patients perceive the attitude and behavior of Health Information Managers and, by extension, the healthcare system as a whole (Wolf et al., 2021). Effective communication in healthcare involves the clear and accurate exchange of information between healthcare providers and patients. Health Information Managers are often responsible for explaining registration procedures, guiding patients through hospital processes, and responding to inquiries. According to Sun et al. (2021), good communication enhances patient understanding, reduces anxiety, and improves overall satisfaction. Conversely, poor communication can lead to confusion, frustration, and dissatisfaction. Health Information Management (HIM) services play a critical role in healthcare delivery, particularly as they serve as the foundation for patient registration, records management, information flow, and decision-making. In public hospitals, especially in Nigeria and other developing countries, the effectiveness of HIM services is often constrained by several systemic, organizational, and technological challenges.

III. METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design. The population of this study comprises all patients who accessed services at the Consultant Outpatient Department (COPD) of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Benin City. The COPD in this study is operationally represented by patients attending the Medical Outpatient (MOP) unit and the Surgical Outpatient (SOP) unit, which serve as major outpatient entry points where Health Information Managers function as the first point of contact for patient registration, folder retrieval, and medical records management. These units were selected because they handle a high volume of patient traffic and represent critical service points where patient experience is significantly influenced by the efficiency and professionalism of Health Information Managers.

Based on hospital attendance records for the period of February to May 2026, the distribution of outpatient visits is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Monthly Patient Attendance at UBTH (MOP and SOP Units)

Month (2026)	MOP Patients	SOP Patients	Total Monthly Patients
February	1,955	1,123	3,078
March	2,929	1,449	4,378
April	2,686	1,436	4,122
May	2,466	1,476	3,942
Total	10,036	5,484	15,520

This gives a cumulative total of 15,520 outpatient visits over the four-month period.

However, it is important to note that this figure represents patient visits rather than unique patients, as some patients may have multiple hospital visits within the study period. Therefore, the population is treated as an accessible outpatient attendance population rather than a fixed population of individuals. For the purpose of statistical sampling, the study adopts a practical approximation based on average monthly outpatient attendance: Average monthly outpatient attendance = $15,520 \div 4 = 3,880$ patients per month. This average is used as an accessible population estimate for sample selection, ensuring a stable and realistic basis for field data collection in a dynamic hospital environment where repeat visits are common. The sample size for this study was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size estimation in large or undefined populations. This formula is appropriate for studies where the population is dynamic, and where patient attendance records may include repeat visits, making it difficult to determine the exact number of unique individuals.

The Cochran formula is expressed as:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n_0 = required sample size

Z = standard normal deviate at 95% confidence level (1.96)

p = estimated proportion of the population (0.5, used for maximum variability)

e = margin of error (0.07 for 7% precision level)

Substitution of Values

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.07)^2}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0049}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{0.9604}{0.0049}$$

$$n_0 = 196$$

Thus, the minimum required sample size is 196 respondents. To account for possible non-response, incomplete questionnaires, and to improve representativeness across the outpatient units (COPD and MOP), the sample size was rounded up to 200 respondents. Therefore, the final sample size for the study is 200 respondents. A stratified random sampling technique was adopted to ensure fair representation of patients across the two outpatient units under study.

Table 2: Proportionate Allocation of Sample Size Across Strata

Stratum	Unit Description	Population (N)	Proportion of Total Population	Sample Allocation (n)
Stratum 1	MOP II Patients	10,036	$10,036 \div 15,520 = 0.647$	129
Stratum 2	SOP II Patients	5,484	$5,484 \div 15,520 = 0.353$	71
Total	—	15,520	1.000	200

Within each stratum, simple random sampling was used to select eligible respondents who had accessed services from Health Information Managers at the point of registration or medical records retrieval. This method ensures that every patient within each outpatient unit has an equal chance of being selected, thereby reducing selection bias and improving the representativeness of the study findings. The primary instrument for data collection in this study is a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire is designed to capture information from both patients and Health Information Management personnel regarding service delivery and patient experience at UBTH. The questionnaire is divided into five sections covering the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and items listed in the objectives of the study structured on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A), to Strongly Agree (SA). This scale is appropriate for measuring attitudes and perceptions in healthcare service studies. Data collected for this study was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The data was coded, entered, and processed to generate both descriptive and inferential statistics in line with the research objectives. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean scores and standard deviation was used to analyze the research questions. Results will be presented in tables for clear interpretation. Ethical considerations are essential in research involving patients and healthcare workers. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) prior to data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without any consequence.

IV. RESULT

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Unit Attended (N = 200)

Unit	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MOP II	129	64.5
SOP II	71	35.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 3. shows the distribution of respondents according to the outpatient unit attended. The results indicate that 129 (64.5%) of the respondents were selected from the Medical Outpatient (MOP II) clinic, while 71 (35.5%) were from the Surgical Outpatient (SOP II) clinic. This distribution reflects the proportionate sampling technique adopted for the study based on the average patient attendance records of the two outpatient units. Consequently, the sample is considered representative of the study population, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Table 4: Patients' Perception of the Efficiency of Registration Services Provided by Health Information Managers at UBTH (N = 200)

S/N	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Registration process at the HIM unit is fast and efficient.	10 (5.0%)	22 (11.0%)	86 (43.0%)	82 (41.0%)	4.20	Agree
2	I do not experience unnecessary delays during registration.	12 (6.0%)	30 (15.0%)	92 (46.0%)	66 (33.0%)	4.06	Agree
3	Health Information Managers attend to patients promptly.	8 (4.0%)	24 (12.0%)	94 (47.0%)	74 (37.0%)	4.17	Agree
4	The registration procedure is well organized.	7 (3.5%)	20 (10.0%)	89 (44.5%)	84 (42.0%)	4.25	Agree
5	Overall, the registration services meet my expectations.	9 (4.5%)	23 (11.5%)	90 (45.0%)	78 (39.0%)	4.19	Agree
	Grand Mean					4.17	Agree

Table 4. presents respondents' perceptions of the efficiency of registration services provided by Health Information Managers at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The findings indicate that respondents generally had a positive perception of the registration services, as reflected by a grand mean score of 4.17, which is above the benchmark mean of 3.00. Specifically, the statement "The registration procedure is well organized" recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 4.25), indicating that most respondents agreed that the registration process follows a systematic and orderly procedure. Similarly, respondents agreed that "the registration process at the HIM unit is fast and efficient" (Mean = 4.20) and that "overall, the registration services meet their expectations" (Mean = 4.19), suggesting that the quality of registration services provided by Health Information Managers was satisfactory. The respondents also agreed that "Health Information Managers attend to patients promptly" with a mean score of 4.17, indicating that patients generally perceived the staff to be responsive during registration. Although the statement "I do not experience unnecessary delays during registration" recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 4.06), it still exceeded the decision benchmark, implying that most respondents believed delays during registration were minimal, although some patients experienced occasional waiting periods. Overall, the findings suggest that patients perceive the registration services provided by Health Information Managers at UBTH to be efficient, organized, and responsive. This positive perception indicates that the registration process contributes favourably to patients' first experience with the hospital and may enhance their overall satisfaction with healthcare services.

Table 5: Patients' Perception of the Timeliness of Medical Records Retrieval Services at UBTH (N = 200)

S/N	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	My medical records are retrieved quickly when needed.	12 (6.0%)	28 (14.0%)	92 (46.0%)	68 (34.0%)	3.08	Agree
2	There is minimal waiting time before records are found.	16 (8.0%)	34 (17.0%)	88 (44.0%)	62 (31.0%)	2.98	Agree
3	HIM staff respond quickly to file requests from clinics.	10 (5.0%)	24 (12.0%)	96 (48.0%)	70 (35.0%)	3.13	Agree
4	Delays in record retrieval do not affect my treatment.	18 (9.0%)	36 (18.0%)	86 (43.0%)	60 (30.0%)	2.94	Agree
5	The records system supports timely patient care.	9 (4.5%)	22 (11.0%)	91 (45.5%)	78 (39.0%)	3.19	Agree
	Grand Mean					3.06	Agree

Table 5. presents respondents' perceptions of the timeliness of medical records retrieval services at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The results show a grand mean score of 3.06, which is above the decision benchmark of 2.50, indicating that respondents generally agreed that medical records retrieval services were timely. Among the statements, "The records system supports timely patient care" recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.19), suggesting that most respondents believed the medical records system facilitates prompt healthcare delivery. Likewise, respondents agreed that "HIM staff respond quickly to file requests from clinics" (Mean = 3.13) and that "My medical records are retrieved quickly when needed" (Mean = 3.08), indicating that Health Information Managers generally retrieve patients' records within a reasonable time. However, the statement "Delays in record retrieval do not affect my treatment" recorded the lowest mean score (Mean = 2.94), while "There is minimal waiting time before records are found" had a mean score of 2.98. Although both statements were rated positively, the comparatively lower mean scores suggest that some respondents still experienced delays in records retrieval, which may occasionally affect the timeliness of healthcare services. The findings indicate that patients perceive the medical records retrieval services provided by Health Information Managers at UBTH as generally timely and supportive of effective patient care. Nevertheless, the relatively lower ratings on waiting time and the effect of retrieval delays suggest that further improvements in records management processes could enhance the efficiency of service delivery and improve patient experience.

Table 6: Patients' Perception of the Communication Quality of Health Information Managers at UBTH (N = 200)

S/N	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	HIM staff communicate clearly with patients.	8 (4.0%)	18 (9.0%)	94 (47.0%)	80 (40.0%)	3.23	Agree
2	I receive adequate information during registration.	10 (5.0%)	24 (12.0%)	92 (46.0%)	74 (37.0%)	3.15	Agree
3	HIM staff are polite when interacting with patients.	6 (3.0%)	16 (8.0%)	90 (45.0%)	88 (44.0%)	3.30	Agree
4	Instructions given by HIM staff are easy to understand.	8 (4.0%)	20 (10.0%)	89 (44.5%)	83 (41.5%)	3.24	Agree
5	Communication from HIM staff reduces patient confusion.	11 (5.5%)	25 (12.5%)	91 (45.5%)	73 (36.5%)	3.13	Agree
	Grand Mean					3.21	Agree

Table 6 presents respondents' perceptions of the communication quality of Health Information Managers at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The results reveal a grand mean score of 3.21, which is above the decision benchmark of 2.50. This indicates that respondents generally had a positive perception of the communication quality of Health Information Managers.

The statement "HIM staff are polite when interacting with patients" recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.30), suggesting that most respondents perceived the Health Information Managers as courteous and respectful in their interactions. Similarly, respondents agreed that "Instructions given by HIM staff are easy to understand" (Mean = 3.24) and "HIM staff communicate clearly with patients" (Mean = 3.23), indicating that communication between Health Information Managers and patients was generally effective and understandable. Furthermore, respondents agreed that they received adequate information during registration (Mean = 3.15) and that communication from HIM staff reduced patient confusion (Mean = 3.13). Although these statements recorded comparatively lower mean scores than the others, they still exceeded the benchmark, suggesting that most patients considered the information provided during registration to be satisfactory. Most importantly, the findings indicate that patients perceive the communication quality of Health Information Managers at UBTH positively. The results suggest that Health Information Managers communicate clearly, provide understandable instructions, and interact politely with patients, thereby contributing to a positive patient experience and facilitating smooth access to healthcare services.

Table 7: Patients' Perception of the Professionalism, Courtesy, and Responsiveness of Health Information Managers at UBTH (N = 200)

S/N	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	HIM staff are professional in their conduct.	6 (3.0%)	18 (9.0%)	88 (44.0%)	88 (44.0%)	3.29	Agree
2	Staff treat patients with respect and courtesy.	5 (2.5%)	15 (7.5%)	90 (45.0%)	90 (45.0%)	3.33	Agree
3	HIM staff are responsive to patient needs.	8 (4.0%)	22 (11.0%)	92 (46.0%)	78 (39.0%)	3.20	Agree
4	Staff show patience when attending to patients.	9 (4.5%)	20 (10.0%)	91 (45.5%)	80 (40.0%)	3.21	Agree
5	I am satisfied with the attitude of HIM staff.	7 (3.5%)	21 (10.5%)	93 (46.5%)	79 (39.5%)	3.22	Agree
	Grand Mean					3.25	Agree

Table 7 presents respondents' perceptions of the professionalism, courtesy, and responsiveness of Health Information Managers at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The results show a grand mean score of 3.25, which is above the decision benchmark of 2.50, indicating that respondents generally had a positive perception of the professionalism and conduct of Health Information Managers. The statement "Staff treat patients with respect and courtesy" recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.33), suggesting that most respondents agreed that Health Information Managers demonstrate respect and courtesy in their

interactions with patients. Similarly, respondents agreed that "HIM staff are professional in their conduct" (Mean = 3.29), indicating that patients perceived the staff as competent, ethical, and committed to delivering quality services. Furthermore, respondents agreed that "I am satisfied with the attitude of HIM staff" (Mean = 3.22), "Staff show patience when attending to patients" (Mean = 3.21), and "HIM staff are responsive to patient needs" (Mean = 3.20). Although these statements recorded slightly lower mean scores, they remained above the acceptance benchmark, indicating that patients generally viewed the staff as approachable, patient, and willing to respond to their needs promptly. The findings indicate that patients perceive Health Information Managers at UBTH as professional, courteous, and responsive in the discharge of their duties. These positive attributes are likely to enhance patients' confidence in the Health Information Management unit and contribute to a more satisfactory healthcare experience from the point of registration through subsequent hospital services.

Table 8: Patients' Perception of the Influence of Health Information Managers' Services on Overall Patient Experience at UBTH (N = 200)

S/N	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Decision
1	Overall, HIM services improved my hospital experience.	7 (3.5%)	18 (9.0%)	91 (45.5%)	84 (42.0%)	3.26	Agree
2	I am satisfied with HIM services at UBTH.	8 (4.0%)	19 (9.5%)	89 (44.5%)	84 (42.0%)	3.25	Agree
3	HIM services influence my willingness to return for care.	10 (5.0%)	24 (12.0%)	88 (44.0%)	78 (39.0%)	3.17	Agree
4	First contact with HIM staff affects my perception of UBTH.	5 (2.5%)	16 (8.0%)	87 (43.5%)	92 (46.0%)	3.33	Agree
5	I would recommend UBTH based on my experience with HIM staff.	9 (4.5%)	21 (10.5%)	90 (45.0%)	80 (40.0%)	3.21	Agree
	Grand Mean					3.24	Agree

Table 8 presents respondents' perceptions of the influence of Health Information Managers' services on their overall patient experience at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH). The findings reveal a grand mean score of 3.24, which is above the decision benchmark of 2.50, indicating that respondents generally agreed that the services provided by Health Information Managers positively influence their overall hospital experience. Among the statements, "First contact with HIM staff affects my perception of UBTH" recorded the highest mean score (Mean = 3.33), suggesting that respondents recognized the important role Health Information Managers play in shaping patients' first impressions of the hospital. Respondents also agreed that "Overall, HIM services improved my hospital experience" (Mean = 3.26) and "I am satisfied with HIM services at UBTH" (Mean = 3.25), indicating that the quality of services provided by Health Information Managers contributes positively to patients' satisfaction with healthcare delivery. Furthermore, respondents agreed that they would recommend UBTH based on their experience with HIM staff (Mean = 3.21) and that HIM services influence their willingness to return for future healthcare (Mean = 3.17). Although the latter recorded the lowest mean score among the five statements, it remained above the acceptance benchmark, suggesting that patients generally perceive the services rendered by Health Information Managers as an important factor in their future healthcare decisions. Overall, the findings indicate that the services provided by Health Information Managers have a positive influence on patients' overall experience at UBTH. The results suggest that efficient registration, effective communication, professionalism, and responsiveness during the first point of contact contribute significantly to patients' satisfaction, their perception of the hospital, and their willingness to utilize or recommend its healthcare services.

V. DISCUSSION

This finding is consistent with the study by Jin et al. (2021), which reported that efficient patient registration systems significantly reduced waiting time and improved patient satisfaction in outpatient departments. Similarly, Ye and Wu (2022) found that streamlined registration processes and appointment systems enhanced patient flow and improved patients' perceptions of healthcare quality. Within the Nigerian context, Ogungbemi et al. (2024) observed that efficient administrative services, including patient registration, contributed significantly to patients' overall satisfaction with healthcare services in a tertiary hospital. The implication of this finding is that efficient registration services provided by Health Information Managers create a positive first impression of the hospital, reduce administrative delays, and enhance patients' confidence in the healthcare system. Maintaining efficient registration processes is therefore essential for improving patient-centred care and overall service quality. The findings from Research Question Two showed that respondents generally perceived medical records retrieval services at UBTH to be timely, as reflected by the grand mean of 3.06. The respondents agreed that their medical records were retrieved promptly, waiting time before records were found was relatively minimal, Health Information Managers responded quickly to file requests from clinics, delays in records retrieval rarely affected treatment, and the records system supported timely patient care. These findings indicate that timely records retrieval contributes to the smooth delivery of healthcare services. This finding agrees with Jabour et al. (2020), who reported that effective electronic medical records systems reduced delays in accessing patient information and improved the efficiency of clinical services. Similarly, Obimba et al. (2022) found that proper health records management facilitated timely access to patient information and enhanced healthcare delivery in Nigerian tertiary hospitals. However, the relatively lower ratings for waiting time

suggest that occasional delays in records retrieval still exist, supporting the observations of Babatope et al. (2024) that infrastructural and operational challenges continue to affect health information management services in many Nigerian public hospitals. The implication of this finding is that improving medical records retrieval systems, particularly through greater use of electronic health records and better information management infrastructure, will further reduce waiting time and enhance patients' overall healthcare experience. The findings from Research Question Three revealed that respondents had a favourable perception of the communication quality of Health Information Managers, with a grand mean of 3.21. The respondents agreed that Health Information Managers communicated clearly, provided adequate information during registration, interacted politely with patients, gave instructions that were easy to understand, and communicated in ways that reduced patient confusion. These findings suggest that effective communication plays an important role in promoting positive patient experiences during the registration process. This finding supports the study by Kim and Sim (2020), which reported that effective communication between healthcare personnel and patients significantly improved patient satisfaction and confidence in healthcare services. Similarly, Abraham et al. (2024) found that respectful communication, empathy, and clear information sharing were associated with better patient experiences across healthcare settings in Africa. These findings reinforce the importance of communication as a key component of quality healthcare service delivery. The implication of this finding is that effective communication by Health Information Managers helps patients understand hospital procedures, reduces anxiety and uncertainty, and strengthens patients' confidence in the services provided. Continuous training in interpersonal communication and customer relations will further improve patient satisfaction. The findings from Research Question Four showed that respondents perceived Health Information Managers as professional, courteous, and responsive in the discharge of their duties, as indicated by the grand mean of 3.25. The respondents agreed that Health Information Managers conducted themselves professionally, treated patients with respect and courtesy, responded promptly to patients' needs, demonstrated patience while attending to patients, and exhibited attitudes that were generally satisfactory. These findings indicate that the personal conduct and professionalism of Health Information Managers positively influence patients' perceptions of healthcare services. This finding is consistent with Kim and Sim (2020), who found that professionalism and effective interpersonal relationships among healthcare workers significantly improved patients' trust and satisfaction. Likewise, Jameel et al. (2025) reported that professionalism, empathy, and respectful interactions by frontline healthcare personnel positively influenced patients' confidence in healthcare institutions and their overall satisfaction with care. The implication of this finding is that professionalism and courteous behaviour among Health Information Managers foster positive relationships with patients, improve service quality, and strengthen public confidence in the hospital. Hospital management should therefore continue to promote professional ethics, customer service, and patient-centered care among Health Information Management personnel. The findings from Research Question Five revealed that Health Information Managers' services had a positive influence on patients' overall experience at UBTH, as evidenced by the grand mean of 3.24. Respondents agreed that the services provided by Health Information Managers improved their hospital experience, increased their satisfaction with healthcare services, influenced their willingness to return to the hospital for future care, shaped their perception of UBTH during their first contact with the hospital, and encouraged them to recommend the hospital to others. These findings demonstrate that the quality of services provided by Health Information Managers extends beyond administrative functions and contributes significantly to patients' overall perception of healthcare delivery. This finding is consistent with Jesus et al. (2025), who reported that improvements in administrative processes and patient-centered service delivery significantly enhanced patient experience across healthcare organizations. Similarly, Ogungbemi et al. (2024) found that positive patient experiences with hospital support services contributed to higher levels of patient satisfaction and greater willingness to utilize healthcare services in the future. The implication of this finding is that Health Information Managers play a critical role in shaping patients' first impressions and overall experience within the hospital. Strengthening Health Information Management services through continuous professional development, improved records management systems, and enhanced customer service practices will contribute to better patient satisfaction, increased confidence in healthcare services, and improved quality of care at the University of Benin Teaching Hospital.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study further concludes that although patients generally expressed satisfaction with the services provided by Health Information Managers, opportunities still exist to improve the speed of medical records retrieval and reduce occasional delays experienced during service delivery. Continuous improvements in administrative processes and records management systems will further enhance service efficiency and patient satisfaction. The management of the University of Benin Teaching Hospital should continue to strengthen the efficiency of patient registration services by ensuring adequate staffing, regular monitoring of patient flow, and periodic review of registration procedures to minimize waiting time and improve service delivery and recommend that the hospital should improve the medical records retrieval process through greater adoption of electronic health records, regular updating of records management systems, and continuous supervision of records management activities to reduce delays in accessing patient information.

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