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Faculty of Management
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Faculty of Management

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**The Impact of Service Quality on Customer
Satisfaction
in Cosmetic Clinics in Saudi Arabia**

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Table of Contents

1. Chapter 1: Introduction	3
1.1 Research Background	3
1.2 Research Problem	5
1.2.1 Theoretical Gaps	5
1.2.2 Practical Gaps	6
1.3 Research Significance	6
1.3.1 At the theoretical level	7
1.3.2 At the practical level	7
References	8

List of Figures

Figure No.	Title	Page
1	Research Model (prepared by the student)	To be added in Project 2

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Customer satisfaction is important for service organizations, especially when there's a lot of competition. It's not just about the main service they provide, but also about how employees communicate, if appointments are reliable, if information is clear and if the physical space is nice. People also care about getting quick responses and feeling like they can trust the organization.

For many companies, making customers happy is a top goal because it can lead to loyalty, good word of mouth and better financial results over time. When customers get what they expect or even more, they're usually happy and will stick with the company. But if the service isn't what they expected, they might get unhappy and go to a competitor. In a lot of service industries, customers judge how good the service is based on how they're treated by employees and how fast they get what they need. These experiences help build trust and make customers want to come back because they had good experiences before. Things like employee communication and the physical environment play a big role in shaping the customer's experience. If customers feel comfortable and supported throughout the process, they're more likely to be satisfied. On the other hand, if they encounter problems or feel like they're not being heard, they might get frustrated and take their business elsewhere. Companies need to pay attention to these details and make sure they're doing everything they can to make customers happy. It's also worth noting that customer satisfaction can vary from person to person. What one person considers good service, another might not. But overall, companies that prioritize customer satisfaction tend to do better in the long run. They build a loyal

customer base and get more positive word of mouth, which can lead to even more customers and better financial results. So, it's really important for service organizations to focus on making their customers happy and to keep working to improve their services over time. By doing so, companies can create a positive feedback loop where happy customers lead to more business, which in turn leads to even happier customers. This can be a key factor in a company's success and sustainability, especially in competitive markets. As customers become more satisfied, they're more likely to recommend the company to others and to continue doing business with them. This can lead to a loyal customer base and a reputation for providing high-quality service, which can be a major competitive advantage.

When it comes to customer satisfaction, service quality plays a huge role. It's all about how customers see the quality of a service, and it usually covers five key areas: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles. Let's break it down - reliability is about delivering what you promise, accurately and consistently. For instance, if a company says they'll have your package delivered in three days, they should stick to that. Responsiveness is being willing to help customers and provide quick service, like responding to their queries in a timely manner. Assurance involves the knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to build trust with customers. If customers feel like they can trust a company, they're more likely to come back. Empathy means offering caring and individualized attention, like understanding a customer's specific needs and concerns. And then there are tangibles, which refer to the physical aspects of the service setting, such as the facilities, equipment, and staff appearance. All these elements work together to create a positive experience for customers.

The connection between service quality and customer satisfaction has been widely

studied across sectors such as banking, hospitality, education, healthcare and retail. Many findings show that higher perceived service quality leads to greater customer satisfaction. This link is especially important in healthcare, where customers often have high expectations and where trust, safety, communication, privacy and professional care are essential. While healthcare customers may assess the technical outcome of a procedure, they also consider non-technical aspects, like how they were treated, the clarity of explanations, and whether their time and concerns were respected.

Cosmetic clinics form a distinctive segment within the healthcare and beauty service sector. Customers visiting cosmetic clinics usually seek services that affect their appearance, self-confidence and sense of well-being. As a result, their expectations are often sensitive and highly personal. A customer might not judge the clinic solely by the final aesthetic result, but also by the consultation process, the explanation of risks and expected results, the professionalism of the staff, the cleanliness of the clinic, how appointments are managed, after-care instructions, and follow-up communication. These factors make service quality especially important in cosmetic clinics.

In Saudi Arabia, demand for cosmetic and aesthetic services has risen in recent years. Social media, changing lifestyles, increased awareness of skincare and aesthetic procedures, and the growth of private healthcare have all contributed to the expansion of cosmetic clinics. This growth has led to strong competition among clinics, especially in larger cities. Consequently, clinics must set themselves apart not only through the medical procedures they offer but also through the quality of the customer experience. Saudi Arabia's ongoing development plans have encouraged improvements in service sectors, including healthcare and private

sector involvement. In this context, cosmetic clinics are expected to deliver services that meet customer expectations and uphold professional standards. Customers today have access to online reviews, social media recommendations and a variety of clinic options. This means that a negative experience can quickly harm a clinic's reputation, while a positive experience can foster loyalty and attract new customers through recommendations.

Despite the importance of customer satisfaction in cosmetic clinics, many organizations still focus mainly on clinical procedures and pricing, paying less attention to the dimensions of service quality. In reality, customers may feel dissatisfied not because of the treatment itself, but due to long waiting times, unclear communication, poor follow-up, lack of empathy, or weak coordination. These issues can lower customer satisfaction even when the technical service is acceptable. Therefore, understanding how service quality affects customer satisfaction can help clinic managers pinpoint areas that need improvement.

This study examines the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia. It aims to investigate how the main dimensions of service quality influence customer satisfaction. By exploring this topic, the study seeks to provide both academic and practical knowledge relevant to management and cosmetic clinic operations. The findings are expected to help managers enhance service delivery, build stronger customer relationships, and improve the competitiveness of cosmetic clinics in the Saudi market.

1.1 Research Problem

Cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia operate in a competitive setting where customers

have many options and high expectations. Even though many clinics invest in advanced technologies, skilled doctors, and appealing marketing, customer satisfaction can still be influenced by the quality of service throughout the customer journey. Customers may judge their experience based on appointment scheduling, reception, consultation, waiting time, communication, cleanliness, privacy, staff behavior, follow-up, and their overall sense of confidence and care.

The main problem addressed in this study is that some cosmetic clinics may not fully understand which aspects of service quality most strongly affect customer satisfaction. When service quality is inconsistent, customers may become dissatisfied even if the clinic offers advanced treatments. This can result in negative reviews, decreased loyalty, and the loss of potential customers. Therefore, it is important to examine the link between service quality and customer satisfaction in cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia.

What makes customers happy with the service they get at cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia? To answer this, we need to look at how the quality of service affects how satisfied customers are. So, the main question we're trying to answer is: how much does the quality of service impact customer satisfaction at these clinics?

1.1.1 Theoretical Gaps

Lots of research has been done on how service quality affects customer satisfaction in areas like banking, hospitality, education, and healthcare. But not as much has been done on cosmetic clinics, where people go for both medical and aesthetic reasons. What's interesting is that customers of cosmetic clinics might have different expectations than those in regular healthcare, because their satisfaction is

influenced by how they feel emotionally, personally, and about their appearance. For instance, someone going to a cosmetic clinic might be looking for a specific outcome that makes them feel more confident, which is different from someone going to a regular doctor's office. This means that cosmetic clinics need to consider these unique expectations when trying to provide good service and keep their customers happy.

Here's how service quality works in cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia. We know that service quality is important, but we're not really sure how it applies to this specific area. The usual way to measure service quality is by using something called SERVQUAL, which looks at things like how well a service is delivered, how reliable it is, and how it makes customers feel. But what's important can vary depending on the type of service and the culture of the place. For example, when it comes to cosmetic services, customers want to feel like they can trust the people helping them, and that they're getting personalized attention. This study helps us understand more about how service quality works in cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia, which can be really useful for people who run these clinics and want to make sure their customers are happy.

1.1.2 Practical Gaps

When it comes to running a cosmetic clinic, managers often find it tough to figure out what areas of service quality need a boost. Some clinics might put all their energy into having the latest equipment and flashy ads, but they might be neglecting the behind-the-scenes stuff that really matters to customers. Things like how long people have to wait, how appointments are managed, how staff communicate with each other and with customers, and whether they follow up with

patients after treatments - all these things can make or break a customer's experience. If a clinic gets these operational details right, customers are more likely to leave happy and come back for more. But if they get it wrong, customers might end up feeling frustrated and take their business elsewhere.

There is also a practical need for clear recommendations that can help cosmetic clinics improve customer satisfaction. By studying the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction, this research can help managers understand how customers judge service experiences and which quality aspects should be given priority. This can support better decision-making, staff training, service design, and customer relationship management.

1.2 Research Significance

The importance of this study lies in the growing relevance of customer satisfaction in the cosmetic clinic sector. As competition intensifies, cosmetic clinics must deliver high-quality services that meet customer expectations. This study is significant because it connects service quality, a key managerial factor, with customer satisfaction, a crucial outcome for organizational success. Understanding this relationship can help clinics create better customer experiences and maintain a strong market position.

This study is also significant because it sheds light on the expanding service sector in Saudi Arabia, particularly in the cosmetic clinic industry. As these clinics become increasingly popular and competitive, consumers are now more informed about their options. By exploring this area, the study can offer useful insights for both scholars and professionals in the fields of management and healthcare

services, ultimately contributing to better understanding and improvement of these services.

1.2.1 At the theoretical level

Theoretically, this study contributes to the literature on service quality and customer satisfaction by applying these concepts to cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia. It offers a foundation for understanding how service quality dimensions may affect satisfaction in a sector that combines healthcare, beauty, and customer experience. The study may also support future research by providing a framework that can be expanded in later stages of the graduation project.

Moreover, the study clarifies the relevance of service quality theory in a specific service setting. While the SERVQUAL model has been used in various sectors, its application to cosmetic clinics can highlight the importance of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles in shaping customer satisfaction. This adds to the academic discussion on whether service quality dimensions have the same effect across all service industries or if their impact varies depending on the nature of the service.

1.2.2 At the practical level

This study can really help managers of cosmetic clinics figure out what needs to be improved when it comes to serving their customers. If it's clear that the quality of service affects how happy customers are, then clinics can work on making their appointment systems better, improving how staff talk to customers, reducing waiting times, making follow-up procedures smoother, respecting customer

privacy, and making the physical space more welcoming. By making these changes, clinics can increase customer satisfaction and encourage customers to come back. For example, a clinic might focus on streamlining their appointment system to reduce wait times, or provide staff with training on effective communication to improve customer interactions. By prioritizing these areas, clinics can create a better experience for their customers and build loyalty.

This research can also be useful for training staff at beauty clinics. When customers come in, they meet lots of people - the ones at the front desk, the coordinators, nurses, doctors, and those who help with questions. How well these staff treat customers can make a big difference in how happy customers are. So, the results of this study might help clinics create training that makes their staff better at listening, being kind, acting professional, and talking to customers in a way that's clear and helpful.

This study can really help cosmetic clinics stand out from the crowd. When customers are happy, they're more likely to tell others about their great experience and recommend the clinic. In an industry where social media and customer reviews play a big role, making sure the service is top-notch can lead to a better reputation and more success in the long run. By focusing on what customers want and need, clinics can build a loyal following and stay ahead of the competition.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

These days, how well a service is done is really important for making customers happy, especially when it comes to healthcare and places like cosmetic clinics. As people learn more about the treatments they want, like ones to look better, they expect a lot from these clinics. So, these clinics need to do more than just give good treatment results - they also have to make sure customers have a great experience overall.

This section looks back at what earlier research has said about the two key things we're studying: how good a service is and how happy customers are. We'll go over the main points of each, break down what they're made of, and see how they're connected, using what other studies have already found out.

This literature review forms the theoretical basis for the proposed research model and helps in building the study hypothesis.

2.2 The Independent Variable - Service Quality

Service quality is widely acknowledged as a key factor in determining organizational success within service industries. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) describe service quality as the gap between what customers expect before receiving a service and what they perceive after the experience. When customers feel that the service surpasses their expectations, they consider the service to be of high quality.

In cosmetic clinics, service quality goes beyond the medical procedure itself. It covers the professionalism of healthcare staff, staff behavior, how appointments are managed, communication, waiting times, cleanliness, privacy, safety, and follow-up care. Customers usually judge the whole service experience rather than just the clinical results.

The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) remains one of the most widely used frameworks for measuring service quality. It consists of five dimensions: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles.

Reliability

When you go to a cosmetic clinic, you want to know that they will do what they say they will. This is called reliability. It means the clinic can deliver their services correctly and on time, every time. People who go to these clinics expect them to do their treatments right, show up on time for appointments, give them the right information, and get the results they were promised.

Reliable services boost customers' trust in the clinic and help reduce uncertainty about cosmetic procedures. According to Kotler and Keller (2022), reliability is often seen as the most important dimension of service quality because customers value dependability and consistency.

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is about how willing employees are to help customers quickly and efficiently. In cosmetic clinics, this includes answering questions promptly, reducing waiting times, managing appointments well, and responding to customer concerns in a timely way.

Customers value clinics that provide quick help and keep up good communication during the treatment process. Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2021) note that responsiveness improves how customers view professionalism and the competence of the organization.

Assurance

Assurance involves employees' knowledge, skills, professionalism, and their ability to inspire trust and confidence. Since cosmetic procedures directly affect customers' appearance and health, assurance is especially important.

Customers want physicians, nurses, and coordinators to have the right qualifications, explain procedures clearly, communicate well, and reassure them about treatment safety.

According to Kotler and Keller, who wrote about this in 2022, feeling sure and safe about something has a big impact on whether people are willing to have

cosmetic treatments done. This is because when people feel assured, they are more likely to take the leap and go through with it.

Empathy

Empathy is about offering personalized care and attention to customers. Employees show empathy by understanding customers' worries, listening closely, respecting privacy, and giving emotional support throughout the treatment process.

Many cosmetic procedures come with emotional expectations, so customers value clinics that treat them with care and professionalism.

When businesses show they care about their customers, it can lead to strong, lasting relationships and make customers more loyal.

Tangibles

The physical things you can see and touch when you get a service are important. This includes the building and its layout, the equipment used, how clean everything is, and what the staff looks like. Even the decor and the latest medical tools play a role. All these things together create the overall atmosphere of the place.

Modern cosmetic clinics spend a lot on advanced laser equipment, comfortable waiting areas, and visually appealing spaces because these tangible aspects shape customers' first impressions.

Research has shown that when a business has nice-looking buildings and facilities, it can make a good impression on customers and affect how they think about the quality of service they will receive, even before they actually get the service.

To put it simply, past studies have all shown that these five key areas work together to influence how customers view the quality of service they receive.

2.3 The Dependent Variable - Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is basically how happy people are with the service they got.

It's like when you expect something to happen, and it either does or it doesn't. If it does, you're satisfied, but if it doesn't, you're not. For example, imagine you go to a restaurant and you're expecting good food and good service. If you get both, you'll be happy and satisfied. But if the food is bad or the service is slow, you'll be disappointed and dissatisfied. This is what Kotler and Keller said in 2022 - that customer satisfaction is all about meeting or beating people's expectations.

In cosmetic clinics, customer satisfaction is influenced by several factors, including treatment results, staff behavior, quality of communication, waiting times, appointment management, clinic environment, and the overall experience.

Researchers often assess customer satisfaction using a range of indicators.

Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction is basically how happy a customer is with their time at the cosmetic clinic. It's about whether the clinic did what they promised and met the customer's expectations.

When people are happy with the service they get, they tend to think well of the place and are more likely to tell others about it.

Loyalty Intention

Customer loyalty is about customers' willingness to keep using the clinic's services in the future.

Loyal customers tend to return to the same clinic for more cosmetic procedures and are less likely to choose competitors.

According to Oliver (2014), customer satisfaction is one of the best predictors of customer loyalty.

Positive Word-of-Mouth

When people have a great experience at a cosmetic clinic, they usually share it with others. They might tell their friends and family about it, or even post about it

on social media. This kind of positive word-of-mouth is really important for cosmetic clinics, because a lot of people rely on personal recommendations when they're trying to decide which clinic to go to for aesthetic services.

Word-of-mouth marketing plays a big role in attracting new customers and improving the clinic's reputation.

Repeat Visit Intention

Repeat visit intention is about customers' willingness to come back for future cosmetic treatments.

Customers who receive high-quality service and are pleased with their treatment results are more likely to return to the same clinic for further procedures.

Researchers in the healthcare field note that when patients come back for more visits, it's a good sign that they're happy with the care they're getting.

Overall, customer satisfaction is a key measure of how well an organization is performing because satisfied customers help ensure long-term business success and a competitive edge.

2.4 The Relationship Between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Research has always said that when companies do a good job, customers are happy. This is true for all kinds of services.

Customers judge cosmetic clinics based on both technical quality (how effective the treatment is) and functional quality (how the service is delivered). Even if the treatment works well, poor communication, long waits, or unfriendly staff can lower overall customer satisfaction.

When people get good service, they're happier with what they're getting. This is because they feel like they're getting a better deal. Researchers like Parasuraman found this out back in 1988. They said that if the service is good, customers will be more satisfied. It's all about feeling like you're getting value for your money.

Companies that consistently deliver top-notch services tend to form lasting bonds with their customers, which in turn boosts loyalty and keeps them coming back.

Research in healthcare has shown that when patients get good service, they're more likely to be happy with their care. This means that things like being reliable, responding quickly, being trustworthy, showing empathy, and having nice facilities really make a difference. Patients who experience these positive things tend to feel more satisfied with the healthcare they receive.

In cosmetic clinics, this connection is even more critical because customers often want both excellent medical results and outstanding service experiences. Professional communication, personalized care, modern facilities, and efficient appointment management all play a part in overall satisfaction.

Based on the literature reviewed, service quality is expected to have a positive and statistically significant effect on customer satisfaction in cosmetic clinics in Saudi Arabia.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at what other researchers have said about service quality and how happy customers are. It talked about what makes up service quality, using a model called SERVQUAL, which includes things like being reliable, responding to customers, giving them confidence, being caring, and having good physical facilities. The chapter also discussed what makes customers satisfied, including how happy they are overall, whether they plan to come back, whether they'll say good things about the service to others, and whether they'll visit again.

The studies reviewed consistently show that high service quality improves customer satisfaction by enhancing customers' experiences before, during, and after cosmetic treatments. Cosmetic clinics that offer reliable services, respond quickly to customer needs, act professionally, provide personalized care, and keep their facilities attractive are more likely to reach higher levels of customer satisfaction.

The studies we looked at provide a solid foundation for our research model and support the idea that good service quality is closely linked to happy customers in

cosmetics clinics in Saudi Arabia.
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Appendix B: Table of Research Instruments

The following table presents the research instrument used to measure the variables in this study. The questionnaire is based on the **SERVQUAL dimensions** of service quality: Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy, and Tangibles. Customer satisfaction is measured through overall satisfaction, loyalty intention, positive word-of-mouth, and repeat visit intention.

□

Variable	Dimensions	Item Numbers	Number of Items	Measurement Scale
Independent Variable: Service Quality	Reliability	R1–R5	5	5-Point Likert Scale
	Responsiveness	RS1–RS5	5	5-Point Likert Scale

	Assurance	A1–A5	5	5-Point Likert Scale
	Empathy	E1–E5	5	5-Point Likert Scale
	Tangibles	T1–T5	5	5-Point Likert Scale
Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction	Overall Satisfaction	CS1–CS3	3	5-Point Likert Scale
	Loyalty Intention	CS4	1	5-Point Likert Scale
	Positive Word-of-Mouth	CS5	1	5-Point Likert Scale
	Repeat Visit / Overall Experience	CS6	1	5-Point Likert Scale
Total	—	—	31	5-Point Likert Scale

Appendix B: Questionnaire

The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Cosmetic Clinics in Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Dear Participant,

I am conducting a graduation project entitled “The Impact of Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction in Cosmetic Clinics in Saudi Arabia.” The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand customers perceptions of the quality of services provided by cosmetic clinics and their level of satisfaction.

Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be used for academic purposes only. Please answer all questions based on your most recent experience with a cosmetic clinic.

Part A: General Information

Please select the answer that best describes you.

1. Gender:

- * Male
- * Female

2. Age:

- * 18–25
- * 26–35
- * 36–45
- * 46–55
- * 56 or above

3. How often do you visit cosmetic clinics?

- * Once
- * 2–3 times
- * 4–5 times
- * More than 5 times

What kind of service was your most recent experience with?

- * Laser hair removal

- * Skin rejuvenation
- * Botox or dermal fillers
- * Chemical peel
- * Facial treatment
- * Body contouring
- * Dermatology consultation
- * Other

How long have you been going to a cosmetic clinic to get treatments or services?

- * Less than 1 year
- * 1–3 years
- * 4–6 years
- * More than 6 years

—

Part B: Service Quality

Tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Agree
- 5 = Strongly Agree

1. Reliability

No. Statement 1 2 3 4 5

The clinic delivers on its promises and provides the services as expected. This is a positive aspect of the clinic's operations.

R2 The clinic provides services correctly and consistently. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

R3 Appointments are handled accurately and as scheduled. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

R4 The clinic keeps its promises regarding the services provided. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

R5 I can depend on the clinic to provide the service properly. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. Responsiveness

No. Statement 1 2 3 4 5

The staff at the clinic are really responsive and get back to me quickly when I have questions or need something, which is great.

RS2 The clinic provides services within a reasonable amount of time. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

My team is always there to lend a hand when I need it, which is really helpful.

Employees are generally willing to help out when I need assistance. It's great to have such a supportive team.

RS4 The clinic keeps customers informed about appointments and services. ☐ ☐

☐ ☐ ☐

RS5 Employees respond effectively when I have a problem or concern. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

3. Assurance

No. Statement 1 2 3 4 5

Our team members have the information and expertise required to address my inquiries effectively.

A2 I feel confident in the professionalism of the clinic staff. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

A3 Employees treat me in a professional and respectful manner. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

A4 I feel safe when receiving services at the clinic. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The staff at the clinic make me feel confident that they're handling my personal

information properly.

4. Empathy

No. Statement 1 2 3 4 5

The staff at the clinic really take the time to focus on each patient's needs, giving me the individual attention I need.

E2 Employees understand my personal needs and concerns. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

My team members really pay attention when I have questions or worries, they listen carefully to what I have to say.

E4 The clinic provides services at convenient times for customers. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

I feel that the clinic really looks out for me and my well-being, they seem to genuinely care about my needs.

5. Tangibles

No. Statement 1 2 3 4 5

T1 The clinic has clean and attractive facilities. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

The clinic's equipment seems to be up-to-date and properly taken care of.

T3 The clinic provides a comfortable physical environment. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

T4 Employees have a professional appearance. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

T5 The clinic provides clear and professional information and materials. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

☐

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Part C: Customer Satisfaction

Please share your thoughts on each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it.

No. Statement 1 2 3 4 5

I'm really happy with the care I got from the clinic overall.

The clinic's services are up to my standards, I'm satisfied with what they offer.

I am happy with the service I get at the clinic, they treat customers well.

I would think about going back to this clinic sometime later.

CS5 I would recommend this clinic to other people. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

CS6 My overall experience with the clinic has been positive. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐