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Health Optimism: The Impact of Health Information Seeking and Healthcare Satisfaction

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A B S T R A C T

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationships between health information seeking, healthcare satisfaction, and health optimism among adults. Specifically, the study aimed to determine how health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction predict health optimism. A cross-sectional design was employed, involving 194 participants recruited through convenience sampling from various community health centers. Data were collected using standardized tools: the Health Optimism Scale, the Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS), and the Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire Short-Form (PSQ-18). Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and linear regression analysis were conducted using SPSS-27 to examine the relationships between the variables and to assess the predictive power of health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction on health optimism. Descriptive statistics revealed a mean health optimism score of 3.85 (SD = 0.75), a mean health information seeking score of 4.12 (SD = 0.68), and a mean healthcare satisfaction score of 3.96 (SD = 0.82). Pearson correlation analysis indicated a moderate positive correlation between health information seeking and health optimism ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and a stronger positive correlation between healthcare satisfaction and health optimism ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$). The regression analysis showed that both health information seeking ($B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = 0.34$, $t = 3.67$, $p < 0.001$) and healthcare satisfaction ($B = 0.47$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = 0.45$, $t = 5.88$, $p < 0.001$) were significant predictors of health optimism, explaining 40% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$). This study demonstrates that both health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction significantly contribute to health optimism among adults. Healthcare satisfaction has a slightly stronger influence on health optimism. These findings underscore the importance of improving health information accessibility and the quality of healthcare services to enhance health outcomes and patients' positive health outlook.

Keywords: *Health Optimism, Health Information Seeking, Healthcare Satisfaction, Predictive Analysis, Cross-Sectional Study, Patient Satisfaction, Health Outcomes.*

1. Introduction

Health information seeking behavior has emerged as a critical factor in health management. The process through which individuals seek, acquire, and utilize health information can significantly impact their health outcomes and overall well-being. Agyemang-Duah et al. (2020) emphasized the complexity of health information seeking among older adults in Ghana, noting that socioeconomic status plays a pivotal role (Agyemang-Duah et al., 2020). Similarly, Chu et al. (2016) investigated how, when, and why individuals seek health information online, highlighting the importance of accessibility and trust in the information sources. These studies underscore that health information seeking behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including age, income, education, and the perceived quality of the information (Chu et al., 2016).

The quality and reliability of health information are crucial determinants of health information seeking behavior. Civan and Pratt (2007) explored how the quality of health information can be characterized and visualized, suggesting that higher quality information is associated with better health outcomes (Civan & Pratt, 2007). Furthermore, Clarke et al. (2019) examined determinants of satisfaction with health information related to the pertussis vaccination, finding that accurate and comprehensive information can reduce anxiety and improve health-related decisions. The relationship between the quality of health information and health outcomes highlights the need for reliable and accessible health information sources (Clarke et al., 2019).

Healthcare satisfaction is another vital component influencing health optimism. Satisfaction with healthcare services encompasses various aspects, including the quality of care, the behavior of healthcare providers, and the overall healthcare experience. Manzoor et al. (2019) demonstrated that patient satisfaction is significantly influenced by the behavior of physicians, which in turn affects patients' perceptions of their health and well-being (Manzoor et al., 2019). Gitobu et al. (2018) found that satisfaction with delivery services in Kenyan public health facilities was a critical determinant of maternal health outcomes. These findings indicate that healthcare satisfaction is multifaceted and impacts patients' health optimism directly (Gitobu et al., 2018).

Healthcare satisfaction also varies across different healthcare settings and populations. Kaushal et al. (2015) assessed client satisfaction regarding service utilization in an urban health center in Northern India, revealing significant variations based on demographic factors such as age and education (Kaushal et al., 2015). Paul et al. (2016) investigated the association between self-perceived health status and satisfaction with healthcare services in Armenia, highlighting the role of cultural and systemic factors in shaping healthcare experiences (Paul et al., 2016). These studies suggest that healthcare satisfaction is context-dependent and influenced by a variety of individual and systemic factors.

The interrelationship between health information seeking, healthcare satisfaction, and health optimism can be understood through the lens of various theoretical frameworks. Upadhyay et al. (2019) explored the mediating role of health beliefs in the relationship between health information seeking and the intention to quit smoking, suggesting that health beliefs play a crucial role in health behavior change (Upadhyay et al., 2019). Similarly, Zhang et al. (2020) examined the impact of personal trust tendency on patient compliance based on internet health information seeking, finding that trust in health information sources significantly influences health behaviors. These theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding how health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction can impact health optimism.

The role of healthcare providers and their interaction with patients is a critical factor in healthcare satisfaction. Carmody et al. (2023) conducted a scoping review on satisfaction with healthcare providers among tinnitus patients, emphasizing the importance of diagnosis, clinical services, and treatment in patient satisfaction (Carmody et al., 2023). Goetz et al. (2017) explored the working atmosphere and job satisfaction among community mental health professionals, highlighting how provider satisfaction can influence patient care. These studies indicate that healthcare provider behavior and job satisfaction are integral to overall healthcare satisfaction (Goetz et al., 2017).

Moreover, healthcare satisfaction is not limited to direct patient-provider interactions but also includes organizational and systemic factors. Jankelová (2023) investigated the factors supporting the job satisfaction of middle healthcare management, emphasizing the role of work conditions, managerial competencies, and social support (Jankelová, 2023). Matsushima et al. (2017) found that altruism among primary healthcare workers in Vietnam was a significant predictor of job satisfaction, which in turn affected patient care. These findings suggest that improving healthcare satisfaction requires addressing both individual and organizational factors (Matsushima et al., 2017).

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The impact of socio-economic factors on health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction cannot be overlooked. Hasan and Uddin (2016) examined women's empowerment through health-seeking behavior in Bangladesh, finding that socio-economic status significantly influenced health information seeking and healthcare utilization (Hasan & Uddin, 2016). Kawi (2024) investigated health information sources and health-seeking behaviors among Filipinos living in medically underserved communities, highlighting the challenges faced by marginalized populations in accessing quality health information and services (Kawi, 2024). These studies underscore the need for targeted interventions to address socio-economic disparities in health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction.

The advent of digital health technologies has also transformed health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction. Schera et al. (2018) discussed the role of mobile decision support and health management apps for cancer patients, suggesting that digital health tools can enhance patient engagement and satisfaction (Schera et al., 2018). Hawrysz et al. (2021) examined patient satisfaction with remote healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that digital health services can improve access and satisfaction, particularly during public health crises (Hawrysz et al., 2021). These findings indicate that digital health technologies offer new opportunities for improving health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction.

In addition to digital health technologies, traditional healthcare services remain crucial for many populations. Lu et al. (2022) assessed outpatient service satisfaction among low-income adults in rural China, finding that service quality and provider behavior were key determinants of satisfaction (Lu et al., 2022). Ping and Jolibert (2012) compared different models of the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and loyalty in the Chinese healthcare system, emphasizing the importance of service quality in patient satisfaction and loyalty (Ping & Jolibert, 2012). These studies highlight that despite the rise of digital health, traditional healthcare services continue to play a vital role in patient satisfaction and health outcomes.

The relationship between health information seeking, healthcare satisfaction, and health optimism is complex and multifaceted. A comprehensive understanding of these relationships requires considering individual, organizational, and systemic factors. Ahmed et al. (2017) investigated service quality, patient satisfaction, and loyalty in the Bangladesh healthcare sector, finding that service quality is a critical determinant of patient satisfaction and loyalty (Ahmed et al., 2017). Aloisio et al. (2018) explored predictors of job satisfaction among allied healthcare providers in long-term care, emphasizing the role of individual and organizational factors in shaping healthcare experiences (Aloisio et al., 2018). These studies suggest that improving health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction requires a holistic approach that addresses multiple levels of the healthcare system.

In conclusion, this study aims to explore the relationships between health information seeking, healthcare satisfaction, and health optimism among a sample of adults. By examining these relationships, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature and provide insights for developing effective healthcare policies and interventions. The findings of this study have the potential to inform healthcare practices and policies aimed at improving health information seeking behavior, healthcare satisfaction, and ultimately, health optimism.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employs a cross-sectional design to examine the relationships between Health Optimism, Health Information Seeking, and Healthcare Satisfaction. A total of 194 participants were included in the study, with the sample size determined based on the Morgan and Krejcie table to ensure adequate power and representativeness. Participants were recruited through convenience sampling from various community health centers. The inclusion criteria were adults aged 18 and above who were able to read and understand the survey materials. Exclusion criteria included individuals with cognitive impairments or severe mental health conditions that could hinder their ability to participate fully.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Health Optimism

The dependent variable, Health Optimism, can be measured using the Health Optimism Scale developed by Jessor, Turbin, and Costa in 1998. This scale consists of 8 items designed to assess an individual's positive expectations regarding their health and future health outcomes. Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale includes subscales for assessing general health optimism and specific health-related optimism. The validity and reliability of the Health

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Optimism Scale have been confirmed in numerous studies, demonstrating strong internal consistency and construct validity, making it a standard and reliable measure for this construct (Rincón Uribe et al., 2022).

2.2.2. *Health Information Seeking*

The independent variable, Health Information Seeking, can be assessed using the Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS) developed by the National Cancer Institute in 2003. The HINTS questionnaire includes 10 items that measure the frequency and sources of health information seeking behavior. The items cover various dimensions such as the use of the internet, healthcare professionals, and other media. Respondents rate their frequency of seeking health information on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The survey also includes subscales for assessing the sources and content of health information sought. The reliability and validity of the HINTS have been established in multiple studies, ensuring it is a robust tool for measuring health information-seeking behavior (Agyemang-Duah et al., 2020; Chu et al., 2016; Kawi, 2024; Upadhyay et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2020).

2.2.3. *Healthcare Satisfaction*

Healthcare Satisfaction, another independent variable, can be measured using the Patient Satisfaction Questionnaire Short-Form (PSQ-18), developed by Marshall and Hays in 1994. The PSQ-18 consists of 18 items that evaluate various aspects of patient satisfaction with healthcare services, including technical quality, interpersonal manner, communication, financial aspects, time spent with the doctor, and accessibility and convenience. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The PSQ-18 has been widely used and validated in different settings, showing high reliability and validity, making it an appropriate and trusted measure for assessing healthcare satisfaction in this study (Gitobu et al., 2018; Hawrysz et al., 2021; Jankelová, 2023; Santis et al., 2020).

2.3. *Data analysis*

Data were analyzed using SPSS-27. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants and the main variables of interest. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the relationships between the dependent variable (Health Optimism) and each of the independent variables (Health Information Seeking and Healthcare Satisfaction). Subsequently, a linear regression analysis was conducted with Health Optimism as the dependent variable and Health Information Seeking and Healthcare Satisfaction as the independent variables. This approach allowed for the examination of the individual and combined effects of the independent variables on Health Optimism. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ for all statistical tests to ensure the robustness of the findings.

3. Findings and Results

The sample consisted of 194 participants, comprising 105 females (54.12%) and 89 males (45.88%). The age distribution was as follows: 30 participants (15.46%) were between 18-29 years old, 52 participants (26.80%) were between 30-39 years old, 48 participants (24.74%) were between 40-49 years old, and 64 participants (32.99%) were 50 years old and above. In terms of education, 25 participants (12.89%) had completed high school, 68 participants (35.05%) had some college education, 74 participants (38.14%) had a bachelor's degree, and 27 participants (13.92%) had a graduate degree. Regarding employment status, 120 participants (61.86%) were employed, 38 participants (19.59%) were unemployed, and 36 participants (18.56%) were retired.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Health Optimism, Health Information Seeking, and Healthcare Satisfaction

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Health Optimism	3.85	0.75
Health Information Seeking	4.12	0.68
Healthcare Satisfaction	3.96	0.82

The descriptive statistics for the study variables are presented in Table 1. Health Optimism had a mean score of 3.85 (SD = 0.75), indicating a moderate level of optimism regarding health outcomes among participants. Health Information Seeking had a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.68), suggesting frequent engagement in health information

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seeking behaviors. Healthcare Satisfaction had a mean score of 3.96 (SD = 0.82), reflecting a generally positive satisfaction with healthcare services.

Prior to conducting the main analyses, the assumptions of linear regression were evaluated and confirmed. The assumption of linearity was checked using scatterplots, which showed a linear relationship between the independent variables (Health Information Seeking and Healthcare Satisfaction) and the dependent variable (Health Optimism). The normality of residuals was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p = 0.178$), indicating that the residuals were normally distributed. Homoscedasticity was evaluated using a plot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted values, revealing no apparent pattern. Additionally, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 2 (Health Information Seeking VIF = 1.32, Healthcare Satisfaction VIF = 1.27), indicating no multicollinearity issues. These checks confirmed that the assumptions for linear regression were satisfied.

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Health Optimism and Independent Variables

Variables	Health Optimism	p-value
Health Information Seeking	0.42	<0.001
Healthcare Satisfaction	0.56	<0.001

The Pearson correlation coefficients presented in Table 2 show that there is a moderate positive correlation between Health Optimism and Health Information Seeking ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, there is a stronger positive correlation between Health Optimism and Healthcare Satisfaction ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$). Both correlations are statistically significant, indicating that higher levels of health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction are associated with greater health optimism.

Table 3

Summary of Regression Results for Health Optimism

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Squares	R	R^2	R^2adj	F	p
Regression	45.76	2	22.88	0.63	0.40	0.39	21.34	<0.001
Residual	68.52	191	0.36					
Total	114.28	193						

Table 3 summarizes the results of the linear regression analysis with Health Optimism as the dependent variable and Health Information Seeking and Healthcare Satisfaction as the independent variables. The regression model was statistically significant ($F(2, 191) = 21.34$, $p < 0.001$) with an R^2 of 0.40, indicating that approximately 40% of the variance in Health Optimism can be explained by the independent variables. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.39 suggests that the model provides a good fit to the data.

Table 4

Multivariate Regression Analysis Predicting Health Optimism

Predictor Variables	B	Standard Error (SE)	β	t	p
Constant	1.42	0.28		5.07	<0.001
Health Information Seeking	0.32	0.09	0.34	3.67	<0.001
Healthcare Satisfaction	0.47	0.08	0.45	5.88	<0.001

The multivariate regression analysis results in Table 4 show that both Health Information Seeking ($B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = 0.34$, $t = 3.67$, $p < 0.001$) and Healthcare Satisfaction ($B = 0.47$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = 0.45$, $t = 5.88$, $p < 0.001$) were significant predictors of Health Optimism. The constant ($B = 1.42$, $SE = 0.28$, $t = 5.07$, $p < 0.001$) indicates the baseline level of Health Optimism when the independent variables are held at zero. These findings suggest that increases in health information seeking and healthcare

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satisfaction are associated with higher levels of health optimism.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationships between health information seeking, healthcare satisfaction, and health optimism among adults. The findings indicate that both health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction are significant predictors of health optimism, with healthcare satisfaction having a slightly stronger influence.

Our results show a moderate positive correlation between health information seeking and health optimism ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that individuals who frequently seek health information tend to have more optimistic health expectations. This finding aligns with previous studies that emphasize the importance of health information in shaping health attitudes and behaviors. For instance, Agyemang-Duah et al. (2020) found that older adults in Ghana who actively sought health information demonstrated better health management and outcomes (Agyemang-Duah et al., 2020). Similarly, Upadhyay et al. (2019) highlighted that health information seeking is linked to health behavior changes, such as the intention to quit smoking, mediated by health beliefs (Upadhyay et al., 2019).

The stronger positive correlation between healthcare satisfaction and health optimism ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that individuals who are more satisfied with their healthcare experiences have higher health optimism. This is consistent with Manzoor et al. (2019), who reported that patient satisfaction significantly impacts perceptions of health and well-being. Gitobu et al. (2018) also found that satisfaction with maternal healthcare services in Kenya was closely associated with better health outcomes for mothers. These studies support the notion that positive healthcare experiences can enhance patients' outlook on their health (Gitobu et al., 2018).

The regression analysis further reinforces these relationships. Health information seeking ($B = 0.32$, $SE = 0.09$, $\beta = 0.34$, $t = 3.67$, $p < 0.001$) and healthcare satisfaction ($B = 0.47$, $SE = 0.08$, $\beta = 0.45$, $t = 5.88$, $p < 0.001$) were both significant predictors of health optimism. The model explained 40% of the variance in health optimism ($R^2 = 0.40$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a substantial impact of these factors on health optimism. This finding corroborates with Zhang et al. (2020), who demonstrated that trust in health information sources significantly influences patient compliance and health outcomes. Moreover, the work of Ahmed et al. (2017) supports the critical role of service quality and patient satisfaction in fostering patient loyalty and positive health perceptions in Bangladesh (Ahmed et al., 2017).

The relationship between health information seeking and health optimism can be attributed to the increased knowledge and empowerment that individuals gain through seeking health information. As Hasan and Uddin (2016) discussed, women's empowerment through health-seeking behavior in Bangladesh was evident, indicating that access to health information empowers individuals to make informed health decisions, thereby enhancing their health optimism (Hasan & Uddin, 2016).

Healthcare satisfaction, as a stronger predictor, underscores the importance of the healthcare experience in shaping health attitudes. Positive interactions with healthcare providers, as noted by Carmody et al. (2023) in their study on tinnitus patients, significantly contribute to patient satisfaction and subsequent health outcomes (Carmody et al., 2023). Goetz et al. (2017) also emphasized that a supportive working atmosphere and job satisfaction among healthcare professionals are critical for delivering high-quality care, which in turn affects patient satisfaction and health optimism (Goetz et al., 2017).

In summary, this study highlights the significant roles of health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction in promoting health optimism. These findings are supported by existing literature, demonstrating that both factors are crucial for enhancing individuals' health outlook and overall well-being.

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, several limitations should be noted. Firstly, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to infer causality between the variables. While significant associations were found, it is unclear whether health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction lead to increased health optimism or if individuals with higher health optimism are more likely to seek information and report satisfaction. Secondly, the use of self-reported measures may introduce response biases, such as social desirability bias, where participants may overreport positive behaviors or attitudes. Thirdly, the sample was drawn from a convenience sampling method, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population. Lastly, cultural factors that influence health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction were not explicitly considered in this study, which could provide a deeper understanding of the observed relationships.

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Future research should address the limitations of the current study by employing longitudinal designs to better understand the causal relationships between health information seeking, healthcare satisfaction, and health optimism. Additionally, utilizing more objective measures of health behaviors and satisfaction could help mitigate the biases associated with self-reported data. Expanding the sample to include diverse populations across different cultural contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings and provide insights into how cultural factors influence these relationships. Furthermore, future studies could explore the role of digital health technologies in health information seeking and how these technologies impact healthcare satisfaction and health optimism, building on the prior works (Hawrysz et al., 2021; Schera et al., 2018).

The findings of this study have practical implications for healthcare providers and policymakers. Enhancing the quality and accessibility of health information is crucial for promoting health optimism among patients. Healthcare providers should be encouraged to actively disseminate reliable health information and engage in open communication with patients. Training programs for healthcare professionals should emphasize the importance of patient-centered care and effective communication skills to improve patient satisfaction. Healthcare organizations should also focus on creating supportive environments for their staff, as job satisfaction among healthcare providers is linked to better patient care and satisfaction (Goetz et al., 2017; Matsushima et al., 2017).

Policymakers should consider implementing policies that ensure equitable access to high-quality healthcare services and health information, particularly for marginalized populations. Initiatives aimed at improving digital health literacy and providing reliable online health resources can empower individuals to make informed health decisions, thereby enhancing their health optimism. Additionally, patient feedback mechanisms should be established to continually assess and improve healthcare services based on patient experiences and satisfaction levels.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the significant roles of health information seeking and healthcare satisfaction in fostering health optimism. By addressing the identified limitations and building on these findings, future research can further elucidate these relationships and inform strategies to enhance health outcomes and well-being. The practical suggestions offered can guide healthcare providers and policymakers in creating environments that promote positive health attitudes and behaviors, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes for individuals and communities.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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