

DEFINING QUALITY HEALTHCARE IN MALAYSIA

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BACKGROUND

- Healthcare quality encompasses a diverse array of perspectives. A well-defined, clear definition of quality healthcare is crucial as it provides a common understanding for healthcare providers, policymakers, and the public. This will foster consistency and alignment in healthcare practices. While similar domains exist across countries, the diverse domains relevant to local contexts and capacities highlight what is most important in defining quality.
- Recognising the absence of a quality definition tailored to the Malaysian context, this study seeks to elucidate the process of formulating a clear and context-specific definition of healthcare quality in Malaysia.

METHODS

1 Interactive Policy-maker Engagements

- 3 sessions among 3 different categories of purposively sampled policy-makers
 - Ministry of Health (MOH) key quality personnel
 - MOH vertical programme representatives
 - Non-MOH key quality personnel
- The process of gathering input was pre-tested

- Prompted with questions:
 - Strengths and weaknesses of the current healthcare system
 - "How do we define the quality of healthcare in the Malaysian context?"

Output yielded : 18 domains

2 Review of Quality-related Documents

- National MOH healthcare quality government documents:
 - Official requests to all MOH Head of Programmes
 - Publication section of MOH official websites for relevant documents
 - Included as long as they were the latest edition

- A total of 443 full-text documents were collated (n) :
 - National health policies and plans, national quality strategies (42)
 - Quality-related legislations, regulations and statutes (35)
 - Quality-related government documents on professional training materials, protocols and guidelines (322)
 - Healthcare quality performance data (10)
 - Technical and vertical programme reports (33)
 - Resources to support national quality efforts (1)

Output yielded : 8 domains

3 Online Survey Among the Public

- Explore perceptions from a geographically representative population
- Validated, pre-tested, bilingual (Malay and English)
- Eligibility: Any Malaysian above 18 years old who used government or private health services

- Simple, open-ended questions using Google Form :
 - What matters to you most when visiting any hospital or clinic?
 - Which areas are working well?
 - How to improve the quality of services in the hospital or clinic?
- Snowball dissemination using Quick Response (QR) codes
- Question (i) : explore the public's interpretation of quality of healthcare
- Analysed using the Primary Healthcare Performance Initiatives (PHCPI) framework

Output yielded : 13 domains

Findings from these 3 approaches were triangulated and mapped against a framework

Development of the framework used for mapping



Total of 17 domains

1. Safe (IOM, WHO)
2. Timely (IOM, WHO)
3. Effective (IOM, WHO)
4. Efficient (IOM, WHO, MOH)
5. Equitable (IOM, WHO, MOH)
6. People-centred (IOM, WHO, MOH)
7. Teamwork (MOH)
8. Caring (MOH)
9. Professionalism (MOH)
10. Affordable (MOH)
11. Leadership (MOH)
12. Respect for human dignity (MOH)
13. Community participation (MOH)
14. Technologically appropriate (MOH)
15. Innovative (MOH)
16. Environmentally adaptable (MOH)
17. Integrated (WHO)

RESULTS

Mechanisms & Processes Involved in Synthesizing the Definition

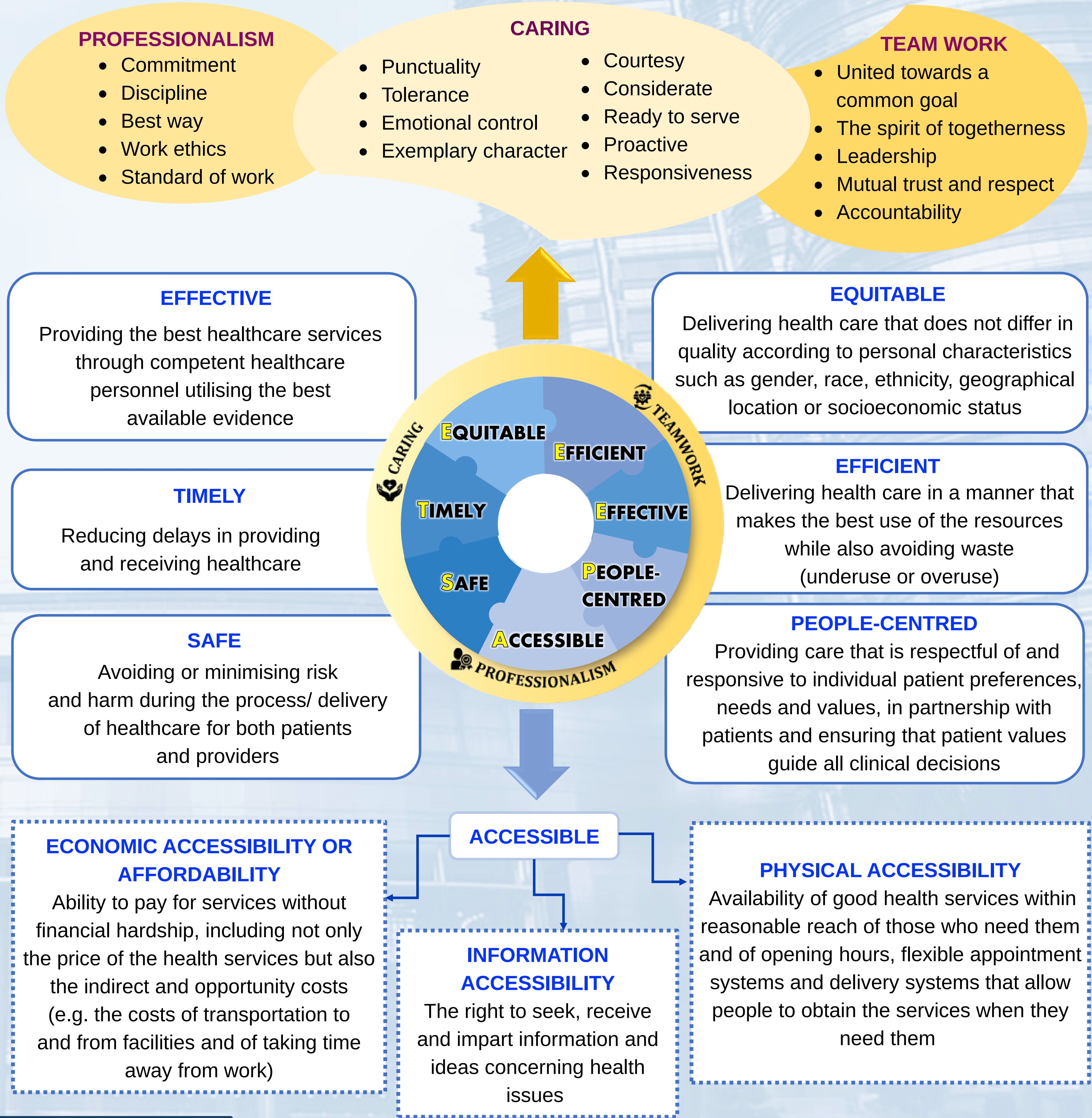
- After mapping the domains, the TWG deliberated on the main overarching domains and sub-domains
- Integrating numerous domains under broader domains → risk of diminishing crucial domains
- Teamwork, caring, and professionalism - from the current MOH Mission Statement, were preserved

Comparison of Domains from Each of the Approaches Mapped Against the 17 Framework Domains

No.	Framework Domains	Policy-maker Engagements	Document Reviews	Online Public Survey	Notations
1	Safe	Safe	Safe	-	Main domain
2	Timely	Timely	Timely	Timely	Main domain
3	Effective	Effective	Effective	Effective	Main domain
4	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient	Efficient	Main domain
5	Equitable	Equitable	Equitable	Equitable	Main domain
6	People-centred/ Patient-centred/ customer-centred	People-centred	Patient-centred	People-centred	Main domain
7	Teamwork	Teamwork	-	-	Main domain
8	Caring	-	-	-	Main domain
9	Professionalism	Professionalism Competent Integrity	-	Professional Workforce capacity	Main domain
10	Affordable	Affordable	Affordable	Affordable	Under accessible
11	Leadership	Leadership	-	Leadership	Under teamwork
12	Respect for human dignity	-	-	-	Under people-centred
13	Community participation	-	-	-	Under people-centred
14	Technologically appropriate	Technologically appropriate	-	Technology appropriate	Under innovative
15	Innovative	Innovative Adaptable	-	-	Included, but not as main/ subdomain
16	Environmentally adaptable	Environmentally adaptable	-	-	Under efficient
17	Integrated	Integrated	-	-	Under people-centred
Additional Domains Emerged Which Were Not Part of the Framework					
Accessible	Accessible	Accessible	Accessible	Accessible	New main domain
Structural				Facility capacities Facility policies	Not included in definition
Total	18 Domains	8 Domains	13 Domains		

FINAL DEFINITION OF QUALITY

"Providing high quality healthcare that is **SAFE, TIMELY, EFFECTIVE, EQUITABLE, EFFICIENT, PEOPLE-CENTRED**, and **ACCESSIBLE [STEEPA]** which is **innovative** and responsive to the needs of the people and is delivered as a **TEAM**, in a **CARING** and **PROFESSIONAL** manner in order to improve health outcomes and client experience"



CONCLUSION

- The addition of the new domain, **accessibility**, underscores its importance and the need for explicit acknowledgement. This incorporation arose from recognizing specific challenges in Malaysia, particularly disparities in equity and physical access. While some may argue "accessibility" could be subsumed under the equity domain, its distinct meaning may not have been adequately captured.
- After defining the STEEPA domains, MOH program national indicators were mapped against it to ensure appropriate domain representation, alignment with national health priorities and guide indicator development. These benchmarks will provide insights into Malaysia's healthcare performance, highlight areas for improvement, and standardize quality improvement initiatives.
- The established and widely accepted local definition of healthcare quality will serve as a guiding framework for measuring, assessing, and enhancing the quality of healthcare services delivered in Malaysia.

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We wish to thank the Director-General of Health Malaysia for permission to present this poster.

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