

Analysis of the Factors Influencing Patient Loyalty in the Digital Age: The Role of Service Quality, Patient Experience, and Hospital Reputation: Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Patient loyalty is a key indicator of a hospital's management success in maintaining its service ecosystem and competitive advantage. In the digital era, patient loyalty is influenced not only by clinical service quality but also by the patient experience, hospital reputation, and the hospital's ability to provide easy, fast, and responsive digital interactions. This study aims to analyze the factors influencing patient loyalty, focusing on the roles of service quality, patient experience, and hospital reputation through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach. A literature search was conducted on scientific articles published between 2021 and 2026 using relevant databases and journal sources. Articles were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria and subsequently analyzed systematically to identify patterns of relationships between variables. The synthesis results indicate that service quality is a fundamental determinant of patient loyalty, as reliable, responsive, safe, and patient-centric care enhances satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat visits. Patient experience is a crucial factor, as loyalty is shaped by the overall experience throughout the patient journey. Hospital reputation also plays a role in building trust and reinforcing patient preferences. Furthermore, digitalization expands patient-hospital interactions through websites, applications, social media, online registration, and telemedicine. The synthesis reveals that satisfaction and trust potentially act as mediators in the relationships between service quality, patient experience, reputation, and loyalty. Consequently, enhancing patient loyalty requires an integrated strategy that combines service quality, patient experience, institutional reputation, digital transformation, satisfaction, and trust.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of the healthcare industry in recent years has shown increasingly dynamic changes along with the increasing public need for quality, fast, accessible, and patient-oriented health services. Hospitals no longer only play the role of medical service providers, but also as service organizations that must be able to build long-term relationships with patients. The increasing competition between hospitals causes patients to have more choices in determining which health facilities to use. In these conditions, patient loyalty

is one of the strategic indicators for the sustainability of the hospital organization because loyal patients tend to make repeat visits, reuse hospital services, and recommend hospitals to families and others. A literature review on patient loyalty factors shows that service quality is one of the important determinants in shaping patient loyalty in hospitals (Setiawati & Lailiyah, 2023).

Patient loyalty is basically not formed spontaneously, but is the result of the patient's evaluation process of the overall experience gained while using health services. Patients will compare their expectations before receiving services with their perception of the services received, including aspects of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and the condition of the service facilities. When the services provided are able to meet or exceed the patient's expectations, the likelihood of satisfaction, trust, intention to make repeat visits, and recommendations to others becomes greater. Research in hospitals shows that service quality is consistently related to patient loyalty, while SERVQUAL dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibles, and empathy are important aspects in shaping patients' perceptions of service quality (Tripathi et al., 2026).

In the context of the digital era, the concept of service quality has expanded from face-to-face services to services that are integrated with information technology. Patients can currently interact with hospitals through websites, mobile applications, online registration, digital queuing systems, telemedicine, electronic payments, social media channels, and communication through digital platforms. Therefore, the quality of hospital services is not only assessed based on the interaction between patients and health workers, but also based on the convenience, speed, reliability, security, and convenience of using digital services. Systematic literature review on e-service quality shows that the integration of digital services, ease of use, technological aspects, trust, and user experience are factors that play a role in increasing patient satisfaction and loyalty (Wati et al., 2026).

The digitalization of health services also changes patients' expectations of hospitals. Patients increasingly expect a service process that is simple, fast, transparent, and accessible without always having to come directly to the hospital. From the perspective of service management, digitalization can create added value if technology is really able to reduce patient barriers in obtaining services. Conversely, digital systems that are difficult to use, unresponsive, unintegrated, or lack of information can create a negative experience and potentially lower patients' desire to return to the service. Research on hospital digitalization shows that the digitization of patient administration and services is related to satisfaction and loyalty through the usability mechanism or ease of use of services (Rusli et al., 2026).

In addition to service quality, patient experience is an increasingly important factor in explaining patient loyalty. Patient experience includes the overall perception and experience felt by patients while interacting with the health care system, starting from the registration process, communication with doctors and nurses, waiting times, facility comfort, providing information, service coordination, to the process of discharge patients. A positive experience can create an emotional bond and trust so that patients not only feel satisfied with the service, but also have a tendency to maintain a relationship with the hospital. Research on outpatient services shows that patient experience has a significant influence on patient loyalty, both directly and through patient satisfaction (Rosally et al., 2024).

The relationship between patient experience and loyalty has also become increasingly complex as patients judge hospitals based on the overall patient journey, not just the clinical outcomes received. Doctor-nurse communication, staff responsiveness, physical environment comfort, medication information, and discharge planning can all be part of the experience that determines whether a patient will return to hospital services. As such, hospitals need to develop a patient-centered approach and ensure that each touchpoint produces a consistent and positive experience. Studies and research in Indonesia also show a relationship between patient experience and loyalty, especially when the experience is able to increase patient trust and satisfaction (Renaldo & Antonio, 2024). The next factor that has a strategic role is the reputation of the hospital. Reputation describes the perception of the public and patients towards the credibility, competence, quality, integrity, and ability of hospitals to provide services. In the digital age, reputation has become increasingly important because information about hospitals can spread quickly through social media, search engines, review platforms, health forums, and various other digital channels. A patient's positive and negative experiences can be easily shared and affect the perception of potential patients. Therefore, the reputation of a hospital is no longer completely controlled by the organization, but is also shaped by the experience and communication of patients in the digital space. Research shows that hospital reputation has an important influence on patient loyalty and even has a stronger influence on loyalty than individual doctors' reputation (Akbolat et al., 2023).

The relationship between service quality, patient experience, reputation, and loyalty shows that patient loyalty is a multidimensional construct. Good service quality can result in a positive patient experience, while a positive experience can increase patient satisfaction, trust, and a tendency to return to hospital services. At the same time, the quality of service and consistent patient experience can strengthen the hospital's reputation in the community. Recent research on the relationship between healthcare quality and hospital reputation suggests that patient experience can serve as a mechanism that bridges the influence of service quality and

reputation on patient loyalty. Thus, loyalty management is not enough only to be carried out through improving the technical quality of service, but also requires integrated management of patient experience and organizational reputation (Rahmah et al., 2026).

This condition shows the need to integrate the perspective of service quality, patient experience, hospital reputation, and digitalization in understanding patient loyalty more comprehensively. A number of studies have examined the relationship between these variables separately, but the results show that the strength and pattern of the relationship can differ based on the type of hospital, patient characteristics, type of service, and the context of digitalization used. For example, research on hospital image, patient experience, satisfaction, and e-health shows that the development of digital technology has become an important part of outpatient loyalty building strategies. Meanwhile, other research shows that hospital digital marketing can contribute to loyalty through the patient experience. This shows that the digital era has expanded the mechanism of patient loyalty formation from just a direct service interaction to an experience that lasts throughout the patient journey, both offline and online (Safira et al., 2025; Burhanuddin et al., 2025).

Based on this description, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is needed to identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific evidence on the factors that affect patient loyalty in the digital age, especially related to service quality, patient experience, and hospital reputation. SLR is important because research on patient loyalty develops with different approaches, instruments, population characteristics, and service contexts. Previous studies have also shown that there is a link between hospital image or reputation, quality of service, patient experience, trust, and loyalty, but a synthesis is still needed that specifically places these three main factors in the context of the digital transformation of health services. Therefore, a study entitled "Analysis of Factors Affecting Patient Loyalty in the Digital Era: The Role of Service Quality, Patient Experience, and Hospital Reputation: Systematic Literature Review" is important to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of forming patient loyalty. The results of the study are expected to be the basis for hospital management in designing strategies to improve service quality, optimize patient experience, strengthen reputation, and develop digital services that are oriented to patient needs.

METHOD

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with the guidelines of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020. The SLR method is used to identify, critically evaluate, and synthesize the results of published research on factors that affect patient loyalty in the digital era, especially service quality, patient experience, and hospital reputation/image. The research process is carried out systematically through several stages, namely the formulation of research questions, the determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria, the search for literature, the elimination of duplicate articles, the filtering of titles and abstracts, the full-text assessment, the assessment of the risk of bias or methodological quality, data extraction, and the synthesis of research results. The literature used is limited to scientific articles published in the period 2021–2026, so that the study can illustrate the development of the latest empirical evidence regarding patient loyalty in the context of digital transformation of health services. The databases used include PubMed/MEDLINE, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, ProQuest, DOAJ, and Garuda to obtain international and national articles. The search strategy uses a combination of keywords and Boolean operators, including: "patient loyalty" AND "service quality" AND "patient experience" AND "hospital reputation", as well as a combination of the terms "patient loyalty" AND "hospital image", "patient loyalty" AND "digital health", "e-service quality" AND "patient loyalty", and "hospital reputation" AND "patient loyalty". The selection of sources and reporting of search strategies is carried out transparently in accordance with the recommendations of PRISMA 2020, which emphasizes the need to include information sources, search dates, and search strategies in full so that the review process can be replicated.

Article eligibility criteria are determined before the selection process to ensure that the literature analyzed is in accordance with the research objectives. Inclusion criteria include: (1) original research articles published in 2021–2026; (2) the article is available in Indonesian or English; (3) the article is published in a national or international scientific journal that can be accessed in full text; (4) the study discusses patients as a population or research respondent; (5) the research discusses at least one main variable, namely service quality, patient experience, hospital reputation/image, or patient loyalty; (6) the research is conducted in the context of hospitals, clinics, health care facilities, or digital health services that are relevant to the context of patient loyalty; and (7) the article provides information regarding relationships, influences, determinants, or mechanisms related to patient loyalty. Exclusion criteria include duplicate articles, editorial articles, comments, letters to editors, proceedings that do not have complete articles, theses/dissertations, articles that do not have full text, articles that do not discuss patient loyalty, and research that only discusses technological aspects unrelated to patient experience, quality of service, satisfaction, reputation, or loyalty. The selection process is carried out in stages starting from the examination of titles and abstracts and then continued with full text

assessments. Every article issued at the full-text screening stage is recorded as a reason for exclusion. The procedure is in accordance with PRISMA 2020 which recommends reporting the number of articles at each stage of selection as well as the reasons for the exclusion of articles that previously had the potential to meet the criteria.

Data from articles that meet all criteria are then extracted using a data extraction sheet that has been systematically prepared. The information collected included the name of the author and year of publication, the country of the study, the purpose of the study, the design of the study, the number and characteristics of the respondents, the type of health care facilities, the research variables, the indicators or measurement instruments, the analysis method, the main results, the direction of the relationship between variables, and the conclusions of the study. Furthermore, a critical appraisal or bias risk assessment is carried out to assess the methodological strength of each article using instruments adapted to the research design, such as JBI Critical Appraisal Tools for observational studies or other appropriate methodological assessment instruments. Assessment is done by categorizing articles based on the level of risk of bias, e.g. low, medium, or high, and articles with a very high risk of bias may be considered for exclusion from the main synthesis. The two stages of assessment, namely selection and extraction, should ideally be carried out by two independent reviewers, while differences in decisions are resolved through discussion or a third reviewer. Furthermore, the results of the study were analyzed using narrative synthesis and thematic analysis, not meta-analysis, because the articles obtained were estimated to have variations in design, population, instruments, indicators, and effect sizes. The results of the synthesis were grouped based on three main determinants, namely (1) service quality, (2) patient experience, and (3) reputation/image of the hospital, then analyzed for the relationship with patient loyalty, including the possibility of mediating variables such as patient satisfaction, trust, and value perception. Findings were also compared based on the context of conventional and digital services to identify patterns, consistency, differences in results, and research gaps. PRISMA 2020 specifically recommends that the synthesis process explain how studies are grouped, how data are displayed, synthesis methods used, and how heterogeneity between studies is considered.

RESULTS

Based on the results of the selection using the PRISMA diagram, 8 articles were obtained that met the inclusion criteria and were used in the research. The eight articles were then analyzed to obtain patient loyalty information in the context of digital transformation of health services.

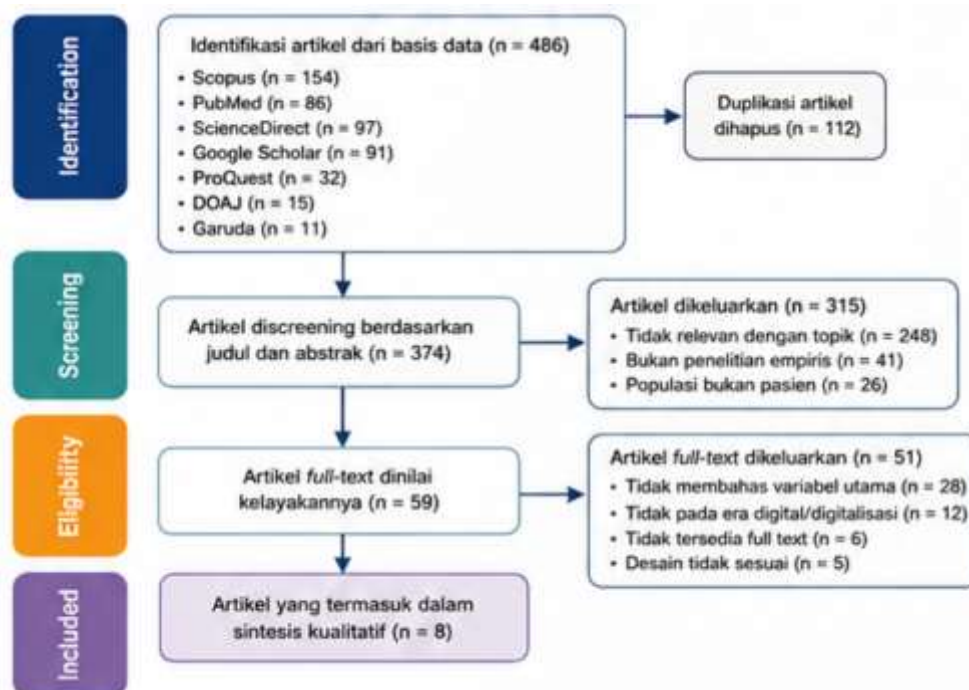


Figure 1. Prism Diagram

The results of the following article review are the core article because they cover all the main variables of the review research.

Table 1. Article Review Results

No	Researcher & Year	Journal	Country	Focus	Relevant key results
1	Al-Dmour et al. (2021)	International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management	UEA	Quality of service, image of the hospital, satisfaction, loyalty	Satisfaction plays a role in the relationship between service quality, hospital image, doctor-patient relationship and loyalty. The study used 418 patients.
2	Rashid & Al-Shami (2022)	Asia Social Issues	Malaysia	Service quality → loyalty	A study of 250 hospital patients showed that the quality of service factor is related to patient loyalty and reinforces the use of the SERVQUAL perspective.
3	Shie et al. (2022)	Frontiers in Public Health	China/Taiwan	Service quality, trust, loyalty	Quality of service and service encounter were related to patient trust and loyalty; the study involved 483 elderly patients with chronic diseases.
4	Akbolat et al. (2023)	International Journal of Healthcare Management	Turkey	Hospital reputation → loyalty	The reputation of a hospital has a positive influence on loyalty and its influence is stronger than that of the doctor's reputation.
5	Renaldo & Antonio (2024)	Indonesian Journal of Health Management	Indonesia	Patient experience → loyalty	Patient experience is related to loyalty through trustworthiness and outcome quality.
6	Rosally et al. (2024)	International Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Science	Indonesia	Patient experience, satisfaction → loyalty	Patient experience and satisfaction are analyzed as factors related to outpatient loyalty.
7	Burhanuddin et al. (2025)	Journal of Neonatal Surgery	Indonesia	Digital marketing, patient experience → loyalty	Hospital digital marketing plays a role in improving the patient experience and contributing to patient loyalty.
8	Rahmah et al. (2026)	International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting	Indonesia	Service quality, hospital reputation, patient experience → loyalty	The study directly tested the quality of service and the hospital's reputation for loyalty with patient experience as a mediator.

Table 2. Results of Synthesis of 8 Articles

Variabel	Evidence from the literature	Relationship patterns
Quality of service	Rashid & Al-Shami; Shie et al.; Al-Dmur et al.; Rahmah et al.	A positive attitude → loyalty
Patient experience	Renaldo & Antonio; Rosally et al.; Burhanuddin et al.; Rahmah et al.	Positive → loyalty, partly through satisfaction/trust
RS reputation/image	Akbolat et al.; Al-Dmur et al.; Rahmah et al.	Positive → loyalty
Digitization	Burhanuddin et al.; literatur <i>e-health/e-service quality</i>	Strengthening experience and ease of service
Patient satisfaction	Al-Dmur et al.; Rosally et al.; Shie et al.; Rahmah et al.	Often be a mediator
Trust	Shie et al.; Renaldo & Antonio	Strengthen the experience/quality relationship with loyalty
Patient loyalty	All articles	Demonstrated through revisits, preferences, recommendations and commitments

Results of SLR synthesis

1. Quality of Service is a Fundamental Determinant of Patient Loyalty

The results of the synthesis showed that service quality was the most consistent factor found in the formation of patient loyalty. Service quality includes reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical aspects of service. Research in Malaysia found that the quality of service factor is related to patient loyalty, while the research of Shie et al. shows that the quality of service in service encounters is related to

trust and loyalty. Thus, hospitals that are able to provide services consistently, quickly, safely, responsively, and according to patient expectations have a greater chance of retaining patients.

2. Patient Experience Is Becoming An Increasingly Important Factor

The synthesis shows that patient loyalty is not only determined by whether medical services are successfully provided, but also how patients experience the entire service process. Renaldo & Antonio (2024) show the relationship between patient experience and loyalty through trustworthiness and outcome quality. Meanwhile, Rosally et al. (2024) put experience and satisfaction as important factors in explaining patient loyalty. This means that hospitals need to pay attention to the entire patient journey, starting from finding information, registration, queues, consultations, doctor/nurse services, payments to follow-up after services.

3. Hospital Reputation Plays a Role in Building Loyalty

Reputation is a strategic factor because patients not only evaluate their personal experiences, but also consider perceptions of the hospital as a whole. Akbolat et al. (2023) found that hospital reputation has a positive influence on patient loyalty, even the influence of hospital reputation on loyalty is stronger than doctors' reputation. This shows that reputation can be a strategic asset for hospitals in retaining patients while building a competitive advantage.

4. The Digital Age Changes the Mechanism of Loyalty Formation

An interesting finding is the emergence of digitalization as a factor that expands the patient experience. Patients now interact with hospitals through websites, applications, social media, online registration, digital marketing, telemedicine, electronic queuing systems, and digital communication channels. Burhanuddin et al. specifically showed the relationship between digital marketing → patient experience → patient loyalty in hospitals in Makassar. Thus, the quality of service in the digital era not only means the quality of direct doctor-patient interaction, but also includes the quality of digital interaction.

5. Satisfaction and trust have the potential to be a mediator

From the rest of the article, it was found that the relationship between the main factor and loyalty often does not take place simply.

The models that can be formulated from the results of the synthesis are:

Quality of Service → Satisfaction → Loyalty

Service Quality → Patient Experience → Loyalty

Hospital Reputation → Trust → Loyalty

Digitization → Patient Experience → Satisfaction → Loyalty

In fact, research on patient experience shows that trustworthiness and outcome quality can bridge the relationship between patient experience and loyalty.

DISCUSSION

1. Quality of Service is a Fundamental Determinant of Patient Loyalty

The results of the SLR synthesis show that service quality is one of the most consistent determinants in the formation of patient loyalty. The quality of service in the context of hospitals is not only related to the ability of health workers to provide medical services, but also includes service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, punctuality, communication, and the physical condition of service facilities. When patients receive services that are appropriate or even exceed their expectations, a positive evaluation of the hospital is formed which can further encourage the patient's desire to return to using services, recommend the hospital to others, and not move to another health facility.

The findings show that patient loyalty is essentially a consequence of the patient's evaluative experience of the quality of service he receives. Research on factors that affect patient loyalty also shows that service quality is one of the important factors in retaining patients. In the context of hospitals, consistent, responsive, safe, and tailored services to patients can reinforce the perception that hospitals are able to meet their health needs professionally. Thus, it is not enough to increase loyalty only through marketing strategies, but must start from improving the quality of core services. These findings are also strengthened by the research of Rosmayani et al. (2023) which places the quality of service as an important factor in the formation of patient loyalty. Good quality of service will create a positive perception of the hospital, while a mismatch between expectations and the services received can lead to dissatisfaction and increase the likelihood of patients moving to other hospitals. Research by Puryanti et al. (2023) also shows the relationship between the quality of external services and satisfaction with patient loyalty.

Thus, the results of the synthesis can be interpreted that service quality is the initial foundation in building patient loyalty. Hospitals need to ensure that every dimension of service runs consistently, starting

from the registration process, waiting time, officer communication, doctor and nurse services, clarity of information, to the payment and follow-up process. Loyalty formed through quality of service tends to be more sustainable because it is based on the real experience of the patient, not just on the promotion or image of the hospital.

2. Patient Experience Is Becoming An Increasingly Important Factor

The results of the synthesis show that patient experience is an increasingly important factor in explaining patient loyalty. The paradigm shift in health services from provider-centered care to patient-centered care causes the success of services to no longer only be assessed based on the success of medical measures, but also based on the patient's experience during the entire service process. Patient experience includes various interactions experienced by patients, ranging from the ease of obtaining information, the registration process, waiting time, communication with doctors and nurses, the comfort of the facility, the patient's involvement in decision-making, to the process after the patient receives services.

The findings of Renaldo and Antonio (2024) provide strong support for this mechanism. Their research found that patient experience was positively correlated with patient loyalty and that trustworthiness played a mediator. This means that positive patient experiences can build the perception that service providers are trustworthy, which further increases patient loyalty. Meanwhile, outcome quality also plays a role in the relationship between patient experience and trustworthiness, although it does not significantly mediate the direct relationship between patient experience and patient loyalty.

These results are in line with Rosally et al. (2024), who found a significant relationship between patient experience, patient satisfaction, and patient loyalty. Patient experience affects satisfaction and loyalty, while satisfaction also affects patient loyalty. This shows that patient experience can be the starting point for forming a positive evaluation of hospital services. Patients who feel well treated, get clear information, experience no barriers to service, and feel safe tend to have higher satisfaction and trust.

Therefore, hospitals need to manage the patient journey thoroughly, not just improve clinical interactions. The patient experience should be viewed as a series of journeys that begin before the patient comes to the hospital and continue after the patient finishes receiving services. Loyalty enhancement strategies need to include easy access to information, a simple registration system, reduced wait times, empathetic communication, comfort in the environment, patient involvement in service decisions, and follow-up after service. Thus, patient experience can be an important mechanism that transforms the quality of service into a long-term relationship between patients and hospitals.

3. Hospital Reputation Plays a Role in Building Loyalty

The results of the synthesis show that the reputation of the hospital is a strategic asset that plays a role in shaping patient loyalty. In contrast to the quality of service that is mainly obtained from the actual experience of patients, the reputation of a hospital can be formed from a combination of personal experience, information from family and friends, mass media, social media, patient reviews, hospital achievements, and public perception of the professionalism and credibility of the institution.

Akbolat et al. (2023) show that doctors' reputations have a positive effect on hospital reputation and patient loyalty, but the influence of hospital reputation on patient loyalty is stronger than doctors' reputation. The findings confirm that patients not only rate individual doctors, but also rate hospitals as an institution as a whole. In other words, a positive experience with one doctor is not necessarily enough to create loyalty if the patient has a negative perception of the hospital's system, facilities, administration, or services as a whole.

Reputation can also serve as a signal of trust. Patients often face limited information in assessing the clinical quality of a hospital before using services. In these conditions, reputation can be an early indicator that helps patients choose a healthcare facility. When a hospital has a good reputation, it will be easier for patients to trust them, try the service, and consider the hospital as the top choice.

The findings of Amarat et al. (2022) further strengthen this argument. The research shows that corporate reputation is related to patient loyalty and that patient satisfaction plays a role as a mediator in the relationship between reputation and loyalty. Thus, reputation not only has a direct effect, but can work through the evaluation of patient experience and satisfaction.

The implication for hospital management is that reputation building must be done holistically and consistently. Reputation cannot be built just through advertising or publication of a hospital's success, but it must be backed by the quality of service that patients truly feel. Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship between service quality, patient experience, satisfaction, trust, reputation, and loyalty.

4. The Digital Age Changes the Mechanism of Loyalty Formation

The results of SLR synthesis also show that digitalization has changed the mechanism of forming patient loyalty. Patient interaction with hospitals is no longer limited to face-to-face contact. Before coming to the hospital, patients can get information through websites and social media; register through the application; obtain medical information digitally; using an electronic queue system; conducting consultations via telemedicine; receive the results of the examination digitally; and communicate with hospitals through various digital channels.

Burhanuddin et al. (2024) specifically found that digital marketing affects patient loyalty through patient experience in hospitals in Makassar. The study involved 393 patients from three hospitals and showed that the use of social media, websites, and apps can improve the patient experience which in turn contributes to loyalty.

These findings show that digital patient experience is part of the quality of modern services. Slow or difficult to use websites, incomplete doctor information, frequent online registrations, slow social media responses, or apps that aren't user-friendly can result in a negative experience even if the hospital's clinical service is actually good. Instead, an easy, fast, transparent, and responsive digital system can reduce administrative barriers and improve patients' perception of hospital quality.

Pratami et al.'s (2023) research also links digital patient experience with innovation, service quality, and patient loyalty. Therefore, digitalization should not be seen only as a marketing instrument, but as an integral part of patient experience management. Based on this synthesis, hospitals need to integrate digital strategies with service quality improvement strategies. Digital marketing must convey accurate information, while digital platforms must provide real convenience for patients. Thus, the mechanism formed is not just digital marketing → loyalty, but more complex, namely digitization → patient experience → satisfaction/trust → loyalty.

5. Satisfaction and trust have the potential to be a mediator

The results of the synthesis show that the relationship between service quality, patient experience, reputation, and patient loyalty does not always take place directly. Satisfaction and trust have the potential to be mediating variables that explain how the patient's experience or perception turns into loyal behavior. In other words, good service quality does not necessarily automatically produce loyalty if patients are not satisfied or do not have trust in the hospital.

The model of service quality → satisfaction → loyalty has received support from various studies. Zebua et al. (2024), for example, found that patient satisfaction is a significant intervening variable in the relationship between patient experience and patient loyalty. The study shows that patient experience has a strong indirect influence on loyalty through satisfaction. These findings are strengthened by Amarat (2022), who shows that the quality of hospital services is related to patient trust and patient satisfaction, while satisfaction affects patient loyalty. Interestingly, the quality of service did not show a direct influence on loyalty in the study, so the indirect mechanism through the patient's psychological variables was important.

Trust also has an important position because health services have the characteristics of high involvement and high uncertainty. Patients leave some important decisions about their health condition to professionals and hospitals. Therefore, patients need confidence that the hospital is competent, honest, safe, consistent, and puts the patient's best interests first. Renaldo and Antonio (2024) show that trustworthiness is an important mediator in the relationship between patient experience and patient loyalty. Based on this synthesis, it can be formulated that satisfaction describes the patient's emotional and cognitive evaluation of the service, while trust describes the patient's confidence in the ability and integrity of the hospital. Both can then encourage the formation of loyalty in the form of revisit intentions, willingness to recommend hospitals, preferences for hospitals, and reluctance to move to other health facilities.

Based on the overall findings, patient loyalty can be understood as the result of a multidimensional process, rather than as a result of a single factor. The quality of service is the main foundation because it provides a real experience to patients. The experience then forms satisfaction and trust. At the same time, the reputation of the hospital provides an institutional perception that strengthens patients' confidence in the hospital. Digitalization expands the point of contact between patients and hospitals so that the patient experience is no longer only formed in the service space, but also through the digital ecosystem.

Managerially, the results of this SLR imply that hospitals need to develop an integrated loyalty strategy. Improving clinical quality needs to go hand in hand with improving the quality of non-clinical services, managing patient journeys, strengthening communication, reducing waiting times, developing digital services, and managing hospital reputation. This approach is more in line with the characteristics of modern health services because patient loyalty is the cumulative result of various patient experiences during interaction with hospitals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on research on service quality, patient experience, hospital reputation, digitalization, satisfaction, trust, and patient loyalty, it can be concluded that patient loyalty is a multidimensional outcome and is not only influenced by one factor. Service quality is a fundamental determinant because services that are reliable, responsive, safe, have guarantees, empathy, and are supported by adequate facilities are able to form positive perceptions of patients and increase the tendency to make repeat visits, recommend hospitals, and maintain relationships with hospitals.

Overall, the results of the synthesis show that satisfaction and trust have the potential to be mediating variables in the relationship between service factors and patient loyalty. The relationship patterns found can be formulated as: service quality → satisfaction → loyalty; service quality → patient experience → loyalty; hospital reputation → trust → loyalty; and digitization of patient experience → → satisfaction → loyalty. Thus, increasing patient loyalty should be done through an integrated approach by optimizing the quality of service, patient experience, satisfaction, trust, reputation, and digital transformation of the hospital.

Advice

For hospital management, a loyalty increase strategy is needed that is oriented towards improving the quality of service as a whole. Hospitals need to periodically evaluate the reliability of service, responsiveness of officers, security guarantees, empathy, facility comfort, waiting time, and quality of communication with patients.

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