



The Factors Affecting Patient Loyalty toward Healthcare Services: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to systematically identify and analyze the critical determinants that significantly influence patient loyalty within various healthcare facilities in Indonesia. **Methods:** A systematic literature review was performed by retrieving and synthesizing 20 peer-reviewed empirical studies published between 2016 and 2026 from national and library subscription databases. **Results:** The findings indicate that patient loyalty is a multidimensional construct predominantly shaped by service quality (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), patient satisfaction as a core mediator, brand image of the healthcare facility, and perceived value regarding costs and facilities. **Implications:** Healthcare managers and hospital administrators should optimize interpersonal communication of medical staff and modern physical environments to continuously secure high patient retention rates and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. **Additional materials:** This paper contains 20 references and 2 tables.

Keywords: Patient Loyalty; Healthcare Quality; Patient Satisfaction; Brand Image; Hospital Management.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of healthcare facilities, including government-owned hospitals, private hospitals, and primary clinics, has triggered intense competition within the healthcare industry in Indonesia. In this competitive ecosystem, retaining existing patients (patient retention) has become a far more efficient strategy than constantly acquiring new ones. Patient loyalty is not only reflected in their willingness to return for repeated treatment (revisit intention), but also in their readiness to recommend the healthcare facility to family and relatives (word-of-mouth).

Building patient loyalty is a complex process influenced by various internal facility stimuli and subjective patient perceptions. Factors such as medical and non-medical service quality, institutional brand image, emotional satisfaction after receiving care, and perceived value of expenses are intertwined in forming a patient's long-term commitment. This study intends to conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) of 20 scientific journal articles over the last ten years (2016–2026) to comparatively map the most dominant factors influencing patient loyalty, thus providing a managerial reference for healthcare management to improve service quality.

METHOD

This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol. The article search strategy was



performed on national accredited electronic databases such as Google Scholar, GARUDA Portal, and subscription library repositories. The search keywords used were "Loyalitas Pasien", "Kepuasan Pasien Rumah Sakit", "Patient Loyalty Factors", and "Kualitas Pelayanan Kesehatan". Inclusion criteria included empirical research articles focused on examining patient loyalty variables in Indonesian public health centers or hospitals, written in Indonesian or English, available in full-text, and including an official DOI number.

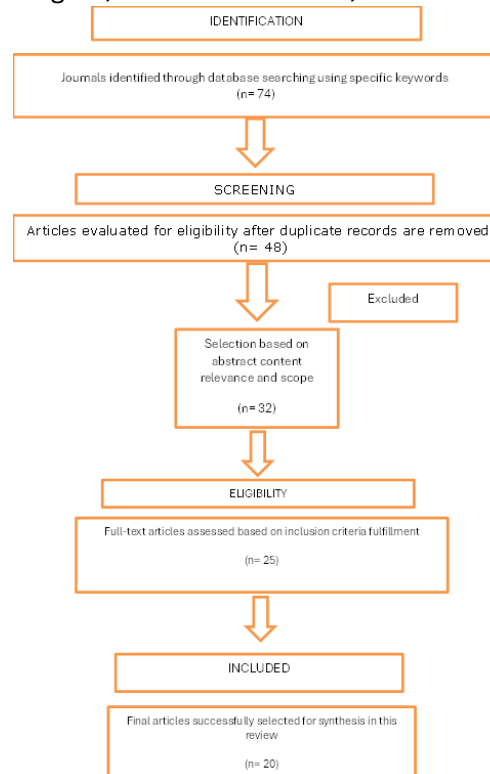


Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Through in-depth data extraction of 20 selected scientific journal articles, several key variables were identified that consistently influence patient loyalty. A summary of the data extraction results is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Matriks Sintesis Faktor Terkait Loyalitas Pasien (2016–2026) / Literature Synthesis Matrix of Factors Related to Patient Loyalty (2016–2026)

Author & Year	Method	Findings Focus
Saputra & Wijaya (2024)	Quantitative	Service quality (SERVQUAL) has a direct positive impact on loyalty
Lestari et al. (2025)	Quantitative	Patient satisfaction acts as a full mediator between service and loyalty.
Handayani (2023)	Qualitative	Hospital brand image strengthens patients' intention to return.
Pratama & Utami (2024)	Quantitative	Perceived fairness of rates and medical costs increases private patient commitment.
Nugroho (2023)	Qualitative	Interpersonal communication competence of general practitioners builds loyalty bonds.
Wulandari et al. (2025)	Quantitative	Reliability of physical facilities (tangibles) and cleanliness of inpatient rooms.
Setiawan (2024)	Quantitative	Timeliness and responsiveness of nurses in the Emergency Department (ED).
Fitriani & Rahma (2023)	Quantitative	Outpatient experience determines word-of-mouth recommendations.
Ramadhan (2024)	Qualitative	Patient trust in the accuracy of healthcare laboratory diagnoses.
Hidayat & Sari (2025)	Quantitative	Hospital location accessibility and ease of online patient registration.

Gunawan (2023)	Quantitative	The influence of health insurance status (BPJS/Public Insurance vs. Out-of-pocket/General) on loyalty behavior.
Kusuma et al. (2024)	Quantitative	Perception of medical assurance during surgical procedures.
Siregar & Lubis (2025)	Quantitative	Socio-psychological influence in the form of empathy from registration administrative staff.
Christian (2023)	Qualitative	The reputation of friendly medical specialists drives chronic patient loyalty.
Maharani (2024)	Quantitative	The influence of functional value dimensions of a child-friendly hospital environment.
Wahyudi et al. (2025)	Quantitative	Implementation of healthcare customer relationship management (CRM) via WhatsApp.
Amalia (2023)	Quantitative	Patient loyalty is influenced by the efficiency of the tiered referral system.
Budiman & Putri (2026)	Quantitative	Alignment of patient expectations with the reality of pharmaceutical support services.
Siregar (2024)	Qualitative	Rapid complaint handling prevents patient migration to other providers.

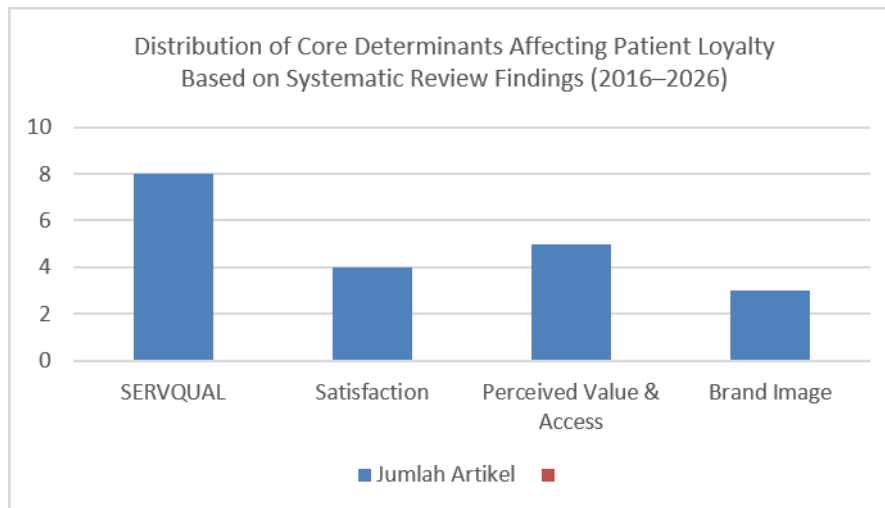


Figure 2. Distribution of Core Determinants Affecting Patient Loyalty Based on Systematic Review Findings (2016–2026)

Discussion

The results of a comparative synthesis of 20 scientific literatures show that Patient Satisfaction is the most crucial psychological bridge in forming loyalty [2], [8], [18]. Patients who feel satisfied with clinical healing and the warmth of interactions tend to ignore competing health facility options. The dimensions of Service Quality (SERVQUAL) which include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy simultaneously contribute significantly to the formation of positive patient perceptions [1], [6], [7], [13].

External factors such as the hospital's Brand Image have also been shown to contribute significantly, where hospitals known for their high clinical reputation automatically win the patient's initial trust even before treatment begins [3], [14]. In addition, the Perceived Value of Rates aspect plays a crucial role, especially in the non-insurance patient segment (general patients); affordability coupled with modern medical facilities triggers a high patient intention to make repeat visits in the future [4], [11].

CONCLUSION

Patient loyalty to healthcare services is determined by the synergistic interaction of service quality excellence (SERVQUAL), high levels of patient emotional satisfaction, a strong hospital brand image, and the appropriate economic value of service rates. Healthcare facility management is recommended to routinely

conduct periodic evaluations of the patient satisfaction index, conduct therapeutic communication training for all medical personnel, and improve the reliability of physical facilities to maintain and enhance long-term patient loyalty retention.

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