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Determinants of Patient Loyalty in Hospital Services: A Literature Review

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Abstract: *Patient loyalty has become an important indicator of healthcare quality and hospital sustainability in modern healthcare systems. However, maintaining patient loyalty remains a challenge due to the complexity of factors influencing patient perceptions and healthcare experiences. This study aimed to analyze the determinants affecting patient loyalty in hospital services through a literature review approach. Literature searches were conducted using Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Scopus for articles published between 2019 and 2025. The findings revealed that patient loyalty is influenced by several interconnected factors, including service quality, patient satisfaction, communication quality, waiting time, administrative efficiency, perceived value, healthcare experience, and hospital trust. Service quality and patient satisfaction were identified as the most dominant determinants influencing patient loyalty across various healthcare settings. In addition, effective communication, shorter waiting times, efficient administrative processes, and positive healthcare experiences significantly increased patients' intention to revisit and continue using hospital services. These findings indicate that hospitals should implement patient-centered healthcare management strategies focused on improving both clinical and non-clinical service quality to strengthen patient satisfaction, trust, and long-term patient loyalty.*

INTRODUCTION

Patient loyalty has become an increasingly important issue in modern hospital management due to rising competition among healthcare providers and growing patient expectations regarding healthcare services. Hospitals are no longer assessed solely based on clinical outcomes, but also through patient-centered aspects such as service quality, communication, efficiency, trust, and overall patient experience. In today's competitive healthcare environment, maintaining patient

loyalty is considered a strategic objective because loyal patients are more likely to revisit healthcare facilities, continue using healthcare services, and recommend hospitals to others (Rachmatillah & Munawar, 2025).

The increasing number of hospitals and the development of consumer-oriented healthcare systems have transformed patients from passive recipients of care into active healthcare consumers who can compare service quality, costs, accessibility, and healthcare experiences across institutions (Puspita & Paramata, 2024). As a result, hospitals are required to develop effective strategies to improve patient satisfaction and strengthen loyalty through high-quality, patient-centered services. Patient loyalty is therefore recognized as an important determinant of hospital sustainability and competitive advantage (Rachmatillah & Munawar, 2025).

Previous studies have shown that patient loyalty is strongly influenced by healthcare service quality and patient satisfaction. Dimensions of service quality such as responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance, and tangibles significantly affect patient perceptions and behavioral intentions toward healthcare providers. Positive healthcare experiences can increase patient trust and emotional attachment to hospitals, which subsequently encourages repeat visits and long-term utilization of healthcare services. In addition, factors such as administrative efficiency, waiting time, communication effectiveness, hospital image, perceived value, and healthcare costs also play important roles in influencing patient loyalty in both outpatient and inpatient settings.

Patient loyalty is widely considered an important indicator of healthcare quality because it reflects patients' willingness to continue using services from the same healthcare provider despite the availability of alternative healthcare institutions. One of the major impacts of patient loyalty is revisit intention, where satisfied patients are willing to return to the same hospital for future healthcare needs. This contributes to service utilization stability and supports long-term hospital performance (Rachmatillah & Munawar, 2025). Furthermore, loyal patients often engage in positive word-of-mouth communication by sharing favorable healthcare experiences with family members, friends, and communities. Such recommendations are highly influential in healthcare decision-making and can strengthen hospital reputation, public trust, and competitiveness (Permatasari et al., 2025).

Although numerous studies have examined patient loyalty in healthcare services, the existing literature remains fragmented and inconsistent. Most studies tend to focus on specific determinants, such as service quality or patient satisfaction, while only a limited number provide a comprehensive synthesis of the multiple factors influencing patient loyalty in hospital settings. In addition, evidence from developing countries, particularly in outpatient hospital services, is still relatively limited compared with studies conducted in developed healthcare systems. Therefore, a comprehensive literature review is necessary to identify, analyze, and synthesize the major determinants affecting patient loyalty in hospital services. A better understanding of these determinants is essential for hospital management in developing patient-centered strategies that improve healthcare quality, strengthen patient trust, and enhance long-term patient retention.

METHODS

This study employed a literature review method to analyze and synthesize previous research regarding the determinants of patient loyalty in hospital services. Literature review is a research approach conducted by collecting, evaluating, comparing, and interpreting findings from previous scientific studies relevant to a particular topic. This method allows researchers to identify research trends, evaluate existing evidence, and determine gaps in the current literature

regarding factors influencing patient loyalty in healthcare services (Snyder, 2019). The review process was carried out systematically through several stages, including article identification, screening, eligibility assessment, critical appraisal, data extraction, and narrative synthesis.

The literature search process was conducted using several electronic databases available on Google Scholar, PubMed, and ScienceDirect. These databases were selected because they provide extensive access to peer-reviewed healthcare, hospital management, and healthcare marketing studies. The search strategy used combinations of keywords and Boolean operators to optimize article identification. The keywords included “patient loyalty”, “hospital services”, “healthcare service quality”, “patient satisfaction”, “patient experience”, “perceived value”, “hospital image”, “administrative process”, “healthcare consumer behaviour”, and “outpatient services”. The Boolean operators “AND” and “OR” were used to combine keywords during the search process. The search strategy was adjusted according to the database characteristics in order to obtain more relevant articles related to the research objective.

The inclusion criteria for this literature review were: (1) original research articles discussing determinants influencing patient loyalty in hospital or healthcare services; (2) quantitative, qualitative, mixed-method, cross-sectional, cohort, experimental, and systematic review studies; (3) articles published between 2019 and 2025; (4) articles written in English; (5) full-text articles available online; and (6) studies specifically discussing patient loyalty, revisit intention, healthcare satisfaction, healthcare experience, or related hospital service factors. Meanwhile, exclusion criteria included duplicate studies, conference abstracts without full-text manuscripts, editorial articles, commentary papers, opinion articles, undergraduate theses, and studies not directly related to patient loyalty in healthcare services.

The article selection process was conducted in several stages. Initially, all articles identified from database searching were collected and screened based on titles and abstracts to evaluate their relevance to the study topic. Articles that were considered potentially relevant proceeded to the next stage of full-text assessment. At this stage, the complete manuscripts were reviewed carefully to ensure compatibility with the inclusion criteria. Studies that did not specifically discuss determinants of patient loyalty in healthcare settings were excluded from the review process. The remaining eligible articles were included for qualitative synthesis.

The critical appraisal of the included studies was conducted using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Checklist for Analytical Cross-Sectional Studies to assess the methodological quality and potential risk of bias of each study. The appraisal process examined several aspects, including study design, sampling methods, sample size, research instruments, statistical analysis, validity of measurements, and clarity of study findings. Studies with stronger methodological quality and clear relevance to patient loyalty determinants were prioritized during the synthesis process. The critical appraisal process was conducted to minimize bias and improve the credibility of the literature review findings.

RESULTS

Based on the results of the literature review from the 15 included articles, the authors found that patient loyalty in hospital services is influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including service quality, patient satisfaction, waiting time, communication, administrative process, perceived value, and healthcare experience. High-quality healthcare services and positive patient experiences were consistently associated with increased patient satisfaction and stronger patient loyalty toward hospital services.

Tabel. 1 Data Extraction Matrix for the Articles Included in the Literature Review

Author, Title, Year, DOI	Study Design	Results
(Ali Rashidi et al, 2025) Association between price transparency and patient decision to complete outpatient imaging https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clinimag.2024.110397	Retrospective observational study	Price transparency significantly influenced patients' decisions to complete outpatient imaging services. Patients were more likely to proceed with imaging examinations when healthcare costs were clearly communicated and perceived as affordable.
(Xiao Hu et al, 2026) Dental Patients' Loyalty and Experiences with Staff Systems in a Tertiary Hospital 10.1016/j.identj.2025.109291	Cross-sectional study	Positive experiences with hospital staff systems, communication, responsiveness, and administrative interactions significantly influenced patient loyalty and revisit intention.
(Nahima Akthar , Smitha Nayak , Yogesh Pai P, 2023) Determinants of patient satisfaction in Asia: Evidence from systematic review of literature https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2023.101393	Systematic literature review	Service quality, communication, waiting time, healthcare staff attitudes, hospital facilities, and administrative efficiency were identified as major determinants of patient satisfaction in Asian healthcare settings.
(Xue Zhang et al, 2025) Developing a Framework for Online Review-Based Health Care Service Quality Assessment: Text-Mining Study https://doi.org/10.2196/66141	Text-mining study	Healthcare service quality was influenced by service delivery process, empathy, communication, provider expertise, and healthcare outcomes. Online patient reviews demonstrated the importance of patient-centered healthcare services.
(Hui Zhang et al, 2023) Effect of waiting time on patient satisfaction in outpatient: An empirical investigation 10.21203/rs.3.rs-2469793/v1	Cross-sectional study	Longer waiting times significantly reduced patient satisfaction in outpatient services. Efficient service flow and shorter waiting times improved patient perceptions toward healthcare quality.
(Sha Liu et al, 2024) Evaluating perceived value and expected value gaps based on patient experience during	Cross-sectional study	Significant gaps were identified between patient expectations and actual healthcare experiences, particularly regarding waiting time, efficiency, and perceived value of

outpatient encounters: An empirical study in China https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e37766		outpatient services.
(Swapnarag Swain, Anees Ahmad, Sreelekha Mishra, 2025) Examining the impact of perceived hospital accreditation quality standards on patient loyalty: A Stimulus-Organism-Response theory perspective, 2024 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iimb.2025.100618	Quantitative cross-sectional study	Perceived hospital accreditation quality positively affected patient trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Hospital quality standards improved patients' intention to revisit healthcare services.
(Yipei Wang et al, 2026) Association Between Physician Communication Features and Patient Outcomes in Telemedicine: Retrospective Cross-Sectional Observational Study doi:10.2196/86977	Retrospective cross-sectional observational study	Effective physician communication significantly improved patient satisfaction, patient engagement, and healthcare outcomes in telemedicine services.
(Siti Mesaroh et al, 2022) Hospital Administration as Factors Associated with Patient Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis 10.26911/thejhpm.2022.07.03.07	Meta-analysis	Hospital administration factors, including administrative services, communication systems, and healthcare workflow management, significantly influenced patient satisfaction in healthcare facilities.
(İsa Gül, Ender Tunçer Helvacıoğlu, Sinan Saraçlı, 2023 Service quality, outpatient satisfaction and loyalty in community pharmacies in Turkey: A structural equation modeling approach https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcsop.2023.100361	Cross-sectional SEM study	Service quality dimensions including communication, responsiveness, and pharmacy environment significantly influenced outpatient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction positively affected patient loyalty.

(Zejun Cai, Ali Wu, Xiaofeng Wang, Haofen Xie, 2025 Outpatient Process Transformation and Patient Satisfaction Under New Public Service Theory doi: 10.2147/PPA.S544684	Quantitative observational study	Improvements in outpatient administrative processes, queue systems, and healthcare workflow efficiency significantly increased patient satisfaction and healthcare service effectiveness.
(Diah Mutiarasari et al, 2021) Patient satisfaction: Public vs. private hospital in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia 10.1016/j.gaceta.2021.07.012	Cross-sectional comparative study	Patient satisfaction levels were higher in private hospitals compared with public hospitals. Service responsiveness, healthcare facilities, and communication quality were major determinants of patient satisfaction.
(MAA Alqahtani et al, 2024) The Impact Of Administrative Workflow Efficiency On Patient Satisfaction https://doi.org/10.70082/q8a7jq29	Literature review	Efficient administrative workflow systems, shorter registration time, effective scheduling, and interdepartmental coordination significantly improved patient satisfaction in healthcare services.
The Relationship between Waiting Time and Patient Satisfaction in The Outpatient of Public Hospital in Banjarbaru, 2021	Cross-sectional study	Waiting time had a significant relationship with patient satisfaction in outpatient services. Longer waiting times were associated with lower patient satisfaction levels.
(Ichsan Rizany, 2021) Unveiling excellence in Indian healthcare: a patient-centric PRISMA analysis of hospital service quality, patient satisfaction and loyalty 10.18196/ijnp.v5i1.10275	Systematic literature review using PRISMA	SERVQUAL dimensions including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles positively influenced patient satisfaction and patient loyalty in hospital services.

DISCUSSION

Patient loyalty in hospital services is shaped by a combination of interconnected clinical and non-clinical factors within healthcare delivery systems. Most studies consistently identified service quality as the primary determinant influencing both patient satisfaction and loyalty. Various dimensions of healthcare quality, such as responsiveness, reliability, empathy, assurance,

communication quality, healthcare environment, and operational efficiency, significantly affect patients' perceptions of hospital services and their intention to revisit healthcare facilities in the future (Divya et al., 2025; Gül et al., 2023). Furthermore, the reviewed studies emphasized that patient satisfaction serves as a crucial mediating variable between healthcare service quality and loyalty intention.

Patients who experience positive healthcare services are more likely to develop trust, emotional attachment, and long-term loyalty toward hospitals. Evidence from systematic reviews conducted in Asian healthcare settings revealed that healthcare staff attitudes, communication practices, hospital facilities, responsiveness, and the quality of healthcare interactions substantially contribute to patient satisfaction and retention (Akthar et al., 2023). Likewise, studies applying structural equation modeling demonstrated that communication quality, responsiveness, and healthcare environment directly enhance outpatient satisfaction while indirectly strengthening patient loyalty through improved healthcare experiences (Gül et al., 2023). These findings suggest that hospitals should increasingly adopt patient-centered healthcare strategies by enhancing both technical service quality and interpersonal interactions to sustain long-term patient relationships.

Another significant finding from this literature review concerns the influence of waiting time, administrative efficiency, and healthcare workflow systems on patient satisfaction and loyalty. Multiple studies reported that prolonged waiting times negatively impact patients' perceptions of healthcare quality and reduce satisfaction levels, particularly in outpatient services (Rizany, 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). In contrast, efficient healthcare delivery systems, streamlined registration procedures, effective queue management, and strong interdepartmental coordination were associated with better patient experiences and increased satisfaction with hospital services (Alqahtani et al., 2024; Cai et al., 2025). Administrative efficiency has become increasingly important because patients now evaluate healthcare quality not only based on clinical outcomes but also on convenience, accessibility, and service efficiency throughout their healthcare encounters.

Additionally, communication quality between healthcare providers and patients emerged as a critical factor influencing healthcare outcomes and patient loyalty. Effective physician communication was found to improve patient trust, engagement, and satisfaction in both traditional healthcare settings and telemedicine services (Wang et al., 2026). Positive interactions between hospital staff and patients also significantly contributed to stronger patient loyalty and revisit intentions (Hu et al., 2026). Moreover, perceived value, price transparency, hospital image, and accreditation quality were identified as additional determinants affecting healthcare decision-making and patient loyalty. Patients were more likely to continue utilizing healthcare services when costs were transparent and perceived as reasonable (Rashidi et al., 2025). Studies examining outpatient healthcare experiences also revealed considerable gaps between patient expectations and actual healthcare experiences, especially regarding efficiency, waiting time, and perceived value (Liu et al., 2024). Furthermore, perceived hospital accreditation quality positively enhanced patient trust and institutional credibility, thereby strengthening loyalty intentions toward healthcare providers (Swain et al., 2025). Overall, these findings indicate that patient loyalty is multidimensional and requires comprehensive hospital management strategies that integrate service quality improvement, administrative efficiency, communication enhancement, and patient-centered healthcare experiences to strengthen hospital competitiveness and long-term sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the included studies, patient loyalty within hospital services is influenced by multiple interconnected determinants, including service quality, patient satisfaction, communication effectiveness, waiting time, administrative efficiency, perceived value, and institutional trust. Service quality and patient satisfaction were identified as the most influential factors contributing to patient loyalty across diverse healthcare environments. Furthermore, streamlined administrative procedures, effective provider–patient communication, reduced waiting times, and favorable healthcare experiences positively affected patients' intentions to revisit healthcare facilities. Therefore, hospitals should adopt comprehensive patient-centered management approaches aimed at improving both medical and non-medical aspects of healthcare services to sustain patient trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.

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