



The Influence of Service Quality and Patient Satisfaction on Patient Loyalty at Hospitals in Ternate City

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of service quality and patient satisfaction on patient loyalty in three hospitals in Ternate City. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, resulting in a total of 150 patients as respondents. The data were analyzed using correlation tests with SPSS version 14. The indicators of Service Quality (X1) consist of Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy, and Assurance. The indicators of Patient Satisfaction (X2) include Expectation Confirmation, Overall Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention, Recommendation, and Perceived Value. The findings reveal that the most dominant indicators are X1.5 (Assurance) with a correlation value of 0.801 and X2.5 (Perceived Value) with a correlation value of 0.805.

Keywords: Service Quality, Patient Satisfaction, Patient Loyalty.

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I. Background

A hospital is one of the healthcare institutions that functions to provide comprehensive medical services to the public. As public awareness of the importance of health increases, patients' expectations of hospital services are also rising. Today, the public evaluates hospitals not only based on the completeness of medical facilities but also on the quality of services experienced directly. Good service quality will create a positive experience for patients, thereby fostering trust and the desire to return to utilize healthcare services at that hospital. Therefore, improving service quality becomes one of the important strategies for hospital management in facing competition, including in the Ternate City

Service quality plays a significant role in determining patient satisfaction levels. Patients who are satisfied with the services they receive tend to give positive evaluations of the hospital and demonstrate loyal behaviors, such as being willing to return for future visits and recommending the hospital to others. Patient satisfaction is essentially formed from the alignment between expectations and the actual service received, whether it concerns the speed of service, the friendliness of medical staff, or the comfort of the available facilities. On the other hand, if patients are dissatisfied, the likelihood of them switching to another hospital increases. Therefore, satisfaction can be seen as an important variable that bridges the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty.

Patient loyalty is an important indicator for the long-term sustainability of a hospital. Loyal patients not only return to use the services but also serve as "promoters" who can enhance the hospital's positive image through word-of-mouth recommendations. In the context of competition between hospitals, the success in creating patient loyalty can become a significant competitive advantage. Therefore, research on the factors influencing patient loyalty, particularly service quality and patient satisfaction, is highly relevant for in-depth study.

Ternate City, as one of the growth centers in North Maluku, has several hospitals that serve as references for the public, both from within the city and the surrounding areas. However, the challenges faced by hospitals in Ternate are not only related to resource limitations but also how to improve service quality to meet patient expectations amidst the increasingly fierce competition in healthcare services. This situation makes it crucial to conduct research on the impact of service quality and patient satisfaction on patient loyalty at hospitals in Ternate City.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Service Quality

Service quality is a critical factor in determining the success of an organization, including hospitals, in providing value to service users. According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), service quality is defined as a measure of the difference between customer expectations and their perceived performance. Meanwhile, Tjiptono (2016) states that service quality is the effort to fulfill customer needs and desires and the accuracy of delivery to meet customer expectations. From this definition, it can be understood that service quality is subjective, as it depends on customer perceptions and experiences.

Parasuraman et al. (1988) developed the SERVQUAL model, which is widely used today to measure service quality. This model consists of five main dimensions:

1. Tangibles: including the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication media.
2. Reliability: the ability to deliver the promised service accurately and consistently.
3. Responsiveness: the willingness of employees to help customers and provide prompt service.
4. Assurance: the knowledge, courtesy, and ability of employees to instill trust and confidence in customers.
5. Empathy: the personal attention and ease of communication with customers..

The SERVQUAL model is frequently used in healthcare research, as these five dimensions are considered effective in describing patient perceptions of hospital services.

In healthcare, service quality relates not only to technical medical aspects but also to non-medical aspects such as comfort, friendliness, and the attention provided by healthcare professionals. According to Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2018), quality healthcare services will influence patient satisfaction, which in turn can increase patient loyalty to the hospital. This aligns with research by Lestari and Suryani (2020), which showed that the higher the quality of hospital services, the greater the level of patient satisfaction and confidence in returning to the service.

Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is an important indicator in assessing the quality of hospital services. According to Kotler & Keller (2016), satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment that arises after comparing the perceived performance of a product or service with their expectations. In the hospital context, patient satisfaction can be defined as the degree of correspondence between patient expectations regarding healthcare services and the actual service they receive (Pohan, 2017). Thus, patient satisfaction is relative and subjective, depending on individual experience.

Patient satisfaction is influenced by various factors, both medical and non-medical. According to Oliver (2015), the main factors influencing satisfaction include service quality, reliability, responsiveness, and interpersonal relationships between healthcare professionals and patients. Research by Lestari & Suryani (2020) also found that communication, friendliness, speed of service, and comfort of facilities contribute significantly to patient satisfaction in hospitals. In other words, satisfaction depends not only on treatment outcomes but also on the service process experienced by patients.

Patient satisfaction is closely linked to loyalty. Satisfied patients are more likely to return to a hospital, recommend it to others, and have higher levels of trust (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2018). Conversely, patient dissatisfaction can lead to a loss of trust and a switch to another hospital. In healthcare research, satisfaction is often positioned as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of service quality on patient loyalty (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). This suggests that satisfaction is a key factor in maintaining long-term relationships between hospitals and patients.

Loyalty

Patient loyalty is a form of patient commitment to consistently use healthcare services at a particular hospital over the long term. According to Griffin (2005), loyalty can be defined as a customer's commitment to a brand, store, or supplier based on a positive attitude demonstrated through consistent repeat purchases. In the hospital context, patient loyalty is demonstrated by a patient's willingness to return for treatment, recommend the hospital to others, and a reluctance to switch to a competitor (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

According to Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler (2018), several indicators of patient loyalty include:

1. Repurchase intention (revisit intention) – patients want to return to the same hospital for treatment.
2. Word of mouth (WOM) – patients are willing to recommend the hospital to others.
3. Resistance to switching – patients do not easily switch to another hospital even when alternatives are available.
4. Preference – patients make the hospital their primary choice for their healthcare needs.

Patient loyalty plays a strategic role in hospital sustainability. Loyal patients not only contribute through repeat visits but also serve as indirect marketing agents through positive recommendations. Research by Lestari &

Suryani (2020) shows that patient loyalty is influenced by service quality and patient satisfaction. This aligns with Oliver's (2015) theory, which states that repeated satisfaction builds trust, which then develops into loyalty.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The research subjects who will form the population are patients visiting three hospitals in Ternate City in 2023. The following table shows the number of patient visits to three hospitals in Ternate City:

Tabel 1.Number of Patient Visits at Three Hospitals in Ternate City in 2023

| No. | Hospital Name | Number of Patients (Year 2023) | Percentage(%) |
|-------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | RSUD dr. ChasanBoesoirie | 20.193 | 45,16 |
| 2. | RS Prima | 11.586 | 25,91 |
| 3. | RS TK IV TNI AD | 12.932 | 28,93 |
| Total | | 44.711 | 100 |

The sampling technique used is Purposive Sampling, which is a Non-Probability Sampling technique where the sample determination is based on certain considerations or criteria set by the researcher so that the total number is 150 samples. The data analysis method used is a correlation test using SPSS.14 software. The indicators of Service (X1) are Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy and Assurance. The indicators of the satisfaction variable (X2) are Conformity to expectations, Overall satisfaction, Decision to reuse, Recommendation (Word of Mouth), Perceived Value.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Tabel 1. Correlations

| | X1.1 | X1.2 | X1.3 | X1.4 | X1.5 | X2.1 | X2.2 | X2.3 | X2.4 | X2.5 | Y |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| X1.1 Pearson Correlation | 1 | .375** | .199** | .929** | .797** | .471** | .392** | .929** | .535** | .496** | .795** |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | | .000 | .007 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X1.2 Pearson Correlation | .375** | 1 | .276** | .382** | .318** | .491** | .930** | .382** | .476** | .439** | .514** |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X1.3 Pearson Correlation | .199** | .276** | 1 | .183* | .285** | .223** | .289** | .183* | .301** | .300** | .265** |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | .007 | .000 | | .012 | .000 | .003 | .000 | .012 | .000 | .000 | .001 |
| N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X1.4 Pearson Correlation | .929** | .382** | .183* | 1 | .855** | .479** | .378** | 1.000** | .527** | .481** | .794** |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .012 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X1.5 Pearson Correlation | .797** | .318** | .285** | .855** | 1 | .469** | .377** | .855** | .581** | .568** | .801** |
| Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X2.1 Pearson Correlation | .471** | .491** | .223** | .479** | .469** | 1 | .422** | .479** | .706** | .809** | .733** |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .003 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X2.2 | Pearson | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Correlation | .392** | .930** | .289** | .378** | .377** | .422** | 1 | .378** | .539** | .534** | .539** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X2.3 | Pearson | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Correlation | .929** | .382** | .183* | 1.000** | .855** | .479** | .378** | 1 | .527** | .481** | .794** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .012 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X2.4 | Pearson | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Correlation | .535** | .476** | .301** | .527** | .581** | .706** | .539** | .527** | 1 | .854** | .756** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| X2.5 | Pearson | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Correlation | .496** | .439** | .300** | .481** | .568** | .809** | .534** | .481** | .854** | 1 | .805** |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |
| Y | Pearson | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Correlation | .795** | .514** | .265** | .794** | .801** | .733** | .539** | .794** | .756** | .805** | 1 |
| | Sig. (1-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 | 150 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

From the table above, it can be seen that the values that provide the most dominant value are the value of X1.5 (Assurance) of 0.801 and the value of X2.5 (Perceived Value) of 0.805. So, from the patient service variable, the Assurance indicator has the greatest influence compared to other indicators, and from the satisfaction variable, the perceived value indicator also has the greatest influence compared to other indicators. Only the X1.2 indicator (Responsiveness) has a small value of 0.265 when compared to all the values of all service variable indicators and satisfaction variables.

V. Discussion

Healthcare services in hospitals are not only assessed by the success of treatment, but also by the quality of care provided to patients. The service variable (X1), with its five main indicators: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance, serves as an important benchmark for assessing the level of public satisfaction and trust in hospitals.

1. Tangibles (Physical Evidence).

Physical evidence includes facilities and infrastructure that can be directly seen, such as the cleanliness of treatment rooms, the neatness of staff, the availability of medical facilities, and the completeness of medical equipment. At Ternate City Hospital, the presence of adequate physical facilities is crucial for creating a positive first impression and increasing patient comfort.

2. Reliability. Reliability refers to the hospital's ability to provide consistent, timely services, and in accordance with medical procedures. Patients at Ternate City Hospital require assurance that the services provided consistently meet standards and are reliable, thus fostering trust in the healthcare system.

3. Responsiveness. This indicator relates to the speed and readiness of medical and non-medical personnel in assisting patients. Responsiveness is crucial, especially in emergencies, as delays in service can

impact patient safety. For Ternate City Hospital, good responsiveness reflects professionalism and agility in meeting patient needs.

4. Empathy. Empathy describes the ability of healthcare personnel to understand the physical and psychological conditions of patients and to provide genuine care. Patients who feel cared for will be more satisfied and loyal to hospital services. At Ternate City Hospital, the application of empathy can also strengthen the hospital's image as a humanistic institution.

5. Assurance. Assurance relates to the knowledge, skills, and courteous demeanor of medical personnel, which instills a sense of security in patients. Assurance also includes transparency of information regarding procedures and treatments. At Ternate City Hospital, this aspect is crucial because it can reduce patient anxiety and increase trust in healthcare professionals.

Of the five indicators above, indicator X1.5 (Assurance) receives more attention from patients because the Assurance Indicator (X1.5) receives more attention from patients at Ternate City Hospital because basically patients need a sense of security, certainty, and trust in receiving health services. Assurance includes the competence of medical personnel, polite and friendly attitudes, openness of information, and guarantees of patient safety. Patients feel more at ease if doctors and nurses have clear qualifications and experience, are able to explain treatment procedures transparently, and demonstrate professionalism in every interaction. In addition, the implementation of safety standards and compliance with medical ethics further strengthen patients' confidence that they are being served safely and reliably. Therefore, the assurance indicator is an important aspect that differentiates service quality and greatly determines the level of patient satisfaction and loyalty to the hospital.

Previous research supports the importance of assurance in healthcare. Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) explained that assurance is a key dimension of service quality directly related to customer trust. Aagja&Garg's (2010) study showed that assurance significantly influences patient satisfaction because it involves trust in medical personnel and guarantees of safety. A similar finding was found by Tjiptono (2016), who emphasized that assurance in the form of employee competence and professionalism contributes significantly to building patient loyalty. A recent study by Dewi & Sari (2022) in a regional hospital also concluded that assurance is a dominant factor in determining patient satisfaction, even higher than tangible and responsive dimensions. Therefore, strengthening assurance indicators will significantly contribute to increasing patient satisfaction and loyalty.

Furthermore, assessing patient satisfaction is crucial for assessing patient loyalty, as high levels of satisfaction typically translate into a willingness to return to a hospital and recommend it to others. Patient satisfaction reflects the alignment between expectations and actual experiences when receiving care; when care meets or even exceeds expectations, patients feel valued and trust the hospital. This in turn fosters loyalty, demonstrated through repeat visits, long-term loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Previous research has shown that patient satisfaction significantly impacts loyalty, both in national and international hospital contexts. Therefore, maintaining patient satisfaction is a key strategy for maintaining and enhancing trust and the sustainability of patient-hospital relationships.

The five indicators of patient satisfaction from this study, namely Conformity to Expectations, Overall Satisfaction, Repurchase Decision, Recommendation (Word of Mouth), and Perceived Value, all have a strong correlation value with loyalty. Conformity to Expectations indicates the extent to which the service received meets or exceeds the patient's expectations; overall satisfaction describes the patient's overall experience with hospital services; Repurchase Decision reflects the patient's intention to continue choosing the same hospital on subsequent visits; recommendations or word of mouth are tangible evidence of patient satisfaction that encourages positive promotion; while Perceived Value confirms that patients assess services not only from a clinical perspective, but also from a balanced perspective of benefits, convenience, and costs. These findings are in line with previous research, both nationally and internationally, which confirm that these dimensions of satisfaction are the main determinants of loyalty, so that consistent improvement in patient satisfaction will strengthen the sustainability and reputation of the hospital.

Of the five patient satisfaction indicators, the X2.5 indicator (Perceived value) has the greatest correlation value with loyalty. This proves that patients do not only assess health services from the technical medical aspects alone, but also from the balance between the benefits received and the sacrifice of costs, time, and energy expended. When patients feel that the services at the hospital provide value that is commensurate or even higher than their sacrifice, then trust, satisfaction, and loyalty will be strengthened. Thus, perceived value is a key factor that encourages patients to reuse hospital services and recommend them to others, thus directly implicating the sustainability and positive reputation of the hospital.

Several previous studies support the importance of perceived value in increasing patient loyalty. Zeithaml (1988) explains that perceived value is a customer's overall evaluation of a product or service's benefits relative to the costs they incur. Sweeney & Soutar (2001) found that perceived value significantly

influences satisfaction and repurchase intentions, particularly in the service context. Research by Cronin, Brady, & Hult (2000) also confirmed that perceived value positively influences satisfaction, ultimately increasing customer loyalty. In the healthcare context, research by Wu et al. (2011) demonstrated that perceived value has a direct influence on patient loyalty through increased satisfaction. Similar results are supported by research by Putri & Pratiwi (2021) in Indonesia, which found that perceived value is a key predictor of patient satisfaction and loyalty to hospital services.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the indicators in the service variable, especially Assurance (X1.5) and Perceived Value (X2.5), have a significant influence on patient satisfaction and loyalty. Assurance, which includes the competence of medical personnel, transparency of information, and professional attitude, provides a sense of security and builds patient trust, which are key factors in creating a positive experience. Perceived Value shows that patients assess services not only in terms of medical quality, but also from the balance between benefits received and costs and time spent. This finding supports the results of previous studies that show that perceived value has a strong correlation with patient loyalty. Thus, hospitals need to focus on improving service quality, especially in the dimensions of assurance and perceived value, to increase patient satisfaction which ultimately impacts loyalty and the sustainability of patient relationships with the hospital.

This study also revealed that to strengthen loyalty, hospitals must maintain a balance between patient expectations and the experiences they receive, and increase patient perceived value through services commensurate with their sacrifices. Therefore, strengthening these indicators of service quality and patient satisfaction is crucial in building a positive image and reputation for a hospital.

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