

# A conceptual review on the mediating effect of patient satisfaction towards patient loyalty in the dental practice in Thailand

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## ABSTRACT

This study reviewed the mediating effect of patient satisfaction between dental practice-related factors and patient loyalty in dental healthcare services (dental practice). This research identifies the link between measurements regarding their efforts to increase dental practice quality to respond to patients' needs and expectations, influencing patient satisfaction and turn it into patient loyalty. The elements of dental practice-related factors include Dentist Services, Staff Services, Prices, and Facilities. The healthcare sector shows the relationship between these three measurements in the theoretical framework in this review article.

**Keywords:** *Dental Practice, Services, Patient Satisfaction, Revisit, Patient Loyalty*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Thailand's healthcare system is being challenged by rapid technological advancements as well as shifting patient needs. Because of these forces, all healthcare providers must compete in the business world to survive and thrive. A change in the business model has occurred due to the increased demand for healthcare services in the private sector. (Visavanont & Jeenanunta, 2014). The healthcare service industry is a part of the world's largest and most comprehensive developing sector, and it is transitioning from a disease-centered model to a patient-centered model in the process. (Cortada et al., 2012) It is necessary to conduct additional research to understand better the various characteristics of patient-centered care and its acceptability and comparative effectiveness in the healthcare setting. (Jayadevappa & Chhatre, 2011) Healthcare marketing impacts consumer behavior, which in turn has a significant impact on healthcare service decisions. (Kay, 2007) The core of these enhancements is to ensure customer loyalty, whether marketing strategies or through repeat visits to the clinic. (Alhidari & Alkadhi, 2018)

Many different marketing strategies are employed to achieve the desired number of customers. (Köseoğlu & Mutlu, 2019) To provide better patient-centered care, dentists should first assess their patients' desires, expectations, and perceptions of their dental practice experiences and then manage or correct those expectations and perceptions as needed, according to their findings. (Cousin et al., 2012) The patient-centered care approach creates a more appealing patient experience and is a fundamental practice for providing high-quality care in healthcare organizations that have implemented patient-centered care. Patient satisfaction ratings have improved in organizations that have implemented patient-centered care. (Charmel & Frampton, 2008) As a result, the patient-centered challenge is to devise strategies for creating a competitive advantage for all dental clinics. Patient-centered care encompasses various aspects, including coordination and integration of care, respect for patients' values, preferences, expressed needs, and patient empowerment. Physical comfort, information education, communication, emotional support, or involvement of family and friends are also crucial. (Jensen et al., 2016) Some studies consider the following factors to be measures of a patient's experience and related to healthcare quality: staff responsiveness and dependability; doctor-patient communication; accounts of waiting time; cleanliness; availability of patient information and cleanliness; access; cost; and tangibles. (Naidu, A., 2009, Ahmed et al., 2014) Consumer participation in healthcare decisions in the private sector has increased in recent years. Patients could compare different clinics. A variety of factors influence the decision on which clinic to use. As a result, understanding consumer behavior when selecting dental clinics is critical. Dental clinics must consider a variety of factors that are related to the quality of their dental practice. (Asefzadeh et al., 2012)

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Dental Practice-Related Factors**

Dental Practice-Related Factors refer to the dentist services, dental practice attributes and related factors. (Kim et al., 2012, Park et al., 2014) In this article, dental practice-related factors comprise Prices, Facilities, Dentist Services and Staff Services based on Esa et al., 2006, Kim et al., 2012, and Luo et al., 2018.

#### **2.1.1 Prices**

The value of the items required to acquire a product or service is referred to as the price. (Al-Qarni et al., 2013) Several individuals believed that dental treatment was prohibitively expensive and was becoming increasingly so. (Wang et al., 1996) Price is one of two critical attributes to consider; another one is the competency of the physician. (Naidu, 2008) The pricing strategy in the healthcare sector includes the following elements: 1) reasonable costs; 2) the quality of treatment is dependent on the price. 3) to provide services at a reasonable cost, and 4) to adhere to a consistent set of pricing policies. (Sreenivas et al., 2013). Dentists frequently criticize the commercialization of dentistry for emphasizing fees—discounts, competition, and treatment packages—instead of on patient care. (Porter & Grey, 2002) The pricing of dental services based on competition does not appear to be an option that was considered viable by 60 percent of dentists. (Dobros & Katsaliaki, 2017) The costs of providing care determine the prices that patients pay. It is something that dental patients have taken into consideration. (Kay, 2007, Asefzadesh et al.,

2012) Dental patient satisfaction is influenced by a variety of factors, including price (dental fees). (Thanveer et al., 2010) Price has proven to be a significant factor in determining buyer preference. Although consumers who have access to price information and price discounters put pressure on retailers to lower their prices, retailers are not required to do so. (Kotler & Keller, 2016) The competition-based pricing strategy adopted by more dentists aims to prevent patients from switching to other dentists. But, to dismiss price lowering as an indication of low- quality services in terms of pricing strategy. (Dobros & Katsaliaki, 2017) The importance of pricing impacts purchasing decisions to use dental clinics in the dental care cost affordable should not be costly. (Bahadori et al., 2015, Desai & Chandawarkar, 2015). The price of healthcare services was a significant differentiator between providers for several people interested in receiving healthcare services. (Anbori et al., 2010). The cost of appropriate dental services is a factor that influences marketing. (Asefzadeh et al., 2012) The relationship between the quality of services and the price was found to be significant. Higher prices were associated with a higher quality of care; conversely, lower prices were associated with lower quality of care. (Whitney et al., 1997)

### **2.1.2 Facilities**

Facilities are defined as a location that includes buildings, equipment, and services that are provided for a specific purpose, such as medical facilities, among other things. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionary), facilities are defined as the extent to which an organizational and technical infrastructure exists to support healthcare services. (Alaiad & Zhou, 2013) Facilities are factors (predictors) of patient satisfaction. (Thanveer et al., 2010) Several studies have identified dental practice-related facilities. The degree to which a dental clinic's administrative and infrastructure are in place to support dental care services is referred to as its facilities. A convenient physical location, convenient parking, convenient office hours, clean and comfortable waiting room toilets, and a clean and comfortable waiting room floor are described by Kim et al. (2012) and Akbar et al. (2019) as indicators of dental practice-related facilities. In this study, dental practice-related facilities about convenient parking, up-to-date equipment, wait time relative to the appointment time, or the ability to schedule a service were evaluated. It includes factors such as whether the temperature is comfortable, whether the dental clinic's location is convenient, whether the materials supplies used for treatment are clean and of high quality, and whether the waiting area, floor, and toilet are clean and convenient. It also includes factors such as whether the clinic's location is convenient and whether the temperature is comfortable. (Kim et al., 2012, Rocha et al., 2017, Balhaddad et al., 2018, and Akbar et al., 2019).

### **2.1.3 Dentist Services**

Dental patients seek technical competence and interpersonal skills to reduce their anxiety and, ultimately, be satisfied with their visit and treatment. (Riley et al., 2014) Patients have certain expectations when they come to see the doctors. They can discuss whether these expectations have been met at the end. The doctor should solicit the patient's input and encourage them to take an active role in the decision-making process. (Ladise et al., 2018) According to Kim et al. (2012), Dentist services are the dentist's practice that is concerned with providing patients with attention; using the most up-to-date technique; and dentists' concern for the pain and fear of their patients. Fernandez et al. (2016) concluded that the reputation of a dentist and recommendations from peers and relatives were the essential factors in deciding on a particular dentist for dental care. More

than two-thirds of the patients (68.6 percent) believed that the dentist's level of education played a role in their decision to choose them as dental care providers. Dobros & Katsaliaki (2017) found that dentists strongly agree (Mean 3.96) that advertisements should be avoided because they violate the ethical Code established by the legislation. In this article, the dental practice related to the dentist in considering the patient's expectations-needs, meet them all together, have sufficient skills, and are good at their job. Additionally, the doctor clearly explains the treatment plan. The doctor asks the patient's opinion and encourages them to participate in the decision. The doctor has interpersonal skills to reduce the patient's anxiety and the reputation of the doctor. (Riley et al., 2014, Rocha et al., 2017, Ladise et al., 2018, Akbar et al., 2019, Balhaddad et al., 2018 and Collin et al., 2019)

#### **2.1.4 Staff Services**

The dental practice-related in Staff Services is about Staff's attitude or helpfulness. (Kim et al., 2012) The attitude is a long-lasting disposition to consistently respond to various affective, cognitive, and behavioral components predictably. (Zikmund, 2003) Services such as scheduled appointments and shorter waiting times can improve patient satisfaction and encourage them to return to the dental clinic. (Asefzadeh et al., 2012) The attitude and helpfulness of the staff constitute the Staff Services (except for the dentist). Staff members who are always willing to assist patients, who work together in the patients' best interests, and who provide them with personal attention are examples. (Rocha et al., 2017) In this article, dental practice-related Staff Services work together in the patient's best interest, are always willing to help patients, receive prompt service, give patients personal attention, and know patients' needs. (Rocha et al., 2017)

#### **2.2 Patient Satisfaction**

According to the definition, satisfaction refers to the emotions of disappointment or pleasure experienced by a person after comparing a product or service's perceived outcome (or performance) with their expectations. Customer dissatisfaction occurs when the experience does not meet the expectations of the customer. However, if the product meets the customer's expectations, the customer is satisfied. (Kotler & Keller, 2016) Currently available studies for measuring the effectiveness of healthcare programs are looking into patient satisfaction with their experiences in the hospital. When a patient comes to the healthcare sector, patient satisfaction is taken into consideration. It reflects how well providers meet their patient's expectations and needs while also providing a suitable service standard. (Thanveer et al., 2010) In the context of the services, satisfaction refers to the belief that the consumer is the end-user of the product or service. Over the years, several studies have confirmed a link between consumer satisfaction and service provider loyalty. (Prayag et al., 2019) Patient expectations should be taken into consideration when conducting patient satisfaction investigations. It is necessary to establish the expected level at which the satisfaction result occurred, and the quality of the clinic is specified following their expectations. Patients' satisfaction and complaints about the healthcare system must be scheduled to address the sector's problems. (Ladise et al., 2018) Patient Satisfaction is determining patient's content for the services they are receiving from healthcare organized and patient-centered delivery of quality healthcare. (Fatima et al., 2017) Baran & Galka (2017) stated that "The marketing literature is rich in measure of satisfaction generated primarily by the services marketing field. All companies recognize the importance of providing quality service to maintain high levels of

customer satisfaction. But will provide high levels of measurable satisfaction ensure that companies create of loyal customers and will this in turn increase company profitability”.

Patient satisfaction is concerned with determining a patient's satisfaction with the services they receive from dental care organizations that are organized and patient-centered in their delivery of quality healthcare. (Fatima et al., 2017) In this study's patient satisfaction measurements about the patient's overall attitude toward the clinic is positive. In general, patients are pleased with the services provided by the clinic. Whenever they require dental treatment, the patients are pleased with their decision to visit the clinic. The overall impression of the clinic's prices, facilities, and services are better than the patients' expectations. (Kashif et al., 2016, and Li et al., 2011)

### **2.3 Patient Loyalty**

Loyalty refers to a commitment to repurchase or patronize a preferred product or service in the future. (Kotler & Keller, 2016) A customer's potential for returning is known as their behavioral intention. It is a relatively accurate predictor of future behavior and can be measured using patient loyalty or behavioral intention. (Alaid & Zhou, 2013) The intention to spread positive words about a service provider and to recommend it to others is a desirable behavioral intention. (Zarei et al., 2013) Loyalty is demonstrated by returning to the distributors and recommending intention. (Kitapci et al., 2014, Yapp et al., 2018, Odoom et al., 2019). Customer loyalty, customer retention, and behavioral intention are all terms that are used interchangeably in marketing. (Cham et al., 2014) The majority of researchers use behavioral intention to measure customer loyalty, which includes positive word-of-mouth, a willingness to reuse, and the recommendation of others. Customers loyal to a specific provider are more likely to return to that provider, recommend that provider to their relatives, friends, and potential customers, and act as a free word-of-mouth advertising agent for that provider. (Zarei et al., 2014) However, Alhidari & Alkadhi (2018) argued that word of mouth and service prices do not impact revisit intention in the dental practice. According to Alaid & Zhou, 2013, Zarei et al., 2013) patient loyalty is about the patients' potential for revisiting and a recommendation intention (positive word of mouth). The patient loyalty measurements are the patients share positive things about the clinic with others and encourage friends and relatives to use the clinic. Consider the clinic as their first choice and recommend the clinic to others was based on Kashif et al., 2016; Kudasani & Panda, 2015.

### **2.4 Hypotheses Development**

#### **H1a: Prices significantly influence patient satisfaction.**

Prices have significant effects on the variable Customer Satisfaction in the healthcare context. (Tarmidi et al., 2021) Price is one of the potential common factors to predict patient satisfaction and analyzed the influencing factors to provide suggestions for the medical reform. (Liu & Fang 2019). Qualitative and quantitative evidence indicates that prices element influences the patient's overall satisfaction. (Pantouvakis & Bouranta, 2014). The cost of services had the most remarkable effects on patients' overall satisfaction. (Zarei et al., 2015)

#### **H1b: Facilities significantly influence patient satisfaction.**

Patients were more satisfied with facilities such as seating arrangement for the patients and attendants, cleanliness, fans, toilets, drinking water, and telephone facility at a higher-level facility in district and civil hospitals than a community health center and primary health center. (Sodani et al., 2010) Facilities are one of the factors that have been identified as factors affecting patient satisfaction. (Farzianpour et al., 2015) The convenience of medical services or facilities is one of the potential common factors to predict patient satisfaction and analyzed the influencing factors to provide suggestions for the healthcare reform. (Liu & Fang 2019). Conversely, the quality of the physical environment had no significant effect on patient satisfaction. (Zarei et al., 2015) Additional improvements about facilities in the accessibility and physical appearance of the dental centers are needed. In addition, interventions regarding accessibility, mainly when booking an appointment, are required to measure patient satisfaction. (Ali, 2016) The B-class graded healthcare businesses in Bangkok and patient perception of its facilities showed a high level of relationship between the feedback received and, therefore, be improved to affect patient satisfaction directly. (Pitt et al., 2016)

### **H1c: Dentist services significantly influence patient satisfaction.**

There is a relationship between doctor-patient communication ratings and overall patient satisfaction. After controlling for such elements, patient-level factors may confound the sizable relationship between doctor or physicians' communication behaviors and overall patient satisfaction. (Clever et al., 2008) Patient dissatisfaction was linked to several factors involving doctors' incompetence, including inappropriate handling of critical cases, inaccurate diagnoses, excessive reliance on medical tests, absence of physical examination, non-availability of specialist doctors, and experimentation by trainee doctors. (Jalil et al., 2017) In addition to the doctor's communication skills, level of interpersonal treatment, and knowledge of the patient, respect for the doctors, and assurance of services all contribute to increased trust in the doctor. Better communication is achieved through patient-centered communication combined with a two-way conversation involving open-ended questions such as collaboration in decision-making results in better management and a greater likelihood of compliance with treatment and patient satisfaction. (Ward, 2018).

### **H1d: Staff services significantly influence patient satisfaction.**

The staff services element is one of the potential common factors to predict patient satisfaction and analyzed the influencing factors to provide suggestions for the healthcare sector. (Liu & Fang 2019). Some services provided by staff members of healthcare providers also fell short of patients' expectations and satisfaction, including explaining what to expect during the services, the courtesy to patients, and may affect patient satisfaction. (Ochonma et al., 2015) Increasing satisfaction ratings concerning staff or nurses' service attitudes, expenditure, and environment can improve patient satisfaction levels. Responsible managers should pay attention to patient satisfaction and improve the quality of relevant health services, thus ultimately enhancing patient experiences. (Chen et al., 2016) The B-class graded healthcare businesses in Bangkok and patient perception of its services showed a high level of relationship between the feedback received and, therefore, be improved to affect patient satisfaction directly. (Pitt et al., 2016)

### **H2a: Prices significantly influence patient loyalty.**

Patient loyalty differed significantly from the healthcare providers reporting higher prices. (OR  $\frac{1}{4}$  1.15;  $P < 0.05$ ). (Anbori et al., 2010) The dentist perceives that three components drive the behavior of a dental clinic in high sensitivity to prices, high churn and few recommendations, and fewer visits. Patient loyalty in dental clinics by a holistic approach helps decrease negative bias in the dentist not to condition their professional behavior when a new patient arrives at the clinic. (Vargas et al., 2016) The switching cost positively impacts patient loyalty but has no moderating effect on the outpatient satisfaction–loyalty relationship. (Dayan et al., 2021) In terms of the direct effect, the method reveals that medical price significantly affected patient loyalty. (Afthanorhan et al., 2018) Some patients (15% of respondents) would move to another hospital if they got a discount. (Susanti et al., 2020) However, the prices do not have an impact on patient loyalty. These findings have important implications for a manager in dentistry. Managers should increase patients' perceived value to keep the consumers coming back to the dental office. (Alhidari & Alkadhi, 2018)

### **H2b: Facilities significantly influence patient loyalty.**

Patient loyalty was no significant association found between patient loyalty and facilities (tangibility). (Anbori et al., 2010) There is no relationship between facilities (physical evidence) with patient loyalty. (Napirah et al., 2016) Some studies confirmed that the facility has no significant effect on patient loyalty at Rawamangun Special Surgery Hospital. (Sitio & Ali, 2019)

### **H2c: Dentist services significantly influence patient loyalty.**

Patients who experience a service compare their expectations with their experience. If they feel satisfied, they will be intensely loyal to the healthcare providers. However, if they experience dissatisfaction, in general, they will turn to other health care providers. (Astuti & Nagase, 2014) Dental patients' perceptions of dentist services are an essential factor, the recommendation from peers or relatives of the patients influencing them to choose a clinic. A dentist's reputation is the most recommended. The dentist's response to their needs and expectations affects patient loyalty. (Siripipatthanakul & Bhandar, 2021)

### **H2d: Staff services significantly influence patient loyalty.**

Nurses' empathy is improved while providing services to inpatients in the certainty of the information supplied to create patient satisfaction, ultimately impacting patient loyalty. (Mahendrayana et al., 2018) In increasing patient loyalty through healthcare quality, what management must do is how hospital staff always look neat and reliable in providing information on services and responsive to the needs of patients. Staff or service officers care about the wants and needs of patients. (Sitio & Ali 2019).

### **H3: Patient satisfaction significantly influence patient loyalty.**

Patient satisfaction factors significantly influence patient loyalty at RSU Bandung Medan. (Susanti et al., 2020) Patient satisfaction significant positive relationship with patient loyalty. The patients of private sector hospitals were found more satisfied than their counterparts in the public sector.

(Shabbir et al., 2016) However, the results of the indirect test on patient satisfaction can increase patient loyalty if supported by high patient trust. (Ramli & Sjahrudin, 2015)

#### **H4: Patient satisfaction is a mediator between dental practice related factors and patient loyalty.**

Patient satisfaction is influenced by the quality of healthcare, which in turn affects positive patient loyalty. Patient satisfaction and healthcare service quality can be operationalized by using a multi-disciplinary approach that incorporates patient inputs and expert judgment. (Naidu, 2009) Service Quality provided by the healthcare provider (hospital) directly influenced the patients' satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, patient satisfaction had a significant impact on patient loyalty. Thus, patient satisfaction is the mediator between healthcare service quality and patient loyalty. (Asnawi et al., 2019) Private healthcare service providers attempt to deliver well-improved healthcare services to their patients. Results confirmed that better quality of healthcare services inclines to build patient satisfaction and loyalty. The healthcare quality aspects are positively related to patient loyalty which patient satisfaction is the mediator. (Fatima et al., 2017) Patient Satisfaction has a positive and significant mediator between service quality and patient Loyalty with a significance value of 0.469. (Mahendrayana et al., 2018)

The theoretical framework (Figure 1) was based on Al- Qarni et al. (2013), Lonial & Raju (2015), Shabbir et al. (2016), Fatima *et al.* (2017), Meesala & Paul (2018), Asnawi et al. (2019), Saub et al. (2019), Hamdan et al. (2019), Wibowo et al. (2019), Zaid et al. (2020), Akbar et al. (2019), Lwin et al. (2021), Park et al. (2021), Siripipatthanakul (2021), Siripipatthanakul & Chana (2021), Siripiatthanakul & Puttharak (2021), Siripipatthanakul & Sixl-Daniell.

### **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

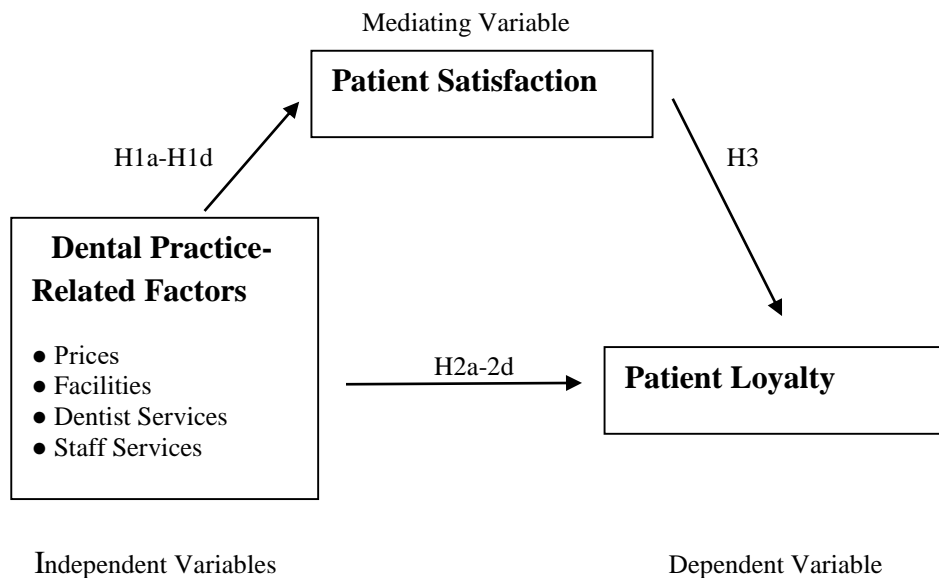


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



### 3.0 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTATION

The questionnaire items were developed by the researchers based on previous research that was found to be valid. Measuring instruments were evaluated in terms of reliability and validity. The original questions and modified survey items are shown as follows.

**Table 1 : The modified questionnaire items and sources.**

<b>Original Questions and Sources</b>	<b>(Modified) Survey Items</b>
<b>a. Prices (Dental Practice-Related factor-1)</b>	
The dental care costs should not be high. (Akbar et al., 2019)	Dental fee costs are not high.
Cost is reasonable. (Sreenivas et al., 2013)	Dental fee costs are reasonable.
Cost versus quality. (Anbori, 2010)	The dental services fees are related and relevance with the quality provided
<b>b. Facilities (Dental Practice-Related factor-2)</b>	
Parking is convenience (Kim et al., 2012)	The clinic provides car parking is convenient.
Have up to date equipment (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic provides up to date equipment.
Waiting time relative to appointment time or schedules time for a service. (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic offers waiting time relative to appointment time or schedules time for a service.
Materials and equipment were clean. (Balhaddad et al., 2018)	The clinic offers materials and equipment were clean.
The waiting room, bathrooms, toilet, and floor should be clean, beautiful, comfortable, and desirable (Akbar et al., 2019)	The clinic offers waiting room, toilet, and floor are clean and comfortable.
College location was easy to access. (Balhaddad et al., 2018)	The clinic location was easy to access.
The temperature was comfortable. (Balhaddad et al., 2018)	The clinic temperature was comfortable.
<b>c. Dentist Services (Dental Practice-Related factor-3)</b>	
The dentist clearly explained my treatment plan. (Balhaddad et al., 2018)	The doctor clearly explained my treatment plan.
The doctor asks patient's opinion and encourage them to participate in the decisions. (Ladise et al., 2018)	The doctor asks patient's opinion and encourage them to participate in the decisions.
The dentist should consider the patients' expectations and needs and meet them completely. (Akbar et al., 2019)	The doctor considers the patients' expectations and needs and meets them completely.
The dentist should have sufficient skills and be good at his/her job. (Akbar et al., 2019)	The doctor has sufficient skills and is good at his/her job.
Interpersonal skills to reduce patient's anxiety. (Riley et al., 2014)	The doctor has interpersonal skills to reduce the patient's anxiety.
The reputation of the doctors. (Collins et al., 2019)	The reputation of the doctor is important for me.

**d. Staff Services (exception for the doctor) (Dental Practice-Related factor-4)**

Staff are always willing to help patients (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic staff are always willing to help patients.
Staff work together in the patients' best interest (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic staff work together in the patients' best interest.
Staff give you for personal attention (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic staff give you for personal attention.
Receive prompt service from clinic staff. (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic staff provides prompt service to patient.
Staff know what your needs are. (Rocha et al., 2017)	The clinic staff know what patient's needs.

**e. Patient Satisfaction**

My feeling towards this hospital is positive. (Kashif et al., 2016)	My feeling towards the clinic is positive.
Overall, I am satisfied with this hospital service. (Kashif et al., 2016)	Overall, I am satisfied with the clinic service.
I feel good about visiting this hospital, whenever I need any medication. (Kashif et al., 2016)	I feel good about visiting this clinic, whenever I need any dental treatment.
The overall feeling about the health care service in this hospital are better than I expected (Li et al, 2011)	The overall feeling about price, facilities and services in the clinic is better than I expected.

**f. Patient Loyalty**

I share positive things about this hospital to others. (Kashif et al., 2016)	I share positive things about the clinic to others.
I encourage friends and relatives to use this service of this hospital. (Kashif et al., 2016)	I encourage friends and relatives to use the clinic.
I consider this hospital to be my first choice. (Kashif et al., 2016)	I consider the clinic to be my first choice.
I will recommend this private hospital to others (Kondasani & Panda, 2015)	I will recommend the clinic to others.

**4.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS**

This article confirms the mediating effect of patient satisfaction between dental practice-related factors and patient loyalty in the dental healthcare sector from a review. Further study in quantitative and qualitative research will identify the relationship between measurements regarding their efforts to improve dental practice quality to respond to patients' needs and expectations, thereby influencing patient satisfaction and turning it into patient loyalty. The dental clinics in a setting area will explain the relationship between these three measurements in this sector. According to the literature review findings, previous studies in the healthcare sector have accepted all hypotheses. Still, only a small number of them support the private dental practice sector framework. The researchers recommended to statistical examine the mediating role of patient satisfaction in the relationship between dental practice-related factors and patient loyalty in further study. It may be helpful for the decision manager in developing a marketing plan and strategies in the healthcare context, with a particular emphasis on the dental healthcare industry.

Quality management, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in service companies could benefit from applying the results to other sectors.

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