

# The Role Of Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience And Perceived Value On The Relationship Of Service And Loyalty Patient

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## Abstract

The growth of the health sector in West Java has not had a significant impact on parental awareness and knowledge of children's dental health, as evidenced by the high number of dental caries cases in children. This indicates that despite the development of healthcare facilities, public awareness of children's dental health remains low. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty, with child-friendly dental clinic experience and perceived quality as mediating variables. This study employs a quantitative approach with a population of dental clinics in West Java. The sample selection was conducted using a purposive sampling technique, and data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with 400 parents of pediatric dental patients. The results of the direct effect analysis indicate that service quality significantly influences child-friendly dental clinic experience ( $\beta=0.758$ ), perceived value ( $\beta=0.781$ ), and patient loyalty ( $\beta=0.368$ ). Child-friendly dental clinic experience affects patient loyalty ( $\beta=0.266$ ), while perceived value influences patient loyalty ( $\beta=0.231$ ). Additionally, the results of the indirect relationship test show that child-friendly dental clinic experience ( $\beta=0.569$ ) and perceived value ( $\beta=0.548$ ) serve as mediating variables in the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty. This study provides insights for dental clinic managers to improve service quality by considering child experience and perceived value to enhance long-term patient loyalty.

**Keywords:** Dental Clinic, Service Quality, Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience, Perceived Value, Dental Patient Loyalty.

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, customer loyalty has become a crucial aspect that organizations must maintain [1]. Customer loyalty refers to an individual's commitment to a preferred product or service, ensuring they do not switch despite market efforts that may influence their decision (Sitio & Ali, 2019). The primary driver of profit growth in the service industry has been identified as customer loyalty [2]. Marketing theory and its role in traditional marketing practices to create and sustain customer loyalty have been essential topics for over 30 years [3]. Discussions on customer loyalty in the past few decades have attracted significant interest due to its importance in securing funding and achieving a competitive advantage [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9]. Research on customer loyalty has also gained attention among pediatric dental healthcare providers [10], particularly regarding efforts to enhance parental knowledge and awareness in preventing dental caries in children.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Federation Dental International (FDI) state that at least 50% of children aged 5 to 6 years in each country should be free of dental caries. However, in Indonesia, this target has not yet been met. According to the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) data, only about 7% of Indonesian children are free from cavities, while the prevalence of early childhood dental caries remains alarmingly high at 93% (kemkes.go.id, 2021). Furthermore, in West Java Province, based on WHO's age classification, 58.1% of children up to 5 years old experience dental problems, yet only 13.7% receive treatment from dental healthcare professionals (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). This situation presents a significant challenge in raising public awareness about the importance of dental health.

In Indonesia, clinics are categorized into two types based on their service capabilities: primary clinics and main clinics. As of 2022, Indonesia has 6,572 primary clinics and 1,042 main clinics (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). Primary clinics provide basic medical and dental care, while main clinics offer both general and specialized medical and dental services ([upk.kemkes.go.id](http://upk.kemkes.go.id), 2021). West Java is one of the most densely populated provinces and has the highest number of clinics, totaling 1,623 comprising 1,433 primary clinics and 190 main clinics (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). Similarly, according to the Public Relations Office of Bandung City (2022), Drg. Sri Mulyanti, Chairperson of the Indonesian Dental Association (PDGI) Bandung, stated that dentists, particularly specialists, are concentrated in large cities, leading to an uneven distribution of dental professionals. As a result, remote areas have limited access to both general and specialized dental care. The high number of clinics in West Java, owned by both the government and private individuals, some accepting insurance such as BPJS or private insurance and others operating independently has intensified competition among clinics.

Given this background, urban dental clinics face fierce competition, with an unequal distribution of clinics concentrated in major cities. Low public awareness of dental health, coupled with fear of dental procedures, contributes to a lower frequency of dental clinic visits. This study aims to comprehensively examine the relationship between Service Quality and Patient Loyalty, with Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience and Perceived Value as mediating variables.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Patient Loyalty*

Patient loyalty is a patient's perspective on certain health services in which they routinely use these facilities and subsequently advocate the services they get to others as expressed [11], [12]. Patient Loyalty can be seen in patients who tend to use certain health services because they are pleased with the quality of service offered by health services [13]. Sari W et al. [14] assess the definition of Patient Loyalty as the patient's availability to reuse health services repeatedly, which is influenced by the patient's happiness and experience of health services. Furthermore, Elizar et al. [15], states that customer loyalty is the extent to which patients choose health services and recommend them based on their trust and satisfaction with the health service provider. It has been demonstrated that patient loyalty influences hospital decisions and fosters loyalty, highlighting the necessity of enhancing service quality, providing cost-effective care, improving the hospital atmosphere, and giving patients relevant information [16]. Patient loyalty can be challenging to accurately measure and forecast since it depends on a number of demographic and visit-related factors [17]. In primary healthcare facilities, it has been discovered that internal service elements like the service provider and the service environment affect patient behavioral loyalty and service quality, underscoring the difficulty of gauging patient loyalty [18]. Therefore, factors influencing Patient Loyalty can be transformed into marketing plans by Bandung City dental offices.

### 2.2 *Service Quality*

Opinion from Grönroos and Parasuraman et al [19], [20] states that, in general, service quality can be defined globally as a consumer's attitude or assessment regarding the service they receive and comes from an illustration of the perceived service performance and the expectations of the customer [21]. According to Gong & Yi, [22], there has been significant progress in the service marketing literature, which considers the need to measure service quality. Researchers have varied concepts regarding service quality, which means the expectations of customers who have subjective evaluations as the main component of forming perceptions of service quality [23]. There are limitations to measuring the quality of health care, and a thorough assessment of the perceived quality of those treatments remains a challenging issue [24]. In previous studies, Aysola et al. [25] state how the patient's experience relates to the standard of care given and serves as a good basis for gauging the patient's experience. Research by Bayer et al. [26], stated that handling patient complaints, which is used as a benchmark for service quality, can improve the patient experience. Then, the patients' feelings about the quality of service they receive will directly influence their satisfaction; in other words, the quality of service they feel from health services will determine satisfaction [27].

### 2.3 *Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience*

The concept of "Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience" emerged as a new concept with the idea that customer experience in dental clinics also needs to be assessed from a child's perspective. A child-friendly environment is a place or space that is created in such a way as to increase their happiness [28]. A child-friendly environment is built to consider children's emotional, physical, and psychological needs [29]. Literature regarding child-friendly environments has parameters to consider, including the physical environment, which includes the facilities available and the cleanliness of the environment itself [30]. Child Health Services' implementation of the Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK) paradigm enhanced coordination and teamwork, which improved integrated care for kids and families and improved patient outcomes [31]. To maximize the experiences of children and their families in healthcare settings, child-friendly healthcare environments should give priority to elements that promote social engagement, patient privacy, parental presence, nature and outdoors, positive distraction, therapeutic play, peer and family support, safety and security, and comfort [32], [33]. The social environment's parameters include factors involving the surrounding community, access to these services, and social support [29].

This new concept results from synthesizing one of the theories established, tested, and considered influential in marketing management. This new concept is the marketing management theory that was coined by Kotler & Keller and Loudon et al. [34], [35]. This theory is then supported by consumer behaviour [36], [37] and transactional theory [38].

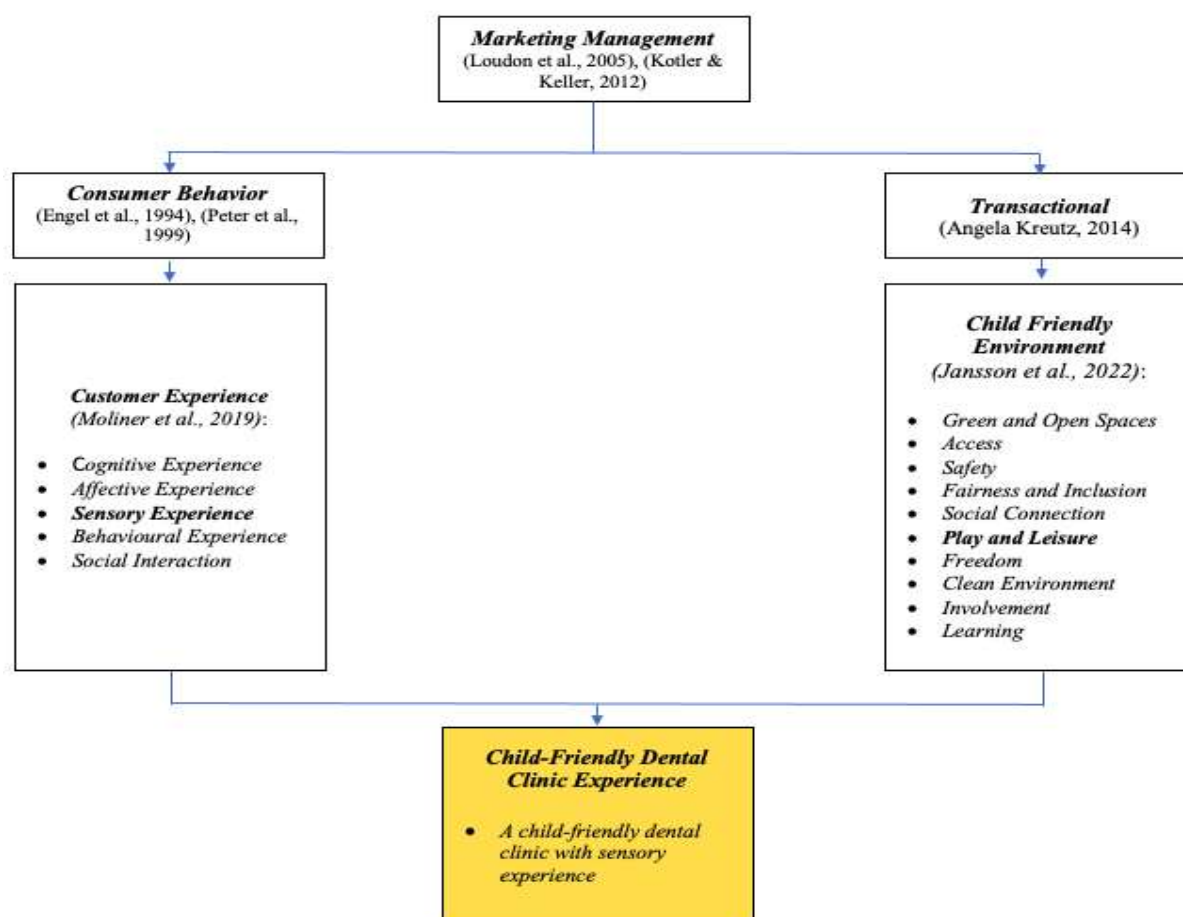


Figure 1. Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience Concept Mapping.

### 2.4 *Perceived Value*

Perceived value is a crucial factor in the healthcare service industry as it influences patients' decisions and satisfaction levels [39]. It is defined as the comparison between the benefits received and the sacrifices made by customers [40]. According to [39], perceived value consists of social and economic benefits as well as sacrifices such as cost and time. Patients feel satisfied when the benefits outweigh the sacrifices. Teke et al. [40] further state that satisfaction depends on the alignment between initial expectations and

actual experience. Patient satisfaction is greatly impacted by perceived value as well as service experience. Perceived value significantly impacted patient satisfaction for both inpatient and outpatient care, according to a study done in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This implies that a patient's overall satisfaction with healthcare services is greatly influenced by how they perceive the value of such services [41]. Rao et al. [39] emphasize that perceived value plays a role in patients' initial decisions, satisfaction, and loyalty to healthcare services. A multifaceted concept, perceived value in healthcare encompasses elements including professionalism, emotional value, and service quality. Together, these factors affect patient loyalty and satisfaction [42]. Patient satisfaction is directly impacted by perceived value, which is influenced by the quality of healthcare services. Research indicates that enhancing service quality raises perceived value, which in turn raises patient satisfaction [43], [44]. In this study, perceived value acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty, where an increase in perceived value enhances satisfaction and the likelihood of patient retention.

According to the preceding description, the following is the research's hypothesis:

**H1:**Service Quality influences Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience.

**H2:** Service Quality influences Perceived Value.

**H3:** Service Quality influences Patient Loyalty.

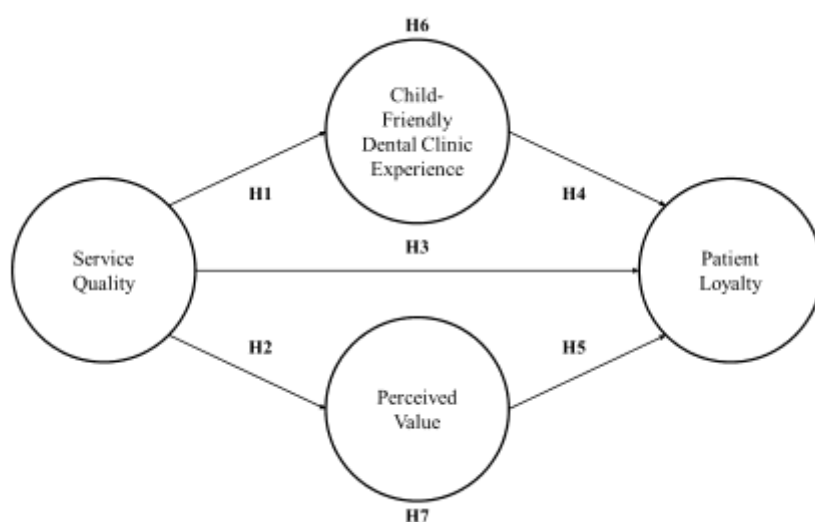
**H4:**Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience influences Patient Loyalty.

**H5:** Perceived Value influences Patient Loyalty.

**H6:**Service Quality influences Dental Patient Loyalty, which Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience mediates.

**H7:**Service Quality influences Patient Loyalty, which Perceived Value mediates.

Accordingly, the conceptual framework in Figure 2 highlights how child-friendly dental clinic experience and perceived value mediate the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty.



**Figure 2. Conceptual Framework.**

## METHODOLOGY

This research used quantitative methodology. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling, with primary data collected from respondents who met the following criteria: (1) parents of pediatric dental patients, and (2) patients who had undergone treatment more than once at the same child-friendly dental clinic. The total sample consisted of 400 respondents from various dental clinics in West Java Province. The secondary data came from articles, literature studies, websites, scientific journals, and other sources.

This research used Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis to identify correlations. The causal relationship between the variables Service Quality, Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience and Perceived Value (X) and Patient Loyalty (Y) in the researcher's proposed structural model will be tested.

This research uses n (sample) degrees of freedom and a significance level 0.05 using t-values for hypothesis testing. If the Critical Ratio (CR) or the null hypothesis is accepted if the probability (P) value is less than 0.05 [45]. The total effect column, which shows the estimated output, can determine the magnitude of the effect.

The following are the measurement variables used in this research:

Table 1. Variable Measurement.

No	Variable	Indicators	Description	Source
1	Patient Loyalty	PL1	The quality of this dental clinic is compared with other dental clinics in the same class	[46]
		PL2	The frequency with which I undergo dental treatment at this dental clinic	
		PL3	If I get an offer from another dental clinic	
		PL4	I am willing to revisit this dental clinic in the future	[9], [46], [47], [48]
		PL5	This dental clinic is my primary choice if I want to visit again for treatment	
		PL6	The level of possibility of continuing to receive treatment at this dental clinic	
		PL7	The frequency I recommend this clinic	[9], [46], [47]
		PL8	Frequency of inviting friends or family to have treatment at this dental clinic	
		PL9	I am willing to invite colleagues or family to undergo treatment at this dental clinic	
		PL10	Frequency of telling what I got during treatment at this dental clinic	[9], [47], [48]
		PL11	Frequency of viewing reviews or providing reviews online and on social media regarding dental clinics	
		PL12	Willingness to recommend this dental clinic if relatives or family ask about dental care	
		PL13	The dental care and services this dental clinic provides align with expectations	[47]
		PL14	What I have spent is worth the treatment results I have received	
		PL15	The quality of dental care meets the standards I desire	
2	Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience	CFDCE1	My experience interacting with employees and medical staff at a dental clinic	[49], [50]
		CFDCE2	The experience I got when the employees and medical staff at the dental clinic treated my teeth	
		CFDCE3	The experience I gain when medical staff carry out dental treatment is related to the skills of the medical staff (dentists and nurses) and the equipment used	
		CFDCE4	Health facilities (dental equipment used) at the dental clinic	[51]
		CFDCE5	Overall condition of the dental clinic (building, infrastructure)	
		CFDCE6	Condition of dental clinic facilities (waiting room, toilet, place of worship, etc.)	
		CFDCE7	Friendliness of employees and medical staff in serving	[52]

		CFDCE8	Explanations given by employees and medical staff starting from the treatment stage to prices	
		CFDCE9	Service of employees and medical staff in serving	
		CFDCE10	Open access to contact the clinic directly and digitally (such as through WhatsApp, social media and others)	[53]
		CFDCE11	Availability of options to contact the clinic either directly or digitally (such as WhatsApp, social media and others)	
		CFDCE12	Apart from conventional contacts, digital contacts help me reserve or make treatment appointments to avoid long queues	
		CFDCE13	Children are assessed as liking room decorations, colours or themes that are child-friendly or appropriate to children's themes	[28], [54]
		CFDCE14	Children are considered to like child-friendly facilities (TV, children's play area, etc.) when waiting for their turn to be cared for so they do not feel bored and afraid	
		CFDCE15	Children are considered to like and be happy if there is a gift given after dental treatment	
3	Service Quality	SQ1	Capabilities of the medical staff, especially the treating dentist	[9], [20], [55], [56], [57]
		SQ2	The dental equipment used is complete and up to date	
		SQ3	The dental clinic can facilitate the dental treatment I want	
		SQ4	The speed and quality of dentists in providing treatment to patients	[9], [20], [55], [57]
		SQ5	Speed and accuracy of information provided regarding schedules, maintenance stages, and prices	
		SQ6	The response and speed of employees in serving patients start from setting schedules to handling patient complaints	
		SQ7	I feel safe regarding the treatment provided by dentists at this dental clinic	[9]
		SQ8	I feel that the dental facilities at this dental clinic are safe for me	
		SQ9	I feel safe because this dental clinic already has a practice permit	
		SQ10	I can provide reviews regarding praise, suggestions, or criticism of this dental clinic both directly and digitally	[56]
		SQ11	The dentist tried to give me several dental treatment options that they thought were best	
		SQ12	I was given the freedom/authority to choose dental treatment options	
		SQ13	My data is protected (regarding address, contact, etc.)	[53]
		SQ14	The confidentiality of my health history is maintained (regarding disease history, treatments that have been carried out)	

		SQ15	The dental clinic kept a good record of my medical history form	
4	Perceived Value	PV1	I feel satisfied with the cost I paid for the contracted service based on its quality.	[39]
		PV2	I feel that the quality of the contracted service is worth the cost I personally paid.	
		PV3	I feel satisfied because the contracted service has met my expectations.	
	PV4	I feel satisfied with how efficiently the dental clinic operates in providing services	[40]	
	PV5	I feel satisfied with how well-organized the appointments, patient flow, and services are at the dental clinic.		
	PV6	I feel satisfied with the modern equipment and up-to-date facilities at the dental clinic.		
	PV7	I feel satisfied with the level of cleanliness and hygiene maintained at the dental clinic.		
	PV8	I feel satisfied with how easy it is to locate the dental clinic from other common locations.		
	PV9	I feel satisfied with how easy it is to reach the dental clinic using a private vehicle or public transportation		
	PV10	I feel satisfied with the professionalism and behaviour of the dental clinic employees.		
	PV11	I feel satisfied with how well the employees stay up-to-date with new dental treatments and trends.		
	PV12	I feel satisfied with the employees' knowledge and expertise in their respective roles.		
	PV13	I feel satisfied with the quality and usefulness of the advice provided by the dental clinic employees.		
	PV14	I feel satisfied with how well the dental clinic organizes its services.		
	PV15	I feel satisfied with the overall quality of service provided by the dental clinic		

## RESULT

After distributing the study's questionnaire, the researchers collected primary data from 400 respondents. Table 2 presents the respondents' profiles, with detailed data obtained from 400 individuals. Among them, 52.3% are female, while 47.7% are male. Many of the respondents fall within the 17-22 age group, accounting for 29.3%. A significant portion of respondents are students, with a bachelor's degree being the most common educational background. The most frequently reported monthly income range is between Rp. 2,000,000 and Rp. 4,000,000. Additionally, 54.7% of respondents indicated that their most recent visit to a dental clinic in Bandung took place more than six months before the survey. An assessment of the measurement model confirmed that all indicators and variables met the required validity and reliability criteria, allowing for further analysis.

Table 2. Respondent's Profile.

Number	Variables	Percentage	
1	Social Gender	Man	47.7%
		Woman	52.3%
2	Age (years old)	< 17	10.8%
		17-22	29.3%
		23-28	17.4%
		29-34	13.6%
		35-40	12.6%
		>40	16.2%
3	Occupation	Students	28.7%
		Entrepreneur	17.8%
		Private Officers	19.2%
		Civil Servants	17.6%
		Others	16.6%
4	Educational background	Senior High School	22.8%
		Diploma	18.0%
		Undergraduate	34.7%
		Post-graduate	24.4%
5	Monthly Income (IDR)	Under 2.000.000	19.6%
		Between 2.000.000 and 4.000.000	31.1%
		Between 4.000.000 and 6.000.000	17.2%
		Between 6.000.000 and 8.000.000	13.8%
		More than 8.000.000	18.2%
6	When was the last time you had your teeth treated at a Dental Clinic in Bandung City?	In the past six months.	44.7%
		More than 6 months ago"	54.7%

Figure 2 shows that the respondents' total number of districts and cities of origin is 25 regions. It is evident from this table that the majority of respondents were from the Bandung City area, with Bekasi City coming in second. Meanwhile, the fewest respondents came from the Kuningan Regency area. This table leads to the conclusion that the respondents are distributed relatively evenly, and there are representatives from each region, although the numbers are not the same. Based on the data obtained, you can see the profile of the respondents in Figure 2 below:

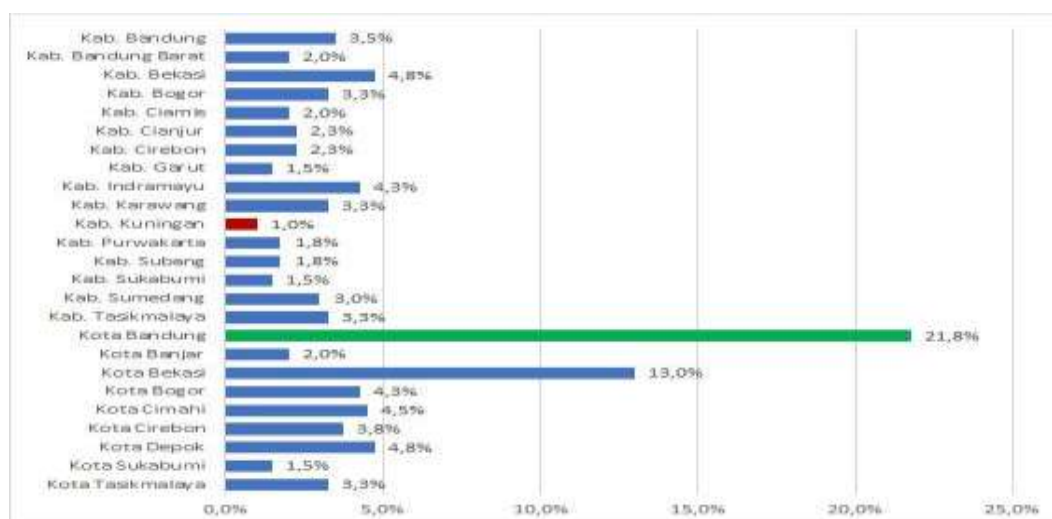


Figure 2. Percentage of Pediatric Dental Patients at Dental Clinics in West Java Province.

Figure 3 shows that the age of pediatric dental patients in the range of 2 – 6 years is the largest, with 53.5%. Meanwhile, the fewest people visiting were aged 15 – 17 years. Furthermore, as many as 42% of pediatric dental patients who carry out regular dental care with an intensity of dental care for a period of 3 to 12 months have at least 1 dental treatment, while the other 58% carry out treatment with an intensity of more than 1 visit to the hospital. Dental clinic even though you do not have a regular schedule for visiting the dental clinic.

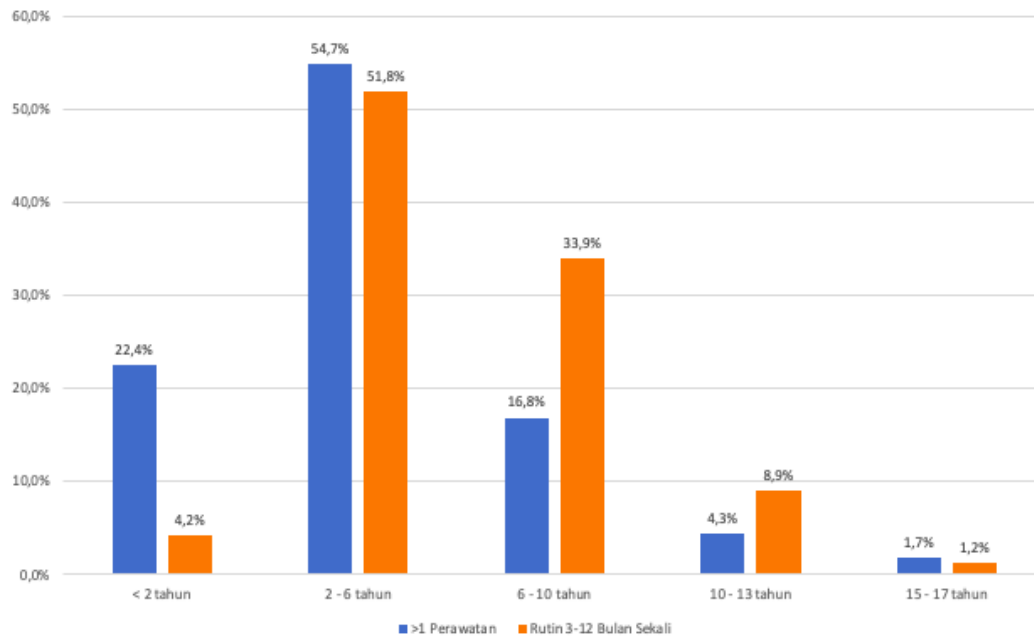


Figure 3. Profile of Pediatric Dental Patients  
Based on Child's Age and Dental Treatment Intensity.

Based on Table 3, the findings of this study indicate that the Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience is positively and significantly influenced by Service Quality. This is evidenced by a coefficient value of 0.758 and a t-value of 26.532, which is greater than 1.96, thereby confirming Hypothesis 1. This means that the higher the quality of service provided, the better the patient experience at the Child-Friendly Dental Clinic.

Additionally, Service Quality has a significant impact on Perceived Value, with a coefficient value of 0.781 and a t-value of 41.206, which is also greater than 1.96. Thus, this study supports Hypothesis 2, demonstrating that high service quality enhances patients' perceived value.

Table 3. Recapitulation of Hypothesis Testing Results.

Partial Hypothesis	Variable	Path Coefficient	t-value > 1.96	Hypothetical Conclusion
H1	SQ -> CFDCE	0.758	26.536	Accepted
H2	SQ -> PV	0.781	41.206	Accepted
H3	SQ -> PL	0.368	6.416	Accepted
H4	CFDCE -> PL	0.266	4.553	Accepted
H5	PV -> PL	0.231	4.131	Accepted
<b>Mediation Hypothesis</b>				
H6	SQ -> CFDCE -> PL		4.644	Accepted
H7	SQ -> PV -> PL		4,085	Accepted

In this study, Hypothesis 3 is also accepted, where the Service Quality variable positively and significantly affects Patient Loyalty. This is indicated by a coefficient value of 0.368 and a t-value of 6.416, which is greater than 1.96. This means that improving service quality can enhance patients' loyalty to the dental

clinic they visit. Furthermore, the Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience variable has a positive and significant effect on Patient Loyalty, with a coefficient value of 0.266 and a t-value of 4.553, which is greater than 1.96. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is accepted, meaning that a good and child-friendly clinic experience will increase patient loyalty.

The study findings also support Hypothesis 5, where the Perceived Value variable has a positive and significant impact on Patient Loyalty. This is evident from the coefficient value of 0.231 and a t-value of 4.131, which is greater than 1.96. Thus, a high perceived value will enhance patient loyalty to the clinic.

Table 4. Direct and Indirect Influence.

Variable	Direct Influence	Indirect Influence Through		Total Effect
		CFDCE	PS	
SQ on PL via CFDCE	0.368	0.201		0.569
SQ on PL via PV	0.368		0.180	0.548

Based on the analysis results from Table 3 and Table 4, this study confirms the hypothesis testing results regarding the mediating role between the examined variables. Hypothesis 6 is accepted because Patient Loyalty is positively and strongly influenced by Service Quality, with the Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience acting as a mediator. This is demonstrated by a t-value of 4.644 and a total effect value of 0.569. In other words, a child-friendly clinic experience can transmit the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty.

Moreover, Hypothesis 7 is also accepted, indicating that through Perceived Value, Service Quality has a positive and significant impact on Patient Loyalty. The study findings show a t-value of 4.085 and a total effect value of 0.548. This means that perceived value acts as a mediator in transmitting the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty.

Hypothesis testing in this study uses a t-value at the 0.05 level of significance. Figure 3 depicts the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty that mediated by Child-friendly Dental Clinic Experience and perceived value. The total model image, which is the final model, can be seen in Figure 3 as follows:

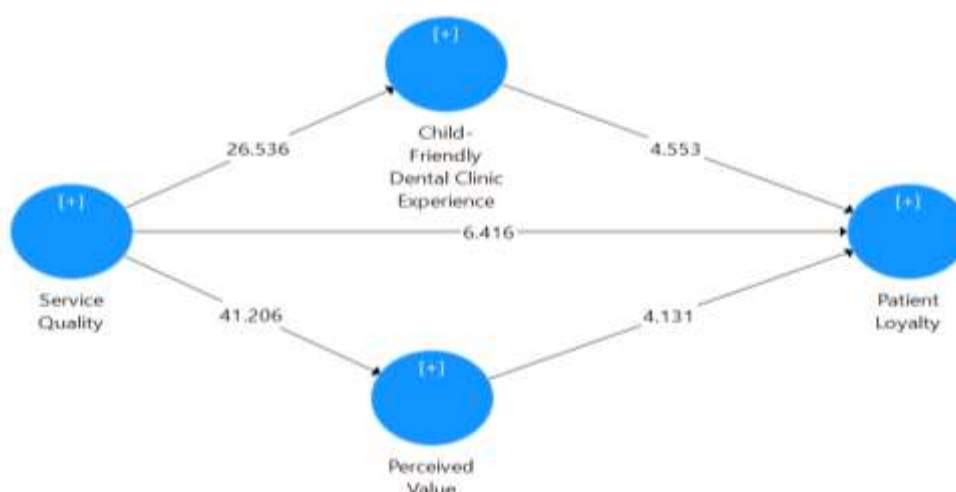


Figure 3. Final Model.

Overall, this study confirms that good service quality not only directly affects patient experience and loyalty but also indirectly through mediating variables such as the child-friendly dental clinic experience and perceived value. The better the quality of service provided, the higher the perceived value felt by patients, ultimately increasing their loyalty to the healthcare services they receive. Therefore, dental clinics

that focus on service quality and a positive patient experience can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty in the long run.

## DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that Service Quality has a significant positive effect on the Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience. Improvements in service quality enhance the overall experiences of children and their families when visiting dental clinics. Previous research supports this relationship. Hudson Smith and Smith [58] highlighted that service quality plays a central role in shaping patient experience. Aysola et al. [25] also confirmed that patient experience is strongly tied to the quality of care, while Bayer et al. [26] found that effective complaint management as part of service quality contributes to better patient experiences. Levine et al. [59] further emphasized that patient experience reflects multiple dimensions of service quality, showing that higher quality services generally result in more positive experiences.

Additional evidence in healthcare strengthens this finding. Sadeh [9] identified service quality as a crucial factor influencing patient experience, while Anwar et al. [60] observed a positive relationship between hospital service quality and patient experience. Similarly, Meng and Md Sidin [61] demonstrated that in the service sector, service quality directly shapes customer experience. These findings reinforce that service quality is a core element in creating positive child-friendly dental clinic experiences, which are particularly important for making children and families feel more comfortable with dental care.

The study also shows that Service Quality significantly influences Perceived Value. When service quality improves, patients assign greater value to the services provided. Teke et al. [40] noted that perceived value in hospital settings is multidimensional and closely connected to service quality. Özer et al. [42] found that higher perceived value in public hospitals is associated with greater loyalty, underscoring the role of quality in shaping value perceptions. Rao et al. [39] also demonstrated that service quality and perceived value work together to enhance patient satisfaction, while Ardianti et al. [41] showed that both service experience and perceived value strongly affect satisfaction in Indonesian hospitals. These results support the conclusion that perceived value increases when service quality improves.

Furthermore, the results confirm that Service Quality has a significant and positive impact on Patient Loyalty. When service quality improves, patients are more likely to remain loyal, whereas declining quality reduces loyalty. Evidence from healthcare indicates that improved service quality enhances loyalty [62], [63], [64]. Similar findings appear in other service industries, where service quality strengthens loyalty both directly and indirectly, often through mediating variables such as satisfaction or perceived value [65], [66], [67], [68], [69], [70], [71], [72], [73].

The findings also show that Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience positively affects Patient Loyalty. Better experiences within the clinic foster stronger loyalty, while negative experiences reduce it. Brandão and Ribeiro [74] reported that positive experiences improve loyalty and satisfaction, and Fitriah et al. [75] found that patient experiences strengthen commitment to healthcare providers. Saputra et al. [76] identified similar patterns in the broader service sector, where positive experiences build loyalty, while Eskiler and Safak [77] confirmed the same effect in fitness services.

This relationship is also evident in healthcare studies. Nasution et al. [78] showed that positive experiences with social insurance services increased loyalty, while Ayu et al. [79] reported that inpatients with good experiences became more loyal and more willing to recommend services to others. For child-friendly dental clinics, these findings underline the importance of providing supportive and positive experiences, as they help build trust and encourage families to return and recommend the clinic to others.

The study further confirms that Perceived Value has a significant positive influence on Patient Loyalty. When patients perceive higher value, their loyalty strengthens; when perceived value declines, loyalty tends to weaken. Teke et al. [40] found that perceived value in hospital services is closely linked to how patients evaluate their care. Similarly, Özer et al. [42] observed that higher perceived value in public hospitals contributes to greater loyalty. Rao et al. [39] confirmed that perceived value, together with patient experience, plays an essential role in shaping satisfaction and indirectly reinforcing loyalty.

Ardianti et al. [41] also emphasized that perceived value strongly influences satisfaction in regional hospitals, which in turn fosters loyalty. Collectively, these findings highlight perceived value as a critical factor determining whether patients remain loyal to healthcare providers.

Beyond its direct effects, the study reveals that Service Quality indirectly influences Patient Loyalty through Child-Friendly Dental Clinic Experience. When service quality improves, the clinic experience becomes more positive, and this improved experience strengthens loyalty. This is consistent with Hamidin and Hendrayati [80], who showed that service quality affects loyalty indirectly through customer experience, and with Pratami et al. [53], who reported that loyalty in dental clinics is shaped by service quality, digital patient experience, and innovation. Zeithaml et al. [81] also emphasized that service quality often affects loyalty through mediating factors such as satisfaction and experience. In child-friendly dental clinics, this means loyalty is not built by service quality alone but also by the quality of experiences offered to children and their families.

Finally, the study shows that Service Quality indirectly influences Patient Loyalty through Perceived Value. Improvements in service quality enhance perceived value, which in turn leads to greater loyalty. Teke et al. [40] demonstrated that perceived value plays a crucial role in how patients assess services and influences future behaviors such as loyalty. Özer et al. [42] also confirmed that perceived value is a strong predictor of loyalty in hospital settings. Rao et al. [39] highlighted that perceived value, together with patient experience, serves as a primary pathway linking service quality with satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Ardianti et al. [41] showed that service experience and perceived value jointly influence satisfaction in regional hospitals, which indirectly strengthens patient loyalty. These findings emphasize that perceived value is not only an outcome of service quality but also a vital mediator connecting service quality to loyalty in healthcare.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight that despite the growth of the healthcare sector in West Java, parental awareness and knowledge of children's dental health remain low, as evidenced by the high prevalence of dental caries. This study examines the relationship between service quality and patient loyalty, with child-friendly dental clinic experience and perceived value as mediating variables. The results confirm that service quality plays a crucial role in enhancing the child-friendly dental clinic experience, perceived value, and ultimately, patient loyalty. Furthermore, both child-friendly dental clinic experience and perceived value significantly mediate the impact of service quality on patient loyalty. These findings emphasize the importance of improving service quality by prioritizing a child-friendly experience and enhancing perceived value to foster long-term patient loyalty. Dental clinic managers can leverage these insights to develop more competitive and patient-centered services.

## TRANSPARENCY

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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