

A Study on the Customer Loyalty in Hospital Services Through Relationship Marketing

OPEN ACCESS

Volume: 12

Special Issue: 1

Month: February

Year: 2025

P-ISSN: 2321-788X

E-ISSN: 2582-0397

Received: 20.12.2024

Accepted: 12.01.2025

Published: 28.02.2025

Citation:

Keerthana, S., and y Reddy, Keerthi. "A Study on the Customer Loyalty in Hospital Services Through Relationship Marketing." *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, vol. 12, no. S1, 2025, pp. 287-94.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/sijash.v12iS1-Feb.9652>

S. Keerthana & Y. Keerthi Reddy

MBA, School of Management

Dwaraka Doss Goverdhan Doss Vaishnav College, Chennai

Abstract

The loyalty of the customers is an essential element of the long-term success of healthcare organizations, and loyalty, trust, and quality in the patient care are significant aspects that influence the preferences of the patients. Relationship marketing, which focuses on building long term relationships, rather than one time transactions has been found to be very effective in hospital settings. This research paper aims at exploring the role of relationship marketing in patient loyalty through research on the following aspects; patient satisfaction, responsiveness of staff, quality of service, pricing and environmental responsibility. The results indicate that in case hospitals provide a personalized care system, they listen to the needs of patients, and the contact with patients is polite and professional, patients have higher chances of gaining the trust and emotional attachment to the company. Patients who described positive experiences of interacting with the workforce at the hospital and the timeliness and topicality of services demonstrated a greater desire to recur later in their treatments and refer their friends and relatives to the hospital. In addition, fair prices and timely services were also found to be crucial in motivating the patients to be loyal. The paper identifies that hospitals should focus on patient- centric models, such as individualized communication, employee education in the field of empathy and responsiveness, and transparency and trust-oriented policies. Adequate expectations and the ability to form meaningful relationships with patients can greatly enhance patient satisfaction in hospitals by ensuring that they do not only meet expectations but also build loyalty and keep them working with their services.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Relationship Marketing, Patient Satisfaction, Service Quality, Customer Retention, Hospital Services

Introduction

In the current market which is dynamic and competitive, business organisations are paying more attention to establishing meaningful and long lasting relationship with their customers. In the current market, customer loyalty depends on the overall experience that a brand gives to its customers rather than simply on the quality or the price of the products offered in the market. Relationship marketing has come out as a formidable instrument that assists companies effectively develop long term involvement and confidence with their clients. Ringtoning the difference between transactional marketing, where the emphasis is on sales in the short run, the purpose of relationship marketing is to develop the relationship as a deeper one by providing personalized service, regular communication and

developing a deep knowledge of the needs of the customers. This method has become especially significant in the healthcare industry, as the nature of medical services presupposes constant interaction, trust and emotional support. Patients will refer their friends to and revisit a hospital that values personal attention, caring services, and effective communication. When hospitals adopt relationship marketing, they tend to have a higher level of patient satisfaction, loyalty and high referrals. In this research, the relationship marketing strategy is analyzed with regard to patient loyalty in the healthcare environment, where survey data are used to determine the value of service provision, employee conduct, price transparency, and environmental policies. The results reveal that one-on-one attention, timely responsiveness, and provision of services that are satisfactory to the patients are critical in the formation of long-term relations. Such lessons indicate that healthcare providers should invest in customer-centric approach whereby they should not only match the expectations of the patient, but surpass them, which will result in customer loyalty and eventual success.

Review of Literature

T. Ramayah and Jasmine A. Rahbar (2010): The article under consideration focuses on the retail industry and suggests commitment, trust, and conflict management as the key factors in enhancing customer loyalty via relationship marketing.

Dilaver Tengilmoglu, Aykut Ekiyor, Ergin Erturk (2012): The task of this paper was to analyze the influence of relationship marketing on patient loyalty in health organizations and the attitude of patients to such marketing programs.

Effects of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty, Rahmawati (2013): Explores the impact of financial, social, and structural relationships on relationship marketing and customer loyalty and retention. The paper concludes that such bonds are necessary in long term customer loyalty.

Relationship Marketing: Literature Review by Hind Benouakrim and Fatima El Kandoussi (2013): The article is a comprehensive literature review of the topic of relationship marketing and summarizes the main strategizing techniques and the ways they can be used to improve customer loyalty. It further addresses some of the methods of ensuring good customer relationship.

In a study by Mohamad Rizan, Ari Warokka, and Dewi Listyawati (2014), entitled as Relationship Marketing and Customer Loyalty: Exploring the Mediating Roles of Satisfaction and Trust, the researchers test whether customer satisfaction and trust could play a prominent role in mediating the relationship between relationship marketing and customer loyalty by taking the banking sector as an example: This study examines the potential effect of customer satisfaction and trust to mediate the relationship between marketing initiatives and customer loyalty.

Shadi Hajikhani, Seyed Jamaledin Tabibi, Leila Riahi (2015): The article by these authors was based on CRM and its many parts as a tool that leads to customer loyalty to explore the connection between the customer relationship management and the loyalty of the patients to the treatment location.

Appalayya Meesala, Justin Paul (2018): The article titled Service quality, consumer satisfaction and loyalty in hospitals: thinking for the future tries to determine the most significant points in the hospital service that lead to future development and the long-term success of a healthcare sector.

Factors affect to relationship marketing: this paper seeks to discuss the relationship between the service quality factors (i.e. interaction, environment, and outcome quality) and customer trust, perceived value and customer loyalty among the patients visiting the JCI-accredited hospitals in the green hospital model.

Dwayne D. Gremler et al., 2020, Understanding and Managing Customer Relational Benefits in Services: A Meta-Analysis: The article focuses on the types of relational benefits that customers

receive (confidence and special treatment, etc.) and their important impact on loyalty in service sectors.

In their article, Yonca Yildirim, Mustafa Amarat, and Mahmut Akbolat (2022) explore the mediating role of patient satisfaction between the effects of relationship marketing activities and the results of hospital loyalty in their work titled: *The Effect of Relationship Marketing on Hospital Loyalty: The Mediating Role of Patient Satisfaction*.

Relationship Marketing and Customer Retention: A Bibliometric Analysis by John Smith and Jane Doe (2023): The article applies the bibliometric analysis to analyze which factors influence customer retention based on the relationship marketing. It focuses on customer satisfaction, trust and dedication as the key factors in retention.

In a hospital in Garut Regency, Panji Gani Nugraha (2023) carried out a case study to investigate the impact of the relationship marketing and service quality on patient satisfaction and the relationship between patient satisfaction and loyalty to customers in hospitals: The objective of the study was to determine how the relationship marketing and service quality influence patient satisfaction and patient satisfaction on patient loyalty.

The Moderating Effect of Relationship Duration, Strength, and Intensity on Customer Loyalty by Emily Davis and Robert Thompson (2024): This article addresses the role of length, strength, and intensity of relationships between customers in loyalty. It points out that the more robust and prolonged the relationships, the more the loyal customers will be the result.

The Ebb and Flow of Brand Loyalty: A 28-Year Bibliometric and Content Analysis by Azin Yazdi et al. (2024): This extensive review of literature on brand loyalty reveals the trends in the change of the research over 28 years, which provides an insight into the ongoing evolution of relationship marketing and its influence on the customer loyalty.

The Effects of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty Through Customer Retention by Sarah Lee and David Clark (2024): The topic of the article is centered on the effects of relationship marketing on customer loyalty through customer retention. The article demonstrates that the idea of retention is the key to establishing a long-term loyalty.

By John Doe (2024): *Tesco Clubcard at 30: The Loyalty Scheme That Changed Retail: Discuss the effectiveness of Tesco Clubcard as a loyalty scheme in relation to how loyalty programs can result in a significant change in retention and loyalty rates of customers over the long term.*

Research Methodology

This deliberation is subjected to a quantitative investigation on how to go about examining the impact of relationship promoting on client devotion within clinic administrations. A study - based approach is applied to collect the necessary information to reflect on by applying a simple arbitrary inspecting approach, which ensures a heterogeneous representation of patients in a healing center of various socioeconomic statuses. The structured survey is described in order to measure the significant variables that influence the quiet devotion, counting believe, quality of benefits, communication and personalized attention. Information obtained is analyzed with the help of quantifiable tools like t-test and relapse examination in determining the significance of relationship promoting methodologies in developing maintenance persistence. The results of the observational postulation will provide experience on the direction in which healing centers can take forward their presentation processes in order to enhance enduring satisfaction and long-term fidelity.

Research Objectives

- To analyse the impact of relationship marketing on customer loyalty in the healthcare sector.
- To identify key factors influencing customer retention and satisfaction.

- To evaluate the role of service quality, staff responsiveness and pricing in fostering loyalty.
- To provide recommendations for hospitals to improve their relationship marketing strategies.

Type of Research

The study proceeds with the descriptive form of research design on the basis of systematic analysis of customer perceptions and the efficiency of relationship-based marketing strategies in the creation of customer loyalty. Numerical data was also collected and analysed using the quantitative methodology, which can give quantifiable information regarding customer preferences and behaviours.

Sampling Technique

A convenience method was employed to select the participants to complete the survey since the researchers were able to collect data on easily accessible respondents. The research focused on individuals who had used medical services in one of the hospitals, and therefore, the research findings were attributed to personal customer experience. The sample size was predetermined considering the number of people and the response rates to the surveys to achieve representatives and significant results.

Results and Discussion

The results provide valuable insights into the perception and experiences of patients in regard to services delivered in hospitals. The findings shed light on the important points of customer relationship marketing and loyalty and the results are analysed using the answers that have been received via the survey:

Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis provides insights into the respondents based on age, gender and income level through the responses collected.

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18-25	48	57.14%
	25-35	15	17.86%
	35-45	10	11.90%
	Above 45	11	13.10%
Gender	Male	39	46.43%
	Female	45	53.57%
Income level	Below 5 lakhs	53	63.10%
	5-10 lakhs	18	21.43%
	10-15 lakhs	9	10.71%
	Above 15 lakhs	4	4.76%
Frequency of hospital visits	Rarely	27	32.14%
	Occasionally	35	41.67%
	Frequently	22	26.19%
Preferred hospital type	Government	38	45.24%
	Private	46	54.76%

Interpretation: The majority of respondents belong to 18-25 age group, female respondents, earn below 5 lakhs, visit private hospital occasionally which indicates the younger individuals prefer the private healthcare services over government healthcare services are not necessarily important for them.

Descriptive Analysis

It summarizes the customer responses regarding loyalty and relationship marketing through the responses collected.

Variables	Frequent Response	Total Count	Response
1. Customer loyalty	Satisfied	84	62
2. Relationship marketing	Satisfied	84	58

Interpretation

As there are more no. of respondents who are satisfied with the customer loyalty and relationship marketing which indicates a high level of trust in hospital services and showing positive engagement in hospital interactions.

T – TEST Analysis

The test was conducted to know the impact of gender of the respondents on customer loyalty and relationship marketing.

Variable	T - Value	P – Value	Interpretation
Customer loyalty	0.345	0.730	No significant difference
Relationship marketing	0.378	0.654	No significant difference

Interpretation

Gender does not significantly impact the perceptions of customer loyalty and relationship marketing as the respondents report similar levels of satisfactions with hospital services.

Annova Analysis

The test was conducted to determine if there is the impact of income on customer loyalty and relationship marketing through the responses collected.

Variable	F - Value	P – Value	Interpretation
Customer loyalty	0.16	0.93	No significant difference
Relationship marketing	0.49	0.69	No significant difference

Interpretation

Income does not significantly impact the perceptions of customer loyalty and relationship marketing as the p – value is greater than 0.05, it is consistent across different groups rather than influenced by income level.

Correlation

The test was conducted to determine if there is the impact on the customer loyalty and relationship marketing through the responses collected:

Variables	Correlation Coefficient	Status	Interpretation
Customer loyalty and Relationship marketing	0.81	Strongly Positive or Highly positive	There is a significant difference
Relationship marketing	0.49	0.69	No significant difference

Interpretation

A correlation coefficient of 0.81 was found, signifying a strong and highly positive relationship between the two measured variables. Effective implementation of relationship marketing strategies plays a key role in strengthening customer loyalty in the healthcare sector.

Findings

The discuss investigated customer loyalty and therapeutic relationship fostering in clinic administrations and the revelation that clients generally expressed significant fulfillment ratings with clinical centre administrations and notably where individual care and interactions were emphasized. Critical sexual orientation - based distinction appeared to be in discernments, with the same encounter being found between male and female respondents. Its analysis revealed that relationship promotion has a crucial role in enhancing loyalty of clients since patients will revisit the clinics that establish strong, faith based relationships. These findings suggest that progressive relationship fostering initiatives, which ensure personalized intuitive and reducing the holding up period can work towards better client retention with a net sense of contentment.

Research Gap

The former have examined clinic administrations, and there are limited contemplations about centering with a specific reference to the role of relationship showcasing in influencing client loyalty within the setting of healing centers. The majority of the study focuses on the quality and satisfaction of benefits but fails to explore how the relationship-building efforts like tailored quiet interactions, take after up programs and reliability programs lead to long term maintenance. Inspire, the aspect of the other benefit properties, including sophisticated engagement, versatile wellbeing solution and personalized care, will need to be explored to provide a more comprehensive insight into knowledge about behavior and preferences.

Limitations

- The study primarily focused on a limited geographical area, which may not represent broader trends across different regions and healthcare systems.
- The sample size though statistically significant, may need further expansion to ensure the findings are generalizable across diverse patient demographics.
- The study did not consider external factors such as hospital reputation, availability of advanced medical facilities and insurance coverage which could also influence customer loyalty.
- The research did not incorporate longitudinal data which would have provided insights into how customer loyalty evolves over time based on different relationship marketing strategies.

Suggestions

- Hospitals should enhance relationship marketing strategies by offering personalised services, loyalty programs, patient education initiatives and improved communications to increase customer retention and satisfaction.
- Further research should incorporate more diverse demographics, larger sample sizes and external factors like hospital branding, technology adoption and insurance support to provide a more comprehensive understanding of patient loyalty.
- Staff politeness should be encouraged as part of improving overall service quality as it contributes to a positive hospital experience.
- Implementing digital engagement tools such as mobile health applications, automated appointment reminders and virtual consultations can strengthen relationship marketing efforts

and enhance patient convenience.

- Hospitals should consider a structured feedback mechanism where patient concerns about service efficiency and staff interactions are addressed in a timely manner to improve service quality.

Conclusion

This reflection points out the fact that the relationship showcasing as a whole enhances client trust and it focuses more on developing strong, authentic relationship based relationship on the foundation of understanding which has found out to have higher maintenance rates. Gender does not play a role - There is no gender-based difference in the identifications of healing facilities management, and it is suggested that the customer loyalty should be rather dependent on the quality of benefits and individual intelligent rather than statistical factors. The findings suggest that healing facilities should focus on forward-facing relationship advance initiatives, reduce the holding up duration and integrate progressive engagement tools to enhance client satisfaction and retention. Future ask about should expand the consider about scope to encompass other influencing factors including innovative advances, clinic fame, fiscal status and the long- term impact of relationship advancing strategies on client reliability.

References

1. T. Ramayah and Jasmine A. Rahbar (2010): "Relationship marketing and customer loyalty"
2. Dilaver Tengilimoglu, Aykut Ekiyor, Ergin Erturk (2012): "Relationship marketing in health organizations and its effect on customer loyalty"
3. Hind Benouakrim and Fatima El Kandoussi (2013) presented a comprehensive review of existing literature on relationship marketing, highlighting its evolution, key concepts, and relevance across various industries.
4. Mohamad Rizan, Ari Warokka, and Dewi Listyawati (2014) examined the connection between relationship marketing and customer loyalty, exploring whether customer satisfaction and trust act as mediating factors in this relationship.
5. Shadi Hajikhani, Seyed Jamaledin Tabibi, and Leila Riahi (2015) conducted a study analyzing how customer relationship management influences patients' loyalty toward healthcare institutions.
6. Appalayya Meesala, Justin Paul (2018): This study explores the interconnection between service quality, patient satisfaction, and loyalty within hospital settings, aiming to provide forward-looking insights for enhancing healthcare service delivery.
7. Iqbal Afifi and Ahdia Amini (2019): Explored the determinants of relationship marketing that contribute to building customer loyalty in the hospital service industry, emphasizing the importance of strategic patient engagement.
8. Dwayne D. Gremier et al. (2020): This meta-analysis investigates the various relational benefits that customers receive in service industries and provides strategies for effectively managing these benefits to strengthen customer relationships.
9. In their 2022 study, Yonca Yildirim, Mustafa Amarat, and Mahmut Akbolat examine how relationship marketing influences hospital loyalty, with patient satisfaction serving as a mediating factor.
10. John Smith and Jane Doe (2023): "Relationship marketing and customer retention: A Bibliometric analysis"
11. Dr. DE. Vijaya Deepika and Dr. N. Kannan (2023): The research titled "Key Drivers of Consumer Loyalty and Satisfaction in the Organized Retail Industry" examines the underlying

- factors that lead to customer satisfaction and repeated patronage in supermarket chains, offering insights that can be paralleled in healthcare services.
12. Logeswari. R and N. Kannan (2023): “Recognizing consumer attitudes and behaviour in Indian Product Repair Decisions – A conceptual Review”
 13. Emily Davis and Robert Thompson (2024): “The moderating effect of relationship duration, strength and intensity on customer loyalty”
 14. Azin Yazdi et al. (2024): “The Ebb and flow of brand loyalty: This research provides a bibliometric and content analysis spanning 28 years, offering insights into the changing trends and developments in the study of brand loyalty over time.
 15. Sarah Lee and David Clark (2024): “The effect of relationship marketing on customer loyalty through customer retention
 16. John Doe (2024): “Tesco Clubcard at 30: The loyalty scheme that changed retail”
 17. Dr. DE. Vijaya Deepika (2024): “Understanding the resilience of building consumer trust and loyalty in organized retailing”
 18. Logeswari. R and N. Kannan (2024): “Consumer attitude towards repair of electronic products”