

The Influence of Service Quality on Word of Mouth Through Patient Satisfaction and Trust as Mediating Variables at Balad Medical Center Clinic, Pariaman

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Informasi	Abstract
Volume : 2 Nomor : 8 Bulan : Agustus Tahun : 2025 E-ISSN : 3062-9624	<i>This study aims to analyze the influence of service quality on WOM through satisfaction and trust at Balad Medical Center Clinic. The research method used was descriptive quantitative, with a sample of 200 patients. The analysis used PLS-SEM analysis with Smart-PLS 4.0. The results showed service quality, patient satisfaction, and trust significantly influenced WOM. Service quality significantly influenced patient satisfaction and trust. Patient satisfaction and trust mediated the relationship between service quality and WOM. Balad Clinic needs to improve service quality to increase patient satisfaction and trust, thus creating positive WOM. Therefore, the study results are expected to enrich the literature and provide practical recommendations for clinic in improving service quality, satisfaction, trust, and WOM.</i> Keyword: service quality, satisfaction, trust, word of mouth

A. INTRODUCTION

With rapid growth and improving service standards, clinics in Indonesia are expected to contribute significantly to supporting the national health system, particularly in providing promotive, preventive, curative, and rehabilitative services to the wider community. Clinical standardization and accreditation are crucial factors in ensuring the quality of healthcare services provided.

According to data health facilities from Social Security Agency for Health in Pariaman City, five clinics that have partnered as primary healthcare facilities are Fanisa Clinic, Balad Medical Center Clinic, Azzahra Medika Clinic, Aisyiyah Clinic, and the Pariaman Health Post Clinic. Meanwhile, four other clinics—Tin Iskandar Medikal Clinic, Bahagia Clinic, Ananda Clinic, and the Pariaman City Police Resort Clinic—are not yet registered as Social Security Agency for

Health partners. Based on available data, only Balad Medical Center Clinic has concrete information regarding the number of visits, namely an average of 100 patients per day, including BPJS participants.

However, the high number of patient visits is apparently not commensurate with the level of voluntary promotion or positive Word of Mouth (WOM) circulating in the community, especially in Pariaman City. Based on a search of the official social media accounts of the Balad Medical Center Clinic, such as Instagram @baladmedicalcenter, information activity, patient testimonials, or content that encourages WOM appears to be very minimal. As of June 2025, the account only had 708 followers and very low average interaction, with posts being infrequently updated. The lack of positive WOM on social media is one indicator of weak public trust in voluntarily recommending this clinic to others.

Strong word of mouth, both offline and online, plays a crucial role in enhancing the image of healthcare services and building sustainable patient loyalty (Dayan et al., 2022; Haque-Fawzi et al., 2022). Low word of mouth (WOM) at Balad Clinic can impact the limited reach of information on healthcare services offered, slow growth in the number of general patients, and potentially reduce the clinic's competitiveness amidst the rise of other healthcare facilities that are aggressively utilizing digital WOM strategies.

Balad Medical Center Clinic, Pariaman, is a healthcare provider in the Pariaman region, established in 2011. Balad Medical Center Clinic strives to improve service quality because service is a key component of any healthcare unit. Patient service quality is the ability of medical personnel and healthcare facilities to provide professional, friendly, timely, and personalized care to improve the patient experience and outcomes. One example of service quality at Balad Medical Center Clinic is serving both BPJS (Indonesian Social Security Agency) and general patients, with equal facilities and services for all patients

Patients who are loyal to Balad Clinic tend to engage in word-of-mouth activities or promote Balad Clinic to their friends and family. This is certainly related to the patient's satisfaction with the services received. Patient satisfaction is a reaction that indicates the extent to which a patient is satisfied with the medical facilities and services received, based on previous experiences that are deemed capable of meeting the patient's expectations. Therefore, an optimal level of service is needed in treating patients, whether they are treated with BPJS facilities or public funds, to ensure the continued satisfaction of patients visiting Balad Medical Center Pariaman.

Service quality is a key determinant of the success of healthcare services, including clinics. Quality service not only impacts patient satisfaction but also influences trust and word of mouth (WOM) behavior. Several previous studies have shown that service quality has a significant relationship with customer satisfaction, trust, and WOM (Marcos & Coelho, 2022; Al-Habib & Albari, 2024; Dandis et al., 2022). Furthermore, in an era of increasingly competitive healthcare services, WOM has become one of the most influential communication strategies. Satisfied patients tend to provide positive recommendations to others, thus WOM can promote a positive image, increase public trust, and attract new patients (Pratama & Suprapti, 2023; Rasheed & Rashid, 2024).

Several previous studies have demonstrated the relationship between service quality and WOM, both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction and trust. For example, research by Al-Habib & Albari (2024) showed that e-service quality positively influences trust, customer satisfaction, and WOM on digital platforms. Meanwhile, Ginting et al (2023) studied also revealed that e-service quality influences satisfaction and WOM, but does not always significantly influence repurchase intention without a mediating role.

In the context of healthcare services, Dandis et al. (2022) found that service quality dimensions, such as administrative, interpersonal, and technical quality, significantly impacted WOM in a university healthcare center. Conversely, Al-Hilou & Suifan (2023) emphasized that patient trust mediates the relationship between service quality and patient satisfaction, while patient satisfaction plays a role in shaping positive attitudes toward services. However, most previous studies have focused on the e-commerce sector (Ginting et al., 2023; Al-Habib & Albari, 2024) or healthcare services in hospitals and educational institutions (Dandis et al., 2022; Dayan et al., 2022; Yildirim et al., 2022). Few studies have specifically examined the relationship between service quality, patient satisfaction, trust, and WOM in primary healthcare facilities such as clinics, particularly in Indonesia.

Furthermore, there are still limited studies that integrate the role of satisfaction and trust as mediating variables in a complete model to comprehensively explain the influence of service quality on WOM, especially in non-hospital healthcare services such as the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman. Although the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman is one of the clinics that has great potential to increase patient loyalty through positive WOM, there is still a lack of scientific studies that specifically examine this issue.

Based on these research gaps, this study is novel in several respects. First, it examines the mediating role of patient satisfaction and trust in the relationship between service quality and

WOM in a clinic context, not a large hospital or digital platform. Second, this study focuses on the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman, which represents primary healthcare services in the region. Until now, there has been little research on the integrative relationship model between service quality, satisfaction, trust, and WOM.

Therefore, the results of this study are expected to enrich the literature on factors influencing WOM in healthcare and provide practical recommendations for clinic managers in improving service quality, building patient trust, and encouraging positive WOM to support sustainable clinic growth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Planned Behavior Theory

The concept of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) was originally proposed by Ajzen. The theory states that individual behavior is directly influenced by behavioral intentions and perceived behavioral control. Behavioral intentions are shaped by attitudes, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms (Lihua, 2022). This theory has been widely applied in various fields, including consumer behavior. In the context of this research, the TPB can be used to understand how service quality influences patients' attitudes toward the services provided, their perceptions of how satisfied they are with the clinic's services, and how their trust in the clinic's overall service delivery influences their willingness to recommend the clinic to others.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth (WoM) is a form of informal, person-to-person communication between a sender and a recipient that is not considered commercially related to a specific product, business, or service (Dayan et al., 2022). When someone has a pleasant experience using a product or service, they tend to share positive information about that product or brand with others (positive word of mouth). In some situations, word of mouth is more trusted by consumers than information provided directly by the company. As a result, consumers who initially have a positive perception of a product or service may change to neutral or even negative after receiving unfavorable information from their environment regarding its actual quality (Chandra et al., 2020).

Service Quality

Service quality can be defined as a consumer's assessment of the level of service received compared to the level of service expected. If the service received or perceived matches expectations, then service quality is perceived as good and satisfactory (Kotler & Keller, 2020). Service quality is the difference between consumer expectations and perceived service

performance (Fattahi et al., 2022). Patients with high expectations and knowledge regarding health-related issues may be dissatisfied with healthcare providers. Situations that cause patients to experience dissatisfaction with healthcare providers include unclear doctor information, poor room cleanliness, staff behavior toward patients, and lost items (Yıldırım et al., 2022).

Research found that service quality significantly and positively influences patient satisfaction and patient trust (Luthfiana et al., 2024). Another research (Punkyanti & Seminari, 2020) also concluded that service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction. Keeping promises to customers, ensuring security in every transaction, providing quality service, demonstrating concern for customers, and providing a sense of security can build trust (Haque-Fawzi et al., 2022).

Furthermore, when someone has a pleasant experience using a product or service, they tend to share positive information about that product or brand with others (positive word of mouth). Consumers often trust word of mouth more than information from the company. Consequently, consumer perceptions can change after receiving positive or negative information from their environment regarding the actual quality of a product or service (Chandra et al., 2020). Research (Ananda, 2024) shows that service quality has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth.

H1: Service quality has a positive effect on patient satisfaction

H2: Service quality has a positive effect on patient trust

H3: Service quality has a positive effect on word of mouth

Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is a subjective concept related to the structure, process, and outcomes of services, as well as the patient's socio-demographic characteristics, behaviors, expectations, attitudes, beliefs, and previous experiences (Yıldırım et al., 2022). Patient satisfaction is defined as the extent to which a patient is satisfied with their healthcare services, both inside and outside the doctor's office (Dayan et al., 2022).

When products and services are complex and difficult to evaluate, consumers often seek information from friends or relatives to determine which service provider to choose. Satisfied, loyal consumers are more likely to recommend the product or service they have used to others. These loyal consumer recommendations are more effective than paid advertising and can reduce the cost of recruiting new consumers (Haque-Fawzi et al., 2022).

Research conducted by (Ananda, 2024) has shown that satisfaction has a positive and significant influence on positive word of mouth. Satisfaction also plays a mediating role, as service quality contributes to customer satisfaction, which in turn influences their willingness to recommend the service to others (Prabowo, 2023; Ananda, 2024).

H4: Patient satisfaction has a positive effect on word of mouth.

H5: Service quality has a positive effect on word of mouth through patient satisfaction as a mediating variable

Trust

Trust in healthcare represents a patient's belief that a doctor will care about their needs and well-being and provide appropriate medical care, symbolizing the patient's confidence in the healthcare services they receive. Patient trust in healthcare providers is a crucial factor influencing loyalty and recommendations to others (Durmus & Akbolat, 2020). Meanwhile, word of mouth (WoM) is a form of informal, person-to-person communication between a sender and a recipient that is not considered commercially related to a specific product, business, or service (Dayan et al., 2022). Research (Prasetyo & Wulandari, 2023) found that trust has a positive and significant influence on word of mouth. Trust influences word of mouth through satisfaction as a mediating variable. Therefore, trust alone is not sufficient to create positive WOM; concrete evidence is needed that the company's service quality can meet customer expectations.

H6: Trust has a positive influence on word of mouth.

H7: Service quality has a positive influence on word of mouth through trust as a mediating variable.

This study aims to explore the role of patient satisfaction and trust as mediating variables in the relationship between service quality and word of mouth as shown in the following figure.

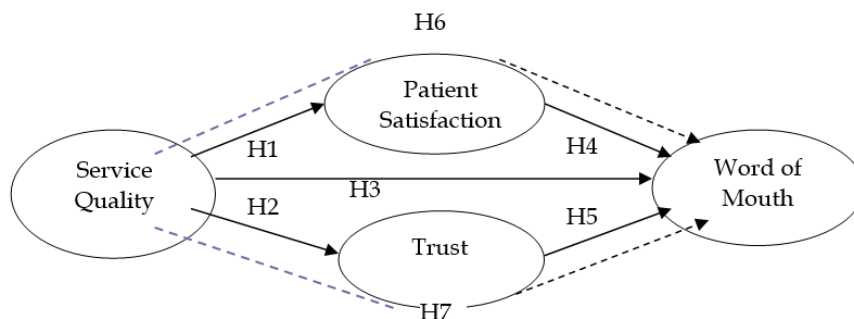


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study, which focuses on patient satisfaction and trust as mediating variables in the relationship between service quality and word of mouth, is a descriptive study using quantitative methodology. Quantitative research is a research approach that emphasizes objective measurement and statistical analysis of numerical data collected through surveys, questionnaires, or other techniques (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). This study is used to test hypotheses and explain the relationships between variables. The population in this study is all BPJS (Social Security Agency) and general patients who received treatment at the Balad Medical Center Pariaman clinic during 2024. This study uses the Probability Sampling method, namely proportional clusters, a sampling method in which groups (clusters) in the population are selected randomly, and the sample size of each group is proportional to the size of that group in the population. The location of the study sample is Pariaman City or Regency, and sample participants are outpatients who have received health services (treatment) at the Balad Medical Center Pariaman Clinic at least once in the last three months. The number of participants in this study is 200 patients. This study will be further analyzed using Smart-PLS 4 to answer the problem formulation. Researchers used a questionnaire method for data collection and used a Likert Scale to facilitate questionnaire assessment.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Direct Effect Test

This study uses a two-way approach because the hypothesis shows an influence without a specified positive or negative direction. If the P-Value < 0.05 , then the hypothesis is accepted, and if the P-Value > 0.05 , then the hypothesis is rejected.

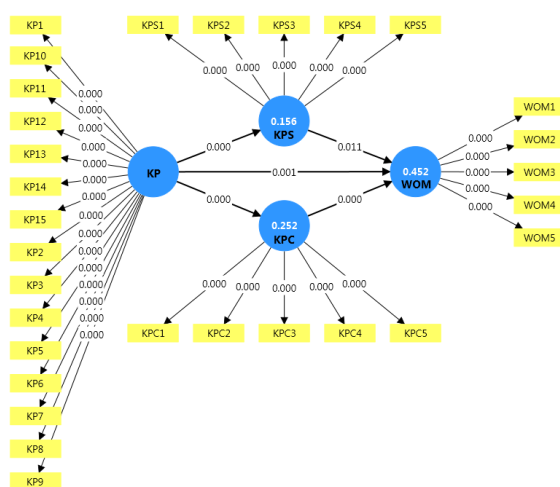


Figure 2. Graphical Output - Bootstrapping

Source: SmartPLS Statistical Analysis 4 (2025)

Based on the figure, it can be seen that the significance value of service quality on patient satisfaction is $0.000 < 0.05$. Then the significance value of service quality on trust is $0.000 < 0.05$. The significance value of service quality on word of mouth is $0.001 < 0.05$. The significance value of patient satisfaction on word of mouth is $0.011 < 0.05$. While the significance value of trust on word of mouth is $0.000 < 0.05$. It can be seen that all direct relationships studied show significant results.

Table 1. Path Coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T Values, P Values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
KP -> KPS	0.394	0.397	0.063	6.236	0.000
KP -> KPC	0.502	0.508	0.055	9.204	0.000
KP -> WOM	0.262	0.264	0.078	3.371	0.001
KPS -> WOM	0.156	0.156	0.061	2.544	0.011
KPC -> WOM	0.402	0.403	0.080	5.038	0.000

Source: SmartPLS Statistical Analysis 4 (2025)

Based on the results of Path Coefficients - Mean, STDEV, T-Values, P-Values in Table 1 above, it can be concluded that Service Quality (X1), Patient Satisfaction (M1), and Trust (M2) have a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth (Y), Service Quality (X) also have a positive and significant effect on Patient Satisfaction (M1) and Trust (M2) as evidenced by the P-Values which is smaller than 0.05 so that the proposed hypothesis is accepted.

Indirect Effect Test

The indirect effect in the basic mediation model as the degree of influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator. The P value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, so the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 2 Specific Indirect Effects - Mean, STDEV, T values, P Values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
KP -> KPS -> WOM	0.061	0.061	0.025	2.413	0.016
KP -> KPC -> WOM	0.202	0.205	0.046	4.433	0.000

Source: SmartPLS Statistical Analysis 4 (2025)

Based on the calculation results of Specific Indirect Effects - Mean, STDEV, T-Values, and P-Values in Table 2, it can be concluded that Patient Satisfaction (M1) and Trust (M2) effectively mediates the relationship between Service Quality (X) and Word of Mouth (Y), as evidenced by the P value which is smaller than 0.05 so that the proposed hypothesis is accepted.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The Effect of Service Quality on Patient Satisfaction

The test found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on patient satisfaction. Service quality is one of the main elements determining patient satisfaction with the Balad Medical Center in Pariaman. Good service is reflected in the friendly attitude of medical staff, timely service, clear communication, and the cleanliness and comfort of the facilities. When all these aspects are met, patients feel valued and cared for, indirectly creating a memorable experience and a sense of satisfaction with healthcare services. This demonstrates that service quality is not merely procedural, but also touches the emotional and psychological aspects of patients, ultimately leading to high levels of satisfaction.

This contrasts with the results of research (Ginting et al., 2023), which found that e-service quality had no significant effect on purchase intention. Similarly, research by (Mahsyar & Surapati, 2020) found that service quality had no significant effect on customer satisfaction; product quality was a more dominant factor in customer satisfaction. In the context of the Balad Medical Center clinic, prompt responses to patient complaints, friendly staff, and the provision of clear and easy-to-understand medical information were key determinants of this satisfaction

The Effect of Service Quality on Patient Trust

The second hypothesis test found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on patient satisfaction. Excellent service quality at Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman plays a significant role in establishing and strengthening patient trust. Consistent, patient-centered service will foster ongoing patient trust. It is crucial for every clinic to continuously evaluate and improve service quality to meet patient expectations, while maintaining the clinic's sustainability and positive image amidst increasingly fierce healthcare competition.

The results of this study differ from other research of (Tania et al., 2024), which found that the direct effect of service quality on trust was insignificant. Trust is more influenced by other factors, and customer loyalty is built primarily through satisfaction. This also contrasts with the results of (Kevin & Anandya, 2021) study, which found that service quality had no direct effect on consumer trust.

The results of this study indicate that patient trust in a clinic is not formed instantly, but rather the result of consistent and satisfying experiences. When patients feel safe, valued, and well-cared for, their positive perception of the clinic's service quality is strengthened. For Balad Medical Center Pariaman, communicative service, transparency of medical information, and the

ability of healthcare professionals to provide easy-to-understand explanations are important factors that strengthen patient confidence in the clinic's credibility.

The Effect of Service Quality on Word of Mouth

The third hypothesis test found that service quality has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. The quality of service provided by Balad Medical Center Clinic, Pariaman, plays a crucial role in shaping patient perceptions and experiences. When patients receive fast, friendly, and professional service, they tend to feel satisfied and valued. This positive experience naturally encourages patients to share their stories with others, both directly and through social media. In this case, quality service is the primary driver of positive word of mouth.

However, the results of this study differ from those of (Purwantoro & Nizam, 2023), who found that technical quality, functional quality, and image dimensions did not directly influence WOM significantly. Furthermore, technical quality did not directly or indirectly influence consumer attitudes.

Word-of-mouth promotion, is considered the most effective form of communication in influencing people's decisions, especially in healthcare. Patients who feel well-served at Balad Medical Center Pariaman Clinic will be more confident in recommending the clinic to family, friends, or colleagues. These recommendations are especially valuable because they stem from personal experience, which is often considered more honest and credible than formal advertising

The Influence of Patient Satisfaction on Word of Mouth

The fourth hypothesis test found that patient satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. Patient satisfaction is the result of a subjective assessment of their experience receiving healthcare services. When patient expectations regarding Balad Medical Center Pariaman's services are met or even exceeded, they experience a deep sense of satisfaction. This satisfaction not only reflects the clinic's success in providing services but also has the potential to encourage patients to voluntarily share their positive experiences with those closest to them.

In the context of satisfaction, patients who feel well-treated, receive clear information, and receive satisfactory service outcomes are more likely to share their experiences with those around them. This word of mouth can take the form of direct recommendations, reviews on social media, or simply sharing everyday stories, all of which have significant potential to influence other potential patients

However, the results of this study differ from those found by (Yeo et al., 2022), where satisfaction was not a significant influence on word of mouth. Factors such as personal comfort and privacy also play a significant role. Satisfaction with a product or service does not always lead to a desire to leave a public review or recommendation, especially if consumers perceive the information-sharing process as time-consuming or privacy-intrusive.

The Effect of Trust on Word of Mouth

The fifth hypothesis test found that trust has a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. Trust is a crucial foundation in the relationship between patients and healthcare providers. At Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman, patient trust grows through consistent service, open communication, and the professionalism of the medical staff in providing care. When patients feel confident in the clinic's competence and integrity, they not only return for treatment but also tend to become representatives, voluntarily sharing their positive experiences with others.

However, the results of this study differ from those of (Hendri & Sarianti, 2022), which found that customer trust did not influence word of mouth activity. Furthermore, another study also demonstrated no direct relationship between trust and word of mouth. In that study, although the level of public and consumer trust was quite high, it did not directly impact word of mouth activity (Salmiah et al., 2024).

The Effect of Service Quality on Word of Mouth Through Patient Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable

Service quality has been shown to have a positive effect on word of mouth through patient satisfaction as a mediating variable. Word of mouth, as a form of informal promotion, is strongly influenced by the extent to which patients feel satisfied with the service they receive. Without satisfaction, good service quality will not necessarily generate positive communication between patients. Therefore, patient satisfaction serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between service quality and word of mouth.

The results of this study indicate that patient satisfaction emerges as an emotional reaction to the fulfillment of expectations regarding the service provided. Satisfied patients tend to feel valued and secure, and are more likely to continue using the same clinic's services in the future. Furthermore, satisfaction also encourages patients to share their positive experiences with others. Thus, patient satisfaction serves as an important bridge connecting service quality with the willingness to voluntarily recommend the clinic.

The results of this study differ from previous research conducted by (Yıldırım et al., 2022) where patient satisfaction has an impact on loyalty to the hospital and patient satisfaction has a mediating role in the impact of relationship marketing on hospital loyalty but not on word of mouth activities.

The Effect of Service Quality on Word of Mouth Through Trust as a Mediating Variable

Service quality has been shown to have a positive effect on word of mouth through trust as a mediating variable. It can be argued that service quality is a fundamental element in creating long-term relationships between clinics and patients at the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman. When patients receive services that meet or exceed their expectations, a positive perception of the clinic's credibility emerges. This perception forms the initial foundation for developing strong trust in the services provided. Patient trust develops with consistent and satisfying experiences in receiving care. When patients feel safe, respected, and professionally cared for, they are more confident in the clinic's commitment and capability to provide quality care. In this context, trust acts as a bridge connecting service quality with patients' emotional responses and subsequent behaviors, including voluntary dissemination of information.

However, the results of this study differ from the results of research conducted by (Hendri & Sarianti, 2022) where in the study it was found that customer trust cannot influence word of mouth activity, in fact customer trust cannot mediate the relationship between service quality and word of mouth activity or the spread of information by word of mouth.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and previous discussion, several conclusions can be drawn: service quality at Balad Medical Center Pariaman significantly influences patient satisfaction, trust, and word of mouth. Patient satisfaction and trust significantly influence word of mouth. Service quality significantly influences word of mouth through patient satisfaction and trust as mediating variables.

This research provides implications for the clinical context: good service quality not only directly impacts word of mouth but also indirectly through patient satisfaction and trust. When patients feel satisfied and trust the clinic's professionalism and integrity, they are more likely to share recommendations with others. This suggests that patient satisfaction and trust play a strategic role in strengthening the influence of service quality on word of mouth.

In connection with the results and conclusions that have been obtained, the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman is advised to improve the quality of service to patients in several

ways, including providing a sense of security to patients with accurate diagnoses and providing suggestions that can provide a sense of calm to patients, staff responding to patients immediately starting from checking the patient's health condition, preparing and delivering medication to patients. Equipping modern medical equipment to support better health services for the community in the Pariaman area. Listening to criticism and suggestions from patients and their families to improve services to be more in line with patient expectations so that patient satisfaction and trust increase. That way, patients will recommend their relatives to use health services at the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman.

FURTHER RESEARCH

This study still has limitations. Therefore, future researchers are advised to explore other factors that may influence patient word of mouth to identify the dominant factors that significantly influence word of mouth at the Balad Medical Center Clinic in Pariaman. Suggested variables include relationship marketing or social media promotion. This will yield better research results. Further research can also be conducted in other locations to compare results and identify contextual differences that may influence the relationship between the variables studied.

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