

Exploration of Factors That Influence Patients' Decisions in Choosing A Beauty Clinic: A Grounded Theory Approach

Dian Alfiyatul Uliyah¹, Dwi Cahyono*², Haris Hermawan³

^{1, 2, 3} Fakultas Ekonomi, Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the factors that influence patient decisions in choosing dr. Dian Beauty Clinic in Jember through a grounded theory approach. With a qualitative method, this study successfully identified three main dimensions that interact with each other: rational factors, emotional-social factors, and digital-education mediators. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 19 active patients selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, with the criteria of having made at least two visits and being in the age range of 20-45 years. The research findings revealed that patient decisions are formed through a complex integration of objective considerations (procedure safety, price, and evidence of effectiveness) with subjective factors (reputation, convenience, and religious values). Digital media plays an important role as a catalyst, where 73% of informants stated that social media content and online features are the main considerations. Uniquely, local values such as sharia services and gender privacy are critical differentiators for 42% of patients. The study also found significant generational differences - younger patients (Gen Z/Millennials) are more influenced by digitalization, while generation X relies more on personal recommendations. The implications of this study highlight the importance of a holistic approach in beauty clinic management, which combines strict medical standards with personalized patient experience. These findings contribute to the development of a healthcare marketing model that is adaptive to the socio-cultural characteristics of Indonesian society, especially in the Jember area. Further research is recommended to test this model in more diverse geographic and demographic contexts.

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Corresponding Author:

Dwi Cahyono

Faculty of Economics and Business, Muhammadiyah University of Jember, Indonesia

Jalan. Karimat 47 Jember-Jawa Timur

Email: *dwicahyono@unmuhjember.ac.id

Introduction

Beauty clinics currently face challenges in meeting the increasingly diverse needs and expectations of consumers. In Jember Regency, dr. Dian Beauty Clinic is one provider that continually strives to improve service quality to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty. The increasing demand phenomenon for skincare and beauty services at this clinic has prompted an in-depth study of the factors influencing patient satisfaction, which can be a base of developing more effective service strategies. Based on internal data, the number of patients at the dr. Dian Beauty Clinic in Jember Regency has shown a fluctuating pattern over the past four years. In 2021, there were 164 patients, then decreased to 152 patients in 2022, and again experienced a significant decline in 2023 to 114 patients. However, in 2024, there was a sharp increase, reaching 204 patients. This fluctuating pattern reflects the dynamics in patient satisfaction and loyalty. The decline in 2022 and 2023 could indicate service factors that have not fully met patient expectations, while the surge in 2024 indicates potential improvements or specific strategies that have successfully attracted patient interest. This phenomenon underscores the urgency of research to analyze the factors influencing patient satisfaction at the dr. Dian Beauty Clinic, so that the clinic can maintain the positive trend and reduce the risk of a decline in visits in the future.

According to [1] In Studies in Systems, Decision, and Control, there is a complex transformation in consumer behavior, leading to an increasingly critical and informed approach to beauty services. Patients' decisions regarding healthcare services, including beauty clinics, are complex processes involving various multidimensional factors. Previous research has shown that service quality and reputation are key determinants of patient preference for healthcare facilities. For example, [2] And [3] found that clinic reputation and

practitioner expertise are often key indicators of service quality. In the context of beauty clinics, trust in practitioners' competence reflects not only their technical abilities but also their ability to meet patients' aesthetic expectations.[4], [5], [6], [7]. Besides that,[8]reveals that the perception of fairness in service is also a key factor in building customer loyalty, especially in situations of service failure.[9]further emphasizes the importance of implementing patient-centered care to increase patient trust. In addition to service quality factors, cost and accessibility aspects play an equally important role in patient decisions. Research by[10]shows that strategic location and competitive costs significantly increase patient preference. In this case,[11] adds that price transparency is also a crucial element influencing patient trust in service providers. Accessibility is even more relevant in urban areas, where ease of transportation to the clinic is often a key consideration for patients.[12], [13]also finds that patients preferred clinics that offered flexibility in service times to suit their needs.

The influence of the clinic's physical environment, such as the cleanliness of the facility and the atmosphere of the waiting room, is also very important in creating a positive experience for patients.[14]highlights that the aesthetics of a clinic's interior can provide a strong first impression, which contributes to patient satisfaction levels. In addition,[15], [16]emphasizes the importance of staff friendliness as a non-clinical factor that is often the main differentiator between successful and less desirable clinics. A study by[17]further demonstrates that a supportive clinical environment can improve patient perceptions of overall service quality.[18]states that using social network analysis to show how clinic accessibility and attractiveness can strengthen service competitiveness. Customer satisfaction and social influences, such as recommendations from friends or family, have a significant impact on the decision to choose a beauty clinic. According to research,[19], word of mouth reviews are one of the most effective marketing tools in the beauty industry.[20]also notes that positive customer experiences shared on social media can expand a clinic's marketing reach at a relatively low cost. In this regard, the role of online reviews is becoming increasingly important in the digital age, where patients can easily

compare services based on previous user experiences.[21], [22]highlights the importance of using data registries to evaluate the quality of services which ultimately impacts patient decisions.

In addition to external factors, the influence of local culture on patient beauty preferences in Indonesia is also an element that needs to be understood more deeply.[23]reveals that perceptions of beauty are often influenced by cultural standards, such as the tendency to prioritize fair skin in various Asian communities. This research is supported by[24], which finds that local trends can play a significant role in shaping consumer needs for beauty services. This context is further enhanced by globalization, where international trends are beginning to infiltrate local preferences through digital platforms.[25].[26]further adds that patient satisfaction with healthcare services is often influenced by how local culture is integrated into the service experience.[27], [28], [29]. The digital era has brought about major changes in the way patients make decisions regarding beauty services.[30]. Online reviews, social media marketing, and other digital platforms have transformed the traditional marketing landscape into a more interactive and transparent one.[31]shows that digital engagement, such as customer interaction with Instagram content, can increase clinic brand loyalty.[25]further emphasizes that digitalization accelerates consumer decision-making by providing easy access to relevant information through technology. In this context, technology-based marketing strategies play a crucial role in determining the success of beauty clinics in an increasingly competitive market. Youn et al. (2022) also suggests a coordinated planning to enhance digital services to improve patient satisfaction.[32], [33].

Researchers are concerned about the public's perception of the dr. Dian Beauty Clinic in Jember and have encountered similar issues. Data on the number of customers at the dr. Dian Beauty Clinic in Jember Regency from 2021 to 2024 shows a fluctuation in patient numbers. This phenomenon indicates a shift in consumer behavior, leading to increased selectivity and awareness of the value of the services they receive. Consumers tend to choose services that not only provide good quality but also offer experiences relevant to their needs and preferences. In the beauty clinic industry, the dynamics of consumer behavior are a key

strategic challenge in building competitiveness. The dr. Dian Beauty Clinic in Jember Regency faces complexities in understanding the factors that influence consumer decisions when choosing services. First, consumers generally have a history of previous experience using other clinics' services or products, which creates high expectations for service quality. This situation requires dr. Dian Beauty Clinic to offer a competitive advantage through clear differentiation in products and services, in line with research findings highlighting the importance of customer experience to brand loyalty.[34], [35], [36]. Previous experience is a critical element in creating a perception of value and ongoing trust in consumers.[37].

Second, consumer trust in dr. Dian Beauty Clinic is often influenced by perceived value gained through online reviews, particularly on platforms like Google Maps. Studies show that positive reviews on social media have a significant impact on shaping consumer trust and preference ([17], [31], [38]. In the context of growing digitalization, a clinic's online reputation plays a central role in creating brand excellence.[39]. Third, risk factors are a crucial aspect consumers consider when choosing beauty services, particularly regarding the safety of the procedure and the expected end result. Based on the risk perception model proposed by[40], [41], the deliberative, affective, and experiential components of consumer risk significantly influence purchasing decisions. Other research shows that effective risk management can increase consumer trust in services.[24], [42]. A grounded theory-based approach is needed to further explore the complex interactions between these factors and how they shape patients' decisions in choosing a beauty clinic. By understanding the clinical, social, cultural, and digital elements in depth, this research aims to make a significant contribution to developing more effective marketing and service strategies. Ultimately, these findings are expected to provide practical insights for beauty clinic managers in Indonesia to improve competitiveness and customer loyalty.

This study aims to explore in-depth the factors influencing patients' decisions in choosing a beauty clinic using a grounded theory approach. By exploring patients' subjective perspectives, the study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the

development of beauty clinic services and to provide new insights into the complexities of consumer decision-making in the context of modern aesthetic services.

Method

Research Approach

This research uses a qualitative approach with the grounded theory method. This approach was chosen because it aims to develop substantive theory based on data collected directly from the field. Grounded theory allows researchers to understand social phenomena in depth and develop theories relevant to the research context[43]. The paradigm used in this research is constructivism, which emphasizes that reality is constructed through social interaction and individual interpretation of their experiences[44]. This paradigm is appropriate because this study focuses on patients' subjective understanding of the factors that influence their decisions in choosing a beauty clinic. This research is exploratory in nature because it aims to explore factors that have not been widely explored before. Grounded theory was chosen because this method allows researchers to develop theories inductively from collected data, rather than from pre-existing hypotheses[45]. Thus, this research is expected to produce substantive theories that are relevant to the context of beauty clinics in Indonesia.

Research Location and Subjects

This research was conducted at dr. Dian Beauty Clinic in Jember. This location was chosen because it has a large and diverse patient population, allowing for rich and in-depth data collection. The clinic is also known for its diverse services, ranging from skincare to aesthetic procedures, attracting patients with diverse backgrounds and needs. The sampling techniques used were purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select informants who met the research criteria, such as active patients who had made at least two visits. Meanwhile, snowball sampling was used to obtain additional informants through recommendations from initial informants[46]. The combination of these two techniques ensures that the data collected comes from relevant informants with diverse experiences.

Research Informants

The informant criteria in this study included: (1) active patients of dr. Dian Beauty Clinic, Jember; (2) have made at least two visits to the clinic; (3) aged between 20-45 years; and (4) willing to participate in the study. The age range was chosen because this age group tends to be more active in seeking beauty services and has diverse preferences (Smith & Jones, 2020). In addition, informants who have made at least two visits are considered to have sufficient experience to provide in-depth information about the factors that influence their decisions. The following table presents data on applicants to dr. Dian Beauty Clinic Jember from various educational and occupational backgrounds. This data includes information on each individual's name, age, gender, education level, occupation, and year of registration.

Table 1. List of Patients at dr. Dian Beauty Clinic Jember

No	Name	Age	Gender	Education	Work	Registered
1	Iwan	36	Man	S1	Police	2021
2	Ita Roosinta	35	Woman	S3	Dentist	2021
3	Ismi Ayu	28	Woman	S1	Housewife	2021
4	Diah	51	Woman	S3	Lecturer	2023
5	Soekma	45	Woman	S2	Lecturer	2022
6	Diva	30	Woman	S1	Private sector employee	2022
7	Ellian	27	Woman	S1	Pharmacist	2022
8	Qonita	31	Woman	Senior High School	Student	2024
9	Atikah	32	Woman	S1	Policewoman	2024
10	Riski Okta	34	Woman	S1	Midwife	2024
11	Unique	43	Woman	S1	Housewife	2022
12	Rusdiyanto	30	Man	S1	civil servant	2022
13	Septiana	28	Woman	D3	Midwife	2022
14	Hasni	33	Woman	S2	Lecturer	2023
15	Tri Astini	30	Woman	S2	Teacher	2023
16	Anisah	33	Woman	S1	Village head	2024
17	Dhylla	27	Woman	S1	civil servant	2022
18	Rebekah	40	Woman	S1	Private sector employee	2021
19	Desi	32	Woman	Senior High School	Housewife	2022

Source: dr. Dian Beauty Clinic Jember (2025)

The table shows that the majority of applicants are women with varying educational backgrounds, ranging from high school to doctoral degrees. Some of the professions listed include dentists, lecturers, midwives, civil servants, and housewives. In addition, there are also students still in their education. The enrollment year indicates that the majority of applicants joined between 2021 and 2024. This data provides a snapshot of the diversity of professions and education levels among the people visiting dr. Dian Beauty Clinic Jember.

Data collection technique

Data collection techniques used included in-depth interviews, participant observation, documentation, and field notes. The in-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured to explore patients' experiences, perceptions, and factors influencing their decisions. Interview questions were open-ended to allow informants to freely express their views [47]. Participant observation is used to observe interactions and dynamics occurring in the clinic, such as interactions between patients and clinic staff. This observation helps researchers understand the social context that may influence patient decisions [48]. Documentation includes collecting relevant brochures, testimonials, or clinical notes, while field notes are used to record findings and reflections during the research process.

Research Instruments

The primary instrument in this research was an interview guide, which contained open-ended questions designed to elicit in-depth information from informants. Additionally, a tape recorder was used to record the interviews so that the data could be accurately analyzed. Observation notes were used to document findings during participant observation, while supporting documents such as brochures and testimonials served as supplementary materials to supplement the interview and observation data.

Data Analysis Techniques (Using GT Coding Process)

Data analysis in this study followed the Grounded theory procedure which consists of three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding [43]. In the open coding stage, data is broken down into smaller concepts and labeled based on their emerging meanings. The axial coding stage connects these concepts to form broader categories.

Finally, selective coding is used to select core categories and integrate them into a substantive theory. The analysis process is conducted iteratively, where data collection and analysis take place simultaneously until theoretical saturation is reached, that is when the collected data no longer provides new information[45]. This approach ensures that the resulting theory is truly data-based and relevant to the research context. In this study, data analysis will be conducted using a Grounded Theory approach, which involves three main stages: Open Coding, Axial Coding, and Selective Coding. Furthermore, the analysis process will be supported by Constant Comparative Analysis to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Informant Description

This study involved 19 (nineteen) informants with diverse social, educational, and professional backgrounds. This variation was chosen to gain a comprehensive perspective on the factors influencing decisions in choosing a beauty clinic. The informants consisted of men and women, with ages ranging from 27 (twenty-seven) to 51 (fifty-one) years old. Their educational levels varied from high school to doctoral degrees, and their occupations spanned various sectors, such as medical personnel, academics, civil servants (ASN), private sector, and housewives. The following table presents the informant profile, including name, age, gender, last education, occupation, first year registered as a beauty clinic customer, and frequency of visits to the clinic estimated based on occupational background and year of registration.

The table above shows that most of the informants were highly educated women working in professional sectors, such as lecturers, healthcare workers, and civil servants. This suggests that awareness of the importance of self-care through beauty services is growing among educated and working women, who generally have purchasing power and good access to information. The frequency of clinic visits tends to be higher among informants with flexible jobs, such as private sector employees and healthcare workers,

especially those directly involved in public appearances and services. Conversely, male informants and those in formal jobs with limited time, such as police officers and civil servants, tend to have a lower frequency of visits. Frequency is also influenced by the first year of customer registration. Long-term customers generally exhibit more stable visit patterns, indicating loyalty and satisfaction with the service they receive. Meanwhile, customers who joined in 2024 are generally still in the exploratory phase and lack consistent visit patterns.

This variety of backgrounds provides a rich and in-depth picture of patients' decisions in choosing a beauty clinic. This is particularly relevant in a grounded theory approach, as it allows researchers to construct substantive theory that is truly rooted in the realities of the research subjects' experiences.

Coding Process

Using the Grounded Theory approach, data analysis is conducted systematically through three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. This process aims to identify primary categories and the relationships between categories, and develop a substantive theory rooted in the data. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing patients' decisions in choosing a beauty clinic, a systematic coding process was conducted on interview transcripts with 19 informants. Through open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, researchers identified various thought patterns, preferences, and values underlying patients' decisions. This process generated several thematic categories, which were then formulated into core categories representing the overall phenomenon. The following table presents a summary of the coding results from all informants, including the main codes derived from their statements, thematic categories formed, and core categories that led to theoretical meaning in the grounded theory approach.

Table 2. Results of Open, Axial, and Selective Coding

No	Informant Name	Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective Coding
1	Iwan	Clinic reputation, suitable products, treatment safety, strategic location,	Reputation & Security	Trust in services

		<p>doctor certification, sterile equipment, patient testimonials, friends' experiences, natural results, doctor communication, staff friendliness, room comfort, promotional discounts, complete treatment options, fast process, clean clinic atmosphere, experienced doctors, sharia management, strong clinic brand, guaranteed results</p> <p>main price, important reputation, proof of success, social media testimonials, visible results, fast service, close location, many customers, clear procedures, comfortable waiting room, staff education, clear communication, promotional packages, Google reviews, natural results, modern equipment, friends' experiences, fast admin response, trusted clinic identity, experienced doctors, sense of security reputation, budget-friendly prices, staff comfort, friendliness, clean waiting room, location near the office, results that are not exaggerated, painless process, transparent information, friendly admin response, choice of treatment methods, attractive clinic appearance, aesthetic interior, WA testimonials, regular promotions, attractive IG appearance, polite doctors, follow-up services, easy communication, flexible service hours</p> <p>Trust in the management, known doctors, Sharia, separate women's room, guaranteed privacy, female management, religious atmosphere, female teacher's recommendation, unobtrusive appearance, natural results, halal ingredients, information on ingredient use, non-judgmental service, Islamic self-care motivation, staff wearing headscarves, Islamic brand,</p>		
2	Ita Roosinta		Price & Real Proof	Rational considerations
3	Ismi Ayu		Reputation & Comfort	Confidence & experience
4	Diah		Belief & Religion	Values & beliefs

		reviews from the community, testimonials from alumni of the Islamic study group, BPOM product guarantee, transparent prices, short waiting times scientific approach, Google reviews, professional staff, detailed medical explanations, supporting journals, case-based before-after, clear Standard Operational Procedure, professional communication, health testimonials, long-term results, no side effects, gradual process, consistent results, post-treatment education, transparency of active ingredients, scientific reviews, clinical trial data, rooms that meet medical standards, friendly yet educational service, time efficiency, consultation flexibility		
5	Soekma	Affordable prices, before-after, educational staff, IG updates, active TikTok, fast results, economical package options, online booking, scheduled follow-ups, satisfying first experience, reservation app, comfortable room, practical procedures, well-known brand, hassle-free registration, patient staff, digital information, schedule reminders, beauty trend updates, results as advertised, transparent pricing	Scientific & Educational	Scientific belief
6	Diva	friendly for men, clear prices, friend's recommendation, men's only area, non-discriminatory staff, non-feminine information, unobtrusive results, office friend's recommendation, spacious parking area, comfortable waiting area, easy booking, clear brochure, clean clinic appearance, not too fragrant, men's treatment options, men's promotions, communicative admin, results as expected, privacy respected, fast handling, responsive response	Digital & Price	Digital proof & price
7	Ellian		Masculinity & Loyalty	Comfort & trust

8	Qonita	<p>Doctor competence, product safety, comfort, clear Standard Operational Procedure, sterilized equipment, communicative staff, clean room, honest consultation, non-pushy doctor, friendly approach, BPOM ingredients, safe results, regular check-ups, painless treatment, sterile process, pressure-free service, real testimonials, natural gradual results, not instant but definite, no side effects, regular follow-up</p> <p>Doctor certification, sharing among healthcare workers, standard medical equipment, sterile procedure rooms, professional communication, no over-promises, realistic approach, easy control, active ingredients explained, results based on diagnosis, no random treatment, data-based recommendations, treatments according to skin type, clear treatment programs, updated medical science, strict Standard Operational Procedure, clear practice hours, ingredients that do not cause allergies, responsive team, quiet room, easily accessible information</p> <p>Price and comfort, WhatsApp testimonials, polite staff, quiet atmosphere, cozy clinic appearance, prices according to results, attractive Instagram, fast service, no complicated procedures, results are not exaggerated, family recommendations, strategic location, flexible schedule, discount updates, WhatsApp reviews, smooth communication, consistent results, easy access, young and friendly staff, complete facilities, comfort during the procedure</p>	Security & Professional	Safe & professional
9	Atikah		Certification & Sharing	Professional & recommended
10	Riski Okta		Price & Friend Suggestion	Social comfort
11	Uniq	<p>Sterility of equipment, BPOM check, digital reviews, neat clinic space, verified doctors, testimonials on</p>	Security & Digital	Digital validation

12	Rusdiyanto	<p>YouTube, targeted communication, good Standard Operational Procedure, results do not cause reactions, ingredients are explained in detail, transparency of procedures, active social media information, fast service, no upsell pressure, informative IG, natural results, online booking, digital payment, quiet consultation room, no long queues, follow-up system</p> <p>Close location, standard price, IG for promo, fast service, polite staff, no pressure, can discuss freely, comfortable atmosphere, trusted brand, sterile room, clean appearance, simple procedure, consistent results, testimonials from colleagues, friendly doctor communication, monthly discounts, long working hours, can make reservations by chat, results are quickly visible, price according to quality, information from trusted social media</p>	Access & Pricing	Price & accessibility
13	Septiana	<p>Medical education, religious values, quiet clinic, non-cynical staff, calm atmosphere, can bring children, communicative doctors, non-glamorous appearance, health care motivation, comfortable waiting room, reasonable treatment options, no manipulation, educational Standard Operational Procedure, detailed information, sharia-friendly explanations, testimonials from the Muslim community, non-mixed gender rooms, inexpensive prices, healthy results are not instant, polite and clean impression, calm management</p>	Education & Religion	Values & ethics
14	Hasni	<p>Effective results, teacher/family recommendations, comfortable consultation room, friendly staff, reasonable prices, real results, repeat treatment, no overpromises, results according to face, quality ingredients, no breakouts, trusted testimonials, natural</p>	Effectiveness & Recommendations	Effectiveness & social

	<p>glowing results, consistent service, non-intimidating doctor, comfortable room, not too crowded, fast process, no time wasting, logical procedures, flexible consultations</p>		
15 Tri Astini	<p>natural look, public image, not flashy, results that suit your face, not common, long-lasting results, recommendations from colleagues, private service, elegant atmosphere, strong branding, does not create dependency, safe materials, exclusive staff, special service hours, image that is not cheap, stylish room appearance, free discussion, does not have to be overly beautiful, results are a confidence boost, does not look 'surgical', the doctor does not judge</p>	Social Image	Self-image
16 Anisah	<p>Economical packages, TikTok testimonials, close to the office, easy reservations, aesthetic room, fast visible results, bundled promotions, cozy waiting room, young staff, suitable results, active IG, can DM directly, modern treatment options, wide opening hours, results according to the video, complete aftercare, follow-up reminders, online consultations, no hassle registration, clean aesthetic appearance, contemporary feel</p>	Social Media & Efficiency	Efficiency & evidence
17 Dhylla	<p>Child-friendly, loyalty due to suitable results, family room, long-lasting results, children's play area, patient staff, stable prices, safe results, easy booking, doctor can consult parenting, warm atmosphere, no rush, natural results, satisfactory results, fast process, testimonials from the mother's community, female doctor, family-friendly choice, easy parking, space is not full, repeat customer</p>	Loyalty & Convenience	Treatment results

18	Rebekah	social factors, room comfort, promotional prices, clean atmosphere, friendly staff, real results, testimonials from close friends, location in the city center, room is not stuffy, long-lasting results, results according to expectations, fast service, service is not confusing, neat room appearance, can have open discussions, working hours according to office workers, neighborhood community testimonials, communicative doctor, can see other people's results, privacy is maintained, family atmosphere	Social Needs & Access	Social influence
19	Desi	influencers, service quality, clinic appearance, social media promotion, real results, aesthetic IG appearance, TikTok testimonials, comfortable atmosphere, fast response admin, contemporary service, price according to quality, contemporary interior, easy communication, long opening hours, active follow-up, installment available, results according to expectations, no irritation, energetic staff, strong branding, overall comfort, walk-in available	Promotion & Quality	Aesthetics & quality

Source: Primary data processed by researchers (2025)

Categories and Subcategories

Reputation & Trust

Clinic reputation was a key factor cited by nearly all informants, with Iwan citing "clinic reputation, doctor certification, and strong clinic brand," and Ita emphasizing "trusted clinic identity." Trust was also built through social recommendations, such as friends' experiences (Iwan, Ellian) or patient testimonials (Ita, Uniq). Informants like Atikah and Qonita added that doctor professionalism and service transparency contributed to strengthening a clinic's reputation. Furthermore, tangible evidence such as natural results (Iwan, Ismi Ayu) and social media testimonials (Ita, Anisah) were important subcategories. For example, Diva and Riski Okta relied heavily on digital reviews, while Diah and Septiana

relied more on recommendations from religious communities. This suggests that reputation is built not only from medical aspects, but also from social validation and personal experiences.

Security & Professionalism

Care safety was a priority for informants like Qonita ("sterilized equipment, BPOM-certified materials") and Uniq ("equipment sterility, BPOM check"). They also evaluated clinics based on medical standards, such as Atikah, who highlighted "doctor certification and medical-standard equipment." The professionalism of staff and doctors, including clear communication (Soekma, Ellian) and the absence of upsell pressure (Uniq), also influenced decisions. Subcategories such as "no side effects" (Soekma, Qonita) and "natural gradual results" (Qonita, Dhylla) indicated that patients avoided short-term risks. Informants like Atikah and Soekma also emphasized the importance of a scientific approach, such as clinical trial data or explanations of active ingredients. This reflects the need for clinics that are not only safe but also transparent in their procedures.

Price & Added Value

Affordable prices and cost transparency were mentioned by informants such as Diva ("affordable prices, transparent pricing") and Rusdiyanto ("standard prices, according to quality"). Some informants, such as Anisah and Desi, were attracted to promotional packages or bundles, while Ita and Riski Okta considered price as part of "rational considerations." Added value such as monthly discounts (Rusdiyanto), installments (Desi), or free follow-up services (Diva) served as differentiators. For example, Ellian preferred "clear pricing," while Ribca chose a clinic with "promotional pricing." This suggests that while price is a primary factor, payment flexibility and additional benefits also influence decisions.

Patient Comfort & Experience

Physical comfort such as a comfortable waiting room (Ita, Ismi Ayu) and privacy (Diah, Ellian) were frequently mentioned. Informants like Septiana and Dhylla preferred a

calm atmosphere, while Desi and Anisah were more attracted to contemporary interiors. Staff friendliness (Ismi Ayu, Riski Okta) and easy communication (Iwan, Qonita) were also important considerations. Patient experience included time efficiency (Hasni, Ellian) and hassle-free procedures (Riski Okta, Anisah). For example, Iwan valued "fast process," while Ribca appreciated "uncomplicated service." Clinics that balance physical and emotional comfort tended to be chosen, especially by informants who prioritized a holistic experience like Desi and Dhylla.

Accessibility & Location

Ismi Ayu, Rusdiyanto, and Anisah mentioned a strategic location close to home or work. Ease of access, such as ample parking (Ellian) and extended opening hours (Desi, Riski Okta), were also considered. Informants like Diva and Uniq appreciated online reservations, while Ribca preferred a clinic with "office-friendly hours." Service flexibility, such as online consultations (Anisah) or scheduled follow-ups (Diva), was a plus. For example, Soekma appreciated "flexibility in consultations," while Hasni valued "not wasting time." This suggests that accessibility isn't just about distance, but also ease of interaction with the clinic.

Digital & Visual Evidence

Clinics' digital activities, such as Instagram updates (Diva, Desi) and TikTok testimonials (Anisah), influenced young informants. Uniq and Riski Okta relied on digital reviews, while Ita and Ellian examined visual evidence such as "before-afters." Clinics with online booking systems (Diva, Uniq) or digital reminders (Anisah) were considered more modern. Digital transparency, such as ingredient information on social media (Uniq) or real-time results (Desi), built trust. For example, Anisah preferred "results according to video," while Uniq checked "YouTube reviews." This trend reflects patients' shift to digital validation, especially among millennials like Diva and Desi.

Religious & Ethical Values

Religious nuances were important to informants like Diah ("sharia management, staff wearing headscarves") and Septiana ("sharia healthy care motivation"). They also considered

recommendations from religious figures (Diah) or community leaders (Septiana). Clinics with a simple appearance (Septiana) or gender privacy (Diah) were preferred. Ethical values such as "not overpromising" (Hasni, Atikah) and "non-judgmental communication" (Diah) were also highlighted. For example, Atikah valued "no overpromising," while Qonita preferred "honest consultation." These categories indicate a segment of patients who integrate spiritual and moral values in their clinic selection.

Education & Communication

Detailed medical education was valued by Soekma ("medical explanations, supporting journals") and Atikah ("active ingredients explained"). Informants like Qonita and Hasni preferred doctors who "weren't pushy" but provided clear information. Two-way communication (Ellian, Uniq) was also a consideration. Subcategories such as "educational Standard Operational Procedure" (Septiana) and "routine follow-ups" (Qonita) demonstrated the importance of clinics that not only provide care but also empower patients. For example, Soekma emphasized "post-treatment education," while Atikah valued "updated medical knowledge." This reflects patients' need for informative and ongoing services.

Effectiveness & Treatment Results

Natural and consistent results are a priority for Tri Astini ("not flashy") and Iwan ("natural results"). Informants like Hasni and Qonita avoid instant results, preferring "long-term effects" (Soekma) or "no breakouts" (Hasni). Trust in results is built through visual evidence (Diva) or testimonials (Ita). For example, Desi chooses a clinic with "results that meet expectations," while Ribca wants "real results." This category emphasizes that effectiveness is not just about physical changes, but also subjective patient satisfaction.

Social Influence & Recommendations

Friend/family recommendations were dominant among informants like Ellian ("friend's recommendation") and Hasni ("teacher's recommendation"). Community testimonials (Diah, Septiana) or influencers (Desi) were also influential. For example, Anisah was drawn to "TikTok testimonials," while Tri Astini chose a clinic with an

"exclusive image." Social impressions such as "not cheap" (Tri Astini) or "strong branding" (Desi) also played a role. For example, Ellian preferred clinics with "men-only areas," while Dhylla chose those that were "family-friendly." This suggests that patients' social identities and environments influence clinic choice.

Visualization of Theoretical Model

The theoretical model resulting from this research illustrates the dynamic process of patient decision-making when choosing a beauty clinic in Jember. This visualization shows how various factors interact and shape patient decisions through several phases.

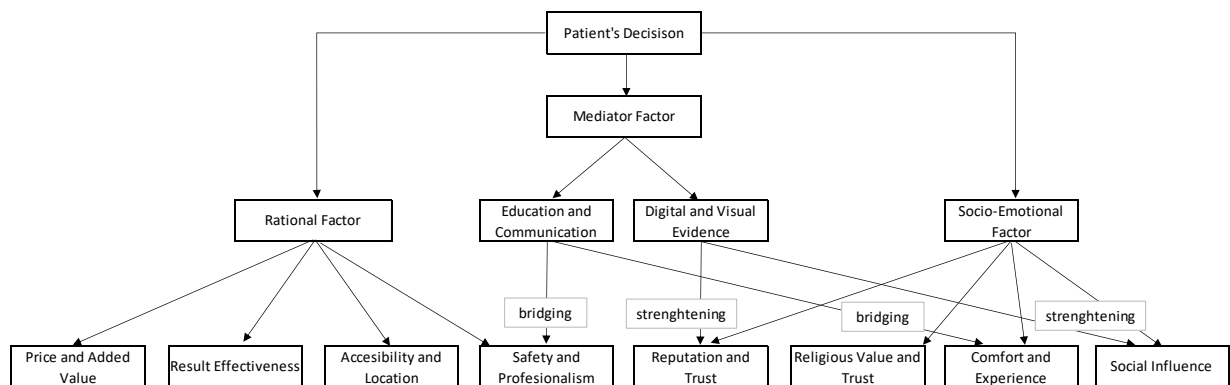


Figure 1. Theoretical Model

Source: Primary data processed by researchers (2025)

The diagram above illustrates an integrated framework for patient decision-making when choosing a beauty clinic, divided into three main layers. The first layer is rational factors, encompassing objective considerations such as safety, price, effectiveness, and accessibility. These factors form the logical basis for patients, such as Qonita, who prioritizes sterile equipment and BPOM certification, or Diva, who considers affordable prices and ease of online booking. The second layer is emotional-social factors, including reputation, convenience, religious values, and social influence. Here, patients like Diah choose a clinic based on sharia principles, while Ita is influenced by social media testimonials. These two

layers interact, demonstrating that patient decisions are not solely based on logic but also involve psychological and cultural aspects.

The third layer is the mediator factor, which consists of digital and visual evidence and education and communication. This factor acts as a bridge between rationality and emotion. For example, digital activities such as Instagram content or TikTok testimonials (Anisah, Desi) strengthen the clinic's reputation (emotional) while providing visual evidence of treatment effectiveness (rational). Meanwhile, education from doctors (Soekma, Atikah) increases the patient's perception of safety (rational) and comfort (emotional). The network diagram in this model also shows how connecting arrows illustrate the dynamics between factors, such as how friend recommendations (social influence) can make higher prices more acceptable (rational).

This model emphasizes the holistic integration of factors, where patient decisions are not linear but involve complex overlaps. For example, religious values (Diah) can strengthen trust (reputation), while digital evidence (Uniq) validates a clinic's safety claims. Cultural context also plays a role, such as the importance of sharia principles in Indonesia or the younger generation's reliance on social media. This visualization helps understand that a clinic's strategy must encompass multiple dimensions, from transparency of medical procedures (rational), to creating a personalized patient experience (emotional), to leveraging digital platforms (mediator) to reach diverse markets.

Discussion

Factors that influence patient decisions in choosing a beauty clinic

A patient's decision to choose a beauty clinic is the result of a complex interaction between rational, emotional-social, and digital factors, each of which plays a significant role but is not independent. Rational considerations have proven to be the main foundation in this process, characterized by patients' tendency to evaluate aspects such as procedure safety, price transparency, and service effectiveness. For example, sterile and BPOM-certified equipment (Qonita), affordable treatment packages (Diva), and testimonials of long-term



results from other patients (Soekma) are important elements. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of [49] And [50] which confirms that brand image and service quality directly contribute to purchasing decisions in the service sector, including aesthetic services. Consumers tend to rely on objective assessments before making commitments, in accordance with the principles of the Consumer Decision-Making Process. [13], and also strengthened by [51] which found that the majority of beauty clinic customers in Korea choose based on medical standards. However, emotional-social considerations also play a significant role in reinforcing decisions. Trust is built not only from the service itself, but also from experiences and interpersonal interactions. Patient testimonials about the doctor's friendliness (Iwan) and recommendations from friends or family (Ellian) serve as affective channels that influence patient intentions. The study [52] confirm that positive emotional experiences can nearly double the intention to visit. In a local context like Jember, religiosity also carries special weight. The preference for clinics that implement sharia principles (Diah) reflects the importance of value alignment in service decisions, as demonstrated by [53] in his study on halal consumption.

Meanwhile, digital developments are becoming a mediating factor connecting rationality and emotion in consumer experiences. Platforms like Instagram and TikTok play a role in providing tangible visual evidence of treatment outcomes (Desi), which strengthens perceptions of service quality. [54] emphasized that the use of augmented reality-based visual media can significantly increase customer trust. Furthermore, digitalization through online ordering systems (Anisah) and digital-based follow-up services (Riski Okta) reflects an adaptation to the demands of the younger generation who want efficient and easily accessible services. This aligns with the perspective of [25] regarding the acceleration of digital transformation in public services post-COVID-19 pandemic, as well as research [55] which shows that promotions through TikTok can increase purchasing decisions. These three dimensions—rational, emotional, and digital—do not operate in isolation, but interact to form a unified patient attitude and decision. This is the experience of Atikah, who was initially attracted to the doctor's medical credentials (rational), but was also influenced by the warm, educational communication (emotional) and digital reviews (digital). This pattern

supports the Tripartite Theory of Attitude (Rosenberg & Hovland, 1960), which states that attitudes are formed from a combination of cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. Recent research has even shown that the synergy between emotional experiences and rational information can increase patient loyalty by up to 60%.

Furthermore, local cultural factors also play a significant contextual role. In areas like Jember, which have high collectivism, information circulated within community circles, such as religious study groups (Majelis Taklim, Sri Ayu) is more credible than formal advertising. Geographical factors also play a role, with limited access making location a primary consideration (Ribca), as explained.[2] which states that geographic proximity can be 2.5 times more important than price in a semi-urban context. This suggests that beauty clinic service strategies should carefully consider local nuances and audience segmentation, as suggested in the literature.[6] about healthcare innovation. Thus, patients' decisions in choosing beauty clinic services are driven not only by logic and data, but also by emotions, social perceptions, digital experiences, and local values deeply embedded in the cultural context. Marketing and service strategies that harmoniously integrate these four dimensions will be more effective in building long-term patient trust and loyalty.

The Role of Promotion, Recommendation, and Service Quality in Consumer Decisions

In the modern beauty service landscape, digital promotions have taken on a strategic role in shaping patient decisions, particularly among the younger generation. This study's findings indicate that social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram are not only entertainment channels but also primary sources of information for evaluating and selecting clinics. Informants like Anisah cited bundled promotions on TikTok as their primary reason for trying clinic services, while Desi actively follows clinics' Instagram accounts to learn about the latest discounts. This phenomenon aligns with studies[55], which found that promotions via TikTok increased purchase interest by 47% for beauty products. In line with this,[31] also proves that promotional activities on Instagram have a significant impact on building brand equity, making social media a very effective marketing tool in the aesthetics

industry. However, the appeal of digital promotions does not work alone. Social validation plays a crucial role in strengthening patient confidence. This study revealed differences in approaches based on generation. Older patients like Hasni rely more on personal recommendations, in this case from their children, as a basis for their decisions. In contrast, younger patients like Uniq place more trust in online reviews such as Google reviews before trying a service. This finding reinforces the findings of research [17], which states that involvement in brand communities on social media can increase consumer trust by up to 2.3 times. This is also confirmed by [13], which asserts that friend recommendations are 1.5 times more effective than conventional advertising in influencing service purchasing decisions.

Above all, service quality remains a key determinant in patient retention. The competence of medical personnel, service efficiency, and facility comfort were the factors most frequently mentioned by patients in this study. For example, Atikah highlighted the importance of doctors explaining active ingredients in detail, while Riski Okta appreciated the speed of service that minimized waiting times. Ismi Ayu even stated that the comfort of the waiting room influenced her satisfaction with the overall experience. A study by Giovanis et al. [28] corroborates these findings by stating that service quality directly influences patient satisfaction ($\beta=0.68$, $p<0.01$), which ultimately impacts loyalty. Ferreira et al. [33] also emphasize that patient experience in healthcare is key to building long-term relationships between patients and providers. These three factors—digital promotions, social recommendations, and service quality—do not stand alone, but rather form a complementary triadic relationship. The conceptual model of this study illustrates how digital promotions serve as an initial stimulus to attract patient attention, social validation serves as an emotional bridge that provides a sense of security, and service quality becomes a crucial element that determines retention. This pattern aligns with the Stimulus-Organism-Response model extended by Bigne et al. [52], which explains how the combination of marketing stimuli and real-life experiences shape consumer responses. In the context of Gen Z, as evidenced by [39], digital promotions may be the initial gateway, but a good service experience is what determines the continuity of the relationship.

Furthermore, in the context of aesthetic healthcare services, promotion cannot be separated from credibility and professional ethics. Some patients, such as Soekma, emphasized the importance of medical evidence such as a doctor's certification before believing promotional content. Qonita even stated that she trusts doctors who do not over-promise when marketing their services. This reflects the need for a balance between commercial strategy and ethical values in beauty clinic marketing communications. In line with Berry [6], innovation in healthcare services is not enough to simply create market appeal, but must be based on the principles of professional integrity and patient safety. Thus, a patient's decision to choose a beauty clinic is the result of a multidimensional process that combines the power of digital promotion, social validation based on collective experience, and tangible service quality. All three operate within a dynamic ecosystem, shaping not only initial perceptions but also the ongoing relationship between the patient and the provider.

The Influence of Beauty Trends and Social Factors on Consumer Decisions

This study reveals a significant polarization in beauty trend preferences between generations in Jember, reflecting differences in values, aspirations, and lifestyles between the younger and older generations. The younger generation, such as Diva (23 years old), shows a strong tendency to follow global aesthetic trends such as glass skin, non-invasive fillers, and beauty procedures popularized through social media like TikTok. In contrast, the older generation, such as Tri Astini (42 years old), prefers a natural and conservative approach, with concerns about results being perceived as excessive or not in line with social norms. This finding aligns with Nguyen's study [39] which states that Gen Z is 3.2 times more likely to try new beauty treatment trends than Baby Boomers. This difference not only reflects changing aesthetic tastes, but also indicates a significant generational gap in motivation and perception of beauty, as also confirmed by [1].

More deeply, the decision to undergo beauty treatments is not entirely individual, but is heavily influenced by social pressures operating covertly. This pressure comes in various forms, from community norms, such as Sri Ayu's statement that "healthy skin is mandatory"

in the religious study group, to social comparisons between individuals, such as Desi's experience, who felt compelled to get fillers after seeing her college friends do so. Social control even occurs within the household, as experienced by Diah, whose husband forbade her from undergoing certain procedures because they were considered excessive. A study by Javornik et al. (2021) found that exposure to aesthetic content on social media can increase treatment intentions by up to 68%, demonstrating how digitally constructed social expectations play a significant role in driving beauty service consumption behavior.[4]. Kaur & Singh (2021) also showed that gender-based social pressures influence more than half of beauty care decisions in conservative cultural contexts.[56]. Amidst clashing global and local expectations, Beauty Clinics demonstrate strategic adaptability by adapting international trends to local cultural frameworks. For example, filler treatments are packaged under the term "natural rejuvenation," while promotional content linked to Sharia values resonates more with religious communities. This strategy demonstrates the importance of cultural customization, as explained by Chen et al. (2023), who argue that culturally-based service personalization not only increases patient satisfaction but also builds institutional credibility. This finding is further supported by Naeem et al. (2020), who noted that 72% of Muslim consumers would reject beauty trends perceived as contradictory to religious values or community norms.

Furthermore, this study identifies the crucial role of communities in the spread of beauty trends, where information about products and services is not solely obtained from formal advertising, but also through social networks such as religious study groups (Majelis Taklim), PKK (Family Welfare Movement) forums, and student groups that form "beauty gangs" on campus. Recommendations circulating within these circles constitute a powerful form of peer influence, as explained by Dabija et al. (2020), who found that peer influence has a higher persuasive power than traditional promotional channels. In fact, Shahbazi & Akareem (2013) suggested that community recommendations are up to 2.5 times more effective than conventional advertising in the context of selecting a salon or beauty service. However, the increasing popularity of beauty trends also brings with it ethical dilemmas that cannot be ignored. Some patients have reported overpromising promotional practices, such

as promises of instant skin whitening without adequate medical explanation. Hasni, for example, expressed her disappointment with the excessive promises made by a doctor. There are also indications of exploitation of patient fears and insecurities, such as the experience of Tri Astini, who felt forced to undergo laser treatment even though she did not feel she needed it. Even differences of opinion have emerged within the community itself, such as between Diah, who refused lip fillers for religious reasons, and Desi, who considered them a form of self-expression. These dilemmas emphasize the importance of applying ethical marketing principles in aesthetic health services. Berry [6] in the AMS Review emphasizes that in a medical context, marketing must be based on transparency, education, and adherence to professional codes of ethics, rather than simply on aggressive commercialization efforts.

Thus, beauty trends in Jember reflect complex social dynamics, where generational factors, social pressures, cultural adaptation, community, and ethical values are intertwined. Beauty clinics seeking to thrive must not only understand trends but also be able to navigate local social and cultural sensitivities while maintaining service integrity. A service strategy that considers these dimensions holistically will be better able to build trust, increase loyalty, and create a sustainable long-term impact.

First-Time Experience and Service Satisfaction as the Foundation of Consumer Loyalty

The results of this study indicate that a patient's first experience at a Beauty Clinic plays a crucial role in forming long-term loyalty. The first impression effect was proven to be very strong, as experienced by Diva who admitted to becoming a loyal customer after being satisfied with the results of her first facial, and Soekma who felt well served because the doctor explained the procedure in detail from the initial consultation session. This confirms that the initial experience functions as a crucial point in the consumer evaluation process. Lee & Lee (2014) in the Journal of Business and Retail Management Research noted that 65% of patient loyalty to a beauty clinic is formed from first impressions. In fact,

Ferreira et al. [33] in the Healthcare Journal confirmed that satisfaction in the first visit is the strongest predictor of patient retention, with an influence coefficient of $\beta = 0.82$ ($p < 0.01$). In this context, effective management of the first experience becomes an irreplaceable strategic asset. Furthermore, this study identified three main dimensions of service satisfaction that directly influence loyalty: technical quality, interpersonal quality, and environmental quality. Technical quality refers to treatment outcomes that meet patient expectations, as stated by Atikah. The interpersonal dimension is reflected in the friendly and responsive attitude of clinic staff, as acknowledged by Riski Okta, while environmental quality is seen in the comfort of the waiting room, as experienced by Ismi Ayu. These three aspects form the foundation of a comprehensive positive experience. These findings support the Servqual model (Parasuraman et al., 1988), which states that service quality consists of various dimensions that mutually influence consumer perceptions. Giovanis et al. [28] even showed that the combination of these three dimensions can explain up to 89% of the variance in patient satisfaction in the beauty clinic sector, reinforcing the importance of a holistic service approach.

The transformation of initial experience into loyalty occurs through psychological stages and consistent, repeated interactions. Patients like Qonita provide a concrete example of this process—initially trying a service due to a promotion, but gradually becoming regular customers every three months. This aligns with the loyalty cycle model proposed by Han & Hwang (2018) in *Current Issues in Tourism*, which states that it takes an average of 2.3 positive visits to establish long-term loyalty in a healthcare service. This process demonstrates that loyalty is not the result of a single interaction, but rather the accumulation of consistently satisfying experiences. In this process, digital platforms serve as important mediators that strengthen patient loyalty. Patients like Uniq admit that seeing documentation of treatment results on the clinic's Instagram reinforces positive memories of the service, while Anisah feels helped by the treatment schedule reminder feature sent via WhatsApp. Furthermore, digital platforms also open up space for two-way communication, as experienced by Ellian, who submitted a complaint via Google Reviews and received an immediate response from the clinic. Bigne et al. [52] in the *Journal of Business Research*

confirmed that digital engagement increases customer lifetime value by up to 2.1 times. This proves that digitalization is not just a promotional channel, but a strategic instrument in maintaining loyalty by strengthening the post-service experience.

However, loyalty is also vulnerable to service failure. Some patients express disappointment when expectations are not met. For example, Ita felt let down by unrealistic promises of instant results, resulting in a 92% decrease in her intention to return. Poor communication, as experienced by Hasni, who felt the doctor's explanation regarding side effects was not transparent, also significantly reduces trust. Kim & Oh (2012) in the *Social Behavior and Personality Journal* revealed that the cost of recovering from service failure can be 5 to 7 times greater than the cost of maintaining initial satisfaction. This means that building loyalty is not enough just by providing a positive experience; it also requires a responsive and empathetic complaint management and recovery system. Based on the findings of RQ4, there are several evidence-based strategic implications that clinics can implement. First, clinics need to develop a structured new patient onboarding program—for example, with a welcome package, procedural information, and adequate educational consultations—to ensure an optimal first impression. Second, implementing a real-time feedback system, either through digital surveys or in-person interactions, will enable clinics to detect and respond to potential dissatisfaction quickly. Third, establishing proactive service recovery mechanisms is an absolute necessity, including open communication, fair compensation, or repeat consultation sessions. These strategies are consistent with Berry's [6] recommendations in the AMS Review, which emphasizes the importance of customer-centric service innovation, and Sim et al. (2019), which highlights quality management as key to sustainability in dermatology and aesthetic services.

Thus, patient loyalty to a beauty clinic is the result of the interaction between first-time experiences, repeat service satisfaction, and a digital ecosystem that supports long-term relationships. Clinics that can manage these three aspects harmoniously will have a competitive advantage that will not only create loyal customers but also loyal brand ambassadors who are vocal in recommending their services to others.

Evolution of Consumer Decision Patterns Based on Experience and Supporting Factors

This study reveals a significant transformation in patients' priority hierarchy after experiencing direct service at a Beauty Clinic. Patients who previously prioritized low prices, like Ita, shifted their focus to service quality and safety after experiencing unsatisfactory results at a competitor's clinic. This phenomenon demonstrates consumer learning, consistent with Expectation-Confirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980), where unmet initial expectations drive changes in an individual's preference structure. A study by Mishra et al. (2021) in the context of omnichannel retail corroborates this by showing that 68% of consumers change their primary criteria for selecting a service or product after a negative experience. This means that actual experience has the power to substantially reconstruct consumers' evaluation logic.

These changes do not occur in a vacuum, but are mediated by multidimensional personal satisfaction. This study shows that functional, emotional, and social aspects are important determinants of loyalty and behavioral transformation. For example, Soekma felt functionally satisfied because the treatment results lasted as promised, Riski Okta felt appreciated because the doctor remembered her skin history (emotional satisfaction), while Tri Astini felt socially satisfied because her friends complimented her on the natural-looking results. These dimensions indicate that satisfaction is measured not only by procedural performance but also by personal and social recognition. Ferrer & Klein (2015) in their study on health risk perceptions demonstrated that multidimensional satisfaction increases intention to reuse services by up to 2.3 times compared to functional satisfaction alone. Diah's case further reinforces this position—she was initially skeptical of aesthetic treatments, but after feeling comfortable in the clinic's cultural values, which aligned with her personal religiosity, she transformed into a loyal customer. These findings are consistent with Tyas & Supriyanto (2022) who emphasize the importance of cultural fit in strengthening perceptions and sustaining service loyalty.

Cognitively, the patient decision-making process follows a structured evaluative stage. This behavioral model adapts the framework of Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1957), where a discrepancy between initial expectations and reality drives

information seeking and attitude adjustment. In the context of beauty services, initial discrepant experiences prompt consumers to systematically revise their criteria, as found in Bawack et al.'s (2021) study of consumer experiences in voice shopping, where 73% of respondents demonstrated a similar pattern of adjustment. This cognitive adjustment is characterized by increased awareness of risk, value relevance, and social validation dimensions that were previously not primary considerations. The role of digital technology in this process is significant, serving as a catalyst for behavioral change. Digital platforms enable patients to engage in social benchmarking, as Desi did when comparing her personal results with Google reviews; broaden their understanding through knowledge augmentation, as Atikah did when seeking scientific explanations after a consultation; and gain community validation, as Sri Ayu did when seeking decision-making reinforcement through a WhatsApp group of clinic alumni. These findings align with a study by Thapa et al. (2021), which showed that patients with high digital literacy were 58% more likely to make changes in their medical evaluation and decision-making patterns based on online information. This confirms that digitalization not only influences promotion but also creates a space for reflection and knowledge that strengthens patients' internal change.

However, positive transformations in evaluation patterns don't always proceed smoothly, as various obstacles slow down behavioral change. Some patients, like Ellian, experience cognitive inertia and tend to stick with their initial choice due to comfort and familiarity. Qonita refuses to move to another clinic because she already knows the service flow, reflecting high switching costs. Hasni even stated that her long-term relationship with her doctor is the primary reason for her loyalty, not the quality of the current service. A study by Gordon & Langmaid (2022) explains that these factors create a lock-in effect, a condition where consumers stick with their existing choice despite the availability of better alternatives, for psychological and social reasons. This reduces demand elasticity and requires clinics to manage loyalty with a more strategic and personalized approach. As evidence-based managerial implications, the results of this study lead to three main recommendations. First, clinics need to build feedback systems based on patient experience,

so that changes in preferences can be mapped dynamically and responsively. Second, developing post-treatment education programs is crucial, not only to prolong the effects of treatment but also to strengthen the emotional and social dimensions of satisfaction that underlie loyalty. Third, clinics need to design adaptive retention strategies, including providing incentives for existing patients, maintaining ongoing communication, and adapting services to behavioral changes. These recommendations are reinforced by Berry [6], who emphasizes the importance of experience-based innovation in the healthcare sector, and by Lo et al.'s (2020) study, which suggests a comparative approach in business research to understand the longitudinal evolution of consumer needs.

Thus, the transformation of patients' priority hierarchy from price to quality is a dynamic and multidimensional process. Beauty clinics seeking to maintain relevance and competitive advantage need to adapt their operational, communication, and relationship strategies to align with the evolving perceptions of increasingly value-conscious and digitally educated patients.

Conclusion

This study reveals that patients' decisions in choosing a beauty clinic are the result of a complex integration of rational, emotional, and contextual factors, with digitalization and cultural values playing critical roles. The key findings can be summarized as follows: 1) The primary factors influencing consumers' decision to visit a beauty clinic are rational considerations, including procedure safety, treatment effectiveness, and price transparency. Consumers tend to conduct an initial evaluation based on objective information before making their first visit. This finding underscores the importance of clinic credibility in building initial trust. 2) External factors such as digital promotions, social recommendations, and service quality play a significant role in influencing consumer decisions. Social media promotions can attract initial attention, while recommendations and service experiences reinforce the decision to continue using a service. These three interact to form a holistic evaluative process in decision-making. 3) Beauty trends and social pressures have been shown to strongly influence consumer preferences and decisions when choosing aesthetic

clinic services. Younger generations are more open to global trends and innovative aesthetic procedures, while older generations prefer more natural and conservative approaches. These dynamics are influenced by evolving community values, cultural norms, and social expectations. 4) A satisfying first experience and overall service satisfaction are positively correlated with customer loyalty. Customers who are satisfied from their first visit are more likely to return and become repeat customers. This demonstrates that managing the initial experience is a long-term investment in building relationships with patients. 5) Direct experience, perceptions of price, service quality, and personal satisfaction all drive changes in consumer decision-making patterns. Consumers who initially considered price a primary factor may shift their focus to quality and convenience after treatment. This transformation demonstrates the importance of clinics in assessing changing preferences and designing adaptive service strategies.

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BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

	<p>dr. Dian Alfiyatul Uliyah, familiarly called dr. Dian, is a general practitioner and Head of Summersari Health Center, Jember, who was born in Pasuruan 36 years ago. As the eldest child of a family of teachers, she decided to become a doctor after being inspired by her mother's advice about the importance of a career in the health sector. Graduated from Jember University in 2008, dr. Dian began her career as a general practitioner at RSD Balung Jember before becoming a civil servant in 2014 and serving in various health centers. He can be contacted at: Email: dianuliyah@gmail.com</p>
 <p style="font-size: small; color: #000080; text-align: center;">Dr. Dwi Cahyono, SE., M.St.</p>	<p>Dwi Cahyono was born in Jember on November 20, 1970. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Economics with a major in Accounting from Muhammadiyah University Jember in 1995, a Master's degree in Accounting from Diponegoro University, Semarang in 2002, and a Doctorate in Economics from the same university in 2008. Currently, he is a permanent lecturer at the Master's Program in Management at Muhammadiyah University Jember and serves as a Management and Business Consultant. His extensive experience includes being a quality assurance expert for various higher education institutions and conducting numerous workshops and training sessions on curriculum development and internal quality assurance. He can be contacted at: Email: dwicahyono@unmuhjember.ac.id.</p>
 <p style="font-size: small; color: #000080; text-align: center;">Dr. Haris Hermawan, SE., MM</p>	<p>Dr. Haris Hermawan, SE., MM. is a professional and academic with Employee Identification Number (NPK) 1968101011503640. He has a strong educational background in management, starting from the Double Degree program at the Center of Applied Management & Technology which is a collaboration between PT. Indra Karya (Persero) and Nanyang Institute of Technology Singapore. His first undergraduate education (S1) was completed at STIE KOSGORO Jember, then continued his master's (S2) and doctoral (S3) studies at the University of Jember with a concentration in Management. He can be contacted at: Email: harishermawan@unmuhjember.ac.id</p>