

The Relationship Between Dentists' Ethics And Patient Satisfaction Level At Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital In Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Ethical conduct within the medical field plays a crucial role in providing healthcare services. Engaging in unethical professional practices can ultimately tarnish the reputation of the profession, thereby affecting healthcare institutions as well. Such behavior may negatively influence patient satisfaction and, in turn, diminish patient loyalty towards healthcare services.

Aim and Objectives: The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between the ethics of dentists and patient satisfaction level in the dental clinic of Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital.

Methods: The research method used is observational analytics with a cross-sectional research design. The research was conducted at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in August-October 2022. Purposive sampling was utilized as the sample method. The sample size in this study consisted of 71 patients. The research instruments included modification of the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ) and Patients' Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ) questionnaires.

Result: The study's results through univariate analysis showed that all respondents or outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital stated that the ethics of dentists and patient satisfaction were in the high category (100%). Bivariate analysis using the Rank Spearman correlation test obtained a p-value of 0.00, indicating a significant relationship between the ethics of dentists and the level of patient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital.

Conclusion: There was a significant relationship between the ethics of dentists and patient satisfaction levels at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital with a p-value of 0.000.

Keywords: Dentist's Ethics, Patient Satisfaction, Dental hospital

1. Introduction

The ethics of the medical (dental) profession is an interesting topic for discussion, given the increasing demands for patient rights, medical service facilities, and the capabilities of dental practitioners in providing medical services, along with various ethical and moral issues that can threaten the dental profession (Holden, 2017). Ethical issues in dentistry arise due to the idealism in the Indonesian Medical Code of Ethics (KODEKI), which often diverges from reality, resulting in the neglect of dental professional ethics. One of the reasons for this is the imposition of sanctions that do not correspond to the level of legal violations committed (Akbar et al., 2020).

Poor practice of professional ethics, over time, will lead to a negative image of the profession, which will also affect the public's (patients') respect and attitude towards doctors (Luo et al., 2018). Research on patient satisfaction in relation to professional ethics has been conducted, but its significance has not been consistently achieved. For instance, sensitivity to medical ethics among young general practitioners at Dr. Moewardi Regional Public Hospital was not significantly related to patient satisfaction, $p = 0.076$ (Kusumaningtyas & Hermasari, 2017). However, a study by Taheri et al. on doctors and patients in Shahid Beheshti Teaching Hospital in Iran found a significant correlation between moral sensitivity and patient satisfaction, $r = 0.611$ (Taheri et al., 2020).

Based on the presented arguments and the research gap between studies, the author is interested in investigating the portrayal of dental practitioner ethics and the level of patient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Oral Hospital. According to the results of a public satisfaction survey regarding the services of Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Oral Hospital, the average satisfaction rate was 81.75% (categorized as good), exceeding the targeted rate of 76.61%. However, specific patient satisfaction surveys related to the ethics of dental practitioners have not been conducted thus far (Ladytama et al., 2018). The objective of this research is to assess the portrayal of dental practitioner ethics and the level of patient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Oral Hospital.

2. Methods

This research was of the analytical observational type, which aimed to analyze and describe the relationship between dental practitioner ethics and the level of patient satisfaction with dental care at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Oral Hospital without any intervention on the research subjects. The research sample was selected using purposive sampling technique, which involved sorting the samples based on predetermined criteria and consecutively sampling patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital from August to October 2022. The sample size in this study consisted of 71 patients. This research obtained an ethical clearance letter from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Dentistry at the Islamic University of Sultan Agung.

The research instruments used in this study were the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ), adapted from Stankovska et al.'s research (Stankovska et al., 2019), and the Patients' Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ), adapted from Habib et al.'s research (Akbar et al., 2020). In this study, the questionnaires underwent validity and reliability testing. Once all the data were collected, the next step was data analysis. Data analysis in this study involved univariate analysis (frequency distribution) and bivariate analysis, specifically the Spearman rank correlation test, as the research data were on an ordinal-ordinal scale.

3. Results

The data collection was conducted using the Ethical Sensitivity Scale Questionnaire (ESSQ) and the Patients' Satisfaction Questionnaire (PSQ), which had undergone validity and reliability testing. The results of the validity test for the dental practitioner ethics questionnaire were 0.361, indicating that the statement items used to measure the dental practitioner ethics variable can be considered valid. The results of the validity test for the patient satisfaction questionnaire were also 0.361, indicating that the indicator or statement items used to measure the patient satisfaction variable can be considered valid. As for the reliability test results, the dental practitioner ethics variable had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.965, and the patient satisfaction variable had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.953. These results indicate that the Cronbach's alpha values for both the dental practitioner ethics and patient satisfaction variables were greater than 0.70, demonstrating that the measurements using the questionnaires in this study were considered reliable (Gatti-Reis et al., 2023).

3.1 Respondent Characteristics

Table 1. Distribution of Outpatient Dental Patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital Based on Gender

Gender	Amount	Percentage (%)
Men	25	35,2
Women	46	64,8
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 1, it is revealed that the majority of respondents are female, with a total of 46 individuals (64.8%), while 25 individuals (35.2%) are male. These results indicate that the outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in August-October 2022 are predominantly female.

Table 2. Distribution of Outpatient Dental Patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital Based on Age

Age	Amount	Percentage (%)
< 20 tahun	8	11,3
20 – 30 tahun	36	50,7
31 – 40 tahun	12	16,9
41 – 50 tahun	7	9,9
> 50 tahun	8	11,2
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 2, it explains that the majority of respondents are aged 20-30 years, with a total of 35 individuals (50%), followed by respondents aged 31-40 years, totaling 12 individuals (17.1%), and the smallest group comprises respondents aged between 41-50 years, totaling 7 individuals (10%). These results indicate that outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in August-October 2022 are mostly young.

Table 3. Distribution of Outpatient Dental Patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital Based on Education

Level of education	Amount	Percentage (%)
Elementary School	1	1,4
Junior High School	2	2,8
Senior High School	16	22,5
College	52	73,3
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 3, it indicates that the majority of respondents have a college education, totaling 52 individuals (73.3%), followed by respondents with a high school education, totaling 16 individuals (22.5%), and the smallest group consists of respondents with an elementary school education, totaling 1 individual (1.4%). These results show that outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in August-October 2022 mostly have a high level of education.

Table 4. Distribution of Outpatient Dental Patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital Based on Occupation

Work	Amount	Percentage (%)
Not Working	37	52,1
Formal Job	22	31,0
Informal Job	12	16,9
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 4, it shows that the majority of respondents are unemployed, totaling 37 individuals (52.1%), followed by respondents working in the formal sector, totaling 22 individuals (31.0%), with the smallest group being respondents working in the informal sector, totaling 12 individuals (16.9%).

3.2 Overview of Dentist's Ethics

Table 5. Distribution of the Description of Dentist's Ethics at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Dentist's Ethics	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	-	0,0
Medium	-	0,0
High	71	100,0
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 5, it shows that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) state that the dentist at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital have high ethics.

Table 6. Distribution of the Description of Dentist's Ethics Based on the Principle of Beneficence at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Principle of <i>Beneficence</i>	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	-	0,0
Medium	-	0,0
High	71	100,0
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 6, it indicates that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Oral Hospital in 2022 (100%) state that the dentist's ethics based on the principle of beneficence (doing good or providing benefits to others) at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital falls into the category of good/high.

Table 7. Distribution of the Description of Dentist's Ethics Based on the Principle of Justice at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Principle of <i>Justice</i>	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	-	0,0
Medium	-	0,0
High	71	100,0
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 7, it indicates that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Oral Hospital in 2022 (100%) state that the dentist's ethics based on the principle of justice (treating others fairly) at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital falls into the category of good/high.

Table 8. Distribution of the Description of Dentist's Ethics Based on the Principle of Non-Maleficence at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Principle of Maleficence	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	-	0,0
Medium	14	19,7
High	57	80,3
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 8, it shows that the majority of outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) state that the dentist's ethics based on the principle of non-maleficence (not causing harm to others) at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital falls into the category of good/high, with a total of 57 individuals (80.3%). Meanwhile, the remaining 14 individuals (19.7%) state that the dentist's ethics based on the principle of non-maleficence at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital falls into the moderate category.

Table 9. Distribution of the Description of Dentist's Ethics Based on the Principle of Respect for Autonomy at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Principle of Respect of autonomy	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	-	0,0
Medium	-	0,0
High	71	100,0
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 9, it indicates that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) state that the dentist's ethics based on the principle of respect for autonomy (respecting the freedom or wishes of others) at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital falls into the category of good/high

3.3 Overview of Dental Patient Satisfaction

Table 10. Distribution of Patient Satisfaction Descriptions at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Patient Satisfaction	Amount	Percentage (%)
Low	-	0,0
Medium	-	0,0
High	71	100,0
Amount	71	100,0

From Table 10, it shows that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) have a high level of satisfaction with the services at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

3.4 Overview of Dental Patient Satisfaction

Table 4.11. Relationship Between Dental Practitioner Ethics and Patient Satisfaction Level at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital

Dentist's ethics	Patient Satisfaction						Total	
	Low		Medium		High		F	%
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
High	-	-	-	-	71	100,0	71	100,0
						0		
						$r = 0,879$	Sig. = 0,000	

From Table 4.11, it can be seen that out of 70 respondents, all of them perceive the ethics of the dentist at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital to be in the high category (100%), and all respondents express high satisfaction (100%). Based on the results of the Spearman Rank test calculation, a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.879 with a p-value of 0.000

was obtained. Since the p-value is below 0.05 (<5%), it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the ethics of the dentist and the level of patient satisfaction at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital.

4. Discussion

Ethics is a reflection of how humans should live and act in general and specific situations (Kaur & Singh, 2018). Dental ethics falls within the realm of professional ethics, which pertains to the obligations, attitudes, and patterns of behavior of individuals as members of a specific profession, namely the profession of a dentist (Taibah, 2018). The results indicated that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) stated that the dentists at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital had a high level of ethics. From these findings, it can be inferred that all dental patients who were sampled perceived the dentists at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital as having good ethics.

Ethical considerations during the provision of patient care are crucial. This can be implemented within the patient safety culture as part of the medical profession's code of ethics that should be preserved. Patients will experience satisfaction if healthcare professionals treat them well (Prasad et al., 2019).

Law Number 44 of 2009 regarding Hospitals states in detail that patient safety is an aspect that healthcare workers must prioritize over other factors (Akbar et al., 2020). Therefore, the implementation of a patient safety culture by doctors can enhance the quality of healthcare services. The presence of a code of ethics makes the implementation of a patient safety culture significant (Balhaddad et al., 2018).

Doctors should respect a patient's decisions in choosing a treatment method and reassure the patient that the offered treatment is the best option. Patients, as message conveyors, communicate their concerns and knowledge to doctors (Khan et al., 2018). Meanwhile, doctors, as message senders, have a responsibility to explain the disease, treatment, and therapies to be undertaken. A doctor is accountable for ensuring that the patient comprehends the message conveyed (Bishop, 2018)

4.1 Principle of Beneficence

The research findings indicated that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital (100%) stated that the ethics of the dentists, based on the principle of beneficence (doing good and providing benefits), at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital fell within the category of good/high.

Dentists working at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital exhibit good ethics in the principle of beneficence. The principle of beneficence is a moral principle that prioritizes actions intended for the benefit of patients. This principle is constrained by the balance of benefits, risks, and costs (as outcomes of actions) and does not determine the achievement of overall obligations. The principle of beneficence should be implemented effectively for the benefit of an individual patient as well as the well-being of society as a whole. Some examples of implementing the principle of beneficence include: 1) Protecting and preserving the rights of others; 2) Preventing harm that others may endure; 3) Eliminating conditions that may endanger others; 4) Assisting individuals with various limitations (disabilities); 5) Aiding individuals in perilous conditions (Jill Day et al., 2018; Welie, 2019).

4.2 Principle of Justice

Based on the research results, it was shown that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) stated that the ethics of the dentists, based on the principle of justice (being fair to others), at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital fell within the category of good/high.

The principle of Justice is translated as upholding fairness or equal rights for every individual (patient). Another interpretation is a principle that views individuals as deserving or "fair" based on their rights. "Fair" in this context means that individuals receive the same benefits. On the other hand, unfairness occurs when individuals do not receive benefits or bear unequal burdens. This principle reflects awareness of limited service resources but users exceeding capacity. The principle of justice is then needed when making such decisions (Razavi et al., 2023; Ustrell-Torrent et al., 2021).

4.3 Principle of Maleficence

Based on the research results, it was found that the majority of outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) stated that the ethics of the dentists, based on the principle of non-maleficence (not causing harm to others), at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital were categorized as good/high. Specifically, 57 individuals (80.3%) fell into this category. Meanwhile, the remaining 14 individuals (19.7%) indicated that the ethics of the dentists based on the principle of non-maleficence at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital were categorized as moderate.

The principle of non-maleficence involves prohibiting actions that may harm or worsen a patient's condition. This principle is known as "primum non nocere" or "do no harm." It is related to the Hippocratic oath expression that states, "I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but I will never use it to harm or injure them." This principle often serves as a topic of discussion in the field of medicine, especially in cases involving fatal diseases, critical illnesses, and serious injuries. This principle plays a crucial role in decision-making to preserve or end life. Its implementation can apply to both competent and incompetent patients. Essentially, this principle provides patients, their guardians, and healthcare professionals with the opportunity to accept or reject a procedure or therapy after considering its benefits and drawbacks in specific conditions or situations (Bishop, 2018; Prasad et al., 2019; Welie, 2019).

4.4 Principle of respect of Autonomy

The research results indicated that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) stated that the ethics of the dentists, based on the principle of respect for autonomy (respecting the freedom or wishes of others), at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital fell within the category of good/high. The principle of non-maleficence involves prohibiting actions that may harm or worsen a patient's condition. This principle is known as "primum non nocere" or "do no harm." It is related to the Hippocratic oath expression that states, "I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but I will never use it to harm or injure them." This principle often serves as a topic of discussion in the field of medicine, especially in cases involving fatal diseases, critical illnesses, and serious injuries. It plays a crucial role in decision-making to maintain or end a patient's life. Its implementation can apply to both competent and incompetent patients. Essentially, this principle provides patients, their guardians, and healthcare professionals with the opportunity to accept or reject a procedure or therapy after considering its benefits and drawbacks in specific conditions or situations (Motloba, 2018; Razavi et al., 2023).

4.5 Patient Satisfaction

Patient satisfaction is the degree of contentment that arises from the impact of healthcare services received by the patient. It is a comparison with their expectations (Afrashtehfar et al., 2020). Patient satisfaction is the alignment between the healthcare service received and what is expected. Healthcare service satisfaction is the patient's appreciation and evaluation of the healthcare service's competence intended for service delivery (Akbar et al., 2020).

The results showed that all outpatient dental patients at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital in 2022 (100%) had high satisfaction with the services at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital. These findings indicate that all dental patients were satisfied after receiving healthcare services from dentists at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital. Patient satisfaction with healthcare services will affect the number of visits. If patients are dissatisfied (for example, due to long waiting times, unfriendly providers, or inadequate skills and unreliable doctors), it can lead to patient dissatisfaction. Patient satisfaction can enhance the public perception of a hospital's image. If the quality of healthcare services is not maintained and improved, the likelihood of a decrease in the number of patients is significant (Afrashtehfar et al., 2020; Wardhana & Christiono, 2019).

Quality service, including healthcare services, is a necessity in response to the demands and needs of society and the implementation of Government Regulation No. 8/1999 concerning Consumer Protection. Improvement and continuous enhancement of healthcare service quality must be carried out periodically using the "Total Quality Management" approach for all healthcare personnel, from top leadership, both structural and functional officials, to frontline staff, and must follow the developments in Medical and Health Science and Technology (Wardhana & Christiono, 2019).

5. Conclusion

From the analysis results, it was concluded that patients' perceptions of dental ethics and service satisfaction at Sultan Agung Semarang Islamic Dental Hospital were in the high category, and there was a significant relationship between the ethics of dentists and patient satisfaction levels at RSIGM Sultan Agung Semarang with a p-value of 0.000.

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