

## **A CULTURALLY SENSITIVE APPROACH IN HEALTH LAW TO BUILD TRUST BETWEEN PATIENTS AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF HOSPITAL SERVICES: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Gunawan Widjaja**

Senior Lecturer Faculty of Law Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Jakarta

[widjaja\\_gunawan@yahoo.com](mailto:widjaja_gunawan@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

This study discusses a culturally sensitive approach in the context of health law as an effort to build trust between patients and medical personnel and improve the quality of hospital services. A culturally sensitive approach in health law focuses on recognising, respecting, and protecting the cultural diversity of patients in the medical service process, which in turn strengthens therapeutic relationships and creates an inclusive and responsive service environment. A literature review method was used to analyse various studies and regulations relevant to the integration of cultural values in health law practice and its implications for patient trust and service quality. The results of the review show that the application of a culturally sensitive approach significantly increases patient trust through more effective communication, respect for cultural values, and reduced discrimination. The trust that is built has a positive impact on treatment compliance, patient satisfaction, and loyalty to the hospital. In addition, the quality of hospital services becomes more humane and in line with the cultural needs of patients, which contributes to the positive reputation of the institution and the sustainability of services. In conclusion, the integration of a culturally sensitive approach in health law is a key strategy in building a fair, inclusive, and high-quality healthcare system. This study highlights the importance of developing legal regulations and cultural competency training for medical personnel to address the needs and challenges of cultural diversity in modern healthcare. Practical implications are suggested for policymakers and hospitals to continue optimising the application of these principles in order to improve trust and service quality in a sustainable manner.

**Keywords:** culturally sensitive, health law, patient trust, service quality, hospitals

### **Introduction**

In the context of modern healthcare, hospitals serve not only as places for medical treatment, but also as spaces for complex social interaction. Every individual who comes to the hospital brings with them their cultural background, values, and norms. Therefore, an approach that accommodates cultural diversity is very important in order to create harmonious interactions between patients and medical personnel (American Medical Association, 2012). In health law, cultural sensitivity is not merely an additional aspect, but a fundamental element that must be integrated so that medical services can be well received by patients from various cultural backgrounds. Misunderstanding or neglecting cultural elements can lead to miscommunication, distrust, and a decline in service quality (Anderson, 2003).

Trust between patients and medical personnel is a crucial foundation for effective healthcare services. This trust is greatly influenced by how hospitals and medical personnel are able to understand and respect the cultural background of patients. Health laws must facilitate the protection of patients' rights related to the preservation of their cultural identity so that patients feel valued and treated fairly (Marja, 2021). In this context, the legal principles governing patient rights must address cultural aspects, including the provision of information, shared decision-making, and protection against discrimination. Thus, the trust that is formed is not only based on medical competence but also on respect for the cultural values of patients (Australian Government, 2005).

The quality of hospital services is greatly influenced by various factors, and one that is gaining increasing attention is cultural sensitivity in healthcare practices. Service quality is not only measured in terms of medical technicalities, but also in how patients feel they are being treated humanely and in accordance with their cultural expectations (Brach, 2000). The application of a culturally sensitive approach in health law will help medical personnel carry out their duties with greater empathy, respect for differences, and tailor medical interventions to the cultural needs of patients. Therefore, the health law system must adopt principles that support these service practices to improve patient satisfaction and outcomes (German Federal Government, 2007).

A culturally sensitive approach is a concept that involves recognising and respecting the diversity of values, traditions, languages, and health practices among patients. In health law, this requires regulations and policies that take into account the cultural and social aspects of patients in the provision of medical services (AHPRA, 2020). In addition, medical personnel are required to have cultural competence, which is the ability to recognise, respect, and respond appropriately to cultural differences without compromising professional standards. This competence is an important prerequisite in modern medical law and ethics to create trust and effective therapeutic relationships (Handtke, 2019).

The importance of a culturally sensitive approach in health law is also reflected in the increasingly diverse dynamics of society and globalisation, which has led to interaction between various cultural groups within the health system. Hospitals, as public service institutions, must be able to adapt to these changes in order to remain relevant and effective (Ramšak, 2023). Legal regulations must guide hospitals to integrate culturally sensitive principles into protocols, medical staff training, and patient complaint handling mechanisms. Institutional unpreparedness in dealing with cultural diversity will only lead to mistrust and worsen the patient experience (Qurotianti, 2024).

Effective communication between patients and medical personnel is one of the key factors in building a lasting relationship of trust. However, in practice, cultural barriers such as differences in language, values, and communication patterns often pose a major obstacle. In many cases, the use of rigid medical language without considering

the patient's cultural background makes medical information difficult to understand, thereby reducing patient participation in decision-making. Therefore, health laws need to regulate and encourage the use of culturally sensitive communication approaches, including cultural interpreters and communication training for medical personnel (Martin, 2024).

Patient trust in medical personnel and hospital institutions is a valuable social asset. Patients who trust medical personnel tend to be more cooperative, follow medical advice, and have higher levels of satisfaction with healthcare services. This trust also contributes to patient loyalty, which in turn enhances the hospital's reputation and the sustainability of its services. A legal approach that prioritises cultural sensitivity has the potential to strengthen this trust by providing a sense of security and appreciation for the cultural diversity of patients (Reijneveld, 2010).

In the context of healthcare, cultural discrimination is a significant challenge that can damage the relationship between patients and medical personnel. Such discrimination can take the form of neglecting traditional practices, unequal treatment, and inconsistencies in the provision of information and medical care. Therefore, health laws must provide clear and firm provisions to protect patients from discriminatory practices and ensure equitable and fair healthcare services for all segments of society without exception (Kobayashi, 2021).

The application of a culturally sensitive approach in healthcare not only increases patient trust and satisfaction, but also has a positive impact on clinical outcomes. For example, patients who feel that their culture and needs are respected tend to be more compliant in following treatment and undergoing routine check-ups. This underscores the importance of integrating cultural aspects into health law as a strategy to improve service effectiveness and enhance community health indicators (Grady, 2015).

The role of medical personnel as the frontline of healthcare services is crucial in implementing a culturally sensitive approach. Healthcare professionals must understand cultural differences as factors that influence patients' perceptions, attitudes, and decisions regarding health. Therefore, health laws and regulations need to set cultural competency standards that healthcare professionals must possess, as well as mandatory cultural training to optimise therapeutic interactions (Cooper, 2010). Thus, healthcare professionals will be better prepared and able to serve patients' needs holistically.

The implementation of a culturally sensitive approach within the framework of health law also requires systemic support from hospital management and policymakers. This includes the development of internal policies that prioritise cultural inclusivity, ongoing training for medical and non-medical staff, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the application of culturally sensitive principles in service delivery. The involvement of various stakeholders in the formulation of these rules and policies is key

to successfully building a hospital organisational culture that values diversity (Plage, 2025).

With various challenges and opportunities, research on culturally sensitive approaches in health law is highly significant in the context of improving the quality of hospital services. Through a literature review, this study will provide a comprehensive overview of how cultural aspects can be integrated into health regulations and service practices.

## **Research Methods**

The research method used in this study was a literature review, which was conducted by systematically collecting, reviewing, and analysing various relevant written sources such as books, journal articles, policy documents, and legal regulations regarding culturally sensitive approaches in health law, patient trust, and hospital service quality. This method does not involve the collection of primary data, but rather focuses on critical analysis of published findings and theories to provide a comprehensive picture of how cultural aspects are integrated into health service regulations and practices (et al., 2022). The research process includes determining the topic, searching for literature using specific keywords, selecting valid and relevant sources, and synthesising the results of the study to formulate a comprehensive understanding and practical recommendations related to increasing patient trust and service quality through a culturally sensitive approach within the framework of health law. This approach allows researchers to explore in-depth and up-to-date understanding based on credible and recent literature reviews in the fields of health law and culture (Elijah & Aslan, 2025).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Culturally Sensitive Approach in Health Law**

A culturally sensitive approach in health law refers to systematic efforts to integrate understanding, respect, and appropriate responses to patient cultural diversity in the formulation, implementation, and oversight of regulations and healthcare practices. This concept stems from the awareness that patients are not merely medical entities, but individuals with unique and complex cultural backgrounds, including values, norms, beliefs, and practices that influence their perceptions and behaviours towards health and treatment (Kandou, 2022). Health laws that adopt this approach not only regulate technical medical standards but also ensure that patients' cultural rights are respected and protected by law, creating a fair and inclusive legal foundation (Nguyen, 2023).

Cultural sensitivity can be defined as the ability or awareness of medical personnel and the healthcare system to recognise and respect cultural differences, and to intervene appropriately without compromising the core cultural values of patients.

In the context of healthcare law, this sensitivity is manifested through rules and policies that accommodate the specific needs of patients from various cultural backgrounds, such as language, customs, religion, and traditional health practices. For example, the need for policies on the use of language interpreters or cultural mediators and recognition of alternative medical practices that do not conflict with patient safety (Kandou, 2025).

In many pluralistic societies, cultural differences are a major factor influencing patients' trust and compliance with healthcare services. Therefore, a culturally sensitive legal approach serves as a mechanism that bridges the gap between the formal healthcare system and patients' local wisdom. Thus, the law functions not only as a control tool, but also as a mediator that integrates various cultural values into healthcare services, which ultimately strengthens the legitimacy and effectiveness of medical services in the eyes of patients (Galton, 2024).

Culturally sensitive healthcare practices also require cultural competence from medical personnel as part of their professional obligations. This competence includes the ability to recognise personal cultural biases, understand patients' cultural needs, and communicate effectively within different cultural frameworks. Health law policies must encourage training and certification in cultural competence so that all medical personnel can provide services that are not only professional but also respectful of cultural diversity. This will reduce the risk of discrimination and cultural conflict in healthcare services (Dimitrov, 2024).

Furthermore, cultural integration in health law helps strengthen patients' rights to be actively involved in medical decision-making, while still considering their cultural beliefs. Patients from certain cultural backgrounds may have specific preferences regarding treatment methods, medical procedures, or final decisions about their care (Hughes, 2008). Culturally sensitive laws recognise these rights and provide a legal framework that allows for the adjustment of services without compromising medical safety and ethical standards. Thus, patients feel valued and motivated to cooperate in the treatment process (NHS, 2014).

This approach also plays a role in preventing cultural discrimination, which remains a serious problem in healthcare services. Such discrimination can manifest itself in the form of unequal treatment, neglect of patients' cultural needs, or cultural bias that reduces the quality of services. Health laws that apply a culturally sensitive approach establish clear rules to protect patients from discrimination, while also requiring health institutions to adopt inclusive policies and complaint handling procedures that are responsive to cultural issues (Fung, 2012).

Equally important, a culturally sensitive approach in health law plays a role in improving communication between patients and medical personnel. Effective communication is key to building trust and understanding in the healthcare process. Language barriers and cultural differences are often the main causes of communication

failures, leading to patient dissatisfaction and a decline in service quality (Lakin, 2022) . Therefore, the law must regulate the provision of support services, such as language interpreters and cross-cultural communication training, so that patient-medical interactions run optimally, building a sense of security and respect. In addition, a culturally sensitive health legal framework encourages the adjustment of care protocols to suit cultural needs without sacrificing medical effectiveness. For example, scheduling visitation times or family supervision based on cultural norms, or recognising traditional healing practices that can be integrated with medical therapy. This approach requires legal flexibility and hospital policies to accommodate cultural diversity as part of humane and high-quality care (Budiyantri, 2023) .

Laws that adopt this approach have also become an important instrument in the education and training of medical personnel, by integrating cultural material into formal curricula and continuing education. Standardising cultural competence through regulation ensures that healthcare workers have the knowledge and skills necessary to handle various cross-cultural situations. This is essential in providing fair, effective, and holistic patient-centred healthcare services (Utami, 2018) .

Equally significant, a culturally sensitive approach to health law is also closely related to the protection of human rights in the field of health. The right to non-discriminatory health services and respect for cultural integrity are part of these human rights. Thus, health law that integrates cultural sensitivity also serves to protect these rights, creating equal and dignified access to health services for all segments of society (Stubbe, 2020) .

From a hospital management perspective, the implementation of culturally sensitive laws creates an inclusive and harmonious work environment. Institutions that implement this policy tend to have medical staff and patients who feel culturally valued and safe, thereby increasing work motivation and patient satisfaction. This also contributes to the hospital's positive reputation, which has an impact on increasing public trust and the sustainability of services (Berry, 2013) .

Globally, the trend towards recognising cultural diversity in healthcare is growing stronger, supported by various international agreements and standards. Both developing and developed countries are beginning to adopt regulations that place culture as an important component of health law. This approach is part of global efforts to achieve an inclusive and equitable universal healthcare system, where no patient feels marginalised due to cultural differences (Lekas, 2020) . However, the implementation of a culturally sensitive approach is not without challenges, such as cultural resistance within healthcare institutions, uncertainty in legal interpretation, and limited resources for training and support facilities. Therefore, there is a need for commitment from the government, hospital administrators, and medical personnel to consistently develop and optimise the application of these principles through cross-sector collaboration and continuous evaluation (Pay, 2014) .

On the other hand, advances in information technology provide new opportunities for developing culturally sensitive approaches, for example through digital health service applications that tailor language and health education content to the user's culture. Health law needs to adapt to these developments in order to remain relevant and effective in responding to the diverse and dynamic needs of society (Latif, 2020).

Overall, a culturally sensitive approach to health law is a strategic foundation for building a fair, effective, and humane healthcare system. Through the integration of cultural values into legal and operational aspects, health law opens up space for the establishment of strong relationships of trust between patients and medical personnel, while also improving the quality of hospital services that are responsive to the socio-cultural context of the community. This is not only a regulatory reform, but also a paradigm shift in health services towards inclusiveness and respect for diversity.

### **The Effect of a Culturally Sensitive Approach on Patient Trust and Hospital Service Quality**

The influence of a culturally sensitive approach on patient trust is an important aspect in improving the effectiveness of healthcare services. When hospitals and medical personnel are able to understand and respect the cultural values of patients, this creates a sense of appreciation that greatly influences the level of patient trust in medical professionals and hospital institutions. This trust is not only based on technical medical abilities, but also on understanding and respect for cultural identity, which makes patients feel more comfortable and secure in receiving healthcare services (Latif, 2020).

Patient trust that grows from a culturally sensitive approach has a broad impact, including patient compliance in undergoing treatment and therapy. Patients who feel that their culture and needs are understood tend to be more open in communicating, following medical advice, and actively participating in the health decision-making process. This makes interactions between patients and medical personnel more effective, ultimately leading to better clinical outcomes and improved quality of life for patients (Karni, 2023).

One factor that influences the quality of hospital services is patient satisfaction. A culturally sensitive approach contributes significantly to this by improving communication and interpersonal interactions between patients and medical staff. Patients who feel that their culture is valued and understood will respond positively to the services they receive, which directly enhances the hospital's reputation and attracts more patients (Sholl, 2019).

The quality of service influenced by cultural sensitivity is also evident in non-technical aspects of service, such as the friendliness of medical staff, respect for privacy, and adjusting service schedules to suit the cultural needs of patients. For example,

patients from certain communities may require special time for prayer or rituals before or after medical procedures. Hospitals that adopt a culturally sensitive approach will accommodate this, enhancing patient comfort and bridging existing cultural differences (Karni, 2023).

In the context of health law, a culturally sensitive approach plays a role in ensuring that patients' rights are fully protected. This protection includes the right to fair and non-discriminatory services and the right to receive medical information in a language and manner that is easily understood. This strengthens patients' trust in the healthcare system and reassures them that their cultural needs are officially recognised in medical services (Latif, 2020). The positive impact of a culturally sensitive approach can also be seen in the reduction of conflicts between patients and medical staff and an increase in the constructive resolution of complaints. When cultural differences are well understood, problem-solving becomes more effective and reduces the potential for disputes that could damage cooperative relationships. Thus, hospitals can maintain a conducive and harmonious service atmosphere that supports the smooth running of therapy and care processes (Pay, 2014).

Furthermore, the application of a culturally sensitive approach in healthcare contributes to an increase in patient retention rates. Patients who feel culturally and medically satisfied are more likely to choose to use the same hospital services again and recommend them to others. This loyalty factor is important for the sustainability and development of hospitals, especially amid increasingly competitive healthcare industry competition (Lekas, 2020).

The adaptation of medical protocols that take cultural diversity into account is also an indicator of improved service quality. Hospitals that are responsive to cultural needs enable personalised services, which take into account not only the medical aspects but also the social and cultural aspects of patients. This approach provides added value in more humane and holistic healthcare services, supporting the achievement of optimal health outcomes (Berry, 2013).

From the perspective of medical personnel, a culturally sensitive approach increases their job satisfaction and motivation in carrying out their duties. Medical personnel who receive training and support in cultural sensitivity feel better prepared to deal with a variety of patients from different backgrounds, reducing work stress and improving the quality of interactions. These conditions contribute to more professional and responsive services (Stubbe, 2020).

The influence of a culturally sensitive approach also reflects a paradigm shift in hospital management, where social and cultural aspects have become priorities in determining service policies and strategies. Management that adopts the principle of cultural inclusivity creates a work environment that respects diversity, while instilling values of trust and respect, which are key assets in providing quality healthcare services (Utami, 2018).



Strengthening trust and service quality through a culturally sensitive approach ultimately supports the achievement of national health service objectives, namely equitable, fair, and high-quality services for all segments of society. This approach addresses the gaps in access and quality of services that have long been experienced by minority groups or patients with special cultural needs, thereby contributing to an improvement in overall public health indicators. (Budyanti, 2023) .

Overall, the influence of a culturally sensitive approach on patient trust and hospital service quality shows that cultural aspects cannot be separated from modern health laws and practices. Integrating cultural values and practices into health services is not only a matter of ethics and law, but also an effective strategy in building a humane, inclusive, and highly competitive health system at both the local and global levels.

## **Conclusion**

A culturally sensitive approach to health law plays an important role in building trust between patients and medical personnel by respecting and accommodating the diversity of patients' cultural values, norms, and practices in the healthcare process. The integration of cultural values into health regulations not only protects patients' legal rights but also creates an inclusive, empathetic, and responsive service environment, thereby strengthening healthy and productive therapeutic relationships. The success of this approach depends on the cultural competence of healthcare professionals and legal policies that support service practices that respect cultural differences.

Patient trust, which has grown since the introduction of a culturally sensitive approach, has had a significant impact on the quality of hospital services, including increased satisfaction, loyalty, and optimal clinical outcomes. This approach helps overcome communication barriers ( ), reduce discrimination, and tailor service protocols to patients' cultural needs without compromising medical standards. As a result, the services provided are not only technical and professional but also humanistic and personalised, which in turn enhances service quality and the hospital's institutional image.

Overall, the application of a culturally sensitive approach within the framework of health law is an effective strategy for creating a fair, inclusive, and high-quality healthcare system. This literature review confirms that cultural diversity is a key factor that must be considered in the development of legal policies and medical practices in order to build strong trust between patients and medical personnel and to improve the quality of hospital services in a sustainable and competitive manner. The recommendation for policy makers and health practitioners is to continue to improve cultural competency training and develop legal policies that are adaptive to the cultural diversity of society.

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