
HOSPITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PATIENT VISITS

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Abstract

The healthcare industry in Indonesia is facing increasingly intense competitive pressures, particularly in urban areas. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health (2023), the total number of hospitals in Indonesia has reached more than 3,100, with the number of private hospitals increasing to more than 1,900. This growth forces each healthcare facility to develop more adaptive and data-driven marketing strategies. However, most hospitals, especially those in the middle to lower scale, still rely on conventional marketing approaches that have not optimally utilized digital platforms as communication channels for patients. This study aims to analyze the influence of hospital marketing strategies on the number of patient visits, focusing on three main variables: (1) digital promotion and marketing strategies, (2) service quality based on the 7P marketing mix, and (3) patient experience, as well as the mediating role of online reputation and patient trust. Patient experience in this study is operationally defined as the quality of service interactions perceived by patients, including the service process and staff interactions, while online reputation is defined as digital-based public perception formed through online reviews, ratings, and testimonials. The study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, namely the collection and analysis of quantitative data from structured surveys using a Likert-scale questionnaire for patients. Quantitative data analysis used the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) model. The expected outcome of this study is the formation of a strategic model that explains the relationship between hospital marketing variables and patient visits, while also generating practical recommendations for hospital management in designing effective, sustainable, and responsive marketing strategies to patient needs in the digital era.

Keywords: Hospital Marketing Strategy, Digital Health Marketing, 7P Service Quality, Patient Experience, Online Reputation

INTRODUCTION

The healthcare sector in Indonesia is undergoing a significant transformation, characterized by increasing competition among public and private healthcare facilities, shifts in consumer behavior toward greater digital engagement, and growing public demands for higher-quality services. In this environment, hospitals are required not only to provide high-quality medical services but also to effectively reach, attract, and retain patients through well-planned marketing strategies. However, in reality, many hospitals, particularly medium-sized institutions, continue to experience stagnation or even a decline in patient visits, indicating a gap between their service capabilities and the effectiveness of their marketing efforts. This phenomenon has become even more apparent in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which health information-seeking behavior shifted substantially to digital platforms. Patients now tend to search for, compare, and select healthcare facilities based on information available online, including user reviews, social media content, service ratings, and the availability of application-based features. Hospitals that fail to adapt to these changing behavioral patterns risk losing a significant share of the market. In addition, low patient loyalty has emerged as a major challenge. Many patients choose not to return to the same hospital not because of poor medical quality, but because of unsatisfactory non-medical experiences, such as long waiting times, limited responsiveness from administrative staff, insufficient online information, and the lack of convenient digital registration systems. This condition highlights that hospital marketing strategies cannot be separated from efforts to improve the overall patient experience.

Previous studies have demonstrated that marketing strategies and service quality play critical roles in influencing patients' decisions to choose and revisit healthcare providers. Advances in digital technology have transformed how individuals obtain health-related information, compelling hospitals to move beyond conventional promotional methods and embrace digital media. Research on digital marketing in healthcare indicates that the use of social media and digital platforms can increase patient engagement and expand hospitals' communication reach. Hasan et al. (2024) explained that social media marketing in healthcare contributes to increased patient participation and value co-creation between patients and healthcare providers. Furthermore, studies on digital marketing suggest that consistent digital interactions can enhance customer loyalty and support long-term relationships with service users. On the other hand, service quality remains a fundamental factor in building patient loyalty. Research by Zhang et al. (2018) found that hospital service quality significantly influences patient loyalty, particularly through dimensions such as empathy and the quality of service interactions. Similarly, Doyle et al. (2013) reported that patient experience is positively associated with clinical effectiveness and patient safety, making it a critical indicator in evaluating healthcare service quality.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Service Quality (7Ps)

Service quality is one of the primary indicators of hospital performance and success. In the healthcare sector, service quality is not only associated with the effectiveness of medical treatment but also encompasses the overall experience patients receive throughout the service process. High-quality services can create satisfaction, safety, and comfort for patients and healthcare service users. Conversely, poor service quality may reduce patient trust and decrease their intention to revisit the

healthcare facility. The service marketing mix is a marketing strategy used by hospitals to improve service quality and attract patients. In healthcare services, the marketing mix consists of seven elements (7Ps): product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence (Ravangard et al., 2020).

Patient Experience

Patient experience refers to patients' perceptions of the healthcare services they receive throughout the service process. It is an important indicator for assessing hospital service quality because it is closely related to patient satisfaction, trust, and loyalty toward healthcare services. Positive patient experiences can increase patients' willingness to revisit the hospital and recommend it to others. Havana et al. (2023) explained that patient experience in healthcare is grounded in the concept of patient-centered care, which emphasizes patients' needs, preferences, comfort, communication, and involvement throughout the healthcare process.

Online Reputation

Online reputation refers to the public's perception of an institution's credibility, quality, and trustworthiness, which is formed through digital interactions such as reviews, comments, ratings, testimonials, and information shared across various online platforms. Online reputation is largely shaped by electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which refers to consumers' experiences, opinions, and evaluations shared through digital media that can be accessed by a broad audience. According to Ismagilova et al. (2020), e-WOM significantly influences consumer perceptions, trust levels, and decisions regarding service usage. The more positive the reviews and digital interactions an institution receives, the stronger its online reputation becomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach and Type

The objective of this study is to examine whether online reputation mediates the effects of digital marketing, service quality (7P), and patient experience on the number of patient visits. This study employs a quantitative research method. According to Sugiyono (2021), quantitative research is a method based on the philosophy of positivism, used to investigate a particular population or sample. Sampling is conducted randomly, data are collected using research instruments, and the analysis is carried out using statistical techniques.

Research Model

This study adopts the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) approach to simultaneously examine the relationships among variables. This model was selected because it is capable of analyzing complex relationships between latent variables (which cannot be directly measured) and manifest variables (measurable indicators). In addition, SEM-PLS is suitable for relatively small sample sizes and does not require data to meet the assumption of multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2019).

Based on the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2, the research model consists of three main components:

1. **Exogenous Constructs (Independent Variables):**
 - Digital Promotion and Marketing Strategy (X1)
 - 7P Service Quality (X2)
 - Patient Experience (X3)

2. Mediating Construct:

- Online Reputation (M), conceptualized as a form of public digital perception that is distinct from individual patient experiences.

3. Endogenous Construct (Dependent Variable):

- Number of Patient Visits (Y).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.
Direct Effects

Variable	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
M -> Y	0.508	0.500	0.056	9.069	0.000
X1 -> M	0.293	0.292	0.074	3.980	0.000
X1 -> Y	0.221	0.224	0.043	5.127	0.000
X2 -> M	0.385	0.387	0.074	5.216	0.000
X2 -> Y	0.218	0.221	0.052	4.193	0.000
X3 -> M	0.293	0.293	0.076	3.856	0.000
X3 -> Y	0.133	0.136	0.048	2.775	0.006

Table 2.
Indirect Effects

Variabel	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
X1 -> M -> Y	0.149	0.146	0.039	3.798	0.000
X2 -> M -> Y	0.196	0.194	0.045	4.312	0.000
X3 -> M -> Y	0.149	0.146	0.041	3.667	0.000

The Effect of Online Reputation on the Number of Patient Visits

The results of the study indicate that online reputation has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the better a hospital's online reputation, the greater the potential increase in patient visits. Online reputation has become an important factor because people increasingly rely on the internet as their primary source of health information. Bujnowska-Fedak and Paulina (2020) further stated that health and disease-related information obtained from the internet undoubtedly influences patient behavior and healthcare decisions.

The Effect of Digital Marketing on Online Reputation

The results of the study indicate that digital marketing has a significant effect on online reputation; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the more effectively hospitals implement digital marketing strategies, the stronger their online reputation becomes in the eyes of the public. These platforms not only enhance patient engagement but also

strengthen the image of hospitals as modern and innovative institutions (Usman, 2025). This finding is consistent with Richter and Kazley (2020), who reported that hospitals with Facebook pages, recent Facebook activity, and higher numbers of likes tend to have more patients willing to recommend the hospital and higher overall patient satisfaction scores.

The Effect of Digital Marketing on the Number of Patient Visits

The results of the study indicate that digital marketing has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the better the implementation of digital marketing by hospitals, the greater the potential increase in patient visits. Digital marketing has become an important strategy for reaching prospective patients more broadly and rapidly through social media, websites, healthcare service applications, and other digital platforms. In the digital era, with the widespread use of the internet and social media, patients increasingly seek health-related information online before selecting and visiting healthcare providers (Deniswara et al., 2024). Consistent with the findings of Hariyanti et al. (2023), social media marketing efforts by public hospitals have a positive and significant influence on patients' intention to visit. Therefore, hospitals need to strengthen their marketing strategies, particularly through social media marketing.

The Effect of Service Quality on Online Reputation

The results of the study indicate that service quality has a significant effect on online reputation; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the higher the quality of services provided by hospitals, the better the online reputation formed in the eyes of the public. Healthcare service quality is one of the primary factors determining patient satisfaction in hospitals. Quality service encompasses not only medical aspects but also non-medical dimensions such as staff friendliness, environmental cleanliness, and administrative efficiency (Sudrajat, 2023; Gultom et al., 2022, cited in Khoirunnisa & Ramadhika, 2024).

The Effect of Service Quality on the Number of Patient Visits

The results of the study indicate that service quality has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the better the service quality provided by hospitals, the greater the potential increase in patient visits. Service quality is a key factor influencing patients' decisions when choosing healthcare services. Inadequate facilities and unsatisfactory services can reduce patient loyalty and their intention to revisit (Aulia et al., 2025). Hospitals that provide professional, safe, and responsive services tend to achieve higher levels of patient satisfaction (Harefa, 2025).

The Effect of Patient Experience on Online Reputation

The results of the study indicate that patient experience has a significant effect on online reputation; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the more positive the patient experience during healthcare service delivery, the better the online reputation formed in the eyes of the public. Patient experience is an important factor in shaping public perceptions of hospitals. According to Doyle, Lennox, and Bell (2020), cited in Suyadi et al. (2025), patient experience reflects individuals' subjective perceptions of the entire healthcare process, from admission and interaction with healthcare professionals to discharge procedures.

The Effect of Patient Experience on the Number of Patient Visits

The results of the study indicate that patient experience has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that

the more positive the patient experience during healthcare service delivery, the greater the potential increase in patient visits. Patient experience is one of the key factors influencing patients' decisions to continue using hospital services. When services meet or exceed patients' expectations, satisfaction is generated (Wulandari, 2024). According to Rifa and Bernarto (2023), increased patient satisfaction leads to stronger intentions to revisit.

The Effect of Digital Marketing on Patient Visits through Online Reputation

The results of the study indicate that online reputation mediates the effect of digital marketing on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that effective digital marketing not only directly increases patient visits but also indirectly increases them through the development of a positive online reputation. In the digital era, the use of online media has become an important strategy for hospitals to disseminate health information quickly and interactively, strengthen a positive image, improve service transparency, and build public trust (Aisyiah et al., 2025).

The Effect of Service Quality on Patient Visits through Online Reputation

The results of the study indicate that online reputation mediates the effect of service quality on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that high service quality not only directly increases patient visits but also indirectly increases them through the formation of a positive online reputation. Hospital service quality is evaluated not only from a technical medical perspective but also from the perspective of public service management (Wollah et al., 2025).

The Effect of Patient Experience on Patient Visits through Online Reputation

The results of the study indicate that online reputation mediates the effect of patient experience on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that positive patient experiences not only directly increase patient visits but also indirectly increase them through the development of a favorable online reputation. Patient experience is one of the reasons individuals choose a particular hospital for healthcare services. Factors such as easy access to facilities, a clean and safe environment, effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients, proper hand hygiene practices, short examination times, and emotional support all contribute to positive patient experiences (Seran et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

1. The results of the study indicate that digital marketing has a significant effect on online reputation; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the better the implementation of digital marketing by hospitals, the stronger the online reputation formed in the eyes of the public.
2. The results of the study indicate that service quality has a significant effect on online reputation; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the higher the quality of services provided by hospitals, the stronger the online reputation formed in the eyes of the public.
3. The results of the study indicate that patient experience has a significant effect on online reputation; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the more positive the experiences patients have while receiving healthcare services, the stronger the online reputation formed in the eyes of the public.

4. The results of the study indicate that digital marketing has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the better the implementation of digital marketing by hospitals, the greater the potential increase in patient visits.
5. The results of the study indicate that service quality has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the higher the quality of services provided by hospitals, the greater the potential increase in patient visits.
6. The results of the study indicate that patient experience has a significant effect on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that the more positive the experiences patients have while receiving healthcare services, the greater the potential increase in patient visits.
7. The results of the study indicate that online reputation is able to mediate the effect of digital marketing on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that effective digital marketing not only directly increases patient visits but also enhances them through the development of a positive online reputation.
8. The results of the study indicate that online reputation is able to mediate the effect of service quality on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that high service quality not only directly increases patient visits but also enhances them through the development of a positive online reputation.
9. The results of the study indicate that online reputation is able to mediate the effect of patient experience on the number of patient visits; therefore, the proposed hypothesis is accepted. This finding suggests that positive patient experiences not only directly increase patient visits but also enhance them through the development of a favorable online reputation.

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