

The Effect of Brand Image and Medical Quality on Intention of Re-visit with Word of Mouth as a Mediating Variable among Patients

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Abstract

Background: People with different characteristics are very selective in choosing hospital health services. People would select the hospital with modern, best medical facilities and trained doctors who offer high-quality services consistently. However, having a successful hospital and able to attract patients back is difficult, especially in the context of limited relevant literature.

Objective: This study aimed to analyze the effect of brand image and perceived medical quality on intention of re-visit with word of mouth as mediation variable among patients in Sari Asih Cipondoh Hospital, Tangerang.

Method: We conduct the cross-sectional study to examine the causalities of independent variable with dependent variable. One hundred seventy-five patients were recruited in this study especially those who have visit the hospital at least once within two year. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Square (PLS) approach was applied to analyze the data. **Result:** The results showed that brand image and perceived medical quality had a positive influence on word of mouth and the intention to hospital re-visit and word of mouth had an impact on the intentions to re-visit hospital. **Implication:** A good hospital brand image perception is enough for the patient to encourage the intention to visit again. Medical quality is considered important to hospitals, as patients can enjoy it immediately, especially in increasing the intention to visit again. In addition, patients will be more confident to use health care if word of mouth is high.

Keywords: brand image, perceived medical quality, word of mouth, intention to hospital re-visit

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Background

The hospital is one of the institutions that provides health services to the public of various age groups and with varying disease conditions (1). Recently, Hospitals need to make efforts to improve the quality of service in order to attract new patients and retain patients. However, retaining an old patient is more difficult than attracting a new one. This is because the use of few medical facilities in different countries makes it difficult for medical consumers to find the best modern hospitals and trained doctors who consistently provide high-quality services (2).

The intention of returning to the hospital is an important aspect of patient loyalty, and has been extensively researched in literature. Intention to re-visit the hospital as an indicator and crucial aspects to long-term consumer loyalty for hospital (3).

Several factors associated with intention of hospital revisit such as hospital brand image, medical quality, and word of mouth. Brand image is considered to have a role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, especially when competitor services are considered almost equal in terms of performance, price, and form of availability (4).

Trust in a hospital's brand is a critical component of its overall image. Trust can be built through consistent, high-quality care and positive patient experiences. When patients trust a hospital, they are more likely to return for future services and recommend the hospital to others (5). Some studies showed the positive effect of brand image on intention of hospital revisit among patients to obtain the services (6-7).

The second factor on intention of hospital re-visit was perceived medical quality. The hospital should provide the safety and good quality of medical services among patients before considering its management and operation (8). Perceived quality is defined as the consumer's assessment of the service of an entity that

contains superiority or overall superiority (9). Perceived medical quality in the context of paramedical staff, health professionals, and services has a significant influence on the patient's intention to visit again (10).

Another factor associated with intention of hospital re-visit such as word of mouth (WOM). WOM can be defined as communication made by a consumer to others about his or her experience with a product or service (9).

WOM could be a factor associated with intention of revisit to hospital (11). It also has indirect impact on hospital re-visit. WOM is a powerful tool in medicine that influences consumer pre-usage attitudes and expectations, as well as post-usage perceptions of a service (12) This implies that positive WOM can be beneficial in attracting and retaining patients. Another study also analyzes the impact of health communication and medical service quality on patients' intention to revisit dental clinics. The It found that factors such as reliability, expertise, and communication by doctors' influence patient satisfaction, which in turn influences the intention to revisit (13)

The preliminary study and indepth interview in a hospital showed that brand image of the hospital still low with 37,5% of survey showed not familiar with the brand image; only 50% of respondent responds the perceived the medical quality and 50% respondents said that received the information from other patients regarding the quality of services in this hospital. Another survey also found only 56.3% respondents have an intention to hospital re-visit.

while existing research has laid a foundation for understanding the impact of brand image and medical quality on patients' intentions to revisit healthcare facilities, there are significant gaps related to the mediating role of WOM, the influence of digital WOM, contextual variations, longitudinal changes, mechanisms of WOM influence, the role of trust, and the need for comprehensive models. Addressing these gaps could

significantly advance the field and provide actionable insights for healthcare providers aiming to improve patient retention and satisfaction.

OBJECTIVE

This study was conducted to examine the association between brand image, perceived medical quality, and word of mouth on intention of hospital re-visit

METHOD

Design

A correlation study with cross-sectional approach was applied in this study. This study was conducted in Sari Pondoh hospital.

Sample, sample size, and sampling technique

The samples in this study are all general patients from Sari Asih Cipondoh hospital, Tangerang. One hundred seventy-five patients were recruited in this study especially those who have visit the hospital at least once within two year.

The samples size was calculated based on the Hair's formula such as 5-10 times the number of indicators used to measure a variable. Therefore, 38 indicators are multiple with 5 parameters.

Data collection process

The data collection process in this study was approached using the questionnaire. The data collection was conducted within 1 month. The dissemination of the questionnaire is carried out online through WhatsApp Blast by disseminating QR barcode link google form to respondents to obtain relevant data. The details of instruments would be explained as follows:

Intention to hospital revisit questionnaire. This questionnaire was modified based on the previous study (14) to measure the intention of the patients to visit again the hospital for obtaining the services. The instrument has three dimensions such as 1) visit again; 2) plan to visit; and 3) wish to visit. The total of items

is 7 questionnaires. The Likert scale was employed in this study such as 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; and 4=strongly agree. The total score of this questionnaire 32. The high score indicated the more intention to hospital revisit and the lowest score indicated the weak of intention to hospital revisit

Brand image questionnaire was used to measure the how the characteristic of hospital brand image impact on the intention of patients to revisit the hospital. The questionnaire was modified from a study (15). This questionnaire consisted of six items questionnaire with three dimension such as 1) strengthens; 2) uniqueness; and 3) favorable. The total of items is 7 questionnaires. The Likert scale was employed in this study such as 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; and 4=strongly agree. Six questions with 24 total score in this question. The high score indicated the good brand image and the lowest score indicated the weak of brand image

Perceived medical quality questionnaire was used to measure the services that received by the patients during visit the hospital. This questionnaire was modified from a study (16). The questionnaire consisted of five dimensions with 11 item questionnaires such as 1) performance; 2) durability; 3) conformance; 4) feature; and 5) reliable. The total of items is 7 questionnaires. The Likert scale was employed in this study such as 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; and 4=strongly agree. The high score indicated the high of Perceived medical quality and the lowest score indicated the weak of Perceived medical quality

Word of mouth questionnaire was used to measure how the patients provided the information to other patients regarding services from the hospital. This questionnaire consisted 13 item questionnaires with five dimensions such as 1) talkers; 2) topics; 3) tools; 4) talking part; and 5) tracking. The total of items is 7

questionnaires. The Likert scale was employed in this study such as 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; and 4=strongly agree. The total score of this questionnaire 52. The high score indicated the good word of mouth and the lowest score indicated the weak of word of mouth

Data analysis

The descriptive statistic was used to describe the characteristic of respondents and using the mean, SD, frequency and percentage. Three-box method approached was used to analyze the distribution of respondents' answering from the questionnaire. The data was analyzed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least square (PLS) approached. The assumption should be met with the criteria before using the SEM statistic such as normally distribution, no auto correlation and multicollinearity.

RESULT

Characteristic of respondents

Table 1 described the characteristic of respondents. More than half respondents were women (63.4%) and 36.6% of them were men. Most of them were 21-30 years (31.4%) and 31-41 years (32%). Almost half of respondents graduated from high school (94.7%). Some of them were housewife (36%) and private employees (36.6%). All respondents mentioned that they have been visiting the clinic (100%). The frequency ≤ 2 of visiting within 1 month almost all respondents (93.1%). A few of respondents visited the clinic >2 within 1 month was 6.9%.

Table 1. Characteristic of respondents

No	Characteristic	N	%
1	Gender		
	Men	64	36.6
	Women	111	63.4
2	Age		
	21-30 years	55	31.4
	31-41 years	56	32
	41-50 years	42	24
	> 50 years	22	12
3	Education level		

	Primary school	6	3.4
	Secondary school	25	14.3
	High school	87	49.7
	Bachelor	57	32.6
4	Occupation		
	Housewife	63	36
	Students	5	2.9
	Entrepreneur	20	11.4
	Civil servants	23	13.1
	Private employees	64	36.6
5	Visit experience		
	Yes	175	100
	No	0	0
6	Frequency of visiting within 1 month		
	≤ 2	163	93.1
	> 2	12	6.9

Result of three-box method

The Three-Box Method is a statistical technique that categorizes data into three ranges based on calculated index scores, providing a clear and interpretable way to evaluate the strength of variables or indicators in research studies. It was based on a total of 175 samples, is divided into categories of low (43.75 - 87.4), medium (87.5 - 131.24) and high. (131,25 - 175). The results Three-box Method variable brand image, perceived medical quality, word of mouth, and intention to visit back shows that Sari Asih Cipondoh Hospital faces strict competition with other hospitals that have a competing brand image. Perceived medical quality, a level of communicative WOM, and respondents already have an intention to visit again.

Table 3. Three box method analysis

Variables	Score		
	Low (43.75 - 87.4)	Moderate (87.5 - 131.24)	High (131.25 - 175)
Brand image		□	
Perceived Medical Quality		□	
WOM		□	
Intention to re-visit		□	

Direct effect of brand image, perceived medical quality, and WOM to intention to hospital re-visit

Table 2 described the direct effect of brand image, perceived medical quality, and WOM to intention to hospital re-visit. The result found that there is positive correlation between the brand image (p-value<.05), medical quality (p-value<.05) and WOM (p-value<.05)with intention to re-visit in the hospital. Other findings also found that there is positive correlation between brand image (p-value<.05) and perceived medical quality (p-value<.05) with WOM

Table 3. Direct effect

Direct effect	β	p-value
Correlation between brand image on intention to re-visit	.177	.008
Correlation between perceived medical quality on intention to re-visit	.51	.000
Correlation between brand image on WOM	.353	.000
Correlation between perceived medical quality on WOM	.555	.000
Correlation between WOM on intention to re-visit	.237	.005

Indirect effect of brand image, perceived medical quality, and WOM to intention to hospital re-visit

Table 3 described the Indirect effect of brand image, perceived medical quality, and WOM to intention to hospital re-visit. The result found that there is the Correlation between brand image with intention to re-visit hospital mediated by WOM (p-value<.05). Another result also found the Correlation between perceived medical quality with intention to re-visit hospital mediated by WOM (p-value<.05).

Table 4. indirect effect

Indirect effect	β	p-value
Correlation between brand image with intention to re-visit hospital mediated by WOM	.083	.018
Correlation between perceived medical quality with intention to re-visit hospital mediated by WOM	.131	.006

Inner modelling result

The construction of the path diagram of the structural model in this study uses 2 exogenous variables and 2 endogenic variables that describe the relationship between the variables. Based on the bootstrapping method found the inner model as follows:

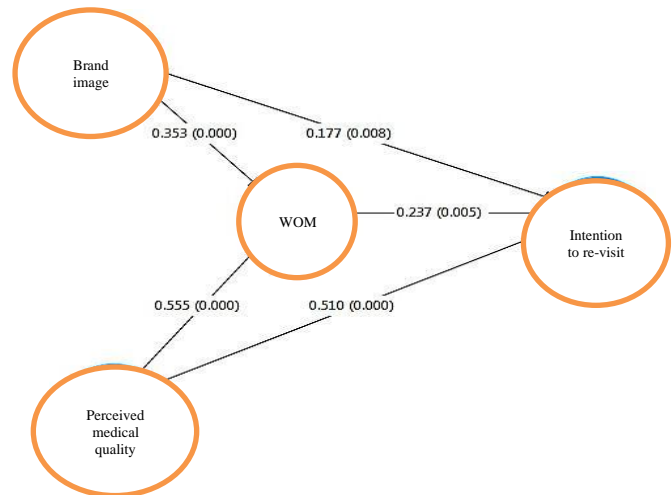


Figure 1. Inner model

Based on the figure 1 found two sub-structural equation as follow:

Structural 1

$$\text{intention to re-visit (Y)} = 0,177X1 + 0,510X2 + 0,237Z$$

Structural 2

$$\text{WOM (Z)} = 0,353X1 + 0,555X2$$

DISCUSSION

Correlation between brand image with intention to re-visit the hospital

The result found that there is positive correlation between the brand image with intention to re-visit the hospital. It was indicated that more outstanding, unique, and strong image of the brand then increasingly the intention to re-visit he patient of the Sari Asih Cipondoh hospital.

Several studies have found that a strong hospital brand image can significantly influence patients' perceptions of service quality, which in turn affects their behavioral intentions, including their intention to revisit the hospital (17, 18,19).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that a positive hospital brand image not only directly increases patient loyalty but also enhances patient satisfaction through the improvement of perceived service quality, which then increases patients' revisit intentions (17). This implies that hospital brand image serves as a critical factor in enhancing service quality, patient satisfaction, and loyalty.

The correlation between brand image and the intention to revisit the hospital is well-established in this study, with brand image playing a crucial role in shaping patients' perceptions of service quality and influencing their subsequent decisions to return to the hospital.

Correlation between perceived medical quality with intention to re-visit the hospital

The hypothesis of this study found that perceived medical quality with intention to re-visit the hospital has a positive association. This shows that the higher perceived medical quality the patient feels, the higher the patient's intention to return to the hospital for future treatment.

Perceived medical quality affects the confidence of patients in receiving medical services. Patients who have a high perception of medical quality tend to feel confident that they will receive adequate and quality care.

Kotler & Keller (2016) explained that Perceived medical quality is important to improve consumer decision to use a product or service back (9).

The correlation between perceived medical quality and the intention to revisit the hospital is strongly positive, as evidenced by multiple studies. These studies highlight that various aspects of perceived medical quality, including the physician's practice service, the kindness and consideration of medical staff, and the hospital's physical environment, significantly influence both patient satisfaction and their intention to revisit the hospital.

Higher satisfaction with physician's practice service significantly increases patients' intent to revisit (20). Kindness and consideration from medical staff have been found to have the most substantial effect on both outpatient and inpatient groups' satisfaction and intention to revisit (21).

Correlation between brand image with word of mouth

The hypothesis of this study found that correlation between brand image with word of mouth. This shows that the Sari Asih Cipondoh Hospital brand image has a significant impact on WOM. When patients have a positive perception of the hospital brand image, they are more likely to give positive recommendations about the hospital to others.

A strong and positive brand image of a hospital can significantly influence patient satisfaction and service quality perceptions. This positive perception is likely to encourage patients to share their experiences with others, thereby generating positive WOM (22).

Hospitals with a well-established brand image are perceived as more trustworthy and reliable, which can lead to increased patient satisfaction and, consequently, more positive WOM communication (19).

The quality of healthcare services provided by a hospital is closely linked to its brand image and plays a critical role in generating WOM. High perceived service quality can enhance the hospital's brand image, which in turn can lead to positive WOM. Patients who experience high-quality care are more likely to share their positive experiences with others (23).

WOM mediates the influence of the brand image on the intention to re-visit the hospital

WOM is identified as a crucial factor in influencing patients' intent to revisit hospitals, its role as a mediator in the relationship between hospital brand image and the intention to revisit.

WOM and relationship marketing are directly linked to increasing patients' intent to revisit, highlighting the importance of positive patient experiences and the generation of positive WOM in healthcare settings (24).

Cognitive components, such as hospital image and perceived medical quality, do not significantly influence patients' intent to revisit. Instead, affective components like relationship marketing and behavioral components, notably WOM, play crucial roles in increasing patients' intent to revisit private hospitals. Trust, while not having a significant mediating effect between predictor variables (including hospital image) and patients' intent to revisit, shows a significant association with affective and behavioral components (12, 25, 26)

WOM mediates the perceived medical quality with the intention to re-visit the hospital

The result of this study showed that WOM mediates the perceived medical quality with the intention to re-visit the hospital

WOM is based on patients' perceived healthcare service quality. Positive WOM reflects patients' satisfaction with medical services and can enhance the perceived quality of care. For instance, the study by Sundberg et al. mentioned in the search results highlights the impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on patient involvement and symptom management, which can influence WOM (27).

Another study in the context of medical tourism found that electronic WOM (eWOM) influences the intention to revisit and trust in the destination, which can be moderated by gender (28).

In summary, WOM is influenced by patient satisfaction, the quality of doctor-patient interactions, and the perceived benefits of healthcare innovations. It affects both the perceived medical quality and the intention to revisit a hospital, with various factors such as service quality, emotional

support, and institutional reputation playing a role in shaping WOM in healthcare (29).

CONCLUSION

The results showed that brand image and perceived medical quality had a positive influence on word of mouth and the intention to hospital re-visit and word of mouth had an impact on the intentions to re-visit hospital. The WOM mediated the association between the brand image with intention to re-visit the hospital. The WOM also mediated the association between the quality of medical care with intention to re-visit the hospital

IMPLICATION

Based on the findings of this study, the implication of this study such as 1) the hospital should invest in building and maintaining a strong brand image through successful patients' outcomes, professional service, and effective communication strategies; and 2) The hospital should focus on delivering high-quality medical care and ensuring patient satisfaction to foster positive WOM.

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