

Increasing Customer Retention through Digital Marketing and Paramedic Competency with Hospital Brand Image as Intervening Variable

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ABSTRACT

Customer retention is a way to retain customers in the business world. A well-maintained business relationship between the company and consumers will positively impact the company in converting customers into repeat buyers. One example of a business that is also a basic need for the community is health services. Therefore, the hospital is one of the important service facilities for the community. To survive and thrive, hospitals must always develop their quality of service and marketing strategies. Nowadays, digital marketing plays an important role in marketing because times have shifted to the digital era. This study analyses the hospital's brand image in increasing customer retention through digital marketing and paramedical competence at Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital Semarang and Islamic Dental and Oral Hospital of Sultan Agung Semarang. This research was an explanatory quantitative research, and data collection was done using questionnaires with a convenience sampling technique. The subjects in this study were dental and oral outpatients at Islamic Hospital of Sultan Agung Semarang and Islamic Dental and Oral Hospital of Sultan Agung Semarang, totalling 177 patients. Analysis of the data used in this study was conducted using Partial Least Square analysis. Based on data analysis, the researcher found that Paramedic Competency and Digital Marketing through Accessibility, Interactivity, and Informativeness increased Customer Retention with Hospital Brand Image as an intervening variable.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing; Customer Retention; Paramedic Competency; Hospital Brand Image*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Customer retention plays an important role in the marketing field to maintain business viability and survival. Companies have multiple approaches to introduce their products to consumers, such as social media or the internet. Social media can simply be interpreted as a communication tool. Social media is a

powerful instrument for engaging customers by enriching the experience of providing quality products and offering products to customers (Arora et al., 2021). The significant increase in internet users dominating the use of social media shows that people have become increasingly media literate or often referred to as digital literate (Harahap & Adeni, 2020). Good relationships with customers can be performed efficiently if a service provider considers customers in the product development process. In the end, the relationship will impress the customers for a long time (Sibarani & Riani, 2017). Bolat, Kooli, and Wright (2016) stated that consumers use internet technology to increase numbers and present business opportunities to reach and connect with more people through websites and social media. Smith and Shaw (2017) stated that 69% of consumers use social media to share information about products and services. Clairine's research (2020) states that the lack of technology is an obstacle in digital marketing; therefore, changes and digitisation must be made to increase customer retention. Meanwhile, another study conducted by Yang and Wuisan (2021) found that website design had no significant positive effect on customer retention.

Branding is a valuable asset for companies in today's highly competitive marketing world (Kim et al., 2008). From consumer satisfaction with the services consumed, branding will compel a sense of curiosity and consumer assessment of the company that produces these services will affect consumers' assessment of the company's brand image (Umar, 2011). The characteristics of good brands are brands that are easily remembered in customers' minds and have different attributes compared to other competitors (Kotler et al., 2019). Consumers will view the brand as an important part of a product or service. Consumers who always reuse the same brands recognise that they will get the same features, benefits, and quality every time they repurchase. Solayappan A. et al. (2010) found that brand consideration has a high degree of positive relationship with brand preference. In their research, Nha and Gaston (2003) found that company image can influence customer retention decisions. Brand image impacted good customer retention decisions. This study is supported by a study conducted by Trasorras et al. (2009), which stated that brand image has a positive and significant effect on customer retention. Similarly, the research results by Ngguyen et al. (2009) also found that brand image has a positive and significant effect on customer retention.

Health is one of the most basic needs for humans. Hospitals are a part of health services (Setyawan et al., 2020). The essential way to offer hospitals services is by providing outpatient care, health services, and paramedical competence of higher quality than other competitors, which is done consistently (Christina, 2014). Medical services currently emphasize the importance of customer-oriented marketing. Hospitals are trying to promote brand image among patients to increase patient satisfaction and retention and further improve performance (Wu, 2011). These two key factors can build and maintain lasting customer relationships (Arora et al., 2021). The quality of paramedics is one of the determinants in determining the satisfaction and retention of hospital patients (Smith et al., 2020). With the existence of qualified paramedical officers, the optimal goals of a hospital can be achieved easily. Paramedics today have experienced significant growth in expanding the role of emergency or acute care in improving their practice (Tavares & Boet, 2015).

The city of Semarang now has several dental and oral health service facilities. One of the dental and oral health services is found at the Islamic Dental and Oral Hospital of Sultan Agung Semarang (RSIGM-SA) and the Islamic Hospital of Sultan Agung Semarang (RSI-SA). The presence of dental and oral health services can provide convenience for the community in obtaining dental and oral services and care and is expected to provide a pleasant experience for patients so that one day they can return for treatment without any trauma. This can help the community, especially in the city of Semarang in improving dental and oral health service efforts, as described in the following table:

Table 1: Number of hospital patient visits in the year 2020 – September 2021

Hospital name	2020	2021
RSI-SA	5291	2648
RSIGM-SA	342	346

Source: Outpatient Patient Data of RSIGM-SA and RSI-SA

Based on the data above (Table 1), it can be inferred that there was only a slight increase in the number of patients at the Sultan Agung Dental and Oral Islamic Hospital (RSIGM-SA). Meanwhile, at the same time, there had been a decrease in the number of patients from last year at the Sultan Agung Islamic Hospital in Semarang (RSI-SA). Hence, researchers wanted to conduct a research related to increasing customer retention in the hospital.

Based on the background above, the researchers were interested in exploring how to increase customer retention through digital marketing and paramedic competency with hospital brand image as an intervening variable. Digital marketing in this study used the dimensions of interactivity, accessibility, and informativeness.

2.0 LITERATURE STUDY

2.1 Customer Retention

Customer retention is defined as the unwavering quality of a business relationship between the client and the business. It can be defined as the repeat buying behavior of customers from a company whenever a product is needed, and customers consider using only that company's products or services (Arora et al., 2021). A company must create a strategy to build customer retention by focusing on customer needs and offering quality services. Liu & Wu (2007) argue that customer retention measures a sustainable relationship and focuses on minimising customer loss. Specifically, customer retention is perceived as continuous repeated customer decisions. Customer retention can be accomplished in two ways. First, with an attitude of trust and loyalty, customers have very little interest in the offers from other similar hospitals. Second, it presents obstacles such as the amount of sacrifice that customers have to make when moving to another hospital, for example, financial sacrifices, time sacrifices, and physical sacrifices (Guo & Wang, 2015). Customer retention plays a significant role for every company because companies with a high retention level will develop more rapidly when consumers feel satisfied with the service received (Tjahyadi, 2006). The indicators of customer retention are (Keiningham et al., 2007):

- a. High satisfaction with products and customer service,
- b. Intensity to continue repeated service,
- c. Willingness to recommend to others.

2.2 Hospital Brand Image

The increasing number of hospitals in Asia is currently triggering hospitals to develop marketing strategies. Hospital branding is one of the marketing methods that can benefit internal and external parties (Yuliani, 2019). The substantial role of branding will enable customers to visualise and understand the product better, reduce the risk that customers feel in buying services, and help companies achieve sustainable performance (Wu, 2011). A unique brand can create an impression for consumers that can strengthen the company's brand image. Brand image is related to attitude, namely in brand beliefs and preferences. Consumers are more likely to purchase a brand with a positive brand image (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

One of the crucial strategies to achieve customer satisfaction is a branding strategy. In their study, Chang and Chieng (2006), which is in line with Davis et al. (2000), stated that branding plays a vital role in a company because it connects customers and suppliers. Likewise, Morrison and Crane (2007) and Zarantonello and Schmitt (2010) convey that today's academics and marketing practitioners recognise that customers no longer buy products or services to fulfil their functional needs. However, they buy the emotional experiences around them. The indicators contained in the brand image consist of (Keller, 2003):

- a. Favorability of brand association. Where there is a liking for the brand, consumers believe and have a friendly feeling that the brand of a product can benefit them. So that it will be difficult for other brands to attract customers who already love the brand.
- b. Strength of brand association. The deeper a person thinks about and digests product information by a brand, the stronger logos, images, quality, and others will embed the brand in the minds of consumers.

- c. The uniqueness of brand association is the uniqueness of a product or service that makes a difference from competitors. This association also provides reasons for consumers that the brand has advantages over other brands.

Based on the theories above, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H₁: Hospital brand image positively affects customer retention

2.3 Digital Marketing

The current digital era transforms communication channels into a challenge for all industries, especially the communications and marketing industry. Digitalization of marketing is a phase of change in the history of communication (Rangaswamy, 2014). The main driver of technological change and consumer behavior has always been a change in marketing strategy. The digital environment is changing with speed, relevance, and complexity today, so these elements have become essential (Jung, 2009). Digital marketing uses interactive technology that connects sellers with consumers electronically as a form of direct marketing such as email, websites, online forums and newsgroups, interactive television, mobile communications, and so on (Kotler et al., 2019). Social media marketing is a valuable tool in managing existing relationships between companies and clients to form new relationships by enabling an online exchange, connection, and communication (Arora et al., 2021).

Pentescu et al. (2015) argued that although social media is widely used in various sectors, the health sector is still in the embryonic stage for its use. Li and Wang (2017) also said that despite the various advantages of social media, there are several challenges and risks associated with more sensitive health data to identify patterns, analyze data, and use them to improve health services. Likewise, Smailhodzic, Hoojisma, Boonstra, and Langley (2016) said that biased articles or discussion forums to promote particular brands could be another potential risk. Li et al. (2018) showed that hospitals have not fully utilised the potential of social media. Research by Househ and Kushniruk (2014) and Lim (2016) reported that the implementation of digitalisation in hospital marketing faced several problems.

Advances in technology offer opportunities for business people to evaluate data and use that information to increase their productivity (Keegan & Rowley, 2017). Business people's practical use of various online tools leads to new opportunities (Gaikwad & Kate, 2016). The Internet is a trusted source by consumers before purchasing products and services. Businesses use the internet as a marketing tool for success and help foster communication with visibility. Online sales channels and social media advertising are powerful ways to reach various markets for business expansion (Banica et al., 2015). Consumers use internet technology to progress, which presents opportunities for several businesses to reach and connect with more people through websites and social media sites (Bolat et al., 2016).

Some indicators in the world of digital marketing consist of (Liu & Shrum, 2002):

- a. Interactivity is the extent to which the level of two-way communication. It refers to reciprocal communication between advertisers and consumers and responses to the input they receive. Indicators in interactivity are (Liu & Shrum, 2002):
 - Perceived control, related to perceived control over navigation, content, and speed of interaction.
 - Perceived response, related to the accuracy of the response given.
 - Personalisation, related to how consumers feel that the responses given are appropriate and relevant.
- b. Accessibility is the ability of users to access information and services provided by online advertising (Aqsa, 2017). The indicators used are as follows (Parasuraman et al., 1985):
 - Convenience in access, which means that it can be accessed anytime and anywhere without any location and time restrictions.
 - Services in a short time can be implemented with users who get a fast response or service (in a short time) from social media.
 - Minimum costs incurred by users in accessing social media.
 - Ease of access in using various electronic media (smartphones, laptops, tablets) (Jun & Cai, 2001)

- c. Informativeness is the ability of advertising to supply information to consumers to provide an accurate picture of a product so that consumers get complete information about the products advertised (Aqsa, 2017). The indicators in this variable are (Francisca & Hapsari, 2018):
- Information clarity. The information provided is clear (features and products).
 - Accurate information about the features and quality of the products.
 - Provide various information, including registering, payment, and service flow.

Based on those research, the following hypothesis can be obtained:

H₂: Accessibility positively affects hospital brand image,

H₃: Interactivity positively affects hospital brand image,

H₄: Informative positively affects hospital brand image.

2.4 Paramedic Competency

Human resources in hospitals are divided into two groups, namely professional groups and managerial groups. The professional group is tasked with healing the patients being treated. This group consists of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and nutritionists. Meanwhile, the managerial group is tasked with helping to facilitate the running of hospital health services, namely structural officials, accountants, and others (Arivetullatif, 2019). Medical and paramedical personnel have an equally important position in producing quality health services in hospitals.

One of the important elements in determining the success of the hospital industry is employee competence. Competence is an ability that must be possessed by a person or every worker (individual) to be able to carry out a job or position in a successful, effective, efficient, productive, and quality manner following the vision and mission of the organization or company (Sciulli & Missien, 2015). Indicators in determining paramedical competence consist of (Hutapea & Thoha, 2008):

- a. The knowledge possessed by paramedics,
- b. Paramedic ability,
- c. The behaviour of paramedics.

Hospital employees are the spearhead of the hospital in providing services to patients. Services included in this case include procedures, ready to help friendliness, communication, doctor, nurses, and non-medical personnel attitudes (Oktariyani et al., 2013). These services are always expected to have high motivation and can be seen from the number of patients who seek treatment to be taken into consideration in patient satisfaction to increase patient retention in the hospital (Smith et al., 2020). The high brand image in the services of a hospital has implications for the high personal initiative of patients to seek treatment at the hospital (Oktariyani et al., 2013).

H₅: Paramedic competency positively affects hospital brand image.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this research is explanatory quantitative research, aiming to determine the effect of hospital brand image as an intervening variable in increasing customer retention through digital marketing and paramedic competency. The basis of the research used is the survey method, where the data is collected by distributing a list of questions. According to Sugiyono (2013: 7), the survey method is a method used to obtain data from certain natural places (not artificial), where researchers carry out treatments in data collection, for example, by distributing questionnaires, tests, structured interviews, and so on.

The data was obtained through a survey by distributing questionnaires on hospital brand image, accessibility, interactivity, informativeness, paramedic competency, and customer retention. There were five answer options, 1 (Strongly Disagree/STS), 2 (Disagree/TS), 3 (Rather Agree/KS), 4 (Agree/S), 5

(Strongly Agree/SS). Questionnaires were distributed directly to subjects and by using Google Forms they were distributed more quickly.

The subjects in this study were 177 patients who visited the dental and oral clinic at RSI-SA and RSIGM-SA for the second or more visits. The sampling technique used is convenience sampling, a collection of information from population members who agree to provide the information (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The data analysis technique used in this research was SmartPLS software. The PLS, or Partial Least Square test, is a variant-based structural equation (Structural Equation Modeling/SEM) approach. The PLS approach is used to perform path analysis widely used in behavioural studies. PLS is a statistical technique used in models with more than one dependent variable and an independent variable (Muniarti, 2003).

This research model is depicted in the figure below:

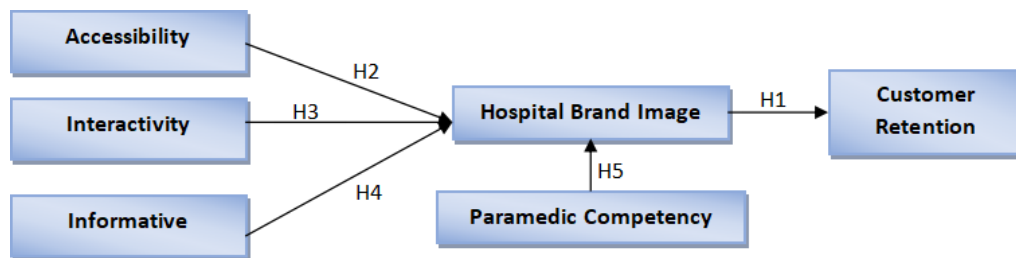


Figure 1: Research model.

4.0 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research used the SEM-PLS analysis technique. All variables in this study were measured using reflective measurements. Thus the SEM-PLS model stage began by testing the measurement model (outer model) and continued with hypothesis testing (inner model).

4.1 Measurement Model (Outer Model)

The measurement in the SEM-PLS model was utilized to test the indicator materials used to have good validity. Validity was assessed using convergent and discriminant validity.

4.1.1 Individual Item Validity (Convergent Validity)

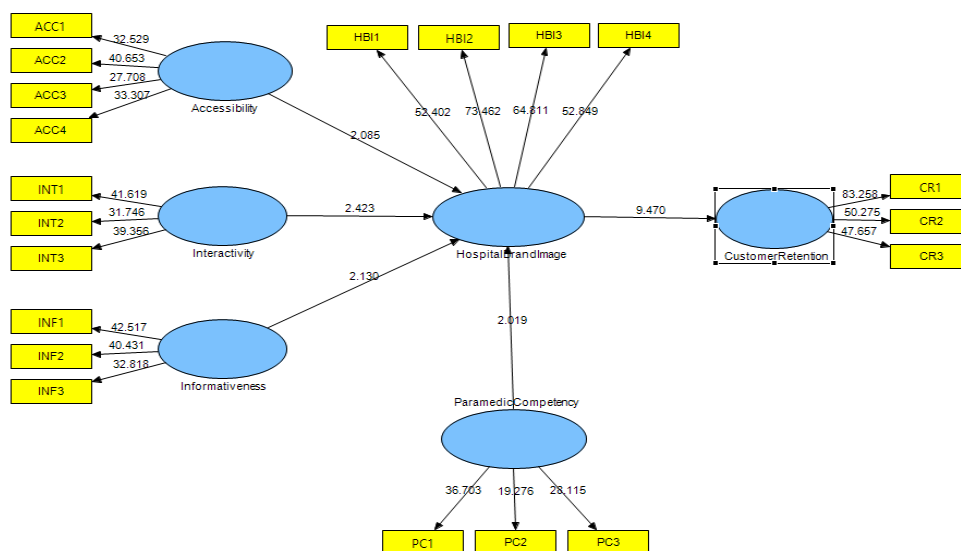


Figure 2: PLS result framework

Figure 2 shows the structural model and analytical result framework of PLS. Each path corresponds to each of the hypotheses proposed. The test of each hypothesis is achieved by looking at the sign, size, and statistical significance of the path coefficient (b) between the latent and the dependent variables. The higher the path coefficient, the stronger the effect of the latent variable on the dependent variable.

All latent variables in this study were measured using reflexive measures. The validity and reliability of each were measured by assessing each loading factor of each indicator. Table 2 shows the results of the cross-loading on each indicator having a higher value than other variables. The measurement model results from this research are presented in the loading factor table for the outer loading in the following table (Table 2):

Table 2: Loading Factor outer loading

	Accessibility (ACC)	Customer Retention (CR)	Hospital Brand Image (HBI)	Informativeness (INF)	Interactivity (INT)	Paramedic Competency (PC)
ACC1	0.886					
ACC2	0.897					
ACC3	0.856					
ACC4	0.862					
CR1		0.941				
CR2		0.916				
CR3		0.922				
HBI1			0.923			
HBI2			0.937			
HBI3			0.935			
HBI4			0.917			
INF1				0.893		
INF2				0.879		
INF3				0.876		
INT1					0.891	
INT2					0.889	
INT3					0.896	
PC1						0.890
PC2						0.822
PC3						0.874

Table 2 shows that all items have a loading factor that exceeded the recommended value of 0.70, thus showing that each item has good convergent validity.

4.1.2 Discriminant Validity Assessment

Discriminant validity can be seen from the cross-loading value between indicators and other constructs. The results show that the correlation of all constructs with their respective indicators is higher than the correlation of indicators with other constructs. Table 3 below shows that the value of the cross-loading on the indicator for the variable per the measurement has the largest cross-loading value compared to the indicator's value for the variable that does not match. The correlation value of the cross-loading variable is obtained as follows:

Table 3: Cross-Loading

	Accessibility (ACC)	Customer Retention (CR)	Hospital Brand Image (HBI)	Informativeness (INF)	Interactivity (INT)	Paramedic Competency (PC)
ACC1	0.886	0.461	0.526	0.507	0.458	0.487
ACC2	0.897	0.446	0.524	0.538	0.436	0.443
ACC3	0.856	0.396	0.501	0.523	0.406	0.437
ACC4	0.862	0.470	0.560	0.561	0.467	0.451
CR1	0.503	0.941	0.579	0.578	0.462	0.414
CR2	0.433	0.916	0.550	0.531	0.480	0.394
CR3	0.474	0.922	0.552	0.584	0.481	0.456
HBI1	0.576	0.531	0.923	0.553	0.547	0.519
HBI2	0.573	0.589	0.937	0.545	0.527	0.500
HBI3	0.562	0.571	0.935	0.501	0.535	0.559
HBI4	0.530	0.553	0.917	0.501	0.518	0.470
INF1	0.538	0.561	0.520	0.893	0.389	0.330
INF2	0.563	0.526	0.499	0.879	0.453	0.347
INF3	0.511	0.527	0.480	0.876	0.401	0.355
INT1	0.419	0.488	0.531	0.427	0.891	0.542
INT2	0.436	0.448	0.461	0.414	0.889	0.429
INT3	0.497	0.432	0.534	0.415	0.896	0.489
PC1	0.467	0.452	0.521	0.361	0.457	0.890
PC2	0.440	0.373	0.426	0.316	0.482	0.822
PC3	0.437	0.346	0.476	0.327	0.485	0.874

Table 3 displays the correlation matrix for all constructs in the form of cross-loading. The correlation matrix between the measured variable and the latent variable must be greater than the correlation element for other variables, indicating good discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2010). As shown in Table 3, the correlation element for each corresponding indicator is greater than the correlation with other variables.

Discriminant validity can also be seen from the correlation value between latent variables as follows:

Table 4: Correlation Between Latent Variables

	Accessibility	Customer Retention	Hospital Brand Image	Informativeness	Interactivity	Paramedic Competency
Accessibility	1.000					
Customer Retention	0.508	1.000				
Hospital Brand Image	0.604	0.605	1.000			
Informativeness	0.609	0.610	0.566	1.000		

Interactivity	0.506	0.512	0.573	0.469	1.000	
Paramedic Competency	0.519	0.455	0.552	0.389	0.548	1.000

The correlation value between latent variables shows that none correlates above 0.70 (Table 4). This detail suggests that each latent variable has a different value from another latent variable (Henseler et al., 2015). Based on the analysis conducted, the measurement model in this study shows adequate discriminant validity, which means that all the latent variables proposed in the hypothesized model are different from each other. In total, the measurement model in this study shows adequate convergent validity and discriminant validity.

4.1.3 Reliability analysis

Reliability analysis is presented in several sizes; namely Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. The results can be seen in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Reliability Test

	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Accessibility	0.766	0.929	0.898
Customer Retention	0.858	0.948	0.917
Hospital Brand Image	0.861	0.961	0.946
Informativeness	0.779	0.914	0.859
Interactivity	0.796	0.921	0.872
Paramedic Competency	0.744	0.897	0.828

Table 4 shows that the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values of all constructs range from 0.744 to 0.861. All constructs have an AVE value of more than 0.5, thus meeting the reliability requirements. The composite reliability of the constructs obtained ranged from 0.897 to 0.961; where all constructs have a value that exceeds 0.70, it can be said to be reliable (Hair et al., 2010). Values for the estimate of internal reliability consistency are also greater, which are acceptable (Ghozali, 2016).

Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the consistency of items between measurement items. Table 5 summarizes Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.828 to 0.946. Because Cronbach's Alpha's value has a value of more than 0.70, therefore it can be said that all constructs are reliable. Reliability is also strengthened by the composite reliability value of all constructs having a value greater than Cronbach's alpha. In conclusion, the constructs of accessibility, customer retention, hospital brand image, informativeness, interactivity, and paramedic competency are all reliable.

As measured by cross-loading, discriminant validity proves that each factor in the measurement model can be empirically distinguished. With satisfactory results for reliability and validity, the next stage is to conduct a structural model analysis, determine the strength of the proposed explanatory model, and test the hypotheses of this study.

4.2 Structural Model (Inner Model)

Based on the results obtained, the measurement model showed good individual item reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The causal structure model was assessed to examine the effect among the constructs defined in the proposed model by estimating the coefficient of determination (R^2) and the path coefficient.

4.2.1 Assessment of the Coefficient of Determination of R^2 and Relevance Predictive Q^2

The value of R^2 determines the model's predictive power. Table 6 shows R^2 for each of the endogenous variables defined in the proposed theoretical model.

Table 6: R² and Q² values

	R Square (R ²)	Q Square (Q ²)
Customer Retention	0.366	0.314
Hospital Brand Image	0.523	0.198

The value of R² on the Hospital Brand Image variable shows a value of 0.523. It is significant that 52.3% of Hospital Brand Image can be influenced by the variables of Accessibility, Informativeness, Interactivity, and Paramedic Competency. At the same time, the value of R² on the Customer Retention variable shows a value of 0.366. This value means that the Hospital Brand Image variable influences 36.6% of Customer Retention.

On Table 6, the Q² value on the Hospital Brand Image variable shows a value of 0.198 or 19.8%, and the Q² value on the Customer Retention variable shows a value of 0.314 or 31.4%. This value indicated that this study has a relevant predictive value because the Q² value is greater than 0 (zero).

4.2.2 Hypothesis Test

Based on the results conducted from the questionnaires distributed to 117 dental and oral patients at RSI-SA and RSIGM-SA, the results were:

Table 7: Hypothesis tests.

	Original Sample (O)	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics (O/STERR)	Prob	Conclusion
Accessibility → Hospital Brand Image	0.236	0.113	2.085	0.037	Accepted
Hospital Brand Image → Customer Retention	0.605	0.064	9.470	0.000	Accepted
Informativeness → Hospital Brand Image	0.232	0.109	2.130	0.033	Accepted
Interactivity → Hospital Brand Image	0.226	0.093	2.423	0.015	Accepted
Paramedic Competency → Hospital Brand Image	0.215	0.107	2.019	0.043	Accepted

These results (Table 7) can be explained as follows:

1. Hypothesis 1 which examined the effect of Hospital Brand Image on Customer Retention shows a positive coefficient. The statistical t value of the bootstrap method test showed 9.470. Suppose the calculated value of t is greater than 1.96. The probability shows a value of 0.000. This number shows that Hospital Brand Image has a positive and significant influence on Customer Retention. Thus Hypothesis 1 is accepted.
2. Hypothesis 2 which examined the effect of Accessibility on Hospital Brand Image shows a positive coefficient. The statistical t value of the bootstrap method test shows 2,085. Suppose the calculated value of t is greater than 1.96. The probability shows a value of 0.037. This number shows that Accessibility has a positive and significant effect on Hospital Brand Image. Thus Hypothesis 2 is accepted.
3. Hypothesis 3 which examined the effect of Interactivity on Hospital Brand Image, shows a positive coefficient. The statistical t-value of the bootstrap method is 2.423. Suppose the calculated value of t is greater than 1.96. The probability shows a value of 0.015. This number shows that Interactivity has a positive and significant effect on Hospital Brand Image. Thus Hypothesis 3 is accepted.
4. Hypothesis 4 which examined the effect of Informativeness on Hospital Brand Image, shows a positive coefficient. The t value of the bootstrap method test statistic showed 2.130. Suppose the calculated

value of t is greater than 1.96. The probability shows a value of 0.033. This number shows that Informativeness has a positive and significant influence on Hospital Brand Image. Thus Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

- Hypothesis 5 which examined the effect of Paramedic Competency on Hospital Brand Image, show a positive coefficient. The statistical t value of the bootstrap method test shows 2,019. Suppose the calculated value of t is greater than 1.96. The probability shows a value of 0.043. This number shows that Paramedic Competency has a positive and significant influence on Hospital Brand Image. Thus Hypothesis 5 is accepted.

4.3 Intervening Test

Because the research model directly relates the variables of accessibility, informativeness, interactivity, and paramedic competency to customer retention through hospital brand image, the test is accomplished with the Sobel test.

Table 8: Intervening Test

Intervening Model	Prob	Conclusions
Accessibility → Hospital Brand Image → Customer Retention	0,041	There is a mediating effect
Informativeness → Hospital Brand Image → Customer Retention	0,038	There is a mediating effect
Interactivity → Hospital Brand Image → Customer Retention	0,019	There is a mediating effect
Paramedic Competency → Hospital Brand Image → Customer Retention	0,049	There is a mediating effect

Based on the results above (Table 8), it is explained that:

- Testing the mediation effect of hospital brand image on the relationship between accessibility and customer retention showed a significant value of $0.041 < 0.05$. This outcome shows that hospital brand image has a mediating effect on the relationship between accessibility and customer retention.
- Testing the mediation effect of hospital brand image on the relationship between informativeness and customer retention showed a significant value of $0.038 < 0.05$. This value shows that hospital brand image has a mediating effect on the relationship between informativeness and customer retention.
- Testing the mediation effect of hospital brand image on the relationship between interactivity and customer retention showed a signift value of $0.019 < 0.05$. This result shows that hospital brand image has a mediating effect on the relationship between interactivity and customer retention.
- Testing the mediation effect of hospital brand image on the relationship between paramedic competency and customer retention showed a significant value of $0.049 < 0.05$. This value shows that hospital brand image has a mediating effect on the relationship between paramedic competency and customer retention.

4.4 Discussion

The more satisfactorily a hospital is in building its brand image, it will affect consumer behavior in making decisions about hospitals. Consequently, it will constantly increase consumer retention to seek treatment at the same hospital. This statement is reinforced by previous research, such as Wang (2015), Tyas and Kenny (2016), Nasib and Amelia (2018), Indawati Lestari (2019), Fadli (2020), which stated that when the brand image is further enhanced it will also increase customer retention. A valuable brand can influence consumer choices, and a good brand can also deliver a sign of superiority to consumers, which will lead to consumer attitudes that can benefit the company.

The vying competition in the business world requires a company to be more creative and have competitive advantages compared to other companies to survive and compete in global business. The use of the internet as a medium in marketing nowadays is interesting because it is based on the rapid development of internet users and increases significantly every year, which can make companies start thinking about using the internet to promote their products or services.

Online information that appears on the internet will get a good impression from internet users. These occurrences relate to how easy it is to get up-to-date information. This provides the experience of communicating more accurately, effectively, and satisfactorily so that consumers find it easier to exchange information even through digital media. Over time, digital marketing strategies are not only for marketing products or services but also branding, building good relationships with customers, and increasing business sales. The quality of response which refers to the speed, accuracy, and frequency of communication in response to consumers, is a consideration in choosing or determining the product to be purchased. Submission of good and accurate information messages from a product or service is very influential in creating a useful message or advertising information for the product or service, including quality, cost, where the consumers can obtain the product or service, and how to use it properly. This information can be the main consideration for consumers to use or buy these products and services. This view is in line with research conducted by Abdul and Zia (2012), Yazeer and Akmal (2013), and Ng Ka Po (2006).

According to Arora et al. (2021), in the current era of increasing use of technology, social media allows customers to actively participate in the communication between companies and customers. This can be established through various social media and involved each other, which then will lead to customer retention. Companies can measure customer retention through loyal consumer behavior based on the desire indicated by the high frequency of consumers buying or using the product or service. Consumers' repurchase indicates a sense of satisfaction that consumers feel about their quality on their first purchase.

Strategy in customer retention focuses on the techniques used to retain customers so that customers won't switch to other service companies. If a company has customers who have believed in its brand image, customers will likely seek the product or service again. Therefore, maintaining a brand image for the company is crucial for companies to create customer retention. Customer retention will later have several distinct benefits for a company, where the company can enjoy these benefits both in financial and non-financial terms.

No less important in considering the retention of patients to return to the hospital is the officers' nature, which includes competence, appearance, and behavior. Paramedic competence is driven by expertise and experience where the skills and knowledge possessed by officers in improving services to patients. In this case, the patient will later assess whether the officers (doctors and nurses) know their job well and the officer's ability to give good advice to the patient in supporting his healing efforts. Consumers' perceptions of the services they receive are influenced by officers' attitudes, one of which is the appearance and behaviour of the officers who serve them. The primary and most essential element of in-hospital services is the presence of doctors and nurses. Doctors and nurses have a vital role in creating the quality of hospital services. According to Nurminah Yusuf (2009), a good perception towards the hospital can be measured through the assistance of good officers so that it can affect the patient's interest to reuse or make return visits to the hospital. However, at present, it is mostly the patient who will determine the health product or service because a patient can also play a promotional role in hospital marketing, in connection with the research conducted by Munaryo (2008), if the patient is not satisfied with the doctor's services, the patient can move to another hospital.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the study results, it is concluded that accessibility is the most dominant variable in increasing hospital brand image, followed by informativeness, interactivity, and paramedic competency. In addition, hospital brand image can increase higher customer retention. This means that management needs to improve the patient's idea of the hospital by paying more attention to accessibility, informativeness, interactivity, and paramedic competency to increase customer retention. Based on the study's limitations, it is necessary to add other variables that affect the hospital brand image. The suggested variables are the excellence of medical services, brand awareness, and so on.

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