



Digital Marketing as a Strategy to Enhance Image and Patient Visits in Healthcare Facilities

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Abstract. Digital marketing has emerged as a key strategy in the healthcare sector to reach communities, build institutional image, and increase patient visits. The shift in consumer behavior toward digital platforms has driven healthcare facilities to adopt technology-based marketing approaches. This study aims to review and analyze the role of digital marketing in enhancing the image of healthcare facilities and its impact on patient visits. This research is a narrative literature review analyzing ten scientific articles published between 2019 and 2024. Literature was collected from national and international databases using keywords related to digital marketing, institutional image, and patient visits in healthcare services. The review indicates that digital marketing strategies such as social media, educational content, search engine optimization (SEO), and online testimonials significantly contribute to enhancing institutional image and patients' intention to visit. The institutional image built through digital media plays a crucial role in fostering trust, loyalty, and decision-making in utilizing healthcare services. Digital marketing holds great potential as a strategic instrument in healthcare facility promotion. A more systematic integration, along with the readiness of resources and supportive policies, is required to ensure the optimal and sustainable implementation of this strategy.

Keywords: Digital marketing, healthcare facilities, institutional image, patient visits

1. Introduction

In today's digital age, healthcare providers face the imperative of adapting to rapidly evolving patient expectations influenced by technology. The integration of digital marketing strategies into healthcare has transformed how providers communicate with patients, disseminate information, and manage their public image. As a result, facilities adopting robust digital marketing initiatives tend to experience enhanced visibility and increased patient engagement. Research indicates that the influence of digital marketing is reshaping traditional healthcare marketing paradigms, with platforms such as social media emerging as vital tools for healthcare communication Shaikh et al. (2023). The accessibility of digital channels enables healthcare organizations to not only promote their services but also reinforce their image and establish trust with their communities (Stoumpos et al., 2023).

A critical aspect driving this digital transition is the recognition of the patient's role as an informed consumer in the healthcare marketplace. As "e-patients" increasingly seek information online, healthcare facilities must ensure a strong digital presence to meet the knowledge demands of their clientele (Atsbeha & Wodaje, 2024). Digital marketing can facilitate personalized interactions through various channels, enhancing patient experiences and fostering loyalty (Mulyani & Hermina, 2023). Moreover, as the barriers to accessing information diminish, facilities that invest in digital marketing can differentiate themselves

by effectively showcasing their unique offerings and quality of care (Sheth, 2023). This shift necessitates an organizational commitment to invest in the technologies that underpin these strategies and to nurture a culture that supports and encourages digital innovation among healthcare professionals (Atsbeha & Wodaje, 2024).

The literature has explored various dimensions of digital marketing within healthcare, revealing numerous benefits, such as increased brand awareness, improved patient acquisition, and ultimately better health outcomes (Jankelová et al., 2021). However, While various healthcare facilities have begun to adopt digital media, their implementation remains suboptimal and often lacks a structured approach. Many institutions continue to rely on traditional promotional methods or utilize social media merely as passive information boards. Consequently, the public image formed is weak and fails to create differentiation amidst the intensifying competition among healthcare service providers.

A primary concern is the absence of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy aimed at building the facility's image and driving an increase in patient visits. As highlighted by Pramudita et al. (2022), the operational sustainability of healthcare facilities heavily depends on the number of patient visits they can attract. A positive image of a healthcare facility contributes to increased public trust, which, in turn, can lead to a rise in patient visits. Nevertheless, many healthcare facilities have yet to fully implement effective digital marketing strategies in this endeavor (Syafitri et al., 2021).

Studies indicate that the public tends to choose healthcare facilities renowned for their good reputation. A positive image can be achieved through various means, including satisfactory services, patient testimonials, and a strong online presence via social media, websites, and digital content (Wahyu et al., 2023).

The urgency of this study lies in the strategic role of digital marketing in efficiently reaching patients, building institutional reputation, and enhancing competitiveness in the era of digital transformation. Beyond these functions, the application of digital marketing in healthcare services directly contributes to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This strategy supports SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by expanding access to information and both preventive and curative healthcare services. It also advances SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) through technological transformation in health service delivery systems. Through inclusive campaigns and broad access to health information, digital marketing contributes to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) – particularly by delivering targeted health information to vulnerable groups and women. Finally, collaboration between the healthcare sector and technology and media providers in developing digital communication systems aligns with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Therefore, this study is significant not only for the development of healthcare facility management strategies but also for informing policies that strengthen information and communication systems in the healthcare sector. Accordingly, the study aims to analyze the role of digital marketing in shaping the image of healthcare facilities, identify its relationship with increased patient visits, and synthesize effective digital marketing strategies within the context of healthcare services.

2. Methods

2.1 Study Design

This work was conducted as a narrative literature review, aimed at synthesizing empirical and theoretical findings on the role of digital marketing in shaping healthcare facility image and driving patient visits. Narrative review methodology was chosen to allow for in-depth tracing and interpretation of diverse concepts, approaches, and study outcomes within the digital health marketing domain.

2.2 Search Strategy and Data Sources

A systematic search was performed across four major bibliographic databases—PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar—between 1 January 2019 and 31 March 2024. Search strings combined controlled and free-text terms, including:

- “digital marketing” AND “healthcare”
- “healthcare facility image” OR “brand perception in hospitals”
- “patient visits” OR “hospital visit intention”
- “social media healthcare marketing”

Searches were limited to articles published in English or Bahasa Indonesia. To ensure transparency and reproducibility, the full search queries, date of search, and database results are provided.

2.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Articles were eligible if they:

1. Reported empirical or theoretical insights on digital marketing interventions in hospitals, clinics, or primary care centers.
2. Examined patient perceptions, institutional branding, or patient-visit outcomes.
3. Were published between January 2019 and March 2024 in peer-reviewed journals.

Exclusion criteria included conference abstracts, commentaries, and studies without clear methodology or outcome measures.

2.4 Selection and Data Extraction

1. Identification: 135 records retrieved.
2. Screening: 60 titles/abstracts screened for relevance.
3. Eligibility: 22 full texts assessed.
4. Inclusion: 7 articles met all criteria and were included in the final synthesis.

Reviewers independently conducted screening and extraction; discrepancies were resolved by consensus. Extracted data included study design, digital marketing strategy, outcome measures, and key findings.

3. Results and Discussion

The articles that passed the selection procedure and met the inclusion and exclusion criteria totaled 7 research studies.

Table 1. Literature review results

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Alexandra Francesca Chandra, Mardiati Nadjib (2023) | Digital Marketing in The Hospital: A Scoping Review | The method employed in this study is a scoping review that systematically collects relevant studies from sources like Open Knowledge Maps and Google Scholar. | The result provides a comprehensive overview of how digital marketing can serve as an effective strategy for enhancing the image of healthcare facilities and increasing patient visits. In this scoping review, Chandra and Nadjib highlight the advantages of digital marketing over traditional methods, underlining its cost-effectiveness and ability to reach a broader audience through platforms like social media and email. This evidence is crucial as it demonstrates the potential for hospitals to not only understand patient needs better but also engage with them more effectively, thus improving service provision. Furthermore, the study underscores the necessity for innovation in digital marketing strategies within healthcare settings, particularly in the face of challenges identified during the pandemic. The emphasis on using hospital applications for online registrations and marketing aligns with the need for healthcare facilities to adapt technologically. The | The conclusion from the article emphasizes that digital marketing significantly enhances patient attraction, business expansion, customer trust, and loyalty in healthcare facilities. |

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
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| | | | conclusion drawn from this review indicates that embracing digital marketing significantly aids in attracting new patients, enhancing trust, and fostering loyalty, thereby positively impacting patient visits and overall facility image. Thus, the findings of this article reinforce the concept that a robust digital marketing strategy is essential for modern healthcare facilities in enhancing their competitive positioning and service delivery. | |
| Nuri Purwanto, Erminati Pancaningrum, Kristin Juwita (2022) | Analysis of Consumer Behaviour in Making Decisions after the Covid-19 pandemic: Perspectives on the Theory of Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) | The method utilized in the study involved distributing questionnaires via Google Forms to a purposively selected sample of 150 respondents across three Indonesian regions and analyzed using the structural equation model (SEM) technique to assess the impact of | The result provides insights into the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior, particularly in the context of healthcare facilities post-COVID-19. The study highlights how digital content marketing, despite its intent to engage customers, did not significantly influence repurchase behaviors, revealing a disconnect between digital marketing efforts and actual consumer responses. This finding is crucial for healthcare facilities aiming to enhance their image and increase patient visits through digital marketing. | The conclusion drawn from the article indicates that while advertising creativity positively influences customer engagement, overall digital marketing strategies did not significantly impact repurchase behavior among consumers in the studied regions following the COVID-19 pandemic. |

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
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| | | digital marketing strategies on consumer behavior | The implication is that while digital marketing can be creatively executed, its effectiveness in driving patient engagement and visitation may not solely rely on traditional metrics of engagement but requires a more nuanced understanding of consumer behavior in healthcare settings. Thus, this reference underscores the need for healthcare facilities to re-evaluate their digital marketing strategies to achieve desired outcomes, emphasizing the importance of aligning marketing efforts with consumer expectations and behaviors post-pandemic. | |
| Md Sohel Rana, Najnatul Farzana Sikder, Humayun Rashid Shahin, Ramjan Ali (2024) | Impact of Digital Marketing on Hospital Marketing Strategies | This study employed a descriptive literature-review methodology, analyzing four seminal articles on digital marketing in hospital settings | The literature analysis reveals several benefits of digital marketing in healthcare settings, including attracting new patients, expanding business reach, increasing customer trust, and strengthening patient loyalty. | Digital marketing plays a vital role in hospital marketing by enhancing patient engagement and improving the overall brand image. For hospitals to remain competitive and effectively communicate with their target audience in the digital era, continuous innovation and |

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | | | strategic implementation of digital marketing are essential. |
| Isaac Owusu Asante, Yushi Jiang, Xiao Luo, Martinson Ankrah Twumasi (2022) | The Organic Marketing Nexus: The Effect of Unpaid Marketing Practices on Consumer Engagement | The method utilized in the study involved covariance-based structural equation modeling to analyze 464 responses from followers of five electronic commerce firms' Facebook fan pages, focusing on the impact of three organic marketing practices on consumer engagement | The reference provided speaks to the task as it highlights the significance of digital marketing strategies in enhancing consumer engagement, which can be directly applied to healthcare facilities aiming to improve their image and attract more patient visits. In the study by Asante et al. (Asante et al., 2022), the authors explore organic marketing practices such as social media engagement and search engine optimization, elucidating their effects on consumer behavior. This is crucial for healthcare facilities, as the findings suggest that employing unpaid digital marketing strategies can lead to authentic patient engagement and improved facility image. By demonstrating how effective organic marketing can enhance consumer relationships, this research supports the notion that healthcare facilities can leverage similar digital strategies to foster positive patient | The findings indicate that employing organic digital marketing strategies is crucial for enhancing consumer engagement, highlighting the need for healthcare facilities to adopt such approaches to improve their image and increase patient visits. |

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
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| | | | perceptions and drive visitation rates. The framework presented for evaluating digital marketing strategies provides actionable insights for healthcare administrators looking to implement effective marketing tactics that resonate with potential patients. | |
| Asma Shaikh, Harिता CK, Arina Mullick, Varun Gadia (2023) | Revolutionizing Healthcare: the Pivotal Role of Digital Marketing in the Modern Healthcare Industry | The method employed in the article involves analyzing the impact of digital marketing strategies on healthcare engagement through case studies, specifically focusing on the Hidoc Dr platform as a model for effective implementation in the healthcare sector | The result provided speaks to the task by highlighting the transformative influence of digital marketing in healthcare, particularly regarding patient engagement and increased facility visits. The article discusses how digital marketing strategies reshape the interactions between healthcare providers and patients, thereby enhancing accessibility and personalization of healthcare. Furthermore, it emphasizes success stories like Hidoc Dr, illustrating how innovative digital marketing can build trust and foster community within the healthcare industry. This aligns with the overarching theme of utilizing digital marketing as a strategic approach to enhance the image of healthcare facilities and attract more patient visits. | In conclusion, digital marketing significantly transforms healthcare engagement by enhancing accessibility and fostering trust between providers and patients |

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
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| Sahala Benny Pasaribu, Dewiana Novitasari, Francisca Sestri Goestjahjanti, Hendratono (2022) | The Impact and Challenge s of Digital Marketing in Healthcare | This study employed a descriptive literature-review methodology | The result provides a Healthcare organizations in healthcare increased spending on digital marketing strategies, with 50% more technology use reported and 48% of executives citing revenue growth as a direct benefit of digital initiatives. Platforms span websites, email, social media, and emerging “digital twin” technologies. Content marketing was shown to boost patient engagement, trust, and loyalty – critical drivers of repeat visits and word-of-mouth referrals. Security and privacy concerns, lack of staff training and clear responsibilities, inadequate infrastructure, and regulatory hurdles remain significant obstacles to full digital integration | Digital marketing in healthcare offers substantial benefits – enhanced service visibility, patient acquisition, brand strengthening, and operational resilience during crises. However, realizing its full potential requires structured planning, adequate resourcing, and rigorous evaluation frameworks |
| Andreas Aryo Risky Prasetyo, Wachyu Sulistiadi (2019) | Effect of Digital Marketing in Hospitals: A Systematic Review | The method in the study involved conducting a systematic review by searching multiple academic databases for articles regarding digital marketing in | The reference provides a systematic review that delineates the impact of digital marketing on hospitals, underscoring its significance as a strategy to enhance both hospital image and patient visits. The authors articulate that effective health care marketing must prioritize understanding prospective patients' needs, which can substantially be achieved | The conclusion of the article emphasizes that the effectiveness of electronic media in developing marketing strategies is crucial for medical institutions, highlighting the complexities and |

| Author (Year) | Study Title | Method | Result | Conclusion |
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| | | hospitals, ultimately including seven relevant articles based on specific inclusion criteria | through digital platforms. They emphasize the advantages of electronic media in targeting specific demographics and promoting healthcare services efficiently. The systematic review synthesizes data from multiple databases, highlighting the inclusion of seven relevant articles. The findings suggest that digital marketing not only helps in attracting new patients but also enhances satisfaction amongst existing patients, potentially leading to referrals. The proposed strategies focus on offering quality services at competitive prices, which are effectively communicated through digital channels. | growth opportunities presented by digital marketing in an evolving healthcare landscape |

Digital marketing plays a significant role in shaping the image of healthcare facilities and driving increased patient visits. Strategies such as the use of social media, educational content, SEO, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) have proven to be key elements in the digital marketing of healthcare services. These findings are consistent with the study by Annafiatuzakiah & Meisar (2025), which states that healthcare facilities that consistently implement digital strategies tend to have a better institutional image and experience an increase in patient volume.

As noted by Babatunde (2024), digital marketing strategies, when effectively implemented, can attract new patients and foster trust, leading to an expanded customer base for healthcare providers. These strategies often include the use of social media, email marketing, and website optimization, all of which can improve visibility in a competitive landscape. Furthermore, the integration of digital marketing into healthcare practices contributes to positive perceptions of healthcare services, as social media and digital platforms serve as vital channels for interaction and information dissemination (Nabilla & Arief, 2023). This engagement translates into better online interactions, as patients are increasingly turning to digital platforms for health-related information.

The recent evolution of digital marketing practices in the healthcare sector has significantly transformed both strategic implementations and consumer engagement. Given the rise of digital platforms, healthcare providers are increasingly leveraging these tools to cultivate closer interactions with patients and reinforce their marketing strategies. Shaikh et al. emphasize that social media, a powerful communication platform, facilitates continuous dialogue between healthcare institutions and their patients, enabling proactive sharing of relevant information regarding services, promotions, and updates (Shaikh et al., 2023). Such dynamic communication is vital for building lasting relationships in a highly competitive landscape.

The growing need for effective digital marketing strategies is underscored in Chandra and Nadjib's comprehensive review, which outlines specific requirements for tailoring marketing plans in healthcare settings. Their recommendations for innovations in digital marketing, including situational analysis and strategic planning, represent a methodical approach to addressing the unique challenges hospitals face, especially in a post-pandemic world (Chandra & Nadjib, 2023). This is supported by the systematic review conducted by Prasetyo and Sulistiadi, which notes the relentless pace of digitalization and its associated complexities in marketing, suggesting that a tailored and well-structured digital marketing approach is essential for healthcare executives navigating the rapidly evolving landscape (Prasetyo & Sulistiadi, 2019).

However, while digital content marketing has potential benefits, consumer distrust can hinder its effectiveness, as highlighted by Purwanto et al. Their findings reveal a troubling trend where consumers' skepticism towards digital content leads to disengagement and a lack of brand loyalty, ultimately impacting repurchase decisions (Purwanto et al., 2022). This signifies the importance of crafting appealing content and ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the information disseminated through digital channels. The challenges of maintaining consumer trust in digital marketing efforts are echoed in Asante et al.'s exploration of unpaid marketing strategies, which emphasizes the necessity for organic engagement practices that resonate more authentically with consumers (Asante et al., 2022).

Moreover, recent literature showcases a comprehensive array of methodologies utilized in digital marketing within hospitals, ranging from search engine optimization to social media advertising. The diversity of these strategies is discussed in a literature review examining the impact of digital marketing on hospital marketing strategies, demonstrating the multifaceted approach required to enhance patient engagement and improve overall service delivery (Rana et al., 2024). Despite the acknowledged challenges – particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, where digital strategies were both a necessity and a considerable burden on healthcare marketing teams Pasaribu et al. (2022) – the advancement of digital marketing presents an essential avenue for healthcare institutions striving for operational success and improved patient relationships.

Conclusions

Digital marketing has emerged as an essential strategy for healthcare institutions to enhance their visibility, foster two-way patient engagement, and drive service utilization. By leveraging tools such as social media, SEO, and content marketing within a well-structured strategic framework, providers can deliver personalized, timely information and build enduring patient trust. However, success hinges on the authenticity of messaging, robust governance, and attention to digital literacy and access disparities to ensure inclusivity.

Ultimately, a patient-centric, continuously monitored digital marketing approach – backed by clear resources and ethical standards – will strengthen institutional reputation, improve patient loyalty, and optimize healthcare delivery.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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