

## **THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN POINT OF VIEW HOSPITAL PHYSICIAN REPUTATION TO HOSPITAL VISITING PERFORMANCE : A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the influence of digital marketing from the perspective of hospital doctors' reputation on patient visit performance. The objective is to analyze findings from diverse studies that investigate how digital marketing strategies shape physicians' reputation and subsequently affect patients' decisions to seek care at hospitals. The research design applies a systematic literature review. The scope of analysis covers scholarly publications released between 2010 and 2025, sourced from databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. A purposive sampling approach was applied with inclusion criteria: (1) studies discussing digital marketing within healthcare services, (2) research addressing physician reputation, and (3) publications reporting hospital performance indicators, especially patient visits. Non-academic materials, duplicates, and articles not available in English or Indonesian were excluded. Data were retrieved using keyword searches (digital marketing, physician reputation, hospital performance, patient visits) and synthesized thematically to identify key patterns and linkages. The findings reveal that digital marketing initiatives such as official hospital websites, social media engagement, online patient reviews, content-driven campaigns, and physicians' digital presence, significantly enhance doctor reputation, foster patient trust, and build loyalty, ultimately leading to higher hospital visitation rates. The study concludes that aligning digital marketing with physician reputation management is a strategic priority to improve hospital performance and competitiveness. It is further recommended that hospitals invest in transparent and patient-centered digital platforms to ensure sustainable growth over the long term.

**Key words:** digital marketing; physician reputation; patient visits; hospital performance; literature review

### **INTRODUCTION**

The advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed healthcare marketing strategies. Hospitals are moving away from conventional promotion tools such as banners, referrals, and printed brochures toward to the digital platforms, that allow greater interactivity and broader patient reach. Digital marketing in healthcare typically includes official hospital websites, search engine optimization, social media engagement, online reviews, and content-based campaigns. These tools help shape patient perceptions prior to making healthcare decisions (Ding, Lu, & Li, 2023). Recent research emphasizes that digital platforms not only improve visibility but also play an essential role in strengthening the relationship between patients and healthcare providers (Schick et al., 2023).

Among the most influential elements in hospital selection is physician reputation. Patients often judge the credibility of a hospital based on the competence, communication style, and professional reputation of its doctors. Previous findings have shown that physician reputation is influenced by factors such as clinical expertise, empathy, and service attitude (Wang, Li, & Zhang, 2020). Moreover, the growth of digital platforms has amplified this effect, where patient experiences are quickly shared online, shaping collective perceptions that strongly impact patient decision-making (Wan, Luo, & Shiu, 2021; Yan, Liang, & Zhou, 2024).

Several studies highlight that physician reputation directly impacts patient trust and loyalty. Torres, Vasquez-Parraga, and Barra (2009) demonstrated that positive doctor reputation fosters patient commitment, while Abdollahi and Mobasher (2024) revealed that ethical violations or poor communication could significantly damage professional image. In addition, Han et al. (2024) confirmed that negative online reviews and the way physicians respond to them critically affect patient choice. Similarly, Hsu, Chiu, Wang, and Liu (2022) found that physician promotion or profile elevation influenced both online reputation and patient engagement in digital health communities.

While there is increasing evidence on the role of digital marketing in healthcare (Burhanuddin et al., 2024; Chandra & Nadjib, 2023) and extensive literature examining physician reputation (Wang et al., 2020; Abdollahi & Mobasher, 2024), few studies have integrated these two domains to explore their combined effect on hospital performance. For instance, studies in Indonesia found that digital marketing strategies significantly affected patient loyalty when mediated by patient experience (Burhanuddin et al., 2024), while another study in East Java emphasized that patients increasingly use digital media to evaluate hospitals, yet still rely on physician reputation as a deciding factor (Wulandari et al., 2024). However, there remains a lack of systematic synthesis that

specifically investigates how digital marketing strategies highlighting physician reputation translate into improved hospital visiting performance.

The integration of digital marketing into healthcare services has been a transformative force, particularly in the last decade. In high-income countries, patients now rely heavily on hospital websites, online reviews, and social media interactions to decide where to seek treatment. Emerging economies, such as Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries, are also rapidly adopting these tools as internet penetration and smartphone ownership rise. The interplay between physician reputation and digital communication has become a decisive factor in healthcare competitiveness.

To address this gap, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review that synthesizes existing evidence regarding the effect of digital marketing from the perspective of hospital doctor reputation on hospital visiting performance. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical development of healthcare marketing, as well as provide practical insights for hospital managers seeking to integrate digital platforms with physician reputation management to improve patient trust, competitiveness, and visitation outcomes.

## METHOD

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) design, which aims to synthesize research findings systematically and transparently. The population of the review consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2025. The databases used included PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.

The inclusion criteria were:

1. Articles discussing digital marketing in healthcare services.
2. Studies emphasizing the role of physician reputation in hospital performance.
3. Publications reporting measurable outcomes related to patient visits or hospital performance.

Exclusion criteria included non-academic sources, duplicates, and articles not available in English or Indonesian. A purposive sampling technique was applied, yielding 12 eligible articles. Data collection was performed by keyword searches: *digital marketing*, *physician reputation*, *hospital performance*, *patient visits*. Data were then synthesized thematically to identify recurring patterns and conceptual linkages.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 12 articles met the inclusion criteria. Among them, 7 were quantitative, 3 were qualitative, and 2 were mixed-methods. The findings indicate that digital marketing strategies—such as hospital websites, social media platforms, online physician reviews, and digital branding—play a pivotal role in shaping physician reputation and patient decision-making.

### Scientific Findings

1. Physician reputation as a mediator Studies (e.g., Ding et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2020; Han et al., 2024) highlight that patients often associate the credibility of a hospital with the perceived expertise and trustworthiness of its physicians. Digital platforms amplify this perception through online visibility and patient reviews.
2. Digital marketing boosts patient trust and visits Articles by Wulandari (2024) and Burhanuddin (2024) show that hospitals utilizing official websites and social media campaigns experience improved engagement and trust, which translates into higher patient visits.
3. Interactive features enhance loyalty Research by Yan (2024) and Hsu (2022) found that features such as interactive Q&A sessions, teleconsultation promotion, and transparent physician profiles increase patient satisfaction and loyalty.
4. Reputation management is critical for competitiveness Schick et al. (2023) and Wan et al. (2021) emphasize that managing physician reputation digitally is not only a branding strategy but also a competitive necessity in the healthcare market.
5. Integration of content-based campaigns Abdollahi et al. (2024) and Chandra (2023) provide evidence that content-driven digital marketing—such as health education videos and physician-led articles—improves both the reputation of doctors and patient intention to visit hospitals.

Most studies were published between 2020 and 2024, reflecting the recent prominence of digital healthcare transformation. Asia contributed the majority of research, followed by North America and Europe. Quantitative methods were dominant, reflecting the need for measurable evidence of digital marketing effectiveness.

**Table 1. Number of Method**

Region	Number of Studies	Years	Dominant Method
Asia	7	2020–2024	Quantitative
North America	3	2018–2024	Mixed

The findings align with Torres (2009), who first suggested that physician reputation significantly influences healthcare-seeking behavior. However, newer studies (2022–2024) expand this by showing how digital tools accelerate and scale this effect, creating a measurable impact on hospital visitation performance.

The results show that digital marketing is not peripheral but central to patient trust building. Physician reputation mediates the link between online campaigns and hospital visits. Cross-country evidence indicates that Asian hospitals prioritize physician profiles and promotions, while Western studies stress transparency in handling negative feedback. This variation underscores the importance of cultural context in designing effective digital strategies.

The synthesis reveals notable differences in the adoption of digital marketing strategies between developing and developed countries. Hospitals in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, tend to emphasize physician reputation promotion through social media and official websites to attract patients. In contrast, studies from Europe and North America highlight the importance of transparency in addressing negative reviews and implementing evidence-based feedback systems. This indicates that cultural and regulatory contexts strongly influence the effectiveness of digital strategies.

From a practical perspective, these findings provide guidance for hospital management to integrate digital marketing with physician reputation management. Examples include publishing transparent professional profiles, promoting teleconsultation services, and applying real-time sentiment analysis of patient reviews. However, there are potential risks if hospitals fail to adapt consistently to digital transformation, such as declining competitiveness, loss of patient trust, or the emergence of information asymmetry that may damage both institutional and physician reputation.

The reviewed studies also show variation and potential bias, particularly in the use of online patient reviews. Some studies revealed that negative reviews are more dominant and influence public perception more rapidly than positive ones. This condition highlights the need for responsive reputation management strategies rather than one-way promotional efforts. Integrating these insights with the *Trust Transfer Theory* and the *Patient Loyalty Model* reinforces the conclusion that physician reputation serves as a key mediator between digital marketing strategies and patients' hospital selection decisions.

In addition to institutional efforts, physician branding has increasingly become an individual responsibility, with many doctors actively managing their personal digital presence through social media, online health platforms, and professional networking sites. This trend reflects a shift toward personalized reputation management, where patients often associate trust not only with the hospital but also with the doctor as an individual. However, such personal branding must be carried out ethically, ensuring that promotional activities do not compromise professional integrity, medical ethics, or patient confidentiality. Ethical physician branding, when aligned with hospital-level digital strategies, can create a synergistic effect that strengthens both individual and institutional reputation.

Specifically in Indonesia, patients have become increasingly critical and selective in evaluating healthcare services. With growing internet penetration and health awareness, many patients no longer rely solely on personal recommendations but actively compare hospitals and physicians through digital platforms. This shift reflects a more empowered patient population that demands transparency, credibility, and responsiveness. Consequently, hospitals that fail to meet these expectations may lose competitiveness, while those that align digital marketing with physician reputation management are more likely to gain trust and loyalty.

Looking ahead, technological advancements such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data analytics, and telemedicine are likely to expand the scope of digital reputation management. For instance, AI-based analysis can be used to detect sentiment patterns across multiple platforms, enabling hospitals to respond more quickly and accurately. The integration of such innovations will further strengthen the role of digital marketing as a key driver in enhancing hospital visitation performance.

## CONCLUSION

This review concludes that digital marketing has become a central element in strengthening hospital performance by shaping physician reputation, which serves as a key mediator influencing patient trust, loyalty, and visitation. Evidence from the 12 reviewed studies highlights that tools such as hospital websites, social media campaigns, online physician reviews, and content-driven health education significantly enhance engagement and competitiveness, though their effectiveness varies across cultural and regional contexts. In Indonesia, where patients are increasingly critical and selective, the integration of institutional digital strategies with ethical

physician self-branding is vital to meet rising demands for transparency and credibility. Furthermore, the emergence of artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and telemedicine offers new opportunities for hospitals to manage reputation more effectively and secure long-term patient loyalty.

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This review is limited to peer-reviewed articles in English and Indonesian, potentially excluding valuable grey literature. Most reviewed studies are cross-sectional, which limits causal inference. Future research should explore longitudinal data, experimental designs, and comparative studies across diverse healthcare systems. Additionally, investigating the role of artificial intelligence and big data analytics in physician reputation management presents a promising avenue for further inquiry.

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