
THE ROLE OF MEDICAL PERSONNEL RESPONSIVENESS AND COMPETENCY IN IMPROVING BRAND IMAGE AND THE ANNUAL NUMBER OF HOSPITAL VISITS

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ABSTRACT

In 2023, there has been a decrease in the number of general patients visiting hospitals, which is a serious concern for the management. The factor suspected to affect this decline is the public's perception of the responsiveness and competence of the services provided by the hospital. The purpose of this study is to empirically reveal the influence of responsiveness and competence on patients' decisions to visit hospitals with brand image as an intervening variable. The type of research is included in the quantitative with a cross-sectional study design. The results of the analysis prove that responsiveness and competence affect the patient's decision to visit the hospital, with brand image as an intervening variable. The implication of these findings is the need to improve the variables that affect the brand image, such as staff knowledge, service skills, and managerial considerations in providing responsive and competent services. These improvement efforts can improve the hospital's brand image and ultimately help attract more patients to re-choose the hospital as their healthcare provider.

KEYWORDS

Responsiveness, competence, brand image, patient decisions, outpatient



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INTRODUCTION

Theoretically, buying interest is an individual behavior that is influenced by the factors underlying it (Supana M. and Yuzliza, M. Y. and Saputra, J. and Muhammad, Z. and Bon, A., 2021), especially in the service industry, the interest in visiting is influenced by customer perception of the responsiveness of service providers to immediately meet their needs (Sharma et al., 2024), because responsiveness reflects the readiness of service providers to meet customer needs, thus influencing customer decisions (Negassa G. P., 2023). In addition, customers' interest in visiting is determined by their perception of the service provider's competence (Daouk-Öyry et al., 2021), because competence describes the service provider's ability to deliver services that meet customer expectations, thus influencing the customer's decision to visit (Kumar A., 2024), and the most important thing is the role of brand image that describes the reputation of the hospital so as to determine the patient's decision to visit hospitals (Fook et al., 2024), as purchasing decisions relate to aspects of product choice, brand choice, distributor choice, purchase time, and payment method (Kashkoli et al., 2019).

One of the factors that determines service quality is the responsiveness of service providers in meeting customer needs (Soleimani H., 2019), the responsiveness of service providers determines the perception of value in the minds of customers, so it affects the brand image embedded in the minds of customers (Chien S., 2019), and responsiveness affects the brand image (Lemon P. C., 2019). Service providers with quick responsiveness always provide prompt services, thus forming a positive value perception in the patient's mind and becoming the basis for determining the patient's choice of a hospital (Sharma et al., 2024), responsiveness reflects the readiness of the service provider to immediately respond to the patient's needs, which will have an impact on the patient's decision to make their choice (Kashkoli et al., 2019), and responsiveness affects patients' decisions to choose a hospital (Wulandari I. and Indaryani, L., 2024), because responsiveness is related to aspects of punctuality, speed of service, speed of assisting, and speed of responding to requests (Zeithaml et al., 2017).

Personnel in a health service are the main determinants of the success of health services and determinants of patient satisfaction with a service (Manzoor et al., 2019) and competent personnel are one of the determinants of customer decisions in determining purchase decisions (Daouk-Öyry et al., 2021), for this reason, the competence of service providers who are able to meet customer needs is needed according to their expectations. so that it can form a positive image in the minds of customers (Rajh D. O., 2019), and the competence of service providers affects the image of the service brand (Qureshi et al., 2022). The competence of the service provider is the basic capital to be able to meet the patient's expectations, thus determining the patient's decision to choose a hospital (Yu et al., 2022), and the competence of the service provider affects the patient's decision to visit the hospital (Chang et al., 2019), because competence is related to aspects of knowledge, skills, and considerations (Robbins T. A., 2017).

Hospital service quality standards are the basis for patient assessment, which will determine the reputation of a hospital's services in the patient's mind

(Abbasi-Moghaddam et al., 2019), the reputation of a hospital service informs the brand image in the patient's mind, so that it becomes the basis for determining the patient's decision to choose a hospital (Cham Y. and Aik, N.-C., 2019), the brand image embedded in the patient's mind is a patient's acknowledgment that the service provider is able to answer their expectations, so that it affects their decision in choosing a hospital (Maulana D., 2023), the brand image embedded in the patient's mind describes the reputation of the service provider, so that it becomes a consideration for patients to decide when choosing health services in one of the hospitals (Ali E. and Nurmahdi, A., 2019). The formation of a positive brand image in the patient's mind will make the patient's perception of the service provider's responsiveness higher, which will influence the patient's decision to visit the hospital (Vimla and Taneja, 2020), even the implantation of a positive brand image in the patient's mind will make the patient's perception of the service provider's competence more likely to influence the patient's decision to visit the hospital. (Chaudhuri M. B., 2021) because brand image is related to recognition, reputation, and affinity (Aaker, 2009).

RS X is a class B hospital that runs outpatient services that accept patient payment facilities with JKN guarantees and general patients with personal payment facilities and insurance. Based on initial observations made on February 12, 2024 to the hospital service quality department, it was informed that there was a decrease in the number of long-term outpatients in the non-JKN category with personal payment and insurance status, where in 2022 the number of patients with personal payment and insurance facilities was 122,812 patients, while in 2023 it was 114,967 patients. Based on this information, it is concluded that in 2023, there will be a decrease in outpatient visits for general patients with personal and insurance payments of 6.4% compared to 2022.

To explore these problems, an interview was conducted with the service quality department on February 15, 2024, asking "What is the main cause of the decline in the number of Non-JKN patients in 2023"? The answer obtained was "After we explored the problem, we got 2,983 (2.60%) patients who complained related to the quality of service, there were 670 (22.46%) patient complaints that assessed the slow service process after registration, in addition to 289 (9.695%) patient complaints related to the slow certainty of doctors in determining follow-up treatment actions for patients". "In addition, some of the problems we found in the suggestion box, around 171 (5.73%) patients complained about the doctor's clarity in conveying the results of the examination, and also 216 (7.24%) patients complained about the doctor's accuracy in conducting the examination, where the patient felt that what he felt was not in accordance with the examination carried out by the doctor, and 183 (6.13%) patients complained about the doctor's concern in involving his family to monitor the patient's progress". "In addition, around 800 (26.82%) patients complained about the queue system that has not been separated between BPJS patients and Non-BPJS, so they feel dissatisfied with the hospital's concern to make them a top priority compared to BPJS patients, and also 654 (21.92%) patients complained about the comfort of the waiting room and also the uncomfortable examination room".

Previous research by Manzoor et al. (2019) confirmed that the competence of medical personnel is a key indicator in determining patient satisfaction, which directly impacts visit decisions. On the other hand, Chien and Chi (2019) examined how service responsiveness increases perceived value, leading to the hospital brand image formation. However, previous studies still discuss variables separately and have not formulated an integrative relationship between responsiveness, competence, brand image, and patient visit decision variables in one complete research model. Therefore, the novelty of this study is to develop and test a structural model that combines all four variables at once, with brand image as an intervening variable, to understand the total influence that responsiveness and competence have on patient visit decision more comprehensively.

Based on the description above, it can be seen that the decrease in patient visits in 2023 illustrates the patient's problem in determining his decision to visit X. It is predicted that this occurs due to a problem in the patient's perception of responsiveness, competence and brand image embedded in his mind, and this is supported by the results of a preliminary survey and several relevant studies that prove that responsiveness, Competence and brand image affect the decision of patients to visit the hospital. Still, it can be seen from the published studies that no one has united these variables in a whole study, so this study has a novelty that unites these variables in one whole study, so that it is an idea to prove the influence of responsiveness and competence on the decision of patients to visit with brand image as an intervening variable. According to the description above, several research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Responsiveness and competence affect the patient's decision to visit with brand image as an intervening variable.

H2: Responsiveness affects the brand image.

H3: Competence affects the brand image.

H4: Responsiveness affects the patient's decision to visit.

H5: Competence affects the patient's decision to visit.

H6: Brand image affects the patient's decision to visit.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study is included in the quantitative type. It has a cross-sectional study design that aims to analyze temporary issues through data collection. A descriptive approach is used to describe the actual state of each variable studied.

Participants and Data Collection Techniques

This research was conducted at Hospital X in Bekasi. The population in this study is outpatients. The sample technique uses nonprobability sampling. The determination of the number of samples referred to by Hair (2019) multiplying the number of questionnaire indicators by five observations, so that the minimum number of respondents required is $36 \text{ items} \times 5 = 180$ respondents, with the sampling method using convenience sampling. The sample criteria must meet the

inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria, which are as follows: (1) Inclusion Criteria: (a) Be a non-JKN outpatient with personal payment and insurance facilities. (b) They received outpatient services when the survey was conducted. (2) Exclusion Criteria: (a) Patients who are unwilling to complete the questionnaire. (b) Be < 25 years old. The data source was obtained from primary data by collecting data using a survey method through a questionnaire developed by itself based on the dimensions adopted from previous research on each variable, using a Likert point scale of 4 -1 consisting of a score of 4 strongly agree (SS). Score 3 agree (S), score 2 disagree (TS), score 1 strongly disagree (STS). The middle score is not used to avoid answers that describe the respondent's doubts, so a score of 4 – 1 is used.

Instruments

The measurement of patient decision instruments is aimed at finding out the reasons why patients decide to visit the hospital, referring to the dimensions of product choice, brand choice, distributor choice, purchase time, and payment method (Kashkoli et al., 2019), with a total of 10 statements. The visibility instrument is intended to measure the patient's perception of the speed of personnel in serving, referring to the dimensions of timeliness, speed of service, speed of help, and speed of responding to requests (Zeithaml et al., 2017), with a total of 8 statements. The competency instrument is intended to measure patients' perception of doctors' competence in serving, referring to the dimensions of knowledge, skills, and considerations (Robbins T. A., 2017), with 9 statements. The brand image instrument is intended to measure patients' perception of the credibility of outpatient services, referring to the dimensions of recognition, reputation, and affinity (Aaker, 2009), with 9 statements. A pretest is carried out through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the validity and reliability of the construct. The validity of the construct is tested by looking at the value of the factor load; if the value of the factor load is greater than 0.5, the indicator is declared valid. Meanwhile, the reliability test is carried out by looking at each construct's CR value; if the CR value is ≥ 0.7 , the construct is reliable (Hair et al., 2019). The results of the CFA analysis showed that in the responsiveness variable, there was 1 invalid indicator, namely in DT7, because it had a factor < 0.6. The competency variable has 2 invalid indicators, namely KM2 and KM8. Meanwhile, brand image and patient decisions have a > factor of 0.60 in the variables. Therefore, each indicator with a factor load of < 0.60 is eliminated, and all indicators with a factor load of >0.60 are continued at the research stage. The results of the validity and reliability test of the construct concluded that all VE values had a > value of 0.5 so that all instruments contained in the variables were declared valid, and all variables also showed a CR value of > 0.7 so that it was concluded that the variables studied were reliable, and the research could be continued to the next stage.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistical analysis is used to describe the actual state of each research variable with a three-box method approach, referring to the opinion (C. et al., 2019) which divides the interval scale into three size ranges consisting of 45 – 90 low categories (R), 90.1 – 135 medium categories (S), and 135.1 – 180 high

categories (T). Hypothesis testing uses Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with the help of the LISREL program. The decision to accept the hypothesis was based on a t-value of > 1.96 (Hair et al., 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profil Respond

Based on the analysis results of 180 respondents surveyed, among the respondents by gender, the highest number of respondents was male, as many as 96 respondents (52%). In respondents based on age, the most aged 46-55 years were 60 respondents (32%). In respondents based on the last education, the most were Bachelors, 59 respondents (32%). In the category of respondents based on payment facilities, the highest number of Non-JKN insurance payment facilities amounted to 91 respondents (49%).

Description of Research Instruments

Table 1. Results of Analysis of Research Instruments

Variable	Index	Behaviour	
	R	S	T
Brand image			*
Patient decision			*
			Menyukai Commitment
Variable	Index	Behaviour	
	R	S	T
Responsiveness			*
Competence		*	Satisfied Believe
Given	Standard Values	Result	Conclusion
Probability	$< 0,05$	0,000	<i>Good fit</i>
RMSEA	$< 0,08$	0,069	<i>Good fit</i>
Given	Value Standard	Result	Conclusion
AGFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,93	<i>Good fit</i>
CFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,98	<i>Good fit</i>
GFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,97	<i>Good fit</i>
YOUTH	$\geq 0,90$	0,98	<i>Good fit</i>
RFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,95	<i>Good fit</i>
NNFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,98	<i>Good fit</i>
NFI	$\geq 0,90$	0,96	<i>Good fit</i>

Source: Researcher data processing, 2024

Based on the table above, the respondents' behaviors can be explained in accordance with the applicable index and theory, as follows: (1) The responsiveness variable is at a high level, with the highest index in the dimension of time speed, this situation shows the behavior of patients who are satisfied with the outpatient services at Hospital X, thus making them committed to choosing Hospital X. (2) The competency variable is at a moderate level, with the highest index in the

consideration dimension, the situation shows the patient's behavior who is impressed by the physical evidence he sees in the outpatient installation of Hospital X, thus making him committed to choosing Hospital X. (3) The brand image variable is at a high level, with the highest index in the affinity dimension, the situation shows the behavior of patients who like the outpatient services of Hospital X, so that it makes him committed to choosing X. (4) The patient's decision variable is at a high level, with the highest index in the dimension of distributor choice, this situation shows the behavior of patients who are committed to choosing Hospital X to get outpatient services.

Structural Model Fit Test

Table 2. Results of Structural Model Fit Test

Total Influence	TValue	Conclusion
Competence ->Brand image	5,21	H3 Accepted
Responsiveness ->Patient decision	3,67	H4 Accepted
Competence ->Patient decision	3,26	H5 Accepted
Brand image ->Patient decision	9,69	H6 Accepted

Source: Researcher Processing, 2024

Results of Direct Impact Analysis

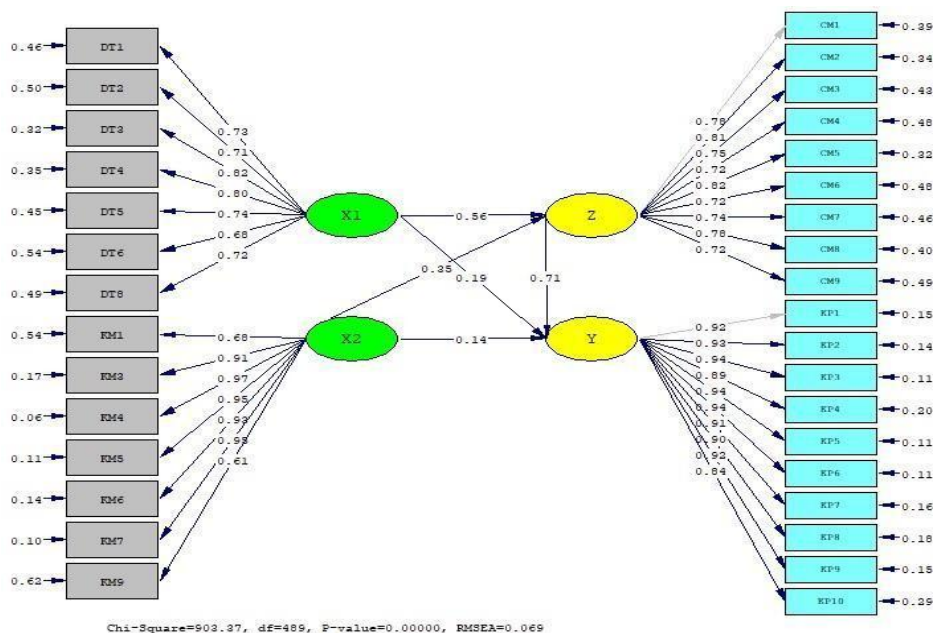


Figure 1. Coefficient Model Path Diagram

Source: LISREL Output, 2024

Based on the figure, it is concluded that the equation of path 1 shows the equation of the path $Y=0.29$ (In the analysis of sub-structure 1 produces the function

of the equation of direct influence $Z=0.56(X1)+0.35(X2)$, the results explain that responsiveness and competence have a positive effect on the brand image, so that by increasing responsiveness and competence, the brand image will increase by 56% through responsiveness and 35% through competence. The determination coefficient shows a value of 0.48, which means that both variables contribute 48% to creating a brand image, and this explains that responsiveness and competence have a moderate contribution in building a brand image (Hair et al., 2019). In the analysis of substructure 2, the function of the direct influence equation $Y=0.19X1+0.14(X2)+0.71(Z)$ was produced. The results explain that responsiveness, competence, and brand image have a positive effect on patient decisions. With efforts to improve responsiveness, competence, and brand image, patient decisions will increase by 19% through responsiveness, 14% through competence, and 71% through brand image.

The determination coefficient shows a value of 0.82, which means that responsiveness, competence, and brand image contribute by 82% in creating patient decisions, and are in the category of strong influencers (Hair et al., 2019).

Results of Indirect and Total Influence Analysis

Table 3. Indirect and Total Influence

Influence	No Influence Immediately	Total Influence
X1ZY → →	0,40	0,59
X2ZY → →	0,25	039

Source: Researcher's preparation, 2024

The indirect influence analysis found that the path equation $0.40(X1)+0.39(X2)$ explained that the brand image positively intervened in the relationship of responsiveness and competence to patient decisions. The results of the total influence analysis found a pathway equation of $0.59(X1)+0.39(X2)$ which means that with the brand image, responsiveness can influence patient decisions by 59% and competence can influence patient decisions by 39%, and this result proves that with brand image, responsiveness and competence can increase patient decisions higher than without brand image.

Uji Hipotesis

Table 4. Summary of Hypothesis Test

Total Influence	TValue	Conclusion
Responsiveness>Brand image >Patient decisions	9,10	H1 Accepted
Competencies->Brand image->Patient decision	6,58	
Direct Influence	TValue	Conclusion
Responsiveness ->Brand image	7,39	H2 Accepted

The Effect of Responsiveness and Competence on Patient Decisions with Brand Image as an Intervening Variable

The results of the analysis concluded that responsiveness and competence have an effect on patient decisions with brand image as an intervening variable as

evidenced by the comparison of T Value $9.10 > 1.96$ and $6.58 > 1.96$, so that with efforts to build a brand image, responsiveness and competence can be higher to shape the patient's decision to visit Hospital X. Confident and liked the outpatient services of Hospital X, so that the patient's commitment to choose Hospital X was formed to meet their needs for outpatient services. It can be seen from the results of the three-box method analysis, patients admit outpatient services at this hospital because they have competent doctors, so that when patient satisfaction with responsiveness, and patient confidence in the competence of the doctors is formed, the patient's decision to choose this hospital outpatient service because he is used to the previous service has increased. But the problem lies in the perception of patients to recognize this hospital as a trusted outpatient service provider, so that patients are hesitant to choose this hospital's outpatient service if it is associated with its reputation. This situation supports the opinion that the brand image is the value or reputation of the brand perceived by the customer that influences the customer to make a purchase, and this can be achieved in line with the customer's personal experience, as well as the reputation conveyed by the media or others (Aaker, 2009), the role of the brand image describes the reputation of the hospital, so that it determines the patient's decision to visit the hospital (Fook et al., 2024), and the formation of a positive brand image in the patient's mind and the perception of the service provider's responsiveness will make the patient's perception of the service provider's responsiveness higher, influencing the patient's decision to visit the hospital (Vimla and Taneja, 2020), even the implantation of a positive brand image in the patient's mind will make the patient's perception of the service provider's competence more likely to influence the patient's decision to visit the hospital higher (Chaudhuri M. B., 2021).

The Effect of Responsiveness on Brand Image

The results of the analyst concluded that responsiveness affects the brand image as evidenced by the comparison of T Value $7.39 > 1.96$, so that with efforts to increase the responsiveness of the personnel, the brand image of outpatient services of Hospital X has increased. Referring to the analysis of the three box method, the patient felt that the registration officer provided certainty of the waiting time according to the number of queues, and the doctor provided certainty of the time related to the examination results, thus forming an affinity in his mind that liked and sympathized with the outpatient services provided by Hospital X. But the problem It can be seen in the aspect of readiness to respond to requests, where patients feel that the doctor is lacking.

The Influence of Competence on Brand Image

The results of the analyst concluded that competence affects the brand image as evidenced by the ratio of $5.21 > 1.96$, which means that by improving the competence of doctors, the brand image of RS X's outpatient services increases. Referring to the analysis of the three-box method, the patient felt confident in the doctor's ability to make considerations, where the patient was quick in fulfilling the patient's request regarding the treatment plan, so the patient was hesitant to recognize this hospital as a trusted outpatient service provider. For this reason, it is

important to build the readiness of personnel in responding to patient requests because it is related to the readiness of service providers to meet customer requests even during busy times (Zeithaml et al., 2017). This result is in line with the opinion that responsiveness is the ability of a service provider to respond to requests immediately, to satisfy customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 2017) and responsiveness is one of the determinants of service reputation in the minds of customers (Kashkoli et al., 2019), because the responsiveness of service providers determines the perception of value in the minds of customers so, it affects the brand image embedded in the minds of customers (Chien S. C., 2019), and responsiveness affects brand image (Lemon P. C., 2019). Believing in the doctor's consideration in providing alternative treatment after conducting an examination, and believing in the doctor's consideration in involving the family to monitor health development, thus forming an affinity in his mind that likes and sympathizes with the outpatient services provided by Hospital X. But the problem lies in the aspect of patient confidence in the doctor's skills, where the patient is not confident in the doctor's skill in conveying medical information promptly. There is a lack of confidence in the doctor's skill in keeping the patient's anxiety away, and not confident in the doctor's skill in conducting a thorough examination, so the patient is hesitant to recognize this hospital as a trusted outpatient service provider. For this reason, hospitals need to develop doctors' skills, because skills are needed in carrying out their duties, and skills are very useful in developing potential, as well as in exploring the ability to practice directly and continuously (Robbins T. A., 2017).

The Effect of Responsiveness on Patient Decisions

The analysis results concluded that responsiveness affects patient decisions as evidenced by the comparison of T Value $3.67 > 1.96$, so that with efforts to increase the responsiveness of personnel in the hospital, the patient's decision to visit Hospital X increased. Referring to the results of the analysis of the three box method, it can be seen that the patient is satisfied with the ability of the registration officer to provide certainty of waiting time according to the number of queues, and satisfied with the doctor in providing certainty of time related to the results of the examination, so that the patient's commitment to choose outpatient services from the hospital is formed X. However, the problem can be seen in personnel readiness in responding to patient requests, where patients feel that doctors are less responsive in fulfilling patient requests related to treatment plans, so patients feel less confident to choose this hospital's outpatient service if it is tied to its reputation. For this reason, it is important to build the ability and capacity of individuals to complete their work based on their intellectual and physical capacity which are directly related to the achievement of work results (Robbins T. A., 2017), and the brand image is born when the product can answer customer expectations for a product brand (Kashkoli et al., 2019), because it requires the competence of service providers who can meet customer needs according to their expectations. This can form a positive image in the minds of customers (Rajh D. O., 2019), and the competence of service providers affects the image of the service brand (Qureshi et al., 2022). The readiness of personnel in responding to patient requests is related to

the readiness of service providers to meet customer requests even during busy times (Zeithaml et al., 2017). These results align with the opinion that responsiveness is the ability of a service provider to respond to requests promptly, aiming to satisfy customer satisfaction (Zeithaml et al., 2017). Responsiveness is the ability of a service provider to help customers and provide prompt service. Responsiveness is one of the factors that affect customer behavior (Wirtz C., 2021), because service providers with quick responsiveness, always provide prompt services, thus forming a positive value perception in the patient's mind and becoming the basis for determining the patient's choice of a hospital (Sharma et al., 2024), responsiveness reflects the readiness of the service provider to immediately respond to the patient's needs, which will have an impact on the patient's decision to make their choice (Kashkoli et al., 2019), and responsiveness affects patients' decisions to choose a hospital (Wulandari I. and Indaryani; L., 2024).

The Effect of Competence on Patient Decisions

The results of the analysts concluded that competence affected patient decisions as evidenced by the comparison of T Value $3.26 > 1.96$, so that with efforts to improve the competence of doctors, the patient's decision to visit Hospital X increased. Referring to the results of the three-box method analysis, the patient felt confident in the doctor's ability to make considerations, where the patient felt confident in the doctor's concern in providing alternative treatment after the examination, and confident in the doctor's concern in involving the family to monitor health development. But the problem lies in the aspect of patient confidence in the doctor's skills, where patients are less confident in the doctor's skill in conveying medical information, less confident in the doctor's skill in keeping the patient's anxiety away, and less confident in the doctor's skill in conducting a thorough examination, so that the patient feels less confident in choosing home outpatient services this illness if it is associated with his reputation. For this reason, it is important to pay attention to the competence of doctors, because skills are needed in carrying out their duties, and skills are very useful in developing potential, as well as in exploring the ability to practice directly and continuously (Robbins T. A., 2017). This result is in line with the opinion that competence is an individual's ability and capacity to complete their work based on their intellectual and physical capacity, which is directly related to the achievement of work results (Robbins T. A., 2017), and the purchase decision is a buying behavior (Ferdinand, 2014).

The Influence of Brand Image on Patient Decisions

The analysis results concluded that brand image affects patient decisions, as evidenced by the comparison of T Value $9.69 > 1.96$, which means that by improving the brand image of Hospital X's outpatient services, the patient's decision to visit Hospital X will increase. Referring to the results of the analysis of the three box method, patients feel well served by the doctor, feel helped by the outpatient payment facilities provided by this hospital, and feel served kindly by the doctor, thus making them committed to visiting Hospital X. But the problem is in the aspect of reputation, Where patients are constrained to recognize this hospital as a trusted

provider of outpatient services, constrained to admit that outpatient services in this hospital have competent doctors, and constrained to admit that outpatient services in this hospital set affordable service prices, so that patients feel less confident to choose this hospital's outpatient services if it is associated with its reputation. For this reason, it is important to build a service provider's reputation, because reputation is related to the assessment of the most preferred brand of various alternatives available, by taking into account customer needs and assessments of perceived quality (Kashkoli et al., 2019), because competence is related to the success of health services and determinants of patient satisfaction with a service (Manzoor et al., 2019), and competent personnel are one of the determinants of customers in determine purchasing decisions (Daouk-Öyry et al., 2021), service provider competencies become the basic capital to be able to meet patient expectations, thus determining patient decisions to choose hospitals (Yu et al., 2022), and service provider competencies influence patients' decisions to visit hospitals (Chang et al., 2019). and customer trust in the brand or company (Aaker, 2009). This result is in line with the opinion that the brand image is the value or reputation of the brand perceived by customers that influences customers to make a purchase, and this can be achieved in line with the customer's personal experience and also about the reputation conveyed by the media or others (Aaker, 2009), and the purchase decision is to buy the most preferred brand from the various alternatives that exist. but two factors can be between purchase intention and purchase decision (Kashkoli et al., 2019), because the reputation of a hospital service informs the brand image in the patient's mind, so it becomes the basis for determining the patient's decision to choose a hospital (Cham Y. and Aik, N.-C., 2019), the brand image embedded in the patient's mind is a patient's acknowledgment that the service provider is able to meet his expectations, so that it affects his decision in choosing a hospital (Maulana D., 2023), the brand image embedded in the patient's mind describes the reputation of the service provider, so it becomes a consideration for the patient to decide in choosing a health service in one of the hospitals (Ali E. and Nurmahdi; A., 2019), because the brand image is a picture of the reputation of a service, so it greatly determines the level of customer decision to make his choice (Ogba Z., 2019).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis, it is known that responsiveness and competence affect patient decisions, with brand image as an intervening variable. Responsiveness and competence affect the brand image. Responsiveness, competence, and brand image affect patient decisions. Brand image is the dominant variable that can increase patients' decision to visit the hospital, with a coefficient of 0.71. Some managerial implications that can be suggested are improvements to the service system by prioritizing the concept of patient-centered care, to encourage doctors to be agile in meeting patient requests related to treatment plans. Improve the training system by providing effective communication training, so that doctors can convey medical information clearly and inform patients about their medical conditions without causing patient

anxiety. In addition, improvements to the organizational culture system are achieved by instilling the principle of attention to detail, so that doctors are always thorough in conducting examinations. Improvements to the promotion system, by displaying the excellence of the services they have, and containing positive comments from patients who have enjoyed outpatient services through social media, so that patients believe that this hospital provides reliable outpatient services, recognize that the outpatient services in this hospital have competent doctors, and recognize that the outpatient services in this hospital set affordable service prices. Improvement in the payment system by developing cooperation with all insurance companies that are in great demand by patients, so that patients choose this hospital according to their insurance, and also try to provide a variety of payment methods, so that patients choose this hospital because it provides a variety of payment facilities. This study is limited to patients with non-JKN general payment categories, without involving BPJS patients, so it is recommended for further research to include patients with payment categories using BPJS, so that it can conduct a different test that is useful to determine each different treatment for each category of patients with general payment facilities and BPJS.

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