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THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND IMAGE AND PRICE ON PATIENTS' DECISIONS TO USE OUTPATIENT SERVICES AT GREEN HOSPITAL X

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Abstract: *Nowadays, patients' decisions to receive treatment from a hospital are affected mainly by factors such as hospital image, price, and service delivery. Green Hospital X in Central Java Provinces is one of the private hospitals committed to providing maximum hospital services for outpatients and inpatients. This research aims to quantitatively determine the influence of Green Hospital X's brand image and price on patients' decisions to use outpatient services at Green Hospital X. One hundred twenty-four outpatient samples show that Green Hospital's brand image and price significantly influence the patient's decision to use outpatient services at Green Hospital X. Moreover, hospital brand image and price significantly influenced patients' decision to use outpatient services at Green Hospital X.*

Keywords: *Brand Image; Price; Green Hospital X; Patient's Decision*

Abstrak: *Keputusan pasien dalam menerima perawatan di rumah sakit umumnya dipengaruhi oleh faktor-faktor seperti citra rumah sakit, harga, dan pemberian layanan. Green Hospital X di Propinsi Jawa Tengah, sebagai salah satu rumah sakit swasta yang berkomitmen memberikan pelayanan maksimal bagi pasien rawat jalan dan rawat inap. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa lebih jauh pengaruh citra merek dan harga terhadap keputusan pasien menggunakan layanan rawat jalan di Green Hospital X. Seratus dua puluh empat sampel pasien rawat jalan menyatakan citra merek Green Hospital X tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keputusan pasien dalam menggunakan layanan rawat jalan di Green Hospital X. Citra merek dan harga rumah sakit berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keputusan pasien menggunakan layanan rawat jalan di rumah sakit tersebut. Hasil penelitian juga mendapatkan temuan citra merek dan harga layanan secara bersamaan berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keputusan pasien dalam menggunakan layanan rawat jalan di Green Hospital X. Sebagai salah satu green hospital di Indonesia, rumah sakit X selalu berusaha memberikan layanan terbaik lewat peningkatan kualitas layanan secara terus menerus. Penelitian ini direncakaan akan dilakukan secara terencana dan terjadwal, untuk dapat memberikan masukan perbaikan secara berkala yang menuju pada perbaikan kualitas (continuous improvement).*

Kata Kunci: Citra Merek; Harga; Rumah Sakit; Keputusan Pasien

PENDAHULUAN

Health is one of the main factors of concern to society today. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for health services has increased. It impacts the growth of the Hospital industry, including the capital city of Central Java Province. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows an increase of 10.3% in the number of hospitals in the Capital City of Central Java Province in 2023.

A hospital is a health service facility that provides inpatient and outpatient services. Therefore, quality service is necessary for hospitals to comply with competition among health service providers. If the quality of service the hospital provides meets patient expectations, the patient will feel satisfied, impacting patient loyalty. If health services do not meet patient expectations, the hospital must try to improve its services.

Green Hospital X is one of the type B private hospitals in Central Java Province. As the fourth oldest hospital in the Capital City of Central Java, it has the image of a Heritage Hospital. It is one of the cultural heritage sites in Central Java Province. In addition, Green Hospital X has more expensive rates than regional general hospitals and hospitals of lower types (types C and D). Based on internal hospital data, in the last five years, the number of patients in 2020 significantly decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the number of visits increased in the following years, it has

yet to return to what it was before the pandemic. Therefore, Green Hospital X needs to explore the factors that influence patients' decisions regarding treatment. This research helps hospital management enhance patient attraction and retention strategies, improve service quality, and develop effective marketing and pricing strategies. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on healthcare marketing, consumer behavior, and service quality by providing a deeper understanding of the factors that drive patient decisions in the healthcare context.

In deciding where to seek treatment, patients look at the quality of service and various other factors. Currently, hospitals' brand image and prices greatly influence patient decisions. It does not rule out the possibility that brand image and price are the beginning of someone being interested in buying the product or service offered by the company, resulting in a decision to buy. Research conducted by Windereis (2021) found that brand image and price aspects need more attention because they can determine patient decisions regarding providing services at the hospital.

From a consumer's point of view, price relates to the benefits or quality of the goods or services purchased. Based on research conducted by Nasrulsyah et al. (2020), who analyzed Siloam Hospital using SWOT analysis, the public considered the price paid for treatment at the hospital to be costly. However, the public remained loyal to the hospital because the service was excellent.

Another essential factor that influences patient satisfaction is the brand image. Building a good brand image with the public is the goal of every company. Brand image is a perception formed by customers about a brand based on brand attributes, benefits, values, and emotional relationships associated with the brand (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Research conducted by Pradhini et al. (2023) stated that brand image positively and significantly influenced patients' decisions in carrying out examinations at Hermina Palembang Hospital.

Brand image is the reinterpretation of all brand perceptions formed from information and past experiences of consumers and customers towards a brand (Coaker, 2021). A brand is not just a name or symbol but a key element in the relationship between a company and its customers (Kotler et al., 2022).

Brand image positively influences consumer loyalty and the desire to make repeat purchases (McPheron, 2021). If customers have a positive image of a brand, they will become loyal and repurchase the product, and vice versa.

A positive brand image can help consumers differentiate from other brands, which can help in the purchasing process. Meanwhile, for companies, brand image can help develop product lines by utilizing the positive image formed by existing brands. Three things can differentiate brand image between various brands evaluated by consumers, which can increase the possibility of making purchasing decisions for a brand, namely strength of brand association, favorability of brand association, and uniqueness of brand association. The strength of brand association represents how information enters consumers' minds and builds the brand's popularity. Favorability of brand association represents the superiority of a brand in terms of the unique attributes and benefits of the product or service). The uniqueness of brand association is related to the uniqueness of a brand that differentiates it from competing brands.

Price is not just a number printed on a label. Consumers will describe the suitability between the performance of a product or service and the price they pay. With technological advances, consumers can compare the prices of several brands before purchasing to get the best price. On the other hand, the Internet also allows companies to monitor market needs and adjust prices accordingly. For example, Uber uses a strategy of increasing their fares during peak hours.

Consumer decisions on service purchases depend on how consumers perceive price suitability and their purchasing power. Consumers with low purchasing power tend not to care about a product or service's quality and brand image but rather emphasize low prices. On the other hand, consumers with high purchasing power tend to want products or services of the best quality or to have a brand image that can increase their prestige.

Sellers often attempt to change consumers' perceptions of their price references. For example, sellers try to place their products in line with executive products to increase their reference prices. Sellers can use splitting rates to eliminate the impression of being expensive for a product or service. For example, an installment strategy or changing the monthly subscription rate to an annual one with a cheaper offer.

In the health industry, especially outpatient services, price variables can be grouped into three categories: (1) doctor consultation fees (fees that patients must pay to obtain health consultations

with doctors) and (2) diagnostic examination fees (costs incurred by patients for examinations). Such as laboratory and radiology examinations), and (3) drug costs (costs incurred by patients to purchase drugs prescribed by doctors.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), four indicators characterize a price: affordability, suitability to the quality of the product, competitiveness, and suitability to the community.

Consumers make many purchasing decisions every day. Therefore, companies or service providers must understand consumer behavior in selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of a product or service to meet their needs.

Kotler et al., (2022) stated that there are five stages in the consumer process of making a purchase, including (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) alternative evaluation, (4) purchasing decision, and finally (5) post-purchase behavior (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Consumer Purhcase Decision
Sumber: Kotler (2022)

One of the concepts popularized by Derek Rucker (Kotler et al., 2016) is the 4As concept (aware, attitude, act, and act again). In this concept, interests and desires are combined into behavior, and a repurchase stage is added as an application of consumer behavior after making a purchase.

However, in the era of connectivity, the 4A concept needs to be modified again. The first shift in the era of connectivity is that today's consumers no longer move alone but are influenced by the community around them. Second, loyalty is marked by purchases or repeat visits and the desire to recommend to the community. Finally, to understand a brand, they actively engage with the community to establish an inquiry-and-advocacy relationship (figure 2). Based on the shift above, the customer journey has been modified into 5As (aware, appeal, ask, act, and advocate).

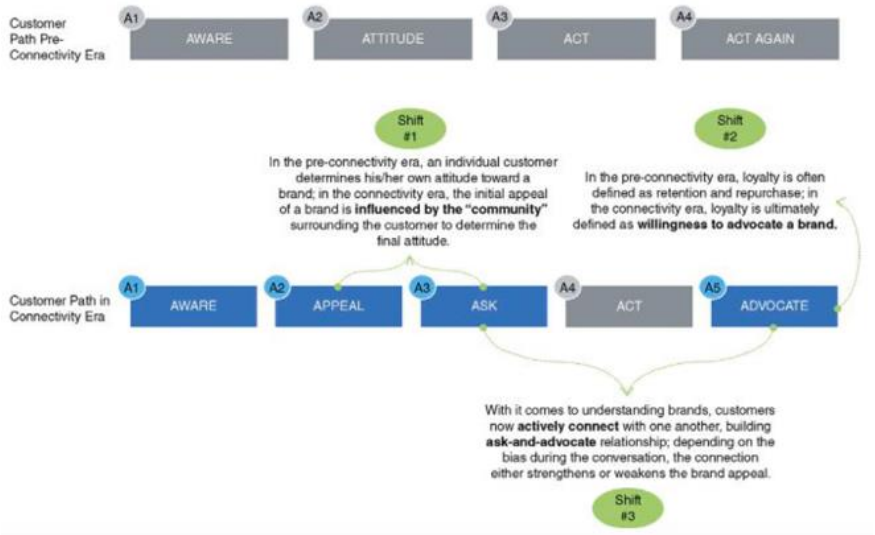

Fig 2. Shifting Customer Journeys in a World of Connectivity
Source: Kotler (2016)

The 5As framework is flexible and can be applied in all industries (Kotler et al., 2016). In describing consumer behavior, 5As can provide a picture closest to the consumer's purchase journey. 5As also provide input for companies when comparing consumer behavior towards their products or services with competitors. For example, when a company learns differences in the consumer journey towards its product or service compared to the general consumer journey in that industry, it can identify possible problems.

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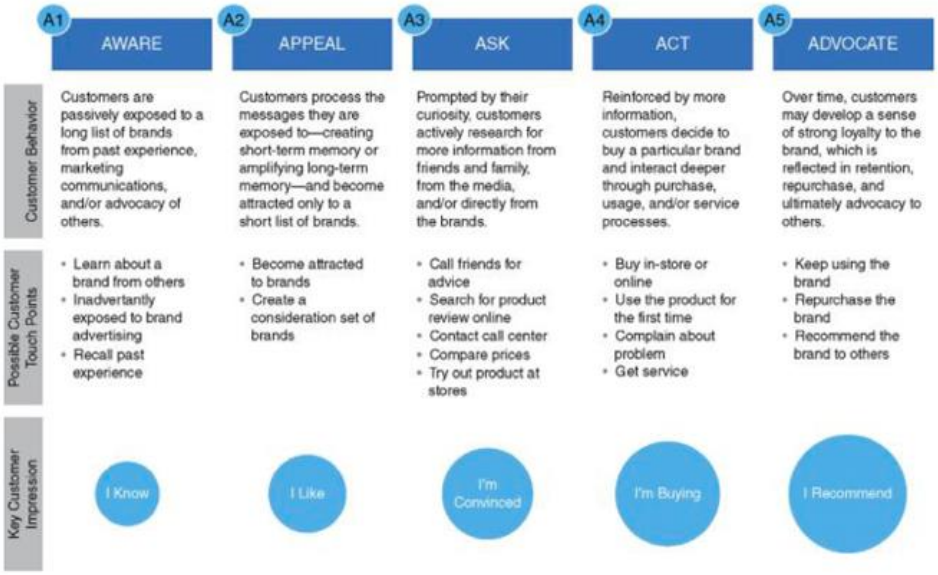

Figure 3. Customer Journey of 5As Model
Source: Kotler (2016)

Based on the background and explanation above, this research aims to analyze and better understand the influence of brand image and price perceptions on outpatient decisions to use outpatient services at Green Hospital X.

A hypothesis is a logical estimated relationship between two or more variables expressed as a statement that can be tested (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). This research hypothesis was built based on theoretical foundations and findings from previous research.

Building a good brand image in society is the goal of every company. Brand image is a perception formed by customers about a brand based on the strength, uniqueness, and liking of a brand. Brand image is essential to attracting customers and differentiating brands from their competitors. A positive hospital brand image can help patients decide about utilizing health services at the hospital. Therefore, the hypothesis in this research is:

H1: Brand image has a significant influence on patient decisions in using outpatient services at Green Hospital X

Price is an essential variable in marketing because consumer (patient) decisions to make purchases or use services can be influenced by price. Price also shows the value position of a company to the market regarding the company's products or services (Setiawan et al., 2019). Consumers (patients) evaluate the actual price of a product or service by what they think about the value of the product or service and determine the perceived relative price (Monroe, 2012). Therefore, the hypothesis in this research is

H2: Price has a significant effect on patient decisions in using outpatient services at Green Hospital X

Using these hypotheses, researchers developed a conceptual framework to determine and analyze the relationship between brand image and price on patient decisions in outpatient services at Green Hospital X as follows:

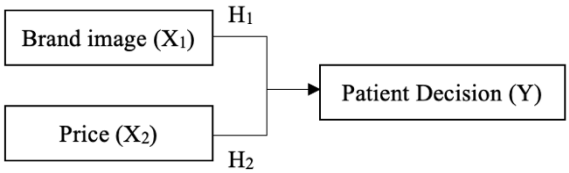

Figure 4. Conceptual Framework
Source: Author's Research

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METODE PENELITIAN

Population is the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that researchers want to study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2017). The research population is patients who paid by cash and had an outpatient examination at Green Hospital X. As the sample represents the entire population whose characteristics will be investigated (Sani & Maharani, 2013), the probability sampling and Slovin method have employed, and unknown of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Gray, 2017; Sugiyono, 2017). The data collection of outpatients from Green Hospital X occurred during the first quarter of 2024.

n = N / (1+N(e)2)

During data collection, 2,490 patients visited Green Hospital X by cash payment in the first quarter of 2024. Therefore, this study's minimum number of samples (with a tolerable percentage of sampling error of 0.1) is 96 samples based on Slovin.

The primary data was collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The Likert scale is composed of strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). The operational definition aims to avoid differences in perception when interpreting the meaning of each context in this research (Sugiyono, 2017). This study's independent variables consist of two independent variables: perception of Green Hospital X's brand image (X1) and perception of Green Hospital X's price (X2). This research's dependent variable is outpatients' decisions to conduct health examinations at Green Hospital X. All the operational varibles present in table 1.

Table 1. Operational Table

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
X_1 Variable: Perception of brand image	Strength	Service superiority over competitor
		Completeness of service over competitor
	Uniqueness	Characteristics that differentiate from competitors
		Brand name and logo uniqueness
	Favorable	Ease of remembering brand name and logo
		Convenience when using the service
X_2 Variable: Perception of price	Price affordability	Affordable price for all circle
		Price variations according to class of service
	Suitability between price and service quality	Price per service quality offered.
		Price per perceived quality.
	Price competitiveness	Prices are more affordable compared to competitors.
		Prices can compete with competitors.
	Suitability between price and benefit	Price per benefit offered
		Price per perceived benefit
Variable Y Patient Decision	Problem Recognition	Availability of services as needed
		Interest in using services as needed
	Information Search	Search for information through the media.
		Search for information through family, friends, or colleagues
	Evaluation of alternative	Evaluate services of several existing hospital brands.
		Evaluate the price of several existing hospitals.
	Purchase decision	Purchase decision based on brand image
		Purchase decision based on price
	Post-purchase behavior	Satisfaction with the services provided
		Provide recommendations to others.

Data validity measurement in this research used the Pearson Product Moment correlation (Arikunto,2016). After the validity test, the researcher carried out a reliability test to test the data consistency of the results from the same respondent at different times (Effendi & Tukiran, 2014). The nonparametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (K-S) is conducted to test normality, whether the independent and dependent variables have a normal distribution in the regression model, the multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity (Ghozali, 2016). Lastly, The F-test and the t-test are calculated to answer the hypotheses.

The 124 questionnaires portray the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of age, gender, education level, and current profession. It shows that the most significant number of respondents in this research were 31 to 40 years old, with 34 respondents (27%), and 86 respondents (69%) were female, 56 respondents had a bachelor's degree (45%), and private sector employees were 56 respondents (45%).

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Characteristics	Sample Size	Percentage
Age (Year)		
<21	10	8%
21 – 30	20	16%
31 – 40	34	27%
41 – 50	29	23%
51 – 60	10	8%
>60	21	17%
Gender		
Man	38	31%
Woman	86	69%
Education		
Elementary School	2	1%
Junior High School	1	1%
High School	37	28%
Diploma	21	16%
Bachelor	56	45%
Master	9	7%
Doctoral	3	2%
Working Status		
Private Sector Employee	56	45%
Civil Servant	7	6%
Entrepreneur	20	16%
Students	7	6%
Housewife	16	13%
Other	18	14%

HASIL PENELITIAN

In this section, all data analyses conducted will be explained. Validation tests, reliability tests, and hypothesis tests will be presented. All calculations were performed using SPSS 26 software. Following this, all results will be analyzed in the context of the current state of hospital management.

Pearson Product Moment is used to check the validity of each research question. (Arikunto, 2016; Özdemir, 2019). Tables 3a, 3b and 3c indicate that the validity value for each statement item of the brand image perception variable (X_1), Price perception variable (X_2), and Purchase Decision Validity Test (Y) are valid based on $r_{count} > r_{table}$, n-2 (0.147).

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Table 3a. Brand Image Validity Test (X_1)

Item	r_{stat}	r_{table}	Conclusion
Statement 1	0.638	0.147	Valid
Statement 2	0.609	0.147	Valid
Statement 3	0.650	0.147	Valid
Statement 4	0.687	0.147	Valid
Statement 5	0.622	0.147	Valid
Statement 6	0.600	0.147	Valid

Table 3b. Price Perception Validity Test (X_2)

Item	r_{stat}	r_{tabel}	Conclusion
Statement 1	0.644	0.147	Valid
Statement 2	0.683	0.147	Valid
Statement 3	0.732	0.147	Valid
Statement 4	0.694	0.147	Valid
Statement 5	0.712	0.147	Valid
Statement 6	0.631	0.147	Valid
Statement 7	0.670	0.147	Valid
Statement 8	0.638	0.147	Valid

Table 3c. Purchase Decision Validity Test (Y)

Item	r_{stat}	r_{tabel}	Conclusion
Statement 1	0.610	0.147	Valid
Statement 2	0.610	0.147	Valid
Statement 3	0.518	0.147	Valid
Statement 4	0.469	0.147	Valid
Statement 5	0.616	0.147	Valid
Statement 6	0.551	0.147	Valid
Statement 7	0.563	0.147	Valid
Statement 8	0.714	0.147	Valid
Statement 9	0.478	0.147	Valid
Statement 10	0.468	0.147	Valid

In this research, the reliability test used Cronbach's alpha to test whether a variable is reliable or not to be asked in the survey (Sugiyono, 2015; Bonett, 2015; Amirrudin, 2021). Table 4 indicates that Cronbach's Alpha value for all variables is more than 0.600. Therefore, all variables are reliable.

Table 4. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N	Alpha	Conclusion
Brand Image (X1)	0.701	6	0.600	Reliable
Price (X2)	0.824	8	0.600	Reliable
Patient Decision (Y)	0.727	10	0.600	Reliable

Normality test is conducted as one of the important assumption for regression analysis (Schmidt & Finan, 2018; Berenson et al, 2020). The normality test of the data, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, is used to the residual of the regression. From Table 5, the significance value is more than 0.05, precisely 0.092. Consequently, it can be concluded that the data in this research follow a normal distribution.

Table 5. Normality Test

N	124
Test Statistic	0.074
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.092

The multicollinearity test is another assumption test that was conducted. In regression analysis, the desired outcome is a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. However, a relationship between the independent variables in multiple regression analysis is not desired. Multicollinearity is a condition where there is a relationship between independent variables (Daoud, 2017). In this research, there are two methods to see multicollinearity. The first one is tolerance value, and the second one is VIF (Variance Inflation Factors). From Table 6, the tolerance value (0.896) is more significant than 0.05, and the VIF value (1.116) is less than 10. Based on these values, it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity in this research.

Table 6. Multicolinearity Test

Model	Colinearity Statistic	
	Tolerance	VIF
Brand Image	0.896	1.116
Price	0.896	1.116

The Glejser test is used in this research for the heteroscedasticity test. Table 9 below shows the result of the Glejser Test. Based on Table 7, the significance value for variable "Citra Merek" is 0.889, and for variable "Harga" is 0.347. Both variables have a value of more than 0.05. It can be concluded that in the regression models, there is no Heteroscedasticity.

Table 7. Heteroscedasticity Test

Model	Significance Value
Brand Image	0.889
Price	0.347

This study employed multiple linear regression for hypothesis testing, utilizing both the t-test and F-test. Multiple linear regression encompasses regression models that incorporate more than one independent variable. Table 8 shows that the t value of the brand image or "Citra Merek" variable (6.349) is greater than in the t table (1.980). It indicates that H01 is rejected. It means that brand image significantly influences patients' decisions to use outpatient services at Green Hospital X. The t-value for the price perception or "Harga" variable (4.414) is greater than the t-table (1.980).

So, H02 is rejected, and price also significantly influences the patient's decision to use outpatient services at Hospital X.

Table 8. T-Test Statistic

Model	B Coefficients	T-Statistic	Signifiance
Constant	-0.002	-0.009	0.993
Brand Image	0.580	6.349	0.000
Price	0.400	4.414	0.000

F-test in this test to determine whether the regression models have significance statistic between all independent variables and independent variable. From Table 11, F_{count} is 143.417. Compared to $F_{Table,}$ which is 3.071, it can be concluded that F_{count} is greater than F_{Table}. It can concluded that there is a significant correlation between the "Brand Image" and "Price" variables for the customer (patient) decision to use outpatient service in Hospital X.

Table 9. F-Test Statistic

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Significance
Regression	63.805	2	31.903	143.417	0.000
Residual	28.251	127	222		
Total	92.056	129			

PEMBAHASAN

Based on the t-test, brand image perception tcount 6.349 > ttable 1.980 implies that strength, uniqueness, and favourability do influence the patient's decision to choose outpatient services at the hospital and to like the attributes of a brand compared to competitors. This finding in line with Aryuningtyas et al. (2023) research, which states that company image influences patients' decisions to seek treatment at Hermina Palembang Hospital. It shows that patient purchase decisions can vary from region to region as patient characteristics can be influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors and patient psychology, including motivation, perception, and emotions (Kotler et al., 2022).

Based on the t-test of price perception (t-count 4.414> t-table 1.980) implies that appropriate and affordable prices improve patients' decisions when choosing outpatient services at Green Hospital X. Patients mostly compare the prices offered with the quality and benefits provided by the hospital. It determines whether patients will make a return visit or not in the future if they need health services again and whether they will recommend the hospital to their family and friends. This finding aligns with research conducted by Petra (2022), which states that price perceptions significantly influence the decision to use a hospital.

In response to these findings, hospitals should always carry out research related to patient satisfaction with the rates set by the hospital, benchmark service rates with other similar hospitals, and pay attention to different external factors that can influence people's purchasing power so that enable hospitals to set affordable and competitive rates for the community.

The F-test shows that the F-count value (143.417) is more significant when compared to the F-table (3,071) and implies that the patient's decision to use outpatient services at Green Hospital X is influenced simultaneously by brand image and price. From the t-test before, brand image and price perception indeed influence patients in choosing services at Greend Hospital X. This is align with F-test result that when patients considered brand image and price together it will affect in patients decision. The result is similar to research conducted by Christ (2021), which states that brand image and price influence patients' decisions to seek treatment at Bina Kasih Hospital Pekanbaru.

Therefore, Green Hospital X still has to pay attention to their brand image. Hospitals must always strive to provide better and better quality health services for the community, especially in the Central Java Province. By increasing the quality of service, the hospital's brand image will also increase in the eyes of the public. The public will also feel that the rates set by the hospital are commensurate with the quality and benefits obtained.

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that brand image and price significantly influences patient decisions in using outpatient services at Green Hospital X and simultaneous significant influence of brand image and price on patient decisions in using outpatient services at the Hospital.

This finding relates to Central Java Province's characteristics, which are very sensitive to prices. These characteristics are related to the income and welfare of West Java Province society, which are not as good as those in DKI Jakarta and West Java Province. Based on BPS (2022), the capital city of Central Java Province society's monthly average per capita expenditure reached 1,973,168 IDE, of which 40,43% was used for food expenses. This amount is smaller than the monthly average per capita expenditure of DKI Jakarta society, which reached 2,525,347 IDR, of which 37,75% was used for food expenses. The per capita consumption can be used to predict per capita income to provide an overview of the population welfare state. The higher the income, the more expenditure will shift from food to non-food consumption.

Nevertheless, patients in the capital city of Central Java Province are concerned about price and brand image simultaneously. Green Hospital X's patient population is dominated by Catholic patients and the late adult to elderly age category. The possible reason influencing the patient's preference was the brand image of Green Hospital X as a private and heritage hospital.

RECOMMENDATION

It is suggested that the role of technology and digital marketing in shaping green hospitals' brand image and pricing perceptions be investigated. Conducting long-term studies to observe changes in patient behavior over time will bring positive lessons for Green Hospital X as part of the hospital's continuing improvement. To generalize the findings, it is recommended that the research be expanded to include multiple green hospitals across Indonesia. Furthermore, another variables such as patient’s satisfaction, brand loyalty, acreditations from healthcare organization, location of hospital, reviews and many more variable that might affect patient’s decision.

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