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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effect of Brand Image and Customer Experience on Patients' Satisfaction and Mediation Role of Trust at Outpatient Installation of RSUD Haji South Sulawesi 2024

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
  *Corresponding Author: hafidnf22k@student.unhas.ac.id	Patients' satisfaction takes a significant role in hospital's health services quality. RSUD Haji of South Sulawesi is required to provide optimal services to its patients. This matter has recently attracted attention as service quality improvement demand increases. This quantitative study was conducted at RSUD Haji South Sulawesi using a Cross-Sectional design, involving 150 samples selected purposively. Data were analyzed using SPSS software. The results of the study, Univariate analysis showed that patients' satisfaction reached 74.67%. Furthermore, bivariate analysis showed significant relationship between brand image, customer experience, and trust on patients' satisfaction (ρ value <0.05). Multivariate analysis further showed that brand image has the most direct effect on patients' satisfaction by 52.2% (β = 0.522), continued by trust by 20.5% (β = 0.205). In terms of their effect on trust, brand image obtained 24.5% (β = 0.245), while customer experience obtained 20.0% (β = 0.200). Meanwhile, the indirect effect of brand image and customer experience on patients' satisfaction through trust is 5.0% (β = 0.050) and 4.1% (β = 0.041), respectively. The conclusion is Customer service is the most effective variable to improve patients' satisfaction. Hence, hospitals are suggested to improve their customer experience.

INTRODUCTION

Healthcare quality is one of the prominent indicator for patient satisfaction. Patient satisfaction does not only demonstrates the hospital's capacity to deliver outstanding healthcare, but also how well it can meet or even beyond patients' expectations. Hospital management shall prioritize numerous variables, including trust, customer experience, and brand image, to increase patient happiness. First impressions of the healthcare quality patients will receive are significantly affected by the hospital's brand image. A positive perception can raise hopes and affect the entire patient's experience (Iglesias et al., 2011). Patient's satisfaction is also significantly affected by the patient's experience, which

encompasses any interactions he has with the hospital, from the registration procedure to both medical and non-medical services. While a bad experience may damage a patient's trust, a good experience may enhance it. Patients' level of satisfaction can be greatly affected by their trust level. Through numerous exchanges that show the hospital's expertise, compassion, and honesty, this trust is further built (Maister, D. H., Green & Galford, 2001).

RSUD Haji is a class B hospital owned by the South Sulawesi Provincial Government which has been established for many years and has been widely known by the public. This hospital image has an Islamic character, indicated by the name and building interior. This is indeed one of the main attractions of the hospital for consumers in the Makassar area, whose majority is Muslim.

Based on the results of the Community Satisfaction Index (IKM) survey in the first semester of 2023, the average patient satisfaction in the three units of RSUD Haji, South Sulawesi is as follow: IGD had a patient satisfaction percentage of 84%, Outpatient Installation had a percentage of 81%, and Inpatient Installation had a percentage of 83%. Although the rate experienced an increase from 2022 with an average patient satisfaction of 80.91% to 82.6% in 2023, the rate still does not meet the patient satisfaction standards of each unit.

It is essential to understand the patients' satisfaction concept since patients are the users of the health services. Patients' satisfaction is described as an expression that investigates the gap between service expectations and the experiences (Naidu, 2009).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This quantitative study was conducted after obtaining recommendations and permission from the research ethics commission of the Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar No. 1370/UN4.14.1/TP.01.02/2024, through a cross-sectional design

Research duration and location

The research was conducted at Haji Hospital, South Sulawesi from June to July 2024.

Population and sample

The study's population consisted of nvolved 150 outpatients selected purposively sampling.

A. Data collection instruments

Data collection was done using a questionnaire, whose validity and reliability have been tested.

B. Data collection procedures

1. Primary data

Brand Image was assessed using a questionnaire consisting of 11 question items described by Kotler through 3 dimensions, including Favorability of brand association, Strength of brand association and Uniqueness of brand association. Customer experience was assessed using a questionnaire consisting of 17 question items described by Schmitt through 5 indicators, including sense, feel, think, act and relate. Meanwhile, trust was assessed using a questionnaire consisting of 10 question items described by Maister by assessing 4 indicators, including credibility, reliability, intimacy, and self-orientation. Furthermore, patient satisfaction was assessed using a questionnaire consisting of 24 question items as proposed by Kotler through 8 indicators, including Interpersonal Manner, Technical Quality, Accessibility/convenience, Finances, Efficacy/outcome, Continuity, Physical Environment and Availability.

2. Secondary data

Included the hospitals's internal reports, records, and literature relevant to the study.

3. Data processing and analysis

All data were analyzed through univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis using SPSS software. Univariate analysis aims to determine the frequency distribution and proportion in order to know the research subjects' characteristics. Bivariate analysis was carried out using the Chi Square test to

see the effect between independent and dependent variable. Meanwhile, multivariate analysis through path analysis aims to see how much direct and indirect effect the brand image, customer experience, and trust variables have on patient satisfaction.

4. Statistical analysis

a) Univariate analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to describe the characteristics of the study sample and the distribution of key variables.

b) Bivariate analysis

Cross-tabulation and chi-square tests were performed to examine the relationships between two variables, such as the correlation between effect of brand image and customer experience on patients' satisfaction and mediation role of trust at outpatient installation.

c) Multivariate analysis

Path analysis was conducted using AMOS software to explore both the direct and indirect effects between brand image, customer experience and trust on patient satisfaction.

RESULTS

Respondent characteristics

This research involved 150 patients as research participant. Table 1 shows the characteristics of outpatient respondents at Haji Hospital, South Sulawesi.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents' characteristics based on age, gender, education, occupation, distance between residence and hospital, number of healthcare services received at rsud haji south Sulawesi 2024

Characteristics	Research Sample	
	N	%
Age		
17-25 years	13	8.7
26-35 years	55	36.7
36-45 years	64	42.7
46-55 years	14	9.3
>55 years	4	2.7
Gender		
Male	48	32.0
Female	102	68.0
Education		
Primary School	11	7.3
Junior High School	27	18.0
Senior High School/ Vocational School	46	30.7
Diploma III	7	4.7
Undergraduate Study	56	37.3
Graduate Study	3	2.0
Occupation		
Civil Servant	23	15.3
Private Employee	44	29.3
State-Owned Enterprise	7	4.7
Entrepreneur	63	42.0
Unemployed	13	8.7
Distance		
<5 km	118	78.7
>5km	32	21.3
Number of Services Received		
2 times	17	11.3
3 times	27	18.0
4 times	36	24.0

Characteristics	Research Sample	
	N	**%**
>4 times	70	46.7
Total	**150**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents are at the age of 36-45 years by 64 respondents (42.7%), female by 102 respondents (68%), have a bachelor's degree by 56 respondents (37.3%), entrepreneur by 63 respondents (42%), have a residence with distance less than 5 km to the hospital by 118 respondents (78.7%), and have visited the hospital for more than four times by 70 respondents (78.7%).

Univariate analysis

Table 2 shows that the overall perception analysis of the brand image of RSUD Haji, South Sulawesi is in the good category, which is 82.9%, with the highest dimension being the uniqueness of brand association by 90.7%. The analysis also shows that the customer experience are good by 84.14%, with the highest dimension being sense by 87.3%, patient trust is 82.35%, with the highest dimension being reliability of 86.0%, and the patient satisfaction analysis are 74.67%, with the highest dimension being availability of 82.7%.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of brand image dimension at RSUD Haji South Sulawesi 2024

Variable	Dimension	Good		Poor		Mean
		n	**%**	**n**	**%**	
Brand Image	Favourability of brand association	125	83.3	25	16.7	82.9%
	Strength of brand association	112	74.7	38	25.3	
	Uniqueness of brand association	136	90.7	14	9.3	
Customer Experience	Sense	131	87.3	19	12.7	84.14%
	Feel	124	82.7	26	17.3	
	Think	120	80.0	30	20.0	
	Act	129	86.0	21	14.0	
	Relate	127	84.7	23	15.3	
Trust	Credibility	121	80.7	29	19.3	82.35%
	Reability	129	86.0	21	14.0	
	Intimacy	127	84.7	23	15.3	
	Self-orientation	117	78.0	33	22.0	
	Credibility	121	80.7	29	19.3	
	Interpersonal Manner	122	81.3	28	18.7	
Patients' Satisfaction	Technical Quality	109	72.7	41	27.3	74.67%
	Accessibility / Convenience	105	70.0	45	30.0	
	Finances	109	72.7	41	27.3	
	Efficacy / Outcome	111	74.0	39	26.0	
	Continuity	104	69.3	46	30.7	
	Physical Environment	112	74.7	38	25.3	
	Availability	124	82.7	26	17.3	

Bivariate analysis

Based on the bivariate analysis results on Table 3, the *ρ value* obtained is less than 0.05, indicating a relationship between brand image, customer experience and trust on patient satisfaction.

Table 3: Analysis of independent variable on dependent variable at RSUD Haji

South Sulawesi 2024

Variable/Category		Patients' Satisfaction				Total		P value
		Satisfied		Less Satisfied				
		n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	
Brand	Good	91	80.5	22	19.5	113	100	0.000

Variable/Category		Patients' Satisfaction				Total		P value
		Satisfied		Less Satisfied				
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Image	Poor	12	32.4	25	67.6	37	100	
Customer Experience	Good	100	86.2	16	13.8	116	100	0.000
	Poor	3	8.8	31	91.2	34	100	
Trust	Good	91	81.3	21	18.8	112	100	0.000
	Poor	12	31.6	26	68.4	38	100	

Multivariate analysis

This research employs hypothesis testing through a multivariate analysis method, specifically path analysis, to examine the direct and indirect effects between independent and dependent variables, as illustrated in the following figure:
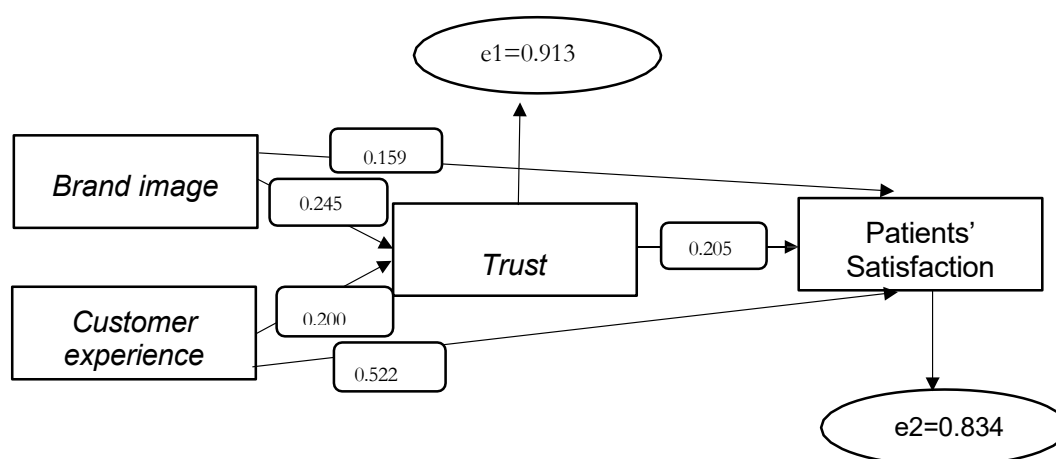
Figure 1: Path analysis of research variable

Based on the multivariate analysis results on Table 4, the coefficient value of the direct effect of Brand image is $\beta = -0.159$, customer experience is $\beta = -0.522$, and trust is $\beta = -0.205$ on patient satisfaction. Meanwhile, the direct effect of Brand image is $\beta = -0.245$ and customer experience is $\beta = -0.200$ on trust. Furthermore, the indirect effect of Brand image is $\beta = -0.050$ and customer experience is $\beta = -0.041$ on patient satisfaction through trust.

Table 4: Effect between independent variable and intervening variable on dependent variable both directly and indirectly

Variable	Coefficient	P Value	Desc
Brand image → Trust	0.245	0.016	**Direct**
Customer experience → Trust	0.200	0.048	**Direct**
Brand image → Patients' Satisfaction	0.159	0.034	**Direct**
Customer experience → Patients' Satisfaction	0.522	0.000	**Direct**
Trust → Patients' Satisfaction	0.205	0.001	**Direct**
Brand image → Patients' Satisfaction → Trust	0.050		**Indirect**
Customer experience → Patients' Satisfaction → Trust	0.041		**Indirect**

DISCUSSIONS

Effect of brand image on patients' trust

Our study found a direct effect of brand image on trust with a coefficient value of $\beta = -0.245$. Earlier research (Iglesias et al., 2011) suggests that a strong brand image helps customers make decisions,

feel at ease when purchasing the goods, and inspires confidence in the product's quality. Another study (Khodadad Hosseini & Behboudi, 2017) revealed that brand image significantly affects patient trust and satisfaction. According to this study, having a strong brand reputation can boost consumer trust, which is crucial for healthcare providers to draw in and keep patients. Research from (Lin & Yin, 2022) brand image plays an important role in building patient trust. According to Kotler's theory, the combination of name, fame (reputation), design, and symbol is used by consumers to distinguish products and services from competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Meanwhile, trust is the willingness of someone who has confidence to rely on an exchange partner (Maister, D. H., Green & Galford, 2001). The effect between Brand image and Trust is the initial stage of the brand building process, both of which play an important role in a consumer's purchasing decision. So that a good image of a healthcare service will determine patient trust and ultimately encourage them to use the facilities available at the hospital.

Effect of customer experience on patients'

This research also found a direct effect of customer experience on patient trust with a coefficient value (β = -0.245). This is in accordance with the previous study (Fitriah, 2023) that patient experience has a significant effect on trust with P value of 0.001 so it is smaller than P = 0.005. Customer experience refers to the overall patient experience during interactions and receiving services at the Outpatient Installation. Good experiences, such as fast service, adequate facilities, and friendly staff, have the potential to increase patients' trust in the institution. Conversely, negative experiences can reduce patient trust. Effective and clear communication from medical personnel does not only provides the information needed by patients but also builds relationships based on trust and transparency.

Effect of brand image on patients' satisfaction

This study discovered a direct effect of brand image on patient satisfaction with a coefficient value (β = -0.159). This study results are in line with earlier study (Sciulli & Missien, 2015) (Wulur et al., 2020) that patient satisfaction has a direct effect on the hospital's brand image. The buyer's decision is affected by individual characteristics such as age, stage of life, occupation, financial situation, and lifestyle, as well as personality and self-concept. The behavior and interests of an individual are highly associated with their age; as an individual ages, so do their financial situation, job status, and product choices. Since customers are prepared to pay more for a good brand image than they are for other hospitals, the hospital will benefit much from its strong brand image. In addition, patients who view the strength of the brand image as more important will assume that the price or cost of the hospital is not a problem in getting hospital services if it comes from a hospital with good brand image (Andreani et al., 2012).

Effect of customer experience on patients' satisfaction

This research also revealed a direct effect of customer experience on patient satisfaction with a coefficient value (β = -0.522). The findings of a prior study (Ferreira et al., 2023) also support this, showing that patient experience is a major factor influencing patients' satisfaction with healthcare services. Patient satisfaction is significantly influenced by the caliber of interactions between patients and healthcare professionals, including efficient communication, competent transition management, and satisfying patients' expectations for the care received. However, this is different from the research done previously (Gomoi et al., 2021) that customer satisfaction is not affected by the consumer experience. Our study's findings indicate that factors associated with patient satisfaction include a clean hospital environment and nurses who are always willing to help. In addition, previous research Agostinho et al (2023) evaluated the relationship between the nursing practice environment, nurse-patient interactions, and patient satisfaction with nursing care in the context of a hospital. The results of the study showed that responsiveness in nursing can significantly increase patient satisfaction. However, in other aspects, the experience related to patient waiting time is often a complaint, so that hospitals can implement an efficient service system to minimize waiting time and speed up the service process.

Direct effect of trust on patients' satisfaction

Current study revealed a direct effect of trust on patient satisfaction (β = -0.205). The results of the study are in line with previous research (Pogorzelska et al., 2023) that patient trust in health service

providers is an important predictor of patient satisfaction. Improved communication, comprehension, and ultimately patient satisfaction can result from a good trust relationship between patients and medical staff. Consumer trust is intended to foster positive customer interactions. Trust is the belief of a particular party towards a corporation in conducting transactions based on a belief that the person they trust will complete all their duties properly and as expected. According to our study's findings, most respondents agreed with the statement "The way the officer conveyed my health condition made me calm" in the intimacy dimension. It is crucial to communicate medical facts with empathy in order to instill calm and build patient trust in the services offered. However, other statement items such as "Doctors are always on time" have a low percentage. This will have a negative impact on patient satisfaction and can affect their views on all hospital services. This dissatisfaction can lead to reduced patient loyalty and increased complaints. Timeliness of service is one of the important factors that affect patient satisfaction in hospitals (Ahmed et al., 2014).

Effect of brand image on patients' satisfaction through trust

This study shows that there is an indirect effect of brand image on patient satisfaction. The indirect effect of brand image through trust on patient satisfaction is 0.050, which is smaller than the direct influence, this indicates that trust does not significantly mediate the relationship between brand image and patient satisfaction. Brand image is an assumption about a brand that is reflected by consumers that is held in consumer memory. The way people think about a brand abstractly in their minds, even though when they think about it, they are not directly dealing with the product (Keller, 2003). The reputation of the hospital as a provider of trusted and high-quality health services as a whole directly affects patient perception and satisfaction. Patients who choose hospitals with good reputations tend to have high expectations that if met directly contribute to their satisfaction.

Effect of customer experience on patients' satisfaction through trust

This study demonstrates that patient satisfaction is affected by customer experience in an indirect way. Trust, as an intermediary variable between customer experience and patient pleasure, does not significantly contribute to boosting patient satisfaction, as evidenced by the indirect effect of brand image through trust on patient satisfaction (0.041). The findings of our study demonstrate that satisfying patient experiences include having nurses who are constantly willing to assist patients and making them feel joyful when they interact with physicians and nurses. This is in line with research from (Akthar et al., 2023) which states that there is a positive relationship between patient satisfaction and the interpersonal skills of doctors and nurses such as the willingness to listen to patients. The emotional function and coordination of nurses are closely related to patient satisfaction. This emotional function encourages a satisfying nurse-patient relationship (Chen et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study revealed an effect of brand image on patient satisfaction, an effect of customer experience on patient satisfaction, an effect of trust on patient satisfaction. In this case, customer experience has the highest effect on patient satisfaction. Other than that, brand image and trust also play an important role in increasing patient satisfaction with health services.

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