

Digital marketing strategy for hospitals in the post Covid-19 pandemic in 2023: A literature review

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**Digital marketing strategy for hospitals in the post Covid-19 pandemic in 2023:
A literature review**

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Abstract

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Background: The healthcare industry is currently facing significant pressure due to the emergence of Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic has had adverse effects on the global economy, industries, and organizations, impacting marketing strategies and expenditures. Due to total lockdown in various regions, digital marketing has become crucial as traditional marketing strategies are no longer effective. One way to gain a competitive edge is to develop an effective marketing strategy. The goal is to inform the public about hospitals, provide information about the facilities and services offered, and build a positive image through the trust of the community.

Purpose: To find out the digital marketing strategies in hospitals in the post-Covid-19 pandemic.

Method: This study was conducted descriptively with a literature review approach. The search was carried out on articles published in English and Indonesian from 2014 to 2022 using Google Scholar, with keywords such as "digital marketing, hospitals, and Covid-19 pandemic."

Results: Hospitals need to implement effective digital marketing to promote medical care services, expand business, and ensure patient satisfaction while maintaining quality healthcare services. Social media is a widely used digital marketing platform for healthcare facilities. The use of digital marketing can be applied to promote hospital services and strengthen the brand image of healthcare facilities.

Conclusion: Digital marketing can be implemented through various options, either through applications designed by hospitals personally or through various other methods such as Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Email Marketing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO), social media, display advertising, referral marketing, affiliate marketing, content marketing, online advertising, and viral marketing.

Keywords: Hospital; Marketing Strategy; Post-Covid-19 Pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

The current state of the healthcare industry is under immense pressure due to the emergence of Covid-19, resulting in adverse effects on the global economy, industries, and organizations. This has influenced marketing strategies and expenditures. The implementation of total lockdowns in various regions has made digital marketing crucial, as traditional marketing strategies have proven ineffective. Over the years, digital marketing strategies have seen significant growth, accompanied by an increase in expenditures (Ali Mohamad, Bastone, Bernhard, & Schiavone, 2023). Accelerating the pace of digital marketing growth in the healthcare industry is expected to revive both in-person and telemedicine patient visits to hospitals, ultimately increasing hospital revenue (Sembiluh, & Sulistiadi, 2022).

The pandemic's impact on the development of information technology and communication has been rapid. The role of the internet and online media can serve as a new strategy for hospitals to engage in digital marketing. This makes interactions with hospital consumers easier, faster, and relatively more cost-effective (Julianti, Sjaaf, & Sulistiadi, 2022).

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused changes and challenges to the economies of every country. One economic challenge is the threat of a recession, making it crucial for every hospital to continue marketing efforts to mitigate the impact of recession. Therefore, it is essential for each hospital to have a marketing strategy that aligns with the current hospital situation (Farrab, Canniford, & Phipps, 2022).

Despite research on the characteristics and benefits of content marketing as a digital marketing strategy, evidence on how online consumer behavior is influenced by digital brand content remains inconclusive. The current state is derived from scattered and fragmented literature on content marketing, hindering a comprehensive understanding of scientific results confirming the effects of content marketing activities on online consumer behavior (Du Plessis, 2022). Although the digital divide in America is not new, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased our society's dependence on the internet, widening the

digital gap. Access to broadband internet has become a basic necessity (Early, & Hernandez, 2021).

Hospitals have become competitive organizations striving to serve the needs of empowered consumers seeking positive experiences. As a result, patient experience has become a crucial driver of hospital performance (Ozcelik, Vamali, & Burnaz, 2021). One effective way to stay competitive is to develop an impactful marketing strategy, aiming to inform the general public about the hospital, provide information on facilities and services, and build a positive image through community trust.

Marketing communication is one of the strategies used by hospitals to promote, introduce, and provide information about the hospital to the public. This communication plays a significant role in patients' choices of services (Sreejesh, Sarkar, & Sarkar, 2021). Through marketing communication, an organization plans and creates information to be used effectively, as marketing communication can be powerful when combined with efficient and effective communication (Alrianti, & Ilyas, 2022).

Marketing strategy is the way entrepreneurs satisfy consumers, aiming to gain profits (Idelji-Tehrani, Dubicka, & Graham, 2023). In the business world, marketing or promotional processes are essential for increasing sales and income. Hospital marketing also aims to introduce the hospital to the general public, provide clear information about facilities and service capabilities, shape and maintain the hospital's image through first, and enhance patient satisfaction (Nugroho, 2023).

The increasing use of digital marketing in the hospital sector is accompanied by a surge in marketing costs allocated for digital marketing. Hospital management must determine the right steps and measurement types to evaluate the impact of digital marketing strategies on overall hospital performance (Pratiwi, Ilyas, & Sulistiadi, 2023).

Hospitals, as healthcare service institutions, must continuously improve their services to meet the evolving needs influenced by advancements in health sciences, technology, and socio-economic factors. In this context, hospitals play a managerial role in

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providing what individuals want and need through the creation and exchange of offered services and quality values to patients (Surandari, & Adisasmito, 2023).

Healthcare service facilities are places used by the public to prevent and improve health. Every healthcare service facility aims to provide quality services accepted by the public. Therefore, a strategy is needed to understand the market or consumer preferences (Tiwari, Pal, & Khandelwal, 2022). One such strategy is the marketing mix. The increasing use of smartphones has triggered most marketing strategies, leveraging various internet platforms and social media.

The promotion or provision of brand information using digital media to reach consumers or clients in a timely, personal, and relevant manner is known as digital marketing. Digital marketing facilitates the delivery of information in various formats, including text, images, and videos. Digital marketing for marketing communication can be carried out by companies in the production of goods or in the healthcare service sector, such as hospitals (Burhan, & Sulistiadi, 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted descriptively with a literature review approach. The scope review information sources were explored using Scopus, ProQuest, Emerald Insight, and Google Scholar. The search period was from June 10 to June 17, 2023. The search strategy employed relevant keywords such as

post-Covid-19, digital marketing, and hospitals published between 2020-2023.

The inclusion criteria for this literature review were articles presenting published research results that are original, full-text, and freely accessible. The exclusion criteria included articles whose outcomes were unrelated to hospital digital marketing, irrelevant study designs, and publications that were not authentic, such as books, magazines, editorials, letters, and newspapers.

The literature review study selection process followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) guidelines. A total of 2,016 articles were gathered from the databases used. In the first stage, 1,203 articles were excluded because their focus was not on digital marketing, using the dependent parameter of marketing strategies. This left a subtotal of 813 articles. In the second stage, 768 articles were excluded based on title relevance to the scoping review, resulting in 45 articles. The third stage excluded 36 abstracts that were not focused on marketing strategies, not aligning with the research objective. The dependent variable parameter was not only hospital marketing strategies but also used to evaluate methods, leading to a subtotal of 25 articles. The fourth stage assessed content and relevance to the scoping review focus, resulting in the removal of 19 articles. The final total of 6 full-text articles aligned with the research topic was obtained.

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RESEARCH RESULT

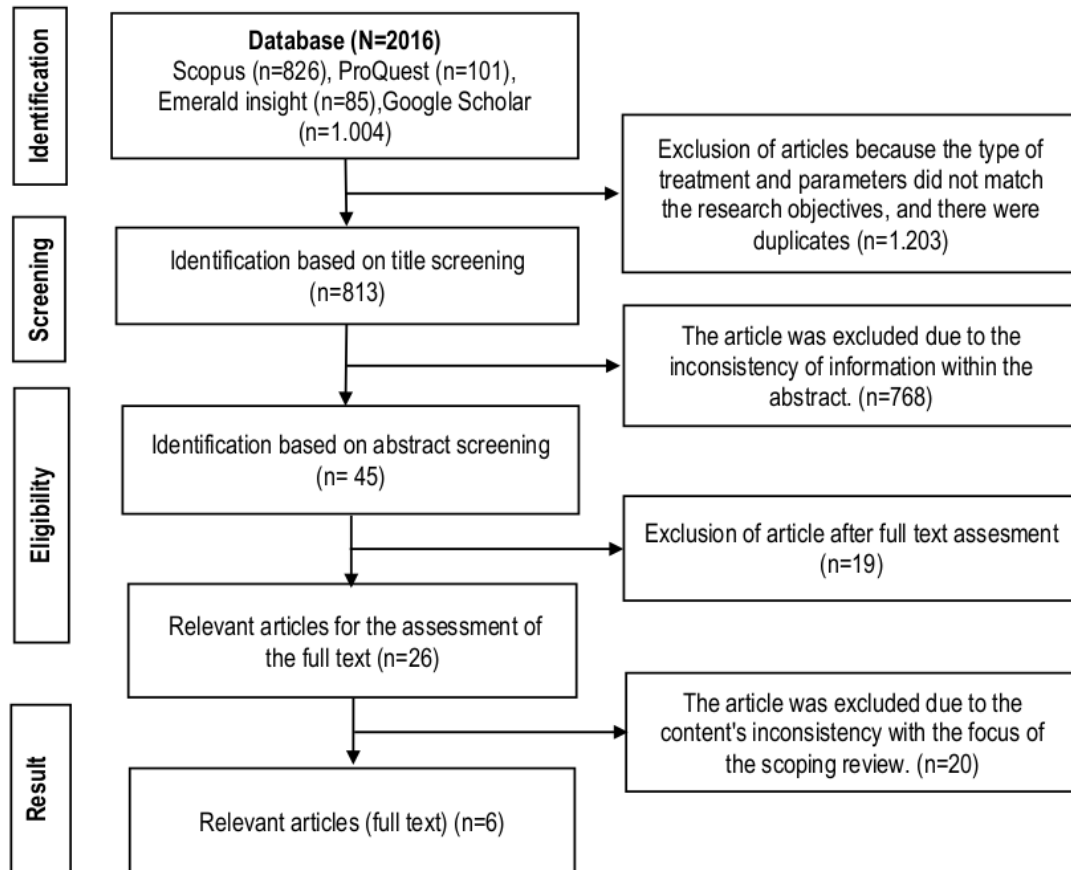


Figure 1. Diagram of PRISMA Flow

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Table of Literature Review

References	Purpose	Method	Results
Khiong, K. (2022). Impact and Challenges of Digital Marketing in Healthcare Industries during Digital Era and Covid-19 Pandemic. <i>Journal of Industrial Engineering & Management Research</i> , 3(5), 112-118.	To analyze the impact and challenges of digital marketing in the healthcare services industry during the digital era and the Covid-19 pandemic.	Literature review through literature search in this literature review uses databases such as Google Scholar, Biomed Central, NCBI, and ProQuest. After collecting the articles, the researcher grouped a number of obtained articles based on the relevance to the digital marketing topic.	Digital technology marketing has an incredible impact, namely increasing more engagement in social media and marketing. Digital marketing in hospitals during this pandemic is a marketing strategy that has many benefits, such as attracting new patients, expanding business, building patient trust, strengthening patient loyalty, increasing brand awareness, encouraging patients to use hospital services, and conducting promotions.
Astiti, S. H., & Ilyas, Y. (2021). Implementasi Bauran Komunikasi Pemasaran RS Hermina Karawang di Era Pandemi Covid19. <i>Jurnal Manajemen Kesehatan Yayasan RS. Dr. Soetomo</i> , 7(2), 162-174.	To find out the implementation of the promotion/marketing communication mix elements used by Hermina Hospital Karawang in the era of Covid-19.	Qualitative design using observation and structured interviews, as well as the exploration of hospital medical record documents.	There are 7 promotion elements in marketing communication applied by Hermina Hospital Karawang, namely, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing, and interactive marketing.
Chandra, A. F., & Nadjib, M. (2023). Digital Marketing in the hospital: A scoping review. <i>Journal of World Science</i> , 2(1), 46-51.	To find out the impact of digital marketing in hospitals.	This scoping review follows the process of systematic review study selection. Relevant studies were gathered from Open Knowledge Maps and Google Scholar.	During the pandemic, hospitals require innovative marketing strategies to attract new patients, expand their business, enhance customer trust, and strengthen loyalty. Digital marketing media significantly impact sales promotion, business expansion, and service quality.

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Wachdaniyah, A. R., Wijaya, S., & Fasya, A. H. Z. (2020). Literature Review Implementasi Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Dalam Menunjang Pemasaran Rumah Sakit. In National Conference for Ummah (Vol. 1, No. 1). Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya.	To identify the influence of brand equity on customer loyalty in hospitals, as well as the dominant brand equity elements for implementation in hospitals.	This literature review was conducted using the traditional literature review method. Article sources were obtained from the Google Scholar and Portal Garuda databases, covering the years 2011-2020. The keywords used were 'the influence of brand equity on loyalty', 'the influence of brand equity on hospital customer loyalty', and 'brand equity in hospitals'. Out of 3,385 articles, 18 were obtained, which were then processed using the illustrative method by depicting variables and analyzed to identify the influence among variables.	Brand equity directly influences customer loyalty. Additionally, brand association, as a dominant element of brand equity, strengthens brand equity in its application in hospitals.
6 Habes, M., Alghizzawi, M., Ali, S., SalihAlnaser, A., & Salloum, S. A. (2020). The Relation among Marketing ads, via Digital Media and mitigate (COVID-19) pandemic in Jordan. International Journal of Advanced Science Technology, 29(7), 12326-12348.	To identify the role of online advertising in raising awareness of Covid-19 and its ability to bring about attitude change.	Online surveys were conducted for the purpose of data collection, selecting n=480 local students from Jordan. In assessing measurements and the conceptual model, the researcher utilized the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach.	Affirming previous research findings that witnessed the role and effectiveness of digital media in health awareness, especially during health crises. Researchers recommend further studies addressing the use of Social Media marketing to spread awareness of Covid-19 to mitigate the current global healthcare crisis.

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Ajumah, A., Nuseir, M. T., & Alshurideh, M. T. (2021). The impact of social media marketing communications on consumer response during the Covid-19: does the brand equity of a university matter?. In The effect of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on business intelligence (pp. 367-384). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

To investigate the impact of social media marketing communication on consumer response to universities in the UAE during Covid-19. A combination of inferential and descriptive analysis was employed to analyze the data. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach was integrated for structural equation modeling.

As a result, this study further enhances the perception of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) on the University's perception through the endorsement of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), which predicts brand sustainability, explicit consumer associations, functional brand image, perception, hedonic brand image, and experiences with the University brand based on brand awareness. This study also positions two levels of social media communication, such as User-Generated Content (UGC) and Firm-Created Content (FCC), within marketing communication through the levels of social media advertising support, social media promotion, and interactive social media marketing.

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DISCUSSION

Digital marketing is the utilization of digital technology to build deeper relationships with the market, promote products and services by leveraging online database channels to reach the market (consumers) personally and cost-effectively through integrated, targeted, and measurable communication. Research conducted in Bucharest indicates the necessity of digital marketing to promote medical care services in expanding businesses.

Digital marketing methods demonstrate the capability to attract new patients while still providing quality healthcare services and ensuring patient satisfaction, leading every patient to recommend the visited healthcare facility. This study emphasizes the significant role of social media in promoting healthcare facilities (Ajer, & Øvreid, 2023).

Previous research findings state that the implementation of digital marketing can strengthen the brand image of healthcare facilities for medical tourism services, making it easier for patients to find the selected hospital location in the medical tourism scheme (Cham, Lim, Sia, Cheah, & Ting, 2021).

In Indonesia, digital marketing at one hospital is carried out through the development of a specific application by the hospital, containing information and promotions related to services provided to patients and the public. Digital marketing has evolved over time, encompassing various types used by the majority of people in their daily lives, including search engine marketing (SEM), email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), social media, display advertising, referral marketing, affiliate marketing, content marketing, online advertising, and viral marketing (Ali Mohamad et al., 2023).

Previous studies indicate the need for digital methods to promote medical services to expand business. Strategic thinking in this case implies attracting new patients and offering them quality healthcare services, ensuring satisfaction, and the potential for them to recommend healthcare facilities further. This aligns with data from other research indicating that digital marketing enhances patient satisfaction, loyalty, and attachment to hospital services (Chandra, & Nadjib, 2023).

Other research suggests that hospitals need to engage in effective digital promotion. The internet has made it easier for consumers to assess something. Many patients decide on medical services by relying on assessments or reviews that appear on search engines. The internet has opened up new opportunities in health marketing. Social media is visited every day by millions of users worldwide, making digital media the chosen direction for all companies when planning marketing strategies (Kelley, Sheehan, Dobias, Koranda, & Jugenheimer, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The utilization of digital marketing can be applied in marketing hospital services, increasing the number of patients based on positive reviews from patient assessments through selected platforms. Additionally, digital marketing can strengthen the brand image of healthcare facilities while facilitating patients in finding the intended hospital location.

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