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THE INFLUENCE OF INSTAGRAM-BASED DIGITAL MARKETING ON PATIENT INTENTION TO SEEK HEALTHCARE AT MUHAMMADIYAH BABAT GENERAL HOSPITAL

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Abstract:

Background: The competitive healthcare environment has compelled hospitals to transition toward digital promotional platforms to enhance public engagement. Muhammadiyah Babat General Hospital (RSU Muhammadiyah Babat) actively uses its official Instagram account (@rsumbabat) for marketing and health education; however, outpatient visits have fluctuated across 2022–2024, leaving the empirical effect of its social media campaigns on prospective patients' treatment-seeking intentions uncertain.

Objective: To analyze the empirical effect of digital marketing via Instagram on the intention to seek healthcare among new outpatients at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat.

Methods: This quantitative study employed an analytical cross-sectional design. A sample of 100 new outpatients was selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected via structured Likert questionnaires validated. Data were evaluated using descriptive univariate analysis and simple binary logistic regression.

Results: The majority of respondents perceived the hospital's Instagram digital marketing as good (93.0%, n = 93) and reported a high intention to seek healthcare (87.0%, n = 87). Simple logistic regression indicated a statistically significant positive effect of Instagram digital marketing on treatment-seeking intention (B = 0.511, Wald = 15.329, p < 0.001, Odds Ratio [OR] = 1.667, 95% CI: 1.291–2.153). Patients perceiving digital marketing favorably were 1.667 times more likely to demonstrate high treatment-seeking intentions.

Conclusion: Digital marketing through Instagram significantly enhances patient treatment-seeking intentions at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat.

Keywords: Cross-sectional study; Digital marketing; Hospital promotion; Instagram; Outpatients; Patient intention

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of information and communication technology has transformed marketing and public relations paradigms across global healthcare systems. Healthcare organizations are increasingly shifting from conventional, passive promotional channels such as print media and billboards toward interactive, visually oriented digital marketing strategies designed to disseminate health literacy, foster community engagement, and strengthen brand equity (Desai, 2019; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Social networking platforms, particularly Instagram, have emerged as primary conduits for health-related information seeking. With its emphasis on

short-form videos, infographics, visual aesthetics, and bilateral communicative features (comments, direct messages, and polls), Instagram allows healthcare institutions to humanize their services, showcase specialist competencies, and establish transparent dialogues with health consumers (Elipka, 2024; Purworini, 2023). In Indonesia, active social media users exceeded 143 million in 2025 (comprising over 50% of the total populace), making mobile social platforms an indispensable marketing channel for contemporary hospitals (Kristin et al., 2026; Sahara, 2024).

In healthcare utilization models, patient intention to seek treatment reflects an individual's conscious cognitive readiness, behavioral drive, and planned decision to utilize healthcare services at a specific clinical facility (Lestari, 2023; Zahro & Nurtjahjadi, 2024). This behavioral intention is governed by complex cognitive processes synthesized through the AIDA framework spanning Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action (Zaki et al., 2025). When health consumers encounter clear, credible, and aesthetically compelling medical information on digital platforms, their initial health awareness transitions into an active preference for that healthcare provider (Nazeli et al., 2023; Pratiwi & Fadhilah, 2021). Consequently, digital marketing serves as a critical upstream catalyst influencing outpatient facility selection and hospital competitiveness (Aufa & Sipahutar, 2022).

Muhammadiyah Babat General Hospital (RSU Muhammadiyah Babat) is a private general hospital located in Babat District, Lamongan Regency, East Java. To expand its institutional reach, the hospital has actively utilized its official Instagram account (@rsumbabat) to publicize clinic schedules, specialized doctor profiles, health education infographics, and hospital facility upgrades. Despite these digital efforts, institutional medical record registries revealed noticeable fluctuations in new outpatient volumes over the past three years: 11,534 visits in 2022, declining to 10,839 in 2023, and recovering to 12,076 in 2024. This clinical utilization pattern suggests that public intention to seek treatment remains variable and is modulated by multiple informational, perceptual, and demographic factors, underscoring the urgent necessity to evaluate whether social media exposure directly drives patient visits.

Existing empirical studies indicate that effective social media marketing improves hospital brand awareness and visit decisions (Marceliani, 2021; Purnomo, 2021). Purworini (2023) demonstrated that Instagram promotions conducted by PKU Muhammadiyah Surakarta Hospital bolstered consumer engagement, while Apsari & Harliantara (2023) confirmed that social media presence significantly shapes healthcare utilization choices. Similarly, international investigations in dental and specialized healthcare confirm that digital outreach bolsters patient trust and service adoption (Nazeli et al., 2023). However, significant empirical gaps remain: most prior inquiries have focused either on generic brand awareness in metropolitan hospitals or on general consumer goods, while rigorous quantitative evaluations assessing behavioral treatment-seeking intentions among newly registered outpatients in peri-urban faith-based hospitals remain scarce.

Therefore, this study aimed to determine and quantify the empirical effect of digital marketing via Instagram on the intention to seek healthcare among new outpatients at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat. The findings are intended to supply hospital administrators with evidence-based insights to refine digital health communication protocols and bolster healthcare utilization.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative analytical observational design utilizing a cross-sectional approach. This design was selected to measure the independent variable (digital marketing

via Instagram) and the dependent variable (patient intention to seek treatment) simultaneously at a single point in time without experimental manipulation.

2.2 Research Population and Sample

The study population comprised all newly registered outpatients attending specialist and general polyclinics at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat. A sample of 100 respondents was selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique based on specific eligibility criteria: (1) new outpatients registering at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat; (2) active users of Instagram who follow or have viewed the @rsumbabat account; (3) aged ≥ 17 years; (4) mentally competent; and (5) willing to provide written consent. Exclusion criteria included repeat/existing chronic outpatients, patients experiencing acute medical crises, and patients without smartphone access.

2.3 Research Setting and Time

The research was conducted at the Outpatient Polyclinic Unit of RSU Muhammadiyah Babat, located on Jl. Raya Babat-Surabaya, Lamongan Regency, East Java, Indonesia. Primary data collection occurred in 2026.

2.4 Research Procedures

The research procedure comprised administrative licensing, instrument pre-testing, questionnaire distribution, and data verification. Outpatients registering at the new patient admissions counter were screened by trained enumerators. Eligible patients were provided with an explanation of the study objectives, assured of confidentiality, and invited to complete self-administered questionnaires while waiting in polyclinic lounges. Questionnaires were checked immediately for completeness upon return.

2.5 Data Collection Techniques

Primary data were gathered using structured self-report questionnaires. Collected data included patient socio-demographic indicators (gender, chronological age, specific polyclinic visited, educational attainment, occupation, monthly income, and geographical residence) alongside perceptual evaluation items.

2.6 Research Instruments

Variables were evaluated using Likert-scale questionnaires. Digital marketing was measured across five dimensions: reach, accessibility, usability, immediacy, and permanence (Wulandari & Purworini, 2023). Patient intention to seek treatment was measured across four dimensions: attention, interest, desire, and action (Zaki et al., 2025). Prior to formal field deployment, the instruments were pre-tested among 30 outpatients. All digital marketing items yielded r-count values between 0.768 and 0.842, and treatment intention items yielded r-count values between 0.594 and 0.770 (all exceeding r-table = 0.361), confirming construct validity. Reliability was established with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.905 for digital marketing and 0.911 for treatment intention. Scores were categorized ordinally into 'Good' and 'Fair/Moderate'.

2.7 Data Analysis

Data were processed using SPSS software. Univariate analysis computed absolute frequencies (f) and percentages (%) for demographic profiles and variable categorizations. Bivariate hypothesis testing was performed using simple binary logistic regression to evaluate the regression coefficient (B), standard error (S.E.), Wald statistic, p-value (significance threshold alpha = 0.05), and Odds Ratio (Exp[B]) with 95% confidence intervals (CI).

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2.8 Scope and Limitations of the Research Used

The scope was confined to new outpatients attending a single private general hospital in Babat, Lamongan. Limitations include non-probability purposive sampling restricting broader generalizability, the cross-sectional design precluding longitudinal causal tracking, and potential social desirability bias in self-reported questionnaires.

2.9 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with the patient's informed consent and the ethical approval status and confirm that appropriate written consent for publication was obtained.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics (n = 100)

Characteristic Domain	Category / Classification	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	36	36.0
	Female	64	64.0
Age Group	20 – 25 years old	30	30.0
	26 – 35 years old	62	62.0
	36 – 45 years old	8	8.0
Educational Attainment	Junior High School	7	7.0
	Senior High School	57	57.0
	Diploma / Bachelor's	34	34.0
	Master's / Doctorate	2	2.0
Occupation	Self-employed / Entrepreneur	28	28.0
	Private Sector Employee	34	34.0
	Civil Servant	7	7.0
	Trader / Laborer	13	13.0
	Others (Housewife, Student, etc.)	18	18.0
Monthly Income	< IDR 1,000,000	24	24.0
	IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 3,000,000	62	62.0
	> IDR 3,000,000	14	14.0
Geographical Residence*	Lamongan Regency	69	69.0
	Tuban Regency	19	19.0
	Bojonegoro Regency	7	7.0
	Others	5	5.0

As shown in Table 1, the demographic characteristics of the 100 respondents showed that the majority were female (64.0%), while male respondents accounted for 36.0%. In terms of age, most respondents were aged 26–35 years (62.0%), followed by those aged 20–25 years (30.0%) and 36–45 years (8.0%). Regarding educational attainment, the majority had completed senior high school (57.0%), followed by Diploma or Bachelor's degree holders (34.0%), junior high school graduates (7.0%), and Master's or Doctoral degree holders (2.0%). These findings indicate that the respondents were predominantly female, within the 26–35-year age group, and had a secondary-level educational background.

In terms of occupation, private-sector employees represented the largest proportion (34.0%), followed by self-employed individuals (28.0%), other occupations such as housewives and students (18.0%), traders or laborers (13.0%), and civil servants (7.0%). Regarding monthly income, most respondents earned between IDR 1,000,000 and IDR 3,000,000 (62.0%), while 24.0% earned less than IDR 1,000,000 and 14.0% earned more than IDR 3,000,000. Geographically, the majority resided in Lamongan Regency (69.0%), followed by Tuban Regency (19.0%), Bojonegoro Regency (7.0%), and other areas (5.0%). Overall, the

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respondents were predominantly young adult women residing in Lamongan Regency, with senior high school education and monthly incomes ranging from IDR 1,000,000 to IDR 3,000,000.

Table 2. Distribution of Respondents by Outpatient Polyclinic Visited (n = 100)

Outpatient Polyclinic Department	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Clinical Service Category
Neurology Polyclinic	23	23.0	Specialist Clinic
General Outpatient Clinic	20	20.0	Primary Care Clinic
Dental & Oral Clinic	18	18.0	Specialist Dental Clinic
Internal Medicine	16	16.0	Specialist Medical Clinic
Ophthalmology Clinic	10	10.0	Specialist Eye Clinic
Orthopedic Surgery	7	7.0	Specialist Surgical Clinic
General Surgery	2	2.0	Specialist Surgical Clinic
Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation	2	2.0	Rehabilitative Service
Obstetrics & Gynecology	1	1.0	Maternal Health Clinic
Urology Clinic	1	1.0	Specialist Surgical Clinic

Source: Primary research survey data, 2026.

Table 2 displays the distribution of respondents based on outpatient polyclinic departments showed that the Neurology Polyclinic had the highest proportion, accounting for 23 respondents (23.0%), followed by the General Outpatient Clinic with 20 respondents (20.0%) and the Dental and Oral Clinic with 18 respondents (18.0%). The Internal Medicine Clinic represented 16 respondents (16.0%), while the Ophthalmology Clinic accounted for 10 respondents (10.0%). Smaller proportions were recorded in the Orthopedic Surgery Clinic (7.0%), General Surgery Clinic (2.0%), Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Unit (2.0%), Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinic (1.0%), and Urology Clinic (1.0%). These findings indicate that most respondents accessed neurological, general outpatient, and dental services.

Table 3. Univariate Frequency Distribution of Variables (n = 100)

Research Variable	Category / Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Operational Interpretation
Digital Marketing via Instagram (X)	Low	0	0.0	Unfavorable Perception
	Moderate	7	7.0	Acceptable Perception
	Good	93	93.0	Favorable Promotional Perception
Patient Intention to Seek Treatment (Y)	Low	0	0.0	Low Healthcare Seeking Readiness
	Moderate	13	13.0	Moderate Treatment Intention
	High	87	87.0	High Healthcare Seeking Readiness

Source: Primary research survey data, 2026.

Univariate analysis (Table 3) showed that 93.0% of respondents (n = 93) appraised the hospital's Instagram digital marketing as 'Good', with only 7.0% (n = 7) rating it as 'Fair'. Correspondingly, 87.0% of respondents (n = 87) demonstrated a 'Good/High' intention to seek treatment, while 13.0% (n = 13) scored in the 'Fair' category.

Table 4. Simple Binary Logistic Regression of Instagram Digital Marketing on Patient Intention

Predictor Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	p-value (Sig.)	Exp(B) [OR]	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Digital Marketing via Instagram	0.511	0.131	15.329	1	< 0.001*	1.667	1.291	2.153
Constant	-18.845	5.161	13.332	1	< 0.001*	0.000		

**Statistically significant at alpha < 0.05. Source: Processed SPSS logistic regression output, 2026.*

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As presented in Table 4, the logistic regression model yielded a statistically significant positive effect of Instagram digital marketing on patient treatment-seeking intention (B = 0.511, Wald = 15.329, p < 0.001). The positive regression coefficient indicates that enhanced digital marketing ratings correlate with higher treatment intention. The Odds Ratio (Exp[B]) was 1.667 (95% CI: 1.291–2.153), demonstrating that respondents who rated Instagram digital marketing favorably were 1.667 times more likely to exhibit a high intention to seek treatment compared to those rating it moderately.

3.2 Discussion

The findings demonstrated that Instagram-based digital marketing significantly influenced healthcare-seeking intentions among new outpatients at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat (B = 0.511, p < 0.001, OR = 1.667). Patients who positively perceived Instagram content had a 66.7% greater likelihood of reporting high treatment-seeking intentions. Most respondents rated digital marketing positively (93.0%), while 87.0% demonstrated high healthcare-seeking intentions. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that social media promotion enhances patient engagement, hospital credibility, and healthcare utilization (Purworini, 2023; Apsari & Harliantara, 2023; Marceliani, 2021).

The relationship can be explained through the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) and Kotler's Consumer Decision-Making Theory. Attractive Instagram content captures attention, generates interest through health information, builds desire through institutional credibility, and encourages patients to seek healthcare services (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Wulandari & Purworini, 2023). Furthermore, accessible and accurate digital information may reduce uncertainty and strengthen healthcare-seeking intentions (Zahro & Nurtjahjadi, 2024).

However, the predominance of respondents aged 20–35 years (92.0%) and those with at least a high school education (91.0%) may have influenced the findings due to their familiarity with digital platforms. Nevertheless, the OR of 1.667 highlights the potential contribution of Instagram marketing to patient acquisition. Hospitals should strengthen digital communication through informative content, educational videos, and consistent engagement to increase patient interest and healthcare service utilization.

3.3 Implications

Hospital administrators should formalize digital content production, ensuring clinical schedules and physician educational reels are updated systematically. Community midwives and hospital marketers can synchronize Instagram broadcasts with primary healthcare outreach, utilizing Instagram Direct Messaging to streamline outpatient appointments.

3.4 Research contribution

This research contributes field-based empirical metrics to hospital administration literature, documenting the direct statistical link between Instagram marketing dimensions and AIDA behavioral intentions in an Indonesian community hospital context.

3.5 Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged: (1) The cross-sectional design captures associations rather than longitudinal behavioral causality; (2) Non-probability purposive sampling was restricted to new outpatients who were already Instagram users; and (3) The absence of multivariable regression modeling controlling for confounding socio-economic determinants.

4. CONCLUSION

Digital marketing through Instagram significantly influences patient intention to seek healthcare at RSU Muhammadiyah Babat ($p < 0.001$, OR = 1.667). Outpatients perceiving Instagram promotional content favorably were 1.667 times more likely to demonstrate high treatment-seeking intentions. Most new outpatients rated digital marketing as good (93.0%) and exhibited high treatment intentions (87.0%).

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

HS: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing original draft. DK, NVR, FU: Supervision, Validation, Methodology, Writing review and editing, Project administration.

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