



**THE ROLE OF SERVICE QUALITY AND BRAND IMAGE ON WORD OF
MOUTH THROUGH PATIENT TRUST IN OZONE THERAPY SERVICES
AT RS UTAMA HUSADA**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of Service Quality and Brand Image on Word of Mouth through Patient Trust as an intervening variable in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. This quantitative explanatory study involved 200 patients as respondents, with data collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with WarpPLS. The results showed that Service Quality and Brand Image positively and significantly influence Patient Trust and Word of Mouth. Patient Trust also has a significant effect on Word of Mouth and mediates the relationship between Service Quality, Brand Image, and Word of Mouth. These findings highlight that improving service quality, strengthening brand image, and maintaining patient trust are essential strategies to encourage positive patient recommendations for ozone therapy services.

Keywords: Service Quality, Brand Image, Patient Trust, Word of Mouth, Ozone Therapy



INTRODUCTION

The healthcare service industry plays a strategic role in improving community welfare and supporting national development. Hospitals as healthcare providers are required to deliver effective, efficient, and high-quality services to meet patients' needs and expectations. In the context of service marketing, service quality is recognized as one of the most important factors influencing patient perceptions and behavioral responses. According to (Parasuraman et al., 1988), service quality is defined as the comparison between customer expectations and perceived service performance. High-quality healthcare services not only enhance patient satisfaction but also strengthen patient trust and encourage positive behavioral intentions. Recent studies indicate that service quality remains a crucial determinant of patient satisfaction, loyalty, and word of mouth in healthcare organizations. Healthcare institutions that consistently provide reliable, responsive, and patient-centered services are more likely to maintain long-term relationships with patients and gain competitive advantages in the increasingly competitive healthcare sector.

In addition to service quality, brand image has become an important factor influencing patient decisions in selecting healthcare services. Brand image refers to consumers' perceptions, beliefs, and associations toward a particular organization or service that are formed through experience and information received over time (Kotler & Keller, 2021). In healthcare services, a positive hospital image can strengthen patients' confidence in the quality and credibility of medical services provided. Recent studies have shown that a strong brand image significantly contributes to patient loyalty, revisit intention, and positive behavioral outcomes. Hospitals with favorable reputations tend to be perceived as more trustworthy and professional, leading patients to develop stronger confidence in the healthcare services they receive. Consequently, brand image becomes an essential strategic asset for healthcare organizations seeking to enhance patient relationships and maintain sustainable competitiveness.

Trust is another important factor in establishing long-term relationships between healthcare providers and patients. According to (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), trust is the confidence of consumers in the reliability and integrity of a service provider. In healthcare services, trust becomes particularly important because patients often face uncertainty and perceived risks when making treatment decisions. Patients who trust healthcare institutions are more likely to follow medical recommendations, continue utilizing services, and maintain positive relationships with healthcare providers. Recent studies have demonstrated that trust significantly influences patient satisfaction, loyalty, and behavioral



intentions in healthcare settings. Therefore, trust serves as a critical psychological mechanism that connects patients' service experiences with their subsequent behavioral responses.

One of the most important behavioral outcomes in healthcare marketing is Word of Mouth (WOM). Word of Mouth refers to informal communication among consumers regarding their experiences with products or services (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Compared with traditional promotional activities, WOM is often perceived as more credible because it originates from actual consumer experiences. In healthcare services, positive WOM plays a vital role in influencing prospective patients' decisions because healthcare services involve high levels of risk and uncertainty. Patients who have positive experiences with healthcare services tend to share recommendations, experiences, and information with family members, friends, and colleagues. Consequently, WOM has become an essential indicator of service success and organizational reputation in the healthcare industry.

Previous studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding the relationships among Service Quality, Brand Image, Trust, and Word of Mouth. Several studies found that service quality positively influences trust and Word of Mouth, while other studies reported that the relationship is not always significant and may depend on mediating variables such as trust. Similarly, although Brand Image has been recognized as an important determinant of consumer behavior, some studies suggest that its effect on Word of Mouth is indirect and operates through psychological factors, particularly trust. These inconsistent findings indicate the existence of a research gap and highlight the need for further investigation regarding the mediating role of trust in healthcare services.

The present study focuses on ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. Ozone therapy has emerged as an alternative and complementary healthcare treatment that is increasingly utilized to support recovery processes and improve patients' quality of life. As one of the healthcare institutions providing ozone therapy services, RS Utama Husada has developed a distinctive service advantage that contributes to its reputation among patients. Preliminary observations indicated that patients generally perceived the service quality and hospital image positively. However, despite relatively high levels of patient trust, not all patients actively recommend ozone therapy services to others. This phenomenon suggests a potential gap between patient trust and Word of Mouth behavior, making it important to examine the role of trust as an intervening



variable in the relationship between Service Quality, Brand Image, and Word of Mouth.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Service Quality and Brand Image on Word of Mouth through Patient Trust as an intervening variable in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of healthcare marketing literature and provide practical recommendations for improving patient trust and positive Word of Mouth behavior. Several recent studies have confirmed the importance of Service Quality, Brand Image, Trust, and Word of Mouth in healthcare services. Research conducted by (Vernanda & Wardi, 2025) found that service quality significantly influences trust and Word of Mouth in healthcare services. Likewise, studies by (Reonald & Aprianti, 2024) reported that hospital brand image and perceived medical quality positively affect Word of Mouth and patients' behavioral intentions. Furthermore, recent healthcare studies indicate that trust plays a crucial role in strengthening long-term relationships between healthcare providers and patients, thereby influencing patient loyalty and recommendation behavior.

Despite these findings, several studies have reported inconsistent results regarding the relationships among Service Quality, Brand Image, Trust, and Word of Mouth. Some studies indicate that Service Quality and Brand Image directly influence behavioral outcomes, whereas others suggest that psychological factors such as Trust serve as important mediating variables. The inconsistency of previous findings indicates the existence of a research gap and highlights the need for further investigation regarding the mediating role of patient trust in healthcare services.

In this study, the research object is ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. Ozone therapy is increasingly recognized as a complementary healthcare treatment that supports recovery processes and improves patients' quality of life. The service has become one of the distinctive healthcare services offered by RS Utama Husada and has attracted patients from both local and surrounding regions. The uniqueness of this service provides an interesting context for examining how patients evaluate service quality, perceive hospital image, develop trust, and subsequently engage in positive Word of Mouth behavior.

Preliminary observations conducted at RS Utama Husada indicated that patients generally perceived the quality of ozone therapy services positively and demonstrated a high level of trust in the hospital. However, despite these positive perceptions, not all patients actively recommended the service to others. This



phenomenon suggests that trust may play a strategic role in strengthening the influence of Service Quality and Brand Image on Word of Mouth behavior. Therefore, understanding the mediating role of trust becomes important for healthcare organizations seeking to enhance patient recommendations and organizational reputation.

Based on the theoretical background, empirical findings, and existing research gaps, this study aims to analyze the influence of Service Quality and Brand Image on Word of Mouth through Patient Trust as an intervening variable in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of healthcare marketing literature and provide managerial implications for improving patient trust and encouraging positive Word of Mouth behavior in healthcare organizations.

To strengthen the research phenomenon, a preliminary survey was conducted among patients receiving ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The results indicated that most respondents perceived the service quality, hospital image, and trust positively. However, the level of Word of Mouth behavior was relatively lower compared to the other variables.

Table 1. Preliminary Survey of Ozone Therapy Patients at RS Utama Husada

No	Survey Indicator	Percentage (%)	Category
1	Patients perceive ozone therapy facilities as comfortable	85%	Very Good
2	Patients are satisfied with medical staff services	82%	Very Good
3	Patients trust the quality of ozone therapy services	80%	Good
4	Patients believe ozone therapy provides health benefits	78%	Good
5	Patients have a positive image of RS Utama Husada	76%	Good
6	Patients are willing to return for ozone therapy services	74%	Good
7	Patients are willing to recommend ozone therapy services to others	61%	Fair
8	Patients share positive experiences with others	58%	Fair

Source: Preliminary Survey of Ozone Therapy Patients, RS Utama Husada (2026)

Based on the preliminary survey results, Service Quality, Brand Image, and Trust were perceived positively by patients. Nevertheless, the indicators associated with Word of Mouth demonstrated relatively lower percentages.



Although patients generally trusted the ozone therapy services and maintained a favorable perception of the hospital, not all patients actively recommended the service or shared their positive experiences with others. This phenomenon indicates a potential discrepancy between patient trust and recommendation behavior. Consequently, Trust may play a strategic role in strengthening the relationship between Service Quality, Brand Image, and Word of Mouth among patients receiving ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Service Quality (X1)

Service Quality is one of the most important determinants of customer perceptions and behavioral outcomes in service organizations. According to (Parasuraman et al., 1988), service quality is defined as the comparison between customer expectations and perceived service performance. When the perceived performance meets or exceeds expectations, customers tend to evaluate the service positively. In healthcare services, service quality is particularly important because patients not only assess medical outcomes but also evaluate the entire service experience, including interactions with healthcare personnel, hospital facilities, and responsiveness during treatment.

(Parasuraman et al., 1988) proposed five dimensions of Service Quality that are widely known as the SERVQUAL model.

1. Tangibles

Tangibles refer to the physical evidence of services, including facilities, medical equipment, cleanliness, and the appearance of healthcare personnel. In healthcare organizations, modern facilities and professional appearances contribute to patients' positive perceptions of service quality.

2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of healthcare providers to deliver promised services accurately and consistently. This dimension includes accurate diagnosis, dependable treatment procedures, and the ability to provide healthcare services as expected by patients.

3. Responsiveness

Responsiveness reflects the willingness of healthcare personnel to provide prompt services and assist patients effectively. Quick responses to patient requests, complaints, and healthcare needs are important indicators of responsiveness.

4. Assurance



Assurance relates to the competence, courtesy, credibility, and professionalism of healthcare personnel in delivering services. This dimension creates feelings of safety and confidence among patients during treatment.

5. Empathy

Empathy refers to individualized attention and care provided to patients. Healthcare personnel who understand patient needs, communicate effectively, and demonstrate genuine concern are more likely to establish positive relationships with patients.

In the context of ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada, Service Quality reflects patients' evaluations of healthcare facilities, professional competence, responsiveness of medical staff, and personalized care received during treatment.

Brand Image (X2)

Brand Image is one of the most important marketing constructs influencing consumer perceptions and decision-making processes. According to (Kotler & Keller, 2021), Brand Image refers to a set of perceptions, beliefs, and associations held by consumers regarding a particular brand. These perceptions are formed through direct experiences, information exposure, and interactions with products or services over time. In healthcare services, Brand Image plays a critical role because patients often evaluate healthcare providers based on their reputation, credibility, and perceived service quality before making treatment decisions.

A positive Brand Image can reduce perceived risk, increase patient confidence, and strengthen trust toward healthcare providers. In highly competitive healthcare environments, hospitals with strong and favorable images are more likely to attract and retain patients. Furthermore, a positive image can enhance patients' willingness to recommend healthcare services to others, thereby contributing to positive Word of Mouth behavior.

According to (Kotler & Keller, 2021), Brand Image can be measured through three main dimensions:

1. Strength of Brand Association

Strength of Brand Association refers to the extent to which a brand is firmly embedded in consumers' memories. Strong brand associations are developed through repeated exposure to information, positive experiences, and consistent service delivery. In healthcare services, patients who frequently



hear positive information about a hospital or experience satisfactory services are more likely to develop strong associations with the hospital's brand.

2. Favorability of Brand Association

Favorability of Brand Association reflects the degree to which consumers hold positive perceptions toward a brand. Positive impressions may result from excellent service quality, professional healthcare personnel, and favorable patient experiences. In healthcare settings, favorable brand associations contribute significantly to patient trust and confidence in the services provided.

3. Uniqueness of Brand Association

Uniqueness of Brand Association refers to distinctive characteristics that differentiate a brand from its competitors. Unique services, innovative treatment methods, specialized medical technologies, and exceptional patient care can strengthen a hospital's competitive position. In this study, ozone therapy services offered by RS Utama Husada represent a unique healthcare service that distinguishes the hospital from many other healthcare providers in the region.

In the context of ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada, Brand Image reflects patients' overall perceptions regarding the hospital's reputation, credibility, and uniqueness in providing ozone therapy services. A stronger Brand Image is expected to enhance patient trust and encourage positive Word of Mouth behavior.

Patient Trust (Z)

Trust is a fundamental element in establishing and maintaining long-term relationships between service providers and consumers. According to (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), trust is defined as the willingness of one party to rely on the reliability and integrity of another party. In healthcare services, trust becomes particularly important because patients often face uncertainty, information asymmetry, and perceived risks when making healthcare decisions. Consequently, trust serves as a critical factor influencing patients' evaluations, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward healthcare providers.

Patient trust develops when healthcare institutions consistently provide reliable services, demonstrate professional competence, maintain ethical standards, and fulfill patient expectations. Patients who trust healthcare providers are more likely to follow medical recommendations, continue utilizing healthcare services, and engage in positive communication regarding their experiences. Therefore, trust acts as an important psychological mechanism that



connects patients' service experiences with their subsequent behavioral responses.

According to the trust theory proposed by (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), patient trust can be evaluated through several dimensions:

1. Credibility

Credibility refers to patients' perceptions regarding the expertise, competence, and professionalism of healthcare providers. Patients tend to trust hospitals that demonstrate high medical standards, professional healthcare personnel, and effective treatment procedures.

2. Reliability

Reliability reflects the consistency and dependability of healthcare services. Patients are more likely to trust healthcare providers that consistently deliver services according to promises and expected standards.

3. Integrity

Integrity refers to honesty, ethical conduct, and transparency demonstrated by healthcare providers. Patients develop stronger trust when hospitals act fairly, provide accurate information, and prioritize patient welfare.

4. Confidence

Confidence represents patients' feelings of certainty and assurance regarding the healthcare services they receive. Higher confidence indicates stronger trust toward healthcare providers and treatment outcomes.

5. Security

Security refers to patients' perceptions of safety and protection during healthcare services. Patients who feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically secure are more likely to develop trust toward healthcare institutions.

In the context of ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada, Patient Trust reflects patients' confidence in the hospital's ability to provide safe, professional, reliable, and beneficial ozone therapy services. Higher levels of trust are expected to strengthen patients' willingness to recommend the services to others and generate positive word-of-mouth behavior.

Word of Mouth (Y)

Word of Mouth (WOM) is one of the most influential forms of marketing communication because it originates from consumers' personal experiences and is generally perceived as more credible than traditional promotional activities. According to (Kotler & Keller, 2021), Word of Mouth refers to interpersonal



communication among consumers regarding products, services, or organizations, which may influence the attitudes and decisions of other consumers.

In healthcare services, Word of Mouth plays a significant role because prospective patients often rely on recommendations from family members, friends, colleagues, and previous patients before selecting healthcare providers. Positive recommendations can increase public confidence in healthcare institutions, while negative experiences may discourage potential patients from utilizing healthcare services.

Word of Mouth can be measured through several behavioral indicators:

1. Positive Talking

Positive Talking refers to patients' willingness to share favorable experiences regarding healthcare services with others. Patients who are satisfied with healthcare services tend to communicate positive information about their experiences.

2. Recommendation Intention

Recommendation Intention reflects patients' willingness to recommend healthcare services to family members, friends, colleagues, and other potential patients. This indicator is considered one of the strongest manifestations of positive Word of Mouth.

3. Encouraging Others

Encouraging Others refers to patients' active efforts to persuade or motivate others to utilize healthcare services based on their positive experiences.

4. Experience Sharing

Experience Sharing represents patients' willingness to communicate detailed information regarding healthcare experiences, treatment processes, and service quality received during healthcare encounters.

In the context of ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada, Word of Mouth reflects patients' willingness to communicate positive experiences, provide recommendations, and encourage others to utilize ozone therapy services. Positive Word of Mouth is expected to contribute significantly to the hospital's reputation and the sustainability of ozone therapy services.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using an explanatory research design. Quantitative research was selected because it allows researchers to examine causal relationships among variables through statistical analysis. Explanatory research was utilized to explain the direct and indirect



relationships between Service Quality, Brand Image, Patient Trust, and Word of Mouth in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The research model was developed based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory, where Service Quality and Brand Image act as stimuli, Patient Trust acts as the organism, and Word of Mouth represents the behavioral response.

The population of this study consisted of patients who received ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The study involved 200 respondents who had experienced ozone therapy services and met the predetermined research criteria. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling techniques, considering that only patients with direct experience of ozone therapy services were capable of providing valid evaluations regarding the variables investigated.

Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed directly to respondents. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument was designed to measure four research variables, namely Service Quality, Brand Image, Patient Trust, and Word of Mouth.

Service Quality was measured using the SERVQUAL dimensions proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), including Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. Brand Image was measured through Strength of Brand Association, Favorability of Brand Association, and Uniqueness of Brand Association based on (Kotler & Keller, 2021). Patient Trust was measured using indicators reflecting credibility, reliability, integrity, confidence, and security. Meanwhile, Word of Mouth was measured through positive talking, recommendation intention, encouraging others, and experience sharing.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with WarpPLS 8.0 software. The analysis consisted of two stages: Outer Model Evaluation and Inner Model Evaluation. Outer Model Evaluation was performed to assess convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). Inner Model Evaluation was conducted through the assessment of R-Square values, Path Coefficients, Indirect Effects, and Model Fit and Quality Indices. Hypothesis testing was carried out by examining path coefficients and p-values, where a hypothesis was considered supported when the p-value was less than 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics



This study involved 200 respondents who had received ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The respondents consisted of patients who had direct experience with ozone therapy services and met the research criteria. Their responses were used to evaluate Service Quality, Brand Image, Patient Trust, and Word of Mouth regarding ozone therapy services provided by RS Utama Husada.

Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model evaluation was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The evaluation included convergent validity, discriminant validity, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha.

The results showed that all indicators achieved loading factor values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory convergent validity. Furthermore, all variables obtained AVE values greater than 0.50, demonstrating that each construct adequately explained the variance of its indicators. Therefore, all constructs satisfied the convergent validity requirements.

Reliability testing was conducted using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. The results showed that all variables exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Service Quality obtained a Composite Reliability value of 0.862 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.785. Brand Image achieved a Composite Reliability value of 0.887 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.807. Patient Trust obtained a Composite Reliability value of 0.893 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.820, while Word of Mouth achieved a Composite Reliability value of 0.915 and Cronbach's Alpha of 0.884. These results indicate that all constructs were reliable and suitable for further analysis.

Structural Model Assessment

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to evaluate the predictive power of the structural model. The results indicated that Patient Trust obtained an R^2 value of 0.932, meaning that Service Quality and Brand Image explained 93.2% of the variance in Patient Trust. Meanwhile, Word of Mouth achieved an R^2 value of 0.929, indicating that Service Quality, Brand Image, and Patient Trust jointly explained 92.9% of the variance in Word of Mouth. These findings suggest that the model possesses a very strong predictive capability.

Direct Effect Analysis

The direct effect analysis was conducted by examining path coefficients and p-values. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Direct Effect Results

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Result
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Service Quality → Patient Trust	0.641	<0.001	Supported
Brand Image → Patient Trust	0.355	<0.001	Supported
Service Quality → Word of Mouth	0.461	<0.001	Supported
Brand Image → Word of Mouth	0.121	0.041	Supported
Patient Trust → Word of Mouth	0.404	<0.001	Supported

Source: WarpPLS Output (2026).

The results indicate that all direct relationships among variables are positive and significant. Service Quality demonstrated the strongest direct influence on Patient Trust ($\beta = 0.641$), while Service Quality also showed a substantial positive effect on Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.461$). Furthermore, Patient Trust significantly influenced Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.404$), indicating that patients who trust ozone therapy services are more likely to recommend those services to others.

Indirect Effect Analysis

The mediating role of Patient Trust was examined using indirect effect analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Indirect Effect Results

Hypothesis	Indirect Effect	P-Value	Result
Service Quality → Patient Trust → Word of Mouth	0.259	<0.001	Supported
Brand Image → Patient Trust → Word of Mouth	0.143	0.002	Supported

Source: WarpPLS Output (2026).

The findings reveal that Patient Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Service Quality and Word of Mouth as well as the relationship between Brand Image and Word of Mouth. These results confirm the important role of Patient Trust as an intervening variable in the proposed research model.

The Effect of Service Quality on Patient Trust

The results of this study indicate that Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Patient Trust, with a path coefficient of 0.641 and a p-value of less than 0.001. These findings suggest that improvements in service quality lead

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to higher levels of patient trust in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The results imply that patients tend to develop trust when they perceive healthcare services as reliable, responsive, professional, and capable of meeting their expectations.

In the context of ozone therapy services, patients evaluate not only treatment outcomes but also the quality of interactions with healthcare personnel, hospital facilities, and overall service experiences. When patients receive professional treatment, accurate information, and personalized care, they become more confident in the healthcare services provided by the hospital.

These findings support the SERVQUAL theory proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which states that service quality is a critical determinant of customer perceptions and behavioral responses. Furthermore, the results are consistent with previous studies conducted by (Firmansyah et al., 2023), (Abutar & Wuisan, 2024), and (Qomariah et al., 2024), (Swatyas et al., 2022) which reported that service quality significantly enhances customer trust.

The Effect of Brand Image on Patient Trust

The findings reveal that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Patient Trust, with a path coefficient of 0.355 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This result indicates that a favorable hospital image contributes to increased patient trust in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada.

Patients tend to trust healthcare institutions that possess positive reputations, professional images, and strong credibility within the community. A positive hospital image reduces uncertainty and perceived risk, which are common concerns among patients when selecting healthcare services. Consequently, patients become more confident in the hospital's ability to provide effective and safe healthcare services.

These findings support the perspective of (Kotler & Keller, 2021), who emphasized that Brand Image plays an important role in shaping consumer perceptions and confidence. The results are also consistent with the findings of (Albari, 2023), who reported that Brand Image significantly influences customer trust in service organizations.

The Effect of Service Quality on Word of Mouth

The results indicate that Service Quality positively and significantly influences Word of Mouth, with a path coefficient of 0.461 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This finding demonstrates that patients who perceive ozone therapy



services positively are more likely to recommend those services to others and share favorable experiences.

High-quality healthcare services create positive impressions that motivate patients to communicate their experiences to family members, friends, and colleagues. Positive service experiences increase patients' willingness to recommend healthcare services because they believe that others may also benefit from the same services.

The findings support previous studies suggesting that service quality directly influences recommendation behavior and positive communication among consumers. In healthcare settings, excellent service quality serves as an important driver of positive Word of Mouth behavior. Several empirical studies have reported a positive and significant relationship between service quality and positive behavioral outcomes, including WOM and customer loyalty (Qomariah & Ambarwati, 2022; Sutrisno et al., 2017; Sanosra et al., 2022; Purnomo et al., 2023; Nikmah et al., 2022; Nursaid et al., 2020; Mu'ah et al., 2020; Qomariah et al., 2020; Salehuddin et al., 2024; Qomariah et al., 2023; Rahmawati et al., 2021; Setyawan et al., 2023). However, these findings are not entirely consistent across studies. Some previous research has reported that service quality does not significantly influence customer loyalty, suggesting that the relationship may depend on contextual factors such as industry characteristics, customer expectations, or the presence of mediating variables (Qomariah, 2012; Fahmi et al., 2020; Qomariah et al., 2021). These inconsistencies highlight the importance of further investigation into the conditions under which service quality contributes to favorable customer behavioral outcomes.

The Effect of Brand Image on Word of Mouth

The findings demonstrate that Brand Image has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth, with a path coefficient of 0.121 and a p-value of 0.041. Although the magnitude of the effect is smaller compared to Service Quality, the results indicate that hospital image remains an important factor influencing patients' willingness to recommend healthcare services.

Patients who hold favorable perceptions of RS Utama Husada are more likely to communicate positive information regarding the hospital and its ozone therapy services. A strong and positive image encourages patients to become advocates for the healthcare organization and actively recommend its services to others.



These findings support the marketing literature, which suggests that Brand Image contributes to positive consumer behavioral intentions, including recommendation behavior and positive Word of Mouth communication.

The Effect of Patient Trust on Word of Mouth

The results reveal that Patient Trust has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth, with a path coefficient of 0.404 and a p-value of less than 0.001. This finding indicates that patients who trust ozone therapy services are more likely to share positive experiences and recommend the services to others.

Trust reduces uncertainty and strengthens patients' confidence regarding treatment quality and healthcare outcomes. Consequently, trusted healthcare services generate stronger recommendation intentions and more favorable communication among patients.

These findings support the Commitment-Trust Theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), which emphasizes that trust serves as the foundation for long-term relationships between organizations and consumers. Patients who trust healthcare providers are more likely to engage in positive behavioral responses, including word-of-mouth communication.

The Mediating Role of Patient Trust

The indirect effect analysis demonstrated that Patient Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Service Quality and Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.259$; $p < 0.001$) as well as the relationship between Brand Image and Word of Mouth ($\beta = 0.143$; $p = 0.002$). These findings confirm that Patient Trust plays an important intervening role in the proposed research model.

The results can be explained through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Theory. In this study, Service Quality and Brand Image function as external stimuli that influence patients' internal psychological states, represented by Patient Trust. Subsequently, Patient Trust generates behavioral responses in the form of positive Word of Mouth.

The findings indicate that healthcare organizations seeking to increase patient recommendations should not only focus on improving service quality and strengthening brand image but also prioritize building and maintaining patient trust. Trust serves as a psychological bridge that transforms positive service experiences and favorable hospital perceptions into positive communication behavior.



These findings are consistent with the studies conducted by (Wardi, 2024), (Liu & Wang, 2023), and (Abutar & Wuisan, 2024), which identified trust as a significant mediating variable in consumer behavioral models.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of Service Quality and Brand Image on Word of Mouth through Patient Trust as an intervening variable in ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada. The findings revealed that Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Patient Trust. This indicates that improvements in healthcare service quality contribute to higher levels of patient trust in ozone therapy services. The results also demonstrated that Brand Image positively and significantly influences Patient Trust, suggesting that a favorable hospital image strengthens patients' confidence in healthcare services.

Furthermore, Service Quality and Brand Image were found to have positive and significant effects on Word of Mouth. These findings indicate that patients who perceive healthcare services positively and maintain favorable perceptions of the hospital are more likely to recommend the services to others. In addition, Patient Trust was found to have a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth, confirming that trust plays an important role in encouraging positive communication behavior among patients.

The mediation analysis revealed that Patient Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Service Quality and Word of Mouth as well as the relationship between Brand Image and Word of Mouth. These findings confirm the important role of Patient Trust as an intervening variable that strengthens the influence of Service Quality and Brand Image on patients' recommendation behavior. Therefore, improving service quality, maintaining a positive hospital image, and strengthening patient trust are essential strategies for increasing positive Word of Mouth among patients receiving ozone therapy services at RS Utama Husada.

Managerial Implications

The findings of this study provide several managerial implications for RS Utama Husada. First, hospital management should continuously improve service quality by enhancing healthcare facilities, maintaining service reliability, increasing responsiveness, and strengthening patient-centered care. Consistent service quality is essential for building patient trust and encouraging positive behavioral responses.



Second, the hospital should strengthen its Brand Image through effective communication strategies, professional healthcare services, and the promotion of its unique ozone therapy services. A positive hospital image can increase public confidence and attract more patients.

Third, hospital management should prioritize efforts to maintain and strengthen Patient Trust. Trust can be enhanced through transparent communication, professional medical practices, ethical service delivery, and consistent treatment outcomes. Since Patient Trust has been proven to mediate the influence of Service Quality and Brand Image on Word of Mouth, strengthening trust should become a strategic priority for the hospital.

Finally, the hospital should encourage satisfied patients to share positive experiences and recommendations regarding ozone therapy services. Positive Word of Mouth can serve as an effective marketing strategy that supports patient acquisition and organizational sustainability.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted only at RS Utama Husada and focused exclusively on patients receiving ozone therapy services. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings to other healthcare institutions and healthcare services may be limited.

Second, this study employed a cross-sectional research design in which data were collected at a single point in time. Consequently, changes in patient perceptions and behaviors over time could not be examined.

Third, the research model focused only on Service Quality, Brand Image, Patient Trust, and Word of Mouth. Other variables that may influence patient behavioral outcomes, such as Patient Satisfaction, Perceived Value, Patient Experience, and Loyalty, were not included in the model.

Future studies are recommended to examine additional variables, involve broader healthcare settings, and employ longitudinal research designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of patient behavior in healthcare services.

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