

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT, INFLUENCER MARKETING, AND WORD OF MOUTH ON HEALTHCARE SERVICE USER DECISIONS AT PT SPRING ISLAND TRAVEL MEDA

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of social media content, influencer marketing, and word of mouth on the decision-making of healthcare service users at PT Spring Island Travel Medan. The background of this research is based on the increasing role of digital media in shaping perceptions and decisions of prospective medical travelers, particularly in selecting healthcare services in Malaysia. This study employs a quantitative approach using descriptive and explanatory methods. The sample consists of 96 respondents, selected using accidental sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results show that social media content has a positive and significant effect on users' decision-making. Meanwhile, influencer marketing does not have a significant partial effect. On the other hand, word of mouth has a positive and significant influence and is identified as the most dominant variable affecting users' decisions. Simultaneously, all three independent variables have a significant effect on healthcare service decisions at PT Spring Island Travel Medan. These findings indicate that trust derived from other people's experiences remains the primary factor in making medical travel decisions, although digital content still plays an important supporting role in influencing user decisions.

Keywords: Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, Word of Mouth (WOM), Service User Decision, Medical Travel.

1. Introduction

The dynamics of healthcare service marketing in the digital era have undergone significant transformation over the past decade, particularly with the emergence of social media platforms as primary communication channels between service providers and consumers (Julsari et al., 2025). This development creates both opportunities and challenges for companies operating in the healthcare service sector, including medical travel facilitators that connect Indonesian patients with referral hospitals abroad (Siregar et al., 2025). PT Spring Island Travel Medan is a company that acts as a facilitator for medical travel services, assisting patients in undergoing medical procedures and treatments at leading hospitals in Malaysia. The company's role includes initial consultation, scheduling appointments with specialist doctors, preparing travel documents, as well as arranging accommodation and travel logistics for patients and their families. Medan serves as a strategic departure city due to its proximity to Malaysia, with a flight duration of less than one hour. The increasing utilization of overseas medical services is driven by several significant factors. Healthcare facilities in Malaysia offer

high standards of service at relatively affordable costs for Indonesia's middle-class population, supported by adequate infrastructure and similarities in religion and culture, which facilitate easier adaptation for patients and their families.

The urgency of this research stems from the rapid growth of the medical tourism industry in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, which has become a preferred destination for Indonesian patients seeking quality healthcare services at competitive prices. According to the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC), Malaysia received over 1.2 million healthcare travelers in 2023, with Indonesian patients constituting a significant portion of this figure. As a key facilitator in this ecosystem, PT Spring Island Travel Medan must understand the factors that influence consumer decision-making in choosing medical travel services. In an increasingly competitive market, the ability to leverage digital marketing strategies effectively has become a critical determinant of business sustainability and growth. The emergence of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube has fundamentally altered how consumers search for and evaluate healthcare service providers. Consumers now have access to vast amounts of information, including service quality assessments, price comparisons, and patient testimonials, all of which shape their perceptions and purchase intentions (Cham et al., 2022).

Communication through social media plays an important role in shaping brand image and trust toward hospitals, which in turn influences the perceptions and behavioral intentions of medical tourists in selecting healthcare services (Cham et al., 2022). In addition, the role of influencers in providing information and recommendations regarding healthcare services has continued to grow. Studies indicate that 36% of Indonesian consumers trust health-related advice from influencers, compared to 21% in Singapore (You Gov in Campaign Indonesia, 2024). This phenomenon highlights the increasing significance of influencer marketing as a strategic tool for reaching potential medical travelers and building credibility in the healthcare sector. The phenomenon of word of mouth, both in the form of direct interpersonal communication and through digital platforms (electronic word of mouth), remains one of the most influential factors in the decision to choose healthcare services. Patients or their families who have previously used medical facilitator services tend to share their experiences and recommendations with others, particularly through informal conversations that are perceived as more honest and trustworthy than paid advertisements. According to Musi et al. (2020), word of mouth is a communication channel that has an extraordinary impact because it is personal, more detailed, and more credible. In the digital era, these recommendations are often reflected in social media reviews, comments in online health forums, ratings in applications, and testimonials shared across various platforms.

Despite the growing body of literature on digital marketing in healthcare services, significant research gaps remain. First, existing studies have predominantly focused on the direct effects of individual digital marketing elements, such as social media marketing or influencer endorsements, without comprehensively examining their combined influence on consumer decision-making in the medical tourism context. Second, limited research has been conducted specifically on medical travel facilitators in Indonesia, particularly those operating from Medan, despite the city's strategic role as a departure point for medical travelers to Malaysia. Third, there is a lack of empirical evidence regarding the relative effectiveness of different digital marketing channels in influencing the decision-making process of medical tourists, particularly in the context of PT Spring Island Travel Medan, where patients and their families navigate complex decisions

involving cross-border healthcare access. Although the importance of digital marketing has been widely recognized, there remains a knowledge gap regarding the extent to which the three key elements social media content, influencer marketing, and digital word of mouth simultaneously contribute to the service users' decision-making at PT Spring Island Travel Medan.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital word of mouth on consumer purchase decisions at PT Spring Island Travel Medan, both partially and simultaneously. Specifically, this research aims to: (1) analyze the effect of social media marketing on consumer purchase decisions; (2) analyze the effect of influencer marketing on consumer purchase decisions; (3) analyze the effect of digital word of mouth on consumer purchase decisions; and (4) analyze the simultaneous effect of social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital word of mouth on consumer purchase decisions. By achieving these objectives, this study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can guide PT Spring Island Travel Medan in optimizing their digital marketing strategies to better serve their target market.

The contribution of this research is multifaceted. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the existing body of knowledge on digital marketing in the healthcare service sector, particularly in the context of medical tourism. The findings contribute to the understanding of how social media marketing, influencer marketing, and digital word of mouth interact to influence consumer decision-making, thereby extending the application of marketing theory to the medical travel facilitator industry. From a practical perspective, the results of this study provide actionable insights for PT Spring Island Travel Medan and similar companies in optimizing their digital marketing strategies to enhance consumer engagement and purchase decisions. The findings may also inform policy development for medical tourism facilitators in Indonesia, particularly regarding effective digital marketing practices that prioritize consumer trust and satisfaction. Furthermore, the research serves as a reference for future studies exploring digital marketing dynamics in the healthcare service sector.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of Social Media Content

Social media content related to healthcare services refers to various forms of information that are created, managed, and disseminated by healthcare institutions through digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube (Butarbutar et al., 2026). This type of content plays a critical role in informing prospective patients and building trust, particularly in the context of medical tourism, which often involves a high level of uncertainty (Nasib, 2024). Therefore, delivering content that is informative, clear, and engaging becomes a key element in shaping the perceptions and choices of medical tourists (Tian, 2022). In practice, healthcare-related social media content can be categorized into several types, including informational and marketing content (Alnawas et al., 2024). Educational content includes information about medical procedures, health conditions, and health advice aimed at improving public understanding (Chi, 2021). Meanwhile, promotional content covers information about services, facilities, the expertise of healthcare professionals, and patient experiences, which are intended to attract attention and build trust among potential patients (Vo et al., 2025). Both types of content play a significant role in influencing medical tourists' decisions when selecting healthcare service providers (Poornima & Subramanian, 2024).

2.2 Definition of Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy that involves the use of influencers individuals who have the ability to influence their followers by utilizing social media as a promotional platform (Agustin & Amron, 2022). The effectiveness of influencer marketing in the healthcare sector is based on several key principles (Joshi et al., 2023). First, the trust established by influencers with their followers allows health-related promotional messages to be received more openly and perceived as more credible. Second, the authenticity of the experiences shared by influencers provides strong social validation regarding the quality and reliability of healthcare services (Marwati, 2022). Third, the reach and engagement rate of influencers can expand the exposure of promotional messages to market segments that were previously difficult to reach (Tian, 2022).

2.3 Definition of Word of Mouth

Word of mouth refers to informal and personal communication among individuals regarding products, services, or their experiences, conducted without direct incentives from the service provider (Rivai et al., 2021). In the context of healthcare services, word of mouth includes discussions among patients or their families about their treatment experiences, recommendations to close contacts, and the sharing of information related to treatment outcomes or satisfaction with the services received (Poornima & Subramanian, 2024).

2.4 Theory of Healthcare Service User Decision-Making

Healthcare service user decision-making is part of broader consumer behavior, defined as the process of evaluating, selecting, and choosing among various available healthcare service alternatives (Salsabillah, 2022). In the context of medical travel facilitation abroad, user decisions involve a higher level of analysis and consideration compared to the use of local healthcare services (Sari, 2020). Factors such as concerns about language communication, differences in healthcare systems, and cost affordability become key considerations (Martin & Nasib, 2021).

2.5. The Influence of Social Media Content on Healthcare Service User Decisions

Social media content has a significant positive influence on healthcare service user decisions, as it provides accessible and relevant information that helps prospective patients evaluate available options (Amanda et al., 2023). High-quality content enhances trust, reduces perceived risk, and shapes positive perceptions of healthcare providers (Tesar Arianto et al., 2021). As a result, informative, engaging, and credible social media content plays a crucial role in guiding users toward making confident and informed decisions when selecting healthcare services (Nasib et al., 2023).

H₁: Social media content has a positive and significant influence on healthcare service user decisions at PT Spring Island Travel Medan.

2.6 The Influence of Influencer Marketing on Healthcare Service User Decisions

Influencer marketing has a significant impact on healthcare service user decisions, as influencers can shape perceptions, build trust, and provide recommendations that are perceived as credible by their followers (Napitupulu, 2025). Through authentic content and personal experiences, influencers help prospective patients better understand

healthcare services, reduce uncertainty, and increase confidence in choosing a particular provider (Tirtayasa et al., 2025).

H₂: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant effect on healthcare service user decisions at PT Spring Island Travel Medan.

2.7 The Influence of Word of Mouth on Healthcare Service User Decisions

Word of mouth has a strong influence on healthcare service user decisions, as it is based on personal experiences and trusted recommendations from others (Farizy & Harsoyo, 2023). Information shared by patients or their families is often perceived as more credible and reliable than formal advertising, thereby reducing uncertainty and shaping positive perceptions (Khan & Fatma, 2023). As a result, word of mouth plays a crucial role in influencing users' confidence and final decisions when selecting healthcare services (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023).

H₃: Word of mouth has a positive and significant influence on healthcare service user decisions at PT Spring Island Travel Medan.

2.8 The Direct Influence of Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, and Word of Mouth on Healthcare Service User Decisions

Social media content, influencer marketing, and word of mouth have a direct influence on healthcare service user decisions (Roy et al., 2025). These factors collectively shape users' perceptions, enhance trust, and provide relevant information that supports the decision-making process (Trinanda, 2021). As a result, they play a crucial role in influencing users' choices when selecting healthcare services (Rahim et al., 2023).

H₄: Social media content, influencer marketing, and word of mouth have a significant influence on healthcare service decisions at PT Spring Island Travel Medan.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research approach with a cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of service quality and price perception on customer satisfaction of PT Spring Island Travel Medan. The study adopts a causal-explanatory approach to investigate how service quality and price perception influence customer satisfaction. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate because the study aims to empirically test the proposed conceptual framework using statistical analysis. The research framework is developed based on service quality theory and previous literature on customer satisfaction, service quality, and price perception.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of interest consists of customers who use the services of PT Spring Island Travel Medan, located at Jalan Jenderal Ahmad Yani No. 106, Kesawan, Medan. PT Spring Island Travel serves as a key facilitator for patients from Medan seeking medical treatment in hospitals in Penang, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Bahru, Malaysia. The study population comprised customers who have utilized the services of PT Spring Island Travel Medan during the research period. The sample size in this study was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error tolerance. Based on the population of customers who used the services of PT Spring Island Travel Medan, the calculation resulted in 96 respondents.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through a questionnaire administered via Google Forms and distributed online. The questionnaire was disseminated through WhatsApp groups and Instagram direct messages during the January–March 2026 period to reach relevant respondents efficiently. Online questionnaires are effective in reaching a wide range of respondents at a relatively low cost (Sugiyono, 2023). This study relied on primary data obtained directly from the participants through the questionnaire. The research instrument applied a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of service quality, price perception, and customer satisfaction. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous validated studies and modified to fit the context of PT Spring Island Travel Medan's services. The constructs measured in this study include Service Quality (X_1), Price Perception (X_2), and Customer Satisfaction (Y).

3.4 Operational Definitions of Research Variables

Table 1. Operational Definitions of Research Variables

Variable	Type	Definition	Measurement	Scale
Service Quality (X_1)	Independent	The overall assessment of service excellence provided by PT Spring Island Travel Medan, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles	Likert scale measuring service quality dimensions	Likert
Price Perception (X_2)	Independent	Customer's evaluation of the reasonableness and fairness of the price charged for the services provided by PT Spring Island Travel Medan	Likert scale measuring price fairness, affordability, and value for money	Likert
Customer Satisfaction (Y)	Dependent	The overall evaluation of customers regarding their experience and satisfaction with the services provided by PT Spring Island Travel Medan	Likert scale measuring satisfaction, recommendation willingness, and repurchase intention	Likert

Source: Author's construction (2026)

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were processed using descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis through multiple regression methods with the assistance of SPSS software. The analysis procedure involved several stages, including descriptive statistical analysis, classical assumption tests, and hypothesis testing.

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to provide an overview of the characteristics of the research data, including measures of central tendency (mean) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation) for all variables examined in the study. Descriptive statistics offer initial insights into the data patterns and assist in understanding respondents' perceptions of service quality, price perception, and customer satisfaction.

Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model provides unbiased and efficient estimates. The classical assumption tests employed in this study include normality test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. The normality test examines whether the residuals are normally distributed. The multicollinearity test assesses the presence of high correlations among independent variables using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), where VIF values below 10 indicate the absence of significant multicollinearity. The heteroscedasticity test examines whether residuals have constant variance.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using multiple regression analysis to examine the effect of service quality and price perception on customer satisfaction. The regression model used in this study is formulated as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y = Customer Satisfaction

α = Constant

$\beta_1 - \beta_2$ = Regression coefficients

X_1 = Service Quality

X_2 = Price Perception

ε = Error term

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is utilized to measure the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables in the regression model, with values ranging from 0 to 1 where higher values indicate greater explanatory power of the model. The F-test is employed to determine whether the independent variables collectively exert a significant influence on the dependent variable, where a p-value of less than 0.05 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. The t-test is used to examine the partial significance of each independent variable's individual contribution to the dependent variable, where a p-value of less than 0.05 indicates that the specific independent variable has a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Result

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Deviation
Social Media Content (X1)	96	9.00	25.00	19.7500	3.79751
Influencer Marketing (X2)	96	6.00	25.00	19.2813	4.07225
Word of Mouth (X3)	96	7.00	25.00	20.0729	3.97689
User Decisions (Y)	96	9.00	25.00	20.1146	3.75253

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Deviation
Valid n (Listwise)	96				

Source: processed data (2026)

Descriptive: statistical analysis of 96 respondents (N = 96) indicates that all variables tend to have high values within the score range of 6 to 25. The Social Media Content variable (X1) shows a minimum value of 9 and a maximum of 25, with a mean of 19.750 and a standard deviation of 3.797. For the Influencer Marketing variable (X2), the minimum value is 6 and the maximum is 25, with a mean of 19.281 and a standard deviation of 4.072. The Word of Mouth variable (X3) records a minimum value of 7 and a maximum of 25, with a mean of 20.072 and a standard deviation of 3.976. The Healthcare Service User Decision variable (Y) has a minimum value of 9 and a maximum of 25, with a mean of 20.114 and a standard deviation of 3.752.

4.2 Validity and Reliability Test

4.2.1 Validity Test Results

Table 3. Validity Test Results

	SMC	Results	IM	Results	WM	Results	UD	Results
	rvalue		rvalue		rvalue		rvalue	
1.	0,823	Valid	0,853	Valid	0,878	Valid	0,862	Valid
2.	0,818	Valid	0,859	Valid	0,827	Valid	0,838	Valid
3.	0,896	Valid	0,870	Valid	0,869	Valid	0,874	Valid
4.	0,855	Valid	0,895	Valid	0,827	Valid	0,906	Valid
5.	0,896	Valid	0,806	Valid	0,836	Valid	0,869	Valid

Source: processed data (2026)

Based on the validity test, each indicator has a calculated r-value greater than the r-table value; therefore, all variables pass the validity test and are able to represent the constructs effectively.

4.2.2 Reliability Test Results

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Alfa Cronbach
Social Media Content (X1)	0,908
Influencer Marketing (X2)	0,909
Word of Mouth (X3)	0,901
User Decisions (Y)	0,918

Source: processed data (2026)

Based on the reliability test, each variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.700; therefore, all variables are considered reliable and are capable of measuring the dependent variable effectively.

4.3 Multiple Linear Regression Test

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,330	1,043		2,235	,028	
	TOTAL(X1)	0,312	0,080	0,315	3,902	,000	,379 2,641

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
TOTAL (X2)	-0,017	0,080	0,080	0,210	,834	,325	3,074
TOTAL (X3)	0,595	0,085	0,085	6,998	,000	,304	3,285

Source: processed data (2026)

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analysis shown in the table above, the constant value is 2.330, and the regression coefficients for each independent variable are presented in the Unstandardized Coefficients (B) column. Mathematically, the resulting regression model can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 2.330 + 0.312 X_1 - 0.017 X_2 + 0.595 X_3 + \epsilon$$

The multiple linear regression equation represents the strength, effect, and direction of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable. When the regression coefficient of an independent variable is positive, it indicates that the variable has a positive (direct) relationship with the dependent variable. Conversely, if the regression coefficient is negative, it indicates an inverse relationship with the dependent variable. The interpretation of the multiple linear regression results is as follows:

- 1) The constant value of 2.330 indicates that if all independent variables Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, and Word of Mouth are held constant or equal to zero, then the value of User Decision is 2.330 units.
- 2) The regression coefficient for the Social Media Content variable is 0.312, meaning that every one-unit increase in Social Media Content will increase User Decision by 0.312 units, assuming other independent variables remain constant.
- 3) The regression coefficient for the Influencer Marketing variable is -0.017, indicating an inverse relationship, although the effect is very small. Theoretically, an increase in influencer marketing activities may reduce User Decision by 0.017 units in this model.

4.4 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Table 6. R-Square Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,879 ^a	,772	,765	1,81972

Source: Processed data (2025)

Based on the coefficient of determination results presented in the table above, the R Square value is 0.772. This indicates that 77.2% of the variation in the User Decision variable can be explained by the independent variables, namely Word of Mouth, Influencer Marketing, and Social Media Content. Meanwhile, the remaining 22.8% is influenced by other factors that are not included in this research model.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Table 7. t-Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	2,330	1,043		2,235	,028		
TOTAL(X1)	0,312	0,080	0,315	3,902	,000	,379	2,641
1 TOTAL (X2)	-0,017	0,080	0,080	0,210	,834	,325	3,074
TOTAL (X3)	0,595	0,085	0,085	6,998	,000	,304	3,285

Source: Processed data (2025)

Based on the results of the t-test, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1) The Effect of Social Media Content (X1) The Social Media Content variable shows a t-value of 3.902 with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000. Since this probability value is far below the threshold of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$), the first hypothesis is accepted. This empirically proves that Social Media Content has a positive and significant effect on Healthcare Service User Decisions. Practically, this finding indicates that the higher the quality and relevance of information presented through digital platforms, the stronger the intention of potential users to choose the service.
- 2) The Effect of Influencer Marketing (X2) on User Decision (Y). Based on the statistical test results, the Influencer Marketing variable has a t-value of -0.210 with a significance level of 0.834. Since this significance value is greater than the predetermined level ($0.834 > 0.05$), Influencer Marketing is found to have no significant partial effect on Healthcare Service User Decisions. Moreover, the negative coefficient (-0.017) indicates that, in the context of this study, the use of influencers does not provide a direct positive impact on the consumer decision-making process.
- 3) The Effect of Word of Mouth (X3) on User Decision (Y). The Word of Mouth variable has the highest t-value of 6.998 with a significance level of 0.000. With a Sig. value < 0.05 , it can be concluded that Word of Mouth has a positive and highly significant effect on User Decisions. This result confirms that personal recommendations or testimonials from other users are the most dominant factors influencing consumer trust and final decisions in selecting healthcare services.

Table 8. F-Test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1033,033	3	344,364	103,994	,000 ^b
Residual	304,647	92	3,311		
Total	1337,740	95			

a. Dependent Variable: TOTAL(Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), TOTAL (X3), TOTAL(X1), TOTAL (X2)

Source: Processed data (2026)

Since the significance value is far below the threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that the research hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that Social Media Content,

Influencer Marketing, and Word of Mouth collectively or simultaneously have a significant effect on Healthcare Service User Decisions.

4.6 Discussion

4.6.1 The Influence of Social Media Content on Healthcare Service User Decisions

The findings of this study indicate that Social Media Content (X1) has a positive and significant influence on healthcare service user decisions. This is evidenced by a regression coefficient of 0.312, a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), and a t-value of 3.902, which confirms that the hypothesis is accepted. These results reinforce the notion that the quality of digital content presented through social media plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior when selecting healthcare services (Poornima & Subramanian, 2024)(Eryc et al., 2026)(Salsabillah, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are consistent with consumer decision-making theory, which emphasizes that relevant, accessible, and credible information enhances consumer confidence in making decisions. In the context of healthcare services, which are characterized by high levels of uncertainty and perceived risk, the presence of informative social media content such as health education, patient testimonials, facility visualization, and digital interaction serves as a key mechanism to reduce information asymmetry between service providers and potential users.

Furthermore, the regression coefficient of 0.312 suggests that every one-unit increase in the quality of Social Media Content leads to an increase of 0.312 units in user decision-making, assuming other variables remain constant. This implies that social media content functions not only as a promotional tool but also as a perception builder and trust generator within the healthcare industry. In the digital era, consumers tend to independently search for information before making service choices, making content quality a critical determinant in shaping user preferences.

4.6.2 The Influence of Influencer Marketing on Healthcare Service User Decisions

The results of this study indicate that Influencer Marketing (X2) does not have a significant effect on healthcare service user decisions. This is evidenced by a regression coefficient of -0.017, a significance value of 0.834 (> 0.05), and a t-value of -0.210, which suggests that the hypothesis is rejected. These findings imply that, within the context of this research, influencer marketing does not play a meaningful role in shaping users' decisions when selecting healthcare services.

From a theoretical standpoint, this result contrasts with the general marketing literature, which often highlights the effectiveness of influencer marketing in shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions (Nasib et al., 2020). However, healthcare services differ fundamentally from typical consumer products, as they involve higher perceived risk, emotional sensitivity, and the need for credibility and trust (Hutagaol et al., 2025). In such contexts, users tend to rely more on reliable, evidence-based information and personal experiences rather than promotional endorsements from influencers (Agustin & Amron, 2022).

Moreover, the negative regression coefficient, although statistically insignificant, indicates a tendency that increased exposure to influencer marketing may not necessarily translate into higher user decisions. This may occur because users perceive influencer content in healthcare as less authentic or overly commercialized, which can reduce its persuasive power. Unlike lifestyle or fashion industries, where influencer

recommendations are highly impactful, healthcare decisions require a higher level of trust, professionalism, and verified expertise.

4.6.3 The Influence of Word of Mouth on Healthcare Service User Decisions

The results of this study indicate that Word of Mouth (X3) has a positive and highly significant influence on healthcare service user decisions. This is evidenced by a regression coefficient of 0.595, a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), and a t-value of 6.998, which is the highest among all variables. These findings confirm that the hypothesis is accepted and that Word of Mouth is the most dominant factor influencing users' decisions in selecting healthcare services (Tian, 2022)(Magfur et al., 2022)(Novirsari, 2022). From a theoretical perspective, these findings are consistent with interpersonal communication theory and consumer behavior theory, which suggest that recommendations from trusted individuals have a stronger impact than formal marketing communications. In the context of healthcare services, which involve high levels of risk and concerns related to safety and quality of life, potential users tend to rely more on direct experiences shared by others, such as family members, friends, or previous patients. Information obtained through Word of Mouth is generally perceived as more objective, credible, and free from commercial.

Furthermore, the regression coefficient of 0.595 indicates that every one-unit increase in Word of Mouth leads to an increase of 0.595 units in user decision-making, assuming other variables remain constant. This highlights that Word of Mouth functions not only as an information source but also as a trust reinforcement mechanism and a form of social validation (social proof) in the decision-making process. When individuals receive positive recommendations from trusted sources, their confidence in the quality of healthcare services increases significantly.

4.6.4 The Direct Influence of Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, and Word of Mouth on Healthcare Service User Decisions

The results of this study indicate that Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, and Word of Mouth simultaneously have a significant effect on healthcare service user decisions. This is supported by the results of the F-test, which show a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), confirming that the overall research model is statistically significant. This finding implies that, when considered together, these three variables contribute meaningfully to explaining variations in user decisions in selecting healthcare services.(Nasib, 2024)(Girsang & Purba, 2025)(Tambunan et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.772 indicates that 77.2% of the variation in healthcare service user decisions can be explained by Social Media Content, Influencer Marketing, and Word of Mouth. The remaining 22.8% is influenced by other variables not included in this study. This high explanatory power suggests that the model has strong predictive capability and that these variables collectively play an important role in shaping user decision-making behavior.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of hypothesis testing conducted on 96 respondents of healthcare service users at PT Spring Island Travel Medan, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the Social Media Content variable shows a positive and significant effect on user decisions. This is reflected in the regression coefficient value of 0.312 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that any improvement in perceived digital content quality will

significantly encourage user decision-making. This finding is consistent with the role of digital platforms as primary sources of information for prospective cross-border medical service consumers. Second, Influencer Marketing does not show a significant partial effect on user decisions, with a coefficient of -0.017 and a significance level of 0.834. Although theoretically expected to contribute positively, the empirical results indicate that, in the context of regional medical travel facilitation, influencer-based promotion is less effective.

Third, Word of Mouth is proven to have the most dominant effect, with a regression coefficient of 0.595 and a significance level of 0.000. This confirms that direct experiences and recommendations from other users are the strongest drivers in shaping trust and commitment toward service providers. Fourth, collectively, these three variables explain 77.2% of the variation in user decisions, as indicated by the R-square value of 0.772. The remaining variation is influenced by external factors such as cost and accessibility.

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