

**STUDYING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PATIENT TESTIMONIALS AND STORIES:
A CASE STUDY OF RUNGTA HOSPITAL, JAIPUR**

Dissertation Submitted to



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by

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Under the Supervision and Guidance of

Dr. Alok Kumar Mathur

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Nidhi Kulshrestha, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MBA (Hospital and Health Management) from the IIHMR University, Jaipur, has successfully completed her internship at Rungta Hospital during Mar 10 - May 31, 2025.

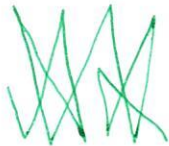
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that dissertation titled **“Studying the effectiveness of patient testimonials and stories: A case study of Rungta hospital, Jaipur”** is a record of the research work undertaken by Ms. **Nidhi Kulshrestha** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **MBA (Hospital and Health Management)** from the IIHMR University, Jaipur under my guidance and supervision and his/her approach to the research study has been sincere, scientific, and analytical.

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DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, hereby declare that this dissertation titled **“STUDYING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PATIENT TESTIMONIALS AND STORIES: A CASE STUDY OF RUNGTA HOSPITAL, JAIPUR”** is the bonafide record of my original research work. I declare that it has not been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been duly acknowledged in the text.

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June 16th, 2025

ABSTRACT

With increasing competition in the healthcare sector, hospitals are under constant pressure to distinguish themselves through effective and emotionally engaging marketing strategies. Traditional promotional tactics focused heavily on clinical achievements and technological advancements. However, modern healthcare marketing has shifted towards more emotionally resonant, patient-centred communication. Among these approaches, patient testimonials have emerged as one of the most impactful and credible tools, capable of building trust and influencing hospital choice. This dissertation investigates the effectiveness of patient testimonials as a strategic component of healthcare marketing, specifically within the context of Rungta Hospital, Jaipur. Using a structured quantitative approach, the study collected data from 390 in-patients and their attendants through a Likert-scale-based feedback form. The form was designed to capture measurable responses across key parameters such as emotional clarity, trust-building, influence on hospital choice, and satisfaction with testimonial-based content compared to traditional advertisements.

The findings reveal that participants rated patient testimonials highly in terms of their relevance as a marketing tool, with the strongest scores for their integration into overall strategy and visibility. Testimonials were shown to significantly enhance emotional connection and trust, making them an essential aspect of patient perception and decision-making. While traditional ads were still considered relevant, they were generally perceived as less convincing than real patient narratives. This study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of emotionally authentic and ethically collected patient stories in hospital branding. The insights gained not only validate the strategic use of testimonials but also provide actionable recommendations for healthcare marketers to strengthen communication, increase patient satisfaction, and enhance institutional credibility in competitive healthcare markets.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION BY STUDENT	3
CERTIFICATE	5
ABSTRACT	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	7
LIST OF TABLES	9
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	10
Background of the study	11
Purpose of the study	11
Problem statement	11
Aims	12
Research Question	12
Objectives	12
Rationale of the study	12
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	13
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	14
Sample size	14
Inclusion criteria	14
Exclusion criteria	14
Data collection method	14
Study duration (TIMELINE)	14
Data analysis	14
Ethical considerations	16
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS	16
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION	17
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	18
Recommendations	19
REFERENCES	21
ANNEXURE: GOOGLE FORM STRUCTURE	23

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page No.
Table 1	Mean Scores for Testimonial-Based Marketing Attributes	9
Table 3	Summary of Reviewed Literature	16
Table 4	Patient Experience & Testimonial Feedback Form (Annexure)	23-24

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Due to the rise in competition within the healthcare industry, institutions are now challenged to build a trustworthy relationship with patients. The marketing strategies employed within healthcare is different from the past. Instead of focusing on advertisement, there is a shift towards more patient-centred and emotional approaches. Incorporation of stories and testimonials from patients is one of the most powerful and credible forms of communication. These stories go beyond mere satisfaction statements; they profoundly shape perceptions, trust, and importantly, influence potential patients in their choices. Identifying empathy, trust and warm interaction becomes easy for emotionally charged patients. Hospital and healthcare marketing used to focus on primary and secondary clinical expertise and technology, but marketing with a human focus was neglected. Patient stories paint a picture of actual experience; they not only present facts about the level of care patients receive but showcase the human aspect too. The stories can be shared through social media, hospital websites, and feedback pages and have the potential to attract a large number of prospective patients.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the effectiveness of patient narratives and testimonials as strategic marketing tools qualitatively. The primary data source for this study will be narrative-based feedback forms and the focus will be on the articulation of trust, satisfaction, and emotional investment patients have with healthcare institutions. The objective of this research, through analysing the feedback, is to identify the patterns, emotional appeal, and elements that shape perception and trust towards the brand. The knowledge gained from this research will help healthcare marketers understand how to ethically and effectively use patient stories to enhance their branding and communication strategies.

Background of the study

Healthcare institutions today are faced with the dual responsibility of delivering high-quality medical care and cultivating a positive brand image in a highly competitive environment. In India, where trust plays a critical role in healthcare decision-making, traditional marketing strategies such as pamphlets, banners, doctor referral networks, health camps, and local advertisements have long been the norm. While these approaches help raise awareness, they often lack the emotional depth required to form lasting patient relationships.

Modern healthcare marketing has thus evolved to focus more on establishing connections and credibility rather than merely promoting services. Among the most powerful tools in this paradigm shift are patient testimonials—first-hand narratives that reflect genuine patient experiences. These stories go beyond clinical success and highlight the emotional and human aspects of care, which significantly influence how hospitals are perceived. Particularly in a country like India, where word-of-mouth and personal experiences are highly trusted, the impact of patient testimonials is profound.

Purpose of the study

This study, conducted at Rungta Hospital, Jaipur, aims to evaluate the role of patient testimonials as a marketing tool that enhances emotional appeal, trust, and brand perception. Unlike traditional strategies that focus on service features and clinical expertise, this research explores how testimonials provide emotional reassurance and guide decision-making. By analysing structured Likert-scale feedback, the study investigates the measurable influence of testimonials on hospital visibility, trustworthiness, and service satisfaction.

Problem statement

In an increasingly competitive healthcare landscape, hospitals must go beyond conventional marketing to create a compelling and trustworthy identity. While traditional methods like posters, service brochures, and public health camps raise visibility, they often fall short in building the emotional connection necessary for patient loyalty. Patient testimonials, captured through feedback mechanisms, offer real-life insights that can bridge this emotional gap and support more meaningful marketing strategies. Despite their growing use, the actual effectiveness of testimonials in enhancing brand perception, trust, and service decisions remains underexplored in empirical studies—particularly in Indian healthcare settings. Moreover, the ethical considerations surrounding the use of these narratives in promotions are often overlooked. This study addresses these gaps by

quantitatively analysing patient feedback to determine the emotional and strategic impact of testimonial-based marketing at Rungta Hospital, Jaipur.

Aims

To explore and evaluate the effectiveness of patient testimonials and stories, extracted from feedback forms, in enhancing healthcare marketing strategies and fostering patient trust.

Research Question

“To what extent do patient testimonials, as expressed through feedback forms, influence emotional appeal, trust-building, and branding effectiveness in healthcare marketing strategies?”

Objectives.

- To analyze patient feedback to understand how testimonials influence patient trust and hospital choice.
- To study Likert-scale feedback to determine the influence of testimonial marketing on patients' perception of trust and service quality.

Rationale of the study

The rationale behind this study lies in the evolving nature of healthcare marketing. Traditional marketing methods—such as pamphlets, banners, health camps, and referral networks—have long been used to create awareness and attract patients. However, these approaches often emphasize services, technology, and infrastructure, and may not adequately address the emotional and psychological needs of patients. As healthcare decisions become increasingly patient-driven, there is a rising need for marketing strategies that foster trust, emotional reassurance, and authenticity. Patient testimonials serve this purpose effectively by offering first-hand accounts of care experiences, allowing potential patients to connect with the hospital on a personal level. These narratives help humanize healthcare brands and contribute to building long-term trust and loyalty. This study is particularly relevant for hospitals operating in culturally sensitive and relationship-oriented environments like India, where emotional appeal and word-of-mouth play a significant role in shaping healthcare choices. By quantifying the influence of testimonials on patient perception and decision-making, this research provides actionable insights for healthcare marketers aiming to enhance their outreach and strengthen brand identity using ethically grounded, experience-based communication.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Table: Summary of Reviewed Literature

Author(s)	Year	Focus of Study	Key Findings
Zakkar & Lizotte	2021	Text analytics of patient stories across platforms	Social media narratives significantly influence hospital brand perception and emotional engagement.
Zakkar & Lizotte	2022	Sentiment and topic modeling of NHS patient stories using NLP	Identified themes in care experiences; highlighted the value of storytelling in service evaluation.
Arora et al.	2017	Emotional impact of testimonials on patients	Testimonials influence patient trust and are persuasive in decision-making.
Jalilvand & Samiei	2012	Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in healthcare	Online testimonials improve trust and decision-making in digital health environments.
Chimonas & Kassirer	2009	Ethical issues in using patient narratives	Warned against biased use of testimonials; stressed consent, privacy, and transparency.
Green & Brock	2000	Narrative transportation theory	Emotional storytelling enhances credibility and audience engagement.
Purcarea	2019	Strategic storytelling in healthcare marketing	Patient stories enhance emotional engagement and reflect institutional empathy.
Niveditha & Madduri	2023	Indian hospital marketing and patient relationship strategies	Testimonials improve hospital trust and engagement, especially in culturally sensitive settings.
Sheikh & Kanyal	2023	Role of traditional and digital marketing in Indian hospitals	Testimonials strengthen emotional appeal and outperform general advertisements in patient perception.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Sample size

The chosen sample size for this dissertation is 390. A convenience sampling approach was used, and responses were collected over a three-month period. All eligible and consenting in-patients and their attendants who were available during this timeframe were invited to participate. Those who voluntarily completed the structured Google Form were included in the final analysis, ensuring the data reflected a broad cross-section of the hospital's IPD population.

Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria for this study consisted of patients currently admitted to the in-patient department (IPD) of the hospital and their attendants who were able to fill out the Google Form using their own mobile phones. This ensured data was gathered efficiently and independently by those comfortable with digital platforms.

Exclusion criteria

Patients who did not have access to a smartphone or were unable to complete the Google Form independently were excluded from the digital survey. However, to include their responses, a printed version of the questionnaire was administered manually to such participants, and their responses were later digitized for analysis.

Data collection method

Data was collected using a structured Google Form designed specifically for this study. The form consisted exclusively of closed-ended, Likert-scale-based questions to gather measurable insights on how patient testimonials influence trust, hospital choice, and perceived service quality. Participants who could access the digital form submitted responses electronically, while others were provided a printed version to ensure inclusivity. All responses were later consolidated into a digital dataset. Participants voluntarily completed the form after giving informed consent.

Study duration (TIMELINE)

The data collection was carried out over a span of three months.

Data analysis

All data collected were quantitative in nature. Likert scale responses were used to evaluate various attributes such as trust, emotional clarity, service quality, hospital selection, and comparative effectiveness versus traditional advertisements. Each attribute was rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Highly Dissatisfied) to 5 (Highly Satisfied). The mean score was calculated for each parameter to determine the overall impact level of patient testimonials.

Revised Classification Range:

- 1.00 – 1.80: Highly Dissatisfied
 - 1.81 – 2.60: Dissatisfied
 - 2.61 – 3.40: Neutral
 - 3.41 – 4.20: Satisfied
 - 4.21 – 5.00: Highly Satisfied
-
- Survey questions are open ended.
 - Taking the testimonials based on the questions present in the feedback form, the questionnaire is designed to incorporate feedback of patients on the services/ moments of truth encountered by patients during their treatment in the hospital. Covering the topics
 - After interacting with the study subjects (390 Inpatients), analysis would be done by taking out the average percentage, of each topic present in the feedback form.

- **Mean Score Calculation:**

For each attribute evaluated through Likert-scale responses, the mean score was calculated by assigning numerical values from 1 (Below Average) to 5 (Excellent).

The total weighted score for each attribute was then divided by the number of valid responses to derive the average score. This allowed for comparative analysis of attributes like trust-building, marketing integration, and emotional clarity.

$$\text{Mean Score} = \frac{\sum(\text{Response Value} \times \text{Number of Responses})}{\text{Total Number of Responses}}$$

- This method facilitated a clear, quantifiable understanding of participant perceptions, enabling rankings and impact interpretations based on average sentiment across the feedback population.

Attribute	Mean Score	New Interpretation
Part of Marketing Strategy	4.29	Highly Satisfied
Awareness/Visibility	4.16	Satisfied
Influence on Hospital Choice	4.12	Satisfied
Trust-Building	4.01	Satisfied
Perceived Impact on Care Quality	3.92	Satisfied
Emotional Connection/Clarity	3.87	Satisfied
More Convincing than General Ads	3.59	Satisfied

Ethical considerations

It is crucial for researchers to ensure that several ethical principals were implemented to ensure that the rights, privacy and dignity of the patients were protected at all time. The incorporation of ethical principal ensure that any sensitive information is protected and the patient does not feel uncomfortable. Informed consent was taken from all participants taking into consideration the voluntary nature of the study. Written and verbal consent was obtained before using of any testimonials. The participation of the respondents was voluntary. No attendant or participant was pressured into participating. The research design was explained to them in layman language. The privacy of the patients was respected and any sensitive issues were approached with discretion and empathy. The researcher ensured that there was no potential harm of any sort, emotional, psychological or reputational, to the participant, whether attendee or patient.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the analysis of the quantitative data collected from 390 participants, including in-patients and their attendants at Rungta Hospital, Jaipur. The structured Google Form contained closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Highly Dissatisfied) to 5 (Highly Satisfied). The aim was to measure how patient testimonials influenced patient trust, perception of service quality, and hospital choice.

Findings Based on Mean Score Analysis

The table below summarizes the mean scores for key attributes related to patient testimonial marketing and their corresponding satisfaction levels:

Attribute	Mean Score	Satisfaction Level
Part of Marketing Strategy	4.29	Highly Satisfied
Awareness/Visibility	4.16	Satisfied
Influence on Hospital Choice	4.12	Satisfied
Trust-Building	4.01	Satisfied
Perceived Impact on Care Quality	3.92	Satisfied
Emotional Connection/Clarity	3.87	Satisfied
More Convincing than General Ads	3.59	Satisfied

Interpretation of Results

- The highest-rated attribute was “Part of Marketing Strategy” (Mean = 4.29), indicating that participants were highly satisfied with the integration of patient testimonials into the hospital’s overall promotional approach.
- Attributes such as “Awareness/Visibility” (4.16), “Influence on Hospital Choice” (4.12), and “Trust-Building” (4.01) fall within the “Satisfied” range, reflecting positive patient perception regarding testimonial-driven marketing.
- “Emotional Connection/Clarity” (3.87) and “Perceived Impact on Care Quality” (3.92) also scored within the “Satisfied” band, suggesting that testimonials helped in emotional reassurance and in forming perceptions about care quality.
- The attribute “More Convincing than General Ads” (3.59) indicates that testimonials were generally preferred over traditional advertisements, but the strength of that preference was moderate within the satisfaction range.

These findings suggest that patient testimonials have a clear and positive influence on trust, perceived service quality, and hospital selection decisions among patients and attendants. The consistency across satisfaction scores confirms the effectiveness of testimonial-based marketing strategies within the context of Rungta Hospital.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The findings of this study align closely with relevant literature on the effectiveness of patient testimonials in healthcare marketing. Based on quantitative feedback from 390 respondents at Rungta Hospital, Jaipur, the study confirms that patient testimonials significantly influence trust, service quality perception, and hospital choice. The highest-rated attribute, “Part of Marketing Strategy” (Mean = 4.29), reflects strong patient satisfaction with testimonial integration into hospital promotions. This supports **Purcarea (2019)**, who

emphasized that emotionally authentic patient narratives build stronger brand identity and institutional trust than conventional advertising. The scores for “Awareness/Visibility” (4.16), “Influence on Hospital Choice” (4.12), and “Trust-Building” (4.01) further demonstrate the persuasive impact of testimonial-based communication. This aligns with **Jalilvand & Samiei (2012)**, who found that electronic word-of-mouth significantly shapes patients' trust and influences healthcare choices in digital environments.

Additionally, “Emotional Connection/Clarity” (3.87) and “Perceived Impact on Care Quality” (3.92) suggest that testimonials not only reassure patients but also positively shape their perception of service delivery. These results are supported by **Arora et al. (2017)**, who highlighted that emotionally engaging testimonials increase patient confidence, especially in sensitive treatment contexts. The attribute “More Convincing than General Ads” (3.59) shows that while testimonials are more trusted than traditional advertisements, both continue to play a role. This observation is consistent with **Sheikh & Kanyal (2023)**, who reported that in Indian tertiary care hospitals, digital testimonials have greater emotional appeal, but traditional tools like banners and pamphlets are still part of the promotional mix. Lastly, the findings are particularly significant in the Indian context. As **Niveditha & Madduri (2023)** emphasized, culturally resonant narratives—especially in local or regional settings—carry enhanced credibility and impact. This reinforces the study’s relevance to hospitals operating in socially connected environments like Jaipur. In summary, the study validates that patient testimonials are an effective marketing strategy for fostering trust and influencing hospital choice. The alignment with key literature underscores the growing value of integrating ethically collected and emotionally resonant stories into healthcare communication.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the effectiveness of patient testimonials in healthcare marketing at Rungta Hospital, Jaipur, using quantitative feedback collected from in-patients and their attendants. The results demonstrated that testimonials play a key role in enhancing trust, improving the perception of service quality, and influencing hospital selection decisions. Findings showed that attributes such as testimonial integration into the marketing strategy, visibility, emotional clarity, and perceived care quality were consistently rated in the "Satisfied" to "Highly Satisfied" range. This indicates that patients recognize and value testimonial-based marketing as a credible and emotionally resonant form of communication. Unlike traditional promotional methods, testimonials offer real-life, relatable experiences that

connect with audiences on a deeper emotional level. This study further validates existing literature that supports the shift from generic advertising toward authentic, patient-centric storytelling in healthcare branding. By analysing structured Likert-scale feedback, the study confirms that testimonial-driven strategies can significantly enhance a hospital's public image, foster trust, and support informed decision-making among prospective patients. These outcomes are especially relevant in culturally connected environments like India, where personal narratives are often more influential than conventional advertisements. To maximize the benefits of testimonial-based marketing, hospitals should ensure the ethical collection and use of stories, maintain authenticity, and tailor the content for diverse audience segments. When implemented effectively, such strategies can lead to improved patient satisfaction, brand loyalty, and institutional credibility.

Recommendations

Based on the insights derived from this research, the following recommendations are proposed for hospitals and healthcare marketers to effectively leverage patient testimonials in their communication strategies:

- 1. Develop a Dedicated Testimonial Collection Framework** Establish a structured process at Rungta Hospital to collect written or video testimonials from patients at discharge counters with proper consent protocols.
- 2. Feature Testimonials in the Hospital's Local Advertising Mix** Incorporate testimonials into existing marketing platforms such as pamphlets, banners, posters, and community health camp brochures to increase emotional resonance.
- 3. Utilize Testimonial Displays at Strategic In-Hospital Touchpoints** Display selected testimonials near OPD registration, IPD lobbies, and discharge areas to reinforce trust and influence decision-making among incoming patients.
- 4. Localize Stories to Appeal to Regional Audiences** Ensure testimonials reflect regional diversity and are communicated in both Hindi and English, using culturally relatable experiences to connect with the surrounding community.
- 5. Integrate Testimonials into Pre-treatment Consultation** Use brief testimonial snippets in counselling sessions for elective services such as maternity, orthopaedics, and surgery to emotionally reassure and engage patients.

6. **Digitize and Promote Testimonials on Social Media and Website** Regularly update the hospital's official social media pages and website with curated patient stories to enhance digital engagement and outreach.
7. **Train Marketing and Frontline Staff** Provide training to the hospital's marketing team and nursing/front-desk staff on how to approach patients for testimonials ethically, and highlight success stories during hospital events.
8. **Track Impact Using Feedback Mechanisms** Implement a follow-up mechanism through SMS or WhatsApp to assess whether testimonial exposure influenced patient decisions, improving future marketing effectiveness.

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ANNEXURE: GOOGLE FORM STRUCTURE

Patient Experience & Testimonial Feedback Form
Rungta Hospital, Jaipur

SECTION A: GENERAL EXPERIENCE

Please rate the following aspects of your hospital experience by ticking the appropriate box.

Parameter	1 – Highly Dissatisfied	2 – Dissatisfied	3 – Neutral	4 – Satisfied	5 – Highly Satisfied
Cleanliness of the hospital	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff behavior and communication	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nursing care and responsiveness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Doctor's explanation and empathy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Admission and discharge process	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall hospital experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION B: IMPACT OF PATIENT TESTIMONIALS

Kindly tick the response that best reflects your view.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I noticed patient stories/testimonials at the hospital.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Testimonials helped me feel emotionally reassured.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Testimonials influenced my decision to choose this hospital.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I trust the hospital more after seeing or reading testimonials.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Testimonials are more convincing than general advertisements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: SHARE YOUR STORY (OPTIONAL)

If you would like to share your experience with future patients, please use the space below.

Your

Story/Testimonial:

.....
.....
.....

☐ I consent to the use of my testimonial by Rungta Hospital for promotional and educational purposes.