

Determination of the Effect of Corporate Image of Health Institutions on Patient Loyalty

Sağlık Kurumlarında Kurum İmajının Hasta Bağlılığı Üzerindeki Etkisinin Belirlenmesi

Gamze BAYIN¹, Ömer Rifki ÖNDER²

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to determine the corporate image and patient loyalty levels of a university hospital and a training and research hospital in Ankara, and to evaluate the relation between corporate image and patient loyalty. The sampling of the study consists of 756 polyclinic patients treated in a university hospital and a training and research hospital in Ankara. Number of patients was determined with the sample size formula. In conclusions of the study it was determined that there is a statistically significant difference in both corporate image and patient loyalty averages between the two hospitals. In addition, there is a strong, positive and statistically significant relation between patients' corporate image and patient loyalty. Health institutions that aim to increase patient loyalty may be advised to place emphasize on their corporate image policies.

Keywords: Corporate Image, Patient Loyalty, Outpatients, Health Care Management

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Ankara'da bir eğitim ve araştırma hastanesi ile bir üniversite hastanesinin kurumsal imaj ve hasta bağlılığı düzeylerini belirlemek ve kurum imajı ve hasta bağlılığı arasındaki ilişkiyi değerlendirmektir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, Ankara'daki bir eğitim ve araştırma hastanesi ile bir üniversite hastanesinden hizmet alan 756 poliklinik hastası oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda, her iki hastanenin hem kurum imajı, hem de hasta bağlılığı ortalamaları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, hastaların kurum imajı ve hasta bağlılığı düzeyleri arasında güçlü, pozitif ve istatistiksel olarak anlamlı ilişki olduğu saptanmıştır. Hasta bağlılığını artırmak isteyen sağlık kurumlarının kurum imajı politikalarına da önem vermeleri gerektiği önerilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kurum İmajı, Hasta Bağlılığı, Poliklinik Hastaları, Hastane Yönetimi

1. INTRODUCTION

Corporate image, which was until recently considered to be an uncertainty and a worrisome concept by organizations including their senior managers yet also known to have a critical importance for corporate success, is essential for both commercial and non-profit organizations (Gray and Balmer, 1998; Bakan, 2005). Examining the matter of corporate image in terms of health organizations, which have an economic and a social dimension, shows that health organizations are primarily customer oriented. Accordingly, in order to attain continuous success and maintain their existence, also health organizations need to earn the favor and meet the needs of their target markets. Health organizations may successfully create a positive image by maintaining their relations with patients well (Karafakioglu, 1998; Cinaroglu and Sahin, 2011). Positive image directs patients to prefer a health organization to another one and to apply to the preferred hospital while determining their priorities; in other words contributes to the creation of patient loyalty (Derin and Demirel, 2010).

International studies included in the related literature emphasize that the image of health organiza-

tions affect patient loyalty. Although the studies conducted on health organizations in Turkey addressed these two concepts independently from each other, studies conducted on other sectors draw attention to the potential relation between these two concepts. The aim of this study is to examine the potential impact of patient's image perceptions on their loyalty level. In this way, it can be achieved that identifying areas which health managers need to improve, providing the allocation of scarce resources and determination of patient satisfaction by determining the patient's expectations.

Today, the vast majority of patients make a choice from the hospitals which offering them the same comfort, have the same value and similar transport facilities. In such an environment, hospitals may improve patient loyalty and thus can improve the performance of organizations by developing their strategies accordingly in a correct way by defining their image. Starting from this idea, this study is expected to contribute to the literature with scientific findings by drawing attentions of health managers to this issue.

1.1. Corporate Image

Questions such as "What do our stakeholders

¹ Hacettepe Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Sağlık İdaresi Bölümü.

² Ankara Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi Sağlık Yönetimi Bölümü.

think about us?" and "What do we want them to think about us?" are among the most strategic questions executives face. On the basis of these questions lies the concept of corporate image (Syropoulou et al., 2010). Examining the studies conducted on this matter from past to present shows that there is no exact agreement concerning the definition of corporate image and how it can be functionalized. Nevertheless studies carried out in this area set forth that it is essential to manage corporate image (Pina et al., 2006).

Corporate image is closely related with the organization's various physical and behavioral characteristics such as its name, architecture, product/service diversity, ideology and culture. Within the frame of these characteristics, corporate image has two primary components as the functional component and the emotional component. Functional component contains measurable and concrete characteristics. Emotional component, on the other hand covers the psychological characteristics formed by feelings and behaviors such as the way the organization carries out its activities, offers services and communicates with the clients. In other words, corporate image is established as a result of comparing several components (Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001).

Dowling (1986) defines corporate image as the whole of the meanings people have concerning the organization they identify, remember and establish relation with. According to Rynes (1991), corporate image is the image associated with the name of the organization. On the other hand, according to Gupta (2002) corporate image reflects the sum of the images of the corporation in the eyes of the clients, investors, employees and the society. In line with these definitions, the corporate image of health organizations can be described as the sum of the thoughts, beliefs and impressions of patients concerning a health organization.

With the latest regulations made in the health area in Turkey, potential patients have a greater access to the health services provided by private hospitals, and when they need to make a selection among hospitals they tend to prefer hospitals with a better corporate image in this market where information asymmetry exists. Identity of the health organization, its service quality and reliability will be the most effective criteria in this choice (Cinaroglu and Sahin, 2011). Image is a process that needs to be well managed by non-profit health organizations, as well as private health organizations. Performances of non-profit health organization are also measured in terms of the number of services they generate within a certain period of time. Every intervention made, regardless whether it has any monetary return or not, bears the quality of an exchange in economic terms. Since the objective of marketing is to facilitate exchange, also such health organizations can create positive corporate images by utilizing marketing (Karafakioglu, 1998).

1.2. Patient Loyalty

The concept of patient loyalty is the adaptation of "customer loyalty" addressed within the scope of general business administration, into the health sector (Erdem et al., 2008). In the literature, and particularly in Turkish sources, the concept of "patient loyalty" is addressed rarely. In general, the concept "customer loyalty" is used also in studies conducted on patients (Sezgin, 2005; Erturk, 2009). In order to be able to define the concept of patient loyalty, it is important to mention customer loyalty, from which patient loyalty is derived.

In the dictionary of the Turkish Language Institution (2005), the word "loyalty" is defined as "to feel love and intimacy for someone, to sympathize someone and faithfulness". Dick and Basu (1994) defined loyalty as "a process determined by the strength of a relation between the attitude towards an entity and repurchasing behavior". Customer loyalty on the other hand is related with "the likelihood of customers turning back to the organization and strengthening of communication by word of mouth" according to Bowen and Shoemaker (1998), and it is "repurchasing the same product or service within time or the continuing consumer tendency to repurchase from the same organization" according to Enis and Paul (1970), or according to Oliver (1999) "customers' dedication of being the customer of an organization by repurchasing the same product or service even if they have negative experiences". According to Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000), customer loyalty is "choosing the same organization whenever it is possible or developing a positive attitude concerning the organization". Duffy (1998) on the other hand states that loyalty develops in time and according to a certain hierarchy. According to Duffy, in a hierarchy of loyalty customers transform from being consumers to partners cooperating with the organization in time, and later to individuals that support and advocate the organization.

On the basis of these definitions and explanations made in the literature, patient loyalty can be defined as "a concept that strengthens the patient-health organization relation that is established as a result of patient undertaking, trust and satisfaction, together with patients choosing the same health organization when they need to, developing a positive attitude for the health organization and recommending it to its acquaintances".

In general, patient loyalty can be explained with patients' positive attitudes and the recurring choice of the same hospital. Patients' loyalty to a health organization can manifest itself in several different ways. The patient may apply to the same health organization for all his or her medical problems (general loyalty) or may apply certain organizations only for some certain services they provide (service-based loyalty).

Some patients may only choose a certain physician (physician loyalty). While all members of a family may choose the same hospital or the same physician (family-based loyalty) they may also have different preferences (individual loyalty) (Karafakioglu, 1998).

1.3. Image and Patient Loyalty Relation in Health Organizations

Corporate image is important for health organizations in several terms. Image is effective on hospital executives in distributing future resources and determining priorities. If the image of a hospital gets tarnished, its market share will decrease through the decreases in the preferences on hospital, consumer, supplier and physician. On the other hand, a good hospital image will increase patients' tendency to choose the hospital in the future (Kim and Kim, 2008). If the customer portfolio of a health organization consists of regular patients, its costs decrease. Since usually people from the same environment apply to the health organization, diagnosis and treatment of health problems due to environmental conditions will become easier. Since the physicians will have the chance to monitor the health condition of the patients in long term they will be able to make diagnosis easier, while patients' decision making processes will be easier and problems concerning finding and choosing health organizations will decrease (Karafakioglu, 1998). Since the tolerance level of patients with high loyalty will also be higher, such inadequacies, imperfect and negative aspects may be rectified more easily. Patients will give more chances to the hospital. And in order to attain this tolerance, it is important to have loyal patients (Bercowitz, 1996).

In order to create a positive corporate image, which is critical in terms of generating patient loyalty, managers of health organizations are advised to ensure that patients feel themselves safe, employees are kind and able to develop trust, services are provided at the promised times, medical records are kept with care, that the organization is trustworthy, modern equipments are used, a visually attractive environment is designs, employees are well groomed and polite, and to treat the environment, the society, local population, patients and employees kindly (Kim and Kim, 2008; Laohasirichaikul et al., 2011). Concerning these matters, patient loyalty should constitute a significant part of the marketing strategies to be adopted by the hospital and for this purpose should be also supported by the hospital management (Erdem et al., 2008; Wu, 2011).

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

2.1. Purpose of the Study

The present study was conducted with the purpose of determining the corporate image and patient loyalty levels of a university hospital and a training and research hospital in Ankara, and evaluating the relation between corporate image and patient loyalty.

2.2. Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of polyclinic patients treated in a university hospital and a training and research hospital in Ankara. 12 polyclinics as 6 surgical and 6 internal polyclinics were selected for each of the hospitals. During the selection process of these polyclinics, emphasize was given to ensure that the selected polyclinics are available in both of the hospitals.

This research was applied in December 2012. To determine the number of patients will be interviewed to fill in the questionnaire, number of patients admitted to the clinic in December 2011 was taken into account. According to the information obtained from hospital records, while the training and research hospital received applications from a total of 49748 patients, 15501 patients applied to the university hospital. With the consideration of the total numbers of patients that applied the polyclinics, patient numbers were determined through the use of the sample size formula. As a result of calculations it was determined to reach a total of 756 polyclinic patients as 381 patients treated in the training and education hospital and 375 patients treated in the university hospital. In this case, it is considered that the determined sample sizes represent the population at 95% reliability level and with 5% tolerable rate of error (Sencer et al., 1984; Cingi, 1994; Sumbuloglu and Sumbuloglu, 2002).

2.3. Data Collection Tool

While corporate image questionnaire was used to determine the corporate image levels of health organizations, patient loyalty questionnaire was used for the purpose of determining patient loyalty. Data collection tools were applied through face to face interviews with the patients. Details concerning the used research forms are presented below.

Corporate Image Questionnaire: In the questionnaire used in order to determine corporate image, there are 26 questions concerning the factors constituting corporate image. The data collection tool developed by Karaosmanoglu (2006) in the doctoral thesis titled "Determinants of Corporate Image Formation: A Consumer Level Model Incorporating Corporate Identity Mix Elements and Unplanned Communication Factors" was taken as basis and other sources in the literature were utilized in order to adapt the said tool into the health sector (Bayramoglu, 2007; Mckee et al., 1996; Satir, 2006; Zerenler and Ogut, 2007; Gray and Balmer, 1998; Fatt et al., 2000; Flavian et al., 2005; Smith, 1993; Nguyen and Leblanc, 2001; Ozata and Sevinc, 2009). Preliminary applications of the questionnaire and the scale prepared within the scope of the study were carried out on 223 polyclinic patients of a training and research hospital in Ankara that bears similarities to the population of the study. Reliability coefficient of the expressions constituting corporate image were generally found

out to be high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0,905). In order to test the factors effective in the creation of corporate image and in order to measure their validity, the answers given by the patients that participated to the preliminary research to the 26 Likert type items were subjected to factor analysis, and it was understood that four factor groups as "physical", "communication", "quality" and "social responsibility" groups can be addressed within the scope of the study. The four factors set forth by means of factor analysis explain 63,19% of the total variance.

Patient Loyalty Questionnaire: For the purpose of measuring the loyalty of the patients receiving service from the hospitals included in the scope of the

study, the Patient Loyalty questionnaire developed by Erdem et al. (2008) was used. The item consists of 11 questions and its Cronbach Alpha value was determined to be 0,92. The expressions in the questionnaire were evaluated through a 5-point likert scale.

3. FINDINGS

Within the scope of the study, corporate image and patient loyalty levels of a university hospital and a training and research hospital were determined, difference analyses were conducted between the two hospitals, and the relation between corporate image and patient loyalty was analyzed. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive findings of the patients included in the scope of the study.

Table 1: Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants

Variables	Total		Variables	Total	
	n	%		n	%
Gender			Marital Status		
Female	387	51,2	Married	516	68,3
Male	369	48,8	Single	153	20,2
Age			Divorced/widow/separated	87	11,5
20 and younger	36	4,8	Income Level (TL)		
21-30	129	17,1	750 and lower	41	5,4
31-40	150	19,8	751-1000	165	21,8
41-50	149	19,7	1001-2000	249	32,9
51 and older	292	38,6	2001-3000	200	26,5
Working Status			3001 and higher	101	13,4
Working in public sector	135	17,9	Educational Status		
Working in private sector	104	13,8	Illiterate	37	4,9
Self-employed	82	10,8	Literate	50	6,6
Retired	128	16,9	Primary School	296	35,6
Housewife	230	30,4	High School	279	36,8
Student	63	8,3	Bachelor's degree	110	14,6
Other	14	1,9	Postgraduate	11	1,5
Total	756	100,0	Total	756	100,0

While 51,2% of the patients included in the scope of the study were females, 38,6% were aged 51 and older, more than half were married and 36,8% are high school graduates. The patients whose income levels were between 1001 and 2000 TL constituted 32,9% of all of the participants. 30,4% of the patients

were housewives.

Table 2 presents the averages of the factors constituting corporate image and patient loyalty for both of the hospitals, general corporate image averages and difference analyses between the two hospitals.

Table 2: Averages of Patient Loyalty and the Factors Forming Corporate Image

Factors	University Hospital			Training and Research Hospital			t	p
	n	X	SD	n	X	SD		
Physical Factors	375	3,86	0,668	381	3,66	0,718	-5,572	0,000
Communication Factor	375	3,70	0,816	381	3,33	0,711	-9,379	0,000
Quality Factor	375	3,52	0,692	381	3,21	0,716	-8,715	0,000
Social Responsibility Fact.	375	3,52	0,578	381	3,34	0,574	-5,191	0,000
Total Corporate Image	375	3,65	0,372	381	3,38	0,491	-8,354	0,000
Patient Loyalty	375	3,49	0,591	381	3,10	0,710	-8,159	0,000

Concerning the averages of corporate image factors and patient loyalty in general shows that the average of the university hospital is higher than that of the training and research hospital. In the "physical factor", while the statement with the highest average for the university hospital was "I like the name of the hospital", the one with the lowest average was "I like the logo of the hospital". For the training and research hospital on the other hand, while the statement with the highest average was "it is easy to remember the name of the hospital", the statement with the lowest average was "I like the colors and design in the visual materials used in the hospital". In terms of all of the statements and the average of the general physical factors, there is a statistically significant difference between the two hospitals. General physical factor average of the university hospital was found out to be higher than that of the training and research hospital. Examining the corporate image point averages in terms of the "communication factor", the statement that had the highest average for both the university hospital and the training and research hospital was "I find the explanations made during the process of diagnosis and treatment satisfactory". On the other hand, the statement with the lowest average again for both of the hospitals was "I hear positive remarks concerning this hospital in the media". In terms of the average communication factor, there is a statistically significant difference between the two hospitals. General communication factor average of the university hospital was found out to be higher than that of the training and research hospital. Looking points for the "quality factor", the top two statements with the highest average for the university hospital were "medical equipments used in the hospital are satisfactory" and "general cleanness of the hospital is satisfactory". As for the statement with the lowest average, it was "waiting time is short". For the training and education hospital, the statement with the highest average was "registration procedure is easy". The statements with the lowest average on the other

hand were "waiting time is short" and "general cleanness of the hospital is satisfactory". The difference between the two hospitals in terms of the average of general quality factor was determined to be statistically significant. As a result of examining corporate image in terms of the "social responsibility factor", the statement with the highest average for the university hospital was "the hospital respects patient rights". As for the training and research hospital, the statement with the highest average was "the hospital is sensitive to environmental issues". The statement with the lowest averages for both of the hospitals was "notifications are made on social matters". The difference between the two hospitals in terms of the general social responsibility average was determined to be statistically significant.

While the general average of "patient loyalty" was found out to be $3,49 \pm 0,891$ for the university hospital, the same was determined to be $3,10 \pm 0,833$ for the training and research hospital. The top two statements with the highest averages for the university hospital were "If I need a health service in the future, I will again prefer this hospital" and "I recommend this hospital to my friends and other people around me". On the other hand, the statement with the lowest average was "I won't abandon this hospital easily, even if other hospitals provide better services". The statement with the highest averages for the training and research hospital was "I am happy of being a customer of this hospital". On the other hand, the statement with the lowest average was "I won't abandon this hospital easily, even if other hospitals provide better services". In terms of general patient loyalty averages, there is a statistically significant difference between the two hospitals.

Table 3 presents the correlation analysis exhibiting the relation between cooperate image and patient loyalty. In order to examine whether corporate image has a significant relation with its own dimensions and with patient loyalty, Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated.

Table 3: Corporate Image - Patient Loyalty Correlation Analysis

Dimensions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Corporate Image	1. Physical Factor	1				
	2. Communication Factor	0,691 0,000	1			
	3. Quality Factor	0,794 0,000	0,763 0,000	1		
	4. Social Responsibility Factor	0,631 0,000	0,618 0,000	0,698 0,000	1	
	5. General Corporate Image	0,882 0,000	0,884 0,000	0,924 0,000	0,829 0,000	1
6. Patient Loyalty	0,771 0,000	0,758 0,000	0,840 0,000	0,695 0,000	0,871 0,000	1

Statistically significant, positive and strong relations were detected between corporate image sub dimensions. Also a statistically significant, strong and positive relation exists between general corporate image and patient loyalty ($R = 0,871$, $p = 0,000$). In addition, it was determined that the relations of each sub-dimension of corporate image with patient loyalty are also statistically significant, strong and positive ($R(\text{Physical Factor}) = 0,771$, $R(\text{Communication Factor})$

$= 0,758$, $R(\text{Quality Factor}) = 0,840$, $R(\text{Social Responsibility Factor}) = 0,695$). According to the results of the correlation analysis, as the level of corporate image increases, also patient loyalty tends to increase.

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis conducted for the purpose of calculating the changes corporate image and sub-dimensions of corporate image triggers on patient loyalty.

Table 4: Corporate Image - Patient Loyalty Regression Analysis

Variable	Coefficient	S. Error	BETA	95% Reliability Limits for α and β_j		t	p
				Lower Limit	Upper Limit		
Constant	-1,203	0,098	-	-1,396	-1,010	-12,228	0,000
X₁ (Physical)	0,276	0,041	0,203	0,196	0,356	6,764	0,000
X₂ (Communication)	0,244	0,033	0,207	0,179	0,310	7,342	0,000
X₃ (Quality)	0,561	0,047	0,419	0,469	0,653	11,978	0,000
X₄ (Social Resp.)	0,208	0,036	0,147	0,137	0,278	5,799	0,000
r= 0,876 R²= 0,767 (F= 618,111; p= 0,000)							

Examining the results of corporate image and patient loyalty regression analysis shows that the model is in general significant ($F = 618,111$; $p = 0,000$). It is observed that the independent variables explain the dependent variable at the rate of 76,6% ($R^2 = 0,767$). Regression coefficient of each independent variable was determined to be significant (X_1 : $t=6,764$, $p=0,000$; X_2 : $t=7,342$, $p=0,000$; X_3 : $t=11,978$, $p=0,000$; X_4 : $t=5,799$, $p=0,000$). Examining the BETA coefficients of the independent variables shows that the highest coefficient belongs to the "quality" factor ($BETA = 0,419$). Accordingly, it is possible to assert that the corporate image factor that acts the most upon patient loyalty is the factor of quality. Regression estimation equation concerning patient loyalty is as follows: $\hat{y} = -1,205 + 0,276X_1 + 0,244X_2 + 0,561X_3 + 0,208X_4$

4. CONCLUSION

The present study was conducted with the purpose of determining the corporate image and patient loyalty levels of a university hospital and a training and research hospital in Ankara, and evaluating the relation between corporate image and patient loyalty. Examining the literature shows that there are many national and international studies examining the relationship between corporate image and customer loyalty in different sectors. Studies conducted on shopping malls by Hart and Rosenberg (2004), on hotel establishments by Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000), on the service sector by Nguyen and Leblanc (2001), Dursun (2001) and Hong Goo (2004), on restaurant establishments by Oh (1995) and Eliwa (1993) and on packet tour operators by Andreassen and Lindestad (1998) show that there is a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship between corporate image and customer loyalty.

In conclusion of the present study, a strong, positive and statistically significant relationship was found between corporate image and patient loyalty. The study Derin and Demirel (2010) conducted on the polyclinic patients of a hospital examined the effect of the recognition of the health organization on patients' behaviors and reported the presence of a positive and significant relation. In the study conducted on the patients of eighteen polyclinics of a private hospital it was reported that there is a significant relation between the reputation of the organization and the level of trust patients have for the hospital (Satir, 2006). Kim and Kim (2008) examined the relation between factors of trust, satisfaction, brand loyalty and brand awareness that affect hospital image and the establishment of successful communication with customers. The authors reported the presence of a significant relationship between image and brand loyalty. As a result of the study conducted on 500 patients from the biggest 5 hospitals in Thailand, it was reported that while the factor that affects patient loyalty the most was personnel behavior, this factor was followed by the corporate image factor (Laohasirichai-kul et al., 2011). Kurtz and Clow (1998) state that image determines patient behaviors, and if the positive image of an organization is damaged patients may renounce from choosing the hospital again and may also relay their negative experiences to their relatives. In another study conducted on private hospitals, it was reported that corporate image has 74% effect on patient loyalty and that in the relation between corporate image and patient loyalty the factors of patient satisfaction and service quality play critical roles (Wu, 2011). In the study conducted by Suki (2011), it is reported that physicians' reputation and image are the most effective factors on patient loyalty. The re-

sults obtained from these studies exhibit similarities from the findings of the present study.

Another finding obtained from the present study is that the general corporate image average of the university hospital is higher than that of the training and research hospital and that the difference is statistically significant. In a study that applied the same scale on the polyclinic patients in Ankara, the patients of a university hospital and a training and research hospital were also included in the scope. While the corporate image average of the university hospital was determined to be 3,9, the corporate image average of the training and research hospital was reported to be 3,5 (Cinaroglu and Sahin, 2011). These results support the findings of the present study. The results indicate that the ownership of hospitals, as owned by the state or by universities, may cause differentiation in patients' expectations from hospitals. It is considered that social perceptions such as university hospitals using advanced technologies at a higher rate, that their means for diagnosis and treatment may be more advanced, and that they have larger number of personnel with high academic titles may cause differences also in patients' image perception. On the other hand, Sloan et al. (2001) reported that the ownership of hospitals do not affect patient behaviors.

In conclusion of the present study it was determined that the corporate image factor that affects patient loyalty the most is the factor of quality. Wazzan (2007) reported that perceived quality affects patient loyalty substantially. In another study, it is reported that high perceived service quality will positively affect patients' intention to choose the hospital again and to recommend the hospital to others (Demirel et al., 2009). Chahal (2008) reports that service quality explains 35% of patient loyalty in the model developed by himself. The author also states that patients that find the personnel, medical equipment and the quality of the treatment process satisfactory will likely recommend the hospital to his or her close circles. Recommendations, in turn, constitute an essential stage of patient loyalty.

Health institutions that aim to increase patient loyalty are advised to place emphasize on their corporate image policies. In this way, executives of health institutions may ensure patient loyalty by creating a corporate image based on corporate fact they can convey to the target population through the suitable means of communication.

The information obtained from this study allows managers of health institutions to see the target audience assessment of about the health services. Health institutions that aim to increase patient loyalty are advised to place emphasize on their corporate image policies. In this way, executives of health institutions may ensure patient loyalty by creating a corporate image based on corporate fact they can convey to the target population through the suitable means of communication. Therefore it is recommended to use the data obtained from this research in the examination of consumer behavior and the creation of marketing campaigns by managers of health institutions with different ownership.

Moreover based on the results obtained from this study, in future studies, it is recommended that evaluating the level of commitment and perceptions of corporate image in different hospitals such as private, public and special branch hospitals and then making comparative analyzes. This allows the service provider to understand about the different perceptions in the minds of consumers and how they are perceived by the consumers. On the other hand, the corporate image is one of the variables affecting patient loyalty. Researches for the identification of other variables that affect patient loyalty should be planned.

REFERENCES

- Aksoy, R. ve Bayramoğlu, V. (2008) "Sağlık İşletmeleri İçin Kurumsal İmajın Temel Belirleyicileri: Tüketici Değerlendirmeleri" *ZKÜ Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 4(7): 85-96.
- Andreassen, T.W. and Lindestad, B. (1998) "The Impact of Corporate Image on Quality, Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty for Customers with Varying Degrees of Service Expertise" *International Journal Of Service Industry Management*, 9(1): 7-23.
- Bakan, Ö. (2005) *Kurumsal İmaj*, 1. Basım, Tablet Kitabevi, Konya.
- Bayramoğlu, V. (2007) "Sağlık İşletmeleri İçin Kurumsal İmajın Temel Belirleyicileri: Zonguldak Örneği" *Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Zonguldak Karaelmas Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Zonguldak.
- Bercowitz, E.N. (1996) *Essentials Of Health Care Marketing*, Jones and Barlett Publish., Burlington.
- Bowen, J.T. and Shoemaker, S. (1998) "Loyalty: A Strategic Commitment, Cornell and Hotel Restaurant" *Administration Quarterly*, 39(1): 12-25.
- Chahal, H. (2008) "Predicting Patient Loyalty and Service Quality Relationship: A Case Study of Civil Hospital" *The Journal of Business Perspective*, 12(4): 45-55.
- Çınaroğlu, S. ve Şahin, B. (2011) "Hastanelerde Kurumsal İtibar ve İmaj: Ankara Metropolitan Alandaki Hastaneler Üzerinde Bir Araştırma" 5. *Sağlık ve Hastane İdaresi Kongresi* sözel sunumu, Fethiye.
- Çıngı, H. (1994) *Örnekleme Kuramı*, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Fen Fakültesi Matbaası, Ankara.
- Demirel, Y., Yoldaş, A. and Divanoğlu U.S. (2009) "Algılanan Hizmet Kalitesinin Tatmin, Tavsiye Davranışı Ve Tercih Üzerine Etkisi: Sağlık Sektöründe Bir Araştırma" *Akademik Bakış*, 16: 1-14.
- Derin, N. ve Demirel, E.T. (2010) "Kurum İmajının Kurum Kimliği Açısından Açıklanabilirliği" *Hacettepe Sağlık İdaresi Dergisi*, 13(2): 155-193.
- Dick, A.S. and Basu, K. (1994) "Customer Loyalty: Toward an Integrated Conceptual Framework" *Journal of The Academy of Marketing Science*, 22(2): 99-113.
- Dowling, G.R. (1986) "Managing Your Corporate Images" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 15: 109-15.
- Duffy, D.L. (1998) "Customer Loyalty Strategies" *Journal Of Consumer Marketing*, 15(5): 435-448.
- Eliwa, R.A. (1993) "A Study Customer Loyalty and The Image of The Fine Dining Restaurant" *Master of Science*, Helwan University, Department of Tourism and Hotel Administration.
- Enis, B.M. and Paul, G.W. (1970) "Store Loyalty As Basis For Market Segmentation" *Journal of Retailing*, 46(3): 42-56.
- Erdem, R., Rahman, S., Avcı, L., Demirel, B., Köseoğlu, S., Fırat, G., Kesici, T., Kırmızıgül, Ş., Üzel, S. ve Kubat, C. (2008) "Hasta Memnuniyetinin Hasta Bağlılığı Üzerine Etkisi. Erciyes Üniversitesi" *İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 31: 95-110.
- Ertürk, E. (2009) "Sağlık İşletmelerinde İlişki Pazarlaması ve Müşteri Bağlılığına Etkisi" *Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Gazi Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Fatt, J.P.T., Wei, M., Yuen, S. and Suan, W. (2000) "Enhancing Corporate Image in Organizations" *Management Research News*, 23(5/6): 28-54.
- Flavian, C., Guinaliu, M. and Torres, E. (2005) "The Influence of Corporate Image On Consumer Trust: A Comparative Analysis In Traditional Versus Internet Banking" *Emerald Internet Research*, 15(4): 447-470.
- Gray, R.E. and Balmer, J.M.T. (1998) "Managing Corporate Image and Corporate Reputation" *Long Range Planning*, 5(31): 695-702.
- Gupta, S. (2002) "Strategic Dimensions of Corporate Image: Corporate Ability And Corporate Social Responsibility As Sources of Competitive Advantage Via Differentiation" *Doctor Of Philosophy*, Temple University.
- Hart, A.E. and Rosenberger, J. (2004) "The Effect Of Corporate Image In The Formulation of Customer Loyalty: An Australian Replication" *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 12(3): 88-96.
- Hong, S.C. and Goo, Y.J.J. (2004) "A Casual Model Of Customer Loyalty In Professional Service Firms: An Empirical Study" *International Journal of Management*, 4(21): 531-540.
- Kandampully, J. and Suhartanto, D. (2000) "Customer Loyalty in The Hotel Industry: The Role of Customer Satisfaction and Image" *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(6): 346-351.
- Karafakioğlu, M. (1998) *Sağlık Hizmetleri Pazarlaması*, Dönence Basım ve Yayın, İstanbul.
- Karaosmanoglu, E. (2006) "Determinants of Corporate Image Formation: A Consumer-Level Model Incorporating Corporate Identity Mix Elements and Unplanned Communication Factors" *Ph.D. Thesis*, University Of Warwick, UK.
- Kim, K.Y. and Kim, K.S. (2008) "Brand Equity In Hospital Marketing" *Journal of Business Research*, 61(1): 75-82.
- Kurtz, D.L. and Clow, K.E. (1998) *Services Marketing*, John Wiley and Sons, United States.
- Laohasirichaikul, B., Chaipoopirutana, S. and Combs, H. (2011) "Effective Costumer Relationship Management of Health Care: A Study of Hospitals In Thailand" *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 6: 1-12.

- Mckee, J., Goldfield, N., Riley, K. and Morton, J. (1996) *Collecting Information from Health Care Consumers: A Research Manual of Tested Questionnaires and Practical Advice*, An Aspen Publication, Washington.
- Nguyen, N. and Leblanc, G. (2001) "Corporate Image and Corporate Reputation In Costumers' Retention Decisions In Services" *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 8: 227-236.
- Oh, H.C. (1995) "An Empirical Study of The Relationship Between Restaurant Image and Customer Loyalty" *Doctor of Philosophy*, Virginia State University, Department Of Hospitality and Tourism Management.
- Oliver, R.L. (1999) "Whence Consumer Loyalty" *The Journal of Marketing*, 63: 33-44.
- Özata, M., Sevinç, İ. (2009) "Hastanelerde Kurumsal İmajın Ölçülmesinde Dikkate Alınması Gereken Faktörlerin Belirlenmesi" *Journal of Azerbaijani Studies*, 59-74.
- Pina, J.M., Martinez, E., Chernatony, L. and Drury, S. (2006) "The Effect of Service Brand Extensions on Corporate Image" *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(1): 174-197.
- Rynes, S.L. (1991) *Recruitment, Job Choice and Post-Hire Consequences: A Call For New Research Directions*. In: Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (ed. Dunelle MD), Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Satir, C. (2006) "The Nature of Corporate Reputation and The Measurement Of Reputation Components" *An Internal Journal*, 11(1): 56-63.
- Sencer, M. ve Irmak, Y. (1984) *Toplum Bilimlerinde Yöntem*, Onur Basımevi, İstanbul.
- Sezgin, B. (2005) "Hastanelerde Pazarlama Faaliyetlerinin Müşteri Bağlılığına Etkisi: Bir Alan Çalışması" *Yüksek Lisans Tezi*, Gazi Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Sloan, F.A., Picone, G.A., Taylor, D.H. and Chou, S. (2001) "Hospital Ownership and Cost and Quality of Care: Is There A Dime's Worth of Difference?" *Journal of Health Economics*, 20: 1-21.
- Smith, S.M. and Clarke, M. (1990) "Hospital Image and Positioning Of Service Centers: An Application In Market Analysis And Strategy Development" *Journal Of Health Care Marketing*, 10(3): 13-22.
- Spyropoulou, S., Skarmas, D. and Katsikeas, C.S. (2010) "The Role of Corporate Image in Business-To-Business Export Ventures: A Research Based Approach" *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39: 752-760.
- Suki, N.M. (2011) "Assessing Patient Satisfaction, Trust, Commitment, Loyalty And Doctors' Reputation Towards Doctor Services" *Pakistan Journal of Medical Science*, 27(5): 1207-1210.
- Sümbüloğlu, K. ve Sümbüloğlu, V. (2002) *Biyoistatistik*, Hatiboğlu Yayınları, Ankara.
- Türk Dil Kurumu. (2005) *Türkçe Sözlük*, Türk Dil Kurumu, Ankara.
- Wazzan, D.B. (2007) "Patient Loyalty Versus Satisfaction: Implications For Quality and Marketing Strategies" *Ph.D. Thesis*, Walden University, USA.
- Wu, C. (2011) "The Impact of Hospital Brand Image On Service Quality, Patient Satisfaction And Loyalty" *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(12): 4873-4882.
- Zerenler, M. ve Ögüt, A. (2007) "Sağlık Sektöründe Algılanan Hizmet Kalitesi ve Hastane Tercih Nedenleri Araştırması: Konya Örneği" *Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 18: 501-519.

