

SUMMARY OF THE NEW FINDINGS OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

1. Thesis title: **“The impact of integrated marketing communication tools on the brand equity of private hospitals in Vietnam”.**

2. Major: Public Relations

3. Code: 9320108

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5. Academic supervisors: 1. Assoc. Prof. Nguyen Thi Truong Giang

2. Assoc. Prof. Pham Chien Thang

6. Institution: Academy of Journalism and Communication

7. New findings of the thesis:

The thesis has achieved several research results of both theoretical and practical significance for the field of Public Relations, particularly in the study of integrated marketing communications and brand equity in the private healthcare service sector in Vietnam.

First, the thesis contributes to systematizing and further clarifying the theoretical foundations regarding the impact of integrated marketing communication tools on the brand equity of private hospitals. Building on the theories of Aaker (1991), Keller (1993), and the IMC framework of Belch & Belch (2021), the thesis analyzes the specific characteristics of healthcare services, legal constraints, and the competitive context of private hospitals in Vietnam. On this basis, it constructs an appropriate theoretical framework to examine the relationship between integrated marketing communication tools and the dimensions of brand equity (brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty).

Second, the thesis develops and empirically tests a research model that simultaneously integrates four core integrated marketing communication tools (advertising, public relations, direct marketing, and digital marketing) within a single analytical framework examining their impact on private hospital brand equity. This constitutes a distinctive contribution compared with many previous studies that typically focused on only one or two individual tools. The results of structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) based on a sample of 635 observations clarify the differential degrees of influence of each tool, thereby providing empirical evidence on the mechanism through which integrated marketing communications affect brand equity in the private healthcare sector.

Third, through empirical investigation combining quantitative and qualitative methods at three representative multi-specialty private hospitals across the three regions of Vietnam (Hong Ngoc General Hospital, Hop Luc General Hospital, and Nam Sai Gon General Hospital) during the period 2023–2025, the thesis provides an initial description and analysis of the current state of

implementation of integrated marketing communication tools, the results achieved, limitations, and underlying causes. The research findings offer empirical evidence that helps identify more clearly the characteristics, levels of influence, and factors affecting the effectiveness of brand equity building among private hospitals in Vietnam today.

Fourth, the thesis employs a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative research (in-depth interviews with marketing communication managers and patients/patient relatives) with quantitative research (questionnaire surveys and SEM analysis). This contributes to enriching the methodological approaches available for studying brand communication in healthcare services in Vietnam. The use of multi-source data and appropriate analytical techniques establishes a solid scientific foundation for evaluating and interpreting the research issues.

Fifth, on the basis of the theoretical and empirical research findings, the thesis proposes a system of orientations and groups of solutions aimed at optimizing the impact of integrated marketing communication tools on the brand equity of private hospitals in Vietnam in the coming period. The proposed solutions are developed both at the general level for the private hospital system and at the specific level for each of the hospitals under study. They emphasize the alignment of communication activities with professional quality, patient experience, organizational culture, and reputation management, while ensuring feasibility within the current legal framework governing healthcare service communication.

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