

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE DECISION OF CHOOSING AN ORTHODONTIST IN EGYPT AND BAHRAIN

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KEYWORDS

Marketing,

Media Social, marketing

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Social media is defined as a type of interactive technology through which people can share their knowledge, opinions and health information, and interact with one another. Social media has accelerated the way people communicate with each other at any time, without limitations through quick messaging, face-to-face interaction, and effective communication. **Aim:** The current study aimed to investigate the impact of social media in the decision of choosing an orthodontist in Egypt and Bahrain. **Material and methods:** The present study was a cross sectional study conducted through an online questionnaire filled in by around 577 participants from Egypt and 562 from Bahrain. The study was carried out in the Faculty of Dentistry, Suez Canal University, after approval of research ethics committee number (415/2021). **Results:** more than half of participants were females of using social media. Both countries describe Instagram as their top choice among social media platforms. While Facebook was favored by the older groups in Egypt. In the Bahraini sample 75% preferred patient testimonials, 65% images of previous cases. On the other hand, the Egyptians preferred the images first (81%) followed by the patients' testimonials (75%). Both countries indicated that the orthodontists account activity and accounts posts would affect their selection decision. Also, they prefer of initial communication between orthodontists and patient via social media rather than in person. The effect of social media reviews displayed a primary influence on both countries. **Conclusion:** Social media has proven to have a powerful effect in Egypt and Kingdom of Bahrain.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is defined as a type of interactive technology through which people can share their knowledge, opinions and health information, and interact with one another⁽¹⁾. Social media has accelerated the way people communicate with each other at any time, without limitations through quick messaging, face-to-face interaction, and effective communication⁽²⁾. There are many social media platforms, including Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Tik Tok, YouTube, and Twitter. Today, patients refuge to social media when they search for solutions to their problems or seek for healthcare provisions

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

I. Study design:

The present study is a cross-sectional study conducted through an online questionnaire filled in by around 577 participants from Egypt and 562 from Bahrain. The study was carried out in the Faculty of Dentistry, Suez Canal University, after approval of Research Ethics Committee number (415/2021).

- i. **Sample size calculation:** The sample size for this study was calculated according to ⁽³⁾.
- ii. **Collection of samples:** The total size of the calculated sample was 1139. The actual sample size attained has been augmented by around 10% to assure that it could make up for any missing data and margin of error.

II. Population and sample design:

Sample Size Calculation: The targeted population is all the residents of Egypt and Bahrain.

III. Study Procedures and Evaluation Methods:

It has been available online for the surveyed respondents in both languages. The survey was distributed by sharing the link on the web, social media applications. The link was available for four weeks and during these weeks the respondents had a choice to complete the survey at any convenient time.

IV. Instrument Development:

The questionnaire included 29 close ended questions that are divided among 7 sections including:

- Section one: Personal Information included 4 items from question 1 to 4.

- Section two: Basic Social Media Information included 3 items from question 5 to 7.

In Section three: Orthodontic preference (asking about current experience for those who already visited the orthodontists and the expected preferences by those who did not) included 9 items from question 8 to 16.

- Section four: Social Media effect on selection of orthodontist included 4 items from question 17 to 20.
- Section five: Orthodontist Social Media Marketing included 4 items from question 21 to 24.
- - Section six: Family and celebrity influence included 2 items from question 25 to 26.
- - Section seven: Social Media reviews and feedback included 3 items from question 27 to 29. These characteristics were measured using dichotomous options, multiple choices and Likert scale questions.

V. Instrument Reliability and validity:

The questionnaire was tested among 20 respondents from each country (Bahrain and Egypt). Based on their feedback, some items have been modified to make them clearer and more understandable.

VI. Statistical Analysis:

All of the original data obtained by the questionnaire were either on a nominal or ordinal scale. Accordingly, the proper statistical tests were performed.

RESULTS

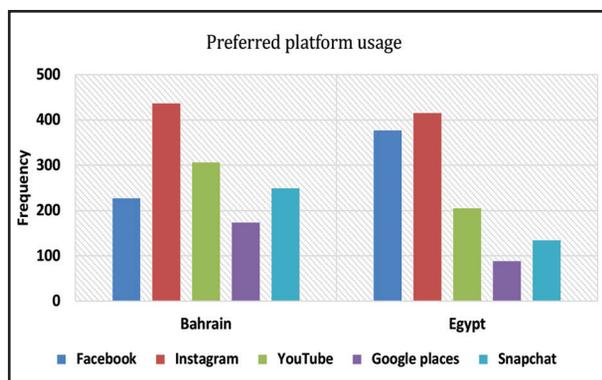
The following results were obtained:

Demographic factors:

In Egypt the most responsive age group was under the age of 30 years old (60%). More than (48%) with a bachelor's degree. The majority were females (63%). In Bahrain, the most responsive age group was 18-30 (22%), 31-40 (22%). More than (36%) had received bachelor's degree. The majority were males (62%).

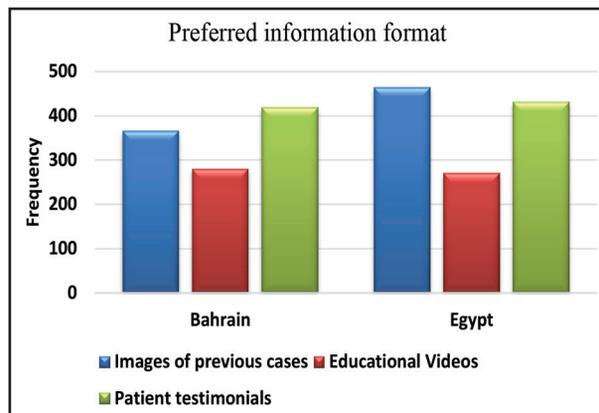
Figur 1 Social Media Usage Information:

Most of the sample respondents from both countries used social media heavily at least once a day. The current study revealed that both countries describing Instagram as their top choice among social media platforms. While Facebook was favored by the older groups in Egypt.



Figur 2 Orthodontic preference:

In the Bahraini sample 75% preferred patient testimonials, 65% images of previous cases and 50% preferred educational videos. On the other hand, the Egyptians preferred the images first (81%) followed by the patients' testimonials (75%).



Social Media Effect on Selection of Orthodontist:

Sixty-one and 53% of the Bahraini and Egyptian –respectively- indicated that the orthodontists account activity and accounts posts would affect their selection decision.

Orthodontist Social Media Marketing:

Both countries showed over 80% preference of initial communication between orthodontists and patient via social media rather than in person.

Family and Celebrity Influence:

Ninety-three and 95% of the respondents in Bahrain and Egypt –respectively- indicated that they would consult a family member or a friend in case they needed to visit an orthodontic clinic.

Social Media Reviews and Feedback:

The effect of social media reviews displayed a primary influence on both countries with more than three quarter of both samples agreed that they would be affected.

DISCUSSION

Social media is a brilliant instrument for entertaining people and sharing knowledge, however, it could also serve as a useful tool for communication between patients and clinicians when used effectively. With new technologies, we can expect our patients to research about us and read reviews of our services prior to visiting our offices ⁽⁴⁾. The results of this study revealed that 62% of samples from Bahrain were male while about 63% of samples from Egypt were female. It was observed that most of the respondents from both countries use social media extensively at least once a day. In addition, 71% of samples in Egypt use social media more than once per day. The percentage is only about 56% in Bahrain ⁽⁵⁾. The current study revealed that both countries describing Instagram as their top choice among social media platforms. In terms of orthodontic preferences, both countries respondents are partial to patient reviews as a primary criterion indicating that word of mouth and personal experiences is a prominent marketing approach ⁽⁶⁾. With regards to social media effect on selection of orthodontist, 61% of the Bahraini respondents and 53% of the Egyptian ones have indicated that the orthodontists account activity and accounts posts would affect their selection decision ⁽⁷⁾. The marketing aspect of orthodontists on social media proved to be immensely relevant with both countries showing over 80% of relevance of the same. While also showing a preference of initial communication between orthodontists and patient via social media rather than in person. Nearly 75% of the Bahraini respondents and 68% of the Egyptian respondents will lean to social media if they want to get information about an orthodontist treatment or clinic with over 80% of Bahrainis and 70% of Egyptians leant to trusting the information ⁽⁸⁾ Revealed that 80% of the respondents relied on an orthodontist's social media when making a decision,

adding that the continuity and intensity of marketing conducted by the orthodontists is extremely relevant to the same. The effect of social media reviews displayed a primary influence on both countries. Over 90% of both national respondents attributed those reviews to present a precious asset for all patients ^(9,10). Finally we think that it is important for orthodontists to have an online presence to sustain and develop their practice, as well as inspire and impact the public.

CONCLUSION

Within the limitation of the current study, the following could be concluded:

1. Social media has proven to have a powerful effect in Egypt and Kingdom of Bahrain. More people are utilizing social media to communicate with orthodontics, search for information, and write about their dental experiences.
2. The current study revealed that Facebook followed by Instagram were the preferred social media applications in Egypt, while in Bahrain Instagram, snapchat followed by YouTube.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Marketing for the orthodontic procedures is recommended on Instagram, You Tube, then Snapchat in Bahrain. However, in Egypt marketing for the orthodontic procedures is recommend on Instagram, Facebook then You Tube.
2. More research and discussion should explore the legal and ethical issues of using social media in dental practices on carrying out it as part of marketing strategies in Bahrain and Egypt.

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