



Unveiling the influence of Social Media and Email Campaign of Healthcare services and its perception: Exploring the mediating roles of patient testimonials and trustworthiness

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Abstract. The Internet and social media are remotely connecting people around the world. Social media is an interactive platform that makes sharing information among online communities easier. Social media campaigns greatly assist businesses in massively attracting new and potential customers. Email campaign stimulates the sales funnel by distributing marketing communications directly to target prospects and subscribers cost-effectively. Increased health consciousness and a general need for health-related information have triggered healthcare in recent years. Integrating social media marketing with email marketing aids in brand development, customer attraction, and long-term client retention. This article aims to understand how social media marketing and email campaigns influence the customer of healthcare services among potential consumers. Whether the patient's testimonial and trustworthiness mediate their perception through social media and email marketing. The research was carried out only among social media users by adopting the judgement sampling method. Data was collected from 123 respondents who use social media regarding healthcare services and receive healthcare-related emails. Using ANOVA, linear regression, and an independent t-test, we have found the hypothesis is proven. Based on the findings, healthcare providers are suggested to be active in social media engagement, hire influencers, be prompt with quick responses and react to the customer's review, follow the trend with podcasts and short videos, and personalize email promotions regularly.

Keywords: social media marketing, healthcare marketing, email marketing, online healthcare, customer engagement, consumer perception.

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1 Introduction

The first step in creating effective healthcare marketing campaigns is to develop communication and marketing tactics to attract new clients and improve patient care by establishing a communication channel between healthcare service providers and their patients [1]. Healthcare marketing uses web pages, social networks, promotional emails, video, SEO, sponsored advertising, and a range of other platforms to provide patients with pertinent information and resources throughout the entire care continuum [2].

1.1 Social media marketing

SMM, or social media marketing, is a vital facet of digital marketing. It involves using social media sites to advertise and advance a company's goods or services. The most popular social networking sites for advertising include Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, and SnapChat [3]. While LinkedIn promotes professional networking, Facebook encourages personal sharing, Twitter promotes fast messaging about one's thoughts or emotions, and Pinterest promotes ideas and online businesses [4]. Apollo Hospitals has posted over 100 YouTube videos, including "Chairman Speak, First Aid, Patient Testimonials, and Apollo Hospitals' Initiatives". By conducting health quizzes, Tweet inars, and other events where participants may win gift cards and fun stuff, the hospital actively engages with its 706,657 Facebook fans. 3967 people follow it on Twitter as well. Users can track and monitor their health, receive and manage health data, and securely store data with Apollo Prism, a Personal Health Record (PHR) service. Additionally, Apollo Medical Centre, Bangalore and Groupon have teamed up to create health checkup programmes for people of all ages. An Apollo Hospitals-sponsored Twitter chat on sports injuries featured a certified joint care specialist with an emphasis on sports medicine. Top integrated pan-Asian healthcare delivery firm Fortis Healthcare has 59,120 Facebook likes, 2420 Twitter followers, and 647 YouTube video uploads. Through their Facebook application, users may arrange an appointment for medical care from anywhere in India. Through its Get Appointment, Patient Education Series, and Health Check Screening programmes, the hospital actively promotes its goods and services while building strong patient relationships.

Approximately 200 videos have been uploaded on YouTube by Max Healthcare, many of these videos feature client endorsements. The premier hospital chain is well-represented on social media, with a remarkable 80,895 Facebook likes, 1419 Twitter followers, and 179 pins across 10 boards on Pinterest. Enlighten to spread knowledge about the fight against obesity on Facebook, a social network that provides information and support for people undergoing bariatric surgery and other forms of obesity treatment, as well as success stories. Parenting advice and information can be found on Bundle of Joy, an interactive gateway on Facebook.

Content should be customized to each channel's requirements, to maximize lead generation and raise brand awareness. The advertising must also satisfy the target market's demands for that medium. High-quality photos and succinct captions are best for Instagram; on LinkedIn, however, the narrative is encouraged [2].

1.2 Email Marketing

Email marketing is a technique used to advance prospects along the sales funnel that entails emailing promotional material to content subscribers. Email marketing can be a helpful communication medium for health and medical organisations to inform and educate target audiences [5]. Email marketing is essential for healthcare companies to maintain regular communication with patients, transmit vital information, automate reminders for appointments, activate patients, and boost their visits [6].

2 Literature Review

Consumers are most successfully reached by businesses through digital marketing channels, which also provide the highest return on spend in the form of increased intentions to buy. It was also investigated how customer perceptions affected their intentions to buy and their following actions after making a purchase. The purpose of the study is to understand how consumer attitudes towards these two digital marketing channels were influenced by the antecedents of believed advantage, risk perception, organizational and corporate credibility. The study concluded that people who have a favourable impression of a brand they see advertised on social media or through email are more likely to want to buy that brand and are also more likely to buy it again [7]. Healthcare organisations commonly utilise the transmission of communications via mail, the Internet, and analogous media to inform patients, both present and prospective, about health and medical options. Direct promotion can be a useful communication channel for health and medical groups to communicate and educate target audiences. This creates the conditions for gaining customers and a corresponding market share, which benefits both the given businesses and the communities in which they are located. As with all types of marketing communication, caution must be used while using direct marketing, capitalising on its advantages while avoiding uses that draw attention to its drawbacks [5]. Social media's intimate aspect can make users less receptive to personalisation if they perceive it as intrusive. Personalising web browsing experiences boosts sales, but when people are dubious about personalisation on Facebook, brand avoidance might result. The authors tested a comprehensive model of how personalization influences consumer brand perceptions and attitudes, including consumer brand engagement, brand attachment, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Results from an online customer panel indicate that consumers' perceptions of customization have a significant impact on their brand attachment and engagement, which in turn has a significant impact on their perceptions of quality and brand loyalty [8].

Strong brand attachment (BA) and self-brand connections (SBC) are created using SM as a marketing tactic. The study underlines the value of social media marketing initiatives (SMMA) in boosting customer loyalty by using PV and SBC as middlemen. The study establishes a direct and significant relationship between SMMA and BA, demonstrating that marketers can develop BA through the use of online platforms. H2 demonstrates that SMMA does have a favourable impact on PV. Similar to H2, H3 demonstrates that SMMA benefits SBC. Additionally, H4—which asserts that PV does positively affect BA—is also supported. Finally, H5 demonstrates that SBC and BA are

positively correlated [9]. Service-oriented academics recognised that (1) service marketing filled a significant need in the marketing literature and (2) there existed an industry that required academics to act (Parasuraman et al., 1985). As a result, service marketing continued to grow. This dissertation, which focuses on healthcare service marketing, seeks to contribute to the development of this discipline and to meet calls for more research in MT. This section goes into further detail about why the service marketing lens is the best marketing subfield to use for this investigation. For the MT sector to grow, healthcare consumers, governments, and providers are all required [10].

2.1 Research Gap

The research gap in the current literature is notable for the limited exploration of the combined influence of SMM and email campaign on the perception of healthcare services, specifically within the context of patient testimonials and trustworthiness as mediating variables. While existing studies have examined the individual impact of marketing strategies on healthcare service perception, there is a dearth of comprehensive research addressing the interplay of these variables. This gap hinders a holistic understanding of the marketing mechanisms that shape healthcare service perception, particularly in the digital age. Bridging this research gap is essential to inform healthcare marketing practices and enhance patient trust and confidence in healthcare services.

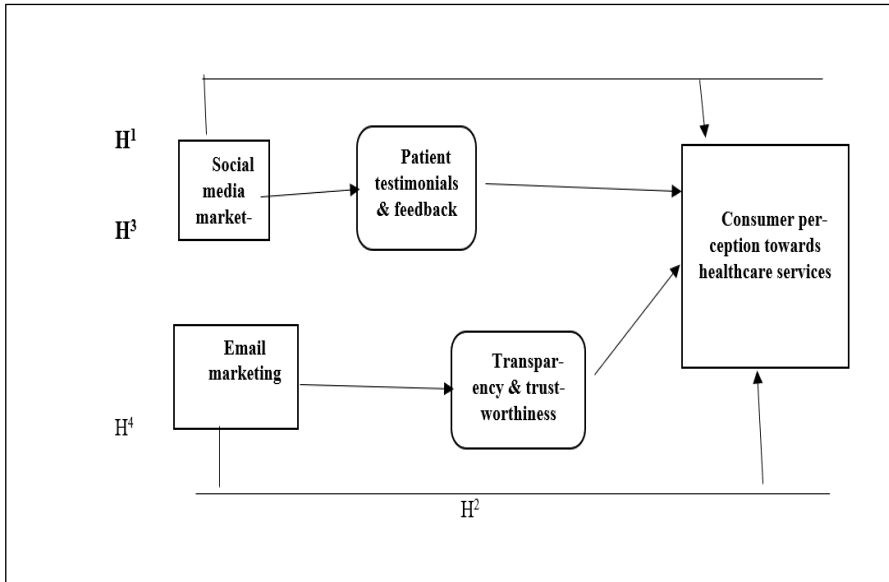
2.2 Research Questions

- How does social media marketing affect the perception of healthcare services among the target audience?
- What is the impact of email marketing on the perception of healthcare services among the target audience?
- How do patient testimonials mediate the connection between how people view healthcare services and social media marketing?
- How does trustworthiness mediate the relationship between email marketing and the perception of healthcare services?

2.3 Objectives of the Study

- To examine social media marketing's impact on the perception of healthcare services among the target audience.
- To investigate how email marketing has affected people's perceptions of healthcare services among the target audience.
- To investigate the mediating role of patient testimonials in the relationship between social media marketing and the perception of healthcare services.
- To explore the mediating role of trustworthiness in the relationship between email marketing and the perception of healthcare services.
- To provide practical implications and suggestions based on the consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services.

2.4 Conceptual Framework



Source: By Author

2.5 Hypothesis

- H¹: Social media marketing has a significant impact on consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services.
- H²: Email marketing has a significant impact on consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services
- H³: Patient testimonials & feedback mediate the relationship between social media marketing and the perception of healthcare services.
- H⁴: Transparency & trustworthiness mediate the relationship between email marketing and the perception of healthcare services.

3 Methodology of the Study

The study used a design based on description. The main data was gathered via Google Forms. The secondary data includes books, journals, articles and blogs on healthcare. The Google form was circulated to 130 respondents, out of that 123 respondents were social media users and healthcare consumers. The study adopted judgement sampling method to collect data as per the time limit. Using Cronbach's alpha, the variables' dependability was evaluated, after a review of the sample characteristics. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to find out the impact of

email campaign and social media marketing on customer perception towards healthcare services. The study also analyses their attitude and satisfaction towards social media and email marketing services.

3.1 Limitations of Study

1. Because the survey only lasted a brief period, the sample was limited to 123 respondents.
2. Personal biases of the respondents to the survey could also affect the results of the study.
3. The study is limited to only users of social media.
4. The study was also confined to the city of Chennai and such results may not be the same in other places.

4 Results and Discussion

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

| Personal characteristics | Fre- quency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Age | | |
| Below 20 years | 23 | 18.5 |
| 20 - 30 years | 34 | 27.4 |
| 30 - 40 years | 33 | 26.6 |
| Above 40 years | 33 | 26.6 |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 57 | 46.8 |
| Female | 66 | 53.2 |
| Monthly Income | | |
| Below Rs.25,000 | 50 | 40.7 |
| Between Rs. 25,000 - Rs.50,000 | 30 | 24.4 |
| Between Rs.50,000 - Rs.75,000 | 39 | 31.7 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|----|------|
| Between Rs.75,000 - Rs. 1,00,000 | 4 | 3.3 |
| Occupation | | |
| Student | 44 | 35.8 |
| Employed | 37 | 30.1 |
| Business | 29 | 23.6 |
| Homemaker | 6 | 4.9 |
| Retired | 7 | 5.7 |

According to Table no. 1, it is seen that majority of respondents are female. The majority of respondents belong to the age category of 20-30 years and 30-40 years. Most of them fall under the monthly income category of below Rs. 25,000 and between Rs. 50,000 – Rs. 75,000. Most of them are found to be student and employed regarding their occupation. The total number of respondents are 123. The questionnaire is pretested by two academics and two patient service experts for the purpose of ensuring instrument validity. Their input is then integrated into the most recent version of the questionnaire.

When the item reliability for the study variables was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, table 2 displays the strong internal consistency to survey questions (0.88).

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | No of items |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Social media marketing | 0.812 | 4 |
| Email marketing | 0.81 | 4 |
| Consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services | 0.835 | 2 |
| Overall | 0.858 | 10 |

Table 3. Independent Sample T-Test

| Table: 3. Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| CONSUMER PERCEPTION | Equal variances assumed | 6.462 | 0.012 | 14.119 | 121 | 0 | 3.35732 | 0.23778 | 2.88657 | 3.82808 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 15.43 | 84.591 | 0 | 3.35732 | 0.21758 | 2.92468 | 3.78997 |

Multiple Regression Analysis

H_0 = There is no significant effect of Social media marketing and email marketing on consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services.

H_1 = There is a significant effect of Social media marketing and email marketing on consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services.

Table 4. Multiple regression

| Variables | Beta | T | Sig |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Social media marketing | 0.225 | 2.546 | 0.012 |
| Email marketing | 0.203 | 2.282 | 0.024 |
| R^2 | 0.41 | | |
| F | 5.82 | | |
| Sig | 0.018 | | |

According to Table no 3, it is seen that social media marketing and email marketing have a significant effect on consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services where the p-value is 0.018, below the alpha value of 0.05%. Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This result is supported by [11] and [12].

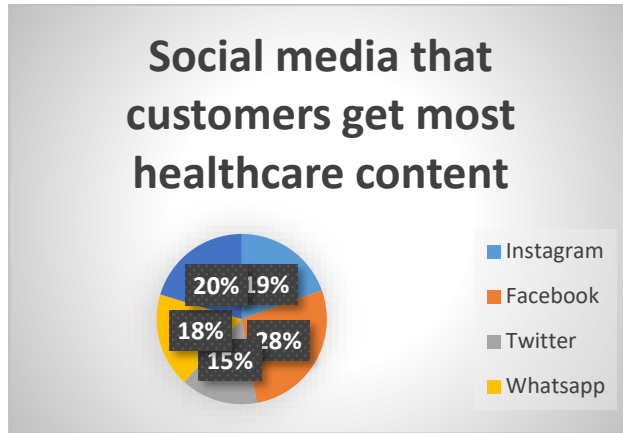


Fig. 1. Source of social media

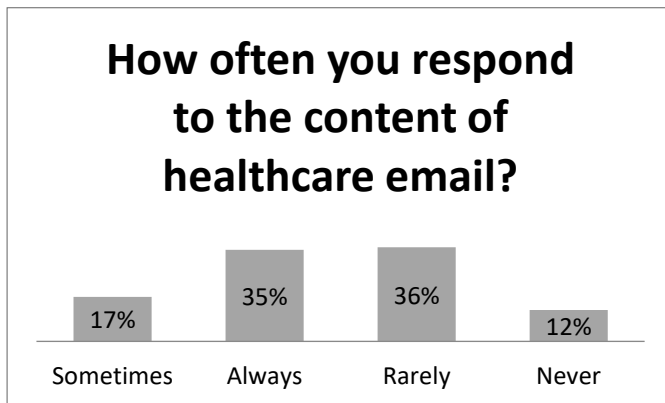


Fig. 2. How often you respond to the content of healthcare email?

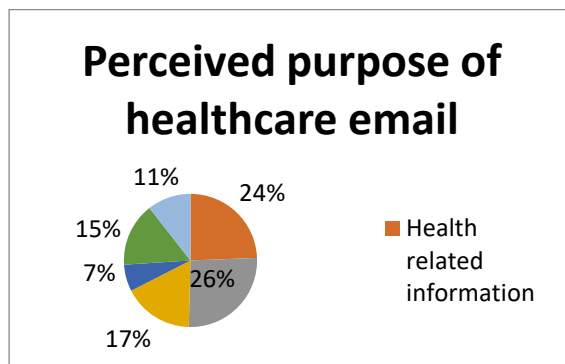


Fig. 3. Perceived purpose of healthcare email

5 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of social media marketing and email campaign on consumer perception towards trust and credibility of healthcare services making consumers more receptive to healthcare messages and services. The alternate hypothesis is accepted proving the research model viable. From various charts, it is understood that according to 28% of respondents, Facebook provides the most healthcare-related information and 20% say Instagram. For the question, of how often they respond to email content, 35% of respondents say always and 36% of respondents answer rarely. When asked about the perceived purpose of using email 26% of respondents use email for reports and 24% of respondents use email for health-related information.

6 Recommendations and Practical Implications

Consumer perception is the sign that establishes a guarantee of the consumer's actual and initial contact with the service. This study looks at a number of variables that influence how patients view healthcare practitioners. Social media and email marketing will attract more customers and raise brand awareness among them, in addition to having a beneficial impact on how consumers view healthcare service providers [13]. If healthcare service providers sell themselves on social media suitably and comprehensively that covers a wide net of customers, this type of growth can greatly benefit them. With the help of social media marketing and email marketing, clients can readily learn the treatments option they offer, their infrastructure and technology, and everything else and find its review online [14]. The hospital administration and healthcare service providers should promote healthcare information across all social media platforms so that users of each platform are equally informed about the facilities. By email marketing carried out by hospitals and healthcare service providers, the management may ensure that all consumers are informed about the services and treatments offered regularly. Being present on social media helps you shape consumer perception more since consumers value new, distinctive, and innovative things more. Electronic word-of-mouth influence of social media attracts new consumers which has to be carefully handled by the service team. Regular communication through email builds the image and retains the consumers in the long run.

6.1 Future Research

The study is exploratory means that only information from residents of a specific geographic area was collected for this publication. Individuals from various locations and cultural backgrounds may react differently. It might also examine information from other places. After seeing their presence on social media, it's also feasible that people's choices and reactions may change when it comes to using social media and email marketing for healthcare. Email marketing and social media are universally applicable.

Consequently, there is a likelihood that a study conducted among people from varied cultural backgrounds and geographical locations may be successful.

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