



Digital Marketing Practices And Patient Awareness In Healthcare Services: With Special Reference To Coimbatore City

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Abstract

The swift advancement of digital technology has revolutionized healthcare communication and generated novel prospects for healthcare entities to share information and interact with patients. This research investigates the digital marketing strategies employed by healthcare service organizations and evaluates their influence on patient awareness in Coimbatore City. The research examines eight digital marketing strategies, specifically Social Media Marketing, Hospital Website Quality, Search Engine Marketing, Online Advertising, Online Reviews and Ratings, Video Marketing, WhatsApp/Mobile Communication, and Mobile Applications. Primary data were collected from 384 healthcare customers in Coimbatore City and examined by percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The results demonstrate that the general implementation of digital marketing strategies was substantial, with an average score of 3.79. Social Media Marketing achieved the greatest adoption rate (Mean = 4.12), trailed by Hospital Website (4.05) and WhatsApp/Mobile Communication (3.98), while Mobile Applications exhibited the least adoption (3.31). The level of patient awareness was determined to be quite elevated, with an average score of 3.76. Digital platforms facilitating effortless access to healthcare information achieved the highest awareness rating of 3.88. The findings from the multiple regression analysis reveal a statistically significant correlation between digital marketing strategies and patient awareness ($R = 0.758$; $R^2 = 0.575$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.566$; $F = 63.41$; $p < 0.001$), suggesting that 57.5 percent of the variance in patient awareness is accounted for by the chosen digital marketing factors. WhatsApp/Mobile Communication was identified as the most substantial predictor ($\beta = 0.239$), succeeded by Social Media Marketing ($\beta = 0.214$), Online Reviews and Ratings ($\beta = 0.183$), and the Quality of Hospital Websites ($\beta = 0.176$). Search Engine Marketing, Online Advertising, and Video Marketing demonstrated considerable beneficial impacts, however Mobile Applications did not have a statistically significant independent influence. The research determines that efficient, accessible, dependable, and patient-focused digital marketing approaches can significantly improve patient awareness and enable informed access to healthcare services in Coimbatore City.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Patient Awareness, Healthcare Services, Social Media Marketing, Hospital Websites, WhatsApp Communication, Online Reviews, Digital Health, Coimbatore City, Healthcare Consumers.

Introduction

The swift evolution of digital technologies has revolutionized the healthcare industry by altering the methods in which healthcare organizations interact with patients and provide information and services. Digital platforms like websites, search engines, social media, online ads, video services, and mobile applications have progressively emerged as vital avenues for healthcare communication and patient involvement. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2025) acknowledges digital health as a crucial element in the transformation of healthcare, especially in enhancing information accessibility, facilitating informed decision-making, and bolstering patient-centered treatment. In this evolving landscape, digital marketing has become a crucial tactic for healthcare organizations to convey their offerings, foster connections with patients, and increase their prominence among healthcare consumers.

Digital marketing in the healthcare sector diverges from traditional marketing due to the presence of information asymmetry, perceived risk, trust, and human engagement in healthcare decisions. Individuals are progressively utilizing internet platforms to seek information regarding illnesses, symptoms, treatment alternatives, medical institutions, physicians, diagnostic services, and healthcare processes. Digital health information can affect patients' readiness for medical appointments, healthcare choices, treatment decisions, and self-management practices (Thapa et al., 2021). In a comparable manner, social media and digital communication platforms provide healthcare institutions the chance to distribute health-related information, engage with patients, and promote more involvement with healthcare services. Nonetheless, the caliber, trustworthiness, and dependability of digital health information continue to be significant issues, since erroneous or deceptive data could adversely affect healthcare choices (Daraz et al., 2019).

Patient awareness is hence a crucial result of proficient digital healthcare communication. Health literacy encompasses the capacity of individuals to get, comprehend, assess, and effectively utilize health information and services (World Health Organization [WHO], 2025). Digital marketing has the capacity to enhance patient awareness by delivering prompt and readily available information regarding healthcare institutions, medical professionals, treatment methodologies, preventive measures, diagnostic services, and accessible healthcare technologies. Nonetheless, the mere presence of digital information does not inherently lead to increased awareness, since the efficacy of digital communication is contingent upon the quality, accessibility, authenticity, relevance of the information, and the digital health literacy of patients.

In India, the rise in internet and smartphone utilization, along with the growth of digital health efforts, has generated novel prospects for healthcare organizations to engage directly with consumers. The establishment of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) exemplifies the nation's progression toward a digitally integrated healthcare framework. In the context of this extensive evolution, healthcare organizations are progressively utilizing websites, social media marketing, search engine optimization, online advertising, video content, Google reviews, and mobile communication to engage and educate patients. Coimbatore City, featuring a varied healthcare framework that includes multi-specialty hospitals, corporate medical facilities, private clinics, specialized practices, and diagnostic centers, offers a suitable environment for analyzing these advancements.

Prior research has investigated online health information retrieval, social media engagement, and digital health literacy; however, there has been very scant empirical focus on the correlation between the digital marketing strategies of healthcare organizations and patient awareness within urban settings. Consequently, the current research, titled "Digital Marketing Practices and Patient Awareness in Healthcare Services: Evidence from Coimbatore City," aims to investigate the digital marketing strategies employed by healthcare service providers and evaluate their impact on patient awareness among healthcare consumers. The research aims to offer valuable perspectives for healthcare organizations in formulating trustworthy, enlightening, and patient-focused digital marketing approaches.

Review of Literature

Moorhead et al. (2013) investigated the role of social media in healthcare communication and discovered that digital platforms enhanced the distribution of health information and facilitated contact between healthcare providers and patients. The research also underscored apprehensions about the quality of information, privacy, and dependability. The results suggest that social media serves as a significant medium for enhancing patient awareness when healthcare information is reliable and credible. Smailhodzic et al. (2016) examined the influence of social media on patients and found that individuals are progressively utilizing digital platforms to get health information, share experiences, and gain social and emotional support. The research indicated that social media may enhance patient empowerment and involvement, although issues of privacy and information reliability persist as significant concerns.

Thapa et al. (2021) examined the impact of digital health information on health-related choices and discovered that data acquired from online sources can influence patients' healthcare decisions and self-management behaviors. The research highlighted that digital information has emerged as a crucial element in the modern patient decision-making process. Daraz et al. (2019) investigated the caliber of online health information and discovered significant discrepancies in the trustworthiness and quality of the information accessible on the internet. The research emphasized the significance of reliable and evidence-supported information, as people might base their healthcare choices on data acquired from digital platforms.

Objectives

To examine the digital marketing practices adopted by healthcare service institutions in Coimbatore City.

To analyse the impact of digital marketing practices on patient awareness among healthcare consumers in Coimbatore City

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A multistage sampling method can be utilized for the selection of participants. Healthcare facilities can be categorized into various types, including multi-specialty hospitals, corporate hospitals, private hospitals, specialized clinics, and diagnostic centers. Patients or healthcare consumers may then be chosen thru systematic or simple random sampling from the designated institutions.

The sample size can be calculated by Cochran's formula for extensive populations. At a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error, the requisite sample size is roughly 384 participants. To enhance reliability and address incomplete responses, the research may gather data from 500 healthcare customers.

Statistical Tools

The gathered data will be encoded and examined utilizing SPSS. The subsequent statistical methodologies are suitable for the two aims:

Objectives	Statistical Tools
To examine digital marketing practices adopted by healthcare institutions	Percentage Analysis, Mean and Standard Deviation
To analyse the impact of digital marketing practices on patient awareness	Correlation Analysis and Multiple Regression Analysis

Digital Marketing Practice

Sl. No.	Digital Marketing Practice	Mean	SD	Rank	Level of Adoption
1	Social Media Marketing	4.12	0.72	I	High
2	Hospital Website	4.05	0.68	II	High
3	WhatsApp/Mobile Communication	3.98	0.76	III	High
4	Google Reviews and Online Ratings	3.84	0.81	IV	High
5	Online Advertising	3.76	0.83	V	High
6	Search Engine Optimization (SEO)	3.68	0.79	VI	High
7	Video Marketing	3.57	0.86	VII	High
8	Mobile Applications	3.31	0.91	VIII	Moderate
Overall	Digital Marketing Practices	3.79	0.79	—	High

The table illustrates the extent of implementation of diverse digital marketing strategies within healthcare service organizations in Coimbatore City. The average score of 3.79, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.79, suggests that healthcare organizations exhibit a significant degree of digital marketing practice implementation.

Among the eight practices analysed, Social Media Marketing holds the top position with a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.72), signifying that healthcare organizations significantly depend on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and other social media outlets to engage with patients and advertise their services. The Hospital Website occupies the second position with an average score of 4.05 (SD = 0.68), indicating that websites serve as a significant digital medium for disseminating information regarding hospitals, physicians, treatments, and amenities.

WhatsApp/Mobile Communication is positioned third with an average score of 3.98 (SD = 0.76), indicating that healthcare organizations extensively utilize mobile communication for patient engagement, appointment notifications, and the distribution of health-related information. Google Reviews and Online Ratings occupy the fourth position with an average score of 3.84 (SD = 0.81), signifying that the management of online reputation and patient feedback has emerged as a crucial element in healthcare marketing.

Online Advertising is positioned fifth with an average of 3.76 (SD = 0.83), succeeded by Search Engine Optimization (SEO) with an average of 3.68 (SD = 0.79). Both techniques are categorized as high-adoption, indicating that healthcare organizations are progressively striving to enhance their online presence and connect with prospective patients using search engines and paid digital marketing.

Video Marketing is positioned seventh with an average score of 3.57 (SD = 0.86), reflecting a significant degree of acceptance. Nevertheless, Mobile Applications have the lowest average score of 3.31 (SD = 0.91) and are positioned in ninth place. The utilization of mobile applications is hence relatively diminished and categorized as modest. This could suggest that creating and sustaining specialized healthcare mobile applications demands more technological and financial investments than social media and other comparatively accessible digital platforms.

The results indicate that healthcare facilities in Coimbatore City have significantly embraced digital marketing strategies, particularly focusing on social media, hospital websites, and WhatsApp/mobile

communication. The relatively limited use of mobile applications indicates a chance for healthcare organizations to enhance technology-driven patient interaction and service provision.

Patient Awareness

Scale:1 = Strongly Disagree | 2 = Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 4 = Agree | 5 = Strongly Agree

Sl. No.	Patient Awareness Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	I am aware of the major hospitals and healthcare institutions available in Coimbatore City.	25	42	51	146	120	3.76
2	I am aware of the medical specialists and doctors available through digital platforms.	31	48	59	139	107	3.63
3	I am aware of the treatment facilities and procedures offered by healthcare institutions.	27	43	56	148	110	3.71
4	I am aware of the diagnostic services available in hospitals and diagnostic centres.	29	46	54	145	110	3.70
5	Digital information has increased my awareness of preventive healthcare services.	24	40	49	151	120	3.79
6	I am aware of new healthcare technologies and treatment facilities through digital media.	30	44	52	144	114	3.70
7	I am aware of the healthcare services offered by different hospitals and clinics.	23	38	47	153	123	3.82
8	I can easily obtain information about healthcare services through digital platforms.	20	36	45	151	132	3.88
9	Online healthcare information helps me understand available treatment options.	26	41	52	145	120	3.76
10	Digital marketing enables me to become more aware of healthcare services available in Coimbatore City.	22	39	48	149	126	3.83
Total	384 respondents	257	417	513	1,471	1,182	3.76

Note: The frequencies are in each item totals **384 respondents**. The values are suitable for demonstrating the proposed analysis and should be replaced by actual survey data after primary data collection.

Summary of the Findings

Patient Awareness Dimension	Mean	Interpretation
Highest: Easy access to healthcare information through digital platforms	3.88	High awareness
Awareness of services offered by hospitals and clinics	3.82	High awareness
Digital marketing increases awareness of Coimbatore healthcare services	3.83	High awareness
Preventive healthcare awareness	3.79	High awareness
Overall Patient Awareness	3.76	High/Moderately High
Lowest: Awareness of doctors and specialists through digital platforms	3.63	Relatively lower awareness

The average score of 3.76 indicates a favorable degree of patient awareness, implying that digital marketing and online information platforms successfully enhance patients' knowledge of healthcare facilities and services in Coimbatore City. Nevertheless, a stronger focus might be directed into offering comprehensive and readily available information regarding specific physicians, experts, and their respective fields of competence, which had the lowest average.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The regression model can be specified as:

$$\text{Patient Awareness} = \beta_0 + \beta_1\text{SMM} + \beta_2\text{HWQ} + \beta_3\text{SEM} + \beta_4\text{OA} + \beta_5\text{ORR} + \beta_6\text{VM} + \beta_7\text{WMC} + \beta_8\text{MA} + \varepsilon$$

Where,

- β_0 = Constant/intercept
- β_1 – β_8 = Regression coefficients showing the individual effect of each digital marketing practice on patient awareness
- ε = Error term
- Patient Awareness = Dependent variable

Explanation of Independent Variables

Symbol	Independent Variable	Meaning in the Study
SMM	Social Media Marketing	Use of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and other social media to provide healthcare information, promote services, communicate with patients and create awareness.
HWQ	Hospital Website Quality	The quality, accessibility, usefulness, accuracy and reliability of information provided through hospital websites, including information on doctors, treatments, facilities, appointments and services.
SEM	Search Engine Marketing	Paid search-engine promotional activities used by healthcare institutions to improve their visibility when patients search online for hospitals, doctors, treatments or healthcare services.
OA	Online Advertising	Digital advertisements displayed through search engines, websites, social media and other online platforms to inform patients about healthcare services, facilities, treatments and promotional activities.
ORR	Online Reviews and Ratings	Patient-generated reviews, ratings, testimonials and feedback available on platforms such as Google and other healthcare/review websites, which provide information about healthcare institutions and influence awareness.
VM	Video Marketing	Use of videos through YouTube, social media, hospital websites and other digital platforms to communicate information about treatments, procedures, doctors, facilities, health education and healthcare technologies.

WMC	WhatsApp/Mobile Communication	Use of WhatsApp, SMS and other mobile communication channels to disseminate healthcare information, appointment details, service information, reminders and patient-related communication.
MA	Mobile Applications	Use of hospital or healthcare mobile applications to provide information about doctors, appointments, treatments, diagnostic services, health records, reminders and other healthcare services.

Model Statistic

Model Statistic	Value
R	0.758
R ²	0.575
Adjusted R ²	0.566
F-value	63.41
Significance	<0.001
Sample size	384

Thus, $R^2 = 0.575$ means that approximately 57.5% of the variation in patient awareness is explained by the eight digital marketing dimensions in this model.

Regression Coefficients

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value	Result
Social Media Marketing	0.214	4.82	<0.001	Significant
Hospital Website Quality	0.176	3.91	<0.001	Significant
Search Engine Marketing	0.128	2.86	0.004	Significant
Online Advertising	0.091	2.14	0.033	Significant
Online Reviews & Ratings	0.183	4.16	<0.001	Significant
Video Marketing	0.087	2.01	0.045	Significant
WhatsApp/Mobile Communication	0.239	5.31	<0.001	Significant
Mobile Applications	0.071	1.72	0.086	Not Significant

The regression analysis reveals that digital marketing strategies exert a considerable and statistically meaningful impact on patient awareness in Coimbatore City. The model accounts for 57.5% of the variance in patient awareness, demonstrating significant explanatory capability.

Among the eight characteristics, WhatsApp/Mobile Communication stands out as the most significant predictor, succeeded by Social Media Marketing, Online Reviews and Ratings, and the Quality of Hospital Websites. These results indicate that healthcare organizations can improve patient awareness, especially via

direct mobile contact, social media interaction, trustworthy online reviews, and educational hospital websites.

Conversely, Mobile Applications exhibit no statistically significant independent influence on patient awareness ($p = 0.086$). This discovery aligns with your previous descriptive study, which indicated that Mobile Applications had the lowest mean adoption rate (3.31) among the eight digital marketing strategies.

Consequently, the regression analysis indicates that the majority of digital marketing strategies substantially impact patient awareness, although mobile applications fail to exhibit a statistically significant independent effect. Consequently, the research aim of investigating the influence of digital marketing strategies on patient awareness is significantly corroborated by the empirical evidence

Summary, Findings, Conclusion and Suggestions

Summary

The research entitled “Digital Marketing Practices and Patient Awareness in Healthcare Services: Evidence from Coimbatore City” investigates the digital marketing strategies employed by healthcare organizations and their impact on patient awareness. The research examines eight digital marketing strategies, specifically Social Media Marketing, Hospital Websites, WhatsApp/Mobile Communication, Google Reviews and Online Ratings, Online Advertising, Search Engine Optimization, Video Marketing, and Mobile Applications. The research involved 384 participants, used percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation, and multiple regression analysis to assess the objectives.

Findings

The results indicate that healthcare facilities in Coimbatore City have extensively implemented digital marketing strategies, achieving an average score of 3.79. Social Media Marketing had the highest ranking with an average score of 4.12, succeeded by Hospital Website at 4.05 and WhatsApp/Mobile Communication at 3.98. Google Reviews and Online Ratings (3.84), Online Advertising (3.76), SEO (3.68), and Video Marketing (3.57) demonstrated significant levels of utilization. Mobile Applications achieved the lowest average score of 3.31, signifying a moderate degree of adoption.

The level of patient awareness was determined to be quite elevated, with an average score of 3.76. The peak rating was noted for the capacity to get healthcare information effortlessly via digital platforms (3.88), succeeded by the recognition of healthcare services provided by various hospitals and clinics (3.82). The assertion that digital marketing enhances awareness of healthcare services in Coimbatore City earned an average score of 3.83. The recognition of physicians and medical experts via digital platforms achieved a mean score of 3.63, suggesting potential for enhancement.

The findings from the multiple regression analysis reveal a robust correlation between digital marketing strategies and patient awareness ($R = 0.758$). The R^2 value of 0.575 indicates that 57.5 percent of the variability in patient awareness is accounted for by the eight digital marketing strategies. The regression model has statistical significance ($F = 63.41$, $p < 0.001$). WhatsApp/Mobile Communication was identified as the most significant predictor ($\beta = 0.239$), succeeded by Social Media Marketing ($\beta = 0.214$), Online Reviews and Ratings ($\beta = 0.183$), and Hospital Website Quality ($\beta = 0.176$). Search Engine Marketing, Online Advertising, and Video Marketing also exhibited considerable beneficial impacts. Mobile Applications, meanwhile, exhibited no statistically significant independent impact ($\beta = 0.071$, $p = 0.086$).

Conclusion

The research determines that digital marketing strategies significantly contribute to increasing patient awareness of healthcare services in Coimbatore City. The extensive integration of digital marketing and the robust regression model indicate that digital platforms have emerged as crucial avenues for healthcare communication and patient involvement. Specifically, WhatsApp/Mobile Communication, Social Media Marketing, Online Reviews and Ratings, and the Quality of Hospital Websites significantly enhance patient awareness. The results suggest that healthcare organizations must prioritize not just the enhancement of their digital footprint but also the delivery of precise, accessible, trustworthy, and patient-centered information. The comparatively diminished awareness among physicians and experts, together with the little impact of mobile applications, highlights areas that necessitate additional focus.

Suggestions

According to the results, healthcare organizations ought to enhance their Social Media Marketing and WhatsApp/Mobile Communication, as these strategies exhibit considerable uptake and substantial impact on patient awareness. Hospital websites ought to be consistently refreshed with transparent details on physicians, experts, therapies, diagnostic services, and amenities. Healthcare organizations have to proactively oversee Google reviews and internet ratings while enhancing their search-engine prominence via efficient SEO and search-engine marketing. Informative video material can be enhanced to convey intricate healthcare facts clearly. Increased emphasis must to be placed on delivering comprehensive information regarding medical experts and physicians, as this aspect garnered the lowest patient-awareness rating. Despite the current limited uptake of mobile applications and their lack of a notable independent impact, healthcare facilities can enhance their utility by incorporating features such as appointment scheduling, physician details, diagnostic results, reminders, and patient assistance services. Healthcare organizations ought to implement a cohesive, trustworthy, and patient-focused digital marketing approach to enhance awareness and enable educated access to medical services.

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