The Role of the Social Media in Raising the Level of Health Awareness among University Youth

Analytical Descriptive Study

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the role of the social media in raising the level of health awareness among university youth, the degree of source credibility of the social media in providing accurate and sufficient health information and which social media platforms raises the level of health information among them. Using online questionnaire, the study was conducted on 255 University youth. The study shows that the greater the degree of dependence on social media as a source of information, the higher the exposure to social media sites related to the health information, while the results showed that the degree of dependence on social media as a source of information and the credibility of social media sites related to the health information are not correlated.
Introduction

Today there is more information, technology and knowledge available than ever before. The social media is used in health communication by individuals, health professionals, disease centers and other health regulatory bodies. However, varying degrees of information quality are churned out daily on social media.

Today the media in general, and the social media in particular, plays a very constructive role in today’s society, mainly in increasing public health awareness and collect the views, information and attitudes toward daily major issue, including health issues. The social media recently became the most powerful tool of communication contributing much in conveying information and health awareness messages among its users. (Pradeep Kumar Dwivedi, 2013).

Actually with the spreading of many physical health problems, related to many epidemics such as Ebola, Bird Flu, Covid 19 and others epidemics (Nagpal et al., 2015), the social media platforms have been used tremendously for physical health issues, and many other mental health problems, such as anxiety, isolation, frustration and depression, which became a major important subject of concern to many segment of the society, among which are the young generation.

The social media is actually facilitating the search, and share information among its users, as the social media is described as a group of Internet-based application that build on the foundations of Web 2.0 to allow for the creation and exchange of user-generated content, different forms of social media such as social networking sites, blogs, content communities, collaborative projects, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds have been created to idealize the engagement, immediacy and interactivity that Web 2.0 offers (Kaplan haenlein, 2010; Smailhodzic et al., 2016).

This diverse range of social media tools impact the way people create, seek and share information. People of diverse ages, backgrounds and cultures freely share all manner of information on social media, including health contents, ranging from benign to malignant health issues.

Social media users, and in particular the young generation users, search the web for information on symptoms, and conditions of ailments, communicate in real time with health experts, learn to administer drugs and complete online personal health assessment
questionnaires (Doherty-Torstrick et al., 2016; Finney Rutten et al., 2019; Fox and Duggan, 2013; Zhang et al., 2019).

Similar to other information shared on social medical, health information, also comes from varied sources and channels including generalist information platform, lay users, healthcare professionals, and institutions (Crook et al., 2016; University of Ghana Business School, Ghana. 2021.

**The Importance and aims of the study**

The importance of the study highlight the fact that since the emergence of the social media in 2004, a growing percentage of the young generation use this technology for health related reasons, as the social media became the main source of information for the youth, as identify by (Lenhart, Smith, Anderson, Duggan, and Perrin, (2015) that from the age of 13-17 age group are heavy users of social media users.

According to the Pew Research Centre (2015), at least 92% of teenagers are active on social media. Lenhart, Smith, Anderson, Duggan, and Perrin (2015) identified the 13–17 age group as particularly heavy users of social media users, with 87% having access to a computer, and 58% to a tablet device. Almost three-quarters of adolescents aged 15 to 17 use a smartphone, and 68% of those aged 13 to 14 (Pew Research Centre, 2015).

Although the young generation rely on the social media for health issues, unfortunately, many users of the social media have many concern about the source health information credibility posted in the social media platforms, which topics in social media raises the level of health information among them, and which social media platforms raise the level of their health awareness.

**Reasons for using the social media for health issues**

The social media can serve as an aid to its users in the health information provider, for example, it fosters their autonomy by complementing the information provided by the different healthcare professionals, and by providing psychosocial support to them.

The social media allows the youth to receive support, and to complement offline information, which may lead to enhancing the empowerment of patients. However, social media use by the youth does not only support them with information, but also provide to
everybody with access to the social media can post “advice” on how to
deal with a certain health condition, it is important to create reliable
online communication channels to prevent health problems being
exacerbated, but on the other hand the social media use by the youth
for health related purposes often spreads misinformation among them.

Also, soci (liette Lapointe, Jui Rama Prasad, Isabelle Vedel, 2014). al media provide the potential to allow the youth to open up
and reduce the inhibitions felt in sharing experiences in face to face
situations”, e.g. hurting other people’s feelings. Therefore, the youth
can use social media as a place to express their emotions freely, like,
releasing negative emotions. In contrast to emotional support, which
is defined as the youth interacting in and receiving communication
to meet their affective needs, emotional expression refers to the
youth expressing their emotions regardless of whether someone will
respond.

Actually, not all the youth that make use of social media use it
actively and positively. Sometimes youth only use social media to read
about other people’s stories, without actively contributing themselves.
(liette Lapointe, Jui Rama Prasad, Isabelle Vedel, 2014).

**Operational Definitions**

**Credibility:** Credibility as information quality criterion mainly
checks for the source and authority of the information. Other
characteristics require that the information be relevant, justifiable,
transparent, and authored by a person, or an organization of repute.
The criterion, content, requires that the health information published
is accurate and reliable, provides balance and clarity, and comes with
appropriate disclaimer.

**Health:** Health is the term for describing the state of being free
from any kind of illness, or diseases. Health is a form that assures the
harmony between all the systems, organs and parts of the body. The
state of being bodily and mentally vigorous, and free from disease, the
general condition of the body and mind. (Wall, 2009)

**Health Awareness:** The main objective of Health Awareness is
to provide health related knowledge to the people for preventing,
and curing disease. The definition of health possesses many
variances as it depends on every individual. Health seems
to include the three main sections, physical health, mental
health and emotional health (Wall, 2009, pp.120-133).

**Physical Health:** Physical health is a term that defines a form of the body that includes perfect and harmonious physiological functions of all the body parts that are anatomically intact with each other. (Wall, 2009).

**Mental Health:** Mental health is based on the positive thoughts and ideas. Brain is a body part that deals with both emotional and mental aspects. (Wall, 2009).

**Emotional support:** Emotional support is defined as “communication that meets an individual’s emotional or affective needs”. It refers to support gained through expressions of care and concern, which serve to improve an individual’s mood. Emotional support helps patients to meet their emotional or affective needs.

**Information support:** Information support is “communication that provides useful or needed information”. In particular, newly diagnosed patients are in a need for a lot of information about their condition and treatment options, which can be provided by the social media.

**Network support:** Network support is defined as “communication that affirms an individual’s belonging to a network or reminds him/her of support available from the network”. Hence, network support is support that reminds people that no matter what situation they are facing, they are not alone. The social media users use the social media for network support. (Wall, 2009).

**Literature Review of the previous study**

Initially, a total of 1,743 articles were identified related to the health awareness. From these articles many of them were posted in the social media were identified, namely as emotional, information, esteem, network support, social comparison and emotional expression, and many others were identified as types of effects on their users, namely improved self-management and control, enhanced psychological well-being, and enhanced subjective well-being, diminished subjective well-being, addiction to social media, loss of privacy.

For instance, several studies in the United States report of a growing use of social media in health communication among adults (Chou et al., 2009; Jacob 2015).

In the United Kingdom, social media has become one of the popular sources of health information among young people (Fergie et al., 2016b). Social communication media is also used in health communi-
cation by hospitals clinics, disease centers and other health regulatory bodies (Moorhead et al., 2013).

During and after recent pandemics such as Covid-19 (Chan et al., 2020) and H1N1 (Ding and Zhang, 2010) or epidemics such as Ebola (Nagpal et al., 2015), social media platforms have been used as timely information dissemination sources by the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and national health agencies (Househ, 2016). Motivated by reasons such as public safety (Antonius and Rich, 2013), well-being and wellness of people (Zhang et al., 2020), financial consideration as well as fame (Eysenbach, 2008), these information sources (actors) capitalize on the network effect of social media to share and reshare health information. In the end, ascertaining information quality becomes a challenge especially for health anxious individuals who are often nervous and fretful, and therefore rarely question the credibility and accuracy of the information (McManus et al., 2014; Te Poel et al., 2016).

According to Baumgartner and Hartmann (2011), health anxious people tend to have a negative response towards trustworthy health information sources such as from government health agencies. Because these organizations present more factual information, they may increase anxiety about health conditions for individuals who undertake researches for reassurance.

Perhaps one critical source of health misinformation on social media is through self-disclosure. According to Lin et al. (2016) when individuals self-disclose medical information on digital platforms such as social media, it creates a reciprocal tendency to compel recipients to also share their health information or reshare other related information within their friend network. This creates a cycle of misinformation sharing among friend networks if such medical information is fake or miscommunicated. Note that unlike information obtained from traditional health media outlets such as books, journals and health magazines which not only are produced by recognized institutions and individuals but also come with metadata such as disclaimers, author information, year of publication, the publisher and the target audience.

Social Media Health Information (SMHI) is often informal and largely authored by non-health professionals and, therefore raises quality concerns. The casual, unregulated nature of social media poses risks
especially to online health Information seekers who are often novices and anxious in seeking answers (Deng and Liu, 2017; Li et al., 2018; Strekalova, 2016). Moorhead et al., (2019).

Orizio et al.(2010) and Adams (2010) affirm that while social media present a potent means of disseminating health information, quality of the content, its reliability and misapplication are real concerns.

We define information quality in this research paper as “the fitness to use or the sufficient value provided to the user of that information” (Miller, 1996; Naumann and Rolker, 2005). While several literature review have been conducted on social media health communication, none so far has been dedicated to social media health information (SMHI) quality.

For instance, Moorhead et al. (2013) provided a review of the uses, benefits and limitations of social media for health communication, and Ventola (2014) conducted a review of the benefits, risks and best practices of social media use for healthcare professionals. The review by Grajales et al., 2014 focused on social media applications in medicine and healthcare. Others such as Best et al. (2014) and Yonker et al. (2015) focused on adolescents’ use of social media their health and well-being, while Charles-Smith et al., (2015) conducted a literature review of the role of social media in disease surveillance and outbreak management.

Theoretical Framework of the study

In this study the researchers will apply two theories. The Media Dependency theory, and Uses and Gratifications theory to guide them throughout this research.

Media Dependency:
The first theory is Media system dependency theory (MSD), or simply Media Dependency, was developed by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur in 1976. The theory is grounded in classical sociological literature positing that media and their audiences should be suited in the context of larger social systems.

MSD ties together the interrelations of broad social systems, mass media, and the individual into a comprehensive explanation of media effects. At its core, the basic dependency hypothesis states that the more a person depends on media to meet needs, the more important
media will be in a person’s life, and therefore the more effects media will have on a person.

According to this theory, there is an internal link between media, audience and large social system. The audience larding from the real life is limited, or they can use media to get more information to fulfil their needs. An extensive use of media generates dependent relation in audience and also media can able to creating dependence relationship with target audiences to achieve their goals by using media power.

This theory is based on the Uses and Gratification Theory and ties into the agenda setting theory. Uses and gratification how people use and become dependent upon the media. People use the media for many reasons, information, education, entertainment, and parasocial relationships are just a few of them.

The Dependency theory says that, the more a person becomes dependent on the media to fulfil theses needs; the media will become more important to that individual. The media will also have much more influence, and power over that individual. If someone is so dependent on the media for information, and the media is that person’s only source for information, then it is easy to set his/her agenda. The individual falls victim to Agenda setting. (Severin & Tankards, 2010)

**Uses and Gratification Theory**

The second theory is the Uses and Gratification Theory. It involves a shift of focus from the purposes of the communicator to the purpose of the receiver. It attempts to determine what functions mass communication is serving for the audience members. The uses and Gratification theory tries to answer questions such as the reason behind using the Internet and other forms of media as the theory has been used to answer the same questions regarding the traditional media (Severin & Tankards, 2010)

The uses and Gratifications theory was developed by Elihu Katz (1959). The theory is more concerned with what people do with their use of media and less concerned with what the media do to people. It challenges the notion of audience passivity and assumes that audiences are active. Audience activity: can be defined as the deliberate choice by users of media content to satisfy their needs. People use the media according to their individuals needs whether social or psychological.

The essential use of this theory in this research study is that it help
the researcher in having an understanding of how people use social media and the purposes for such usage. Taking into consideration, the Internet and World Wide Web grew at a more rapid rate than any other previous mass medium, encourages different age groups to access social media. (Severin & Tankard. 2010).

Thus, as mentioned earlier in this research paper through the uses and gratifications theory will clarify why and how people are using social media to make them aware of any issues of their interest among them health information issues.

**Elaboration Likelihood Model**

The core of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is based on a person’s motivation and ability to think about and assess qualities of the issue-relevant information in the persuasion context. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a multi-process theory of persuasion about the processes underlying changes in attitudes. (Shu-Fei Yang, 2015). Motivation refers to the individual’s personal relevance to the persuasive message while ability is manifest in the individual’s cognitive competence or prior expertise with the attitude object. Individuals vary in their ability and motivation to elaborate. (Peter J. Sher and Sheng-Hsien Lee, 2009). In the information systems discipline, ELM has been used to examine user behavior, and it has been proposed that two factors including argument quality and source credibility affect user attitude towards document management systems. (Tao Zhou. 2012). The basic principle of the ELM is the presence of two routes to persuasion: the central and peripheral routes. These are attached to two opposite points, which represents the likelihood of cognitive effort being expended to process a message. Depending on a person’s motivation and ability, their elaboration likelihood will be either high or low, which will, in turn, determine the route through which persuasion may occur. (Philip J. Kitchen &al., 2014). Based on ELM model, the information will show two effect routes in the process of persuading the audience, the first is central route and the other is peripheral route, as shown in Fig. 1. (Xiaowei Hu & al.,2021)
Fig. 1. Two effect routes in Elaboration Likelihood Model.

Problem Statement

The main challenges of using social media as a tool to raise the level of health awareness among university youth is the degree of source credibility of health information provided through the social media, which social media platforms raise the level of health information awareness, and whether the social media can actually raises the level of health information awareness among them.

Research Question

Three main research questions were addressed in this study:

Research Question 1: Which social media platforms raise the level of health information issues?

Research Question 2: what is the degree of source credibility of the social media in providing accurate, sufficient health information?

Research question 3: can the social media actually raise the level of health information awareness among university youth?

Objective: To analyse the role of the social media in raising the level of health awareness among university youth, the degree of source credibility of the social media in providing accurate and sufficient health information and which social media platforms raises the level of health information among them.

The Methodology of the Study: This study used the quantitative and qualitative approach. Sampling size is 255 University youth. An online survey was conducted in order to target age bracket (18-24). The sample has been taken mainly from diverse university youth.

The sampling method and size: In this context of this study,
the researchers use convenient sample. As the questionnaires was conducted online on MSA university youth, (October University for Modern and Sciences and Arts), the sample size of the study is 255 students, both male and female.

**Collecting research data:** The researchers designed the method for collecting the research data in the form of questionnaires. The questionnaires have been designed to assure the gathering of information that correlate to the study variables such as the social media usage, frequency, and media credibility.

**Validity and verification of the Questionnaires:** The questionnaires have been validated through many external professional academic Mass Communication staff members who recommended some changes, and modification that the researchers took into considerations.

**Results:**

**Main Research Questions**

1. Usage of social media daily by youth:

![Figure (1): Usage of social media daily bases](image)

Figure no (1) showed that 92.4% from the participants using social media on daily bases and this percentage proves that the social media play an important role among youth and totally depend on it in their daily life.
2. Social media platforms most used by youth:

![Figure (2): Social media platforms used by the youth](image)

Diagram no (2) showed that Facebook came as the first choice 65.8%, while Blogs 50.6%, Twitter 31.6%, and YouTube was 20.8%, this shows that almost all of the participants are exposed to social media platforms with different degree according to their uses and gratification.

3. Usage of the social media sites per day?

![Figure (3): Social media usage per day](image)

Diagram no (3) showed that 59.7% use social media twice per day, while 22.1% use it once a week, and 11.7% use it once per day, 6.5% use it twice a week. This shows that all the participants exposed to the
social media sites consider it as an important part of their daily time and consume a lot of time using it.

4. Duration spent on the social media daily:

![Chart showing daily usage of social media](chart.png)

**Figure (4): Social media usage daily.**

Diagram no (4) showed that 41.1% use social media three hours daily, while 39.4% use social media two hours daily. While 12.1% use the social media more than three hours daily. This reflect the heavy users of the social media are among the youth and the high level of dependency on the social media.

5. Reason for using the social media (you may chose more than one)

![Chart showing reasons for social media usage](chart2.png)

**Figure (5): Reason for social media usage.**
Diagram no (5) showed that 40.7% seek information on health, and 30.7% for entertainment, while 16.9% connecting with friends, and 8.2% education. This reflect the high rate of interest among the youth for seeking health information throughout the social media.

6. Frequency of visit of social media sites related to health information:

Figure (6): Frequency of visit the social media sites related to the health information.

Diagram no( 6) showed that 71.9 % visited the social media sites related to health information, while only 28.1% do not visit the social media sites for health information, this reflect the important of the social media as a source for providing the youth with health information issues.
7. Frequency of visit of the official website of the Egyptian Ministry of Health.

![Diagram showing frequency of visit of the official website of the Egyptian Ministry of Health.](image)

**Figure (7): frequency of visit of social media sites related to the health information.**

Diagram no (7) showed that 74% visited the official website of the Egyptian Ministry of Health recently, while 26% did not. This reflects the important of the Egyptian Ministry of Health as a source of health information for the youth.

8. Credibility of the Egyptian Ministry of Health page on Facebook:

![Diagram showing credibility of the Egyptian Ministry of Health page on Facebook.](image)

**Figure (8): Credibility of the Egyptian Ministry of Health page on Facebook**

Diagram no (8) showed that 73.1% find the Egyptian Ministry of
Health a credible source providing sufficient health information, while 19.3% said maybe, and 7.6% said no.

9. Reason of incredibility of the Egyptian Ministry of Health page on facebook:

Table no (1): sources of information for health information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sources of information</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have no idea</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private doctors</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian Ministry of health</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World health Organization</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others, please indicate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diagram no (9) showed that 34.8% said that insufficient information came as a reason for not finding the Egyptian Ministry of Health a credible source providing health information, while 22.8% lack of trust, and 6.8% as inaccurate information.

10. Sources of information for health information used by youth.
Table no (1) showed that private doctors websites 27.6%, and 13.6% friends, while 12% the Egyptian Ministry of Health, and 10.4% World Health Organization. This reflect that the youth depend to a certain degree on the private doctor’s websites for health information as a priority as they may feel more comfort, privacy and get more accurate health information, While they feel somehow confident with their friends to share intimate health issues.

11. Social media platforms credibility for health information:

![Diagram no (10): Social media credibility for health information (n=171 visitors of social media sites related to the health information).]

Diagram no (10) showed that 38.4% think that the social media platforms in general can be a credible source of health information, while 16.4% said maybe while 45.2% said no.
12. Role of Social media platforms to increase the level of awareness on health issues.

Diagram no (11) showed that 31.6% agreed that the social media platform can help increase the level of awareness on health issues, while 19.6% maybe, and 48.8% said no.

Research hypothesis:

- H1: The degree of dependence on social media as a source of information and the exposure to social media sites related to the health information are positively correlated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the exposure to social media sites related to the health information</th>
<th>The degree of dependence on social media</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.8%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chi²  

df  

Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)  
Pearson's R

9.522  
2  
0.009  
0.200
From the previous table we can conclude that the greater the degree of dependence on social media as a source of information, the higher the exposure to social media sites related to the health information (sig. 0.009)

- H2: The degree of dependence on social media as a source of information and the credibility of social media sites related to the health information are not correlated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>credibility of social media sites related to the health information</th>
<th>The degree of dependence on social media</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
<td>mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maybe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chi^2</td>
<td>Pearson's R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.678^a</td>
<td>0.1639</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the previous table we can conclude the degree of dependence on social media as a source of information and the credibility of social media sites related to the health information are not correlated. (sig. 0.104)

Discussion:
- The majority of participants use social media on daily bases which proves that social media play an important role among youth and totally depend on it in their daily life. The results reflect that university young are heavy users of the social media and deeply depend on it on regular basis.
- Facebook came as the first choice from social media platform, followed by Blogs, Twitter, and YouTube, this shows that almost all of the participants are exposed to social media platforms with different
degree according to their uses and gratification.
- Reason for using the social media: seek information on health comes first, entertainment second, while connecting with friends comes as third in their choices, finally education came at the end. This reflect the high rate of interest among the youth for seeking health information throughout the social media. According to (Eva A. Pedersen &al., 2020), as a part of the social media strategy, clear Call To Actions (CTA) were defined describing the actions that we wanted from the target group, like for example clicking on a link, or liking, sharing, and commenting. These, in turn, directed the production of content. A Call To Action reproduces the specific goal for the type of engagement that a post should generate. Moreover, According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model, When message recipients have both the motivation and the ability to consider detailed information in a given message, persuasion occurs via the central route. When central route takes place, recipients use critical thinking and consideration to process information, which needs more cognitive effort and careful observation. In this route, recipients change their attitude due to comprehensive consideration of relevant arguments supporting the advocated view. (Lin Liao & Tao Huang, 2021).
- 74% of participants visited the official website of the Egyptian Ministry of health recently. This reflects the important of the Egyptian Ministry of Health as a source of health information for the youth. According to (Siyu Liu, 2021) most studies which have employed the uses and gratifications theory explored why users choose to consume information from different media platforms and news sources and assign them different credibility levels, and in the online environment, users have greater control over what they would like to see, so that their motivations are important for understanding their using behaviors. Compared with general media use, which is measured in terms of time and frequency, media dependency level can also be a strong predictor of perceived credibility levels.
- 73.1% find the Egyptian Ministry of Health a credible source providing sufficient health information, while 19.3% said maybe, and 7.6% said no.
- Sources of information for health information used by youth: the results showed that private doctor’s websites come in priority for privacy and confidentiality reason, followed by friends as friends have
almost similar health issues and problems, followed by the Egyptian Ministry of Health, and World Health Organization. This reflects that the Egyptian youth depend to a certain degree on the private doctor’s websites for health information as a priority, while (Siyu Liu, 2021), found in his study that Chinese students depend most heavily on the Chinese government and mainstream news media sources on social media than on other sources to consume Chinese COVID-19 information. However (Najma Akhther, 2021) found that The span of seeking information as measured in his study also includes information and advice that people can receive through social media, such as occurrence and symptoms of conditions, treatment options, medication use, online resources, and local services or clinics. According to (Tao Zhou & al., 2016) The Elaboration Likelihood Model propose that argument quality and source credibility represent two key variables affecting user attitude change.

- 38.4% think that the social media platforms in general can be a credible source of health information, while 16.4% said maybe while 45.2% said no. However in Saudi Arabia (Wadd Mohamaed & al., 2021) showed that the use of social media by health educators and students revealed that more than half of the participants used social media for health awareness purposes. They believed that these platforms were important tools to spread knowledge, raise awareness, and improve health habits. Furthermore, (Cheng Zhou & al, 2021) indicates that health advice and caution misinformation is more likely to be disseminated on social media for misinformation written with more ambiguous words, and this is also consistent with the finding that ambiguity is an important feature of rumor spreading.

- 31.6% agreed that the social media platform can help increase the level of awareness on health issues, while 19.6% maybe and 48.8% said no, this reflect that still many youth do not rely on the health information provided by the social media.

- We can furthermore conclude that the greater the degree of dependence on social media as a source of information, the higher the exposure to social media sites related to the health information, while the results showed that the degree of dependence on social media as a source of information and the credibility of social media sites related to the health information are not correlated.
**Recommendations for future study**

Social media should have a greater role in increasing the level of raising the level of health information among the youth in general.

1. The study provides insights into the emerging utilization of social media in healthcare. In particular, it identifies types of use by the youth as well as the effects of such use.

2. Accordingly, our results framework and propositions can serve to guide future research.

3. Moreover, one of the main reasons for youth to join online health communities is their dissatisfaction with their healthcare professional’s inability to meet the patients’ emotional and informational needs.

4. Another reason for youth to use social media was to bridge the gap between traditional health information source about their health condition and everyday life health problem and the new digital media as a media source provider for health information. In particular, Facebook as a social media platform is seen as an important source of health information beside and in addition to traditional in-office counselling in improving youth health knowledge and information.

5. Moreover, one of the main reasons for the youth to join online health communities is their dissatisfaction with their healthcare professional’s inability to meet the patients’ emotional and informational needs.

6. Therefore, the types of social media platforms use by the youth as identified in this study refer to the way in which the youth use social media intended to meet an unfulfilled need.

7. The most common important reason for the youth users of social media for health related reasons was the social support provided by the social media. The Social support is defined as “the process of interaction in relationships which is intended to improve coping, esteem, belonging, and competence through actual or perceived exchanges of psychosocial resources”. Social support is represented through five different categories and four of these categories were found to be common types of social media use by the youth for health related purposes. These four types, namely emotional support, esteem support, information support, and network support are explained below.
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