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The Importance Of Social Media On Doctors And People During Corona Time

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Abstract

Background: Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has produced a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and everyday lives. Not only the spread rate of contagion and patterns of transmission endangered our sense of security, but the safety measures put in place to contain the spread of the virus also require social distancing. In this context of physical threat, social and physical distancing, the role of the different mass media channels and social media in lives of individual, social and societal levels cannot be underestimated.

Aim of the study: to examine the importance of social media on doctors and people during covid-19 period.

Research Questions: What is the importance of social media on doctors and people during covid-19 period?

Methods: This is a cross-sectional web-based anonymous survey. Data were collected from Health Care Professional (HCPs) via fulfilling online designed questionnaire. Descriptive statistics with frequencies and percentages are presented.

Results: Of 407 participants, a total of 391 completed the survey (response rate: 96%); two-third of participants were females, 43.2% were aged 20-30 years and most were not employee (45%). Whats App and Instagram were mostly used by respondents with (38%) and (34%) respectively. 40% of the respondents use the social media for more than four hours. During Covid-19, 29% of the participants followed health news, 22% followed Covid-19 news, while 21% followed other news. Most participants (68%) had social media as their main source of information on pandemic such as Covid-19 and further affirmed that they followed many doctors during Covid-19.

Conclusion: Whats App and Instagram are useful platforms to spread right information about diseases during pandemics. Doctors are on the spotlight during pandemics and grossly trusted for prosper dissemination of information during pandemics.

Introduction

Since the outbreak, SARS-CoV-2 posed a near impossible challenge for containment and non-transmission around the globe. The outbreak was first recognized in early March in the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and large-scale containment efforts started by the mid of March. The virus spread through the respiratory route, caused a spectrum of illnesses, including very mild cases, was rapidly transmitted between humans with an epidemic doubling time of about 1 week, and was surreptitiously spreading for at least 1 week. According to the WHO, the pandemic is accelerating at an exponential rate. The first 100,000 cases took 67 days, the second 100,000 took 11 days, the third 100,000 took just 4 days, and the fourth only 2 days. Now there are 100,000 individuals infected in 24 h. As more and more countries report cases, including those with no link to the disease epicenter, there are many more unrecognized cases in the world and that community transmission is happening in many countries. The gulf countries, like others, released a series of protective measures in order to halt the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Peak CM et al).

Social media has not only been a platform for news and information dissemination, but has also proved a means of spreading panic, fear and confusion by the people to the people despite having been warned by the NCDC not to indulge in social media abuse through spreading misinformation (NCDC, 2020). This is largely because the use of social media is permissible to all and sundry, hence unverified and fake news can be passed on without fear or favor. Savrum and Leon (2015) explain it thus, "The media provide a freedom of choice and individuals are free to choose which broadcast best represents their interest." They further posit that the media exacerbates social issues thereby heightening negative impressions on these situations (Savrum & Leon, 2015, p. 14). AlSayyad and Guvenc (2015) in their analysis of the role of social media to the success of the Arab Spring revolution interviewed Gigi Ibrahim, an Egyptian tweeter, who said that:

Social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook are very important. They can spread mass amounts of information … communication is key here. But at the end of the day, if people don't decide to go to the streets … nothing will happen.

In Yemeni, when government banned Al Jazeera from covering events in the country, social media became an easy outlet used for several activities (AlSayyad & Guvenc, 2015). The Arab Spring uprising introduced social media to Yemen as online meetings were organized in close Facebook groups and news spread through blog and YouTube channels (AlKandari & Al-Jenaibi, 2022). In view of the above assertions, the advantages of social media cannot be too stressed as it crippled unpopular regimes and opened spaces for people to express their grievances albeit via virtual public spaces. However, when social media is negatively deployed, the uninformed easily fall prey to misinformation which at times brings mishap and confusion to the populace. (Ngozika A et al).

As indicated by Makani, the role of social media in the current pandemic climate mirrors that of the radio during both World Wars. It can provide information about health, connect us with family and friends and even allow us to change the world, if we are so inclined, by creating and participating in campaigns that aim to inform or solicit help. It's no surprise then that Whatsapp use surged 40 per cent and other platforms have had millions of new and additional users during the COVID-19 crisis. (Devika Singh Mankani), (Al-Jenaibi, 2023).

Emiratis, on average, spend 2.57 hours on social media daily. Much like in the rest of the world, social media has become one of the most essential parts of daily internet usage in the UAE. It has given a voice to the ignored and served as a melting pot of ideas of all kinds. Dropping smartphone prices have driven the massive increase in the usage of mobile phones across the UAE. The large-scale rise in the adoption of social media can be attributed to the easy availability of super-fast internet at very low prices. The explosion in YouTube usage is due to the increased prevalence of fast internet connectivity. Whatsapp's willingness to keep reinventing its product and keep offering novel experiences to its customers is the reason that it has surged past all other competitors and established a unique niche of its own among chatapps. *(UAE Social Media Statistics 2020)*.

It has taken a pandemic for the physician workforce to enter the parallel universe of social media and digital socialism. Despite the exponential growth in popularity of social media in the last decade, most doctors have practiced social distancing from Facebook and even microblogging sites such as Twitter. Privacy concerns about patient-doctor relationships, potential medicolegal consequences of social media behavior, and lack of intellectual and meaningful content on such platforms are touted as excuses to stay out of these virtual arenas. The professional vacuum created due to physician experts shying away from social media has spearheaded a negative campaign blaming modern medicine and its exponents as pro-Big Pharma and corrupt. (Nisha Nigil).

In March 2020, during the early days of the pandemic, social media was dominated by influencers pedaling unproven remedies, immune boosters, and fake products with doubtful preventive and therapeutic effects on COVID-19. The deluge of misinformation on COVID-19 compelled many responsible physicians to claim their well-deserved spot in the field of knowledge dissemination. The lockdown era forced medical experts from all over the world to shed their social media aversion, anxiety, and inertia overnight! Not only that, we suddenly witnessed doctors from around the world flocking to Twitter and Facebook to gather updates on medical information about COVID-19. In fact, during the early phase of the pandemic, people were heavily reliant on real-time medical updates exchanged between doctors from China, Italy, Spain, France, and the US. (Nisha Nigil, 2020).

Aim of the Study

The aim of this paper is to examine the importance of social media on doctors and people during covid-19 period. This paper is aimed to provide insight at the contribution of social media to doctors and people during covid-19 period in different emirates at the UAE.

This paper also aimed at assessing the prevalence of misinformation about covid-19 through social media platforms and strategies to curb such misinformation. This paper is also aimed at suggesting appropriate strategies to curb/reduce the rate of abuse of social media in disseminating misinformation about covid-19.

Research Objectives

1. To assess the rate of awareness of people about covid-19 in the UAE.
2. To assess the prevalence/extent of social media use during covid-19 period.
3. To assess the extent of misinformation about covid-19 circulating during covid-19 period.
4. To suggest strategies to curb/minimize the spread of misinformation about covid-19.

Research Question

1. What is the rate of awareness of people in the UAE about covid-19?
2. What is the extent of social media use to circulate information about covid-19.
3. What is the rate of misinformation about covid-19?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among people.
2. There is no significant difference in the awareness level about covid-19 between those who use social media and those who did not.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among several social media platforms users.
4. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among respondents from different emirates.
5. There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of covid-19 and social media use.

6. There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 between male and female social media users.

Literature Review

Since the global outbreak of coronavirus, screen time rules across homes have just disappeared into the woodwork. With e-learning, e-working, e-shopping and e-socialising becoming the buzzwords, the increasing time people began to spend on social media gained a new legitimacy. (Devika Singh Mankani).

During sudden outbreaks, the public needs access to timely and reliable information about disease symptoms and their prevention. (Bastani & Bahrami , 2020). Nowadays, social media is often seen as a fast and effective platforms for searching, sharing, and distributing health information among the general population. (Zhao &Zhang, 2017) Also, social media serves to provide an important informal source of data to identify health information that has not been reported to medical officers or health departments and to uncover or share perspectives on any life-threatening health-related issues.(Charles-Smith et al) But this channel of disseminating knowledge sometimes mixed with scare tactics, discrimination, misleading reports and conspiracy theories related to the origin of the virus, its spread and mass buying of face masks, all closely connected to the modern 21st century "info media" social media networks. (Larson, 2018). Despite the importance of rapid access to information in these critical situations, poor comprehension or inaccurate or false information in the format of rumors or unreliable news can lead to misunderstanding in the community, which makes the situation worse. (Van der Meer & Jin, 2020).

Physicians tackle covid-19 on social media

Facing huge gaps in our knowledge about the novel virus, many private groups were launched on Facebook by physician volunteers to educate and prepare the planet's physician army to lead the epic fight against the virus and the infodemic. Several of these physician groups now have up to 75 000 members and continue to engage and educate members in a constructive manner. They are also involved in physician advocacy on various issues including shortage of PPE, spread of misinformation, cyberbullying, and workplace harassment. Community Facebook groups made up of thousands of members and run by the public in major Canadian cities have been successful in conducting interactive webinars hosted by physician experts in order to clear COVID-19 misinformation. There is also a Facebook group named "COVID-19 Physicians Memorial" created as a tribute to physicians who have died while fighting COVID-19. The group shares information and obituaries of physician warriors from North America. As an emerging trend, we see physician celebrities with thousands of Facebook followers engage in debunking COVID-19 myths generated by Dr Google, WhatsApp University, and YouTube academy. A Facebook post from 5 March 2020 by Canadian infectious disease specialist Dr Abdu Sharkawy has been shared by over 1 million Facebook users so far. (Nisha Nigil , 2020).

Twitterati physicians can engage in day-to-day interactive learning through regular updates from leading epidemiologists, eminent researchers, infectious disease and critical care specialists, policymakers, physician leaders, hospital CEOs, and even prominent media personnel covering the pandemic. Twitter took the extra measure of promoting credible COVID-19 information by "verifying the accounts of physician experts" with its blue checkmark badge. This was done in consultation with global public health authorities. (Nisha Nigil 2020), (Al-Jenaibi, 2023).

Almost all high-impact journals now have Twitter handles, tweeting regular updates on cutting edge research on SARS-CoV-2. Virtual journal clubs, medical case discussions, and even graduations happen daily via Twitter. Health care workers have also been resorting to mobile applications such as WhatsApp for real-time professional communication and knowledge exchange. Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter have thus evolved into a virtual front line for knowledge translation and dissemination related to the pandemic. (Nisha Nigil 2020)

Zoom is another phenomenon that has been imposed on us due to COVID-19. This year many organizations held their international conferences virtually on Zoom and similar web applications. Recognizing the need to capitalize on social media popularity, some universities have appointed chief medical social media officers to consolidate their digital footprint. Thanks to the infodemic mess, infodemiology is now a popular area for medical research. The World Health Organization recently conducted an online conference on infodemiology as part of its fight against misinformation and disinformation. Non-profit organizations and groups like the Association for Healthcare Social Media are being launched to help promote positive social media engagement by doctors. (Nisha Nigil 2020)

Although the number of social media physicians is growing fast, the lack of professionalism in engagement is a rising concern. Unfortunately, there have been instances where the public has witnessed fierce debates between doctors on social media, exposing the professional divide around various aspects of COVID-19 lockdown and treatment. Receiving billions of views, COVID-19 misinformation is not only putting lives at stake but has also led to many influential physician researchers and front-line doctors facing character assassination and even receiving hate messages and death threats from social media mobs. (Nisha Nigil 2020).

The International Telecommunication Union's latest report revealed that 53.6% of the global population, or 4.1 billion people, uses the Internet till the end of 2019. According to the latest statistics, a whopping 98.98% of the UAE population remains active on social media. This means that in 2020, an eyeball popping 9.73 million people come online on social media almost every day out of a population of 9.83 million people. In 2020, UAE saw a 1.3% annual growth in internet users. The usage of social media recorded a 6.3% increase from the previous year. (Sahni & Sharma 2020)

Popular Social Media Platforms in the UAE

Mobile social media usage has been booming in the country. 9.7 million users access social media through their mobile devices. That is 99% of the population of the country. The 2020 usage statistics show that the number of mobile social media users in the country recorded a 10.6% growth with more than 932,000 new users added last year. Falling smartphone costs and easy availability of cutting-edge technology are the major reasons for this boom. Youtube is the most popular social media platform in 2020 with 8.65 million users. Almost 79% of the UAE's population has profiles on Facebook while YouTube's penetration also stands at 88%.*(UAE Social Media Statistics 2020)*

People use mobile phones too much nowadays that it may cause medical implications. Likewise, a study reported by The Lancet described "WhatsAppitis" in which a young women had wrist pain because of sending too many messages from her phone, as almost every person is having Internet in their cell phones and laptop and everyone is capable of sending text messages and information, nowadays instead of "alert," "panic" transmits faster when compare to CoV disease itself. (Fernandez-Guerrero IM).

While these are incredibly challenging times for everyone, smart social media and digital marketing strategies can still influence patients in a positive, profound way.

Theory Relating to Social Media Use.

The Social Impact Theory

Background

The social impact theory was coined by Ohio State University psychologist Bibb Latane in 1981 after conducting a series of experiments to validate his hypothesis of how influence works. Three factors make up social impact theory: strength, immediacy, and number. The core message of his theory focusses on influence groups, target of the influence, proximity in time and how many people are in the influencing group.

Lateen theory believed there is an influence group and a targeted group for influence.

His theory soon later became powerful in the context of social media and influence. Millions of social media users across nations are influenced daily to make a buy decision and turnaround time for conducting businesses reduced. Lateen theory became more powerful in the context of social media as highlighted below:

- Social media provides strength in the form of friends, colleagues, and family: the people you have relationships with and whose opinions matter to you.
- Social media provides immediacy–both temporally and virtually: the people you are connected to are never more than a mobile device away.
- Social media provides enormous opportunity for the number of people in the influencing group.

The social impact theory is related to some of the context in this study. Social media being a platform for wider coverage has helped in disseminating/sensitizing the populace about the concept of covid-19 and various steps to curb its spread.

Social media has changed the landscape of communication. It continues in imitation of stand a "gamechanger" of communication. Social media is an extensive umbrella on instant online verbal exchange channels. It enabled the people whole over the world in imitation of have interaction or share production then manufacturer related records together with each other. The social impact theory believes with social media, manufacturers can influence millions of targeted prospects/customers. Same way governments/WHO and other key stakeholders have been able to reach millions of people about covid-19.

The different attribute concerning conventional media is as such is a customized person generated media. Users exercise higher rule upon its utilizes than content material technology (Dickey and Lewis, 2011). Consumers are no longer inclined according to listen what business agencies necessity to them in imitation of paying attention instead it wants enterprise businesses in accordance with listen as it say. This attitudinal and behavioral change of state among buyers is the influence on neighborly media manifestation yet such is a sizeable project for business firms after bear together with that (Kietzmann et al., 2011). This situation alerts to that amount enterprise corporations to identify those elements over communal media as affect the consumer mindset towards the product associated information embedded among social media content. This might also allow corporations to increase violent associative media promotional strategies.

The social impact theory is particularly related and useful to the subject of covid-19 because it gives opportunity to meet a wider coverage of people and people can be influenced to take precautionary measures against the spread of the virus.

Research Method

Overview

This section accounts for the systematic procedures that will be adopted in the collection of data for this research. It is sequentially organized along the following themes: research design description of study area, study population of the study, sample size and sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis and management, and ethical considerations. These will be harnessed towards the realization of the objectives of the research.
Quantitative method of research was selected over qualitative so as to obtain.

Research design: According to Asika (2009), research designs are often referred to as the structuring of investigation aimed at identifying variables and their relationships to one another. In this study, questionnaire serves as useful guide to the effort of generating data for this study. The design of this study will involve quantitative methods of data collection. The survey research design through the administration of questionnaires was used for the study.

Area of the study: The study will be conducted in UAE. The study will cover seven (7) Emirates in UAE. The emirates are Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Alkaimah, Sharjah and Umm Alquwain.

Sample Size: Sample size is defined as a limited number of elements selected from a populating which is a representative of that population (Ogbechi. 2002). The sample size for this study is 407.

Instrument for data collection: These are the tools or methods used in getting data from respondents. In this study, questionnaires and interviews are the research instruments used. Questionnaire is the main research instrument used for the study to gather necessary data from the sample respondents. The questionnaire is structured type and provides answers to the research questions and hypotheses therein. This instrument is divided and limited into two sections; Section A and B. Section A deals with the personal data of the respondents while Section B contains a research statement postulated in line with the research question and hypothesis in chapter one. Options or alternatives are provided for each respondent to pick or tick one of the options.

Reliability and Validity of Instrument: Reliability means the accuracy of precision of a measuring instrument while validity means the extent to which the research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. To have a valid instrument, the questions in the questionnaire should be free from ambiguity (the questions will not be too complex). To have a reliable instrument, the questionnaire will be followed with interview of sample of respondents to know whether their view on the subject.

Method of Data Processing and Analysis

Having gathered the data through the administration of questionnaire, the collected data was coded, tabulated, and analyzed according to the research question and hypothesis. To analyze the data collected effectively and efficiently for easy management and accuracy, the simple percentage method was the analytical tools used for this research project. Also, t-test was used to check for difference in means while correlation was used to check for relationship between variables. The data will be analyzed with SPSS version 21. Microsoft Excel will be used for data processing and transformation.
A frequency distribution table will be presented to describe basic demographic characteristics of respondents. Also, bivariate analysis shall be carried out including t-test, Anova and correlation. This is to give the study a robust finding. Findings from t-test and Anova shall be used to examine differences in social media use and its importance across several emirates. The correlation analysis will be carried out to assess the relationship between social media use and other explanatory variables/predictors.

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Background Characteristics

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	**Gender**		
	Male	59	15.1
	Female	332	84.9
2.	**Age**		
	12-19 years	103	26.6
	20-30 years	167	43.2
	30 and above	117	30.2
3.	**Emirate**		
	Abu Dhabi	110	28.1
	Adjam	53	13.6
	Dubai	77	19.7
	Fujairah	27	6.9
	Ras Alkaimah	63	16.1
	Sharjah	24	6.1
	Umm Alquwain	37	9.5
4.	**Working Place**		
	Not Employee	175	45.0
	Private Sectors	62	15.9
	Public Sectors	152	39.1

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by background characteristics. The result shows that more than two third of the respondents (85%) are female respondents, while the remaining 15% are their male counterparts. Distribution by age revealed that those in the youngest age group (12-19 years) account for 27% of the respondents, while the oldest age group accounted for about 30%. Those in the age group 20-30 years were reported to account for 43% of the total respondents. The distribution by emirates revealed the highest percentage of respondents (28%) reside in Abu Dhabi, followed by those who reside in Dubai (20%). Those who reside in Ras Alkaimah accounted for 16%, followed by those at Adjam 14%. Those residing at Umm Alquwain accounted about 10% while the lowest percentage (6%) are those from Sharjah. Also, the distribution of respondents by working place revealed that about 45% are not employees, about 39% were reported working in public sectors with 16% in the private sector.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of social media

S/N	Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	**How often do you use social media?**		
	1-2 hours	117	30.3
	3-4 hours	113	29.3
	More than 4 hours	156	40.4
2.	**What kind of social media do you use?**		
	Instagram	121	31.7
	Snapchat	109	28.5
	Ticktock	1	0.3
	Twitter	4	1.0
	Whatsapp	144	37.7
	Youtube	1	0.3
	All of the above and more	2	0.5

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by use of social media. The result revealed that 30% of the respondents use social media for 1-2 hours while about 29% were reported to use social media 3-4 hours daily. The highest daily users (more than 4 hours) accounted for the highest percentage of the respondents (40%). The distribution of respondents by the kind of social media they use revealed that the majority of the respondents (38%) use whatsapp, followed by those who revealed they use instagram (34%). Those using snapchat accounted for about 29% of the respondents, ticktok 0.3%, twitter 1%, youtube 0.3%, and others 0.5%.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of Social Media

1.	**What kind of tool do you use to follow news on social media?**		
	Personal Computer	27	6.9
	Smartphone	294	75.2
	Tablet	30	7.7
	Others	40	10.2
2.	**What kind of news do you follow during Covid-19?**		
	Covid-19 news	85	22.0
	Economic news	49	12.7
	Health news	112	29.0
	Political News	59	15.3
	Others	81	21.0
3.	**When do you use social media?**		
	Afternoon	140	36.1
	Evening	130	33.5
	Morning	118	30.4

The distribution of respondents by the kind of tool they use to follow news on social media revealed that more than two third of the respondents (75%) use their smartphone to follow news on social media, followed by those who use tablets with about 8%. Those using their personal computer to follow news are just 7%, while those using other tools aside personal computer, tablets and smartphone accounted for 10% of the total respondents. Also, the distribution of respondents by the kind of news they follow during covid-19 period revealed that 29% followed health news, 22% followed covid-19 news, only 13% followed economic news, while 15% followed political news and the remaining 21% followed other news. The distribution of respondents by when they use social media revealed morning users 30.4%, afternoon users 36.1% and evening users 33.5%

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of Social Media

S/N	Variable	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Social media has been a very active medium for disseminating false information and myth about COVID-19 in UAE?	77(20.6)	181(48.4)	70(18.7)	25(6.7)	21(5.6)
2.	I believe most UAE are ignorant of the right medium of getting information about COVID-19?	75(20.5)	147(40.2)	104(28.4)	31(8.5)	9(2.5)
3.	Social media has been a very active medium of spreading false information and myth about the virus?	91(24.6)	148(40.0)	91(24.6)	21(5.7)	19(5.1)
4.	Low knowledge of technicality involved affect my use of social for the dissemination of information about a pandemic?	83(22.3)	156(41.8)	103(27.6)	18(4.8)	13(3.5)

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by their perception of the role of social media during the covid-19 period. The result shows that most of the respondents (69%) revealed that social media has been a very active medium for disseminating false information and myth about covid-19 in UAE. Also, further analysis revealed that not less than 60% of the total respondents believe most UAE are ignorant of the right medium of getting information about covid-19. In another analysis, about 65% revealed that social media has been a very active medium of spreading false information and myths about the virus. Also it was reported by a vast majority of the respondents that low knowledge of technicality involved affects their use of social media for the dissemination of information about a pandemic.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of Social Media

1.	I believe there is a synergy between government and social media in disseminating information about COVID-19?	73(19.7)	161(43.4)	93(25.1)	23(6.2)	21(5.7)
2.	I use social media platforms to spread information about COVID-19 more than any other professional?	84(22.8)	145(39.3)	93(25.2)	27(7.3)	20(5.4)
3.	Do more rumors spread in social media during COVID-19?	101(27.4)	132(35.8)	98(26.6)	23(6.2)	15(4.1)
4.	I know how to distinguish between rumors and facts in social media?	74(20.2)	165(45.0)	83(22.6)	26(7.1)	19(5.2)

The table above reveals the distribution of respondents by use of social media. About 63% of the respondents believe there is a synergy between government and social media in disseminating information about covid-19. Further analysis revealed that not less than 62% of the total respondents were reported to use social media platforms to spread information about covid-19 more than any other professional. Also, analysis revealed that not less than 60% of the respondents agreed to spread rumors on social media during covid-19 period. Also, no less than 65% were indicated they knew how to distinguish between rumor and facts on social media.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of Social Media

1.	Always I double-check the news through social media during COVID 19?	106(29.0)	134(36.6)	72(19.7)	30(8.2)	24(6.6)
2.	I pass the news through social media without checking the news?	75(20.4)	151(41.1)	77(21.0)	37(10.1)	27(7.4)
3.	I believe social media more than other news sources	102(27.6)	140(37.9)	82(22.2)	27(7.3)	18(4.9)
4.	Social media use as an immediate mechanism for accessing and sharing information on COVID-19 in UAE?	78(21.4)	153(41.9)	88(24.1)	28(7.7)	18(4.9)

The table above revealed that 66% of the respondents indicated to always double check the news through social media during covid-19. Also further analysis revealed that 61% of the respondents indicated that they pass the news through social media without checking the news. Also, findings from the table of analysis revealed that about 65% of the respondents believe social media more than other news sources. In another analysis, 63% of respondents sees social media use as any immediate mechanism for accessing and sharing information on covid-19 in UAE.

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of Social Media

1.	Social media is my main source to reach and obtain information from places on pandemic such as COVID-19?	96(26.1)	155(42.1)	63(17.1)	33(9.0)	21(5.7)
2.	Social media use has enhanced government services and improve knowledge about COVID-19?	83(22.6)	157(42.7)	85(23.1)	26(7.1)	17(4.6)
3.	I am aware of the spread of news on social media during COVID 19?	115(31.2)	132(35.8)	83(22.5)	25(69.4)	14(3.8)
4.	The government used social media in the right way to aware people about COVID-19?	88(23.8)	165(44.6)	67(18.1)	31(8.4)	19(5.1)

About 68% were reported to believe social media is their main source to reach and obtain information from places on pandemic such as covid-19. Analysis revealed that not less than 63% of the respondents believed social media

use has enhanced government services and improve knowledge about covid-19. Another analysis revealed that 66% of respondents agreed to be aware of the spread of news on social media during covid-19. Majority of the respondents (70%) revealed that the government used social media in the right way to sensitize people about covid-19.

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Use of Social Media

1.	I am very satisfied with the government regulations through social media?	117(31.8)	146(39.7)	69(18.8)	21(5.7)	15(4.1)
2.	Police use social media in a strong way to aware people about COVID-19?	93(25.1)	151(40.8)	78(21.1)	31(8.4)	17(4.6)
3.	Doctors use social media in a strong way to aware people about COVID-19?	119(32.2)	126(34.1)	77(20.9)	29(7.9)	18(4.9)
4.	I believe all doctors through social media during COVID-19?	96(26.2)	145(39.5)	70(19.1)	42(11.4)	14(3.8)
5.	I followed many doctors during COVID 19?	110(29.7)	142(38.4)	69(18.6)	26(7.0)	23(6.2)
6.	I chat with doctors through social media during COVID-19?	105(27.9)	155(41.2)	60(16.0)	25(6.6)	31(8.2)

Majority of the respondents also suggested that they are satisfied with the government regulations through social media. Further analysis revealed that 66% of respondents believed police use social media in a strong way to sensitize people about covid-19. Also the result shows that majority of the respondents believed doctors use social media in a strong way to ensure people are aware of covid-19. Similarly, 66% of respondents believed that all doctors through social media during covid-19, while majority indicated they followed many doctors during covid-19. Also, about 69% of respondents indicated they chat with doctors through social media during covid-19.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among people.
Hi: There is a significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among people.
Significance level=0.05
Critical Region: Accept Ho, if p-value is greater than the significance value, otherwise reject Ho.

ANOVA

I believe most UAE are ignorant of the right medium of getting information about COVID-19?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	46.115	6	7.686	9.190	.001
Within Groups	295.208	353	.836		
Total	341.322	359			

The table of analysis above revealed that the p-value (0.001) is less than the significant value (0.05) We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among people. The result suggest the awareness level differs from emirate to emirate.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: There is no significant difference in the awareness level about covid-19 between high and low users of social media.
Hi: There is a significant difference in the awareness level about covid-19 between high and low users of social media.
Significance level=0.05
Critical Region: Accept Ho, if p-value is greater than the significance value, otherwise reject Ho.

ANOVA

Social media has been a very active medium for disseminating false information and myth about COVID-19 in UAE?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	11.225	2	5.613	5.211	.006
Within Groups	383.454	356	1.077		
Total	394.680	358			

The table of analysis above revealed that the p-value (0.006) is less than the significant value (0.05). We can therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in the awareness level about covid-19 between high and low users of social media. The high users of social media tend to have more awareness about covid-19 than the low users.

Hypothesis 3

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among several social media platforms users.

Hi: There is a significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among several social media platforms users.

Significance level=0.05

Critical Region: Accept Ho, if p-value is greater than the significance value, otherwise reject Ho

ANOVA

level_of_awareness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.279	1	.279	.496	.483
Within Groups	61.713	110	.561		
Total	61.991	111			

From the table of analysis above, the p-value shows a value of 0.483 which is greater than the significance value (0.05). We therefore accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among several social media platform users. In other words, the level of awareness about covid-19 among twitter users is not significantly different from the level of awareness among snapchat and youtube users.

Hypothesis 4

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among respondents from different emirates

Hi: There is a significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among respondents from different emirates

Significance level=0.05

Critical Region: Accept Ho, if p-value is greater than the significance value, otherwise reject Ho

ANOVA

level_of_awareness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.695	6	4.116	6.413	.000
Within Groups	240.687	375	.642		
Total	265.382	381			

The table of analysis above shows the difference in the level of awareness among several emirates. The result shows a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the significant value (0.05). We can therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 among the several emirates.

Hypothesis 5

Ho There is no significant relationship between the level of awareness of covid-19 and social media use.

Hi: There is a significant relationship between the level of awareness of covid-19 and social media use.

Significance level=0.05

Critical Region: Accept Ho, if p-value is greater than the significance value, otherwise reject Ho

Correlations

		level_of_awareness	social_media_platform
level_of_awareness	Pearson Correlation	1	-.067
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.483
	N	386	112
social_media_platform	Pearson Correlation	-.067	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.483	
	N	112	112

The table above shows the relationship between level of awareness of covid-19 and social media platforms. The result shows a p-value of 0.483 which is greater than the significance value (0.05). We can therefore fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant relationship between level of awareness of covid-19 and social media platforms. However, the Pearson correlation value revealed a value -0.67 which suggest a strong negative relationship between level of awareness of covid-19 and social media platforms.

Hypothesis 6

Ho: There is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 between male and female social media users

Hi: There is a significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 between male and female social media users.

Significance level=0.05

Critical Region: Accept Ho, if p-value is greater than the significance value, otherwise reject Ho

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
socialmedia111	3.629	.058	.289	377	.772	.035
			.311	82.191	.757	.035

From the t-test analysis above, the p-value shows a value of 0.058 which is greater than the significant value (0.05). We can therefore accept the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant difference in the level of awareness of covid-19 between male and female social media users.

Summary

The aim of this research is to examine the importance of social media to people and doctors during covid-19 period. Findings from this research work revealed that respondents in this study are high social media users. The report revealed that not less than 70% of the respondents use social media daily for at least 3 hours. Findings from this study also revealed that nearly all the respondents (98%) use three social media platforms namely instagram, snapchat and whatsapp. Further analysis further revealed that not less than 22% follow news on covid-19 daily throughout the covid-19 period.

Test of analysis also revealed that there is a significant difference in the level of awareness about covid-19 among social media users. The difference among the emirates was also discovered to be significant.

Discussion of the Objectives

1. To assess the rate of awareness of people about covid-19 in the UAE.

Table 3 revealed the kind of news people follow on social media. The result revealed that at least 22% of the respondents follow news on covid-19 daily throughout the covid-19 period. Also in table 5, it was reported that not less than 62% of the respondents use social media platforms to spread information about covid-19 more than any other professional.

2. To assess the prevalence/extent of social media use during covid-19 period.

Table 2 reported the extent of social media use among respondents. The result revealed that not less than 70% of the respondents are high users/subscribers of several social media platforms. The result from table 5 also revealed that not less than 61% of the respondents spread information about covid-19 more than any other professional.

3. To assess the extent of misinformation about covid-19 circulating during covid-19 period.
Analysis from table 4 indicated that about 69% of the respondents suggested that social media has been a very active medium for disseminating false information and myth about covid-19 in the UAE.

4. To suggest strategies to curb/minimize the spread of misinformation about covid-19.
Findings from tables 6 revealed that majority of the respondents (66%) indicated to always double check the news through social media during covid-19 which proved to be an effective way of minimizing the spread of misinformation about covid-19.

Answering of Research Questions

1. What is the rate of awareness of people in the UAE about covid-19?
The findings from this research work revealed that not less than three quarter of the respondents (70%) are ware of covid-19 in the UAE according to the findings in table 4.

2. What is the extent of social media use to circulate information about covid-19.
Also findings from table 5 revealed that 62% of the respondents revealed they use social media to spread information about covid-19.

3. What is the rate of misinformation about covid-19?
Findings from table 4 revealed that at least 69% of the respondents believed that social media has been a very active medium for disseminating false information and myth about covid-19 in the UAE.

Suggesting a future research topic

The role of social media in disseminating false information about covid-19 in the UAE.

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