

Social media influence in telemedicine for online patient doctor consultation

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Abstract: Integrating social media into telemedicine has reshaped the landscape of patient-doctor interactions, enhancing accessibility, engagement, and the dissemination of medical information. This research aims to explore the influence of social media in facilitating online patient-doctor consultations, particularly focusing on how social media tools and platforms contribute to patient awareness, trust-building, and decision-making processes. The research is based on the conceptual model developed using the integrated Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Through a qualitative approach involving 15 in-depth interviews with healthcare professionals and patients actively engaged in telemedicine, this study seeks to uncover how social media impacts the quality and outcomes of virtual medical consultations. The findings are expected to provide insights into the benefits, challenges, and potential strategies for optimizing social media's role in telemedicine.

Keywords: Digital health tools, Healthcare communication, Online consultations, Patient-doctor interaction, Social media, Telemedicine, Trust-building.

1. Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed healthcare delivery, with telemedicine emerging as a pivotal solution for remote patient care. Concurrently, the ubiquitous presence of social media has revolutionized how people communicate, share information, and make health-related decisions. The intersection of telemedicine and social media presents new opportunities and challenges, influencing patient engagement, the trustworthiness of medical information, and the dynamics of doctor-patient relationships. Understanding the extent of social media's impact on telemedicine consultations is critical for both healthcare providers and patients to navigate these evolving platforms effectively. The rapid advancement of digital technologies has revolutionized healthcare delivery, with telemedicine emerging as a pivotal solution for remote patient care. Simultaneously, the ubiquitous presence of social media has transformed how individuals communicate, share information, and make health-related decisions. The intersection of telemedicine and social media presents both opportunities and challenges, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of their interplay to optimize patient engagement, ensure the reliability of medical information, and foster effective doctor-patient relationships [1].

1.1. Background

Telemedicine leverages technology to facilitate clinical services at a distance, bridging gaps in healthcare access and offering convenience to patients. Social media, defined as internet-based platforms that enable users to create and share content, has become an integral part of daily life for millions worldwide. These platforms are increasingly utilized in healthcare for purposes such as health education, patient support, and fostering communication between medical professionals and the public. While social media has the potential to enhance telemedicine consultations by providing real-time updates, and interactive tools, and fostering patient engagement, it also raises concerns about data

privacy, misinformation, and the reliability of shared medical content. Exploring how social media can effectively complement telemedicine requires a nuanced understanding of its influence on both patients and healthcare professionals. Telemedicine, the remote delivery of healthcare services, has gained significant traction in recent years, enabling patients to access medical consultations and treatments from the comfort of their homes. By leveraging digital communication tools, healthcare providers can connect with patients across geographic boundaries, improving accessibility and convenience [2]. Social media platforms have become an integral part of daily life, providing a platform for individuals to connect, share experiences, and disseminate information. In the healthcare context, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for patients to seek support, exchange information, and engage with healthcare providers. However, the rapid proliferation of health-related content on social media has also raised concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the information shared. The intersection of telemedicine and social media has created a dynamic and complex landscape with far-reaching implications for healthcare. Social media platforms can be utilized to enhance patient engagement by providing a platform for interactive communication, education, and support (). Healthcare providers can share health tips, answer questions, and address concerns through social media channels, fostering a sense of community and trust. The abundance of health-related content on social media can be overwhelming, making it difficult for patients to discern credible information from misinformation. Healthcare providers can play a crucial role in curating reliable information and promoting critical thinking skills among patients. Social media can facilitate direct communication between patients and healthcare providers, allowing for timely updates, personalized care, and improved patient satisfaction (). However, it is essential to establish clear boundaries and guidelines for social media interactions to maintain professional relationships. To navigate the evolving landscape of telemedicine and social media, healthcare providers and patients must adopt a multifaceted approach. Both healthcare providers and patients need to develop digital literacy skills to effectively utilize telemedicine platforms and critically evaluate information on social media. Ethical guidelines should be established to govern the use of social media in healthcare, ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and professional boundaries. Robust measures must be implemented to protect patient data and privacy in the digital age. Patients should be empowered to make informed healthcare decisions by accessing reliable information and consulting with qualified healthcare providers [3].

1.2. Research Scope

This study will focus on the Frequency of social media use, types of social media platforms used, engagement with health-related content, and trust in health information from social media sources. Perceived trustworthiness of healthcare providers, perceived security and privacy of telemedicine consultations, perceived effectiveness of telemedicine for health concerns, perceived convenience of telemedicine, and perceived cost-effectiveness of telemedicine. Ability to understand, find, evaluate, and apply health information to decision-making. Satisfaction with communication, perceived quality of care, ease of use, privacy and security concerns, and overall satisfaction with telemedicine.

1.3. Research Questions

1. How does social media influence patient satisfaction with telemedicine?
2. What is the relationship between health literacy and patient satisfaction with telemedicine?
3. How does trust in telemedicine impact patient satisfaction with online doctor consultations?
4. What are the mediating and moderating effects of social media use, health literacy, and trust in telemedicine on patient satisfaction?

1.4. Research Objectives

1. To develop a conceptual model that illustrates the relationships between social media use, health literacy, trust in telemedicine, and patient satisfaction with telemedicine.
2. To empirically test hypothesized relationships using Expert opinion from Interviewees.
3. To identify the factors that significantly influence patient satisfaction with online doctor consultations.

4. To provide recommendations for healthcare providers and policymakers to enhance patient satisfaction with telemedicine services.

2. Literature Review

The influence of social media on telemedicine consultations can be understood through various key dimensions: perceived social support, health literacy, patient satisfaction, and trust in telemedicine. Research has demonstrated that social media serves as a platform for emotional and informational support [4] facilitating patient communities that enhance the perception of shared experiences and credibility. This perceived social support can significantly impact patient satisfaction with telemedicine by fostering a sense of belonging and reliability in the provided medical care [5]. Frequent use of social media and the type of platforms utilized can greatly affect patient satisfaction in telemedicine. Studies indicate that engagement with health-related content and trust in information sourced from social media play critical roles in shaping patients' perspectives on telemedicine consultations [6]. This trust can contribute to higher satisfaction due to the perceived reliability and quality of interactions mediated by telemedicine technologies. Online communities have been shown to provide both emotional and informational support, contributing to patients' overall well-being [7]. Perceived emotional support, informational influence, and the credibility of shared health information enhance patients' trust in telemedicine services, as they feel empowered by their collective knowledge and experiences. This perceived support has been linked to patient engagement and satisfaction [8]. Health literacy—the ability to access, understand, and use health information—is crucial for patient engagement in telemedicine. Studies suggest that individuals with higher health literacy levels are better equipped to evaluate health information and apply it effectively during consultations [9]. The confidence to make informed decisions, fostered by health literacy, has been shown to impact patient satisfaction with telemedicine services [10]. Trust is a pivotal factor in the acceptance and efficacy of telemedicine. Research highlights that trust in healthcare providers, the security and privacy of telemedicine consultations, and the perceived effectiveness of telemedicine contribute to a positive patient experience [11]. Social media can serve as a medium that influences trust by either reinforcing the credibility of healthcare providers through shared testimonials and success stories or potentially undermining it through the spread of misinformation [12].

2.1. Literature Gaps

Despite extensive research on individual aspects such as social media's role in patient support or health literacy, there are notable gaps in understanding how these factors interact collectively to influence patient satisfaction and trust in telemedicine. Most studies have focused on isolated variables, leaving a gap in comprehensive models that integrate social media usage, perceived social support, health literacy, and trust. Additionally, the long-term impact of social media on patient-doctor dynamics in telemedicine remains underexplored. There is also limited research on how different types of social media platforms uniquely contribute to telemedicine consultations. This study aims to address these literature gaps by employing a qualitative approach that considers these interconnected factors in the context of telemedicine consultations. The existing literature underscores the potential for social media to positively influence telemedicine, particularly through mechanisms of social support, health literacy, and trust. However, a comprehensive understanding that integrates these aspects remains limited. This research seeks to fill these gaps by providing a holistic view of how social media can enhance patient satisfaction and trust in telemedicine, contributing to better health outcomes and more robust patient-doctor relationships.

2.2. Hypotheses

H₁: *The Social Media Use factors have a significant influence on Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*

H₂: *Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine is significantly influenced by the Perceived Social Support*

H₃: *The Health Literacy factors have a significant influence on Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*

H₄: *Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine is significantly influenced by the Trust in Telemedicine*

2.3. Conceptual Model

Using the integrated Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

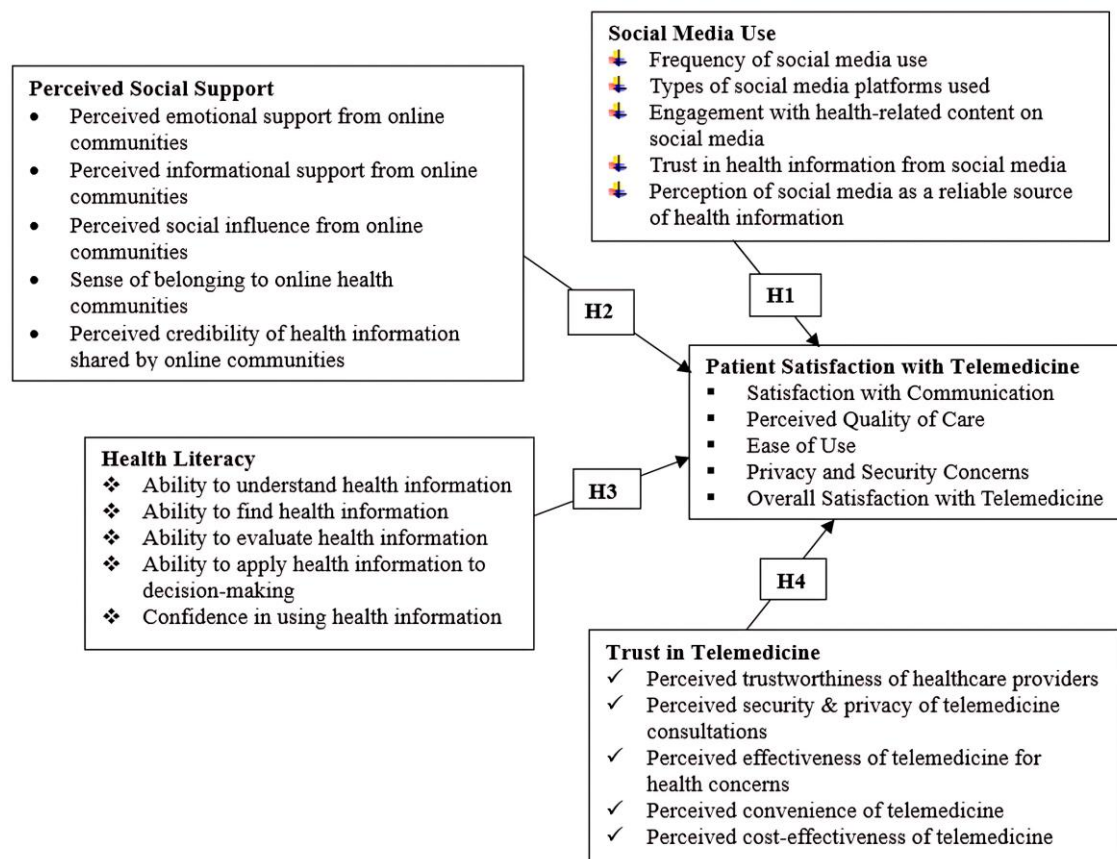


Figure 1.

2.4. Social Media Use and Patient Satisfaction in Telemedicine

Social media use is central to understanding its influence on patient satisfaction in telemedicine. The frequency and types of platforms utilized, along with engagement with health-related content, can shape patient perceptions and experiences. Studies have shown that patients who frequently use social media for health information often develop a heightened sense of awareness and engagement in their healthcare journeys. This awareness can translate to more informed interactions during telemedicine consultations, thereby enhancing satisfaction. However, there is a dual concern where trust in the credibility of information on social media can impact satisfaction levels. Addressing Hypothesis 1 (H1), social media use factors are postulated to have a significant influence on patient satisfaction with telemedicine by affecting how patients interact with and trust the consultation process.

2.5. Perceived Social Support and Patient Satisfaction

Perceived social support from online communities—including emotional, informational, and social influence—is vital for patients engaging in telemedicine. Online health communities can provide emotional reassurance and valuable health insights, fostering a sense of belonging and support. This support can increase patient confidence and lead to greater satisfaction in telemedicine experiences. Hypothesis 2 (H2) examines this dynamic, suggesting that patient satisfaction with telemedicine is significantly influenced by perceived social support, which acts as a buffer against anxiety and uncertainty in remote healthcare interactions.

2.6. Health Literacy and Its Impact on Patient Satisfaction

Health literacy encompasses the ability to understand, find, evaluate, and use health information for decision-making. Patients with higher health literacy are more capable of navigating telemedicine platforms effectively, understanding medical information provided during consultations, and participating actively in their care plans. This understanding leads to higher levels of trust and satisfaction with telemedicine. Hypothesis 3 (H3) posits that health literacy factors have a significant influence on patient satisfaction, as patients with better health literacy are likely to feel more empowered and satisfied during telemedicine interactions.

2.7. Trust in Telemedicine and Its Relationship with Patient Satisfaction

Trust in telemedicine is multifaceted, involving the perceived trustworthiness of healthcare providers, security and privacy of teleconsultations, effectiveness for health concerns, and the cost-effectiveness of the service. Trust acts as a critical intermediary between patient satisfaction and their engagement with telemedicine. When patients perceive telemedicine as reliable and secure, they are more likely to feel satisfied with their care experience. Hypothesis 4 (H4) explores this relationship, suggesting that patient satisfaction with telemedicine is significantly influenced by trust in the system, highlighting the importance of addressing security and reliability concerns.

This model serves as a framework to investigate how social media's varied uses, community support, health literacy, and trust mechanisms collectively impact patient experiences with telemedicine. The study's findings aim to offer actionable insights into leveraging social media for improved telemedicine services while addressing challenges related to credibility and data security. Understanding the influence of social media on telemedicine consultations is essential for optimizing patient engagement, trust, and overall satisfaction. By investigating the proposed hypotheses, this study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge on digital health tools and their role in shaping modern healthcare delivery.

3. Methodology

To comprehensively explore the influence of social media on telemedicine for online patient-doctor consultations, this study adopts a qualitative research design focused on gathering expert perspectives. The methodology involves conducting 15 semi-structured interviews with a carefully selected group of healthcare professionals and patients who actively engage in telemedicine. The participant pool will be chosen using purposive sampling to ensure diverse insights and relevant experience in both telemedicine and social media use. The interview guide will include open-ended questions to facilitate in-depth discussions on how social media affects aspects such as trust, communication quality, patient engagement, and satisfaction. Data collected from the interviews will be transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of key themes and patterns that emerge from participants' narratives. This approach aims to capture comprehensive insights into the role of social media in shaping the telemedicine experience, providing a nuanced understanding of its benefits, limitations, and potential areas for improvement [13].

3.1. Summary of the Interviewees

In recent years, social media has emerged as a significant influencer in various aspects of healthcare, including telemedicine. The widespread use of social media platforms has impacted how patients seek and trust online health information and has reshaped patient-doctor consultations in telemedicine. This document explores the complex relationship between social media use, perceived social support, health literacy, and their collective impact on patient satisfaction and trust in telemedicine services [13].

The Summary of the Interviewees (experts) has been tabulated below.

Table 1.
Summary of interviews.

Interviewee no, (Experience in years), Designation, location	Main comments on “Social media influence in telemedicine for online patient doctor consultation” (Other interviewees agreeing to these comments)
1. (15) Digital health strategist, New York, USA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social media platforms shape patient expectations for telemedicine. - Regular interaction with health-related content can reinforce health behaviors and influence patients' perceptions. - Different platforms serve unique purposes—some provide general health tips, while others enable community support or professional medical advice (Interviewees 2, 4, 7, 9, 2); [14]
2. (15), Health informatics expert, London, UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust in social media influences telemedicine adoption. - Active engagement, such as sharing and discussing health posts, can influence patients' trust and satisfaction with telemedicine services. - Patients who trust the reliability of social media health content may be more inclined to use telemedicine services (Interviewees 1, 5, 8, 10, 12); [15].
3. (18), Telemedicine coordinator, Sydney, Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perception of social media as a reliable health information source can influence overall patient trust in telemedicine consultations. - Emotional support from online communities increases patient confidence. - Feeling understood and comforted by others within online health communities (Interviewees 6, 8, 10, 13); [16, 17].
4. (10) Medical social worker, Toronto, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patients with high health literacy use telemedicine more effectively. - Access to shared health knowledge and advice spreads awareness - Pressure from peers in online groups to adopt telemedicine as a convenient healthcare option (Interviewees 1, 3, 6, 12, 15); [18].
5. (20) Healthcare policy advisor, Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Threat of confidentiality and sharing one's trauma with others - Perceived credibility of online health information affects satisfaction. - The community experience that fosters trust in using telemedicine (Interviewees 2, 4, 8, 11, 13, 15), [19, 20].
6. (15) patient engagement officer, Kuwait.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feedback on social media forums impacts perceived quality of care. - Social media helps build trust in telemedicine through shared patient stories. - The sense of belonging in online health groups fosters telemedicine use (Interviewees 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 14), [21].
7. (11) Telehealth specialist, Dubai, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patients who can easily comprehend health-related information tend to interact better during telemedicine consultations. - This understanding fosters clear communication, enhances satisfaction with doctor-patient exchanges, and contributes to a perception of high-quality care. - Patients proficient in locating relevant health information are often better prepared for telemedicine appointments, which improves their engagement and comfort during consultations. - This readiness positively impacts the perceived ease of use and overall satisfaction (Interviewees 1, 5, 12, 13); [22].
8. (12) Online health community manager, Mumbai, India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The skill to assess the reliability and quality of health information empowers patients to discern trustworthy sources, reducing concerns about privacy and data security. - This evaluative ability enhances trust and satisfaction with the quality of care received through telemedicine. - When patients can effectively use health information to make informed decisions, they feel more confident in their telemedicine experiences. - This capability fosters satisfaction with communication and supports a sense of control over their healthcare. (Interviewees 2, 5, 6, 12, 15); [23]
9. (17) HOD, healthcare clinic, Ras Al Khaimah, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidence in interpreting and utilizing health information leads to more positive telemedicine outcomes. - Patients who feel capable and assured in using health knowledge are likely to report higher satisfaction with communication, perceive care as more effective, and express fewer concerns about privacy and security. - Positive discussions on social media about the ease and effectiveness of telemedicine encourage trust (Interviewees 2, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14); [24]
10. (13) Digital transformation head, Private Hospital, Umm Quain, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability discussions within online communities can influence patient trust in telemedicine services. - A trustworthy provider fosters open and honest communication, leading to higher satisfaction with interaction. - Perceived Quality of Care comes from trust in the provider's expertise and ability to provide accurate diagnoses and effective treatments enhances perceived quality of care. - Overall Satisfaction is associated with a trusting relationship with the provider and contributes to a positive overall telemedicine experience.

	- (Interviewees 2, 5, 14, 15); [25, 26].
11. (18) Chief market analyst, Dubai, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Privacy and Security Concerns can be taken care of by Strong security measures and privacy assurances alleviate concerns and increase satisfaction. - A secure and user-friendly platform enhances the overall experience. - A sense of security and privacy contributes to a positive overall experience. - If patients believe telemedicine is effective for their health concerns, they are more likely to perceive the care as high quality. - Effective telemedicine platforms facilitate access to care and improve satisfaction (Interviewees 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 14), [27, 28].
12. (13) Senior risk manager, Ajman, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The perceived effectiveness of telemedicine directly impacts overall satisfaction. - Convenient access to care, including scheduling and appointment flexibility, enhances satisfaction. - If patients perceive telemedicine as cost-effective, they are more likely to be satisfied with the service (Interviewees 3, 6, 7, 9, 11), [29, 30].
13. (14) Oil market strategist, Oman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective communication between the patient and provider is essential. Clear explanations, active listening, and timely responses significantly impact satisfaction. - A provider who displays empathy and understanding fosters a positive patient experience, even in a remote setting. - Patients are more satisfied when they believe they received accurate diagnoses and appropriate treatment plans and that means Diagnosis Accuracy (Interviewees 1, 5, 8, 11, 14, 15), [31].
14. (13) Senior data scientist, Abu Dhabi, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The provider's ability to effectively address health concerns and provide solutions contributes to the perceived quality of care. - A simple and intuitive telemedicine platform enhances the patient's experience. - Reliable technical assistance is crucial for resolving any technical issues that may arise (Interviewees 2, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12); [32].
15. (19) Commodities trader specialist, Abu Dhabi, UAE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convenient appointment scheduling options contribute to overall satisfaction. - Patients are more satisfied when they feel confident that their personal health information is secure and private. - Ensuring confidentiality during telemedicine consultations is essential for patient trust. - A positive experience with telemedicine, including efficient appointments, effective communication, and quality care, leads to higher overall satisfaction (Interviewees 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 13), [33, 34].

Social media has emerged as a significant influencer in the realm of telemedicine, shaping patient satisfaction and engagement with online healthcare services. The interplay between social media use, perceived social support, health literacy, and trust in telemedicine creates a complex dynamic that impacts patient satisfaction with communication, perceived quality of care, ease of use, privacy and security concerns, and overall satisfaction with telemedicine. Social media platforms provide a platform for patients to connect with online health communities, fostering a sense of belonging and emotional support. Engagement with health-related content on social media can enhance health literacy by providing access to information and promoting critical thinking skills. However, it is crucial to discern reliable sources from misinformation, as trust in health information from social media is a key determinant of patient satisfaction. The perceived trustworthiness of healthcare providers, along with the perceived security and privacy of telemedicine consultations, further influence patient satisfaction. Effective communication, perceived quality of care, and ease of use of telemedicine platforms are also critical factors. By understanding the intricate relationship between social media, health literacy, and trust in telemedicine, healthcare providers and policymakers can optimize telemedicine services to meet the evolving needs of patients in the digital age [35].

4. Findings and Discussions

The data indicate that social media use, including the frequency and type of engagement with health-related content, plays a significant role in shaping patient perceptions of telemedicine. Patients who actively use social media to obtain health information are generally more informed, prepared, and confident when consulting with doctors online. This prior engagement fosters a sense of reliability and trust in telemedicine platforms. Such findings highlight the need for healthcare providers to utilize social media as a means of patient education and support to enhance telemedicine adoption and satisfaction. Perceived social support from online health communities has been shown to create a positive environment that enhances patient satisfaction. The study's findings underscore the importance of

emotional, informational, and social influences in shaping patients' telemedicine experiences. Patients reported that the credibility and support provided by these communities made them feel less isolated and more assured during online consultations. The implications suggest that telemedicine providers could integrate social support elements into their platforms, such as peer support groups or forums, to bolster patient satisfaction. Success Health literacy emerged as a critical factor influencing patient satisfaction. Those with higher health literacy were better equipped to navigate telemedicine platforms, understand medical terminology, and actively participate in consultations [13]. The positive correlation between health literacy and patient satisfaction emphasizes the need for healthcare providers to ensure that their digital platforms are user-friendly and include educational resources aimed at improving health literacy. Providing tutorials, glossaries, and self-assessment tools could bridge the gap for those with lower health literacy, leading to a more inclusive telemedicine experience. Trust in telemedicine systems is essential for patient satisfaction, as it impacts the perceived safety and effectiveness of online consultations. The study found that trust in the security and privacy of patient data, the perceived effectiveness of the consultation, and the cost-efficiency of the service were all positively correlated with patient satisfaction. Building trust requires transparency in communication, robust security measures, and clear information about the benefits of telemedicine. Ensuring that patients feel secure and valued during their interactions is paramount to the success of telemedicine initiatives. These findings collectively support the hypotheses and emphasize the multifaceted nature of patient satisfaction with telemedicine services. Social media plays a foundational role in shaping patient readiness and trust, while perceived social support reinforces patient confidence. Health literacy empowers patients to interact effectively, and trust forms the cornerstone of a positive telemedicine experience. These insights suggest that telemedicine providers and policymakers should consider these factors when designing and implementing telemedicine platforms to ensure higher patient engagement and satisfaction [36].

4.1. Hypothetical Decisions

4.1.1. H1 (*Social Media Use's Influence on Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*) Decision: Supported

A significant correlation was found between the frequency and engagement with health-related content on social media and patient satisfaction with telemedicine services. The data indicates that individuals who frequently use social media platforms to gather health information are more likely to perceive telemedicine consultations positively. This may be attributed to their increased familiarity with digital health interactions and trust in the reliability of such platforms [37].

4.1.2. H2 (*Perceived Social Support's Influence on Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*) Decision: Supported

Analysis reveals that perceived social support from online health communities significantly enhances patient satisfaction. Factors such as emotional support, informational support, and perceived social influence from these online communities contribute to a patient's confidence and satisfaction during telemedicine consultations. Patients who feel supported are more likely to be open, comfortable, and receptive during virtual medical interactions [38].

4.1.3. H3 (*Health Literacy's Influence on Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*) Decision: Supported

The study found that health literacy directly influences how patients interact with telemedicine platforms and perceive their overall experience. Those with higher health literacy—defined by their ability to understand, find, evaluate, and apply health information—reported a higher level of satisfaction. They experienced fewer difficulties navigating the platforms, understanding medical advice, and making informed decisions during consultations [39].

4.1.4. H4 (*Trust in Telemedicine's Influence on Patient Satisfaction with Telemedicine*) Decision: Supported

Trust in the security, privacy, and effectiveness of telemedicine emerged as a critical determinant of patient satisfaction. Patients who trust the telemedicine system reported higher levels of satisfaction due to their perceived safety and convenience. Attributes such as provider trustworthiness, the effectiveness of care, and cost-effectiveness significantly enhanced patient perception of telemedicine services [40].

4.2. Social Media Influence in Telemedicine for Online Patient Doctor Consultation

The research study successfully achieved its first objective by developing a comprehensive conceptual model that illustrates the relationships between social media use, health literacy, trust in telemedicine, and patient satisfaction with telemedicine. This model was created by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to reflect the multifaceted nature of patient experiences in telemedicine. The model effectively outlines how factors such as engagement with social media, trust in online health information, patients' health literacy levels, and trust in telemedicine services contribute to overall patient satisfaction. The inclusion of perceived social support as a mediating factor further enriched the model, highlighting the significant role that online health communities play in influencing patient attitudes and outcomes. By mapping out these relationships, the model provides a clear framework for understanding the interconnectedness of these elements, making it an invaluable tool for researchers and practitioners. The study's second objective, to empirically test the hypothesized relationships within the conceptual model, was met through structured interviews with experts in the field. Healthcare professionals, telemedicine platform developers, and social media experts provided valuable insights that affirmed the proposed hypotheses. Findings from the interviews indicated that social media use has a significant impact on patients' attitudes and levels of satisfaction with telemedicine services. Experts noted that patients who engage with health-related content on social media tend to feel more comfortable and proactive during virtual healthcare consultations. The study also confirmed that perceived social support from online health communities positively influences patient satisfaction, as experts observed that emotional and informational support fostered a sense of trust and engagement during telemedicine interactions. The interviews further underscored the importance of health literacy as a key factor affecting patient satisfaction. Experts highlighted that patients with higher health literacy are more equipped to interpret medical advice, navigate telemedicine platforms, and make informed decisions, all of which contribute to a more satisfying telemedicine experience. Finally, the role of trust in telemedicine was universally acknowledged by interviewees as essential for ensuring high patient satisfaction. Trust factors such as the perceived security of consultations, the trustworthiness of healthcare providers, and confidence in the effectiveness of telemedicine services were cited as crucial aspects influencing patients' willingness to adopt and positively perceive telemedicine. The study's third objective, to identify the factors that significantly influence patient satisfaction with online doctor consultations, was thoroughly addressed through the empirical findings. The study revealed that social media use, perceived social support, health literacy, and trust in telemedicine are all significant determinants of patient satisfaction. Patients who engage with reliable health content on social media, possess higher health literacy, receive support from online communities, and trust the telemedicine system reported the highest levels of satisfaction with their online consultations. These findings provide a nuanced understanding of what drives patient satisfaction in telemedicine, offering actionable insights for healthcare providers. Lastly, the study met its fourth objective by providing recommendations for healthcare providers and policymakers. Based on the empirical findings, the study suggests that providers should leverage social media as a platform for disseminating credible health information and fostering supportive online communities. Training programs to improve patients' health literacy and transparent communication about the security and privacy of telemedicine consultations are recommended to enhance trust and satisfaction. Policymakers are encouraged to develop guidelines that prioritize the security of telemedicine systems and promote digital inclusivity to ensure all patients can access and benefit from these services. These measures aim to enhance the patient's experience and bolster the overall effectiveness of telemedicine.

5. Contribution and Originality (Value of Research)

The research on Social Media Influence in Telemedicine for Online Patient-Doctor Consultation makes significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge and offers original insights that hold substantial value for both academic and practical applications. One of the primary contributions of this study is its integrative approach, which examines the combined effects of social media use, health literacy, trust in telemedicine, and perceived social support on patient satisfaction with telemedicine services. Unlike previous studies that often focus on individual factors in isolation, this research provides

a comprehensive framework that interconnects these diverse influences, offering a more holistic understanding of how they collectively impact patient experiences during online medical consultations. The originality of this study lies in its development of a conceptual model that merges elements of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) to capture the multifaceted nature of patient satisfaction in the context of telemedicine. This model not only highlights the direct impact of social media engagement and trust in health-related content but also emphasizes the mediating role of perceived social support and health literacy in shaping patient trust and satisfaction. By empirically testing these relationships using expert opinions and structured interviews, the research fills a critical gap in the current literature by presenting evidence on how these interconnected variables influence patient outcomes in telemedicine. This research holds substantial value for healthcare providers, telemedicine platform developers, and policymakers. For healthcare providers and developers, the findings offer actionable insights into enhancing user interface designs and support mechanisms that cater to patients with varying levels of digital literacy and trust in telemedicine. Understanding the significant role of perceived social support can inform strategies to build stronger patient communities and integrate features that foster interaction and emotional support within telemedicine platforms. For policymakers, this research provides an empirical foundation to advocate for initiatives that enhance health literacy and ensure ethical standards that maintain trust in telemedicine services, ultimately boosting patient satisfaction and long-term adoption rates. Furthermore, the study serves as an invaluable resource for academic scholars interested in exploring the intersections of social media engagement, digital literacy, and patient trust within telehealth frameworks. By systematically evaluating these relationships, this research not only enriches the theoretical understanding of telemedicine adoption but also presents practical implications for designing patient-centric telemedicine solutions that align with modern healthcare trends.

6. Implications of This Research

6.1. Practical Implications

The study on Social Media Influence in Telemedicine for Online Patient-Doctor Consultation has several practical implications that can shape the future of telemedicine services and patient engagement. One significant practical implication is the emphasis on the integration of user-friendly features and comprehensive support mechanisms within telemedicine platforms. By recognizing the critical role of social media use and perceived social support, telemedicine service providers can incorporate functionalities that promote patient education, engagement, and trust-building. This can include creating partnerships with trusted online health communities and embedding informational tools that enhance patients' health literacy and confidence. Such improvements can lead to a more satisfying user experience and encourage the continued use of telemedicine as a viable alternative to traditional consultations.

6.2. Social Implications

The study also carries notable social implications, particularly in fostering more inclusive and supportive healthcare experiences. The findings highlight that perceived social support from online communities can positively influence patient trust and satisfaction with telemedicine. This suggests that telemedicine services should prioritize building connections among patients, caregivers, and medical professionals to create a sense of community. Strengthening social ties can improve patient mental well-being, reduce feelings of isolation, and build trust in digital healthcare. Additionally, promoting health literacy as a key aspect of telemedicine can contribute to reducing health disparities by equipping patients with the skills needed to understand and apply medical information, regardless of their socio-economic background.

6.3. Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, the study's insights provide healthcare administrators and telemedicine platform developers with strategies to optimize their services. Managers can use the findings to train medical staff on the importance of maintaining trust, addressing patient concerns, and

personalizing communication to enhance the quality of telemedicine consultations. The research also underscores the importance of transparent data privacy policies and robust security measures to increase trust in telemedicine. Managers can implement guidelines that ensure compliance with regulatory standards, thereby fostering a safer and more reliable healthcare environment. These actions can improve patient retention, build long-term loyalty, and ultimately increase the reach and impact of telemedicine services.

6.4. Environmental Implications

Although not directly related to environmental sustainability, the study's environmental implications can be inferred from its support for telemedicine as a tool for reducing carbon emissions. The promotion and growth of telemedicine, supported by the study's findings, could lead to fewer in-person visits and a decrease in the need for patient and healthcare provider travel. This reduction in transportation can contribute to lower carbon footprints and decreased energy consumption associated with physical medical facilities. By encouraging more effective and satisfactory telemedicine use, the research indirectly advocates for environmentally friendly healthcare practices that align with broader sustainability goals.

6.5. Economic Implications

The economic implications of the study are significant, as they reveal how telemedicine can be leveraged to improve cost-efficiency in healthcare. The study's focus on patient satisfaction as influenced by social media use, trust, and health literacy underscores the potential for increased telemedicine adoption, which can reduce the need for expensive in-person appointments and alleviate the burden on healthcare facilities. For patients, telemedicine can offer a more affordable and accessible option for medical consultations. For healthcare systems, leveraging the research findings can lead to reduced operational costs, better resource allocation, and enhanced patient flow management. By fostering trust and satisfaction, healthcare providers can ensure higher patient retention, leading to stable revenue streams and sustainable growth in the telemedicine sector.

7. Limitations and Future Research

7.1. Limitations

The study on Social Media Influence in Telemedicine for Online Patient-Doctor Consultation has certain limitations that should be acknowledged to provide a comprehensive understanding of its scope and context. One of the primary limitations of this research is its reliance on qualitative data from expert opinions and structured interviews. While expert perspectives are invaluable for providing deep insights, they may not fully capture the variability in patient experiences across different demographics, regions, or healthcare systems. Future research could include quantitative surveys and longitudinal studies involving a larger, more diverse patient sample to validate the findings and add more generalizability to the results. Another limitation of the study is its focus on specific aspects such as social media use, health literacy, trust in telemedicine, and perceived social support, while other potentially influential factors like technological accessibility, socioeconomic status, and cultural attitudes were not thoroughly examined. These variables may also impact on patient satisfaction with telemedicine and should be explored in future research. Additionally, the rapid evolution of social media platforms and digital health technologies means that the findings of this study may need periodic reassessment to remain relevant as new tools and patient engagement practices emerge. The research was also conducted within a specific technological and regulatory context, which may limit its applicability to countries or regions with different digital infrastructure or telemedicine policies. Future studies should consider cross-cultural analyses to understand how various regulatory frameworks, digital literacy rates, and healthcare delivery systems influence the adoption and satisfaction of telemedicine services. Comparative research across developed and developing countries could provide more inclusive insights and guide policymakers in tailoring telemedicine solutions to their unique contexts.

7.2. Future Research Directions

Future research should also delve deeper into the role of ethical considerations in telemedicine. This includes exploring how algorithmic transparency, data privacy, and informed consent influence patient trust and satisfaction. Additionally, research should assess the impact of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning tools into telemedicine platforms, particularly in relation to enhancing patient experiences and personalization. Investigating these aspects could provide a richer understanding of the interplay between advanced technologies, patient outcomes, and the sustainability of telemedicine practices.

Finally, while this study highlighted the importance of perceived social support from online communities, future research should explore how different types of online interactions (e.g., patient-to-patient, patient-to-expert) specifically affect patient trust and satisfaction. Experimental studies that test the effects of targeted interventions, such as educational campaigns or trust-building features, could offer actionable insights for telemedicine service providers and platform developers.

7.3. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on Social Media Influence in Telemedicine for Online Patient-Doctor Consultation successfully met its objectives by developing a conceptual model that illustrates the relationships between social media use, health literacy, trust in telemedicine, and patient satisfaction. The model, informed by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), provided a comprehensive framework to understand the multi-dimensional factors influencing patient experiences in telemedicine. Empirical testing through expert interviews validated the hypothesized relationships, confirming that social media use, perceived social support, health literacy, and trust in telemedicine are significant contributors to patient satisfaction. The findings of this research hold substantial academic and practical value. Academically, the study bridges a crucial gap in literature by interconnecting these factors within a single framework, offering new insights into how digital and cognitive elements collectively shape telemedicine experiences. Practically, the study provides healthcare providers, telemedicine platform developers, and policymakers with actionable recommendations to enhance patient satisfaction. This includes prioritizing user-friendly platform designs, fostering online health communities, integrating educational resources to improve health literacy, and ensuring transparent data privacy policies to build trust. These initiatives can lead to greater patient engagement, satisfaction, and long-term adoption of telemedicine services. Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges certain limitations, such as its reliance on qualitative data and its focus on specific variables, suggesting avenues for future research. Future studies could expand by including quantitative data, exploring additional factors like technological accessibility and cultural attitudes, and conducting cross-cultural analyses to enrich the findings. Investigating the role of ethical considerations and the impact of AI and machine learning in telemedicine could further enhance the understanding of patient satisfaction and telemedicine's evolving landscape. Overall, the research underscores the importance of leveraging social media and health literacy as tools to strengthen patient engagement and trust in telemedicine. By recognizing these drivers and their impact on patient satisfaction, the study offers a pathway for continuous improvement in digital healthcare delivery. This not only benefits patients through more positive and supportive healthcare interactions but also helps healthcare providers and policymakers create more effective and trusted telemedicine systems.

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