

# "DIGITAL PRESENCE IN ORTHODONTICS: A SURVEY OF PRACTITIONER AWARENESS"

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## Abstract:

The questionnaire approach is a powerful and adaptable instrument for gathering data in a variety of study fields. Its structured style makes it easier to collect, organize, and analysis of data in a systematic manner, which is especially helpful for quantitative research projects. This research project is about to evaluate awareness of digital marketing techniques among the orthodontists. Questionnaire study provides accessibility, affordability, and the capacity to contact a large and varied population, allowing for the effective collection of thorough insights. The responses from maximum targeted population give reliable study result through this research type. However, it is important to recognize issues including low response rates, possible bias from non-response, and limitations in guaranteeing respondent representativeness. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the questionnaire methodology is nevertheless useful since it offers a methodical way to obtain information and enhance knowledge across a range of disciplines.

**Keywords:** Digital marketing, Awareness, orthodontists.

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## INTRODUCTION:

The emergence of social media has radically altered how individuals communicate via social media<sup>1</sup>. Social media refers to online tools and methods that individuals use to exchange ideas, viewpoints, and experiences. Digital and social media networks were first developed for personal use, but companies of all sizes increasingly successfully use them to advertise their goods and services and interact with both present and potential customers. Social media marketing is an engaging, economical, and more effective way to promote goods and services than traditional advertising, especially as more people are

spending time online. Social media is a key strategy in dental marketing, and the health care industry is currently reaping the benefits of digital marketing. Reaching hundreds of prospective new patients who are looking for a practitioner's knowledge and services can be done affordably using social media marketing.

## AIM:

To Evaluate Awareness Among Orthodontists regarding Digital Marketing Strategies and interrelationship between social and digital media used in orthodontic practice.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD:

To assess the several facets of practice marketing, usage, and preferences of social and digital media, a Google Form was developed. Google Forms' questionnaire of a maximum sample size of more than will be circulated among Practicing Orthodontists, Academicians, Consultants, and other practitioners, and 150 responses were collected from various demographic areas in India.

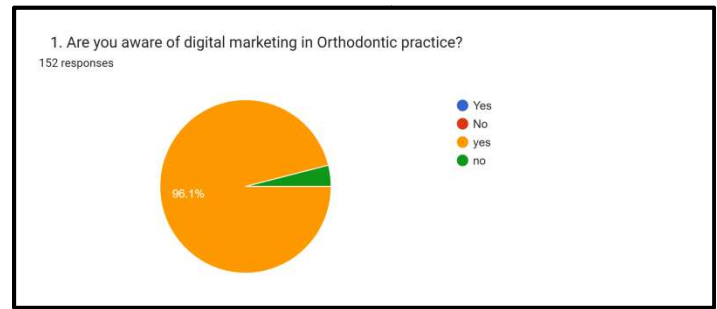
A description of social media and digital media, as well as numerous examples of social media websites, were included in the survey. All participants' demographic data was collected, and the survey included questions on their usage patterns and opinions of social media use in orthodontic practices. Questionnaire was made to assess the awareness, knowledge and need of the social media and digital marketing required in orthodontic practice. Participants were orthodontists who had more than 2 years of clinical experience after post-graduation. An e-mail was sent out to all orthodontists who were registered with Indian Orthodontic Society also online messages were forwarded to collect responses, so that participants could take the survey at any convenient time.

## DATA COLLECTION:

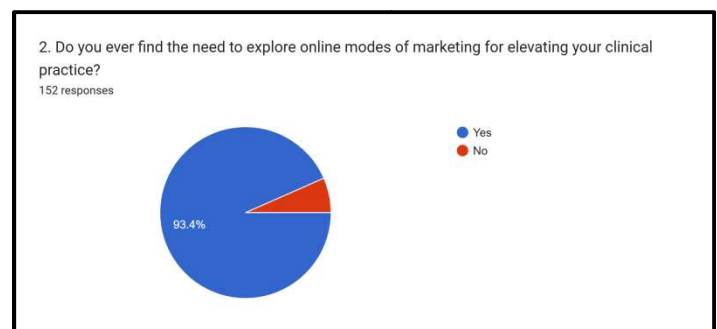
In order to gather data, questionnaire was issued to all India Orthodontic WhatsApp groups, and through their emails those who were in close proximity and orthodontists were asked to complete it.

## RESULTS:

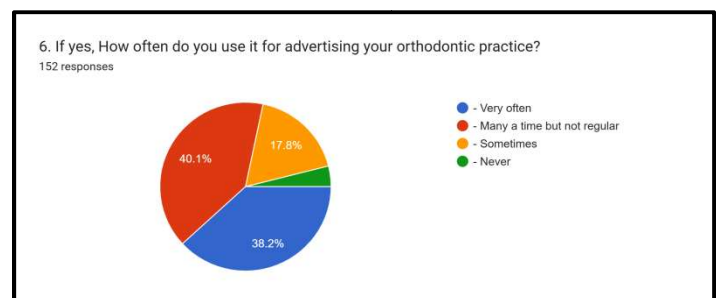
A total of 250 orthodontists from private practices and academics were given their responses to survey. Results from the Orthodontists' survey showed that 96 % orthodontists are aware about the digital media driven orthodontic practice (Graph.1). 93.4 % participants found online modes of marketing needful (Graph.2). About 54% participants have their own website and almost 96% have their social media page for their practice promotion. Out of these participants



**Graph. 1: Depicts awareness of orthodontists regarding digital**

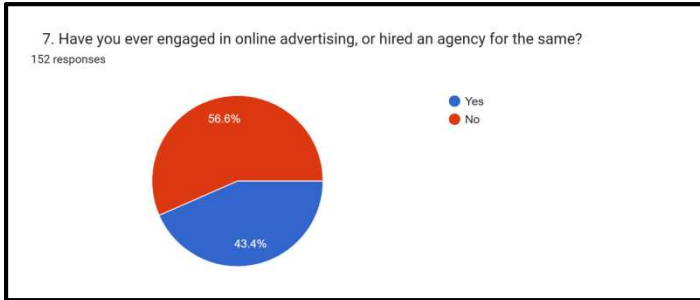


**Chart 2. Need to explore online modes of Marketing**

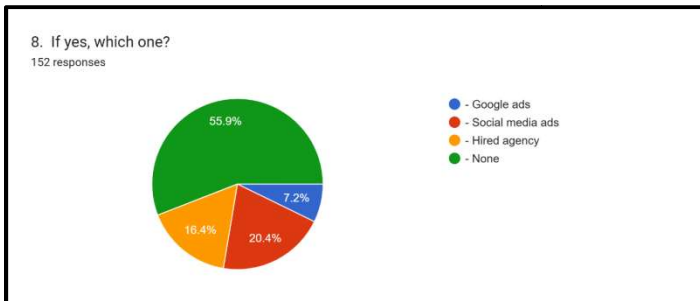


**Chart. 3 Depicts Frequency of Social Media Usage for Marketing Purpose**

Orthodontic practitioners give thought towards online advertising either through hired agencies or other Medias. Around 43% participants engaged in online advertising and hired agency for the same (Chart 4). Different Medias like Google ads, social media ads and other hired agencies were used by the participants in the study in the given percentage shown in chart 5.

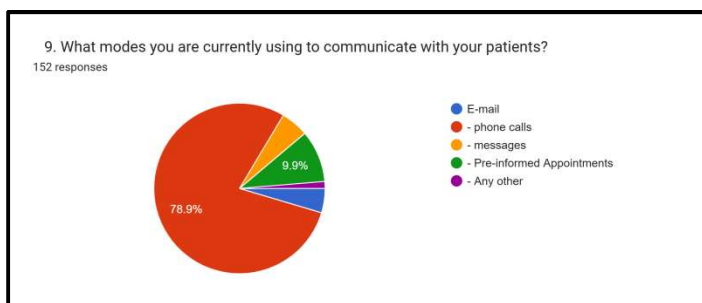


**Chart 4. Percentage of participants involved in online advertising for marketing orthodontic practice**



**Chart 5. Participants involved in different online advertising**

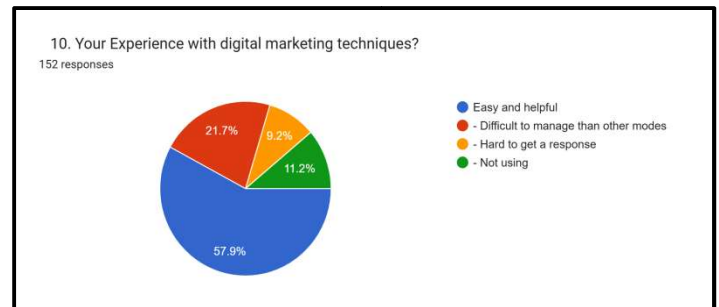
When a survey question asked about modes participants currently using to communicate their patients it shows majority of participants rely on phone calls to communicate with patients, even if every patient now a day's uses social media then also phone calls is the preferred mode of communication for the practitioner(Chart 6)



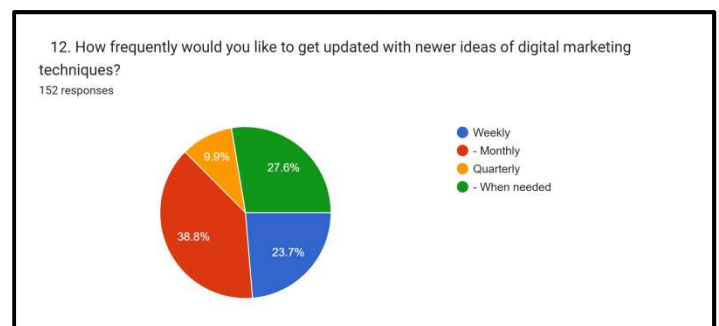
**Chart 6. Modes of communication between practitioners**

Digital marketing now a day's sets newer trends day by day, on assessing the experience of practitioners/participants regarding digital marketing techniques shows the response depicted in Pie chart 7. At the start, reference of digital marketing tools noticed by the users through various sources like through mouth referral, any advertisement or any webinars or from any articles or news (Chart. 7) The source of reference is important to assess that which mode is popular amongst the practitioners and from where they get the information of the digital marketing tools useful in clinical practice propagation.

Practitioners who referred to digital marketing majority of them found it easy and helpful. Frequency of the practitioners to get updated with digital marketing ideas depicts in chart

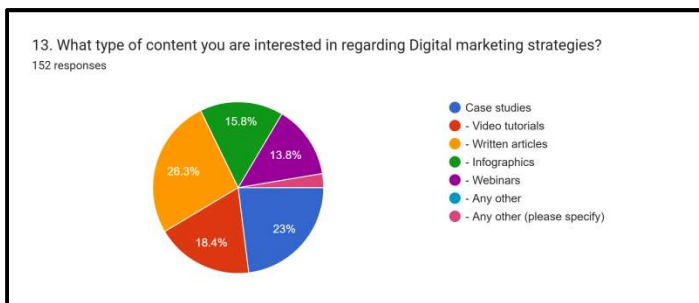


**Chart 7. Experience with digital marketing techniques**

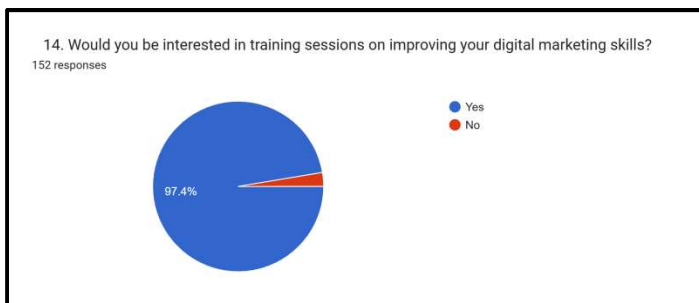


**Chart 8. Participants wanted to get updated with Newer Ideas**

Contents required to update any clinical practice involves different case studies, visual infographics, written articles or any webinars, participants preferred different sources according to their convenience (Chart 9), also the participants who are seeing digital marketing tools are interested in training session to evolve the practice promotion(Chart 10). There are various courses available on internet to improve digital marketing strategies, those who have referred it found significant improvement in promotional strategy.



**Chart 9. Content to Propagate Through Digital Marketing.**



**Chart 10. Participants interested in training session on improving digital marketing strategies**

## DISCUSSION:

Numerous studies have documented the substantial effect that digital media has played in health care in recent years. In dentistry, digital marketing is simply the technique of using the internet and other digital communication channels to reach new patients. As is

well known, orthodontists and dentists have made great use of digital marketing to improve their clinical practices. The results of our study suggest that 93.4% of the orthodontists use digital marketing to promote practice.

The present survey highlights a high level of awareness among orthodontists regarding digital media-driven orthodontic practice, with 96% of participants acknowledging its relevance. This finding reflects the growing penetration of digital technology in healthcare marketing and indicates that orthodontists, both in private practice and academia, recognize the importance of an online presence in the modern era. Similar trends have been reported in contemporary dental literature, emphasizing digital platforms as essential tools for patient education, engagement, and practice growth.

A substantial proportion of respondents (93.4%) considered online marketing modes to be necessary, underscoring a positive attitude toward digital marketing strategies. This suggests that orthodontists perceive digital media not merely as an optional adjunct but as an integral component of practice management. The increasing dependence of patients on online sources for healthcare information, clinic selection, and appointment scheduling may explain this strong inclination toward digital platforms.

Despite this high level of awareness and perceived need, a noticeable gap exists between acceptance and consistent utilization. While approximately 54% of participants reported having their own website and nearly 96% maintained at least one social media page for practice promotion, only 38% used digital media regularly for marketing purposes. This discrepancy may be attributed to several barriers, including lack of time, insufficient technical expertise, concerns regarding professionalism and ethical boundaries, or uncertainty about return on investment.

The preference for occasional use of social media by the majority of participants further supports this observation. Social media platforms appear to be the most accessible and widely adopted digital tools; however, their use is often intermittent rather than strategic or sustained. Irregular engagement may limit the potential benefits of digital marketing, such as consistent brand visibility, patient trust-building, and long-term practice growth.

Overall, the findings indicate that while orthodontists demonstrate strong awareness and favorable attitudes toward digital marketing, there is a need to bridge the gap between knowledge and effective implementation. Structured training programs, professional guidelines, and evidence-based strategies for ethical and efficient digital marketing could help orthodontists maximize the benefits of digital media and translate awareness into regular, impactful practice promotion.

### CONCLUSION:

Digital and social media were used by the majority of orthodontists, patients, and parents. In an orthodontic office, this could be a useful marketing and communication tool to increase patient traffic. According to orthodontists, patients come to them because of their online notoriety. They use their own website, which is accessible on Google, to advertise their profession. Photos of patients and the clinic are frequently posted on social media, with Facebook and WhatsApp being the most popular platforms. Based on their online popularity, orthodontists estimate that 15–20% of people frequent them.

Regarding the standpoint of the patient, people select orthodontists based on their online popularity, with Google searches being the most popular. They evaluate orthodontists on social media, with Instagram being the most preferred platform, followed by Facebook and WhatsApp groups. Patients of all ages saw a dentist primarily through word-of-mouth recommendations and only when an issue emerged. When selecting an orthodontist, the cost of treatment is also very important because they

are knowledgeable about the many types of braces and how much they cost. Facebook and Instagram were the social media platforms where the biggest differences between orthodontists and patients/parents were discovered. The majority of orthodontic practices are missing this opportunity, which might be used as a marketing tool for both existing and future patients.

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