

Chapter 5

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DENTAL EDUCATION

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Using any social media tool is one of the most popular online activities. According to the digital global 2020 data, more than 4.5 billion people use the internet, and 3.83 billion people worldwide use social media. Almost 60 percent of the world's population is already online, and nearly half of the world's population will use social media by the middle of this year [1]. Today, people use social media not only for communicating but also for a variety of purposes. According to thoughtfullarning.com, we can summarize these varieties of purposes under the four categories as follows: sharing, such as publishing the ideas in writing, pictures, or video; learning, such as breaking news worldwide or specific knowledge; interacting, such as talking with friends face-to-face worldwide through video technology; marketing, such as nonprofit organizations' fundraising events using the internet. Thus, it is not surprising that social media is a part of people's life.

What is Social Media?

Ventola defined social media as a collection of Internet-based tools that build a platform for individuals and populations to gather and communicate, enabling easy sharing of information, ideas, messages, and images and collaborating in real-time [2]. After the invention of the World Wide Web in 1989, access the information has dramatically changed. The authors of the study indicated that the internet's initial launch could be classified as

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networking, education, patient care, and public health programs [19]. Also, using social media platforms have some advantages, such as improving their clinical knowledge, improving their professional networking, improving marketing efforts, and overcoming professional isolation [20]. On the other hand, there are some limitations, such as poor-quality information, patient privacy concern, doctor-patient relationship boundary issues [19], lack of policy regarding the use of social media, and ethical/legal problems. However, faculty members and other professionals should overcome the limitation of using social media, and they should place on the social media platforms in their teaching process much more. Besides, dental school faculties should consider specially address the use of social media in their faculty policy.

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