

USEFULNESS OF LATEST SOCIAL MEDIA IN VETERINARY FIELD AS FELT BY VETERINARIANS

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ABSTRACT

Veterinarians play a vital role in rural sector by not only treating and curing the diseases, but by acting as opinion leaders for livestock farming community. To enable the livestock farmers for adopting the latest technology, veterinarians need to have proper dissemination tools like latest social media. 2-3 veterinarians were chosen randomly from each district of Gujarat state thus constituting a sample size of 70. Usefulness of latest social media was measured under three categories i.e. communication aspect, usefulness aspect and knowledge aspect. Major findings of the study were slight less than half (44.29 %) of the respondents belonged to middle age and three fifth (60.00 %) of them were graduates of Veterinary Science, while slight less than two fifth (37.15 %) of them had high to very high experience in the veterinary field. 48.56 per cent veterinarians belonged to Government and slightly less than half (44.28 %) of them had medium annual income between Rs. 5 and 10 lakh. Most of the respondents were using the WhatsApp, Google+ and Facebook daily. Frequency of using YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn were observed less, as most of them were not using these for professional use. The main usefulness of latest social media as felt by respondents was a more users friendly (1st rank). It was also felt that latest social media is useful to take help for emergency cases (2nd rank), latest social media makes communication speedy and easy (3rd rank) and virtual groups on latest social media are one of the standard sources for information (4th group).

Keywords: usefulness of latest social media, veterinary field, veterinarians

INTRODUCTION

Veterinary is a vast field which includes prevention, control and curing of animal diseases and farming management. Veterinarians play a vital role at rural level, by not only treating and curing the diseases, but they act as an opinion leaders for livestock farming community. To enable the farmers for adopting the latest technology, veterinarians need to have proper dissemination tools like latest social media. This study reflects the usefulness of the latest social media in the veterinary field.

Social media means websites and applications that enable users to create and share contents or to participate in social networking. Social media has essentially broken down the barriers that busy veterinary practices once faced and provided a convenient means to connect with farmers/customers and prospects. Not only that they are able to interact with people on a professional level, but they can now reach them on a more personal and emotional level as well. They can communicate directly with farmers, ask them for feedback, and provide them with valuable online resources for their needs. Most importantly, veterinarian can show existing clients and interested prospects that they are there for them, that are listening, and that they truly care. These positive interactions foster good will, which is an essential

part of keeping our farmers happy and attracting new ones at the same time.

Latest social media provides the modern veterinary practice with the tools necessary to solidify the brand and forge those lasting relationships that are so important in successful practices. Our clients/farmers/animal owners and prospects are using social media, and they are waiting for us to join the conversation.

The main advantages of them are: Cut steps in the diffusion process, save time, money and effort, Instant international reach and Continuous availability. Increasingly, veterinarians are using digital networking as part of their standard portfolio of communication tools. The current top six latest social media platforms, along with their unique advantages, are:

- **WhatsApp**

It is very popular and latest social media used across the world. It enables everyone to share pictures, videos, audios, documents, etc. It also enables to communicate with others via audio/video calling.

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- **Google+**

Google+ allows us to share pictures, links, and videos, and connects us to Google's powerful search engine platform. Cross-posting to Google+ from Facebook or Twitter can dramatically increase our marketing reach.

- **Facebook**

Powerful and inexpensive, Facebook can help us directly interact with persons and potential clients while simultaneously spreading the word about animal care and services.

- **YouTube**

This popular online venue allows us to interact with clients through instructional videos, tutorials, and a video tour of clinic. Farmers love to see the demonstration of new techniques through video and this platform allows veterinarians to educate farmers/clients on animal husbandry topics with authenticity.

- **Twitter**

With its sizable online community, Twitter helps us communicate directly with our farmers and professional personnel in real time and allows us to react quickly to clients' questions and needs. It allows for instant updates on promotions and initiatives, blog entries, and other news of our practice.

- **LinkedIn:** For a more sophisticated social media

approach, LinkedIn exposes our useful awareness regarding animal diseases, prevention and control. This business-to-consumer networking site increases our referrals, generates testimonials, and drives potential farmers/clients to our network.

There is dearth of information on use of latest social media in veterinary field by veterinarians of different profile. Hence, this study was planned and executed in Gujarat.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Gujarat state and restricted to veterinarians (i.e., those respondents were considered who engaged in veterinary field). 2-3 veterinarians were chosen randomly from each district of Gujarat state thus constituting a sample size of 70. The respondents were interviewed personally and some of respondent had given their response through e-mail. Ex-post facto research design has been used to ascertain the usefulness of latest social media. Schedule for profile statements regarding usefulness of latest social media was constructed with the help of experts of animal science and extension personnel. In this study limited personal characteristics was chosen. Total 17 statements were selected out of suggested 26 statements. Different statements were merged as per categories like communication aspect, usefulness aspect and knowledge aspect. Against each of 17 statements, there were three column's representing a three point (1 to 3) continuum of more usefulness to less usefulness. After calculating the total score and mean score of each statement, the rank value was assigned.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Personal characteristics of selected veterinarians

n=70

Sr. No.	Attributes	Classification	Frequency	Per cent
1	Age	Young (Up to 35 years)	27	38.57
		Middle (35 to 50 years)	31	44.29
		Old (Above 50 years)	12	17.14
2	Education	Graduate, B. V. Sc. & A. H.	42	60.00
		M. V. Sc.	21	30.00
		Ph.D. in Veterinary/ Animal Science	07	10.00
3	Experience in Veterinary field	Low (Up to 5 years)	18	25.71
		Medium (6 to 10 years)	26	37.14
		High (11 to 15 years)	15	21.43
		Very high (Above 15 years)	11	15.72
4	Occupation	Veterinary Officer-Milk Coop. Union	23	32.86
		Veterinary Officer-Govt.	34	48.56
		Veterinary Officer-N.G.O.	09	12.87
		Veterinary Officer-Private Practitioner	04	05.71
5	Annual income	Low (Up to ₹ 5,00, 000)	08	11.43
		Medium (₹ 5,00, 001 to 10,00, 000)	31	44.29
		High (₹ 10,00, 001 to 15,00,000)	17	24.29
		Very high (above ₹ 15,00,000)	14	20.00

Table 1 shows the personal characteristics of veterinarians. It indicated that more than two fifth (44.29 %) of the respondents belonged to middle age and slight less than two fifth (38.57 %) of respondents belonged to the young age group, followed by old age with 17.14 %. Three fifth (60.00 %) of them were graduates of Veterinary Science while 30.00 per cent of them were Masters of Veterinary Science. Only 10.00 % respondents were PhD in Veterinary Science. Slight less than two fifth (37.14 %) of them had medium experience (6 to 10 years) in the veterinary field, while 25.71, 21.43 and

15.72 % of them had low (up to 5 years), high (11 to 15 years) and very high (Above 15 years) experience in veterinary field. Slightly less than half (48.56 %) of them were Government Veterinary Officers, while 32.86, 12.87 and 05.71 % of them belonged to Milk Cooperative Unions, NGOs and private practitioners. More than two fifth (44.29 %) of them had medium annual income between Rs. 5 to 10 lakh, followed by 24.29, 20.00 and 11.43 % with high (₹ 10 to 15 lakh), very high (above ₹ 15 lakh), and low (up to ₹ 5 lakh) annual income, respectively.

Table 2: Veterinarians according to their frequency of using latest social media

n=70

S.No.	Social media	Daily	Weekly	Periodically	Monthly	Bimonthly	Biannually	Annually	Never
1	WhatsApp	88.57	10.00	01.43	-	-	-	-	-
2	Google+	62.86	08.57	02.86	10.00	05.71	02.86	07.14	-
3	Facebook	52.86	11.43	20.00	10.00	-	05.71	-	-
4	YouTube	38.57	17.14	08.57	21.43	-	05.71	08.57	-
5	Twitter	18.58	27.14	05.72	-	-	02.85	14.28	31.43
6	LinkedIn	10.00	07.14	11.43	22.86	04.28	08.57	12.86	22.86

Table 2 reflects respondent's frequency of using latest social media. From above table it can be concluded that most of the respondents were using the WhatsApp, Google+ and

Facebook daily. Frequency of using YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn were observed less, as most of them were not using these for professional use.

Table 3: Usefulness of the latest social media in veterinary field

n=70

Sr. No.	Statements regarding usefulness of the latest social media in veterinary field	Mean score	Rank
A	Communication aspect		
1	Latest social media make communication speedy and easy	2.59	3 rd
2	Latest social media help in quick and timely decision making	2.41	7 th
3	Latest social media are good for interaction with colleagues, scientists and farmers/ animal owners for getting information and feedback	2.30	10 th
4	Farmers /neighbours seek the information regarding veterinary field from veterinary doctors through social media	2.20	12 th
5	Latest social media are least cost communication media for animal owners	1.86	15 th
6	Latest social media are not important means for communication in veterinary field	1.39	17 th
B	Usefulness aspect		
7	Latest social media are more users friendly	2.76	1 st
8	I felt that latest social media are useful to take help for emergency cases	2.64	2 nd
9	I found new scope of treatment within veterinary sector through latest social media	2.34	9 th
C	Knowledge aspect		
10	Virtual groups on latest social media are one of the standard sources for information	2.51	4 th
11	I believe that, my knowledge has increased in veterinary field by using latest social media	2.46	5 th
12	I noticed that my technical skills have increased by using latest social media	2.46	6 th
13	I am more dependent on latest social media for retrieving the latest knowledge	2.36	8 th
14	I came to know about new and effective drug through latest social media which was not known to me	2.22	11 th
15	Latest social media are very useful for up-gradation of knowledge	2.07	13 th
16	I came to know about new method of treatment through latest social media	2.06	14 th
17	I avoid using the latest social media, as it is not standard medium for getting proper information	1.54	16 th

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Data presented in Table 3 shows the usefulness of the latest social media in veterinary field. It is divided in main three aspects. The findings revealed that, importance felt by respondents regarding communication aspect of latest social media were: latest social media make communication speedy and easy (3rd rank), latest social media help in quick and timely decision making (7th rank), latest social media are good for interaction with colleagues, scientists and farmers/ animal owners for getting information and feedback (10th rank), Farmers /neighbours seek the information regarding veterinary field from veterinary doctors through social media (12th rank), latest social media are least cost communication media for animal owners (15th rank) and latest social media are not important means for communication in veterinary field (17th rank).

Importance felt by respondents regarding usefulness aspect of latest social media were, latest social media are more users friendly (1st rank), and useful to take help for emergency cases (2nd rank) and they found new scope of treatment within veterinary sector through latest social media (9th rank).

Importance felt by respondents regarding knowledge aspect of latest social media were: virtual groups on latest social media are one of the standard sources for information (4th rank), knowledge is increased in veterinary field by using latest social media (5th rank), increased technical skills by using latest social media (6th rank), more dependent on latest social media for retrieving the latest knowledge (8th rank), knew about new and effective drug through latest social media which was unknown to me (11th rank), latest social media are very useful for up-gradation of knowledge (13th rank), came to know about new method of treatment through latest social media (14th rank). I avoid using the latest social media, as it is not standard medium for getting proper information (16th rank).

CONCLUSION

Most of the veterinarians are using the WhatsApp, Google+ and Facebook daily. Frequency of using YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn were observed less. This study reflect that latest social media is the most useful tool for communication with farmers and professional personnel, retrieving the latest knowledge and are the most user friendly as felt by veterinarians who are engaged in the field. Veterinarians are more dependent on the latest social media for getting new information in field, feedback from farmers and dissemination of the technology to the farmers.

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