Investigating the Factors Affecting an Older Adult's Dental Care Provider Choice

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Healthcare related information are primarily in the form of:
- Public reports: Official data provided by federal agencies.
- Anecdotal comments: Information provided by other users.
- Official data provided by federal agencies.
- Experimental Design:
  - Independent Variables (IV):
    - Overall rating:
    - Staff rating: high or low rating
    - Cleanliness rating: high or low rating
    - Bedside manner: high or low rating
  - Dependent Variables (DV):
    - Trust in the information provided
    - Likelihood of choosing the dentist
    - Confidence in the decision
    - Ranking of the decision aids

With the increase and ease of access of internet-based resources, healthcare seekers can use different online platforms to make healthcare related decisions. However, online reviews are limited as they are anecdotal in nature & may not be as trustworthy as public reports which are more extensive and representative of the population. Consumers consider anecdotal comments more convincing than public reports since they are primarily narratives of patient experiences while the public reports focus on statistical summaries of information and technical jargons (Huppertz & Carlson, 2010).

Anecdotal comments:

Public reports:

Experimental Design:

The order of the conditions was randomized 3*2*2*2 within subject experimental design

IBM SPSS Statistics 24 was used to analyze the data.

Four-way repeated measures ANOVA with 95% confidence level was used to test the effect of the IVs on the DVs.

Statistically significant four-way interaction between the IVs and the level of trust in the information, F(1.79, 554.37) = 9.05, p < 0.001, and the likelihood of choosing the dentist, F(2, 618) = 49.47, p < 0.001.

Statistically significant three way interaction between nature of the review, the bedside manner and cleanliness rating on confidence in the decision, F(2, 618) = 9.03, p < 0.001.

Results

- Conclusion:
  - Contradictory information including low ratings but a positive review resulted in a loss of trust in the information and a lack of confidence in their decision.
  - When the participants were provided with a stimulus involving two or more variables with low ratings, they trusted the negative review slightly more than the positive review and the no review conditions.
  - As the ratings declined from high to low, the participants were less likely to choose the dentist. This supports previous research showing that a user is less likely to choose a product with low ratings than with high ratings (Metzger & Flanagin, 2010).
  - Participants were more likely to choose the dentist with positive reviews but low ratings than one with negative reviews but high ratings, suggesting that the nature of the review was an influential factor in their final decision, as can also be seen from the ranking question.
  - One potential reason for this finding is that the reviews provided qualitative information supplementing the more quantitative information from the ratings.
  - Staff rating was ranked as the least influential factor, perhaps because the users recognized the lack of the need for significant interactions with the staff members in order to be treated.
  - When at least one of the ratings was low, they had a higher confidence in their decision not to use the dentist when the review was negative. This finding suggests that the people are more confident in basing their decision on the negative review than a positive one when the ratings are inconsistent. In other words, they are more confident about rejecting than accepting the dentist in this situation.
  - Overall, we conclude that in addition, to reviews, decision aids such as bedside manner and cleanliness ratings are vital cues that aid in the end user’s decision-making process.

Discussion

- Future Work:
  - Future studies will focus on understanding the workload demands, along with the use of multiple reviews in the study.
  - This type of investigation could potentially provide additional information that would help in developing effective information presentation strategies for optimum decision making.

References