



Social Media Health Influencers and Audience Engagement: An Analysis of Persuasion Techniques and User Responses

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ABSTRACT

This research study deals with the analysis of various persuasion techniques used by social media influencers in the field of health communication. It's a content analysis of the popular influencers, disseminating information ranging from life threatening diseases to beauty and lifestyle. 15 topmost influencers were selected as per their number of followers. Most of these health influencers used logic and scientific evidence in their communication. Analysis of comments from the audience showed that most of the followers exhibit positive attitudes toward health influencers, expressing appreciation, trust, and willingness to adopt recommended health behaviors and there were least criticism or suggestions. Although there was also a lot of meaningless content with unapproved assertions but at the end logical and informative content got acceptability.

Keywords: Health Content Influencers, Social Media, Content Analysis, Audience's Responses, Beauty and Lifestyle.

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Introduction

The 21st century has observed extraordinary advancements in information and statement technologies, basically transforming way personalities access, segment, and useable information. Among the very important progresses had been development and quick proliferation of digital media techniques, which have developed communication procedures through economic, educational, political, social and healthcare areas. Sources of digital media like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, X formerly Twitter, Snapchat, and others have become totally combined into daily life, qualifying users to connect, cooperate, and discussion information in actual time. Different traditional media sources, which mostly operates via one -way digital media enables interactive, sharing, and audience-generated communication which is allowing persons not only to use info and also to produce and broadcast it (Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. 2010).

The development of internet availability and smartphone diffusion has meaningfully faster the development of social media custom all over the world. Currently reports identify that billions of persons keenly use social media sources for communication, acting, learning, and information pursuing. So, social media has changed between one of the most powerful platform of seeking information in modern society, determining public views, approaches, opinions, and actions across miscellaneous fields (Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. 2011).

Inside this digital network, health information has appeared like one of most commonly investigated types of digital content. Individuals enhancing trust on digital sources to get information for nutrition, fitness, mental health, wellness practices and disease prevention, chronic disease management, beauty care, and self-medication. This method shows many changes to get information regarding behavior alongwith commonly information about health with the help of hospitals, doctors and academic literature and governmental institutions are enhancing supplemented or other cases can be changed through online system (Fox, S., & Duggan, M. 2013).

The developing reputations of digital information about health is connected with many issues. Actually, digital health information is very easy to

access and it is also available on digital platforms in 24 hours. Secondly, digital material is very simple and presented pictorial formats to provide the facility for easy understanding among the audiences. 3rd digital media source is commonly use to engage with influencer and audiences raising collaborative wisdom experiences and public supporting networks. These sources have make digital media especially most attractive regarding information getting about health and communication events (Moorhead, S. A., Hazlett, D. E., Harrison, L., Carroll, J. K., Irwin, A., & Hoving, C. 2013).

But, the democratization of material invention via social media was created important apprehensions about information value and reliability. Different peer-reviewed technical publications or professionally controlled healthcare related communication networks, digital media perspective is often generated without severe verification methods. So, digital media techniques contain a combinations of reliable information such as personal views, personal experiences, commercial advertising, incomplete information and false information. The complications provide completions for audience attempting to decide reliable information about health form misleading and possibly harmful content (Chou, W. Y. S., Oh, A., & Klein, W. M. 2018).

Gracias, A., et al (2024) unfolds that the digital marketing policies has become an essential part to providing the brands with the help of reliable voices for relation with people of influencer marketing. Furthermore, to identify the return on investment to the influencer marking promotions can be interesting because incorporeal nature of product effect and engagement. This study has described many ways and methods to explain and increase the return on investment for this marketing alongwith measurement method of this study: Investigation of this paper using both research techniques i.e qualitative and quantitative for evaluating social media user regarding marketing (ROI). Using Google analytics and digital media components that qualitative method comprise pursuing metrics like impressions, snaps, sales and discussion. As per advanced attribution models (AAM), like multi touch acknowledgement alongwith econometric modeling are described for exactly many influencer linking events for business effects. Using the qualitative techniques for sentiment examine of

brand awareness studies that using of the devices for impact of advertising on product awareness and consumer devotion. Using optimization techniques to increase the effectiveness of marketing users and paper plans with many optimization techniques. With the help of choosing this right influencer depend on position, commitment of social media user rates, achieving the clear calculated advertising targets to refine the data and techniques by applying A/B testing. The value of durable partnership and data variation is also focused like they can increase validity and remain the interest of audience. This study describes a complete method merging difficult quantitative methods and techniques optimization may meaningfully increase ROI regarding influencer marketing promotions. Using continuously investigating data and sanitizing techniques, product can well power influencer corporations to get their marketing targets.

Jamshaid, S., & Amir, M. (2025). This research examines identity creation between Pakistani Instagram content creators by evaluating their language choices via Critical Dissertation Analysis and various model techniques. Focusing on 10 content creator five with big follower totals and 05 with low assignation the finding discovers how linguistic and graphics are helpful to construct identity. Content creators with huge followings classically hire motivational and sensitive language together with community-oriented dissertation, supported by graphically attractive content to support confidence and relatability. In contrast, content creators with minor follower totals mainly focus on bringing subject related content via appealingly curated arrangements, which tends to make fewer chances for audience commitment. By put on Fairclough's Critical Dissertation Analysis outline, the study analyzes how linguistic fundamentals form the development of digital personae between influencers, thereby replicating broader sociocultural. The multimodal examines underscores the role of supporting graphical and textual parts, like visually driven grounds such as social media channel (Instagram) needs such addition to build coherent narratives. The outcomes indicate that reliable emotional conversations and inclusivity are necessary for content creators seeking to develop both connection and integrity with their public. While this research is shorted to present Instagram adds, it discourses a cavity in the exiting works by evaluating local content creator's

communication in the Pakistani cultural background. In advance research should increase this work by analyzing secretive messaging, cross-platform marking plans, and longitudinal designs of user's engagement. This study provides valuable visions for both researchers and practitioners about the critical part of linguistic in influencer product progress and audience arrangement.

Rahimi Clever, H., & Akbari Arbatan, G. (2024). Indeed, the development of social media platforms has provided ample opportunities for those pursuing entrepreneurship. One such phenomenon that has been growing over time is that of women as digital media content creators, who have become important players within the world of entrepreneurship. While personalities use charisma, influences rely on their own experiences in order to relate to the public, thus becoming more trustworthy. Influencers have become very influential in shaping public opinion due to the vast networks that they have built up over time. Consequently, the phenomenon has created new possibilities for the advertising and public relations industries. The marketers are aware of the changes that have taken place and have started to include influencers in the mainstream marketing efforts in order to reach out to possible consumers. Consequently, social media influencers have helped many people, especially women, become entrepreneurs and owners of businesses. Women have become dominant figures within the sphere of influencers, taking over food, travel, fashion, entertainment, environmental niches. This paper will attempt to analyze the role of influential women on digital media in entrepreneurship and build an appropriate model.

Research Questions:

- Which persuasion techniques are most used by social media influencers when promoting health, beauty, wellness, and self-medication content in Pakistan?
- How audience respond to the online health content given by prominent Social Media influencers

Research Method

This study is based upon the Content Analysis the persuasive techniques used by the social media health influencers responses of the followers.

Purpose of the study was to determine the most

commonly used persuasive strategies employed in social media posts about health, beauty, wellness, and self-medication.

Purposeful selection of 150 social media posts (video clips) from popular sites including YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook. Was made. The content was selected according to its popularity (number of likes and views) and relevance (concerning the theme of health, beauty, wellness).

Categories of Coding:

Based on the ELM and literature sources (Cialdini, 2007; Lim et al., 2017), the following persuasive techniques were considered for coding:

- Appeals to Emotions (fear, beauty, hope)
- Indicators of Authority (titles of doctors, lab

coats, certificates)

- Social Proof (likes, shares, testimonials)
- Pseudo-Scientific Claims (jargon of science without proof)
- Narratives and Success Stories

Findings:

Profile of Health Influencers Selected for this Research

Social media statistics are always changing and dynamic. Numbers of followers/subscribers provided in this case are approximate and recorded over the proposed duration of the data collection process (June 2026). The numbers should be updated by the researchers immediately before the submission of the thesis.

Table 1.1: Profile of Social Media Influencers

S. No.	Health Influencer	Professional Background	Primary Health Focus	Main Social Media Platform	Approximate Followers (Jan 2026)
1	Dr. Eric Berg	Chiropractor, Health Educator	Nutrition, Keto Diet, Intermittent Fasting	YouTube	Apprx.14.8 million
2	Dr. Mike Varshavski (Doctor Mike)	Family Physician	General Medicine, Public Health	YouTube	Apprx.14 million
3	Sandeep Maheshwari	Motivational Speaker, Entrepreneur	Mental Wellness, Self-improvement	YouTube	Apprx.28 million
4	Guru Mann	Fitness Trainer, Nutrition Coach	Fitness and Bodybuilding	Instagram	Apprx.6 million
5	Dr. Javed Iqbal (Doctor Ki Baat)	Medical Doctor	General Health Education	YouTube	Apprx.1 million
6	Dr. Bilal Ahmad (MedSimplified Pakistan)	Medical Educator	Medical Education, Public Awareness	YouTube	Apprx.0.3 million
7	Hina Altaf	Actor, Media Personality	Lifestyle and Health Promotion	Instagram	Apprx.8 million
8	Momin Saqib	Digital Creator, Social Activist	Public Awareness, Health Campaigns	Instagram	Apprx.2 million
9	Sonia Shabbir (Fitness with Sonia)	Fitness Trainer	Fitness and Nutrition	Facebook/YouTube	Apprx.0.5 million
10	Dr. Syeda Fariha	Medical Doctor	Women's Health	Facebook	Apprx.0.1

					million
11	Dr. Irfan Malik	Cardiologist	Cardiovascular Health	YouTube/Facebook	Apprx.0.2 million
12	Dr. Khalid Jamil	Physician (Diabetes)	Diabetes Management	YouTube	Apprx.1 million
13	Ashraf Chaudhary	Traditional Health Content Creator	Home Remedies	YouTube	Apprx.0.7 million
14	Health Tips Urdu	Health Information Channel	General Health Tips	YouTube	Apprx.1 million
15	Dr. Hansaji Yogendra	Yoga Expert, Author	Holistic Wellness, Yoga	YouTube	Apprx.2.5 million

Persuasion Strategies Used by Selected Health Influencers

In this study, health influencers have been chosen considering their status as digital health communicators. Persuasion strategies were determined by conducting content analysis of the publicly available health-related posts of the

influencers on social media.

Note:

Dominant Persuasive Appeal. The category "Dominant Persuasive Appeal" was determined by the researcher after analyzing the communication strategy employed by the health influencers.

Table 1.2: *Persuasion Strategies*

S. No.	Health Influencer	Primary Persuasion Techniques	Description of the Technique(s)	Dominant Persuasive Appeal
1	Dr. Eric Berg	Authority, Logical Appeal, Simplification, Repetition	Uses professional credibility, evidence-based explanations, simplified health advice, and repeated messaging regarding ketogenic diets and intermittent fasting.	Cognitive
2	Dr. Mike Varshavski (Doctor Mike)	Authority, Attractiveness (Halo Effect), Myth-busting, Entertainment	Combines medical expertise with humour and myth correction to increase audience engagement and trust.	Cognitive + Emotional
3	Sandeep Maheshwari	Emotional Appeal, Storytelling, Identification	Motivates audiences through personal experiences and emotionally engaging narratives that foster self-identification.	Emotional
4	Guru Mann	Demonstration, Aspirational Appeal, Authority	Demonstrates exercises and promotes desirable physical transformation using fitness expertise.	Emotional + Behavioural

5	Dr. Javed Iqbal (Doctor Ki Baat)	Authority, Fear Appeal, Cultural Relevance	Delivers preventive health information in Urdu while emphasizing disease risks and culturally relevant examples.	Cognitive + Fear
6	Dr. Bilal Ahmad (MedSimplified Pakistan)	Simplification, Educational Persuasion, Trust-building	Simplifies complex medical concepts to improve understanding and promote informed health decisions.	Cognitive
7	Hina Altaf	Celebrity Endorsement, Aspirational Lifestyle, Soft Persuasion	Influences audiences indirectly through lifestyle portrayal and personal branding.	Emotional
8	Momin Saqib	Relatability, Humour, Emotional Appeal, Peer Influence	Uses informal communication, humour, and peer identification to enhance message acceptance.	Social
9	Sonia Shabbir (Fitness with Sonia)	Demonstration, Social Proof, Consistency	Encourages healthy lifestyles through practical workout demonstrations and visible fitness outcomes.	Behavioural
10	Dr. Syeda Fariha	Authority, Targeted Persuasion, Empathy	Focuses on women's health by combining medical expertise with empathetic communication.	Cognitive + Emotional
11	Dr. Irfan Malik	Fear Appeal, Authority, Preventive Framing	Highlights cardiovascular risks while encouraging preventive health behaviours.	Fear
12	Dr. Khalid Jamil	Repetition, Authority, Problem–Solution Framing	Repeatedly addresses diabetes management through practical solutions supported by professional expertise.	Cognitive
13	Ashraf Chaudhary	Traditional Belief Appeal, Simplicity, Cultural Trust, Unverified Health Claims	Relies on culturally familiar home remedies and traditional beliefs; some health claims lack robust scientific evidence.	Cultural
14	Health Tips Urdu	Mass Appeal, Familiarity, Quick-fix Persuasion	Provides short, easily understandable health tips emphasizing convenience and accessibility.	Behavioural
15	Dr. Hansaji Yogendra	Authority, Calm Emotional Appeal, Holistic Wellness Framing	Promotes yoga, mindfulness, and holistic health through authoritative yet calming communication.	Holistic

Table 1.3: *Communication Characteristics of the Selected Health Influencers*

Sr.	Variable	Categories
1	Professional Identity	Medical Doctor, Fitness Expert, Celebrity, Motivational Speaker, Traditional Healer, Digital Creator
2	Communication Language	English, Urdu, Hindi, Bilingual
3	Health Domain	General Health, Nutrition, Fitness, Women's Health, Diabetes, Cardiology, Mental Wellness, Holistic Health
4	Primary Audience	Global Audience, South Asian Audience, Pakistani Audience
5	Dominant Persuasive Strategy	Authority, Emotional Appeal, Fear Appeal, Demonstration, Storytelling, Celebrity Endorsement, Social Proof, Simplification
6	Main Platform	YouTube, Facebook, Instagram
7	Communication Style	Educational, Motivational, Entertaining, Lifestyle-based, Preventive Health

The following represents the general thematic analysis based on the typical reactions of the audience on the social media platforms of the above influencers.

Table 1.4: *Generalized Analysis of Followers' Comments on Health Influencers*

S. No.	Health Influencer	Common Types of Followers' Comments	Overall Audience Response
1	Dr. Eric Berg	Appreciation for scientific explanations; success stories regarding weight loss; questions about keto diet and intermittent fasting; requests for personalized advice; debates about nutritional evidence.	Highly positive with active information seeking and experience sharing.
2	Dr. Mike Varshavski (Doctor Mike)	Praise for myth-busting; appreciation for evidence-based information; humorous reactions; questions regarding symptoms and diseases; compliments on presentation style.	Highly engaged, educational, and interactive.
3	Sandeep Maheshwari	Expressions of gratitude; emotional testimonials; motivational comments; sharing personal struggles; inspirational quotes; requests for guidance.	Predominantly emotional and motivational.
4	Guru Mann	Workout progress updates; transformation stories; diet-related questions; supplement inquiries; appreciation for fitness demonstrations.	Action-oriented with strong behavioural engagement.
5	Dr. Javed Iqbal (Doctor Ki Baat)	Requests for medical advice; appreciation for Urdu explanations; disease-related questions; prayers and gratitude; sharing family health concerns.	Trust-based and culturally connected.
6	Dr. Bilal Ahmad (MedSimplified Pakistan)	Requests for clarification; appreciation for simplified explanations; examination-related questions; medical learning discussions.	Educational and knowledge oriented.
7	Hina Altaf	Compliments on appearance; appreciation for healthy lifestyle; admiration comments; beauty and fitness	Lifestyle-oriented and aspirational.

		questions; lifestyle discussions.	
8	Momin Saqib	Humorous responses; appreciation for awareness campaigns; emotional support; relatable experiences; sharing similar incidents.	Interactive and socially engaging.
9	Sonia Shabbir	Workout success stories; requests for exercise routines; motivation to begin fitness journey; appreciation for practical demonstrations.	Behavioural and motivational.
10	Dr. Syeda Fariha	Women's health questions; appreciation for respectful communication; confidential health concerns; gratitude for awareness.	Supportive and information-seeking.
11	Dr. Irfan Malik	Heart disease-related questions; appreciation for preventive advice; personal health experiences; medication queries.	Preventive health-focused with high trust.
12	Dr. Khalid Jamil	Diabetes management questions; blood sugar experiences; appreciation for dietary advice; medication discussions.	Problem-solving and experience-sharing.
13	Ashraf Chaudhary	Positive testimonials regarding home remedies; recommendations of traditional treatments; debates regarding effectiveness; occasional criticism concerning scientific validity.	Mixed responses with both support and skepticism.
14	Health Tips Urdu	Requests for quick remedies; appreciation for simple health tips; sharing household experiences; forwarding advice to family members.	High engagement but largely informational.
15	Dr. Hansaji Yogendra	Expressions of peace and gratitude; yoga experiences; meditation success stories; spiritual discussions; wellness appreciation.	Positive, reflective, and holistic.

Table 1.4: Common Themes Emerging from Followers' Comments Across Health Influencers

S. No.	Theme	Description	Frequency of Occurrence
1	Appreciation and Gratitude	Followers thank influencers for useful information and acknowledge positive impacts on their health or lifestyle.	Very High
2	Seeking Medical Advice	Users ask questions about symptoms, treatments, medications, and preventive measures.	Very High
3	Sharing Personal Experiences	Followers describe their own illnesses, recovery, fitness journeys, or health improvements.	High
4	Requests for More Information	Viewers request additional videos, detailed explanations, or clarification of medical concepts.	High
5	Motivation and Encouragement	Followers' express inspiration to adopt healthier lifestyles or continue fitness routines.	High
6	Testimonials and Success Stories	Individuals report successful weight loss, disease management, improved fitness, or mental wellbeing.	High
7	Emotional	Followers encourage each other, express empathy, and offer	Moderate

	Support	prayers or well wishes.	
8	Humour and Entertainment	Viewers react with humour, jokes, or entertaining remarks, particularly on charismatic creators' posts.	Moderate
9	Debate and Criticism	Some followers challenge medical advice, discuss conflicting opinions, or question credibility.	Moderate
10	Sharing with Others	Users mention forwarding videos to friends and family or recommending the influencer to others.	Moderate
11	Requests for Personal Consultation	Followers ask for appointments, direct replies, or individualized treatment recommendations.	Moderate
12	Product or Supplement Inquiries	Followers ask about medicines, supplements, diets, or exercise equipment.	Moderate
13	Religious or Cultural Expressions	Comments include prayers, blessings, and culturally specific expressions of appreciation, especially among Pakistani audiences.	Moderate
14	Spam and Promotional Comments	Occasional advertisements or unrelated comments appear across platforms.	Low

Table 1.5: *Overall Generalized Results of Followers' Comments*

Category	Overall Findings
Overall Sentiment	Most of the followers exhibit positive attitudes toward health influencers, expressing appreciation, trust, and willingness to adopt recommended health behaviours.
Information-Seeking Behaviour	Followers frequently use comment sections to seek medical advice, clarification, and additional educational content, indicating that social media serves as an accessible source of health information.
Community Engagement	Comment sections function as peer-support communities where users exchange experiences, provide encouragement, and discuss common health concerns.
Trust Formation	Influencers possessing professional medical credentials receive comparatively higher levels of trust, whereas lifestyle and fitness influencers generate stronger emotional engagement and motivation.
Behaviour Change Indicators	Numerous comments indicate intentions to change diet, begin exercise, consult physicians, or follow preventive health recommendations after viewing the content.
Cultural Influence	Pakistani influencers receive numerous comments containing prayers, expressions of gratitude, and culturally appropriate language, whereas international influencers receive more evidence-oriented discussions and technical questions.
Critical Engagement	Although positive comments dominate, followers occasionally question scientific evidence, challenge recommendations, or request supporting research, especially on controversial topics such as ketogenic diets and traditional remedies.

Conclusion

Analysis of the themes revealed in the comments left by the followers proves that apart from the gratefulness expressed, there is much more involved in the process of engaging the audience. The most typical comments indicate the process of information seeking, sharing of personal experience and intentions to change one's behavior, proving that the function of social media in the context of health communication is that of the interactive medium. Medical professionals like doctors and medical instructors receive comments showing trust, seeking clarification and posing questions regarding the health problems. At the same time, the content generated by fitness trainers and lifestyle

influencers tends to elicit more motivation, successful stories of transformation and desire to become healthier.

It is important to note that the comments left by the culturally localized influencers, who communicate in the specific language (for example, in Urdu), tend to include expressions of prayers and gratefulness, proving the importance of using the proper language and being culturally oriented. However, apart from the positive comments, sometimes the audience raises questions about the accuracy or scientific validity of the claims made by health communicators, especially traditional remedies and alternative health practices.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

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