



Dissemination of Health Content through social media and its Acceptability by the Viewers

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ABSTRACT

Increasing exposure to the different social media applications has led towards more dependency on social media influencers in general and especially on health-related content creators. This survey study is an attempt to investigate the reasons for this blind following and outcome of this faith on health content creators. 384 respondents were approached by researchers to collect the data by using a survey questionnaire. Results of the study show that health content in the form of short videos, especially through Instagram, TikTok and YouTube was given more exposure. Health influencers using logical approaches by giving scientific evidence were more rigorously followed. Another major criterion was the credibility and qualification of the influencer. Overall opinion of social media users was that health influencers are doing positive efforts to give awareness, but a large majority also holds the view that this content is misleading sometimes, probably in the quest of number of subscribers and watch time. Thus, the results indicate that respondents have a fairly balanced attitude towards health influencers and acknowledge their usefulness for health promotion, while also being aware of their possible negative consequences.

Introduction

Health content creators occupy an especially important position in contemporary ecosystems of health communications. With the use of videos, reels, livestreams, blogs and digital online activities, they discuss via messages regarding Physical health, mental well-being, nutrition and exercise, beauty care, alternative medicine for prevention of diseases along with self-care experiences. Their rising content creators has changed health communication from a mainly organizational actions with in highly personalized and socially interacted method. (Byrne, E., Kearney, J., & MacEvilly, C. 2017).

The increase of content creator driven health communication has generated both chances and challenges. In other hand, content creators may be including positively by enhancing the knowledge of health promoting protective attitudes, enhance healthy lifestyles and also spreading educational background. In other words, influencers have been emerged about incomplete information, unauthentic medical prescription, health communication for commercialization, increasing of self-treatment and impracticable health and beauty criteria. (Ventola, C. L. 2014).

The major role of the social media indicated during the diseases period of COVID -19 in the field of health communication. Many people get the information and detailed about the above said diseases with the help of social media and they have to updated themselves for the treatment, medicine of this pandemic during this period.

Concurrently, incomplete information spread quickly through digital systems, generating what the WHO defined as an “infodemic.” As phenomenon confirmed the dominant influence of social media communication on audience health observations and actions. (Zarocostas, J. 2020).

In Pakistan Perspective, different challenges and chances for social media sources which are using for health communication and during the previous period, Pakistan also expert speedy growth in internet saturation, using of smartphone and adoption of the social media network. Digital media techniques highly provide as main sources related to health communication regarding various sections of the public. Given of current differences in field of health care availability, knowledge of health related literature and digital media is a major source to get health related information knowledge. (Hamza, A., Yonghong, D., & Ullah, I. 2025).

At that time, Pakistani digital atmosphere has been faced challenged related with incomplete information, poor knowledge of health, unaware proper health related advice and whole promotion of other medications and self- treatment experiences. These problems underlines are necessary for systematic analysis of how health related knowledge is conveyed and accepted among digital media atmosphere. (Waszak, P. M., Kasprzycka-Waszak, W., & Kubanek, A. 2018).

Digital health communication provides platforms methods online technologies to exchange, disseminate, and describes the information about health related content. It includes a large range of communication related activities alongwith digital health related information, knowledge, telemedicine, and other mobile apps regarding health issues, social online method, patient sponsors communities, and content creators generated health related material. (World Health Organization. 2025).

online health communication provides significant challenges, knowledge surplus had become a developing concern like audience are showing to large number of health related materials from various sources. The profusion of knowledge can create disturbance and make it problematic for people to find reliable sources. (Eppler, M. J., & Mengis, J. 2004).

Moreover, digital techniques facilitate quickly distribution of incomplete information. Health doubtful information may comprise wrong medical entitlements, unverified cure, conspiracy philosophies, pseudoscientific advice, and ambiguous product advancements. Research recommended that false information mostly spreads more quickly than accurate knowledge due to it normally induces stronger sensitive responses and produces higher involvement levels. (Wang, Y., McKee, M., Torbica, A., & Stuckler, D. 2019).

Social Media Platforms as Health Information Ecosystems

These social media platforms have evolved into an intricate ecosystem in which information relating to health issues is constantly created, disseminated, received, and evaluated. Unlike media systems that operate through centralized information creation channels, social media platforms provide decentralized information generation channels for all the parties involved.

Health-related information through social media includes but is not limited to:

- Preserving oneself from diseases
- Nutritional information
- Fitness and exercise
- Consciousness about mental health
- Beauty and skin care
- Complementary medicine
- Wellness tips
- Self-medication tips
- Pharmaceuticals
- Public health campaign

This variety of available information brings a chance to learn something new, but it also provides people with contradictory information.

According to literature, younger generations see social media as one of their main sources of information regarding health-related matters. Young people use social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram prior to seeing doctors or specialists. Thus, social media has a significant impact on people's health beliefs, perceived risks, and intentions.

A number of elements play a role in determining the effectiveness of social media health communication. Source credibility, message framing, design, engagement, and social validation techniques are some of the elements. Social validation tools include liking, sharing, commenting on, and the number of followers one has.

Berjawi, O., et al (2025) The Social media platforms had become arenas for political dissertation, where political influencers and news media companies energetically employ stylistic strategies to make public judgement. However, how these plans change between actors and adjust to audience opportunities leftovers underexplored. This study examines the nature of digital persuasion and its influence on the audience appointment in political dialog on the X platform (formerly Twitter). Exactly, we have analyzed how persuasive strategies laboring by political influencers and news media interpretations differ during a U.S. election occasion, and how types of persuasion associate with the meeting of the audiences. Our thinking includes an analysis of the Aristotle's persuasion framework that contains of three demands: Ethos (credibility), Pathos (emotion appeal), and logos (logic and reasoning), along with romanticism, and social network analysis. The findings identified that these political influencers have tended to employ, a hybrid strategy that combines character and symbols to exploit user commitment and exhibition high philological homophile with their personality networks. In contrast that these news media accounts mostly trust on ethos-driven demands and show partial rhetorical arrangement with their spectators. These visions have been highlighted that how oratorical variation and audience alignment have causes to differ between influencers and organization employees, provisions a new lens for accepting digital political communication.

Israel, E., et al (2025) This study describes audience opinion regarding digital media influencers and their effect on consumer buying plan in Abuja, Nigeria. The method of research survey has been adopted, using a self-administered questionnaire to collect data from the respondent. Through multiple stages sampling, the 380 participant have been respond to determine the study. The data collection was descriptively examined through table frequencies and ratios. These results shows that there is a very high experience to social media influencers between people's in Abuja, especially between the young and well educated participants. Many participants observed influencers as is being reliable, responsible and educated, these are consisting with reliable. Furthermore, results showed that positive views of influencer reliability strongly influenced on the customer purchase behavior, with 72.1% of audiences allowing for recommendation of products by influencers and 64.7% approving real procurements. Final the study has been describes that social media influencers pointedly from of consumer attitude in Abuja and approved that varieties, influencers and communication consultant's priorities validity, limpidity and reliability in digital campaigns.

Bai, B., et al (2025) In these days the world, the social media platforms have been providing a traditional channel influencing that how these customers make buying decisions (Kim and Park, 2023). These young persons that who grew up in the digital age, are particularly busy with digital sources like Douyin, forming a important influences for fashion style targeting to strengthen their market existence (Vițelar, 2019). This theoretical chapter goals to examine the role of effective influencers on social media industry and especially relating with Douyin. Taking an pioneering method, the chapter influences insights from recognized theories such as the Source Attractiveness Model (SAC) and the Theory of Persuasion to divide the relationships supporters maintain with effective influencers, who are digital demonstrations in the online space (McGuire et al., 1985; Masuda et al., 2022). With the help of an in-depth analysis of communications with the famous virtual influencer, Yexi Liu, the chapter undoes the nuances of how these digital personas are reforming followers' brand observations and purchasing traditions.

Research Questions

1. How does media and health literacy affect audience susceptibility to persuasive health messages?"
2. Are there significant differences in audience responses to different types of health content on social media?

Research Method

Audiences' Survey

384 social media users who are 18 years and above and belong to varying socio-economic statuses within Pakistan.

Stratified sampling helped in ensuring gender, age group, educational background, and rural/urban representation.

Goal of the survey was to analyze the perception and influence of persuasive health content on different demographic segments in terms of their media literacy, health literacy, etc.

A pre-coded survey questionnaire covering exposure to social media health content, Credibility and influence of perceptions and literacy of media and health was utilized to collect information from the users of social media.

Findings

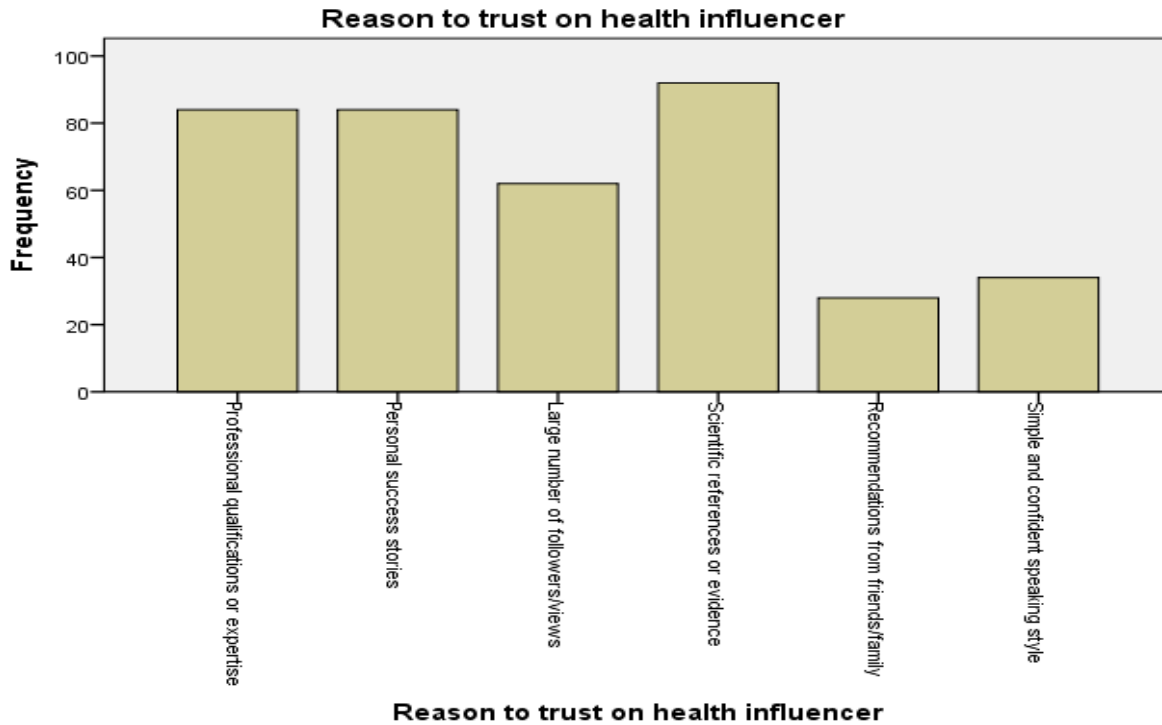
Major findings of the study are presented through tables and figures with suitable interpretation

Table 1: Favorite social media platform for health-related information

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
YouTube	92	24.0	24.0	24.0
Facebook	43	11.2	11.2	35.2
Instagram	145	37.8	37.8	72.9
Tik Tok	72	18.8	18.8	91.7
X/Twitter	12	3.1	3.1	94.8
Snapchat	19	4.9	4.9	99.7
Other	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 1 shows the social media platforms preferred by the respondents to obtain information regarding their health conditions. The total number of valid responses received from the respondents was 384. Instagram was the preferred platform among the respondents, where 145 (37.8%) respondents chose Instagram. YouTube was preferred by 92 (24.0%) respondents, followed by TikTok with 72 (18.8%) respondents preferring it. Facebook was preferred by 43 (11.2%) respondents. X (formerly known as Twitter) was the least preferred platform, where only 12 (3.1%) respondents preferred X. Apart from that, 19 (4.9%) respondents preferred other platforms, while one respondent (0.3%) preferred other than these platforms. From the above results, it can be seen that respondents prefer visually appealing platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to obtain health-related information.

Fig. 1



Interpretation of Figure: Reasons for Trusting Health Influencers

The reasons for trusting health influencers among the respondents while consuming health-related information on social media platforms have been shown in Figure. From the results, it has been found that scientific references or evidence was the most influential factor for the selection of health influencer, as 92 respondents (24.0%) chose this reason to trust. This was followed by professional qualification or expertise of the person and personal success story, each factor chosen by 84 respondents (21.9%). Having a lot of followers or views was the reason to trust selected by approximately 63 respondents (16.4%), whereas having a simple and confident speaking style was selected by 35 respondents (9.1%). The least influential factor among all was the recommendation from friends or family, as 28 respondents (7.3%) have chosen this reason to trust the health influencer. It can be said that the respondents have trusted those influencers who supported their advice with the credible evidence and had the professional qualifications rather than the popularity or recommendation of the friends and family members.

Table 2: Most helpful communication method to understand health information

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Short videos/reels	118	30.7	30.7	30.7
Detailed explanatory videos	84	21.9	21.9	52.6
Live sessions/webinars	94	24.5	24.5	77.1
Infographics and visual posts	49	12.8	12.8	89.8
Written captions/blog-style posts	19	4.9	4.9	94.8
Podcasts/audio discussions	20	5.2	5.2	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the modes of communication that the respondents think will be the most effective way to understand the information regarding health. In all, 384 valid respondents answered the question. The top mode is short videos or reels which have been chosen by 118 respondents (30.7%) respondents, which shows a strong preference for visually appealing content. After short videos or reels, the second most preferred way of communication is live sessions or webinars which have been chosen by 94 respondents (24.5%) respondents. The third choice among the respondents is detailed explanatory videos (84 respondents; 21.9%). Infographics and visual posts are liked by 49 respondents (12.8%) respondents, while the least preferred modes of

communication are podcasts or audio discussions (20 respondents; 5.2%) and written captions or blog style posts (19 respondents; 4.9%). From the above results, it can be seen that respondents prefer to learn through video-based and interactive content rather than text-based content regarding their health.

Table 3 : Perception of viewers about most effective influencer in promoting healthy behavior

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Medical professionals/doctors	95	24.7	24.7	24.7
Fitness trainers	97	25.3	25.3	50.0
Celebrities	74	19.3	19.3	69.3
Lifestyle vloggers	60	15.6	15.6	84.9
Ordinary individuals sharing experiences	36	9.4	9.4	94.3
Mental health advocates	22	5.7	5.7	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 illustrates the responses of the participants in relation to the kind of influencer who they think is the most effective in ensuring healthy behavior among people. In all, 384 responses were given. A majority of them (97 responses; 25.3%) stated fitness trainers to be the most effective influencers, while 95 of them (24.7%) selected medical professionals/doctors. The third largest number of respondents (74 responses; 19.3%) indicated celebrities to be the most effective ones, followed by lifestyle vloggers (60 responses; 15.6%). Ordinary people sharing their personal experience (36 responses; 9.4%) and mental health advocates (22 responses; 5.7%) received fewest responses. It can be seen that in general, respondents have more faith in professional or knowledgeable influencers such as fitness trainers and medical professionals.

Table 4 Overall opinion of viewers about health influencers on social media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
They positively improve public health awareness	52	13.5	13.5	13.5
They are useful but sometimes misleading	145	37.8	37.8	51.3
They are mainly for entertainment	107	27.9	27.9	79.2
They create unnecessary fear or trends	61	15.9	15.9	95.1
They should be more regulated	19	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	384	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 indicates respondents' general attitude towards health influencers on social media. Altogether, 384 respondents gave valid answers. The biggest percentage of respondents, 145 respondents (37.8%), thought that health influencers are helpful, but sometimes misleading, implying that although they see the usefulness of health influencers, at the same time, they are wary of their reliability and accuracy of disseminated information. The second biggest group, 107 respondents (27.9%), saw health influencers not as a serious source of advice on health-related matters, but rather as a source of amusement. At the same time, 61 respondents (15.9%) thought that health influencers spread fear and unnecessary trends, while 52 respondents (13.5%) thought that they contribute to public health awareness positively. The smallest number of respondents, 19 respondents (4.9%), thought that health influencers need stricter regulations. Thus, the results indicate that respondents have a fairly balanced attitude towards health influencers. They acknowledge their usefulness for health promotion, while also being aware of their possible negative consequences, such as spreading misleading information or sensationalism.

Conclusion

Response of research subjects suggest that multiple factors, are indirectly associated with media literacy, affect health advice seeking behavior. Table shows that 24.7 and 21.4% respondents showed reluctance to the persuasive health messages due to doubt about authenticity and Difficulty in maintaining consistency respectively.

Results of the study highly advocate the role of media literacy and enlightenment in improving the audience response responding health risk messages. According to this table more than 85% of the social media users changed or tried to change their lifestyle especially regarding diet plans and exercise. Only a few (less than 10%) preferred to remain stagnant.

Figure 1 is an indication of the respondents' affinity towards types of health-related content available on social media platforms. From the findings, it is apparent that health-related content of mental health awareness was most preferred by the respondents and attracted approximately 98 respondents (25.5%). In second place was health-related content of fitness and exercises with approximately 87 respondents (22.7%) and in third position was health-related content of diet and nutrition with approximately 82 respondents (21.4%). Health-related content of lifestyle and wellness tips was preferred by approximately 44 respondents (11.5%) and medical advice and disease prevention with approximately 42 respondents (10.9%). The least preferred type of health-related content was home remedies and natural treatments which attracted approximately 31 respondents (8.1%). From the results, the respondents prefer preventive and lifestyle-oriented types of health content as opposed to treatment-oriented types of health content. The highest preference for mental health awareness indicates increased public awareness on the importance of mental health in addition to the increasing role played by social media in mental health education.

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences in respondents' preferences regarding six types of health-related topics. The results indicate a statistically significant difference in preferences: $\chi^2(5) = 49.47$, $p < 0.001$. This means that respondents did not show the same level of preference for the six topic categories. Mental health awareness was the most preferred category (25.5%), followed by fitness and physical exercise (22.7%) and diet and nutrition (21.4%); conversely, home remedies and natural treatment methods were the least preferred (8.1%).

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