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ARTICLE

The Role of Social Media Influencers in Health Awareness among Algerian Youths: A Field Study on a Sample of Facebook Users

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Social media influencers, health awareness, Algerian youth, Facebook platform.

Abstract

This study explores the role of health-related content produced by social media influencers in promoting health awareness among Algerian youth who use the Facebook platform. It also aims to determine the extent to which Algerian youth rely on social media influencers for health information, to identify the types of health-related content preferred by the study sample, and to assess the credibility of the health content disseminated by influencers via Facebook. The study adopted the sample survey method, involving 212 participants, with the electronic questionnaire used as the primary research tool. The findings indicate that influencers play a role in health awareness, as 75% of the sample reported trusting the health content provided by these influencers and acquiring positive health behaviours.

Citation

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Introduction

In recent years, the world has witnessed an unprecedented digital revolution in technology, resulting in a profound transformation in how information is produced and disseminated. Information now spreads quickly and with minimal effort, reaching recipients easily and efficiently. These technological advancements have contributed to narrowing geo-

graphical gaps and overcoming communicative boundaries that persisted until the late 1970s, leading to a rapidly evolving dynamic that has altered various aspects of life. One of the most prominent manifestations of this transformation is what has become known as modern communication technologies or new media, which have played an active role in reshaping social consciousness, particularly among youth, and have contributed to a significant increase in human knowledge over a short period by providing diverse sources that meet various needs and desires.

The internet represents one of the most significant manifestations of this technological revolution. It has opened up vast horizons for communication and interaction among individuals and groups, mainly through the Facebook platform, which marked a qualitative shift in the structure of social communication. These platforms have created digital spaces for exchanging opinions, ideas, and attitudes, connecting communities within a boundless virtual realm.

The importance of these platforms continues to grow across various societies, as individuals increasingly rely on the information they provide to understand prevailing trends and societal developments. The type and degree of this reliance vary according to two primary conditions: the extent of societal change, whether marked by conflict or stability, and the increasing significance of social media networks as sources of information. Dependency theory clearly explains this dynamic, highlighting the media's dominance over the information sources individuals use to fulfil their primary goals. These goals tend to expand and intensify as societies become more complex.

1. Defining the Research Topic

1.1 Research Problem

Social media platforms, including Facebook, are key new media applications that have become increasingly important to a large segment of Algerian society, especially among Algerian youth. In Algeria, the use of these platforms continues to grow rapidly, particularly among the younger population. According to the "Digital 2023" report by the global data analysis firm "Datareportal", published in January 2023, the number of Facebook users in Algeria reached 23.95 million, representing 52.9% of the population (Algerian Press Service - APS, 2025).

Through their tremendous development, these social platforms have evolved beyond their traditional roles to become fertile environments for exchanging information across various political, economic, educational, or even health-related domains. The latter, in particular, has emerged prominently across both traditional and new media. The intersection between media and health forms a foundational axis for understanding public health today. Issues related to health awareness and the public's reliance on multiple sources in their search for health-related information have become central topics of interest for researchers in the field of health and those concerned with it, especially given the growing number of social media users worldwide seeking new information about their personal and community health and increasingly depending on these platforms.

Algerian youth constitute one of the most significant segments of society. They are the most active users of social media platforms, which fulfil a wide range of needs and gratifications across various domains. The health domain, in particular, has attracted notable attention from young people, as they follow and engage with health-related news and topics that enable them to access valuable health information. This information is integrated into their daily lives, helping them adopt correct and positive health behaviours.

Given that social media platforms have fostered participatory engagement by enabling individuals with shared interests and activities to connect, these platforms enhance health awareness, according to the perspective of Algerian youth.

The widespread proliferation of social media platforms has led to the emergence of "influencers," particularly in the health sector. They have assumed prominent roles in shaping public opinion and disseminating health awareness, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These influencers utilise platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok to share content tailored to audience needs, which has enabled them to attract many followers.

However, this role is not without challenges, the most significant of which is the spread of inaccurate health information. Consequently, the credibility of the content has become a critical factor in its evaluation. This situation highlights the necessity of critical thinking among audiences and the role of health institutions in monitoring content and collaborating with influencers to ensure the dissemination of reliable information. In light of this, we chose to explore this topic to explore social media influencers' role in promoting health awareness among Algerian youth.

2. Research Questions

The central research question of this study is as follows:

What is the role of social media influencers on the Facebook platform in promoting health awareness among Algerian youth?

From this central question, the following subquestions are derived:

- What is the frequency of Facebook usage among Algerian youth for following health-related content on the platform?
- What types of health content shared by influencers on Facebook are preferred by the respondents?
- What are the motivations behind the respondents' engagement with health content influencers' shares on Facebook?
- What level of trust do respondents place in the health-related content that influencers provide on Facebook?

3. Research Objectives

- To determine the frequency with which Algerian youth engage with health-related content on Facebook.
- To identify the types of health content shared by influencers on Facebook that Algerian youth prefer.
- To understand the motivations behind the respondents' use of health content shared by influencers on Facebook.
- To analyse the role of health influencers on Facebook in shaping health awareness and guiding the behaviours of Algerian youth.
- To propose practical and applicable recommendations for relevant stakeholders, such as policymakers, health institutions, and media organisations, health awareness in the digital space should be strengthened, and the spread of health misinformation should be limited.

4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study emerges in light of the substantial transformation witnessed in the health sector with the advancement of the digital age, where social media platforms have become a primary source of health information for a broad segment of society. Within this context, digital influencers in the health domain have emerged as effective alternatives to traditional health institutions through their role in disseminating health information to Algerian youth and influencing their health-related behaviours.

This study is further significant because of the considerable impact of digital influencers on youth health awareness and attitudes. It focuses on distinguishing between the positive roles that contribute to health education and the negative roles that may lead to the dissemination of inaccurate and misleading information. The study examines the relationship between the health content shared by influencers and its credibility on the Facebook platform, considering credibility as a crucial factor in individuals' selection of appropriate health content.

Moreover, this study holds substantial value for health policymakers, media and research institutions. It contributes to understanding the nature of digital influence on the health sector. It offers recommendations for promoting the dissemination of reliable health content and combating the spread of misinformation, thereby ensuring individual and public health protection.

5. Definition of Key Terms

As with any academic study, it is essential to define certain concepts and terms that facilitate the researcher's understanding and framing of the subject under investigation. In this context, the following key terms outline the general framework of this study:

a. Social Media Influencers

- **Influencers** are minor celebrities whose presence has become intertwined with modern life. They express opinions that gain wide circulation on the Facebook platform and produce content that attracts large numbers

of followers across various fields, including fashion, cooking, sports, travel, entrepreneurship, and even personal storytelling (Lyon, 2021, p. 17).

- **Concept of social media influencers:** These are individuals who influence many people. They market themselves and possess the ability to attract significant attention. Most of these influencers operate across various social platforms, the most prominent being Instagram, followed by Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and YouTube.
- **Definition in the Context of Digital Media:**

“A digital influencer is a user of a digital platform who possesses credibility, authority, and the ability to exert psychological or behavioural influence over their followers, *owing* to their ongoing interactions and status within the digital social network.”

b. Health Awareness

Health awareness attempts to persuade and influence individuals' behaviour regarding a particular topic, idea, or issue. It involves mechanisms of verbal persuasion, clarification, explanation, and the reinforcement of these elements through convincing evidence and arguments tailored to the cognitive level of the recipients. Effective health awareness requires clarity in the communicated ideas, simplicity, and the absence of contradictions. A clear objective strengthens the message, as ambiguity may cause confusion between awareness and propaganda. Furthermore, awareness should be characterised by objectivity and impartiality, presenting ideas directly and unambiguously (Boujelal, 1990, p. 43).

It is also defined as a set of educational and media-related activities and procedures aimed at providing citizens with accurate information to help them protect themselves and their children from disease, alert them to health risks, and promote the adoption of health values and beneficial behaviours within the community.

Health awareness is also described as follows:

"People's understanding of health-related information and facts, along with their sense of responsibility for their own health and that of others, whereas health education refers to the provision of health-related information and facts concerning health and illness to the general public." (Al-Salamouni, 2019, p. 3)

c. Health Information

Richard Smith (1996, p. 1062) defines health information as a commodity that supports decision-making in patient care.

Mohamed Nafti (1978, p. 3) further defines it as scientific and technical information that moves an individual from a state of doubt to a state of certainty or high probability. It includes all information related to medical education and practice, such as scientific research, publications, disease diagnosis, treatment, prevention, pharmaceuticals, environmental health, relevant statistics, health research funding, and the sources and accessibility of such information.

d. Facebook Platform

The definition of the Facebook platform: Facebook is a social networking platform that allows users to join free of charge to connect and interact with others, send messages, and update their profiles (Sibti, 2018, p. 61). It is a hub for exchanging information and news about events within societies and serves as an effective environment for broad advertising activities (Abboud & Mazhar, 2015, p. 140).

It is also considered an advertising site for publishing products and properties. Its creator, Mark Zuckerberg, defined it as follows: "A social movement that enables ordinary individuals to establish a public identity by sharing information about themselves, their emotional and mental makeup, and their personal photos." He described it as "a directory of the world's inhabitants" (Al-Issawi, 2021, p. 10).

e. Algerian Youth

In *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasīṭ* (The Intermediate Dictionary), "youth" is defined as vitality and freshness, the beginning or prime of something. However, there is some debate among researchers regarding a standardised conceptual definition of youth. Some view youth as a social group or age category ranging from 15–24 years or 15–29 years, depending on social context. Others consider youth to encompass individuals aged between 15 and 35 (Omar, 2021, p. 46).

For this study, Algerian youth are operationally defined as any Algerian Facebook user aged between 18 and 40.

Second: Methodological Procedures of the Study

1. Type of Study

In scientific research, various classifications of studies exist depending on different criteria, as in media studies. Some classifications are based on the field of application, distinguishing between field studies and desk-based studies. Others are based on the research approach, distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative studies. There are also classifications, such as descriptive and experimental studies, according to the methodology used. Some researchers combine these criteria into a unified classification.

This study falls under the category of quantitative descriptive field studies. Quantitative studies focus on the systematic and scientific investigation of phenomena, using numerical data for analysis. They adhere to the principles of validity and reliability, and their data are processed statistically. The results of such studies can be generalised to the original population (Ali, 2014, p. 133).

2. Research Methodology

Given the large size of the study population, the sample survey method was employed as one of the methodological designs of the descriptive survey approach adopted in this study's theoretical framework. The descriptive sample survey method is regarded as one of the most appropriate scientific methods for studies aimed at describing, constructing, and profiling media audiences and their behavioural patterns in particular. This is achieved by recording, analysing, and interpreting the phenomenon in its current state after sufficient and relevant data are collected.

The sample survey method is among the most widely used methodological designs for studying audiences and public opinion, as it describes the receiving audience's characteristics and behavioural patterns. This is done by selecting representative samples of the overall population about one or more variables, such as age groups, educational levels, economic status, or a combination of these variables, to compare them with respect to media interaction and communication behavior (Kebbour, 2010, p. 9).

As such, the sample survey method provides a general statistical overview of the study population within a specific timeframe. This approach is beneficial when dealing with large sample sizes, which tend to increase with the number of variables under study. Consequently, this method allows the findings to be generalised to the broader population (Al-Hameed, 2015, p. 162).

3. Study Population and Sample

Owing to the large size of the available research population and the difficulty of conducting a comprehensive survey of all its units, a sample was selected to represent the original population, with the possibility of generalising the results to all Algerian youth who use social media platforms.

After identifying the target and accessible population for this study, namely, all Algerian youth aged 18 and above who use various social media platforms regardless of content type and given the size and dispersion of this population as well as the challenges of surveying it in its entirety, we employed a sampling method to select a representative subset.

This study adopted convenience sampling, also called accidental sampling or available sampling. Convenience sampling is a nonprobability sampling method in which the sample is drawn from the closest, most accessible, and most effortless group for the researcher to reach within the target population. This type of sample is often chosen for its availability, and participation is generally voluntary, with no predetermined selection criteria for inclusion (Al-Hajj, 2019, p. 64).

The sample in our study consisted of Algerian youth who used the Facebook platform and responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed electronically via Facebook from March to April 2025. A total of 218 responses were collected. However, six questionnaires were excluded because of inconsistencies or lack of seriousness, rendering them unsuitable for data entry and analysis. As a result, 212 valid questionnaires were retained, representing the final sample size for the study.

The following two tables present the distribution of the study sample according to gender and educational level:

Table 01

Distribution of the sample according to gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	120	56.6%
Female	92	43.4%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

Table 2

Distribution of the sample by educational level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Middle School	3	1.4%
Secondary School	26	12.3%
University	183	86.3%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

4. Data collection tools

The tool used for collecting field data in this study was the questionnaire. A questionnaire is a method of data collection that involves systematically and formally asking respondents specific questions aimed at eliciting particular ideas and facts relevant to the subject and objectives of the study, without the researcher intervening in the respondents' assessments of the data.

It is considered one of the most common and widely used tools in scientific research, particularly within the survey method, owing to its effectiveness in collecting information on a specific topic from a large number of individuals, whether or not they are located in the same place (Al-Askari, *Methodology of Scientific Research in the Humanities*, 2004, p. 172).

The questionnaire was chosen as the data collection tool because of its compatibility with the quantitative nature of the survey method adopted in this study and its characteristics that facilitate time and effort efficiency for both the researcher and the respondents (Mansar, 2018, p. 59). It is also suitable for studies involving many units, as with this research.

The study utilised one of the modern forms of the questionnaire, known as the online survey. This type of questionnaire, also called an internet-based survey, has become increasingly popular, especially for studies exploring attitudes and opinions. Its growing use is attributed to several advantages, including low cost, broad accessibility, and ease of design. Moreover, online questionnaires offer features that assist researchers in collecting accurate and reliable data.

1.4 Validity and Reliability Testing of the Questionnaire

This step aims to verify the questionnaire's appropriateness for measurement and effectiveness in collecting the intended data, which is referred to as its validity, i.e., its ability to achieve the purpose for which it was designed.

- **Instrument validity:** We aimed to assess the validity of the questionnaire statements by employing both face validity and construct validity.

a. Face Validity:

After the principal axes of the electronic questionnaire were formulated and its components were completed, the instrument was submitted to a group of academic experts in the field of media and communication for review and evaluation. The goal was to assess the instrument's suitability for fieldwork by assessing its items and dimensions and to confirm the validity of the measures it included. This approach is known as face validity, as it is based on expert agreement regarding the appropriateness of the questions and their alignment with the intended objectives. Several observations and suggestions were recorded on the basis of the feedback received, and the questionnaire was revised accordingly.

This process led to the final version of the instrument, which was subsequently distributed on the Facebook platform during the previously specified timeframe.

b. Construct validity

Construct validity is one of the measures used to assess an instrument's validity, as it evaluates the extent to which the instrument achieves the objectives it was designed to measure. It reflects the degree of correlation between each study domain and the total score of the questionnaire items. The results showed that the correlations in all the questionnaire domains were statistically significant at the level of $\alpha = 0.01$, indicating that all the domains are valid for measuring what they were intended to measure.

2.4 Reliability of the questionnaire scores

Reliability refers to the consistency of results and the likelihood of obtaining the same outcomes if the questionnaire was administered to the same sample under similar conditions. In this study, we assessed the internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire via Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient)

Numerous studies suggest that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient should not be less than 0.8 for any domain within a study. To ensure the reliability of our questionnaire, the internal consistency coefficient was calculated across the questionnaire's domains. The analysis revealed that the instrument achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.939, indicating a high reliability level for the questionnaire items. This finding suggests that the instrument is consistent and can be reliably used in field studies. The higher the coefficient value is, the greater the reliability and validity. In our study, the overall reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.80, confirming its robustness.

The electronic questionnaire was designed via the Google Forms service, and the form link was shared via the Facebook platform. The respondents' answers were monitored, followed by coding and extracting the collected data via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Description of the Questionnaire:

Our questionnaire includes 15 questions divided into four sections:

- **Section One:** Sociodemographic data
- **Section Two:** Habits and patterns of Algerian youth in using health-related content from influencers on the Facebook platform
- **Section Three:** Motivations behind Algerian youth's use of health-related content from influencers on the Facebook platform
- **Section Four:** Level of trust in the health content provided by influencers on the Facebook platform

5. Statistical methods used in the study:

After the field data were collected, coded, categorised, and processed via SPSS software, the following statistical methods were adopted for the study:

- **Calculation of Frequencies and Percentages**
- **Simple and cross-tabulation tables** were used to identify the frequency of a given variable, describe the sample and determine the extent of their responses to the questionnaire items.
- **Cronbach's alpha coefficient:** This coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire items.
- **Standard deviation:** The standard deviation was used to determine the dispersion of responses around the mean value of each questionnaire item. It was calculated via the following formula: the square root of the sum of the squared deviations from the mean, divided by the total number of respondents minus one for interpreting standard deviation values, where the closer the value is to zero, the lower the dispersion, indicating greater homogeneity among respondents and a higher level of agreement around the mean score.

6. Fields of Study

1. Spatial Scope: The spatial scope of this study is the Facebook platform.
2. Human Scope: The human scope includes all Algerian youth who use the Facebook platform.

Third: Results of the Field Study

Section Two: *Habits and Patterns of Facebook Usage among Algerian Youths in the Study Sample*

Table 3

Frequency of Facebook Usage among Sample Respondents

Level of Usage	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	12	5.7%
Medium	84	39.6%
High	116	54.7%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The results presented in the table indicate that most respondents use Facebook frequently, as evidenced by 54.7% selecting the "High" usage option. This is followed by 39.6% who use the platform at a "medium" rate, whereas only a tiny percentage, 5.7%, reported "low" usage. This intense engagement with the platform is attributed to its range of services and unique features, which help respondents satisfy their needs and desires.

Table 04

Duration of Facebook Usage among Sample Respondents

Statement	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Duration of Facebook usage	1to 3 years	12	5.7%
	3to 5 years	84	39.6%
	More than 5 years	116	54.7%
	Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors

The table above illustrates the duration of Facebook usage among the study sample. Most respondents, 54.7%, had been using the platform for more than five years, which aligns with the growing and sustained use of Facebook in Algeria.

Table 5
Time Spent by Algerian Youths on the Facebook Platform

Statement	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hours of Facebook Usage	Less than 1 hour	25	11.8%
	2 to 3 hours	77	36.3%
	3 to 5 hours	110	51.8%
Total		212	100%
Time of Facebook Usage	Continuously	135	63.7%
	During free time only	67	31.6%
	Rarely	10	4.7%
Total		212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The study results revealed that most respondents in the sample spend between 3 and 5 hours browsing Facebook, with a percentage of 51.8%. Those who spend between 2 and 3 hours account for 36.3%, whereas those who spend less than one hour account for 11.8%. This finding indicates that most of the respondents in the sample spend relatively long periods on Facebook. The enjoyment that users may experience while browsing the platform and sharing opinions with friends leads them to pay little attention to the time spent online. This reflects Facebook's nature as a significant communication medium.

Moreover, 63.7% of the respondents used Facebook continuously, highlighting its significant role in individuals' social lives. Its use appears to have become an addiction for users of all ages and both genders. The platform can explain this intensive use by creating a new virtual space where users can express their opinions and relieve their frustrations.

This is followed by 31.6% who use the platform only during free time and just 4.7% who use it rarely.

Section Three: Motivations Behind Algerian Youths' Use of Health-Related Content from Influencers on the Facebook Platform

Table 6
Duration of Facebook Usage by Respondents to Follow Health Content Provided by Influencers

Statement	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Hours spent using Facebook to follow influencers' health content	30 minutes to 1 hour	110	51.8%
	2 to 3 hours	77	36.3%
	3 to 5 hours	25	11.8%
Total		212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The study results revealed that most respondents in the sample spend between 30 minutes and 1 hour following health-related content shared by influencers on Facebook, with a percentage of 51.8%. This is followed by 36.3% who spend between 2 and 3 hours, whereas 11.8% reported spending between 3 and 5 hours browsing health content on the platform. This finding indicates that most participants spend considerable time influencing their health-related content.

Allocating a daily period ranging from half an hour to more than an hour specifically for following health information distinct from other Facebook activities, such as chatting, interacting, or sharing, reflects a relatively high average usage time for this type of content.

This can be explained by the fact that the health content shared by influencers often provides individuals with relevant and needed health information, especially when such content comes from reliable sources. As a result, engagement with this content increases, leading users to spend more time following it for various purposes.

Table 7

Degree of Commitment among Respondents to Following Health Content from Influencers on the Facebook Platform

Commitment to Following Health Content from Influencers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Often	116	54.7%
Always	84	39.6%
Rarely	12	5.7%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The results also showed that most respondents are keen to follow the health content provided by influencers on Facebook, with 54.7% indicating that they do so often, followed by 39.6% who stated that they always follow such content. A minority of respondents, 5.7%, reported rarely paying attention to this type of content.

These statistics show that most of the sample shows a significant interest in the health content that influencers share on the Facebook platform. This interest is likely due to the relevance and usefulness of the health information provided and the effectiveness of the advice offered.

Table 08

Types of Health Content Provided by Influencers on Facebook Preferred by the Study Sample

Type of Health Content	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mental Health	89	21.97%
Nutritional Health	129	31.85%
Physical Health	139	34.32%
Environmental Health	48	11.85%
Total	405	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The types of health content provided by influencers on Facebook and preferred by the study sample varied. A significant portion of the respondents (34.32%) expressed interest in physical health topics, placing them in the first rank. This preference can be attributed to the understanding that physical health is the foundation of mental and psychological well-being.

Over half of the sample demonstrated concern for physical health issues, encompassing many areas. Among these are health matters specifically related to women, as women experience certain unique health conditions throughout different life stages, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, and puberty. These physiological changes may expose women to several serious illnesses, including breast cancer, cervical cancer, and thyroid cancer, among others.

Furthermore, physical health is not confined to women's health alone; it also affects all members of the family and the surrounding community, which explains its high level of relevance and interest among respondents.

Following physical health, nutritional health ranks second with 31.85%, reflecting the belief that nutrition is the foundation of good health and the starting point for achieving a sound body free from ailments. A balanced diet enhances the body's disease resistance and promotes overall well-being.

Third, mental health accounts for 21.97%, which is a significant and logical percentage. The strong interest in this content stems from the understanding that mental health is integral to overall health. The World Health Organisation defines health as *"a complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmi-*

ty." One of the key implications of this definition is that mental health extends beyond the absence of disorders or disabilities, encompassing a broader, more holistic state of well-being.

Finally, the percentage of environmental health is 11.85%, which is relatively low despite the critical role of the environment in achieving public health and societal balance.

Table 09

Forms of Interaction by the Study Sample with Health Content Provided by Influencers on Facebook

Type of Interaction	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Total
Likes	149	50	13	212
Percentage (%)	70.3%	23.6%	6.2%	100%
Comments	60	135	17	212
Percentage (%)	25.5%	63.5%	8.0%	100%
Shares	15	178	19	212
Percentage (%)	7.0%	84.0%	9.0%	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The interpretation of these results is closely linked to the unique features of social media platforms, which offer various forms of interaction among users, such as likes, comments, and shares.

The "like" function is one of the most straightforward interaction tools available on social media, as it eliminates the need for writing while simultaneously conveying a sentiment or stance toward the posted content. This feature has evolved, particularly on Facebook, by introducing emotional reactions such as sadness, laughter, surprise, and solidarity, enhancing users' ability to express nuanced responses.

On the other hand, the "share" function is considered one of the most powerful tools in social networking platforms. It reflects the perceived value of the content published by others and the user's endorsement and appropriation of that content. Sharing a post on one's timeline or with friends signifies that the content aligns with the user's views or interests. Moreover, sharing dramatically contributes to broader content dissemination and visibility, often propelling it into the spotlight as a "trend."

Through such features, users use these networks to interact with content that appeals to them, matches their preferences, and strengthens their connection to the platform.

Table 10

Most preferred forms of health content among the study sample

Format of Health Content	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Video Clips	139	34.32%
Images	129	31.85%
Hyperlinks	48	11.85%
Articles	89	21.97%
Infographic Content	0	0.00%
Total	—	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

The table above illustrates the format of the health content the study sample prefers. According to the data, video content ranks first, with 34.32% of respondents favouring this format. The preference for health content in the form of videos can be attributed to the ease of downloading and viewing, especially when the video files are small. This is particularly relevant given the increasing availability of high-speed internet in Algeria and the rise of mobile applications that allow users to download multiple videos quickly.

In addition, most respondents rely on smartphones rather than other devices to access social media platforms, supporting the preference for video content.

Several technical factors also explain this preference:

- Advancements in video quality include better resolution and sound.
- The combination of audio, visual, and graphics within a single format.
- The ability to download and rewatch the content at any time.
- The possibility of attaching videos to links is often accompanied by scientific reports or articles that elaborate on the video content.

The health content in the images ranked second, with a percentage of 31.85%. The respondents in the study sample clearly preferred following health-related content on Facebook in the form of pictures. This result can be explained by the importance of images in delivering knowledge and transmitting information. Images help recipients interpret and retain the written information that accompanies them.

Moreover, images serve to visualise verbal meanings, making it easier for users to comprehend content without relying heavily on verbal language. As such, images are invaluable for segments of the population with limited reading skills or those who struggle to understand written information.

Therefore, using images to convey health information is considered one of the most preferred formats among the study sample. This has been especially evident in recent times, particularly with the outbreak of COVID-19, during which most awareness campaigns on social media focused on images rather than articles, owing to the powerful impact of visual imagery on individuals' perceptions and health awareness. Images thus serve as effective summaries of articles and reports.

Table 11

Motivations Behind the Study Sample's Use of Health Content Provided by Influencers on the Facebook Platform

Motivation	Frequency	% of Total Motivations	% of Total Sample (n=212)
Openness to various health information sources	100	15.3%	47.16%
Learning about key health topics	120	18.3%	56.6%
Finding solutions to health problems	23	3.51%	10.84%
Acquiring new health information	80	12.25%	37.73%
Entertainment and leisure	100	15.3%	100%*
Personal desire to search for health information	111	17%	90%
Interest in health-related topics	60	9.17%	40.8%
Forming opinions and attitudes toward health issues	60	9.17%	6%
Total	654	100%	—

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 10 illustrates the primary motivations expressed by the study sample for using health-related content from social media influencers on the Facebook platform. Most of the responses focused on the motivation to "learn about key

health topics," with 56.6% of the sample identifying this as a primary driver. This result is closely linked to the global context, which has led to the widespread emergence of serious diseases that threaten public health. This has increased the demand for accessible and reliable health information that clarifies the nature, causes, and treatment of such illnesses, thereby promoting individual responsibility for health care.

Social media platforms have become rich sources of health-related content and serve as primary channels for information seeking among many individuals. This aligns with the subsidiary premise of media dependency theory, which posits that the need for information increases in times of crisis, leading to greater reliance on media platforms.

Furthermore, on the basis of the frequencies and percentages shown in the table, it is evident that a large proportion of the sample (90%) uses Facebook, driven by a "personal desire to search for health information." This is considered one of the most significant psychological motivations, reflecting individuals' curiosity to explore and stay informed.

Section Four: Credibility of the Health Content Provided by Social Media Influencers on the Facebook Platform

Table 12

Degree of Trust Among the Study Sample in the Health Content Provided by Influencers on Facebook

Degree of Trust in Influencers' Content	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do not trust it	10	4.7%
Somewhat trust it	112	52.8%
Fully trust it	90	42.5%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

On the basis of the data presented in the table, 52.8% of the study sample respondents considered the health content provided by social media influencers to be "somewhat trustworthy." This finding indicates a moderate level of trust in influencers as sources of health information. This cautious trust can be attributed to the general understanding that health-related information on social media requires verification and scrutiny to ensure its accuracy.

Moreover, 42.5% of the respondents fully trusted influencers as reliable sources of health information. In contrast, only 4.7% of the participants indicated that they do not trust influencers, likely because of misleading or false information circulating online.

Establishing trust and credibility in information disseminated via social media does not occur randomly; instead, it is rooted in the content, especially when it addresses real-world health issues and responds to public health crises. These platforms have thus become fertile ground for accessing health information, primarily when the content is based on clear, verified sources, generating a sense of reliability and reassurance among users.

Table 13

Extent to which the Study Sample Verifies the Health Content Provided by Influencers on Facebook

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	100	47.0%
Often	90	42.5%
Never	22	10.0%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

On the basis of the data presented in the table, which illustrates the extent to which the study sample verifies the health content provided by influencers on the Facebook platform, it is evident that 47% of respondents always verify the content. This behaviour reflects a lack of complete trust in influencers as reliable sources of health information. In reality, the open nature of social media allows anyone to publish health-related content, including individuals who are not

qualified to address medical topics. As a result, these platforms often contain false or misleading information that may provoke fear and anxiety, especially when the content originates from unverified sources.

Algerian youth appear to possess sufficient health awareness, prompting them to consistently verify the information's source, publication date, and accuracy and assess whether it may be exaggerated or untrustworthy.

Furthermore, 42.5% of the sample reported verifying the information often, whereas 10% said they never did so. This latter group may either lack interest in verifying the accuracy of the information, possibly relying on alternative sources, or may belong to a lower educational level, which could lead them to place blind trust in the content they consume.

Table 14

Level of Satisfaction with the Health Content Provided by Influencers on the Facebook Platform

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not satisfied	15	7.0%
Satisfied	159	75.0%
Highly satisfied	38	17.9%
Total	212	100%

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2025.

With respect to the respondents' level of satisfaction with the health content provided by influencers on Facebook, the results show that more than half of the sample (75%) were satisfied with the content shared by influencers. Additionally, 17.9% reported being highly satisfied. In comparison, 7% expressed dissatisfaction with this content, primarily due to concerns about misleading or incorrect information that could negatively affect their health.

These findings indicate a generally positive perception among the study participants concerning their satisfaction with Facebook influencers as health information providers. The responses indicate that influencers play a supportive role in enhancing the respondents' health knowledge and awareness.

Conclusion

The study of the role of social media influencers in promoting health awareness among Algerian youth, through one of the most widely used and influential digital platforms, Facebook, constitutes a scientific necessity, given the importance of this space in disseminating health awareness in its various forms. Social media platforms, foremost Facebook, have increasingly come to function in complementarity with traditional media, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of health education campaigns and contributing to the establishment of positive health behaviours within society.

This research is significant because it focuses on the extent to which users of these platforms engage with health-related content and are influenced by the awareness messages shared by influencers. On the basis of the findings of the field study, it can be concluded that social media influencers on Facebook play a role, albeit **limitedly**, in shaping health awareness among youth. This influence contributes to building a health knowledge base that supports individual and community well-being and fosters the development of a health-literate and informed citizenry.

However, despite these findings, this study remains a preliminary step that calls for further research efforts, whether through analytical or more in-depth field studies. Accordingly, through this work, the researchers aim to open new scientific horizons that encourage more profound exploration of the potential offered by social media platforms, viewing them as active partners in spreading health culture and enhancing medical knowledge across different segments of society.

This research has led to practical recommendations and proposals, which researchers hope will directly or indirectly support ongoing efforts to strengthen health awareness within the digital environment.

These recommendations may be summarised as follows:

- Health awareness constitutes the cornerstone of any comprehensive health strategy, representing the first and most crucial step in curbing the spread of serious diseases. This reality necessitates reinforcing awareness efforts within Algerian society, emphasising involving all relevant actors responsible for its dissemination.

- This goal requires effective and integrated coordination between traditional and digital media across various electronic platforms. This is essential for supporting health education campaigns and expanding their reach to audiences still relying on traditional media and the diverse public engaged with social media networks.
- Strengthening the formal regulation of digital health content is imperative. This includes establishing oversight and guidance mechanisms by relevant health authorities, such as the Ministry of Health and health communication units, to monitor the content shared by influencers and ensure its alignment with recognised medical standards.
- In this context, it becomes essential to integrate social media into the awareness-raising activities of governmental bodies and civil society organisations, such as schools, charities, and educational institutions. Social media platforms offer numerous advantages, including low cost, rapid dissemination, public engagement, and multiformat content delivery. This calls for intensifying joint campaigns between media institutions and influencers to maximise their impact.
- Encourage partnerships between traditional media outlets and digital influencers to organise coordinated health campaigns that combine institutional credibility and widespread influence.
- Given the sensitive nature of health-related topics that concern individuals' lives, those responsible for sharing health information in the digital space must uphold the highest standards of accuracy and credibility when preparing educational content. This includes supporting influencers with medical and scientific backgrounds (e.g., doctors, pharmacists, nutritionists) by providing them with the necessary resources to produce reliable awareness content, thereby reinforcing the credibility of public health messaging.
- In addition to practical efforts, there is an urgent need to intensify academic research and studies that explore health communication strategies and assess their effectiveness in influencing public behaviour. This will contribute to the development of evidence-based awareness policies. Promoting scientific research on the influence of digital health and supporting academic and field studies examining influencers' impact on public awareness and behaviour in health matters are also essential. This is crucial for building data-driven digital health communication strategies.
- Finally, Algerian society is responsible for actively monitoring health issues, whether through official institutions or various media platforms, to foster a comprehensive health culture. Such a culture will help *instill* the values of social awareness and collective participation, especially in light of the notable shortfall in health awareness programmes currently experienced in the country.

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