

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER-DOCTORS ON HEALTH BEHAVIOR CHANGE AMONG UNN NSUKKA CAMPUS STUDENTS.

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Abstract

The wide spread of social media has positively influenced how health information is communicated, especially through influencer doctors (medical professionals) who use media platforms like X, Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, etc. to engage a large audience. This study analyzed the impact of social media influencer doctors on health behavior change among Nsukka Campus Students (UNN). A structured survey was conducted with 400 students to evaluate their consumption of health content on social media from influencer doctors and its correlation with changes in their health behaviors such as dieting, exercising, preventive care, etc. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between frequent engagement with influencer doctors' content and the adoption of healthier behaviors. Furthermore, the survey results show that confidence in the legitimacy of influencer doctors is a significant factor in behavior change, agreeing with other studies on the significance of trust in digital health communication. Also, the study recommends government engagement with social media influencer doctors as a public health disease prevention mechanism. The study concludes that social media influencer doctors when trusted, can effectively promote health.

Keywords: *Influencer, Doctors, Health Behavior, Content, Social media, Platform*

Introduction

Social media has different uses, and one is its widely acknowledgment as an effective tool for the spreading of health information that influences people's lifestyles and behaviors (Moorhead et al., 2013). Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and X are effective channels for sharing health-related information and interventions because of their widespread reach, accessibility, and interactive features (Merchant et al., 2014).

Over the last few years, social media platforms have transformed the dissemination and consumption of health information by initiating a unique platform for health promotion and behavior change through influencers (Moorhead et al., 2013; Maher et al., 2014). There are many influencers on the SM platforms, and amongst them are 'influencer-doctors', who are certified medical professionals who reach out to their audience through their different SM handles to offer health advice, thereby utilizing their online presence and influence (Attai, 2016). They have mass followers who always engage with them by commenting on their posts on health practices. They have considerable influence over their audience, especially among the younger demographics, who often appreciate and adore them. They are often recognized by their authoritative presence, credibility, and breadth of medical expertise (Eckler & Kalyango, 2015). This is a significant development given the prominence of SM in the lives of young adults, who regularly depend on it for other communication (like sharing pictures, meeting friends), and networking activities.

Al-Deen and Hendricks (2012) posit that "social media platforms are a significant part of students' lives," and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN), presents a perfect environment to examine the impact of 'influencer-doctors' on health behaviors due to its varied student body and vibrant social media presence. According to Omekwu et al. (2014), "a good number of UNN students are active on social networking platforms," and this means that as they navigate through their timelines, they will stumble across different messages by these doctor influencers whom they supposedly will always learn from. Also, given the range of health-related problems, such as poor dieting, mental health disorders, infections, bad lifestyle choices, stress, etc., faced by university students, it is important to look into how well influencer doctors can help improve

their health-related behaviors (Wang et al., 2015). This study examines how social media platforms can help improve university students' health-related behavioral problems through influencer-doctors.

Statement Of The Problem

Since the origin of social media, there has been a change in how people relate to and influence one another (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). One of the uses of social media is being an effective tool for the spreading of health information which influences people's lifestyles and behaviour (Moorhead et al., 2013).

According to research, 61% of social media users find relevant influencers who provide satisfying information about different items and ideas on social media, and amongst them are doctor influencers who offer professional health information in an appealing and instructive manner (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). Influencer doctors have the potential to induce health behaviour changes, especially among the new generation of youths, who make up a considerable number of university students. Among this generation, 43% prefer to discover new products or services, including health-related content, through social media influencers, while 32% make decisions based on these influencers' recommendations (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024).

More so, studies also show that social media influences health behaviour, with 60% of users reporting changes to their health habits due to online information (Fox & Duggan, 2013). And 72% of online health seekers report having trust in the information provided by online healthcare professionals (HINTS, 2019).

Regardless of these figures showing the rise of doctor influencers, there is no empirical evidence to show their specific impact on health behaviour among Nigerian university students, particularly at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) campus. This gap poses a significant issue, as effective health interventions require an understanding of the mechanisms driving behaviour change. Despite the widespread assumption and belief of a positive relationship between influencer content and audience engagement, the impact of this relationship on students' health behaviours, such as adopting healthier diets, exercising regularly, or adhering to medical advice, remains unclear. Therefore, this study aims to investigate and establish the impact of social media influencer-doctors on the health behaviour of UNN Nsukka campus students. It seeks to determine if students trust these

influencers and if social media medical health advice effects behaviour change.

Research Objectives

- a. To determine the percentage of UNN Nsukka campus students who watch and read health-related content by influencer Doctors on social media.
- b. To determine the impact of social media influencer doctors' health related content on behavior change among UNN campus students.

Research Questions

- a. What percentage of UNN Nsukka campus students read and watch health-related content by Influencer Doctorson social media?
- b. Does being exposed to health-related content by influencer doctors on social media cause behavior change among UNN Nsukka campus students?

Review Of Literature

Conceptual Review:

Social Media and Health Communication: Social media has become a powerful tool for health communication in recent years, as it provides a forum for public health initiatives, health education, and the encouragement of healthy lifestyle choices (Moorhead et al., 2013). Health communication is becoming more participatory, extensive, and instantaneous due to the widespread usage of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube(Freeman et al., 2015). These platforms have improved health communication by reaching various demographics, offering live or real-time information, and promoting community development and user-generated content. They allow public health organizations to communicate with individuals directly and are progressively replacing traditional media gatekeepers and facilitating more individualized outreach.

Notwithstanding the numerous benefits of social media to health communication, it poses some challenges. One of the most pressing concerns is the ease with which content may be shared on social media, incorrect or misleading health information can swiftly spread, potentially causing injury.A good example can be drawn from, the COVID-19 pandemic, disinformation about the virus and vaccinations disseminated widelyon social media, contributing to vaccine reluctance and the

proliferation of conspiracy theories (Loomba et al., 2021). Another challenge it poses is the varying quality of health information available on social media. Unlike traditional media, where experts verify contents before broadcast or publication, social media allows anybody to share health-related information, regardless of qualification. This can make it difficult for consumers to differentiate between legitimate and untrustworthy sources of information. The lack of control and oversight on social media platforms exacerbates the situation (Chou et al., 2020).

Social Media and Influencer Doctors: Influencer doctors are a breed of medical practitioners who combine clinical experience with the wide reach of social media. These doctors often use their platforms on social media where they enjoy huge followership to educate the public on various health-related topics, including wellness recommendations and refuting medical myths. The popularity of influencer doctors stems from their ability to make difficult medical knowledge understandable, personal, and engaging (Househ, 2019). For example, Dr. Chinonso Egemba (@Aporoko Dr. on X), Dr. Kelechi Okoro (@healthertainer on Instagram), Dr. Nurudeen Shotayo (@FirstDoctor on X) etc, have amassed hundreds of thousands of fans by breaking down medical topics in a fun and understandable manner.

Influencer doctors can greatly impact public health by positively changing health behaviors and attitudes through their social media handle, especially during critical public health crises. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous influencer doctors performed essential roles of sharing virus knowledge, supporting vaccination, and fighting misinformation (Basch et al., 2020). Their capacity to communicate quickly and engage with many of the public made them important allies in the fight against the pandemic.

While the contents of these influencer doctors are effectively positive, some challenges come with it. Some impostors create catfish accounts for phony reasons, like seeking financial benefits by promoting items or services on commission. Others may want to mislead the public for ideological purposes, such as spreading anti-vaccine ideas or other health disinformation. In other situations, these accounts may be part of a larger effort to disrupt public health campaigns or create confusion during health crises (Cheng & Koh, 2020).

Health behaviour challenges among university students: University students are at a critical point in their lives, they are at the point where

they manage to navigate towards having a sound education and growing into maturity. This phase can be characterized by severe health-related behavioural issues that might influence their general well-being and academic achievement. Some of them are;

- a. **Poor eating habits;** some undergraduates find it difficult to maintain a balanced diet due to busy schedules with their studies, limited financial resources, and the availability of unhealthy food options. So they are exposed to poor dietary habits, such as consuming high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and skipping meals, which can lead to weight gain, nutritional deficiencies, and other health issues. Research shows that students with poor dietary practices frequently experience decreased academic performance and overall health problems (Adebisi, Ojo, & Oduola, 2020).
- b. **High level of stress;** Academic burdens, social obligations, and personal obstacles that revolve around university students contribute to this. Chronic stress can cause mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, lowering pupils' academic performance and general well-being. Effective stress management methods and support networks are critical for students who have these challenges (Iheanacho, Uzochukwu, & Eze, 2019).
- c. **Substance abuse;** Substance addiction, particularly the use of alcohol and other substances, is a serious issue among university students. The availability and social acceptance of these substances encourage their abuse, which can impede academic performance, lead to addiction, and cause long-term health concerns. (Okafor, Ifediora, and Chukwu, 2022).
- d. **Irregular sleep patterns;** many students have inconsistent sleep habits owing to academic pressures, social activities, and lifestyle choices. Poor sleep quality can harm cognitive functioning, academic performance, and general health (Eze & Akpan, 2020). Promoting excellent sleep hygiene and managing sleep problems are critical to improving students' health and academic performance.
- e. **Sexual health behaviours;** Problems with sexual health, such as unsafe practices and insufficient knowledge, are common among university students in Nigeria. These problems may impact students' general well-being and result in health consequences (Iwuanyanwu & Eze, 2021). This requires comprehensive sexual health education and easy access to medical services is crucial to overcome.

Addressing these health behaviour challenges that are popular among university students requires a holistic approach, and getting daily tips

from influencer doctors from their social media handles will go a long way in curbing them.

Empirical Review

Social media used as a platform for disseminating health information has changed some individuals perspectives, especially young adults, on how to engage with health content. This review examines some empirical evidence on the impact of social media influencer-doctors on health behavior change, particularly among university students.

a. Influence of Social Media on Health Behaviors

Research reveals that social media platforms are increasingly used for health promotions Whelan and Crawford (2017) found that 80% of studies reported positive outcomes for health promotion interventions using social media (p. 243). Another research work that studied how effective social media is in teaching healthy lifestyles, by Harris S. E et al (2019) mentioned that 40% of studies used media platforms to deliver health promotion interventions (p. 273). This exposes that social media can be an effective medium for teaching and inculcating healthy lifestyles among university students, which includes improved eating habits and increased physical activities. Students who follow trusted influencers and are exposed to their health-related content are more likely to be influenced by them and adopt their proposed better health practices. Moreover, another study by the World Health Organization (2019), reveals the potential of social media to promote public health, particularly in disease surveillance and health education. According to their global action plan, social media platforms can effectively disseminate accurate health information, promote healthy behaviors, and support health research.

b. Credibility of Influencer-Doctors

The credibility of influencers is crucial to their ability to influence health behavior change. Influencers with medical credentials and experience (such as doctors or health experts) tend to influence their followers more. According to Influencer Marketing Hub (2022), 72% of the younger generation who use social media trust social media influencers for health advice, especially when the influencers are recognized as experts in their professions. This conclusion is noteworthy for university students, many of whom belong to this generation, cohort and are thus more inclined to rely on social media influencer doctors, for advice on health problems.

c. Gaps in Research on Nigerian University Students

There is limited empirical research focused on Nigerian university students regardless of the growing body of literature on the global impact of social media influencers on health behaviour. Studies have yet to investigate the localized impact of influencer doctors on health behaviours in Nigeria. Given the rising use of social media among Nigerian youth, with 38% of the population having internet access as of 2023 (Statista, 2023).

Empirical evidence as reviewed above reveals that social media influencer-doctors play a critical role in promoting health behaviour change among young adults, particularly through their ability to foster trust and engagement. While global studies highlight the positive impact of these influencers, further research is needed to explore their specific effects on Nigerian university students.

Theoretical review: This study is anchored on Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory (SLT). This theory explains how people can learn and adopt behaviours through observing others, imitating and reinforcing. The theory has its core components as;

1. **Observational learning:** That people learn by imitating certain behaviors they observe.
2. **Modeling:** People tend to adopt certain behavior advocated by those they hold at high esteem.
3. **Self-Efficacy:** People will have confidence in adopting and performing behaviors.
4. **Reinforcement:** This component explains how consequences of behavior influence learning and adoption.
5. **Cognitive process:** This explains how people process information, think and make decisions in regards to the information.

The idea focuses on the reciprocal relationships between personal variables, behavior, and environmental effects. Students at UNN Nsukka may watch health behaviors modeled by social media influencer doctors, which will shape their attitudes and actions towards health practices.

Methodology

A survey design was employed for this research work, data was fetched through questionnaires as the research instrument. The study was conducted within the premises of the University of Nigeria Nsukka campus, to both male and female students who read and ticked their options as the answers to the questions on the questionnaire. The entire students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka campus comprised of

33,441 students (UNN Academic Planning Unit, 2017) formed the population of this study. Philip Meyer's (1973) previously established sample size calculations for populations ranging from 1000 to infinity at a 95 percent confidence level were utilized to determine the appropriate sample size of 370 students. However, because a larger sample size reduces the margin of error in statistical analysis (Cochran, 1977), 400 participants from the campus population were taken as the sample size for this study. 'Convenient sampling' procedure was employed as the sampling technique because prospective respondents could be easily seen, approached, and administered the questionnaire regardless of their departments and levels in school. The study enlisted the aid of four research assistants, who were assigned to distribute questionnaires to the respondents and collect them. The collected data was presented and analyzed with the use of SPSS software, and the results were summarized in tabular forms.

Hypothesis

To help address this issue from the statistical perspective, two hypotheses were formulated for test:

Hypothesis 1 If students at UNN Nsukka campus are on social media platforms like X, YouTube and Instagram, they will read and watch content by influencer doctors.

Null Hypothesis: Students at UNN Nsukka campus do not watch the content of influencer doctors they trust, regardless of their presence on social media like X, YouTube, and Instagram.

Hypothesis 2: If students at UNN Nsukka campus watch and read content by influencer doctors they trust, it will change their health behaviour.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant change in the behaviour of UNN Nsukka campus students who read and watch the content of influencer doctors they trust.

Data Presentation

The following analysis is based on data gathered from a questionnaire distributed to students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka campus. 10 of the 390 questionnaires distributed to respondents were incomplete, and 25 were not returned.

Table 1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	Male	208
	Female	182
Age	16-20	168
	21-25	175
	26-30	46
	31 and above	1
Academic Level	100 level	75
	200 level	36
	300 level	121
	400 level	107
	500 level	51

From the table above, data gathered shows there were more female respondents to their male counterparts, and from the age range listed in the questionnaire, students who are between 21-25 years responded more to the questionnaire more than students who fall in other age ranges. While more respondents of this study are in their 3rd year in school.

Table 2. SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

How often do you use social media	Never	0
	Daily	320
	Several times a week	49
	Once a week	0
	Rarely	21
Which social media platform(s) do you use the most	Facebook	118
	Instagram	113
	X or twitter	47
	Youtube	63
	Tiktok	29
Do you follow any doctor or healthcare professional on social media	No	160
	Yes	230
How often do you come across health-related posts or videos by influencer doctors on social media	Never	0
	Very often	134
	Occasionally	151
	Rare	75

Which of the following types of health-related content have you seen on social media by influencer doctors	Physical fitness and exercise	0
	Nutrition and dieting	56
	Mental health and wellness	0
	Disease prevention	23
Health related content you have seen on social media by influencer doctors.	Sexual and reproductive health	44
	All of the above	267

Data shows that 83% of the respondents use social media daily, while 12% use it several times a week, and 5% use it rarely. Among social media platforms, 34% primarily use Instagram, followed by 30% on Facebook, 17% on YouTube, 11% on Twitter, and 8% on TikTok. Regarding health professionals on social media, 58% of respondents follow doctors or healthcare providers, while 42% do not. Health-related posts by influencer doctors are frequently encountered, with 35% seeing them very often, 46% occasionally, and 19% rarely. For content type, 68% of respondents have seen all listed health topics, with 11% noting sexual and reproductive health, 14% nutrition, 8% each for physical fitness and disease prevention, and 4% for mental health content. This data suggests influencer doctors reach a broad audience, enhancing awareness on various health topics.

Table 3. HEALTH BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Have you ever made any changes to your health habits based on advice from a social media influencer doctor	No	46
	Yes	344
If yes, did it improve your health and wellness	No	52
	Yes	338
To what extent has health-related content by influencer doctors impacted your overall health awareness	Not at all	31
	Very much	0
	Moderately	151
	Slightly	208
On a scale of 1-5, how would you	Not credible	25
	Slightly credible	79

rate the credibility of health information shared by influencer doctors on social media	somewhat credible	222
	Credible	29
	Very credible	35

The data above reveals that most of the respondents (88%) have adjusted their health habits based on advice from social media influencer doctors, which means that the influencers have a strong influence on health-related behaviour.

Among the respondents, almost all 338, felt that these adjustments caused improvements in their health and wellness, suggesting that influencer doctors may play a positive role in motivating healthier choices. In terms of health awareness, responses varied: while 8% of the respondents reported no impact from influencer doctors' health content, most respondents felt some degree of influence.

About 39% perceived a moderate impact, and 53% reported a slight impact on their overall health awareness. This suggests that influencer doctors contribute meaningfully to health awareness, though for many, the influence may not be highly transformative. Regarding the credibility of health information shared by influencer doctors, the data shows a small portion (7%) viewed the information as "Not credible," while 20% found it "Slightly credible." The largest segment, at 57%, rated it as "Somewhat credible," indicating that most respondents approach this information with a degree of skepticism. A smaller group considered it "Credible" (7%) or "Very credible" (9%), showing that while influencer doctors are trusted by some, a majority may still seek additional sources or verification for health advice received through social media.

Overall, this data illustrates that while social media influencer doctors can affect health behaviours and awareness, their perceived credibility is moderate, reflecting a balance between influence and cautious engagement from the audience.

Table 4. FACTORS INFLUENCING HEALTH BEHAVIOR

What motivates you the most to follow health-related content from influencer doctors	Peer recommendations	18
	Trust in the influencer doctors	61
	Personal health concerns	66
	Popularity of the content	39
	Easy access of the information	106

	Others..... specify	0
How confident are you in making health-related decisions based on information from social media doctors	Not confident	6
	Very confident	0
	Somewhat confident	216
	Confident	168
Do you believe social media influencer doctors play a significant role in promoting healthy behaviors among students	No	37
	Yes	353

The data for the 4th section in the questionnaire indicates that 42% (106) of respondents are motivated to follow health-related content from influencer doctors because of ‘easy access to information’. Personal health concerns drive 26% (66) of respondents, while 24% (61) are motivated by trust in these influencers. A smaller portion, 15.4%, follow due to the popularity of the content, and only 7.1% are influenced by peer recommendations. No respondents indicated additional reasons in the “others” category.

Regarding confidence in making health-related decisions based on information from social media doctors, respondents who are somewhat confident are 64%, while 50% feel confident. 1%, are not confident, and no respondent was very confident in their decision-making.

Finally, regarding the perceived role of influencer doctors in promoting healthy behaviours, 91% of respondents believe these influencers play a significant role in encouraging healthy behaviours among students, whereas 9% disagree.

In summary, easy access to information (42%) and personal health concerns (26%) are the leading motivators for following health content. While respondents show varying levels of confidence, the majority view influencer doctors as positively influencing student health behaviours.

To properly test the hypotheses of this study, an examination of the relationship between ‘the dependent variable and the independent variables for hypothesis 1 was conducted using a multiple linear regression analysis as seen below.

Table 5. HYPOTHESES 1

Dependent Variable: Do you follow any doctor or healthcare professionals on social media					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	46.431 ^a	7	6.633	52.867	.000
Intercept	28.109	1	28.109	224.035	.000
Age	.188	1	.188	1.499	.222
AcademicLevel	4.520	1	4.520	36.025	.000
HowOftenSocialMediaIsUsed	4.098	2	2.049	16.331	.000
HowOftenyoucome AcrossPostsByDoctorsOnSocialMedia	19.075	2	9.538	76.018	.000
HowOftenSocialMediaIsUsed * HowOftenyoucome AcrossPostsByDoctorsOnSocialMedia	1.322	1	1.322	10.535	.001
Error	47.928	382	.125		
Total	230.000	390			
Corrected Total	94.359	389			
a. R Squared = .492 (Adjusted R Squared = .483)					

The data in the above table indicate that media usage ($p < .001$), how often respondents come across posts by doctors ($p < .001$) and academic level ($p < .001$), are important predictors of following doctors and healthcare professionals on social media. And a 49.2% variance, which is good enough to mean that these factors are important predictors of students' engagement with influencer doctor content. The data also shows a significant relationship in the interaction between social media use and the frequency of seeing doctors' posts, which suggests that how effectively social media is used in following healthcare professionals is dependent on how often students encounter posts from doctors. So, students at UNN Nsukka campus who are active social media users will frequently see health posts from influencer doctors and are more

likely to follow and engage such posts by influencer doctors, especially as their academic level increases.

To statistically test the second hypothesis posed for this study, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of exposure to influencer doctors' content on modifications in health habits. As seen in the table below.

Table 6.HYPOTHESIS 2

Dependent Variable: Have you ever made any changes to your health habits based on advice from a social media influencer doctor					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	29.551 ^a	7	4.222	146.298	.000
Intercept	11.281	1	11.281	390.925	.000
Age	1.212	1	1.212	42.014	.000
AcademicLevel	.064	1	.064	2.227	.136
HowOftenyoucomeAcrossPostsByDoctorsOnSocialMedia	13.842	2	6.921	239.850	.000
ConfidenceInTakingHealthDecisionBasedOnInfoFromInfluencerDoctors	2.144	2	1.072	37.153	.000
HowOftenyoucomeAcrossPostsByDoctorsOnSocialMedia * ConfidenceInTakingHealthDecisionBasedOnInfoFromInfluencerDoctors	.259	1	.259	8.960	.003
Error	11.023	382	.029		
Total	344.000	390			
Corrected Total	40.574	389			
a. R Squared = .728 (Adjusted R Squared = .723)					

The data above shows that age $p<.001$, how often respondents come across influencer doctors' posts $p<.001$, and confidence in making health decisions based on information from influencer doctors $p<.001$ are

significant with the respondents who make changes from influencer doctors' advice on social media. The data also shows that the interaction between how often respondents come across posts by doctors on social media and confidence in making health decisions based on influencer doctors' posts is significant. The approximately 72.8% of the variance explained by the model, is a high explanatory power indicating that the variables effectively predict whether students are likely to change health behaviours based on influencer doctors' content.

Simply put, the findings show that UNN students are more likely to make health changes when they frequently engage with and trust the messages of influencer doctors on social media.

Findings Of The Study

The findings of this study show a lot about social media, influencer doctors, and exposure to health information on social media, which affects health behaviour change.

Thus, this study reveals that social media influencer doctors make impact in the health behaviour change among UNN Nsukka campus students because they frequently visit social media platforms daily. Table 2 provides the data which shows that almost all the respondents 320 (83%) visit different social media platforms daily and a good number of them 134 (33%) and 151 (46%) often and occasionally come across health messages on social media. This means that being on social media regularly exposes one to health-related messages from the supposedly 'doctor influencers'. This affirms findings from other studies (Whelan and Crawford, 2017. & Harris S. E et al 2019) that were captured in the earlier part of this study. Their studies posit that a good number of youths (students) use the social media, which makes the social media an effective tool for health intervention schemes.

Also, the findings of this study align with almost the principles of the Social Learning Theory, which anchored this study. From Table 2, we can see that a high percentage (83%) of the respondents visit their different social media platforms daily, and a good number of them 267 (68%) see different health tips from influencer doctors, which completely agrees with the 'observational learning' that the SLT advocates. Thus, making social media the right environment where people can learn good health lifestyles by watching videos and imitating what they have seen.

Table 2 also shows that most of the respondents (230) follow influencer doctors on social media, which means they students see them as models they look up to. This agrees with another component of the

SLT, that people tend to adopt certain behaviours advocated by those they hold in high esteem.

Table 4 provides the data which supports the confidence aspect of the SLT, and reveals that 49% of the respondents are confident, while 63% of them are somewhat confident of the posts and health tips they get from influencer doctors on social media. This means self-efficacy comes into play while adopting and imitating behaviors and making the findings of this study to a great length supports the components of the SLT.

For the hypotheses posed for this study, findings as seen in Table 5 strongly support the first hypothesis which is, 'If students at UNN Nsukka campus are on social media platforms like X, YouTube, and Instagram, they will read and watch content by influencer doctors'. The table shows that except for age, all the variables featured in the table have significant relationship. The interaction between social media use and exposure to doctors' posts further reinforces the hypothesis, suggesting that high social media engagement and frequent exposure to healthcare content are crucial for following influencer doctors. Therefore, this study rejects the null and accepts hypothesis 1 of this study.

The second hypothesis: 'If students at UNN Nsukka campus watch and read content by influencer doctors they trust, it will change their health behavior', is strongly supported by the findings of this study. Table 6 shows significant results for frequency of exposure and confidence in influencer doctors' advice indicating that regular interaction with the influencers' content, trust, and credibility play essential roles in predicting health behavior changes. Additionally, the significant interaction between exposure and confidence further supports the hypothesis by highlighting that trust and visibility have an amplifying effect on the likelihood of behavior modification. Also, like the first hypotheses, this study rejects the null but accepts hypothesis 2.

The two hypotheses supported by the findings of this study show that social media influencer doctors' posts influence and affect behavior change among UNN Nsukka campus students who are on social media.

Recommendations

The usefulness of the social media cannot be overemphasized. If certified doctors who are on social media offer health tips to their followers regularly, it will help their followers form and live a better the lifestyles. It will make getting a reasonable health information for a healthy lifestyle a click away for many.

So this study recommends:

1. The Ministry of Health should find a way to work with influencer doctors and use their platforms as a mechanism to combat the high spread of infectious diseases and promote a healthy lifestyle to the public. With the impact these influencer doctors have on their followers, engaging them during health epidemics will surely prove positive in limiting the widespread of diseases, especially among the youth.
2. Sensitization programs on this subject should be carried out in rural areas for secondary school students to allay them of the fear of not trusting and believing in health messages from influencer doctors on social media.
3. Broader studies should be carried out on this to know how effective influencer doctors are in the behaviour change of university students in the different regions and the country at large.

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