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Social Media-Mediated Health Information and its Impacts on Consumer Behavior and Health Outcomes at City Government of Mandaluyong City, Philippines

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of social media-mediated health information on the health-related consumer behavior and outcomes of residents in Mandaluyong City, Philippines, using a descriptive correlational design. The research aimed to understand how the perceived credibility of information sources, personal health beliefs, attitudes, and social influences shape consumer health behaviors. Additionally, it explored the health outcomes associated with social media health information, categorized into positive health changes, mixed mental health impacts, and negative health risks. Employing a quantitative approach, data were gathered through surveys and analyzed using statistical tools such as weighted mean, standard deviation, and Pearson r-correlation coefficient. The study addressed three main objectives: analyzing the influence of social media-mediated health information on health-related consumer behavior, examining the health outcomes from consuming health information via social media, and determining the significant relationship between social media health information and health outcomes. The findings revealed that perceived credibility, personal health beliefs, and social influence significantly affected health-related consumer behavior. Participants who trusted credible sources and adopted proactive health attitudes reported positive health changes, whereas misinformation and negative social influences contributed to mixed mental health impacts and negative health risks. Furthermore, a significant relationship was established between social media-mediated health information and health outcomes, highlighting the critical role of social media in shaping health behaviors and outcomes among residents of Mandaluyong City. These results underscore the need for educational initiatives to enhance health literacy and the importance of reliable health information sources in mitigating the risks associated with social media engagement.

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1. Introduction

The rapid proliferation of social media as a dominant platform for disseminating health information has transformed how individuals access, evaluate, and act upon health-related content. Health consumers today are increasingly reliant on social media to gather health information, which raises critical questions about the credibility of these sources and the subsequent impact on health behavior and outcomes. Unlike traditional sources of health information—such as physicians or government agencies—social media offers a diverse and often unregulated array of voices, ranging from professional health organizations to unverified lay individuals. This shift in the information landscape has significant implications for how consumers interpret and utilize health advice, which, in turn, influences their overall health outcomes.

In the context of Mandaluyong City, a densely populated urban area in the Philippines, the ubiquity of social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, has made health information more accessible than ever before. However, the credibility of this information remains questionable. Studies have demonstrated that consumers' trust in health information sources can affect their health-seeking behavior and decision-making processes.

For instance, Chang, Zhang, and Gwizdka (2020) [5] found that the perceived credibility of online health information is influenced by the type of source and the individual's eHealth literacy. This finding is echoed by Dwyer and Liu (2012) [3], who observed that consumers with lower trust in health professionals are more likely to rely on non-traditional information sources, such as online forums, thereby adopting self-care practices that may deviate from evidence-based recommendations.

Moreover, the way health information is presented—whether through text, images, or a combination—plays a crucial role in how it is understood and acted upon. Schubbe *et al.* (2020) [4] emphasized that pictorial health information significantly improves comprehension, especially among individuals with low health literacy, a finding particularly relevant in diverse urban communities such as Mandaluyong City. Additionally, the study by Pifalo *et al.* (1997) [6] underscores the broader value of consumer health information, noting that library-provided health resources led to increased patient-provider communication and reduced anxiety, indicating that access to credible health information has tangible effects on consumer well-being.

Despite the growing body of literature on consumer health information, there remains a gap in understanding the role of social media-mediated health information in shaping health behaviors, particularly in low- to middle-income urban settings. This study seeks to fill that gap by focusing on how social media-mediated health information influences health-related behaviors and outcomes among residents of Mandaluyong City. Specifically, it will examine how perceived credibility, personal health beliefs, social influence, and peer behavior interact with the consumption of health information on social media platforms. The study will also explore the associated health outcomes, including positive health changes, mental health impacts, and potential negative risks, building on existing findings that underscore the complexity of consumer health information behaviors and outcomes (Or & Tao, 2014) [7].

This research aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of the relationship between social media-mediated health information and consumer health behaviors, with the ultimate goal of informing public health strategies that leverage the benefits of social media while mitigating its risks.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed to examine how social media-mediated health information impacts the health-related consumer behavior and health outcomes of residents in Mandaluyong City, focusing on the perceived credibility of information sources, personal health beliefs and attitudes, social influence and peer behavior, and to determine the significant relationship between these influences and the resulting health outcomes, including positive health changes, mixed mental health impacts, and negative health risks.

More specifically, it aimed to answer the following:

1. How does social media-mediated health information influence the health-related consumer behavior of residents in Mandaluyong City in the following aspects:
 - 1.1 perceived credibility of information sources;
 - 1.2 personal health beliefs and attitudes; and
 - 1.3 social influence and peer behavior?
2. What are the health outcomes associated with the

consumption of health information from social media among residents of Mandaluyong City in term of:

- 2.1 positive health outcomes;
- 2.2 mixed mental health impacts; and
- 2.3 negative health risks?

3. Is there a significant relationship between social media-mediated health information influence and health outcomes associated with the consumption of health information from social media among residents of Mandaluyong City?

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationship between social media-mediated health information and health-related consumer behavior, as well as the resulting health outcomes among residents of Mandaluyong City. The descriptive component aimed to document how social media influences various aspects of health behavior, such as the perceived credibility of information, personal health beliefs, and social influences. The correlational aspect of the study sought to identify significant relationships between these influences and health outcomes, including positive health changes, mental health impacts, and potential health risks.

The target population for this study consisted of residents of Mandaluyong City aged 15 years and above, as recorded in the 2020 census, which indicated a total of 309,441 eligible consumers. Using the Raosoft sample size calculator with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the minimum sample size was determined to be 384 respondents. A random sampling technique was employed to ensure that the sample was representative of the population.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed to collect data, consisting of three sections. The first section gathered demographic information, including age, gender, educational attainment, and social media usage patterns. The second section focused on the perceived credibility of social media health information, personal health beliefs, and social influence factors. The final section measured various health outcomes, such as changes in health behavior, mental health impacts, and reported health risks.

The questionnaire used a Likert scale to capture respondents' attitudes and beliefs regarding the credibility of social media health information and its influence on their health-related decisions. To ensure the instrument's validity, it was pre-tested on a small sample of 30 respondents, and necessary adjustments were made based on feedback.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the respondents' demographic characteristics and social media usage patterns. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between social media influences—such as perceived credibility, health beliefs, and social influence—and the resulting health outcomes. The level of significance was set at 0.05 to determine whether the relationships observed were statistically significant.

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board, and informed consent was secured from all respondents. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, and they were given the option to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

3. Results and Discussions

Table 1: Social Media-Mediated Health Information Influence the Health-Related Consumer Behavior of Residents in Mandaluyong City in terms of Perceived Credibility of Information Sources

Perceived Credibility of Information Sources	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I am strongly influenced by the health information I receive from social media platforms.	2.14	MinI
2. I find that health advice on social media influences me as much as information from healthcare professionals.	2.12	MinI
3. I believe that health-related content shared by social media influencers strongly influences my perceptions of credibility.	2.10	MinI
4. I often feel influenced to verify the sources of health information before trusting social media posts.	2.13	MinI
5. My personal experience shows that health information from social media strongly influences my beliefs about accuracy.	2.16	MinI
Overall Perceived Credibility of Information Sources	2.13	MinI

Note: 1.00-1.49 – Not Influenced (NI), 1.50-2.49 – Minimally Influenced (MinI), 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Influenced (ModI), 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Influenced (SI)

Table 1 indicates that residents of Mandaluyong City experience a minimal influence from social media-mediated health information regarding the perceived credibility of information sources. The average mean scores for each item ranged from 2.10 to 2.16, all falling within the "Minimally Influenced" (MinI) category. This suggests that while participants acknowledge some level of influence from social media health information, it is not strong enough to be deemed significant. For instance, the lowest mean score of 2.10 indicates that individuals are somewhat skeptical about the credibility of health-related content shared by social media influencers, reflecting a cautious approach towards the information they encounter online. Similarly, the consistently low scores across all items imply that respondents are not fully trusting the health information they receive through these platforms. This aligns with findings by Pifalo *et al.* (1997) [6], who noted that the effectiveness of consumer health information relies heavily on the perceived credibility and trustworthiness of the source, which influences users' behaviors and health outcomes.

Furthermore, the overall mean score of 2.13 reinforces the notion that perceived credibility remains a significant concern among residents. Although there is a recognition of some influence, the results suggest that residents prioritize verifying information from more authoritative sources, such as healthcare professionals. The finding that individuals feel minimally influenced to verify health information from social media before trusting it underscores the need for greater public education on evaluating the credibility of online health information. As Or and Tao (2014) [7] pointed out, while consumer health information technologies (CHITs) show potential benefits for self-management, their effectiveness is often contingent on users' trust in the information presented. Overall, this data indicates that while social media plays a role in shaping health-related consumer behavior, the residents of Mandaluyong City approach it with a degree of skepticism, suggesting that further efforts are necessary to enhance trust and reliability in social media health communications.

Table 2: Social Media-Mediated Health Information Influence the Health-Related Consumer Behavior of Residents in Mandaluyong City in terms of Personal Health Beliefs and Attitudes

Personal Health Beliefs and Attitudes	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Health information on social media has strongly influenced my views on personal health.	3.15	ModI
2. I am strongly influenced to follow health tips or advice from social media to improve my health.	3.17	ModI
3. Social media content has strongly influenced the way I think about diet and exercise.	3.14	ModI
4. I feel strongly influenced in managing my health after consuming health information from social media.	3.16	ModI
5. I rely on social media health information to make decisions about my health, with strong influence.	3.13	ModI
Overall Personal Health Beliefs and Attitudes	3.15	ModI

Note: 1.00-1.49 – Not Influenced (NI), 1.50-2.49 – Minimally Influenced (MinI), 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Influenced (ModI), 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Influenced (SI)

Table 2 demonstrates that social media-mediated health information has a moderate influence on the personal health beliefs and attitudes of residents in Mandaluyong City, as indicated by mean scores ranging from 3.13 to 3.17 across all items. Each item reflects a perception of significant impact, with scores comfortably within the "Moderately Influenced" (ModI) category. For instance, the statement regarding health information on social media influencing participants' views on personal health received a mean score of 3.15, suggesting that individuals are actively integrating social media health information into their beliefs and practices. This level of

influence underscores the vital role that social media plays in shaping health-related attitudes, particularly as individuals appear empowered to follow health tips and modify their behaviors based on the content they consume online. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which emphasizes the potential benefits of using consumer health information technologies (CHITs) to enhance self-management of health conditions, such as diabetes, through increased access to information (Or & Tao, 2014). Furthermore, the overall mean score of 3.15 reinforces the conclusion that residents are increasingly relying on social

media for health-related information and decision-making, reflecting a shift in how health behaviors are influenced in the digital age. The relatively high mean scores suggest that individuals are not merely passive consumers of health information but are actively applying it to their daily lives, impacting their dietary choices, exercise routines, and overall health management strategies. However, while the influence is noteworthy, it also raises concerns about the accuracy and

reliability of the information being consumed, highlighting the need for critical evaluation of health content on social media platforms. This emphasizes the importance of educating residents on discerning credible information sources to ensure that their health beliefs and practices are based on accurate and trustworthy information, ultimately improving their overall health outcomes.

Table 3: Social Media-Mediated Health Information Influence the Health-Related Consumer Behavior of Residents in Mandaluyong City in terms of Social Influence and Peer Behavior

Social Influence and Peer Behavior	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. My health decisions are strongly influenced by what my peers share on social media.	3.18	ModI
2. I am strongly influenced to try health practices recommended by people in my social media network.	3.17	ModI
3. I feel influenced to discuss health topics with friends and family based on what I read on social media.	3.14	ModI
4. I feel strong pressure to follow certain health trends because they are popular on social media.	3.15	ModI
5. My peers' health-related posts on social media strongly inspire me to change my health habits.	3.16	ModI
Overall Social Influence and Peer Behavior	3.16	ModI

Note: 1.00-1.49 – Not Influenced (NI), 1.50-2.49 – Minimally Influenced (MinI), 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Influenced (ModI), 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Influenced (SI)

Table 3 illustrates that social media significantly influences the health-related consumer behaviors of residents in Mandaluyong City through social influence and peer behaviors. The mean scores for all items related to social influence range from 3.14 to 3.18, indicating a "Moderately Influenced" (ModI) level. Specifically, the highest mean score of 3.18 reflects that participants feel a strong influence from peers when making health decisions based on social media content. This finding suggests that the social media landscape serves as a powerful platform for shaping health behaviors, where peer recommendations and popular trends become key determinants in individual health-related choices. Furthermore, the results indicate that residents are not only influenced by their peers to adopt specific health practices but also engage in discussions about health topics motivated by social media content.

The findings align with existing literature regarding trust and sources of health information. Research by Hesse *et al.* (2005) ^[1] underscores the profound shift in how patients obtain health information, revealing that the majority of individuals turn to online sources before consulting healthcare providers. While physicians remain trusted sources of health information, the increasing reliance on social media creates both challenges and opportunities for health communication. The influence of social media can promote positive health behaviors but also risks spreading misinformation, as individuals may prioritize peer validation over the accuracy of the content. This complexity necessitates a critical approach to health information consumption, where residents in Mandaluyong City must balance peer-driven insights with reliable and credible sources to make informed health decisions.

Table 4: Health Outcomes Associated with the Consumption of Health Information from Social Media Among Residents of Mandaluyong City in terms of Positive Health Outcomes

Positive Health Outcomes	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I believe that health information from social media has improved my overall health awareness.	3.01	ModI
2. Consuming health information on social media has encouraged me to adopt healthier lifestyle choices.	3.03	ModI
3. The health tips I find on social media have positively impacted my daily health routines.	3.05	ModI
4. I feel more informed about health issues after consuming information from social media platforms.	2.99	ModI
5. Social media health content has motivated me to seek professional medical advice when necessary.	3.02	ModI
Overall Positive Health Outcomes	3.02	ModI

Note: 1.00-1.49 – Not Influenced (NI), 1.50-2.49 – Minimally Influenced (MinI), 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Influenced (ModI), 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Influenced (SI)

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that residents of Mandaluyong City perceive moderate positive health outcomes from consuming health information on social media. With mean scores ranging from 2.99 to 3.05, the responses reflect a consistent belief that social media contributes to improved health awareness and encourages healthier lifestyle choices. Specifically, the statement "The health tips I find on social media have positively impacted my daily health routines" garnered the highest mean score of 3.05, suggesting that users actively integrate the health advice

they encounter online into their daily lives. However, the lowest mean score of 2.99 for the statement regarding feeling informed about health issues indicates a slight ambivalence, suggesting that while social media plays a role in health awareness, there may still be gaps in the quality or comprehensiveness of the information consumed.

The overall perceived credibility of health information sources from social media is assessed at a mean of 3.02, reinforcing the moderate influence of this information on the respondents' health behaviors. This aligns with findings by

Hesse *et al.* (2020) ^[1], which emphasize the necessity for credible health information sources on social media, particularly during health crises. The perceived benefits of health information from social media could translate into improved health behaviors, yet the moderate influence also

signals potential risks associated with misinformation. Therefore, while social media serves as a valuable tool for health education, ongoing efforts to ensure the accuracy and reliability of shared information are essential for fostering a healthier community.

Table 5: Health Outcomes Associated with the Consumption of Health Information from Social Media Among Residents of Mandaluyong City in terms of Mixed Mental Health Impacts

Mixed Mental Health Impacts	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I have experienced both positive and negative emotions after engaging with health content on social media.	3.05	ModI
2. Consuming health information on social media sometimes leads to confusion or uncertainty about my health choices.	3.05	ModI
3. I feel overwhelmed by the amount of health information I encounter on social media.	3.07	ModI
4. Discussions about health topics on social media can sometimes create anxiety or stress for me.	3.03	ModI
5. I find it challenging to discern which health information on social media is relevant to my mental well-being.	3.05	ModI
Overall Mixed Mental Health Impacts	3.05	ModI

Note: 1.00-1.49 – Not Influenced (NI), 1.50-2.49 – Minimally Influenced (MinI), 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Influenced (ModI), 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Influenced (SI)

Table 5 presents an analysis of the mixed mental health impacts associated with the consumption of health information from social media among residents of Mandaluyong City. The mean scores for each item in this category range from 3.03 to 3.07, indicating a moderate level of influence on respondents' mental health. Notably, the statement "I feel overwhelmed by the amount of health information I encounter on social media" received the highest mean score of 3.07, suggesting that while individuals may seek health information online, they often find the sheer volume of content to be excessive and potentially distressing. Additionally, consistent mean scores of 3.05 for statements regarding experiencing both positive and negative emotions and the challenges of discerning relevant health information further emphasize the complexity of individuals' emotional responses to social media health content.

Moreover, the overall perceived credibility of information sources in this context is rated at 3.05, reflecting a moderate

trust in the health information encountered on social media. This aligns with findings from Fergie *et al.* (2015) ^[10], which highlight how young adults engage with user-generated health content on social media, navigating between professionally produced websites and social media platforms to find relevant information about conditions such as diabetes and common mental health disorders. Participants in their study noted the challenges of assessing content credibility, as well as the emotional impact of navigating conflicting health messages online. The current findings indicate that while social media serves as a platform for health information, it can also lead to confusion, anxiety, and stress, particularly when discussions surrounding health topics become overwhelming. These results underscore the importance of fostering media literacy and critical thinking skills among social media users, enabling them to evaluate the credibility and relevance of health information while managing the emotional impacts of their online engagement.

Table 6: Health Outcomes Associated with the Consumption of Health Information from Social Media Among Residents of Mandaluyong City in terms of Negative Health Risks

Negative Health Risks	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. I have encountered misleading or inaccurate health information on social media that has affected my decisions.	3.11	ModI
2. I believe that some health content on social media may promote unhealthy behaviors or attitudes.	3.09	ModI
3. Consuming certain health-related posts on social media has made me anxious about my health.	3.10	ModI
4. I have felt pressured to conform to health trends promoted on social media, which may not be suitable for me.	3.08	ModI
5. My trust in health information from social media has been compromised due to exposure to unreliable sources.	3.12	ModI
Overall Negative Health Risks	3.10	ModI

Note: 1.00-1.49 – Not Influenced (NI), 1.50-2.49 – Minimally Influenced (MinI), 2.50-3.49 – Moderately Influenced (ModI), 3.50-4.00 – Strongly Influenced (SI)

Table 6 provides awareness into the negative health risks associated with the consumption of health information from social media among residents of Mandaluyong City. The mean scores for each item in this category range from 3.08 to 3.12, all indicating a moderate level of influence on respondents' perceptions of health-related content. The highest mean score of 3.12 is attributed to the statement "My trust in health information from social media has been

compromised due to exposure to unreliable sources." This suggests that frequent encounters with misleading or inaccurate information significantly impact users' overall trust in the health content they encounter on these platforms. Additionally, respondents express concern regarding the promotion of unhealthy behaviors and the anxiety caused by certain health-related posts, highlighting the complex relationship between social media engagement and

individuals' mental and physical health.

The overall negative health risks score of 3.10 reinforces the concern that social media can contribute to harmful health behaviors and decision-making processes. This finding resonates with the work of Fergie *et al.* (2015)^[10], which discusses how young adults navigate the vast amount of health-related content online, often encountering conflicting information that can lead to unhealthy attitudes and anxiety. Their research indicates that users are aware of the potential

risks associated with engaging with user-generated health content and are actively negotiating the credibility of the information they consume. The current findings from Mandaluyong City underline the urgent need for improving health literacy and critical evaluation skills among social media users, enabling them to discern credible sources from unreliable ones and mitigate the adverse effects of health misinformation prevalent in online environments.

Table 7: Relationship Between Social Media-Mediated Health Information Influence and Health Outcomes Associated with the Consumption of Health Information from Social Media Among Residents of Mandaluyong City

N	df	Computed r-value	p-value	Verbal Interpretation
384	383	0.758	< 0.00001	Significant Positive Correlation

Tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance

Table 7 illustrates the relationship between social media-mediated health information influence and health outcomes associated with the consumption of health information among residents of Mandaluyong City. The computed r-value of 0.758 indicates a significant positive correlation between these two variables, suggesting that as individuals' consumption of health information from social media increases, so too do their perceived health outcomes. This strong correlation reflects the notion that effective health communication on social media can lead to improved health awareness, informed decision-making, and positive lifestyle changes. The significance of the p-value, which is less than 0.00001, reinforces the robustness of this finding, indicating that the likelihood of this correlation occurring by chance is exceedingly low.

These results align with the findings of Fergie *et al.* (2015)^[10], who explored young adults' experiences in seeking health information online, emphasizing that user-generated content on social media can significantly impact individuals' health-related perceptions and behaviors. Furthermore, Li and Wang (2018)^[11] highlighted the importance of trust, emotional support, and the satisfaction of autonomy needs in influencing health-information-seeking intentions on social media. Their research suggests that trust plays a crucial role in how individuals engage with health content, potentially affecting their overall health outcomes. The significant positive correlation in this study indicates that residents of Mandaluyong City who actively engage with health-related content on social media may experience enhanced health outcomes.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Residents of Mandaluyong City exhibit minimal influence from social media health information on their perceived credibility of information sources, indicating a cautious approach towards trusting health-related content shared online. However, social media has a moderate influence on the personal health beliefs and attitudes of residents, with individuals actively integrating health information from these platforms into their daily practices. Furthermore, social media significantly influences health-related consumer behaviors in Mandaluyong City, as residents are notably swayed by peer recommendations and popular trends in their health decision-making. Additionally, residents perceive moderate positive health outcomes from consuming health information on social media, suggesting that it enhances health awareness and promotes healthier lifestyle choices despite some concerns about information quality. In terms of

mental health impacts, the consumption of health information from social media leads to mixed outcomes, with individuals feeling overwhelmed by the volume of content while also experiencing both positive and negative emotional responses. Meanwhile, residents recognize moderate negative health risks associated with social media health information, particularly regarding compromised trust due to unreliable sources and the promotion of unhealthy behaviors. Lastly, a significant positive correlation (r-value of 0.758) exists between the influence of social media-mediated health information and health outcomes among residents of Mandaluyong City, indicating that increased engagement with health content on social media correlates with better perceived health outcomes.

Based on the findings regarding social media's influence on health beliefs and behaviors among residents of Mandaluyong City, several recommendations are proposed by school leaders in basic and higher education, along with the City Health Officer. First, school leaders should implement educational programs that focus on improving health literacy among students and residents alike. These programs should teach critical evaluation skills to help individuals assess the credibility of health information found on social media and distinguish reliable sources from misinformation. Second, the City Health Officer, in collaboration with health professionals, should actively engage with social media platforms to share accurate, evidence-based health information. By doing so, they can counteract the spread of misinformation and promote healthier behaviors within the community. Partnerships with social media influencers can further increase the reach and relatability of these messages. Third, community-based support groups, facilitated by school leaders and health professionals, should be established to provide residents with a platform to discuss health-related topics and share experiences influenced by social media. These groups would offer peer support, helping individuals manage the overwhelming volume of health information online. Lastly, ongoing research should be encouraged by educational institutions and the City Health Office to track the evolving influence of social media on health behaviors and outcomes, ensuring that strategies remain relevant and effective in promoting public health.

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