


Transformation in Health: Social Media Physician in Türkiye¹

Osman Erođlu² 

Sađlıkta Dönüşüm: Türkiye’de Sosyal Medya Hekimliği	Transformation in Health: Social Media Physician in Türkiye
Öz <p>Bu çalışmanın amacı; sosyal medya hekimliğini anlamaya ve açıklamaya çalışmaktır. Bu çalışmada öncelikle kurumsal çerçevede sosyal medya hekimliğinin kavramının kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturduđunu düşünölen piyasa kurumsal mantığından ve sosyal medyadan söz edilmiştir. Araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemiyle yürütölen bir vaka analizi çalışması olup bu çalışmada veri üçgenlemesi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada, Türkiye’de 500,000’den fazla takipçisi olan 20 sosyal medya hekiminin 1000 paylaşımı içerik analizi ile incelenmiştir. Daha sonra elde edilen veriler ışığında Instagram kullanan farklı uzmanlık alanlarından 10 hekimle derinlemesine yüz yüze yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, sosyal medya hekimliği kavramının ortaya çıkışı piyasa kurumsal mantığı ve sosyal medya süreçlerinin etkileşimiyle gerçekleştiđi ifade edilmiş olup kavram tanımlanmıştır.</p>	Abstract <p>The aim of this study is to try to understand and explain social media physicians. In this study, firstly, the market institutional logic and social media, which are thought to form the conceptual framework of the concept of social media medicine in the institutional framework, are mentioned. The research is a case study conducted with qualitative research methodology and data triangulation is used in this study. In the study, 1000 posts of 20 social media physicians with more than 500,000 followers in Turkey were analyzed through content analysis. Then, in-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 physicians from different specialties using Instagram. As a result of the research, it was stated that the emergence of the concept of social media physician was realized through the interaction of market institutional logic and social media processes and the concept was defined.</p>
Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Medya Hekimliği, Kurumsal Mantıklar, Sosyal Medya, Türk Sađlık Alanı	Keywords: Social Media Physician, Institutional Logics, Social Media, Turkish Health Care Field
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² Assoc.Prof.Dr., Mardin Artuklu University, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Business Administration, osmaneroglu@artuklu.edu.tr
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1. Introduction

The term “social media physician” is relatively new, and its use emerged alongside the increasing integration of social media into healthcare communication. The concept likely began to gain traction in the mid-2000s as social media platforms such as Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), X (formerly known as Twitter, 2006), Instagram (2010) and TikTok (2016) became widely accessible and utilized by physicians to share knowledge, engage with patients, and build networks. The advent of the concept of social media physician, which is the focus of this study and can not pinpoint an exact date or citation for the first use of the term, is thought to have occurred as a result of two critical processes. The interaction of market logic, which has long been influential in the health sector, and social media, which has gained an important place in our lives with the digitalisation process, represents a significant area of interest. In recent decades, many public institutions have undergone significant transformations from a public institutional logic that is characterized by public service values to a market institutional logic that is centered on efficiency, competition and market-driven decision making. Since the field is also affected by the market logic, which is the trigger of this transformation, the theoretical part of the study consists of institutional logics.

The concept of institutional logics was first used in the literature by Alford and Friedland (1985) to explain contradictory institutional practices and beliefs in contemporary Western societies. Institutional logics, as defined by Friedland and Alford (1991) as "the worldview that categorises and gives meaning to social action", are the dynamics that shape organisational practices and arrangements. The coexistence of multiple logics within or outside organisational domains, and the dominance of a single logic, can give rise to or precipitate an institutional change at the organisational level (Reay & Hinings, 2005). Institutional change occurs when the dominant institutional logic is replaced by new institutional structures as a result of the dissolution of norms, rules, codes, practices and routines established in a particular organisational field as a result of various dynamics (Thornton et al., 2012: p.164). In Türkiye, since the founding of the Republic, the management of public hospitals has been dominated by an institutional logic that can be described as a "public service logic." However, significant changes have occurred as a result of the impact of neo-liberal economic policies, which have been in place since the 1980s, especially with the implementation of the health transformation programme in 2003. It is evident that market logic is becoming an increasingly prominent alternative to institutional logic. An alternative institutional logic has begun to emerge more prominently in recent years (Aksoy, 2007; Koç, 2012; Özseven et al., 2014; Yıldız & Özkoç, 2017; Gürses & Danişman, 2017). Furthermore, the influence of market logic in the healthcare sector is being compounded by the advent of social media, which has facilitated the dissemination of information and ideas in the digital age.

With the rapid development of technology, the ways people communicate have also undergone a profound transformation. The use of social media has become an integral part of people's daily lives, with its frequency of use and popularity increasing rapidly in recent years. Social media, in conjunction with technological products and applications, has permeated nearly every aspect of an individual's daily life. Social media is a powerful tool that enables collaboration among users and serves as a social interaction mechanism for a diverse range of individuals. The content created and exchanged within virtual communities through the use of social media is utilised by billions of people for the purposes of communication and connection. As in many other areas of life, social media is employed in the health sector to

disseminate messages to followers, enhance accessibility, capture the attention of the target audience and foster trust. In particular, social media has become a medium that facilitates individuals' access to information and offers immediate interaction. In the field of healthcare, digital platforms are influencing the way in which patients and physicians interact with one another. The potential for social media to facilitate communication between individuals, healthcare professionals and patients about health problems is considerable. This could lead to improvements in health outcomes by introducing a new dimension to healthcare services. Social media encompasses a multitude of internet-based networks that facilitate interaction between patients, physicians, and institutions in a myriad of ways (Carr & Hayes, 2015); furthermore, it has emerged as a prominent resource, actively utilized by physicians, a pivotal element within the healthcare sector.

In recent years, the increasing demand for digital communication and patient education encouraged many physicians to engage with social media, especially as patients began to seek health information online (Ahmed et al., 2020). Social media provides several advantages for physicians, including: improved access to information (Rahman, 2023), enhanced professional development (Agha, 2018), public health advocacy (Blanton & Peterson, 2022) and accurate health messaging (Brennan et al., 2022). The reasons for physicians' increased use of social media are manifold and include professional development, as well as the provision of timely and accurate health information to the public (Chan et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Royan et al., 2022; Atef et al., 2023). This online interaction can become an important component of physicians' professional identities. The power of social media has led to the emergence of social media physicians, which is the focus of this study, as a new research area in the healthcare sector. Social media physician represents a novel area of practice in which physicians engage with patients through various digital platforms, including Q&A, live broadcasts, and the sharing of patient experiences and success stories. Additionally, physicians utilize social media to disseminate information within their respective fields, such as articles, blog posts, general health information, and health advice. They also disseminate news related to developments in the field of health, including new research findings, health policies, and regulations. Furthermore, social media enables physicians to raise awareness about health-related issues and to facilitate more convenient and accessible health services. As social media use by physicians has become more widespread, it has prompted both excitement about the opportunities it offers and concerns about its ethical and professional implications (Abelson, 2022; Green, 2023).

This study will initially present the market institutional logic and social media, which are considered to constitute the conceptual framework of the concept of social media physician within the institutional framework. In the research method, the physicians with the highest number of followers in Türkiye were analysed using content analysis on Instagram. Subsequently, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with physicians who used Instagram, based on the data obtained. The findings of the research reveal how social media physician is viewed in Türkiye and provide a basis for comparative research to be conducted with other countries in the future.

2. Literature review

2.1. Health and Market Logic

In their 1991 study, Friedland and Alford further developed the concept of institutional logic in the context of exploring the relationships between individuals, organisations and society. Friedland and Alford initially classified institutional logic into five mutually exclusive categories: capitalist market, bureaucratic state, family, democracy and religion (1991, p.242). Subsequently, Thornton et al. (2012) augmented the number of these logics and incorporated the concept of 'profession' into the institutional logic. Furthermore, Thornton et al. (2012) replaced the concept of 'democracy' in the initial definitions with the concept of 'company', resulting in a total of six institutional logics. The contradiction or conflict between the existing institutional logic in the organisational field gives rise to institutional change. Institutional change can be defined as the transformation or development of established institutional practices in a particular organisational field, accompanied by the dominance of a new institutional structure (Thornton et al., 2012, pp. 164-165). In other words, institutional change refers to the transformation and development of established practices, rules, material practices, and cultural symbols, leading to a new form of dominant institutional logic and thus a new institutional order (Gümüştaş, 2018, p.28). The institutional logics that give rise to institutional change in the organisational field has been the subject of considerable academic scrutiny.

The institutional logics that drive institutional change in the organisational field may emerge or evolve through processes of transformation or development. Transformational change may manifest in the form of displacement, decomposition and mixture, whereas developmental change may occur through assimilation, elaboration, expansion and contraction (Thornton et al., 2012). One of the earliest studies to employ the institutional logic approach at the sectoral level was conducted by Leblebici et al. (1991), which examined the evolution of institutional logic in the radio broadcasting sector in the United States. The study examined the manner in which institutional practices within an inter-organizational field evolve over time. In his study of US higher education publications from 1958 to 1990, Thornton (2002) demonstrated that as the editorial logic was superseded by the market institutional logic over time, the organisational structure underwent a transformation, and the influence of the professional logic in determining the organisational structure diminished, while the market logic gained ascendancy. Lounsbury (2002) conducted a historical analysis of the US finance field (1945-1993), demonstrating how the transformation of the regulatory logic that dominated the finance field into a market logic shaped the professionalisation of finance professions. Rao et al. (2003) conducted research in the field of gastronomy in France, wherein they discovered that the logic of classical cuisine was supplanted by the logic of new (*nouvelle*) cuisine. This shift in dominant institutional logic prompted chefs to abandon classical cuisine. In Glynn and Lounsbury's (2005) analysis of critics' reviews of Atlanta Symphony Orchestra performances, it is emphasised that the traditional aesthetic logic has undergone a transformation into a commercially oriented market logic, as a result of the diminishing resources available to the orchestra. Reay and Hinings (2005) discovered that the Alberta healthcare sector has undergone a transition from a dominant institutional logic of medical professionalism to a business-oriented institutional logic of healthcare as part of government restructuring practices.

Following the 1980s, a significant number of countries adopted neoliberalism, also referred to as the free market model, in their respective policy frameworks. The free market economy espouses the tenets of "private property, freedom of choice and enterprise, competition, limited government and free trade" and this ideological shift has spurred the adoption of market logic in areas traditionally dominated by public institutions, such as healthcare, education and transportation (Hall, 2013). Thornton et al. (2005, pp. 168-170) identified the following characteristics of a market institutional logic: financing is provided by investors, investors' personal interests are at the focal point, the aim of increasing productivity, the value of shares owned by shareholders and the position of the enterprise in the market are important, activities are in accordance with the objectives of the enterprise and the rules determined, and investments are made depending on the purpose of the enterprise and the competitive strategy. Public organizations began to resemble private businesses, incorporating management practices such as performance-based funding, cost-cutting, decentralization, efficiency, innovation and customer satisfaction (Margetts & Dunleavy 2013; Bovens et al., 2014, Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Sillince & Mueller, 2017, Binns, 2021). Critics argue that market logic in health has fragmented care and shifted priorities from equity and patient-centered care to cost control and competition in England (Pollock, 2018). The move to managed care in these public programs has led to some cost savings and efficiency improvements. However, critics argue that the privatization of Medicaid and Medicare services has led to reduced care quality and limited access to services, especially for vulnerable populations in the USA (Ginsburg, 2014). Singapore's healthcare system has resulted in efficient service delivery, high-quality care, and relatively low healthcare expenditure; however, there are concerns that the reliance on individual savings and private insurance may create barriers for lower-income groups, especially for those who cannot afford out-of-pocket expenses (Chia, 2019). These cases illustrate the shift from the public sector to business-like institutional logic in healthcare systems, highlighting the challenges and outcomes of market-oriented reforms. Each region's approach varies based on local conditions, but the overarching trend reflects the growing influence of private-sector efficiency models within traditionally public health systems.

In the field of Turkish health, Aksoy (2007) is widely regarded as a seminal figure, having defined the characteristics of public and market health services for the first time. In his study, Koç (2012) conceptualised "servant logic" and "commercial logic" based on interviews with critical actors within the organisation (chief physician or assistant chief physician) and document analysis (legislation, sector and research reports-OECD and Health Statistics reports). In terms of definition, servant logics are based on the provision of equal and quality health services to all, which is among the main duties of the state under the Constitution. Commercial logics, on the other hand, are based on the Ministry of Health's purchasing services from hospitals owned by individuals and private legal entities, with the principle of quality service supply and efficiency. In his research, Danişman (2012) adopted a comparative approach to examine the constraints and shaping effects of national policies on institutional logic in the context of health services. Danişman (2012) asserted that before the inception of the health transformation programme in 2003, the Turkish health system was predominantly state- and public-dominated. However, with the advent of the programme, the private sector

sought to enhance its contribution to state-provided health services and extend its reach to a larger proportion of citizens. The subsequent establishment of numerous private hospitals and the transformation of health services into a competitive domain marked a transition towards a market logic.

Özseven et al. (2014) found that the change in the management of public hospitals in the Turkish health sector has resulted in a transformation of the institutional logic of public service, which has traditionally held a significant position in the Turkish health sector, towards a new institutional logic that can be expressed as a "business-like institutional logic". In their study, Meydan and Yasit (2015) employed an institutional theory approach to examine the transformation of the institutional environment in the Turkish health sector between 1928 and 2014. Their analysis was situated within the broader literature on corporate business, institutional logic, and institutional entrepreneurship. In the context of this study, two propositions developed by Meydan and Yasit (2015) in relation to institutional logic in the Turkish health field are worthy of particular attention. The initial proposition posits that the dominant logic within the Turkish healthcare sector is that of the medical profession. Meydan and Yasit (2015, p. 14) put forth this proposition by drawing upon sociological studies of the medical profession and comparing them with ethnographic observations in the field. Another proposition developed in the study is the view that the Ministry of Health is attempting to exert dominance within the field through the implementation of a "logic of producing public services based on cost-effectiveness," as opposed to the "market logic" that is prevalent in other sectors. This logic derives its authority from legislative measures. Furthermore, Meydan and Yasit (2015, p. 16) put forth the proposition that "market logic has never been constructed in the Turkish health field, and there is no institutional entrepreneur to construct this logic in the field itself". In a multidisciplinary study, Yıldız and Özkoç (2017, p. 117) examined the relationship between institutional logic, a core topic in institutional theory, and organisational structure and organisational culture, two central themes in organisational behaviour. In this quantitative study, the business-like logic, market logic and public service logic were analysed in public, private and education-research hospitals. One of the key findings of the study is that, in general, employees in hospitals tend to exhibit a greater degree of business-like organisational logic.

Gürses and Danişman (2017) conducted a micro-level analysis of institutional logic prior to and following the implementation of a government-led health transformation initiative in the Turkish healthcare sector. Gürses and Danişman (2017) demonstrated that physicians are subject to the influence of a multiplicity of institutional logic, including medical professional logic, business-like logic, state logic, and rogue logic, in the course of their daily routine practices. Özseven (2017) investigated the role of the congruence between the essence of the domain and the essence of the institutional logic in the evolution of organisational domains. The study revealed that statist and professional institutional logic constituted the orthodoxy, while market logic formed the heterodoxy within the Turkish health sector. Özseven (2020) conducted an empirical study to analyse the effect of habitus on the practices developed by physicians under multiple institutional logics. In designing the study, Özseven (2020) identified a number of institutional logics based on the findings of previous research conducted in the Turkish health sector. In light of the aforementioned, the logic of public service was identified as per the study conducted by Özseven et al. (2014). This logic is predicated on the notion that the right to healthcare is a fundamental entitlement of citizens

and that it should be provided free of charge. Conversely, the market logic is based on the studies of Danışman and Ocasio (2012) and Danışman (2013), which posit that health services are a commodity and the individual seeking such services is a consumer. Furthermore, it was asserted that business-like institutional logic (Özseven et al., 2014), which is a combination of market and public service institutional logic, is exclusive to public hospitals. Uzun et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study on physicians working in secondary public hospitals in Sakarya province to determine the institutional logic present in the Turkish health field and whether there has been a change in institutional logic due to the "Health Transformation Program". The findings indicate that the logic of cost-effective public service production, as proposed by Meydan and Yasit (2015), is evident among physicians working in secondary public hospitals, as demonstrated by Uzun et al. (2020).

A review of the literature on the Turkish health sector reveals that the reforms introduced by the Health Transformation Project, which commenced in 2003, have had a significant impact on the sector. This is evidenced by the findings of the first period studies, which align with the conclusions drawn in the original literature. These studies indicate a weakening of the dominant state logic and a shift towards a new market logic (Aksoy, 2007; Danışman, 2012; Özseven et al., 2014). It is therefore generally accepted that, rather than coexistence, the Turkish health field was dominated by the public logic before 2003 and evolved towards a market logic in the post-2003 period. However, recent studies have demonstrated that multiple institutional logics have been adopted in the Turkish health field, in alignment with the original literature (Özseven, 2017; Gürses & Danışman, 2017; Meydan et al., 2020; Özseven, 2020; Uzun et al., 2020). The Turkish health system has undergone significant transformations compared to the previous period, particularly following the implementation of the Health Transformation Program in 2003. To illustrate this, the following table (Özseven et al., 2014, p. 131), which compares the Turkish healthcare system before and after 2003, provides valuable insight into the changes that have occurred.

Table 1: Differences in Implementation Before and After 2003

Criteria	Before 2003	Post 2003
Direction of the service process	From physician to patient	From patient to physician
Hospital performance	Not measured	Measured
Importance given to patient satisfaction level	Low	High
The power of the patient vis-à-vis the physician	Weak	Relatively high
Criteria for staff appointment and promotion	Service score	Service score and performance indicator
Specialization of hospital managers	Physician	Business Administration/Administration

Physician fees	Fixed	Fixed and performance-based
Income-type of service relationship	The services provided are not related to the income provided to the hospital	The type of service provided is related to the return it generates
Hospital funding source	General budget	General budget and hospital revenues
Budget	Based on hospital debt stock, regardless of performance	More transfers to high-performing hospitals
Focus on material procurement	Quality	Quality and cost; cost is more decisive
Level of focus on utilization of hospital capacity	Low	High
The standard for productivity measurement	No	There is
The standard for efficiency measurement	None; managers can stay in the office for long periods of time regardless of the hospital's income level or service delivery.	There is; hospital administrators and general secretaries lose their positions when they fail to meet the standards targeted at the beginning of the semester.
Competition understanding	No	There is
Appointment system	It existed, but was ignored	Developed with care
Hospital physical environment	Like a public building	Like private hospitals and hotels
Importance of Service Quality Standards	Low	High
The focus of hospital inspections	Compliance with legal requirements	Compliance with hospital performance and service quality criteria

Source: (Özseven et al., 2014, p. 131)

As seen in the table, the perception of health as a pure public service, the approach of viewing patients as citizens, hospital financing based on the general budget, free healthcare within a legal framework, providing healthcare services according to bureaucratic rules, appointing and promoting personnel according to public authority priorities, employing staff with permanent status, fixed-salary payments to doctors, hospital management akin to a public institution, and service standards based on doctors' priorities were prominent features of the dominant public service institutional logic before 2003. In the context of the prevailing public authority priorities, the hiring of personnel on a permanent basis, the implementation of fixed salaries for physicians, the management of hospitals as a public institution, and the establishment of service standards based on physician priorities have emerged as defining characteristics of the dominant public service institutional logic prior to 2003.

In addition to the institutional logic of public service, market logic has also emerged as a result of the neo-liberal policies that have been pursued since the 1980s. Furthermore, the proportion of private hospitals in comparison to total hospitals has also increased. The physician who examines the greatest number of patients, and performs the greatest number of interventions and surgeries, is the one who is rewarded the most by the system. However, the greater the number of patients a physician examines or operates on, the less time they are able to dedicate to each individual patient. Furthermore, it is evident that this system, which encourages the consumption of services, will result in an increase in erroneous and superfluous diagnoses and treatments. The primary output of the performance system in practice is based on customer satisfaction. In the book titled *Performance Management in Health*, published by the Ministry of Health in Türkiye, it is stated that "The free market approach to health services tends to determine the quality of the health system primarily by the final output criterion." This criterion concerns the level of satisfaction expressed by patients who have received health care services, regardless of whether this satisfaction is based on the clinical findings or the environment created. The Health Transformation Program has the effect of opening up the health field to the dynamics of the market, and structuring and behaving like a business in order to achieve profitability.

In accordance with the principles of business logic, all health institutions, whether public or private, will endeavour to augment their revenues by curtailing their inputs and augmenting their outputs. The optimal method for increasing revenue in a healthcare organisation is to expand the number of patients applying to that organisation and the range of therapeutic services offered to them. The asymmetric level of information between patients and healthcare professionals, coupled with the fee-for-service payment strategy, particularly for physicians, makes it evident that this approach would result in the creation of artificial demand and the "production of disease by medicalising the nature of life" (Elbek and Adas, 2009). This is achieved by exploiting the lack of information of the 'customer' and conditioning it to a position that is profitable for the enterprise and the physician. While the fundamental tenets of the public service logic that had previously characterised the health sector remained intact, the practices of the market logic, based on cost-effectiveness with a focus on effectiveness, efficiency and competition, began to gain significant traction, leading to a notable transformation in the health sector. The advent of social media has also had an impact on the transformation of the health sector. The following section will examine the relationship between health and social media.

2.2. Health and Social Media

Since the 1980s, the influence of market logic driven by neo-liberal policies has become visible in the healthcare sector, while from the 2000s onwards, social media has also started to make its impact felt. The rapid global proliferation of the Internet and the advent of the Web 2.0 era in 2000 gave rise to the concept of social media. In their 2010 definition, Kaplan and Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content". Social media, in conjunction with a plethora of technological products, including computers, tablets, smartphones, blogs, and applications, has permeated nearly every aspect of an individual's daily life. The concept of social media is characterised by a dynamic approach to connectivity and communication, facilitated by internet-based tools. These enable the sharing of information, messages, knowledge, ideas, images and other

materials (Peck, 2014). In emphasising the capacity of social media to exert influence, Blossom (2009, p. 29) characterises social media as a highly scalable and accessible communication technology with the potential to directly or indirectly impact users' target audiences.

It would be remiss to ignore the impact of social media in the field of health, as in every other area of modern life. The expansion and monetisation of social media are influencing the field of health, whether directly or indirectly. There has been a notable increase in awareness of social media and its use in healthcare in recent years. In the context of healthcare, social networks offer considerable potential value for all stakeholders in the sector. They facilitate rapid reach and interaction with stakeholders, enable the aggregation of relevant information from multiple sources in a short period of time, and facilitate collaboration (Keckley and Hoffman, 2010; DeVries, 2012). From this perspective, a considerable number of healthcare organisations have initiated the creation of substantial social media opportunities with the objective of promoting clinical success, disseminating best practices, facilitating interaction with patients and informing them about their illnesses, and developing online communities of patients and healthcare professionals (Giustini, 2006; Keckley and Hoffman, 2010). The ready availability of communication tools has facilitated more efficient communication between physicians and both their patients and other healthcare professionals. Patients utilise social media for a variety of reasons, including the acquisition of information regarding their illnesses, the receipt of social support and communication with medical practitioners. The advent of new internet technologies, particularly the participatory internet (e.g. Web 2.0), has led to a significant transformation in health-related communication models, creating new avenues for instant communication and online feedback between healthcare professionals and patients, among others (Eysenbach, 2008; Smith & Smith, 2011). The numerous features and applications of social media platforms provide opportunities for the creation of patient resources and educational materials, the facilitation of professional networking, the promotion of research collaboration and publishing, the engagement of the public and policy debates, as well as the provision of personal and work-related assistance (Logghe et al., 2018).

The use of social media by healthcare professionals for professional purposes is becoming increasingly prevalent. For example, it has been demonstrated that an emergency message regarding an outbreak can disseminate more rapidly than any influenza virus on Twitter, which is now designated as X (McNab, 2009). A growing number of social media and networking services have been introduced and adopted in the health and healthcare sectors. The advent of social media tools such as LinkedIn (2003), Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), Twitter, now X (2006), and Instagram (2010) has led to their widespread adoption in the health and healthcare sectors. The Instagram environment, which is characterised by a high level of user engagement, remains an effective platform for physicians to disseminate information about their basic services and products to their target audiences. Instagram is a social media platform that offers users the ability to create and share multimedia content, including videos and images, on mobile devices at no cost (Mukherjee & Jansen, 2017, p. 1213; Virtanen et al., 2017, pp. 470-471).

The term 'Instagram' is a portmanteau of the words 'instant' and 'gram', with the latter deriving from the term 'telegram' and referring to the speed with which messages can be conveyed (Giannoulakis and Tsapatsoulis, 2016, p.115). The platform affords users the ability to engage in interactive communication through the utilisation of sharing, commenting and liking options, thereby facilitating a two-way exchange of information between the sender and receiver (Kim and Hull, 2017, p. 219). As a result of the millions of photos and videos shared on Instagram on a daily basis, the platform has become an invaluable data source for large-scale public health studies (Boulos et al., 2014, p. 229). Although the Instagram environment offers features such as the ability to comment on photos, and like and archive liked photos, anyone can create a profile on this site, follow the pages or communities they are interested in, and interact with individuals who share similar interests and opinions. Consequently, Instagram is also utilised by organisations as a commercial opportunity to reach their target audience. In the current social context, where aesthetic considerations are paramount, Instagram provides an optimal platform for the dissemination of information pertaining to developments in fields such as dermatological treatments, obesity surgery and healthy eating habits (Boulos et al., 2011, p.10). Instagram remains a key tool for the World Health Organization (WHO) and other public health agencies, serving as a platform for visually compelling health messages that educate and engage the public, as well as a conduit for risk communication in the context of public health crises and natural disasters. Despite the clear benefits, physicians' participation in social media is fraught with ethical concerns. Lee et al. (2022) emphasized that inadvertent sharing of patient information or images on social media, even without identifiable features, can lead to violations of medical ethics and legal consequences. Furthermore, the online presence of physicians might blur the lines between personal and Professional identities, leading to inappropriate conduct or professional misconduct (Hersh et al., 2023). Research indicates that some physicians inadvertently disclose patient information or discuss cases in ways that could compromise confidentiality (Simmons et al., 2023). Social media offers a wealth of opportunities for physicians; however, the use of these platforms by physicians is fraught with ethical, legal and professional challenges.

Before an examination of social media physicians on Instagram, where millions of images and videos are disseminated on a daily basis, it is essential to delineate the concepts of phenomenon and influencer. An individual may be considered a social media influencer if they are both famous and ordinary, and have reached a considerable number of followers on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Twitter/X and TikTok. They are ordinary internet users who present their personal lives and lifestyles to a large audience through textual and visual expression on blogs or social media (Jin et al., 2019, pp. 568-569). Such individuals may be described as online celebrities, exhibiting their personal lives through social media and appealing to a considerable number of followers (Chae, 2018, p. 246). This form of celebrity status is achieved by presenting oneself on social media, creating an online persona and attracting and interacting with a large number of people with this image (Noble & Senft, 2013). When the concept of a phenomenon is evaluated in relation to an individual, it can be defined as "internet users who are active on one or more social networks, who seek to gain a following and become renowned by creating content in accordance with the rules of the social network in question" (Schouten et al., 2020, p. 260). One of the most crucial

responsibilities of social media influencers is to maintain consistent communication and engagement with their followers.

The phenomenon of social media influencers is also observed in the field of health, whereby individuals gain a following as a result of their expertise in various fields, their opinions or suggestions, or their motivating features. In the field of health, the accounts of various health institutions or health experts on social media platforms are also subject to monitoring, following, commenting on, or messaging by individuals, or more specifically, by patients. This is a consequence of the integration of internet technologies into daily life practices. Furthermore, the phenomenon of phenomenon-isation can be observed in the field of health among individuals holding titles such as doctors and dentists, who disseminate posts pertaining to medical issues, including those related to sports and physiotherapy (Biol and Bakir, 2019:214-215). Given the prevalence of health-related content on social media, individuals have begun to follow medical professionals who disseminate information on Instagram. Indeed, medical practitioners have also assumed the role of social media influencers by disseminating images from their personal and professional lives to their respective audiences. In examining the phenomenon, it is often evident that doctors play a significant role. A multitude of medical professions, including dentistry, ophthalmology, gynaecology, physical therapy, general practice, dermatology and plastic surgery, engage with their respective audiences on Instagram. The platform provides access to advertising and public relations activities, with announcements of campaigns being disseminated to patients via this channel. Similarly, social network users may be designated as "influencers" if they are recognized by the target audience they focus on in social networks, have a high number of followers, and attempt to attract the attention of their followers by regularly sharing digital content in a specific field.

It is possible for any individual to become a phenomenon for a limited period of time by undertaking an exceptional action. An influencer is defined as an individual who has gained the trust of their followers by regularly sharing their ideas and experiences related to their interests. They have also gained a significant following on digital platforms, thereby acquiring considerable influence over their audience. It is evident that any influencer who attains a specific number of followers has the potential to become a phenomenon. While social media phenomenon represents the initial stage of engagement within social networks, the influencer represents the subsequent stage of phenomenon. It can be concluded that not all influencers are of the same caliber; however, they can all be considered social media influencers (Tam, 2020, p. 87). In this context, social media influencers may be defined as individuals who engage in the active preparation of content on one or more social networking platforms, with the aim of appealing to a specific audience and increasing their awareness. The term "social media influencer" is used to describe individuals who possess the capacity to exert a greater degree of influence over others than is typical of the general population. This is due to a number of factors, including their communication network, their ability to persuade, the breadth of their social network, or their centrality within a social network (Nonprofit Business Advisor, 2015, p. 6). An alternative definition, based on the number of followers and the number of people they reach, defines an influencer as a person who is well-connected and has a significantly larger number of groups than the average (Keller & Berry, 2003). An influencer is a social network user who has achieved a certain level of popularity on social networks, is trusted by their followers, whose opinions and experiences on any subject

are taken into account, and has the power to influence the audience they address (De Veirman et al., 2017, p. 2). Having defined the concepts of phenomenon and influencer in social media, the following section will attempt to explain social media physician, which is the focus of the study.

3. Method

This section presents the purpose and question of the research, as well as data collection tools.

3.1. Purpose and question of the research

With the widespread use of the internet, social media usage in Türkiye has increased, just as it has throughout the world. The role of social media in society has become increasingly significant, with a notable impact on various critical aspects of healthcare services, as it has affected every field. A review of the literature reveals that patients utilise social media for a variety of purposes, including obtaining information about their illnesses, accessing social support from other patients and communicating with healthcare professionals. Although initially conceived as a social interaction platform, Instagram has subsequently gained acceptance in professional fields, including healthcare. The present study focuses exclusively on Instagram as a digital platform, and does not encompass information pertaining to other social networking services. The objective of this study is to gain insight into and elucidate the phenomenon of social media physician. The question of this research is how the concept of "social media physician" emerged.

To this end, the content of the accounts of the social media physicians with the highest number of followers on Instagram in Türkiye was initially analysed. This was followed by the conduct of in-depth semi-structured interviews with social media physicians. The principal objective of this research is to ascertain the genesis of social media physician and to define this concept.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

The research is a case analysis study conducted with qualitative research method and data triangulation was used in this study. Qualitative research is also used as a research methodology in which knowledge of the social is gathered from people's own expressions and narratives. It provides a picture of individual and group behaviors or social processes as perceived and reconstructed by people. Therefore, the main feature of qualitative research can be seen in the data generation techniques and data analysis that make it possible to reveal this picture as detailed and in-depth as possible. In the study, content analysis and interview method, which are among the basic data collection tools in qualitative research, were used as data collection tools. Tax triangulation, which is called mixed method, aims to examine and verify the data from different angles to ensure the reliability of the research. It is the combination of different data sources, data collection methods, researchers or theoretical perspectives to increase the accuracy and validity of a research. This method allows a research finding to be validated from different perspectives and thus increases the reliability of the findings. Data triangulation is widely used as a strategy to achieve more comprehensive and reliable results in research (Denzin, 1978; Flick, 2018).

The population of the study consists of physicians using Instagram in Türkiye. The reason for using Instagram among social media platforms in the study is that Instagram's visual-centric format offers a unique opportunity for doctors to promote their work through "before

and after" photos, videos, patient testimonials, and promotional content (Bélanger et al., 2020). In fields like cosmetic surgery, dermatology, and dentistry, Instagram can function as a digital portfolio, reaching a wide audience of potential patients. In addition to showcasing results, Instagram allows for direct patient engagement through comments, direct messages, and paid advertisements. As a result, Instagram has evolved from a social platform to a powerful marketing tool for doctors aiming to expand their practices and increase profitability (Chien et al., 2021).

While forming the sample of the study, physicians were first ranked in terms of the number of Instagram followers, and the accounts of physicians with more than 500,000 followers were taken into consideration. Social media physicians with the most followers on Instagram were identified and analyzed according to BoomSocial (2024) data and the researcher's reviews. Then, the Instagram accounts of the 20 physicians with the highest number of followers which is shown in table 2 were sampled by removing different health professional groups from among them. The examination of these accounts covers the period between May 28, 2024 and July 15, 2024. The 1000 posts shared from these accounts were analyzed by content analysis method. Content analysis is one of the most common methodologies used in qualitative research to examine a phenomenon. The purpose of content analysis is to discover the underlying meaning of text through quantifying the meaning of spoken or written language (Krippendorff, 1989). Content analysis allows the researcher to be "close" to the data and is considered highly reliable as it follows systematic steps (Renz et al., 2018, p.825). Hierarchical code-subcode model was used in the analysis. The content analysis conducted in the study seeks answers to the following questions:

Q.1: What are the themes of social media physician's Instagram account?

Q.2: What kind of posts does he/she share on Instagram and what is the number of likes of the posts?

Information such as demographic information and specialties of physicians were obtained from their personal web pages and related physician pages. Then, as a result of the information obtained as a result of content analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 social media physicians from different specialties between September 1, 2024 and October 10, 2024 as shown in table 3. These interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes and the interviews were conducted face-to-face. During the interviews, 15 pages of notes were kept by the researcher. The semi-structured interview technique allows for the collection of specific data from the participants, gives the opportunity to ask additional questions based on what the participants say, and the questions can be flexible (Merriam, 2013). The interview questions were prepared after a literature review and interviews with a pilot group of 2 social media physicians. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher in a computerized format. Afterwards, all the data obtained in the study were read and coded multiple times. Based on the notes taken during the interviews, themes such as "market", "posts", "number of followers", "social media identity" and "ethics" were determined in accordance with the purpose of the research. Snowball sampling was used in this study. It is a useful technique when the researcher "does not have much information about the size of the population or when there is no record of the population" (Black, 2002:55).

Table 2: Social Media Physician with the most Followers on Instagram

Name	Gender	Age	City Where He/She Works	Specialization Area	Title	Graduated University	Public /Private	Instagram Participation History	Number of followers	Number of posts	Themes
Osman Müftüoğlu	Male	69	Istanbul	Internal Medicine	Prof.	Ankara University	Private	November 2017	2.1 Mn	4056	#Healthy Life
Berika Demir	Female	29	Istanbul	Gynecology and Obstetrics	Assistant Doctor	Istanbul University	Public	May 2013	1.8 Mn	370	#gynecology #phenomenon
Umit Aktas	Male	54	Istanbul	Phytotherapy Acupuncture	Doctor	Eskisehir University	Private	February 2016	1.6 Mn	2069	#drug-free and healthy living #Herbal and Weight Loss Cures
Ebru Zulfikaroğlu	Female	53	Ankara	General Surgery and Obstetrics and Gynecology	Associate Professor	Gazi University	Private	February 2013	1.5 Mn	5183	#Genital aesthetics #Vaginismus
Hayati Aktas	Male	61	Samsun	Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery	Prof.	Ankara University	Private	Mart 2014	1.2 Mn	4056	#facelift #aesthetic #hairtransplant
Ali Fuat Serpen	Male		Istanbul	Pediatrics, Phytotherapy Aromatherapy	Specialist Pyhsician	Istanbul University	Private	November 2012	1 Mn	2358	#allergic diseases #growth and development #nutrition
Ender Sarac	Male	65	Istanbul	Family Medicine, Phytotherapy Ayurveda, Acupuncture	Specialist Pyhsician	Ege University	Private	February 2013	1 Mn	7369	#Healthy living #Nutrition #weight loss #detox
Hussein Kandulu	Male	45	Istanbul	Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery	Specialist Pyhsician	Trakya University	Private	September 2012	1 Mn	2230	#plasticsurgery #liposuction #breastsurgery #hairtransplant
Hamid Aydin	Male	55	Istanbul	Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic	Specialist Pyhsician	Dicle University	Private	April 2017	1 Mn	1001	#haircut

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Surgery												
Aysegul Çoruhlu	Female	55	Istanbul	Biochemistry	Specialist Pyhsician	Istanbul University	Private	April 2019	856 B	12326	#long life	
Mehmet Fatih Karsli	Male	43	Ankara	Gynecology and Obstetrics	Associate Professor	Gaziantep University	Private	July 2021	807 B	897	#genital aesthetics #pregnancy-birth	
Nihat Dik	Male	52	Istanbul	Practitioner Aesthetics	Doctor	Istanbul University	Private	April 2014	760 B	3339	#French hanger #filling #botox	
Ozge Aydin	Female		Ankara	Practitioner Aesthetics	Doctor	Ankara University	Private	February 2014	730 B	652	#lip fillers #botox	
Deniz Simsek	Male		Istanbul	Psychiatry	Specialist Pyhsician	Adnan Menderes University	Private	September 2013	713 B	264	#psychiatry #functional Biochemistry	
Onurkan Idaci	Male	45	Ankara	Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery	Specialist Pyhsician	Uludag University	Private	February 2017	698 B	2139	#liposuction #mammoplasty	
Suleyman Tas	Male	42	Istanbul	Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery	Prof.	Istanbul University	Private	September 2013	679 B	3225	#nosejob #facelift #hairtransplant #bodyjob	
Muhammed Keskin	Male	34	Istanbul	Cardiology	Assoc. Prof.	Istanbul University	Public/Private	January 2019	666 B	1492	#healthnutrition #healthylife #heart	
Banu Ciftci	Female	47	Istanbul	Gynecology and Obstetrics	Prof. Teaching Member	Hacettepe University	Public/Private	December 2012	662 B	3744	#pregnancy #menopause #volunteerdoctor	
Hasan Husnu Eren	Male	58	Istanbul	Practitioner	Doctor	Istanbul University	Private	April 2012	651 B	1259	#alternativeveholistic-healthservice	
Yavuz Dizdar	Male	60	Istanbul	Radiation Oncology	Assoc. Prof. Dr.	Istanbul University	Public	Mart 2017	616 B	1471	#healthylife #healthynutrition	

Table 3: Information about the Interviewed Physicians

Gender	Age	Specialization Area	Title	Public /Private	Instagram Participation History	Number of followers	Number of posts	Themes
Male	43	Obstetrics and Gynecology	Specialist Physician	Private	January 2022	1497	156	#Genital Aesthetics
Male	38	Otorhinolaryngology	Associate Professor	Private	August 2017	7845	600	#Rhinoplasty #Otoplasty
Male	37	Ophthalmology	Specialist Physician	Public	August 2018	11700	122	#Eye Diseases
Male	40	Internal Medicine	Specialist Physician	Private	December 2022	2936	64	#Obesity
Male	40	Otorhinolaryngology	Specialist Physician	Private	February 2024	1347	37	#Rhinoplasty
Female	36	Obstetrics and Gynecology	Specialist Physician	Private	July 2019	9192	521	#Woman Birth #Genital Aesthetics
Male	47	Anesthesiology and Reanimation	Associate Professor	Public	August 2017	6743	2604	#Health #Literature #Poetry #Humor
Female	37	Dermatology	Specialist Physician	Private	September 2019	4201	575	#aesthetics #skin #hair diseases
Male	40	Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgery	Specialist Physician	Private	December 2016	18000	416	#liposuction #nosejob #breastlift
Female	42	Pediatrics	Specialist Physician	Private	April 2021	3965	375	#Nutrition #Development

4. Analysis and Findings

The initial findings of the study are based on the results of the content analysis of the social media accounts of the physicians with the highest number of followers, as identified through the aforementioned sampling process. The majority of the social media physicians with the highest number of followers whose accounts were analysed were male (75%), with 15 males and 5 females. The mean age of the physicians was 51 years, with the youngest being Berika Demir, a 29-year-old resident in the field of gynaecology and obstetrics, and the oldest being Osman Müftüoğlu, a 69-year-old specialist in internal medicine. A total of 75% (15) of the social media physicians reside in Istanbul. The majority of physicians with the highest number of followers work in the field of aesthetics. Of these, five are specialists in plastic, reconstructive and aesthetic surgery, while two general practitioners continue to work in the field of aesthetics, focusing on the administration of dermal fillers and botulinum toxin injections. Of the physicians, seven are specialists, four are associate professors, four are general practitioners, three are professors, one is a faculty member, and the other is an assistant physician. The majority of physicians completed their undergraduate education at universities in Istanbul (8) and Ankara (5). The majority of physicians (90%) are in possession of private clinics. The average age of Instagram usage among physicians is approximately nine years. The earliest participant is Hasan Hüsnü Eren, who joined the platform in April 2012. The latest participant is Mehmet Fatih Karşlı, who joined in July 2021. The physician with the highest number of followers is Osman Müftüoğlu, with 2.1 million followers, followed by Berika Demir with 1.8 million followers. The mean number of posts shared by doctors is 2975, with Ayşegül Çoruhlu having the highest number of posts (12336) and Deniz Şimşek the

lowest (264). The most prevalent themes in the posts are related to healthy living, gynaecological care, aesthetic procedures (including Botox, fillers, hair transplantation, facelifts, liposuction, French hooks and genital aesthetics), nutrition, weight loss, herbal products, longevity and alternative medicine.

A detailed analysis of social media physicians' posts reveals the prevalence of aesthetic content, particularly before-and-after photographs. Subsequently, posts on healthy living, nutrition and sports are presented. Information is shared regarding patient success stories, diagnoses and treatment processes, application images and results, surgical images and videos, and information about diseases. Furthermore, the sharing of posts on medical, herbal and cosmetic products is a common occurrence. Additionally, there are posts pertaining to healthcare events and participation in conferences. Additionally, content is provided regarding physicians who have appeared in the media, published articles, and received awards. Additionally, the platform features content related to medical supplies and equipment, including physician's scrubs, stethoscopes, masks, and procedure tools. It is notable that the use of hashtags and mentions, surveys, interaction with comments, advertisements, collaborations and joint work are employed. Additionally, social media posts are observed that are not directly related to the field of medicine.

A content analysis of the final three social media posts by physicians reveals that the most recent posts by Osman Müftüoğlu, the physician with the highest number of followers, address time management, effort, and assistance. These posts received an average of 18 thousand likes. Subsequently, Berika Demir's final posts pertained to the video of the day's shift, the video subsequent to the shift, and the operating room video. These posts collectively garnered an average of 92 thousand likes. However, it is notable that Berika Demir stands out as the social media physician with the highest level of engagement in terms of comments and likes. The most recent posts by Ümit Aktaş pertain to the olive oil product he has produced, a 50% discount on his own products, and a promotion of his own olive oil. These posts have collectively received an average of 7 thousand likes. The final posts published by Ebru Zülfikaroğlu were related to the Gaza conflict, an image of herself, and a discussion of labiaplasty surgery. These posts received an average of 5,000 likes. It can be observed that Hayati Aktaş's final three posts comprise aesthetic images of his patients. These posts collectively received an average of 3,500 likes. An analysis of Ali Fuat Serpen's posts reveals two distinct categories: the first concerns allergies in children, while the second addresses adenoid and masturbation in childhood. The average number of likes for these posts is 4,000. The most recent posts by Ender Saraç pertain to his television programme, yoghurt soup and herbal products for heart disease. These posts collectively received an average of 1,500 likes. An analysis of Hüseyin Kandulu's posts reveals the presence of content pertaining to Novomed, his attendance at a congress, and his own photographs. The average number of likes received by Hüseyin Kandulu's posts is 30,000. Hamit Aydın's most recent posts can be classified into three categories: Magistral, 10 Mistakes That Upset the Hair Transplant Patient, and a photograph with a notable individual. The average number of likes for these posts is 10,000. The most recent posts by Ayşegül Çoruhlu pertain to the interpretation of results, the consumption of processed foods, and the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. These posts have collectively garnered an average of 3,500 likes.

Mehmet Fatih Karşlı's last three posts are about non-medical topic, oil detox, and psoriasis urticaria, with an average of 1,500 likes per post. Nihat Dik's recent posts are about a holiday event, lip filler, and Eid al-Adha, but the likes on his posts are not visible. Özge Aydın's recent

posts include a lip filler-themed cake, a photo of herself, and a family photo, with an average of 1,500 likes per post. Deniz Şimşek's last three posts are titled "Which magnesium?", "feelings towards parents," and "two glasses do good," averaging around 30,000 likes per post. Onurkan İdaci's last three posts are about a TV program themed around post-pregnancy aesthetics, another on breast aesthetics, and one on aesthetic surgery, with an average of 15,000 likes per post. Süleyman Taş's recent posts include his own training program, a liposuction patient photo, and a facelift patient photo, averaging 1,000 likes per post. Muhammed Keskin's last three posts are titled "red beet, enemy of cancer, friend of the heart," "take cold showers, protect your veins," and a video of himself working out, with an average of 9,000 likes per post. Banu Çiftçi's recent posts include a TEDx talk, voluntary healthcare, and a photo of herself in uniform, with an average of 30,000 likes per post. Hasan Hüsni Eren's recent posts are about MHA zeolite, "MHA zeolite stops diarrhea," and ozone therapy, with an average of 1,500 likes per post. Yavuz Dizdar's recent posts include life-related sayings and TV program appearances, with an average of 5,000 likes per post.

In conclusion, physicians disseminate information on Instagram with the objective of raising awareness about various health-related matters, including diseases, treatment methods, surgical procedures, the interpretation of results, congresses and training programmes attended, as well as content related to healthy living, such as nutrition, the promotion of healthy products, sports and lifestyle. Additionally, they share images of patients who have undergone successful treatment, respond to followers' queries about health or surgical procedures, and provide insights into their daily lives, including images of the clinic, the operating room, themselves, their family and their interests. Finally, they also share aphorisms about life. The subsequent phase of the study will present the findings of the interviews with physicians regarding the practice of medicine on social media.

Ten physicians from a range of specialties were interviewed, with each interview lasting, on average, 40 minutes. Eight of the interviewed physicians have a single Instagram account, while two of them have two separate accounts, one for personal use and one for professional purposes. Of the interviewed physicians, seven were male and three were female, with an average age of 40. Eight of the physicians are engaged in private practice, while two are employed in the public sector. Additionally, two of the interviewed physicians are associate professor. The physicians were observed to have participated on Instagram between the years 2016 and 2024. The mean number of followers for the interviewed physicians is 6,742, with an average of 547 posts per physician. The primary themes explored by physicians on Instagram include genital aesthetics, rhinoplasty, otoplasty, obesity, liposuction, breast augmentation, aesthetic medicine, dermatology, hair disorders, nutrition, developmental biology, gynaecology, ophthalmology, health, literature, poetry and humour.

The physicians interviewed indicated that their primary objective on social media is to highlight their areas of specialisation, procedures and experiences. They also stated that they predominantly share images of patients after surgery, treatment or a procedure. The objective is to foster patient-physician trust by sharing posts that illustrate the recovery process or demonstrate patient satisfaction. It was indicated that the objective is to attract a greater number of patients by means of promoting the clinics, the treatment methods employed, or the special services offered. Aesthetic surgeons, ENT specialists, dermatologists and ophthalmologists are particularly inclined to share images of patients before and after aesthetic procedures. In contrast, gynaecologists tend to share posts about their procedures that do not include the patients' faces. Other physicians seek to raise awareness among their

followers and highlight pertinent health-related issues by disseminating information on health-related matters.

The physicians in question highlighted that the primary objective behind the creation of sponsored posts is to expand their follower base, a strategy that has proven to be highly effective. Furthermore, they disseminate a variety of multimedia content, including reels, videos, surveys, photographs, case studies, and other forms of visual and textual content. It was stated that the frequency of posts is a key factor in increasing the number of followers and fostering engagement. To illustrate, one of the physicians stated that “a colleague had grown their following from 1,500 to 30,000 in three months by sharing one video reel and one post daily”. It was emphasised that sponsored advertisements, before and after photos, reels videos, question-answer surveys, interesting medical cases and non-medical posts (playing the reel, making fun videos, high-quality photos) were the types of posts that received the most interaction.

The majority of the interviewed physicians explicitly asserted that the identity they construct on social media is aligned with their identity in social life. They further emphasised that this harmony is a crucial factor in the professional success of social media medicine. All physicians concurred that a physician's positive and prominent social media presence has a definitive influence on patients and followers. Such impact can be observed in the acquisition of new patients, the establishment of trust, the fostering of patient loyalty, and the development of the physician's personal brand. It was also observed by the interviewed physicians that some physicians with a large number of followers are able to reach an audience that is significantly larger than their actual professional skill and knowledge levels. The interviewed physicians concurred that social media has a considerable influence on directing patients towards treatment, surgery and aesthetic procedures. Social media has become an effective tool in many medical disciplines and specialties. Upon inquiry as to which medical disciplines and specialties employ social media the most, all physicians responded that aesthetics is the primary area of utilization. The specialties that utilize social media to a greater extent and with greater efficacy are plastic surgery, dermatology, and otolaryngology, respectively.

It is imperative that any posts on social media comply with the relevant medical ethics rules and laws in the country in which they are published. The dissemination of medical promotions and the provision of patient information are safeguarded by the provisions of specific legal regulations. The most significant challenge encountered by medical professionals utilising social media is the ethical dilemma that it presents. All of the interviewed physicians acknowledged the ethical issues that arise in the context of social media. One of the physicians interviewed said that “young children are influenced by social media and apply to the clinic for aesthetic nose surgery”. Another physician said that “some physicians share unethical and deceptive posts”. “Although before-after posts are banned by the Ministry of Health, they are frequently shared,” another physician emphasized. The most prevalent ethical issue encountered by medical professionals on social media is the protection of patient privacy and confidentiality. In particular, the sharing of before-and-after photographs of patients is a common occurrence. Despite the prohibition of such posts under Turkish legislation, they continue to be published due to a lack of effective supervision. It has been alleged that some medical practitioners provide incomplete and misleading information to patients on social media, which may have a detrimental impact on their health. Additionally, it has been suggested that some physicians may exaggerate the efficacy of their

treatments, surgical procedures or aesthetic interventions, creating unrealistic expectations among their patients. The ready accessibility of social media in the field of medicine is perceived by some physicians to have a detrimental impact on the social reputation of the physician and to erode the physician-patient relationship in terms of professionalism. Some physicians have asserted that social media has precipitated a shift in the practice of medicine towards a mercantile model, wherein patients are regarded as mere consumers. The impact of the market logic on the sector was expressed as follows: “patients are seen as customers and social media pushes the physician to be a merchant”. “I do not act like a doctor but like a businessman, this clinic is now a business”.

The interviews revealed the effects of market logic. Physicians are motivated to use Instagram for business purposes for several reasons. First, Instagram's large user base provides an accessible platform to increase visibility, particularly for private practitioners. Second, Instagram allows physicians to bypass traditional advertising routes and market their services directly to the public. Lastly, Physicians can cultivate a personal brand by sharing insights into their professional expertise, lifestyle, and success stories. This phenomenon has been identified as a potential ethical concern in the context of medical practice. Ultimately, while social media physician is becoming increasingly prevalent and offers significant opportunities to physicians, it is essential to exercise caution in monitoring its use in order to ensure ethical boundaries are respected, professional reputations are safeguarded, and patient safety is prioritised.

The most important finding to be drawn from the interviews with physicians is that patients are seen as customers as a result of the market institutional logic and social media is seen as a tool that allows faster and easier access to more customers for physicians. In this context, the research has made important contributions to the market institutional logic by discussing the concept of “social media physician”.

5. Conclusion and Implications

The emergence of the concept of social media medicine is thought to be realized through the interaction of two critical processes. Institutional logics provide a powerful lens for understanding the dynamics within healthcare sector and play a central role in determining how healthcare organizations operate. The market logic, which has long been influential in the health sector, and social media, which has gained an important place in our lives with the digitalization process, appear as areas of interaction. It is seen that health has been accepted as a right of citizenship with the legal regulations put into practice since the first years of the republic and in this context, public authority has been predominantly effective in the provision and financing of health services. The public authority, which increased the dominance of the statist institutional logic in the Turkish health sector, lasted until the 1980s. However, as the years progressed, while trying to maintain the effectiveness of the public authority in the realization of health services, regulations and practices that paved the way for the private sector to take part in the provision of health services were applied. In parallel with the increasing role of the private sector, the concept of 'business management' has become more pronounced in the management of public hospitals. With the practices and legal regulations implemented within the scope of the Health Transformation Program

launched in 2003, the market mechanism started to be effective in the management of public hospitals in addition to the institutional logic of public service.

Market institutional logic, health is a service provided by private institutions and organizations within the dynamics of competition, with the concern of service quality and customer satisfaction, with patients largely seen as customers. This logic emphasizes efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and the implementation of business practices. In addition to the effect of market logic in the health sector, social media has started to show its effect with the spread of digitalization. As in many areas of life, social media is used in the health sector to spread messages to followers, to be more accessible, to attract the attention of the target audience and to build trust. Social media allows patients, physicians and institutions to interact with each other in a wide variety of ways. It has become a popular resource that is actively used especially by physicians, one of the most important components of the health sector.

It is challenging to ascertain the precise point at which the concept of "social media physician" emerged as a consequence of the convergence of social media, which has become a pervasive aspect of our lives, with the market logic and digitalisation process, which have long been prevalent in the health sector. This concept has gradually taken shape with the evolution of social media platforms, making it difficult to determine the precise point at which it emerged. However, the mid-2000s and especially the early 2010s saw a significant shift in the utilisation of social media in the context of medicine and healthcare more broadly. At that time, the rapid proliferation of social media prompted physicians and other healthcare professionals to utilize these platforms for the purposes of information sharing and community building. The advent of social media platforms such as Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), X (formerly known as Twitter, 2006), Instagram (2010) and TikTok (2016) provided physicians and health professionals with the opportunity to reach a wider audience through social media.

The interviews revealed the effects of market logic. Instagram has evolved from a social platform to a powerful marketing tool for doctors aiming to expand their practices and increase profitability. Physicians are motivated to use Instagram for business purposes for several reasons. First, Instagram's large user base provides an accessible platform to increase visibility, particularly for private practitioners. Second, Instagram allows physicians to bypass traditional advertising routes and market their services directly to the public. Lastly, physicians can cultivate a personal brand by sharing insights into their professional expertise, lifestyle, and success stories. However, this use of Instagram for marketing purposes raises significant ethical and legal concerns. While Instagram offers new opportunities for business growth, it also brings forth several ethical challenges. These concerns revolve around misinformation, patient privacy, and the commercial aspect of healthcare. The allure of presenting perfect results on Instagram can lead to the misrepresentation of medical outcomes. Physicians may emphasize exceptional cases while neglecting to show typical or negative outcomes. Additionally, physicians may embellish their qualifications or expertise in order to appear more attractive to patients, thus undermining the integrity of healthcare information shared online. Physicians must be vigilant about securing informed consent before sharing any patient-related content on social media platforms. The use of Instagram as

a direct marketing tool also raises questions about the commercialization of healthcare. When medical professionals use Instagram primarily to drive business outcomes, the line between professional responsibility and business interest becomes blurred. This can contribute to a commodification of healthcare, where the focus shifts from patient care to profit-making. Instagram's rise as a business tool for doctors is reshaping how healthcare is practiced and perceived. One of the fundamental principles of medical professionalism is the fiduciary duty of doctors to prioritize patient well-being. However, when doctors use Instagram to market their services, especially in competitive and lucrative fields such as cosmetic surgery, it may create a conflict of interest between business goals and patient care. The doctor-patient relationship is built on trust, and social media use that emphasizes marketing over medical care can damage this trust.

The objective of this study is to gain insight into and elucidate the concept of social media physician, with a particular focus on Instagram, one of the social media platforms. The concept of social media physician can be defined as a modern phenomenon in which physicians utilise social media platforms to disseminate health information, share details of their treatments, surgical procedures and other professional activities, provide patients with information, draw attention to issues surrounding healthy living, maintain patient relations in the digital environment, share details of their private lives and finally, address ethical issues.

In comparison to traditional healthcare, social media physician is an increasingly significant and evolving field within the context of contemporary healthcare. Nevertheless, the potential challenges and risks associated with this novel concept warrant consideration. First and foremost, the dissemination of health information on social media is frequently unregulated and lacks credibility. While social media facilitates rapid information dissemination as a powerful communication tool, it is imperative to guarantee the scientific validity and reliability of this information. Social media physicians must uphold ethical responsibilities and professional boundaries when utilising social media.

6. Future research and limitations

While this study aims to contribute to the literature by discussing a relatively new and understudied concept, it has some limitations that should be recognized. First of all, the study focuses only on Instagram among social media platforms and does not include X (formerly known as Twitter, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube which are frequently used by physicians. Phenomenon and Influencer physicians, which are thought to have emerged with the influence of market logic and social media, are not included in this study. However, future studies on these two concepts may yield different findings. This research is a case study conducted with content analysis and interviews and may lead to other conclusions with future large-scale quantitative studies. In addition, the generalizability of this study may be limited, so future studies may investigate whether social media medicine varies in different countries. It is recommended that further academic research be conducted on social media physician, and that relevant institutions encourage a comprehensive examination of the ethical issues associated with this field. Furthermore, it would be beneficial for health authorities to emphasise the supervision of guidelines developed on social media and provide training to health professionals on this issue, which may increase the effectiveness of social media physician.

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Extented Summary

Transformation in Health: Social Media Physician in Türkiye

Since the establishment of the Republic, the management of public hospitals in Türkiye has been dominated by an institutional logic that can be described as a public service mentality. However, starting in the 1980s, significant changes began to take place under the influence of neoliberal economic policies, and particularly with the implementation of the Health Transformation Program in 2003. With recent developments, an alternative institutional logic in the form of a market-oriented approach has increasingly made itself evident (Aksoy, 2007; Koç, 2012; Özseven et al., 2014; Yıldız and Özkoç, 2017; Gürses and Danışman, 2017). Alongside the influence of market logic in the healthcare sector, the rise of digitalization has brought social media to the forefront. Social media, as in many other areas of life, is used in the healthcare sector to disseminate messages to followers, increase accessibility, attract the attention of target audiences, and build trust. Especially in healthcare, digital platforms offer a new dimension by reshaping patient-physician communication and providing a space for individuals, healthcare professionals, and patients to communicate about health-related issues. Social media, which facilitates access to information and enables real-time interaction, has the potential to enhance health services and address health issues. It encompasses various internet-based networks that allow diverse interactions between patients, physicians, and institutions (Carr and Hayes, 2015), and has become a popular resource actively used by physicians, who are one of the most critical components of the healthcare sector. Physicians are increasingly using social media for reasons ranging from professional development to providing timely and accurate health information to the public (Chan et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020; Royan et al., 2022; Atef et al., 2023). This online interaction can become a significant component of physicians' professional identities, and the power of social media has brought forth the concept of social media physicians as a new area of study within the healthcare sector.

It is challenging to ascertain the precise point at which the concept of "social media physician" emerged as a consequence of the convergence of social media, which has become a pervasive aspect of our lives, with the market logic and digitalisation process, which have long been prevalent in the health sector. This concept has gradually taken shape with the evolution of social media platforms, making it difficult to determine the precise point at which it emerged. However, the mid-2000s and especially the early 2010s saw a significant shift in the utilisation of social media in the context of medicine and healthcare more broadly. At that time, the rapid proliferation of social media prompted physicians and other healthcare professionals to utilize these platforms for the purposes of information sharing and community building. The advent of social media platforms such as Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), X (formerly known as Twitter, 2006), Instagram (2010) and TikTok (2016) provided physicians and health professionals with the opportunity to reach a wider audience through social media.

The purpose of this study is to understand and explain social media physicians. For this purpose, the content of the Instagram accounts of the most-followed social media physicians in Türkiye was analyzed, followed by in-depth semi-structured interviews with these social media physicians. The main questions this research seeks to answer are how social media medicine emerged and what this concept entails. A detailed examination of the posts by social media physicians reveals that aesthetic-related posts, particularly before-and-after photos, are the most prominent. These are followed by posts on healthy living, nutrition, and exercise. Additionally, there are posts on patient success stories, diagnosis and treatment processes, application images and outcomes, surgery images and videos, and informative posts about diseases. Posts also include content on medical, herbal, and cosmetic products. There are also shares about participation in healthcare events and conferences. Content related to media appearances, article publications, and awards received by the physicians is also present. Posts featuring doctor's coats, stethoscopes, masks, medical instruments, and tools are common as well. The use of hashtags and mentions, surveys, interaction with comments, advertisements, collaborations, and partnerships are also noteworthy. Among the posts, there are even non-medical social posts.

This study aims to understand and explain the concept of social media physician, focusing on the platform Instagram. Through content analysis and interviews, the concept of social media medicine is defined as a modern phenomenon where physicians use social media platforms to provide health information, share details of treatments, surgeries, and other professional practices, inform patients, highlight topics related to healthy living, maintain patient relationships in a digital setting, and share aspects of their personal lives. Additionally, it is a concept that encompasses ethical concerns.