



**A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF EMOTIONAL AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE
IN MOTIVATIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENT**

Nazwa Khalifatunnisa¹, Nasywa Kamilah², Annisa Fauziah³, Tatu Siti Rohbiah⁴

^{1,2,3,4}State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Indonesia

Email: 231230081.nazwa@uinbanten.ac.id

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Abstract

Motivational content on social media has become increasingly prevalent; however, the ways in which language conveys emotions and persuades audiences in digital interactions remain underexplored. This study aimed to analyze the semantic meanings, emotional expressions, and persuasive language used in motivational social media comments on TikTok and Instagram. The data consisted of [N] comments collected between January and April 2026 through purposive sampling, focusing on comments containing emotional, motivational, and persuasive elements. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the data were analyzed through semantic and pragmatic-semantic techniques to examine how meaning was constructed and interpreted in context. The findings revealed that emotional language dominated the comments, particularly in expressions of praise, empathy, and encouragement. In addition, persuasive meanings were frequently conveyed through motivational statements, analogies, and reflective expressions, which functioned as forms of implicit persuasion. The study also found that meaning was dynamic and shaped by contextual factors, audience perceptions, and communicative intentions. These results contribute to a more profound understanding of how language functions to construct meaning, express emotions, and influence audiences in digital communication environments.

Keywords: *semantic analysis; connotative meaning; pragmatic semantics; persuasive language*

INTRODUCTION

Motivational discourse has become increasingly prevalent on social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, where users frequently share inspirational messages, personal experiences, and encouragement to engage audiences. These platforms create a dynamic environment where users employ language not only to convey information but also to express emotions and influence attitudes. Emotional expression in language plays a crucial role in communication because it enables individuals to convey their feelings while helping audiences understand and respond to those feelings. When people encounter emotionally charged expressions, they do not merely comprehend the message but also interpret the context, the speaker's condition, and often relate the message to their experiences. This suggests that emotional meaning is not solely

embedded in words but is constructed through interpretation and contextual understanding (Van Kleef & Heerdink, 2015).

Language on social media, particularly in motivational material, is frequently designed to inspire and influence audiences through emotional and persuasive elements. In this study, motivational material refers to posts and comments that promote encouragement, self-improvement, resilience, positive thinking, and personal development. Emotional elements include expressions of empathy, praise, support, hope, and encouragement, whereas persuasive elements involve advice, motivational appeals, recommendations, and other linguistic strategies intended to influence attitudes or behaviors. Such material exemplifies pragmatic strategies in online discourse, in which messages are constructed to achieve specific communicative purposes and generate particular effects on readers (Radyuk et al., 2019). The language used in motivational content generally contains positive sentiment, expressive vocabulary, and rhetorical strategies aimed at engaging emotions and shaping audience responses. The effectiveness of such language lies in its ability to integrate semantic meaning with emotional and persuasive functions, making the message more impactful and engaging (Nijodo et al., 2024). This phenomenon demonstrates that motivational content on social media is not simply a collection of encouraging words but a strategically constructed form of communication. The use of specific diction, sentence structure, and style plays an important part in determining how emotional and persuasive messages are conveyed and interpreted by audiences, as language on social media is deliberately designed to influence perceptions and build engagement. Often, simple words can have a strong impact when combined with emotional meaning and clear persuasive intent. Therefore, analyzing language in motivational content is essential to understand how messages effectively influence readers (Nijodo et al., 2024; Al Ayyubi et al., 2025).

However, understanding emotive and persuasive language in social media motivation is not a straightforward process. Words and phrases can have multiple meanings depending on the situation, and persuasive methods are often conveyed through implicit features such as emotive language, connotation, and imagery. Thus, a semantic approach is needed to capture how these language elements influence audience perception and response (Fauzi et al., 2025; Suaib et al., 2025). Therefore, it is important to understand not only the literal meaning of language but also how meaning interacts with emotional expression and persuasive intent in communication, particularly in motivational content on social media, where rhetorical strategies and emotional appeals play an important role in influencing audiences (Tumasang, 2022). Furthermore, in the context of social media, language meaning is also influenced by users' social, cultural, and psychological backgrounds. Each individual may interpret the same message differently depending on their experiences and conditions. This complicates language analysis, as it involves not only linguistic structure but also how language is used and understood in context (V. Kleef et al., 2015).

Moreover, the development of social media has encouraged the emergence of various language variations, such as the use of metaphors, hyperbole, and symbolic expressions. These variations enrich the meaning of a text but also add challenges to the analysis process (Nijodo et al., 2024). Therefore, a more profound understanding of different types of meaning, including lexical and connotative meaning, is necessary, as well as how these meanings function in constructing emotional and persuasive messages (Fatima et al., 2024). Although previous studies have examined digital communication, persuasive language, and emotional expression in online environments, limited attention

has been given to how semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive functions interact simultaneously in motivational social media comments. In particular, studies focusing on TikTok and Instagram comments remain scarce, despite the growing influence of these platforms in shaping online communication and audience engagement.

This study focuses on the semantic, emotional, and persuasive dimensions of motivational comments on TikTok and Instagram. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How is semantic meaning constructed in motivational social media comments? (2) How are emotions expressed through lexical and connotative meanings? and (3) How are persuasive functions realized through language use in motivational comments? Language plays an important part in determining the perception and expression of emotions within specific communicative contexts (Sadig, 2025). By integrating semantic analysis with a pragmatic-semantic approach, this study provides a more profound understanding of how language constructs meaning, conveys emotional expression, and influences audience responses in digital communication. This approach examines not only the literal meanings of linguistic expressions but also the ways in which contextual factors, communicative intentions, and emotional nuances shape message interpretation and impact within social media environments (Fatima et al., 2024).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lexical Meaning and Connotative Meaning

Language is fundamentally linked to identity, emotion, and social interaction. In semantic studies, meaning can be examined at both the lexical and connotative levels, where words convey not only literal meaning but also emotional and contextual connotations (Ginting & Ginting, 2019). The expression of emotion in language serves as a social signal, influencing how messages are understood and how audiences respond. Emotions conveyed through language can influence attitudes and behaviour, resulting in more effective communication (Van Kleef et al., 2011). Persuasive language is used to influence people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours.

Emotional Expression in Language

This language often combines emotional appeals with logical explanations to increase effectiveness (Tumasang, 2022; Nurhikmah, 2024; Rahim et al., 2024). Persuasive methods are widely integrated into motivational messages on social media, including encouragement, affirmations, and metaphorical phrases (Putra, 2021). Previous research has revealed that language on social media conveys emotion, persuasive intent, and contextual meaning. For example, Schlicht et al. (2026) discuss how language similarity influences audience choices and explain how sentiment and emotional tone shape engagement. Furthermore, Nijodo et al. (2024) argue that meaning is dynamic and influenced by lexical and contextual elements. However, most previous research has examined emotional, persuasive, and semantic aspects separately. Therefore, this study integrates these three elements into a unified framework to provide a more holistic understanding. Previous studies have also emphasised that emotional language plays a crucial role in capturing audience attention, as emotionally charged messages tend to be more engaging, foster empathy, and encourage interaction. According to Van Kleef & Heerdink (2015), emotional expressions function persuasively by shaping social judgements and influencing attitudes. In motivational social media discourse, such language means that expressions of hope, support, and admiration are not only

communication tools but also social influence tools. Emotional resonance enhances persuasive outcomes by making messages more relatable and impactful to readers.

Furthermore, semantic theory suggests that meaning is not limited to dictionary definitions but is strongly influenced by context and connotative dimensions (Ginting & Ginting, 2019). In social media communication, users often employ symbolic language, indirect expressions, and culturally influenced phrases that require broader interpretation than literal semantics. This emphasises the importance of integrating semantic and pragmatic approaches when analysing motivational discourse, as persuasive and emotional meanings are often embedded in contextual language patterns rather than solely in explicit statements (Fatima et al., 2024). Therefore, combining these theoretical perspectives allows for a more comprehensive analysis of how language constructs meaning and influences digital audiences. Furthermore, persuasive language theory emphasises that communication is often strategically crafted to influence attitudes, beliefs, and decision-making processes. Persuasive techniques frequently used on social media typically include motivational statements, affirmations, rhetorical strategies, and metaphorical expressions that subtly direct audience responses (Tumasang, 2022). While previous research has separately examined semantic meaning, emotional language, and persuasive communication, combining these elements provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding how language functions in motivational social media discourse. This combined approach reveals more about how digital communication simultaneously constructs meaning, expresses emotions, and shapes audience behaviour.

RESEARCH METHODS

The dataset consisted of 30 comments collected from motivational posts on TikTok and Instagram between January and April 2026. The platforms were selected because they are widely used for sharing motivational content and encourage active user interaction through comment sections. Purposive sampling was employed to select comments that contained emotional expressions, motivational themes, and persuasive functions. The dataset included comments written in both Indonesian and English. Comments consisting solely of emojis, advertisements, duplicated entries, or irrelevant content were excluded from the analysis.

Data were collected through nonparticipant observation and note-taking. The unit of analysis in this study was individual social media comments posted on TikTok and Instagram. Each comment was treated as a separate data unit and analysed using semantic and pragmatic-semantic approaches. The analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. After data collection, all comments were read repeatedly and coded according to a predefined coding framework. Three analytical categories were developed: emotional expression, motivational language, and persuasive function.

Comments were classified as emotional when they expressed feelings such as empathy, admiration, gratitude, sympathy, happiness, or encouragement. Comments were categorised as motivational when they contained messages related to hope, resilience, self-improvement, reflection, or personal growth. Comments were classified as persuasive when they attempted to influence attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours through advice, affirmations, recommendations, metaphorical expressions, or indirect appeals. For example, the comment "*Gagal itu bukan akhir dunia*" ("Failure is not the end of the world") was coded as motivational because it promotes resilience and positive thinking and persuasive because it encourages readers to adopt a particular attitude towards failure.

Similarly, comments expressing admiration or gratitude were coded under emotional expression. The coding process was conducted by the researcher using a coding guide developed from the theoretical framework of semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive language. When a comment contained more than one linguistic function, multiple codes were assigned to reflect its communicative characteristics. The final classifications were reviewed repeatedly to ensure consistency between the coding categories and the interpretation of the data.

Furthermore, the purpose-based sampling technique ensures that the selected data specifically reflects motivational content containing emotional and persuasive elements, thereby increasing the relevance and validity of the analysis in meeting the research objectives (Nijodo et al., 2024). By using this method, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of semantic, emotional, and persuasive interactions in social media communication.

The selected data were grouped according to language type, emotional expression, motivational content, and persuasive function to ensure a systematic analysis. A coding framework was developed to classify each comment based on predefined operational criteria. Language type was categorised according to the language used in the comment (e.g., Indonesian or English). 'Emotional expression' referred to comments containing affective meanings such as admiration, empathy, gratitude, sympathy, happiness, or encouragement. Motivational content included expressions related to hope, resilience, self-improvement, and positive thinking. The persuasive function refers to linguistic elements intended to influence readers' attitudes, beliefs, or behaviours through advice, affirmations, recommendations, or appeals. To improve transparency and replicability, each category was assigned specific coding criteria, as presented in Table X. The coded data were then interpreted using descriptive qualitative analysis to examine how language constructs meaning, conveys emotions, and performs persuasive functions within motivational social media discourse.

DISCUSSION

Theory of Semantics

Semantic theory is a branch of linguistics that investigates meaning in language, including words, phrases, and sentences. Ginting & Ginting (2019) propose several approaches to understanding meaning. Behavioral semantics explains meaning through the relationship between stimuli and responses based on experience. Generative semantics emphasizes the close relationship between meaning and the underlying structure of sentences. Structural semantics views meaning as the result of relationships among linguistic elements within a system, whereas descriptive semantics focuses on meaning as it is currently used without considering historical development. Furthermore, lexical semantics examines the meanings of individual words and their semantic relationships, such as synonymy and antonymy. Logical semantics applies symbolic logic to explain meaning, while grammatical semantics analyzes meaning through grammatical structures. Finally, historical semantics investigates how meanings change over time. Semantic meaning is not limited to individual words but also extends to phrases, sentences, and complete texts. Understanding meaning requires consideration of context, speaker intention, and social circumstances because the intended meaning of an utterance may differ from its literal interpretation. Furthermore, meaning is dynamic and can be influenced by cultural and contextual factors, which shape how messages are interpreted in different communication settings. This perspective is particularly relevant to social

media discourse, where users often rely on contextual and connotative meanings to express emotions and persuade audiences. Both theories emphasize the importance of semantics in comprehending meaning in language, but they use distinct approaches. The first journal defines semantics as a theoretical and systematic study of meaning, encompassing methodologies such as behavioral, structural, generative, and lexical semantics, demonstrating that meaning can be investigated from various linguistic perspectives. On the other hand, the second periodical focuses on the practical application of semantics, particularly in translation, where meaning is modified by context, culture, and the speaker's intent. As a result, it is possible to conclude that semantics is more than just studying meaning theoretically; it is also about using that understanding in real-world communication, particularly in guaranteeing correct and meaningful translation across languages.

Types of Language

Emotional, motivational, and persuasive language are important features of communication in social media discourse. Emotional language refers to expressions that convey feelings such as empathy, admiration, gratitude, and encouragement, influencing how audiences interpret messages (Van Kleef et al., 2011). Motivational language aims to inspire positive thinking, resilience, and self-improvement through supportive and encouraging expressions. Meanwhile, persuasive language is used to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors through advice, affirmations, and rhetorical appeals (Tumasang, 2022). In motivational social media comments, these forms of language frequently interact, allowing users to express emotions, encourage others, and influence audience responses simultaneously. Emotional and persuasive language plays an important role in shaping audience responses in digital communication. Emotional expressions such as empathy, admiration, gratitude, and encouragement function as social signals that influence how messages are interpreted (Surisna, 2021). Persuasive language, on the other hand, seeks to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors through advice, affirmations, and motivational appeals. In social media discourse, these linguistic functions frequently interact, enabling users to express emotions while simultaneously encouraging and influencing others. The theoretical perspectives discussed in this study emphasize that language in social media discourse serves multiple communicative functions. Semantic meaning enables users to construct and interpret messages through both lexical and connotative meanings, while emotional language allows individuals to express feelings such as empathy, admiration, and encouragement. At the same time, persuasive language functions to influence attitudes and responses through advice, affirmations, and motivational appeals. Therefore, examining semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive language together provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how motivational comments operate in social media communication.

Emotional Expression

Emotional expression plays a crucial role in communication, as it conveys feelings that words may not easily capture. Emotions can be observed through various forms, such as facial expressions, body movements, tone of voice, and even the choice of words used in communication. In everyday interactions, people often interpret others' emotions based on social and emotional signals (Van Kleef et al., 2011). In addition, the emotions expressed by an individual can influence how others respond. For example, expressions of anger may cause others to react with caution or avoidance, while expressions of

happiness can create a more positive and comfortable atmosphere. In this sense, emotions function as social signals that guide interpersonal interactions and help individuals adjust their behavior accordingly. However, interpreting emotions is not always straightforward, as it strongly depends on context (Yang et al., 2022). The same expression can be understood differently depending on the situation, the relationship between individuals, and cultural background. Therefore, it is important to consider these factors carefully to avoid misinterpretation in communication. In the digital era, online interactions frequently communicate emotional expressions through written language (Bashir et al., 2025). Through lexical choices, connotative meanings, and contextual expressions, users convey emotions, attitudes, and intentions in social media discourse. However, because digital communication lacks nonverbal cues such as voice intonation, facial expressions, and body language, interpreting meaning can sometimes be challenging. Consequently, context plays a crucial role in helping readers understand emotional and persuasive messages accurately, particularly in social media communication where meaning is often shaped by both linguistic and situational factors.

Both theories emphasize the importance of emotional expressiveness in communication, whether in person or online. The first viewpoint emphasizes that emotions are crucial social signals that influence how people interpret messages and respond to others, while their meaning varies depending on context, connections, and cultural background. Meanwhile, the second viewpoint demonstrates that in digital communication, emotional expression is mostly reliant on written language and visual elements such as emojis, which can help transmit meaning but also raise the danger of misunderstanding owing to the lack of nonverbal clues. As a result, comprehending emotional expression necessitates paying close attention to context in both direct and digital communication to guarantee that messages are correctly and successfully interpreted.

Persuasive Functions

Persuasive functions refer to the use of language to influence readers' attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. In motivational social media comments, persuasion is commonly expressed through advice, encouragement, metaphorical expressions, moral appeals, and messages promoting self-improvement (Nijodo et al., 2024). These linguistic strategies are intended to inspire positive thinking, strengthen confidence, and encourage personal growth among readers. Advice functions guide readers toward particular attitudes or actions, while encouragement provides emotional support and motivation. Metaphorical expressions convey persuasive messages indirectly through figurative language, making them more memorable and impactful. Moral appeals encourage readers to adopt certain values or behaviors, whereas self-improvement messages emphasize personal development, resilience, and perseverance (Tumasang, 2022). Therefore, persuasive functions in motivational social media discourse operate not only by conveying information but also by influencing how readers interpret messages and respond to them. In some situations, persuasive language may indicate an intention to influence how people perceive a particular topic, especially in social media environments where messages are designed to encourage engagement and communicate specific viewpoints (Stepaniuk & Jarosz, 2021). Consequently, it is important to understand how persuasive language functions in motivational content so that readers can critically evaluate messages and recognize the communicative strategies employed within them. This highlights the role of linguistic elements in conveying persuasive intent through carefully constructed

language (Stepaniuk & Jarosz, 2021). Awareness of persuasive techniques can support more critical interpretation of online communication. Both theories demonstrate how persuasive language is used to encourage particular attitudes and viewpoints through linguistic strategies. In the context of motivational social media comments, persuasive functions can be identified through observable indicators such as advice, encouragement, affirmations, moral appeals, metaphorical expressions, and messages promoting self-improvement. The present study examines these linguistic features to understand how users construct persuasive intent within motivational discourse. By analyzing these indicators, the study explores how language is used not only to express ideas but also to encourage positive attitudes and personal reflection among readers.

Social Media and Motivation

Social media platforms provide spaces where users communicate, express emotions, and exchange opinions through digital discourse. In motivational content, users frequently interact through comments that convey encouragement, admiration, empathy, and personal reflections. Such interactions demonstrate that language in social media serves not only an informational function but also emotional and persuasive functions. Through comments, users construct meaning, express attitudes, and communicate support within online communities. Therefore, social media discourse provides an important context for examining how semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive language operate in digital communication.

The use of social media is closely associated with communication, self-expression, and interaction in digital environments. Through comments and online discussions, users share opinions, express emotions, provide encouragement, and respond to the experiences of others. These interactions demonstrate that social media functions as a space where meaning is negotiated and communicated through language. In motivational content, users frequently employ emotional and persuasive expressions to convey support, admiration, and encouragement. Therefore, social media discourse provides a relevant context for examining how semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive functions are realized in online communication. Both viewpoints demonstrate that social media motivation is nuanced and influenced by various factors. The first emphasizes users' need for validation, social comparison, and identity construction, which are shaped by sociocultural influences, whereas the second highlights practical motives such as communication, self-expression, and the pursuit of personal goals. As a result, social media motivation is dynamic and influenced by psychological, social, and cultural factors, playing an important role in shaping behavior in digital settings.

The Tabulation of Data

The data show that emotional language is the most common feature in motivational social media comments. Expressions of praise, empathy, and encouragement frequently appear, demonstrating the importance of language as a means of emotional communication. This finding supports the view that emotions serve as social signals, potentially influencing how readers interpret messages (Van Kleef & Heerdink, 2015). Motivational expressions, advice, and metaphorical phrases frequently serve as indicators of persuasive intent within motivational social media comments. For example, the comment "failure is not the end of the world" illustrates the interaction between semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive function. Lexically, the word "failure"

refers to the lack of success in achieving a goal, while the phrase *"the end of the world"* literally denotes a catastrophic event. Connotatively, however, the expression suggests that setbacks should not be viewed as irreversible or devastating experiences. Emotionally, the comment conveys reassurance and encouragement by reducing feelings of disappointment and hopelessness. From a persuasive perspective, the statement functions as advice and motivation, encouraging readers to adopt a more positive attitude toward failure and personal growth. This example demonstrates how motivational social media comments combine lexical meaning, connotative meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive intent to construct supportive messages.

This study demonstrates that meaning is dynamic and situational. Evidence from the data shows that the interpretation of motivational social media comments depends on context and individual perspectives. For example, the comment "failure is not the end of the world" may be interpreted as encouragement for individuals experiencing academic, professional, or personal setbacks. In this context, the expression conveys reassurance and resilience. Similarly, the comment "everything happens for a reason" may be interpreted as a message of hope and acceptance by some readers, while others may view it as a reflection on personal growth after adversity. These examples indicate that the connotative meaning of motivational comments is shaped by readers' experiences, situational backgrounds, and emotional conditions. Therefore, meaning is not fixed but is dynamically constructed through interaction between language and context, supporting the view that social and environmental factors influence semantic interpretation (Fatima et al., 2024). This conclusion is consistent with previous research, which has highlighted the interrelationship between emotion, persuasion, and meaning in social media discourse (Nijodo et al., 2024). The findings of this study highlight the dominant role of emotional language in motivational social media discourse. Language in this context conveys information and serves as a medium for expressing emotions and persuasion, shaping how audiences interpret and respond to messages (Nijodo et al., 2024). To provide a clearer picture of the data, a classification of comments based on language type, emotional expression, and persuasive function is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Analysis of Comments

Classification (Comment)	Years	Type of language	Emotional Expression and Persuasive Functions
Be careful, having a loving uncle with Down's syndrome could lead to being compassionate, caring, loving, empathetic, driven and picking up on adorable heart warming habits like this.	2026	Emotional and Motivational	Empathy, compassion; persuasive (warning + positive framing)
I am neither the teacher, the student, nor the student's parent, yet I still feel an overwhelming sense of pride when witnessing	2026	Emotional	Pride, excitement; implicit encouragement

this moment.			
God bless this child & every set of hands in this room.	2026	Emotional	Care, blessing; moral persuasion
Not all can hear, even though everything is audible.	2026	Motivational (Philosophical)	Reflection; implicit persuasion
The explanation is excellent and highly engaging. Although the content is quite long, it remains easy to understand and enjoyable to read, which made me read it until the end. Wishing you continued happiness and good health	2026	Emotional	Happiness, admiration; encouragement
It is more important to cultivate self-acceptance regardless of one's circumstances. This is highly admirable and profoundly impressive.	2026	Emotional and Motivational	Self-love; direct persuasion
Failure is not the end of the world; rather, it is the beginning of success. Therefore, never be afraid of failure.	2026	Emotional	Hope, resilience; strong persuasion
Life is not about waiting for the storm to pass, but about learning how to dance in the rain.	2026	Emotional	Inspiration; persuasive metaphor
Today's Ramadan Reflection: "When something you love causes you pain, embrace the pain, because it is the consequence of your own choice."	2026	Emotional and Motivational	Acceptance, struggle; reflective persuasion
The destination may be more beautiful than we expected, even though the journey toward it does not always unfold as we had hoped.	2026	Emotional	Acceptance; soft persuasion
Other people do not need to know what you experience behind the scenes. It is enough for them to see you when you are genuinely happy.	2026	Emotional	Self-control; advisory persuasion
change is not always easy and is not always simple, but with enough dedication, any habit	2026	Motivational and Persuasive	Determination; strong persuasion

can be reshaped. so if you really went it, becoming the best version if yourself,			
“Struggling in class.” There is no doubt that this teacher is an exceptionally inspiring and supportive educator who creates a learning environment free from judgment.	2026	Emotional	Respect, admiration; indirect persuasion
He is great teacher and very empathetic. He is great teacher and very empathetic	2026	Emotional	Admiration; weak persuasion
James I never get tired of this. What a precious thing to have captured.	2026	Emotional	Appreciation; emotional expression
These kids are so lucky to have someone so patient and caring of them.	2026	Emotional	Gratitude; indirect persuasion
This young man is such a good teacher!	2026	Emotional	Admiration; emotional
Your work is gorgeous!!!	2026	Emotional	Praise; emotional
We often believe this is what we deserve.	2026	Motivational	Reflection; persuasion
The most important thing is to continue striving and making every possible effort. As the saying goes, Man jadda wajada: whoever strives earnestly will eventually achieve their goal.	2026	Motivational and Persuasive	Faith, effort; strong persuasion
They are both such precious gifts	2026	Emotional	Love, appreciation; emotional
"we are star people" this right here is my dreams for the entire field of special education,	2026	Motivational	Hope, aspiration; persuasive vision
wonderful teachers calming and superatitive,	2026	Emotional	Admiration; emotional
she's an exceptional child regardless of the syndrome,	2026	Emotional	Respect, acceptance; implicit persuasion
she's so adorable	2026	Emotional	Affection; emotional
They are so lucky to have a him,	2026	Emotional	Gratitude; indirect persuasion
we are made of pieces of everyone we've never loved,	2026	Motivational (philosophical)	Reflection; deep persuasion
may your mom rest in peace in heaven,	2026		Sympathy, sadness; emotional
Just enjoy your live do	2026	Motivational	Encouragement;

something you can do something i can make u happy never give a care about people whose throwing hate for you				strong persuasion
you get to do thing that you are scared of and that's i think when the most growht happens	2026	Motivational	Courage, growth; persuasive	

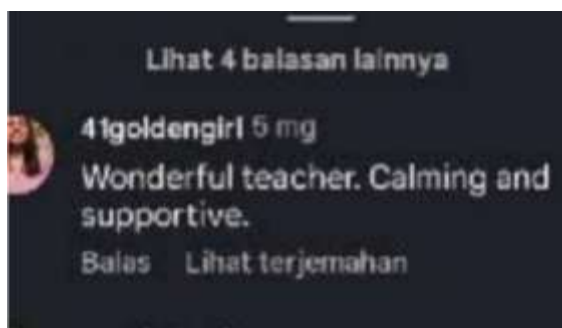


Figure 1. TikTok Screenshot Showing Motivational Social Media Comments Used as Research Data



Figure 2. TikTok Screenshot Illustrating Emotional and Persuasive Expressions in Motivational Social Media Comments.

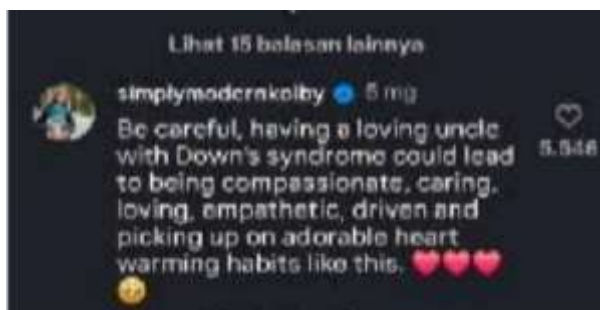


Figure 3. Instagram Screenshot Displaying Motivational Social Media Comments Containing Emotional and Persuasive Language

As shown in Figure 1, emotive language was identified as the most frequently used category, occurring in 40 comments. Motivational language appeared in 25 comments, while 15 comments contained a combination of emotional and motivational language. This pattern indicates that motivational social media comments are not limited

to conveying information but are also strongly oriented toward expressing emotions. Many comments conveyed positive feelings such as appreciation, empathy, pride, and encouragement, suggesting that users frequently engage emotionally when interacting online. In this regard, emotional expressions can be understood as social cues that influence how messages are interpreted by audiences. Comments that contain supportive and empathetic tones are more likely to be perceived as meaningful and engaging. This suggests that emotive language plays a crucial role in building connections and fostering a sense of shared understanding among users. Therefore, its dominance reflects the importance of emotional involvement in shaping communication patterns within social media environments. Figure 2: Persuasive Functions of Language. The persuasive elements in social media comments are generally conveyed in an implicit manner rather than through direct statements. This is evident in the coded data presented in Table 1, where motivational language appears more frequently than direct directive expressions, indicating a preference for indirect persuasion. For instance, comments categorized as motivational language include expressions such as “Failure is not the end of the world” and “Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass,” which function persuasively through metaphorical and emotionally resonant wording rather than explicit commands. Rather than explicitly instructing readers what to do, these coded examples show that users tend to rely on figurative and motivational expressions to deliver persuasive meanings. Such linguistic choices suggest that persuasion in online discourse operates through subtle emotional engagement and strategic word selection. It is important to note that the present study analyzes the persuasive functions of comments themselves rather than measuring direct audience responses. Therefore, the claim that these comments “influence readers” should be understood as an interpretive account of their persuasive potential, based on linguistic features identified in the dataset. From this perspective, motivational language functions not only to inspire but also to construct meanings that may encourage attitudinal alignment in readers, as inferred from the way the comments are linguistically framed.

Figure 3 further demonstrates that meaning in social media communication is flexible and highly dependent on context. This interpretation is supported by a close reading of the coded comments in the dataset, rather than relying solely on visual representation (screenshot). For example, a motivational comment such as “Don't give up; your story is not over yet” can be understood differently depending on the reader's emotional condition and personal experience. In a supportive context, this expression may function as encouragement for individuals facing difficulties; however, in another interpretive frame, it may be read as a general statement of optimism without direct personal relevance. This variation in interpretation indicates that meaning is not only shaped by linguistic structure but also by the socio-emotional context in which the message is received. The same type of motivational comment may therefore generate different levels of engagement or resonance among readers. Individual background, prior experiences, and current emotional states influence such differences, shaping how the message is processed. Thus, social media discourse is context-dependent and interpretive, rather than fixed. The coded examples in Figure 3 illustrate that comments often function beyond literal expression, operating as reflections, encouragement, or social support. This demonstrates the adaptive nature of language in online interaction, where meaning emerges through the interplay between text, context, and reader interpretation.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the construction of semantic meaning, emotional expression, and persuasive language in motivational comments on TikTok and Instagram. The findings indicate that semantic meaning in social media comments is dynamic and context-dependent, shaped by lexical choices, connotative meanings, and figurative language that requires contextual interpretation. Emotional expression is frequently present, mainly through motivational and supportive statements that foster encouragement and a sense of shared emotional experience among users, although the study does not measure actual audience emotional responses. Persuasive language is generally conveyed indirectly through motivational phrases, metaphors, and reflective expressions rather than explicit commands, highlighting the role of subtle linguistic strategies in enhancing engagement and relatability. Overall, semantic, emotional, and persuasive elements interact to shape communication patterns in social media comments. However, the study is limited by a relatively small dataset restricted to selected platforms, the absence of inter-coder reliability testing, and the lack of audience-response data. Future research is recommended to use larger datasets, multiple platforms, and mixed-method approaches combining qualitative and quantitative analysis to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of digital communication dynamics.

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