

MEDIA LITERACY WORKSHOP

Influencer or Manipulator?

How social media shapes emotions, choices and behaviour

#DigitalLiteracy

#GenZ

#Ethics

DIGITAL INFLUENCE

More than just posts

Social media interfaces are designed to influence our emotions, behavior, and core identity.

Influencers don't just sell products; they shape global trends, opinions, and our perception of reality.



THE CORE REALITY

“Most influencer content
doesn’t try to convince
people logically. It tries to
make them **FEEL**
something.”

KEY MANIPULATION TACTICS



Hidden Ads

Commercial messages camouflaged as personal recommendations or casual lifestyle content.



FOMO

The engineered fear of missing out on a trend, a product, or a seemingly perfect experience.



Emotional Hooks

Using intense emotions—vulnerability, anger, or euphoria—to trigger engagement and clicks.



Parasocial Bonds

One-sided emotional connections where users feel they "know" an influencer personally.

CASE 1: THE "PURE" ROUTINE

"Guys, this completely changed my skin. Not sponsored btw."

This aesthetic uses soft lighting and "authentic" bedroom settings to build trust before a recommendation.

❤️ 1.2M 💬 4.5k ➡️ 12k



CASE 2: PRODUCTIVITY

"While you sleep, someone else is getting ahead."

Hustle culture influencers use dramatic "5 AM" lighting to create a sense of inadequacy and urgency.

Tactic: High-pressure aspiration.



CASE 3: MANIFESTING WEALTH

"Manifest the life you deserve."

Luxury lifestyle content presents a hyper-filtered reality that conflates self-worth with material consumption.

Common themes: Dubai breakfasts, supercars, designer labels.



CASE 4: PERFORMANCE

"Social media isn't real and I've been struggling lately..."

Strategic vulnerability can be a tool for engagement. It creates a deep parasocial bond through "raw" content.

The "Sad Selfie" is often a calculated move for viral reach.



INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP



Challenge: Create a Fake Post

Pick a goal and use these keywords to design an influential post:

- Emotion
- Urgency
- Authenticity
- Persuasion
- Aspiration

BEYOND THE SCREEN

The Better Question

"Media literacy is not about distrusting everything online.

It is about asking better questions."

Who benefits from this post? How does it want me to feel?
Is it real or a performance?



Digital Empowerment

The internet is designed to influence:

**ATTENTION • EMOTIONS •
BEHAVIOUR**

Understanding that gives us more control.