

Original Article

# Strategies Used for Persuasion in Vaccination Discourse in Kenya

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**Abstract** - Everyday communication relies heavily on persuasion, making it a crucial element in relationships, leadership, peace building, and success across various domains of life. This study aimed to analyze the use of persuasion in vaccination discourse in Kenya, to identify and discuss the persuasive strategies employed. Guided by Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory, the study adopted a descriptive research design. The population included all vaccination discourse on communicable diseases, and data were purposively sampled from ten address situations delivered by stakeholders from the Ministry of Health and Public Health of Kenya, obtained from mainstream media repositories. The researcher transcribed all expressions and identified utterances intended to persuade. Analysis, guided by relevance principles, revealed that vaccination discourse in Kenya employs a mix of persuasive strategies, including logical, emotional, and motivational appeals, to influence public attitudes. The findings highlight that effective vaccine communication depends not only on delivering factual information but also on how the facts are framed and presented. Persuasive language is therefore pivotal in promoting public health action. The study recommends that health communication integrate targeted persuasive strategies, with training for health officials and communicators on pragmatic language use to enhance message framing and delivery. This would build trust and support informed decision-making among Kenyan citizens regarding vaccination. By examining vaccination discourse through a pragmatic lens, this study contributes to the literature on persuasive communication, enriches understanding of Relevance Theory, and provides insights into global patterns of pragmatic moves in public discourse, offering a foundation for more effective health communication strategies.

**Keywords** - Persuasion Strategies, Relevance, Vaccination, Vaccine Hesitancy, Discourse, Communicable Diseases.

## 1. Introduction

[1] defines persuasive communication as any form of messaging aimed at shaping, strengthening, or altering individuals' reactions. [2] Add that every form of communication, regardless of intention, inherently carries persuasiveness because it can influence the responses of those involved. Persuasion is a common mechanism through which change is influenced at home, in the workplace, among friends, and within broader society. Whether intentional or not, persuasion plays a vital role in conveying messages and achieving the purpose of interactions, permeating domains such as public relations, marketing, education, and media. While the concept and application of persuasion have been widely studied in general communication contexts, there is a notable gap in research on how persuasion operates within vaccination discourse, particularly in addressing vaccine hesitancy. In Kenya, reports from the Ministry of Health reveal that uptake of key vaccines remains suboptimal—HPV vaccination coverage is at 52%, largely hindered by parental reluctance, while COVID-19 vaccine uptake stands at 42% (UNICEF). These figures highlight a pressing public health

problem: many Kenyans are avoiding vaccination due to misinformation, fear, and low vaccine confidence, suggesting that existing communication strategies lack persuasive effectiveness. Globally, research confirms that vaccine misinformation and hesitancy undermine public health efforts. However, little work has specifically examined persuasion strategies as a tool to counter these challenges in the Kenyan context. This underexplored area leaves a critical gap in understanding how language and discourse can be strategically employed to influence public attitudes toward vaccination. The consequences are significant—reduced vaccine uptake increases vulnerability to preventable diseases, strains healthcare systems, and jeopardizes community immunity.

In Kenya, most studies on vaccination focus on determinants of uptake and hesitancy rather than on the linguistic construction of persuasion. Qualitative work across Kenyan counties highlights low knowledge, service disruptions and distance as key barriers, with HPV-specific rumors about fertility and safety shaping demand;



recommended solutions emphasize community sensitization and trusted champions [3]. Related study in Kisumu by [4] shows very low HPV coverage and documents parental and adolescent concerns, while phone-based surveys during 2021 reported high COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy linked to safety/efficacy worries, lower education, and access constraints. Research on communication by [5] examines channels, message testing, and visual design, such as posters and media sources. The study argues that vaccine refusal is associated with the level of education. However, it does not delve into the pragmatic strategies embedded in the Ministry of Health's public statements.

Various studies on persuasion strategies have been undertaken; the current research sets up the strategies used for persuasion in vaccination discourse, which is a different set-up from the studies mentioned above and in the literature. This is meant to investigate the universality of persuasive strategies. This study addresses this gap by examining vaccination discourse from a linguistic perspective to identify effective persuasive techniques mapping how logical, emotional, motivational and credibility appeals are encoded at the utterance level across real communicative events, thereby linking linguistic form to the persuasion goals identified but not analysed in prior Kenyan work.

## 2. Literature Review

Persuasion is an ever-present aspect in everyday interactions, whether interpersonal or public speaking. The primary objective of any speech to persuade is to change an audience's opinion or strengthen an existing belief when one wishes to convince listeners about an idea or influence them to take action. Every day communication is naturally infused with persuasion, playing a vital role in relationships, leadership, peace building, and achieving success in nearly all aspects of life. It is therefore critical that communicators are deliberate about strategies of persuasion. Persuasion involves the act of making somebody do something or believe something [6]. According to [7], persuasion refers to the deliberate use of human communication to sway individuals by modifying their convictions, principles, or dispositions. It is important to note that persuasion is neither coincidental nor coercive, but rather an inherent aspect of effective communication. Pragmatics plays a vital role in communication by influencing how messages are delivered and understood, making it especially important in the context of persuasion. [8] emphasizes that the effectiveness of communication, especially in persuasive contexts, depends on how well the speaker or writer navigates the pragmatic elements to ensure that the audience correctly understands their intended meaning.

The persuasive effects in vaccine communication depend on the ability to influence cognitions and affect (risk beliefs, anticipated regret, norms, and trust) and delivery tactics that reduce the friction of acceptance. Synthesis work, including

that by [9], demonstrates that credible sources, precise benefits framing, prompts/reminders, defaults, and reducing practical barriers reliably increase uptake. In contrast, fear appeals or myth-busting alone are inconsistent and lack efficacy and trust cues. Systematic reviews of hesitancy interventions also conclude that successful interventions are not generic information campaigns, but those that are suited to the context-specific concerns of the audience [10]. According to [11], the persuasive power of provider language at the clinical encounter is that a presumptive recommendation style, like it is time to take the vaccines today will be accepted immediately better than a participatory opening. Motivational interviewing also indicates that it would be beneficial as it meets parental values, eliminates ambivalence, and advances confidence and preferences in various assessments.

This study aims to investigate how persuasive strategies are employed in vaccination discourse to alter Kenyans' perspectives on accepting vaccination for communicable diseases. Ideally, Persuasion in discourse permeates various domains such as public relations, education, and media, reflecting historical and current trends. Its significance extends to diverse professions, including law, teaching, and social work. [12], argue that persuasion serves as the primary means for individuals to exert influence and make a difference within their homes, friendships, communities, and workplaces. They further suggest that persuasion can supersede established notions of genetic programming, environmental conditioning, and early childhood influences, as it shapes thoughts and behaviors in real-life situations.

The Greek Philosopher Aristotle developed three rhetorical devices that have been used as persuasive strategies for thousands of years. The three pillars of persuasion developed by Aristotle, *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, are discussed by [13]. *Logos* consists of two elements, which are evidence and reasoning. According to Lucas [13], the second device is *ethos*, which refers to Competence, encompassing the speaker's intelligence, expertise, sincerity, and knowledge. The other aspect involves character, which focuses on how the audience perceives the speaker's sincerity, trustworthiness, reputation, and physical appearance. Speakers establish their credibility by demonstrating expertise, reliability, and enthusiasm. This is accomplished by providing qualifications and relevant firsthand encounters, delivering a well-rounded and non-forceful stance, referencing reliable authorities, utilizing suitable language and syntax, fostering an amiable image, and actively engaging with both the subject matter and the audience during their delivery. Agreeing that *pathos* refers to emotional appeals and noting that Aristotle was suspicious of too much emotional appeal, [13], posits that the use of *pathos* continues to become more acceptable in public speaking. *Pathos* pertains to the emotional intensity exhibited by a speaker towards their topic. It shows the need for the speaker to demonstrate his or her feeling of sympathy or suffering. This persuasive strategy involves the stimulation of

emotions through oral communication. To engage pathos, speakers employ various techniques: using expressive words to create visual images in the minds of listeners, offering personal anecdotes or testimonies, employing rhetorical devices such as metaphors, similes, and personification, and utilizing vocal fluctuations, rhythmic patterns, and recurring elements. Using Relevance Theory, this study's interest was to reveal such strategies in vaccination discourse that may lead to the adoption of vaccination.

Another strategy is Positive and Negative Motivation. The strategy that can be used by teachers, politicians, public speakers, parents, and business people is labeled as negative and positive motivation. On one hand, audience motivation can be achieved when speakers relate the contents of their speech to their audiences' personal lives. On the other hand, negative motivation will result from the failure to follow the speaker's speech. Negative and positive motivation go side by side with appeals to needs. Maslow talks about three layers of needs that people are targeting [14]. The range of requirements encompasses physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs in that order. By incorporating appeals to these needs as well as utilizing positive and negative motivation in tandem, the effectiveness of the message can be heightened. This is such a gap that the present study aims to address by looking at persuasion strategies in vaccination discourse.

Pragmatic research on persuasion has been conducted on childhood vaccination adoption in Nigeria [15]. They discovered that the majority of identified communication strategies focused on informing, educating, and reminding individuals of such vaccination. However, there was a scarcity of strategies aimed at imparting skills, fostering community ownership, and facilitating effective communication. However, it did not identify any persuasion strategies that aimed to inform and facilitate the decision-making process by the citizens of that particular country. It proposed that Nigerian vaccination communication interventions should focus on aiding program managers in recognizing deficiencies in vaccine communication. This study seeks to suggest a basis for a persuasive formula in Vaccination Discourse, which was not addressed in the research by [15].

According to a review conducted by the World Health Organization (2016) [16] on effective communication strategies for promoting national immunization schedules, communication interventions need to assess various outcomes and determine the strength and nature of any associations found. Indicators of effectiveness include vaccine-related knowledge, attitudes, perceptions, and behavior. To achieve optimal immunization coverage and realize public health objectives, interventions ought to draw from both overarching theories of behavior modification at a larger scale and personalized models of individual behavior decision-making. The study under investigation examines persuasion strategies

in vaccination discourse because if vaccination is to be fully accepted, then persuasive communication should occur.

A study by [17] reviewed the texts of slogans used in the immunization promotion campaigns organized by the World Health Organization (WHO). It concluded that the more specific and measurable the data presented in the message, the more trustworthy it seems to the audience. Their analysis revealed that health messages that contain numbers or certain statistics and the application of factual information reinforce the message and also diminish unbelief, and as such, people will tend to believe what they are being told. The current study utilizes the context of utterance to identify utterances used for persuasion in vaccination discourse in Kenya.

[15], Conducted a qualitative study in Nigeria to examine how caregivers and health workers perceive and experience communication strategies related to childhood vaccination. The study focused on peasants and subsistent farmers in Nigeria, who were believed to play a crucial role in the adoption of vaccination. The research identified ten key elements that characterized the findings. One important aspect was the presence of mutual distrust among interpersonal relations and peasants in general. Peasants exhibited suspicion, evasiveness, and a lack of trust towards others within their community. They held the belief that good things in life were limited in quantity, which hindered their ability to improve their conditions. Furthermore, the emergence of a reliance on government authorities and simultaneous animosity towards them played a role because peasants exhibited a conflicting stance towards government officials, depending on them to address their issues while also harboring suspicion. Another significant finding was the presence of fatalism among peasants. With a belief in a supernatural force governing their welfare, they harbored limited ambitions for progress, thereby lacking the motivation to strive for greater accomplishments. They also had a limited worldview and demonstrated low levels of empathy, making it difficult for them to envision themselves in new situations. This particular perspective on life greatly influenced the willingness of peasants to adopt health services. The qualitative study suggested that successful vaccination adoption relies on effective persuasion of the majority of peasants. This current study sets out to analyse persuasion strategies in vaccination discourse used by health officials in Kenya.

[18], carried out a cross-sectional study to examine the factors that impact the vaccination status of children between 12 and 35 months old in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Their findings demonstrated that the proportion of infants who received the complete immunization fell below the national objective. Several factors, including maternal ethnicity, paternal education, and receiving vaccination date notifications from medical personnel, were associated with the completion of vaccinations. Interestingly, television, radio, and posters were not widely utilized as sources of information

for vaccination programs or notification of vaccination dates. These findings indicate the need for targeted messages tailored to specific sub-groups that are culturally acceptable, conveyed through appropriate communication channels. The study suggests that fathers could also contribute to decision-making, and enhancing the health literacy of both mothers and fathers through health education may help improve vaccination status. Additionally, this research underscores the importance of healthcare professionals providing clear information regarding vaccinations, including the recommended immunization schedule. The current study presents content analysis of persuasion strategies in vaccination discourse in Kenya's electronic media, which was not widely utilized in the above study.

In a study carried out by UNICEF in 2016 [19] in Zimbabwe, the investigation focused on the factors that contributed to vaccine hesitancy and the extent of immunization coverage. The findings indicated that caregivers possessed limited knowledge and a passive grasp of vaccination, failing to associate specific diseases with the vaccines. Rather, they perceived vaccinations solely as injections and lacked the confidence to inquire about particular vaccines and diseases from healthcare providers. These observations highlighted insufficient information and knowledge, leaving caregivers ill-equipped to comprehend the potential dangers of not adhering to the vaccines outlined in the child's health card and vaccination schedule. Additionally, the dissemination of vaccination-related information predominantly relied on conventional IEC resources, including brochures and visual aids, which were considered a universal solution for stimulating public interest and increasing awareness [19]. The study emphasized that health care workers play a crucial role in providing information about vaccination. Unfortunately, at the facility level, these workers mistreated the caregivers. Specifically, when caregivers missed scheduled appointments, they experienced ill-treatment from health workers, which led some of them to forgo future appointments or discontinue the services altogether. This lack of persuasion hindered their ability to meet the necessary level of commitment. Furthermore, the caregivers expressed dissatisfaction with certain health workers who they claimed verbally mistreated them when they inquired about vaccines. The interest of the present research was on proper and persuasive communication, hence an investigation into persuasive strategies in vaccination discourse.

In Somalia, [20], a study was conducted on the utilization of social media for Health Communication in Africa. The study focused on the role of mobile phones in the polio campaign, specifically in Somalia, which was one of the countries affected by the polio epidemic. The research delved into various approaches, outcomes, and valuable insights. The country witnessed a growing presence of mobile phones, facilitating easier sharing of targeted information.

Consequently, a new strategy was devised, utilizing mobile phone technology as the primary means of communication for polio immunization campaigns. This approach involved employing communication tactics to educate the community about the importance of receiving the polio vaccine. Nevertheless, [20] highlighted the difficulty of directly linking the surge in polio immunization acceptance to the dissemination of information through mobile devices. This once again underscores the necessity for a thorough examination of the effects of different communication factors in program implementation, aiming to identify intersecting, amplifying, or interdependent variables in health communication. To fill the said gap, this study investigated persuasion strategies and politeness in vaccination discourse in Kenya.

[21], carried out research in the Oromia Regional State of Eastern Ethiopia, using multivariate logistic analysis to determine the factors that affect immunization coverage in children aged 12-23 months. This survey, which followed a community-based cross-sectional design, incorporated mixed data analysis methods. The researchers utilized a stratified multi-stage cluster sampling technique, employing simple random sampling, to determine the sample size. The findings indicated a general deficiency in vaccination coverage, primarily attributed to caregivers' lack of awareness about the importance of immunization. Furthermore, caregivers were reluctant to bring their children for the second and third doses due to concerns about potential side effects. Additionally, misconceptions regarding contraindications of immunization and insufficient information regarding the location and timing of immunization contributed to the low coverage rates. Another study conducted by [22] did not demonstrate the impact of engaging healthcare professionals in improving coverage. This study uses a neo-Gricean and relevance theory and seeks to establish the strategies used for persuasion in vaccination discourse by healthcare professionals in Kenya.

Another research conducted in Kenya by [23] focused on creating impactful messages and communication strategies to encourage maternal immunization. The study aimed to identify the key elements that could influence attitudes, intentions, and vaccine acceptance among mothers. The findings revealed that incorporating relatable factors into the messages played a significant role in shaping positive attitudes towards maternal immunization. The current study addresses persuasive vaccination strategies in all the discourse on communicable diseases, targeting mothers, fathers, and children.

Immunization can prevent 2–3 million deaths annually from Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (VPDs), yet global coverage remains stalled at 86%. Efforts are needed to improve this rate and address disparities across regions and immunization types [24]. Past pandemics like a vian flu, swine flu, and Ebola have highlighted the threat of infectious

diseases. Since the 1960s, new disease agents have emerged while older ones like cholera, malaria, and TB have resurged [25; 26; 27]. This study aims to analyze persuasive vaccination discourse to ensure accurate messaging, recognizing its critical role in public health promotion and disease prevention. There is still limited research specifically addressing how persuasion is employed in vaccination discourse. Reports by the Ministry of Health in Kenya and UNICEF show that vaccine hesitancy remains a concern, with COVID-19 vaccine uptake at just 42%. This low coverage highlights the need for stronger persuasion strategies to counter misinformation, address public fears, and build confidence in vaccines. This sets in to analyse persuasion strategies employed by health stakeholders in Kenya within vaccination discourse. It relies primarily on public discourse, based on the assumption that speakers use language in specific ways to persuade their audiences. Grounded in the field of pragmatics, the study is guided by Relevance Theory [28] to examine how persuasion strategies are applied in vaccination discourse.

### 2.1. Theoretical Framework

The research was guided by [28] Relevance Theory, a pragmatic framework suggesting that utterances often have multiple possible interpretations. According to this theory, when someone speaks, they express several assumptions that the listener considers important. [28], Also, listeners typically deduce the speaker's intended meaning by evaluating the relevance of various aspects within the ongoing conversation and context.

According to [28], new information introduced in an ongoing conversation has contextual impact. They propose that when the listener recognizes the contextual impact of new information, they not only try to understand its relevance but also attempt to determine how it can help elucidate the speaker's intended meaning. Throughout this process of exchanging information, the speaker's contributions can either reinforce or undermine the listener's assumptions, remove them entirely, or introduce new beliefs. Nevertheless, redundant information duplicating existing knowledge is considered irrelevant to what is already known. The primary cognitive outcome obtained through processing an input within a context is a contextual implication, a deducible conclusion derived from both the input and the context, rather than solely from the input or the context.

[28] Relevance Theory is grounded in the notion of relevance and is supported by two fundamental principles: The Cognitive Principle (suggesting that human cognition aims to maximize relevance) and the Communicative Principle (asserting that speech creates anticipations of utmost relevance). It argues that the raised expectations of relevance caused by an utterance are sufficiently specific and foreseeable to direct the listener towards the intended meaning of the speaker. This study utilized this theory to determine the strategies that were used to achieve persuasion in the updates

given by the officials of the Ministry of Health in Kenya, assuming that speakers possess the ability to employ convincing tactics in their speeches, to steer their audience towards the correct understanding of their statements. This is achieved by anticipating that listeners will extract the most pertinent significance from their words, influenced by the input and contextual clues, enabling them to take the necessary precautions whenever any prevalent communicable disease in our nation endangers their lives.

A possible limitation of Relevance theory is that relevance is subjective and varies between individuals based on their knowledge, experiences, and context, making it difficult to measure or determine what is universally relevant [29]. This creates a challenge in analysing persuasion strategies, as some approaches may appeal to specific audiences while failing to reach others. To mitigate this limitation, the study analysed a variety of communication materials to capture a broader range of strategies and communications, ensuring insights reflect diverse approaches designed to appeal to different audience segments. This ensures that any audience not reached by one strategy in a particular message may resonate with another strategy in a different communication.

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1. Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive research design. A qualitative study involves a description of phenomena [30]. The design enables the researcher to provide an in-depth analysis of phenomena after careful description of observed patterns in the data. Similarly, [31] also notes that a qualitative researcher intends to explain, describe, and interpret information.

### 3.2. Population

The target population for this study comprised all vaccination discourse on communicable diseases by the stakeholders in the Ministry of Health in Kenya. This discourse was obtained from press releases, media briefings, communications issued by the Ministry of Health and affiliated stakeholders, from mainstream media houses' repositories. The vaccination discourse was chosen from the period between 2013 and 2023.

### 3.3. Sampling Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling of real language data. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects sample elements based on their relevance, aiming to obtain a representative sample through sound decision-making. [32] highlights the importance of purposive sampling, which good qualitative researchers, at the very least, engage in purposeful sampling, which means that they purposefully choose data that fit the parameters of the research questions, goals, and purposes. Ten communication discourses were picked for analysis to generate enough data for this study, because the

study focused on expressions, and each situation is expected to generate at least ten expressions relevant to the study. This led to about 100 expressions. Qualitative inquiry is value-laden and does not focus on the objective finding that lacks neutrality [33]. That is why small samples are the best suited for qualitative research; they allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of a particular context, which is generally not possible through studying larger samples. In the same vein, the researcher employed a small sample through purposive sampling, i.e., ten communicative situations from the MoH officials for this research.

### 3.4. Research Instruments

Data was sought from media repositories, especially on the MoH platform, using Chrome downloader. The researcher intensively read the downloaded vaccination discourses and prepared a checklist listing the different strategies of persuasion for further examination. This was used to sort these strategies for their analysis and to note the contextual information to bring out the persuasive aspects in the discourses used by the officials in the Ministry of Health.

### 3.5. Data Collection Procedure

The first step was carrying out a survey on the discourses from the MoH available on mainstream media repositories to ascertain their relevance to the objectives of this study. In the second step, the sampled discourses were downloaded and printed.

Next, the researcher carefully reviewed the sampled pieces of communication and conducted a pragmatic review to identify the strategies of persuasion. These were identified and highlighted according to the expected features checklist, taking note of the contextual information.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

The study used a qualitative method to present and analyse data. The researcher transcribed all the persuasive utterances identified. Using a checklist, the strategies of persuasion were highlighted and listed in reference to relevance theory. According to [34], politeness analysis should focus on discourse rather than individual sentences or phrases. The significance of the context of the utterance is also acknowledged.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Strategies of Persuasion in Vaccination Discourse

The following is a brief summary of the ten extracts from which the expressions were drawn:

#### 4.1.1. Extract 1

This discourse is drawn from a televised segment aired on Citizen TV, focusing on the government's response to concerns surrounding COVID-19 vaccination. The interaction involves health officials engaging with the public to clarify government policy, address vaccine hesitancy, and outline the

status of vaccine deployment. The discourse is situated within a broader national context of increasing vaccination coverage and managing public perception during the pandemic. A total of eight persuasive strategies were identified in this discourse, each playing a role in shaping public attitudes and responses to the vaccination campaign: exp1, exp2, exp3, exp4, exp5, exp6, exp7, and exp8.

#### 4.1.2. Extract 2

The second discourse focuses on the government's response to a rise in COVID-19 infections and the need to strengthen immunity through booster vaccinations. Delivered through televised updates, the discourse emphasizes the importance of continued public vigilance, particularly among those who have received earlier doses. Health officials explain the declining immunity over time and justify the launch of the booster campaign, especially targeting the youth. Within this discourse, several persuasive strategies were identified across five expressions, namely Exp9, Exp10, Exp11, Exp12, and Exp13.

#### 4.1.3. Extract 3

Discourse 3 centers on the Kenyan Ministry of Health's oral cholera vaccination campaign launched in August 2023. This initiative aimed to immunize approximately 1.5 million individuals aged one year and above across eight counties most affected by the cholera outbreak: Nairobi, Kajiado, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Homa Bay, Machakos, and Garissa. The campaign was a response to the escalating cholera situation. The discourse was informative and persuasive, using various strategies to encourage public acceptance and uptake of the cholera vaccine as a necessary step in combating the outbreak. This is as depicted in Exp14, Exp15, Exp16, and Exp17.

#### 4.1.4. Extract 4

The fourth discourse centers on the launch of Kenya's Rapid Results COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign, unveiled in February 2022 by Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe and Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. The campaign aimed to vaccinate one million Kenyans daily over a ten-day period. The discourse employed various persuasive strategies to encourage public participation in the vaccination drive. Four key strategies were identified within this discourse, labeled as Exp18, Exp19, Exp20, and Exp21.

#### 4.1.5. Extract 5

This discourse involves the Ministry of Health's launch of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine as a strategic measure to combat cervical cancer. The campaign targets girls aged 10 to 15, aiming to provide them with a single-dose vaccine to prevent HPV infections that can lead to cervical cancer. The discourse employs four distinct persuasive strategies, articulated through five expressions labeled Exp22 to Exp26, to encourage vaccine uptake and address potential hesitancy.

#### 4.1.6. Extract 6

Discourse 6 focuses on the launch of a polio vaccination campaign in Kajiado County, Kenya, initiated by the Ministry of Health in response to recent detections of poliovirus in the region. The campaign aims to immunize children under the age of five, particularly in high-risk areas, to prevent the spread of the disease. In this discourse, seven distinct persuasive strategies have been identified, labeled as Exp27 through Exp33, each employing various techniques to encourage public participation in the vaccination drive.

#### 4.1.7. Extract 7

This discourse Covid-19 briefing outlines the state of infections, vaccine coverage, and strategies for accelerating vaccination across the country. Throughout the address, multiple persuasive strategies are employed to justify policy decisions and encourage compliance. Six key expressions were identified within the discourse, labeled as Exp34 to Exp39.

#### 4.1.8. Extract 8

Discourse 8 captures the official launch of Kenya's accelerated COVID-19 mass vaccination drive, as delivered by a senior government representative through the Ministry of Health and broadcast on the Afya Channel. The address took place in Dagoretti, a region recognized for its relatively high vaccination uptake, and was aimed at encouraging broader national participation. Several persuasive strategies were identified within this address, labeled as Exp40 to Exp46.

#### 4.1.9. Extract 9

This discourse features a public address by Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe, urging unvaccinated Kenyans to get the COVID-19 jab following the arrival of a large shipment of vaccines from international partners. Several persuasive strategies were identified in this address, categorized under Expressions Exp47, Exp48, Exp49, Exp50, Exp51, Exp52, and Exp53.

#### 4.1.10. Extract 10

Discourse 10, from which Exp54, Exp55, Exp56, and Exp57 have been extracted, focuses on the expansion of Kenya's malaria vaccination campaign targeting infants in the Lake Region. The discourse emphasizes the importance of full dosage adherence, continued use of existing malaria prevention methods, and the government's commitment to improving child health outcomes. Within this communication, several persuasive strategies are used to promote vaccine uptake and community cooperation.

This section is organized to highlight the nature of the persuasive strategies, supported by illustrative expressions drawn from actual discourse as indicated in the above summaries. Relevance Theory is applied to account for how meaning is derived through the interaction between linguistic input and contextual assumptions. After critically evaluating

the ten selected discourses, a range of persuasive strategies was identified across different contexts and speakers. These strategies included: Logos, Ethos, Pathos, and motivation. This analysis aligns with the principles of Relevance Theory, which maintains that communication is guided by the pursuit of optimal relevance, where the listener seeks the most significant contextual effect for the least cognitive effort. In these discourses, speakers relied on both explicit and implicit forms of persuasion to influence public attitudes toward vaccination. The identified strategies reflect deliberate efforts to align messages with the cognitive environments of the audience, using appeals to logic, credibility, emotion, and motivation.

### 4.2. Logos

Grounded in the framework of Relevance Theory, which emphasizes optimal cognitive effect and minimal processing effort, logos was analyzed in the current study in relation to how speakers structure their discourse to achieve rational persuasion. This was manifested in two principal forms: evidence, including examples and testimonies used to affirm claims, and reasoning, which involves the logical progression from premises to conclusions based on the available evidence. Both forms serve to increase the relevance of an utterance by providing justifications that are cognitively rewarding to the audience, thus enhancing the persuasive intent.

The deployment of logos aligns with the communicative principle of relevance, whereby speakers aim to provide information that justifies the audience's effort in processing the message. Testimonies and examples function as concrete proof, reinforcing the speaker's credibility and supporting claims with experiential or factual grounding. Meanwhile, reasoning allows for the construction of argument chains that guide the audience toward intended conclusions. This strategic use of logic ensures that utterances are informative and inferentially accessible. Several instances of *logos* were noted in various extracts analyzed, illustrating how speakers utilize logical structures to fulfill persuasive and communicative goals in line with Relevance Theory.

*Exct 1, Exp1*

*Based on the data we get from the Pharmacovigilance Platform, we have recorded 615 cases of adverse events. Most of these events have been mild.*

This expression is drawn from a televised segment aired on Citizen TV, focusing on the government's response to concerns surrounding COVID-19 vaccination. The interaction involves health officials engaging with the public to clarify government policy, address vaccine hesitancy, and outline the status of vaccine deployment. The discourse is situated within a broader national context of increasing vaccination coverage and managing public perception during the pandemic. The use of logos in this expression is evident through reference to pharmacovigilance data. In the expression, the speaker cites

specific figures, 615 cases of adverse events, to support the argument that the vaccine is generally safe. By stating that most of these events have been mild, the speaker provides a factual basis to reassure the public and reduce fear surrounding vaccination. This use of quantifiable data strengthens the credibility of the message and aligns with the principles of Relevance Theory by offering information that is both informative and easy for the audience to process. It appeals to logic and encourages acceptance by demonstrating transparency and reliance on scientific monitoring. In the second expression (Exp 2), the speaker equally employs logical appeal by providing statistics on data-driven procurement.

*Exct 1, Exp 2:*

*We are going to do our own procurement depending on this. Thank you. We have placed an order for the AstraZeneca vaccine to the tune of 13.3 million doses. However, because of global manufacturing constants, all this we cannot be able to get in a single day because of demand from the rest of the global community. So this will come in a staggered way on a monthly basis, starting with the end of this month, where we will get close to 400,000 Johnson & Johnson vaccines.*

The mention of an order for 13.3 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine in Exp 2 serves to inform the audience of the government's proactive efforts to secure sufficient vaccine supplies. This reference to concrete figures demonstrates planning and preparedness, reinforcing the evidence of the credibility of the vaccination program. It also helps to build public confidence by showing that access to vaccines is being prioritized at a national level. This finding agrees with [17], in their WHO immunization campaign slogans analysis, which shows how the inclusion of concrete, quantifiable data enhances message credibility and audience trust. This function aligns with the *logos* dimension in rhetorical analysis. They argue that this provides the audience with clear, evidence-based justification that enhances persuasive impact while minimizing unnecessary processing effort.

*Exct 2, Exp 13:*

*Over time, the immunity even for a healthy person, who has been vaccinated, begins to go down, necessitating the need for a booster shot for an increased immune response. So, the booster shot or the booster dose is critical for us in this fight against any emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus.*

Looking at the above utterance, the speaker uses hypothetical reasoning to explain the need for continued vaccination. This statement helps the audience understand that immunity is not permanent, even in healthy individuals. By presenting a likely scenario of declining immunity, the speaker justifies the need for booster shots in a logical and forward-looking way. This type of reasoning makes the

message more relatable and supports informed decision-making by showing the ongoing value of vaccination. The following expression reflects the speaker's use of logical reasoning through comparison of risk to emphasize that the benefits of receiving the vaccine are greater than the potential side effects.

*Exct 1, Exp 3:*

*So the government makes policies on a day-to-day basis, depending on the situation that is at hand. And for this particular one, we have known that it is safer to have the vaccine. The benefits of the vaccine outweigh the side effects.*

Rather than denying the existence of side effects, the speaker acknowledges them while highlighting that the overall gain, which is protection from severe illness, is more significant. This kind of reasoning helps the audience weigh their options rationally and supports informed consent, which is crucial in public health communication. In line with Relevance Theory by [28], the expression offers a concise yet meaningful input that yields strong contextual effects. It enables the audience to process the information efficiently and draw conclusions with minimal effort, making the message both persuasive and cognitively economical.

This strategy is further depicted in Exct 2, Exp 9, and Exp 10, which rely on statistical evidence to support the vaccination campaign and emphasize the seriousness of the COVID-19 situation. These expressions aim to present factual data that strengthens the government's call for public participation in the booster shot program.

*Exct 2, Exp 9:*

*In the last 24 hours, 427 people tested positive for Covid-19 from a sample size of 3307... the positivity rate rising again, this time to 12.9 percent.*

The evidence in this expression allows the speaker to introduce factual statistics to underscore the severity of the pandemic. The use of up-to-date numerical data presupposes that the audience is aware of the ongoing health crisis and accepts the positivity rate as a key indicator of viral spread. This presupposition functions persuasively by portraying the situation as urgent and worsening. Within the framework of Relevance Theory, this expression achieves optimal relevance by delivering input that is both cognitively significant and easy to process. The alarming figures require minimal effort to understand but lead the audience to a strong cognitive effect: the need to act. Thus, the embedded presupposition that COVID-19 is resurging becomes a strategic cue to justify preventive measures such as vaccination. Additionally, the reference to vaccination goals conveys structured intent and long-term planning.

*Exct 2, Exp 10:*

*Of the 18.4 million doses issued... the government hopes to fully vaccinate 19 million adults and 2.9 million teenagers aged 15 to 17 years by the end of June.*



The above expression, on the contrary, is presupposed with the occurrence of a national vaccination programme that is already in process. It hopes the targeted population knows about this effort and is supposed to join. This message indicates that the vaccination campaign is not just in progress, but that it is being strictly followed. The speaker introduces the process as organized, time-saving, and involving because it defines specific objectives and deadlines. Such assumptions assist in forming public perception, making it appear ordinary and obligatory that everybody participates.

In the view of the Relevance Theory, the statistics inform the audience to view their parts in the campaign's success. The use of figures ensures that the commitment of the government is real, and thus, the message is more acceptable and believable. This agrees with what [36] concluded in his research findings on Ethiopian newspapers, where he observed the tendency of the journalists to assume prior knowledge in their audience and incorporated the assumptions in their messages. In the example, the message carried in this expression involves less mental processing required to comprehend the message; thus, it is more relevant and convincing. The present expression, as well as the findings made by [36], demonstrate the effect intended information may have on the way individuals receive and react to messages that are made publicly.

The third extract centers on the Kenyan Ministry of Health's oral cholera vaccination campaign launched in August 2023. This initiative aimed to immunize approximately 1.5 million individuals aged one year and above across eight counties most affected by the cholera outbreak: Nairobi, Kajiado, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Homa Bay, Machakos, and Garissa. The campaign was a response to the escalating cholera situation. In Exp 14, the use of statistical information functions as a strong logical appeal, as indicated below:

*Exct 3, Exp 14:*

*A total number of 2,263 cases have been admitted... resulting in 15 tragic deaths.*

When the speaker gives the specific numbers concerning the number of cholera admissions and deaths, he or she uses the actual numbers to drive the sense of urgency. This implies the outbreak is not only persistent but also a serious one, which necessitates urgent action. The implication in this case is that the viewing audience should know the significance of such quantities and can relate them to actual and increasing threats. According to the Relevance Theory, this kind of information will be cognitively effective in that it requires little processing and stimulates a high level of emotional and rational awareness. It compels the audience to perceive the vaccination campaign as a necessity without any additional clarification or discussion.

*Exct 3, Exp 17:*

*We have two types of brands... the full dose will give*

*protection for three years, the single dose... for up to six months.*

Here, the speaker continues to bring out the urgency by categorically providing a comparison between two kinds of cholera vaccines. The description of the duration of protection afforded by each option helps the listeners come up with a commonsense choice that is based on effectiveness. This type of comparing logic assumes that the audience is interested in levels of protection and desires to select the most adequate variant. It promotes informed concern and makes the campaign sound ready to address the needs of people. The pattern of danger highlighted in the previous expression (Exp 14) to an offering of vaccines in Exp 17 constitutes a sense of flow that is persuasive, a solution to a problem. According to the Relevance Theory, this strategy minimizes cognitive efforts in the sense that it leads the viewer into only a single logical conclusion, which implies that the best thing to do is to get vaccinated.

*Exct 5, Exp 24:*

*Australia boasts... no woman actually gets cervical cancer... and this they've done through vaccination and screening.*

In Exp 24, the speaker uses logical reasoning by referring to a successful example from a developed country. The mention of Australia's ability to control cervical cancer through vaccination and screening presents a clear and achievable goal. This comparison serves as evidence that such diseases are preventable with the right action. The speaker assumes the audience will recognize the link between regular health efforts and better outcomes. This presupposition makes the message more convincing by showing that a health crisis can be avoided if proper measures are taken. According to Relevance Theory, this kind of example is effective because it provides clear input that helps listeners draw meaningful conclusions without much effort.

*Exct 5, Exp 25:*

*Kenya becomes the 16th country in Africa to introduce this vaccine, and as we've seen globally, in the UN member states becomes the 97th country. So with all the myths and rumors and misconceptions about this vaccine, all the developed world has introduced this vaccine. It is us in the developing world who have the highest burden of cervical cancer that get all these rumors and dilly-dally in preventing these diseases.*

According to Exp 25, the speaker builds on the previous logic by contrasting the developed world's progress with the delay seen in many developing countries. The audience understands why timely vaccination is both necessary and effective. This use of comparative reasoning highlights the negative effects of hesitation and misinformation. The speaker's aim is to shift the mindset of the local audience by making them reflect on their own context. This reasoning

follows what Aristotle called *logos*, the logical appeal of an argument. As [13] explains, *logos* depends on both reasoning and evidence. The speaker uses the example of global differences to prove a point and to show that belief in rumors can lead to poor health outcomes. By doing so, the argument becomes more persuasive because it is supported by real examples and clear reasoning. This helps the audience understand why timely vaccination is both necessary and effective.

*Exct 5, Exp 26:*

*I want to continue to give our commitment as the World Health Organization to support this country in taking this forward*

Through institutional endorsement and partnership, the speaker in this utterance uses credibility appeal as a persuasive strategy. This reaffirms the World Health Organization's continued support for Kenya's HPV vaccination program. This endorsement from a globally trusted health institution lends weight to the message and reassures the public about the vaccine's reliability and the seriousness of the initiative. Exct 6, Exp 28, and Exp 30 all use evidence-based strategies to justify and support the polio vaccination campaign.

*Exct 6, Exp 28:*

*The polio campaign has been necessitated by the detection of the polio virus within the sewerage system in Kamkunji sub-county, Nairobi County.*

*Exct 6, Exp 30:*

*This polio vaccination campaign is targeting a total of 2.4 million Kenyan children below the age of five in the 12 counties.*

In Exp 28, the speaker refers to the detection of poliovirus in the sewerage system of Kamkunji sub-county, Nairobi. This environmental evidence is presented as the key reason for launching the campaign, grounding the message in a specific and verifiable public health concern. By pointing to actual virus presence, the speaker enhances the urgency and legitimacy of the response, making it clear that the risk is real and immediate. This is complemented by Exp 30, which offers statistical evidence on the scope of the intervention. The mention of a target population of 2.4 million children across 12 high-risk counties demonstrates the campaign's scale and strategic focus. It reassures the public that the government is taking wide-reaching and organized action to protect children. In both cases, the use of concrete data increases the relevance of the message.

*Exct 6, Exp 33:*

*We stress the element of safety... because in the past, there have been issues raised about this*

In addition to the argument posted in the previous expression, Exp 33 adds another layer to the evidence-based approach by drawing on historical precedent. This reference to prior concerns acknowledges public scepticism while

demonstrating that lessons have been learned and addressed through rigorous safety checks. By grounding the current campaign in both present facts and past experience, the speaker creates a more comprehensive and trustworthy narrative.

*Exct 7, Exp 34:*

*Over 95% of those people who are hospitalized are unvaccinated, meaning that those vaccinated stand a better chance of fighting and avoiding severe disease*

Exct 7, on the Covid-19 briefing outlining the state of infections, vaccine coverage, and strategies for accelerating vaccination across the country, has also used *Logos*. Exp 34 employs statistical evidence to support the argument for COVID-19 vaccination by linking it directly to health outcomes. The speaker notes that over 95% of hospitalized patients are unvaccinated, implying that vaccinated individuals are significantly less likely to develop severe illness. This comparison offers a transparent and data-driven rationale for vaccine uptake, emphasizing its protective benefits. The statistics not only make the message factual but also persuasive, amounting to encouragement for individuals to view vaccination as a practical and effective health decision.

*Exct 7, Exp 36:*

*It is very important, then, that we are not left behind in this new world order, especially because we are a tourism destination of choice.*

Exp 36 illustrates the use of logical reasoning through a cause-and-effect structure to justify the urgency of vaccination. The speaker argues that failing to keep pace with global vaccination standards could isolate Kenya in the "new world order," particularly because the country depends heavily on tourism. The cause of low vaccination uptake is linked directly to a possible negative effect: being excluded from international travel and economic opportunities. This form of argument enhances the clarity and persuasiveness of the message by connecting a familiar national interest (tourism) to a concrete consequence, allowing the audience to easily process the implications and see the practical value of the recommended action.

*Exct 8, Exp 42:*

*We were vaccinated against TB... our children are vaccinated against polio, so they do not die, so they do not suffer.*

*Logos* is further depicted in Exct 8, which captures the official launch of Kenya's accelerated COVID-19 mass vaccination drive, as delivered by a senior government representative through the Ministry of Health and broadcast on the Afya Channel. The address took place in Dagoretti, a region recognized for its relatively high vaccination uptake, and was aimed at encouraging broader national participation. As brought out here, the speaker draws on historical precedent by reminding the audience of widely accepted childhood

vaccinations, such as those for tuberculosis and polio. This reference to familiar and successful vaccination programs serves as evidence to support the safety and necessity of the COVID-19 vaccine. By connecting past practices to the current context, the speaker helps normalize the vaccine and reduce hesitation.

*Exct 8, Exp 45:*

*You know, it is like someone bad who deceives you. They tell you, 'There is no rain,' so you do not wear a sweater or carry an umbrella—but they have one. When it rains, you are caught unprepared. That is how this virus is. It makes you unaware.*

Further, figurative and anecdotal strategies are used to address misinformation and reinforce vaccine confidence in Exp 45, where the speaker personifies the virus using a metaphor. Comparing it to “someone bad who deceives you,” the speaker illustrates how the virus creates a false sense of safety, leaving people vulnerable when it resurfaces. This figurative language is intended to simplify a complex health risk and make it more relatable, warning the audience against complacency and encouraging proactive vaccination. This in itself enhances persuasion in vaccination discourse.

*Exct 8, Exp 46:*

*I have heard many stories about this vaccine. Recently, someone said that if you get vaccinated, you will not be able to have children. And that was not even a woman—it was a man! If you have other issues, just tell us.. I know people who are already vaccinated. And the women are in the hospital giving birth to twins. They have two children, not even just one.*

The above text tackles a common myth, that vaccination causes infertility, by using anecdotal evidence. The speaker dismisses the claim by sharing a real-life example of vaccinated individuals giving birth to twins. This direct counter-narrative is meant to correct misinformation through accessible and familiar language. Both expressions use informal but impactful communication styles to challenge misconceptions and promote trust in the safety of the vaccine.

*Exct 9, Exp 48:*

*Some 4.3 million doses of Johnson & Johnson from Germany... 400,000 AstraZeneca... 1.2 million from the US...*

Another instance of persuasion happens in Exp 48, where the speaker presents a list of the quantity of vaccines bought by different countries, including millions of doses funded by Germany and the United States. Such application of evidential statistics is in the form of a logical appeal, which is intended to support the message of the speaker. Speaking of particular numbers, the assumption is that there is no longer a problem with access to vaccines, and people should not postpone getting vaccinated under any pretext of lack of vaccines. This is a convincing strategy that allows them to present real numbers, which helps eliminate doubts and uncertainty. In the

context of Relevance theory, such information can be easily processed and used immediately to assist the audience in making the targeted conclusion: vaccination is now a choice for individual people, not a supply problem.

[35] argues that an appeal to logos usually follows a factual and logical appeal that informs one on what to believe and how to act. According to him, logos involves the use of demonstration of evidence that is concrete, verifiable, and difficult to counter, making the message of a speaker more believable and convincing. In the present case, the use of the statistics of supply of vaccines by the speaker adopts this rule since they provide concrete evidence to support the argument that vaccines are available. Thus, Exp 48 not only strengthens the element of trust in numbers but also is in agreement with the scholarly concept of how logic may be used to shape the decisions made by society as part of health communication.

Similarly, in the same extract, Exp 52 employs cause and effect reasoning to discourage individuals from paying for vaccines, which are officially free. The speaker points out that if someone chooses to pay for a service that is already provided at no cost, the resulting loss or consequence is self-inflicted and not the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. This form of reasoning emphasizes personal accountability while indirectly cautioning the public against exploitation or misinformation. Moreover, the speaker eliminates the excuse of affordability, thereby encouraging immediate and barrier-free access to vaccination.

*Exct 9, Exp 52:*

*If you insist on paying for something free (vaccine), that is not the Ministry of Health's issue. You are foolish*

Extract 10 focuses on the expansion of Kenya's malaria vaccination campaign targeting infants in the Lake Region. The discourse emphasizes the importance of full dosage adherence, continued use of existing malaria prevention methods, and the government's commitment to improving child health outcomes. This communication is used to promote vaccine uptake and community cooperation, as depicted in Exp 55 and Exp 57.

By stating that the vaccine led to a 30 percent reduction in severe malaria cases and a decrease in hospital admissions in Exp 55, the speaker provides measurable proof of its impact through statistical evidence. This strengthens the message by showing that the intervention is safe and effective in achieving tangible health outcomes.

*Exct 10, Exp 55:*

*The vaccine was safe and well-tolerated, resulting in a 30 percent reduction in severe malaria and a reduction in hospital admissions.*

In Exp 57, the speaker uses logical reasoning by linking limited resources with the need for careful investment. The

cause-and-effect structure of the message suggests that, because the country is operating under financial constraints, any public health decision must be well thought out and result in maximum benefit.

*Exct 10, Exp 57:*

*We are working in a tight resource environment... investment... must give optimal returns.*

This reasoning presupposes that the audience values accountability and wants assurance that public funds are used wisely. By emphasizing the logic behind the investment, the speaker appeals to the audience's sense of rationality and helps justify the vaccination programme as both necessary and economically sound. This amounts to persuasion, which is the interest of this study. This approach indicates the place of logos within the art of persuasion, where the arguments are constructed upon clear evidence and logical conclusions. [35] Argumentation Schemes for Presumptive Reasoning says that when one is logical in a discourse, they tend to use cause and effect, analogy, or generalization patterns to persuade people listening to them. In this example, the speaker employs a cause-and-effect format to give the audience a convincing conclusion that investing in health is a must, even during a hard economic period. The logic in this case follows the linguistic principles of organization of logical reasoning in an argument because the quality of a message is determined by both the facts presented and the way in which the facts have been arranged to answer a claim. In such a way, Exp 57 empowers the perceived confidence of the population by providing the vaccine as an option that creates responsible and rational decisions regarding the presence of limited resources.

### 4.3. Ethos

In persuasive communication, ethos refers to the appeal to credibility and character, whereby a speaker's authority, reliability, or expertise is used to enhance the persuasiveness of a message. In public health discourse, particularly in contexts marked by uncertainty or skepticism, such as vaccination campaigns, ethos plays a critical role in shaping public trust and uptake of recommended actions. When a speaker is perceived as knowledgeable, trustworthy, or morally responsible, the audience is more likely to accept their message with minimal resistance. This is especially relevant in institutional contexts, where official voices, such as government ministers, health experts, or international organizations, carry persuasive weight due to their perceived legitimacy.

This strategy aligns closely with Relevance Theory [28], which posits that communication is effective when it yields significant cognitive effects with minimal effort. By invoking ethos, speakers reduce the audience's need to evaluate or verify the truthfulness of the message independently, thus lowering cognitive processing costs. Credibility acts as a cognitive shortcut: if a reputable authority presents a claim, the audience is likely to consider it both relevant and true, even

in the absence of detailed argumentation. Hence, ethos enhances both the efficiency and the acceptability of communication by anchoring persuasive messages in established trust networks.

[38] agrees with this upon emphasizing the pragmatic role of institutional ethos in legitimizing public discourse, noting that speakers affiliated with credible institutions are more readily believed in health-related messaging. Similarly, [39], in her rhetorical analysis of expert communication, affirms that the invocation of ethos functions not only to convey authority but also to secure audience alignment with institutional values. In the extracts analyzed in this study, ethos was depicted in numerous instances, demonstrating how Ministry of Health officials consistently drew on institutional credibility and authoritative personae to reinforce the legitimacy of vaccination messages. These are discussed in the following expressions.

*Exct1, Exp 4:*

*Dr. Patrick Amoth, the Acting Director General, Ministry of Health, also the President, WHO Executive Board...speaking to us on COVID-19 and the state of war.*

Credibility appeal is used as a persuasive strategy in Exp 4, in the introduction of the speaker, Dr. Patrick Amoth, who is a senior official in the Ministry of Health and the president of the WHO executive board. His dual role as a senior government health official and a high-ranking figure in a respected global health body lends significant authority to the message being delivered. The implication is that the information provided is not only nationally grounded but also informed by international expertise and oversight.

This enhances public trust in the communication, particularly among audiences that may be skeptical of local systems. When a speaker references a trusted source, according to relevance, it increases the audience's confidence in the truthfulness and reliability of the information [28]. This reduces the listener's need to critically evaluate the message or seek out further evidence, thereby lowering cognitive effort while maintaining high communicative value.

*Exct 6, Exp 31;*

*The vaccines... have been tested by our own National Quality Control Laboratory and found to be safe.*

A credibility persuasive strategy is used in Exp 31 by referencing the safety verification conducted by a trusted national authority. The statement that the vaccines have been tested and approved by the National Quality Control Laboratory reassures the public about the reliability and safety of the polio vaccine. This appeal to institutional credibility makes the message more convincing, especially to audiences that may be skeptical of external sources. In line with relevance theory by [28], such references enhance the communicative effectiveness of the message by reducing the

audience's need to seek additional confirmation, thereby supporting quicker and more confident decision-making.

*Exct 7, Exp 37:*

*The Pharmacy and Poisons Board has reviewed and given emergency use authorization... as recommended by the World Health Organization.*

Credibility as a persuasive strategy is brought out in Exp 37 by highlighting the alignment between national regulatory bodies and international health authorities. At this point, the speaker notes that the Pharmacy and Poisons Board has granted emergency use authorization for a vaccine, following recommendations from the WHO. This dual endorsement reinforces the legitimacy and safety of the vaccine by associating it with trusted institutions at both the national and global levels. This referencing makes the message gain authority and reliability, helping to build public trust.

*Exct 8, Exp 44:*

*Starting from the President of this country, Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, who was the first to be vaccinated.*

Exp 44 utilizes the persuasive strategy of credibility by referencing leadership through example. The speaker cites President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta as the first person in the country to be vaccinated, reinforcing public trust in the vaccination campaign. By showing that the highest-ranking official willingly received the vaccine, the message conveys safety, confidence, and national unity.

*Exct 9, Exp 51:*

*We thank the German people, even during their own hour of need, for donating these vaccines.*

Additionally, Exp 51 relies on the persuasive strategy of credibility by appealing to global solidarity. The speaker expresses gratitude to the German people for donating vaccines to Kenya despite facing their national challenges. This acknowledgement highlights the generosity of a trusted international partner and reinforces the legitimacy of the vaccines received. By showing that respected nations are supporting Kenya in its vaccination efforts, the speaker strengthens public confidence in both the vaccines and the broader campaign.

Regarding the above instances through the lens of Relevance Theory, it becomes clear that ethos operates not merely as a stylistic device but as a cognitive facilitator. By invoking reputable figures and institutions, such as the Director General of Health, national laboratories, and the WHO, speakers provide the audience with immediately accessible sources of trust.

This reduces the cognitive burden on the audience to process complex or unfamiliar information. In terms of relevance, these credibility cues optimize processing by supplying strong assumptions with high contextual effects. The endorsement by trustworthy sources implicitly

communicates that the message is not only worth attending to but is also dependable, thereby encouraging acceptance with minimal mental effort.

Furthermore, Relevance Theory explains how ethos works pragmatically to minimize inferential distance between speaker and hearer. For example, when the President is portrayed as taking the vaccine publicly, or when the Pharmacy and Poisons Board is mentioned alongside WHO approval, these signals do not require the audience to assess the scientific content of the message themselves. Instead, the credibility of the source acts as a cognitive warrant, a mental shortcut that satisfies the audience's need for justification.

In this way, ethos functions as a relevance-enhancing strategy: It provides confidence in the truth of the message, helps the audience understand it as intended, and lowers doubts or mistrust in public health communication. This is in agreement with Cap (2014), who, in his pragmatic study on legitimization in political discourse, highlights how institutional authority and trusted figures are repeatedly used to reduce processing effort and legitimize urgent public health interventions.

#### 4.4. Pathos

Pathos refers to the use of emotional appeals in communication to influence the audience's feelings, attitudes, and decisions. In persuasive discourse, pathos works by triggering emotions such as fear, hope, empathy, or urgency, which in turn shape how people respond to a message. In health communication, especially during public health crises, emotional appeals are commonly used to influence behavior and overcome resistance. For example, referring to the death of a loved one or the suffering of children can evoke fear or compassion, which motivates the audience to act, such as choosing to be vaccinated. Indicators of pathos include emotionally loaded language, personal stories, figurative expressions, and references to loss or safety.

According to Relevance Theory, emotional appeals increase a message's relevance by creating strong contextual effects that are easy to understand and connect with. When a speaker uses emotional language, the audience can interpret the meaning quickly and relate it to their own experiences, reducing the mental effort required to process the message. These appeals often make the consequences of inaction feel more personal and urgent, which strengthens the overall persuasive effect.

Since emotions influence decision-making, pathos is an efficient strategy that helps speakers reach both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of their audience. In this study, pathos was clearly identified in several expressions, where speakers used stories of illness, death, and recovery and hopeful narratives to connect with the audience and persuade them to accept vaccination. These emotional strategies are discussed in the following extracts.

*Exct 1, Exp 5:*

*More than 90% of the mortalities are those who are aged 50 years and above... they ought to come out clearly and get their first and second jabs.*

The above text employs emotional framing by appealing to fear and highlighting the risk of death, particularly among older adults. By directly linking the risk of death to vaccine hesitancy, the message aims to motivate action through fear of loss. This strategy does not rely on abstract statistics alone but connects them to a concrete and serious outcome: mortality. The use of this emotional appeal enhances relevance by drawing immediate attention to potential consequences that are personally significant to the listener, thus encouraging quick interpretation and response with minimal mental effort.

*Exct 2, Exp 11:*

*In Siaya County, we have lost three people. That shows that COVID is still lethal.*

This text uses emotional framing by referring to recent deaths to highlight the ongoing danger of COVID-19. The speaker mentions that three people died in Siaya County, reinforcing that the virus remains lethal. This reference to death serves as an emotional appeal, aimed at creating fear and concern among listeners who may be hesitant about vaccination. By connecting the disease to real and recent loss, the message becomes more personal and urgent. It encourages the public to take the virus seriously and view vaccination as necessary to protect themselves and others.

*Exct 3, Exp 16:*

*To date, a total of 2,263 cases have been admitted to our Cholera Treatment Center, resulting in 15 tragic deaths.*

In the above text, the speaker employs an emotional appeal strategy by highlighting the impact of the cholera outbreak in human terms. While the numbers alone convey seriousness, the phrase "15 tragic deaths" adds an emotional layer meant to stir concern and fear. By framing the outcome as tragic, the speaker moves beyond presenting statistics to emphasizing the real-life consequences of inaction. This approach aims to prompt a deeper emotional response from the audience, encouraging them to take the threat seriously and support the vaccination effort.

The fourth extract centers on the launch of Kenya's Rapid Results COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign, unveiled in February 2022 by Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe and Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiang'i. The campaign aimed to vaccinate one million Kenyans daily over a ten-day period. The discourse employed various dimensions of Pathos.

*Exct 4, Exp 19*

*We do not want to hear that any Kenyan, even a single one, has suffered or is dead.*

*Exct 4, Exp 20*

*This COVID-19 lies to us... It makes you unaware.*

*Once you relax, it comes with another variant with much force.*

The speaker uses emotional appeals to persuade the audience in Exp 19 and Exp 20, but in different ways. The speaker in Exp 19 creates empathy and fear by stating that no Kenyan should suffer or die from COVID-19. This appeal to shared humanity and concern for others is meant to evoke emotional responsibility, encouraging people to act in order to prevent further loss. In Exp 20, the same speaker uses a different approach to emotional appeal, which is the use of figurative language by personifying the virus, saying it 'lies to us' and 'comes with another variant with much force.' This makes the virus appear deceptive and aggressive, heightening the perceived threat and prompting vigilance. Both expressions aim to emotionally engage the audience, increasing the urgency to act.

These emotional appeals indicated in the above expressions can be clearly understood through the lens of Relevance Theory, which explains how communication becomes effective when it provides a meaningful impact with minimal effort. By using fear, empathy, and vivid figurative language, the speaker reduces the audience's need to interpret or question the message; emotions make the intended meaning immediately clear and personally important. In this way, emotional content increases the *cognitive effect* of the message, making it more memorable and persuasive. The expressions draw attention to the real and urgent consequences of inaction, prompting quick emotional and behavioral responses with little mental processing. This interpretation is supported by [40], who shows that emotional discourse in public health campaigns plays a central role in shaping attitudes and motivating compliance, especially when the emotions are tied to collective values like safety or loss. Similarly, [41] argues that emotions such as fear and empathy are critical tools in risk communication, as they enhance message relevance and public engagement during health crises. These findings support the view that emotional appeals, like those shown in Exp 19 and Exp 20, are not just stylistic choices but key pragmatic strategies that improve how persuasive and accessible a message is presented and perceived.

*Exct 8, Exp 40.*

*The man agreed to get vaccinated, but the wife refused... Unfortunately, the wife died. The man survived. The young child is still there... shattered.*

This text combines emotional appeal and logical reasoning to strengthen the message on the importance of vaccination. The speaker here shares a personal story about a man who got vaccinated while his wife chose not to. Tragically, the wife contracted COVID-19 and died, while the vaccinated husband survived and was left to care for their young child. This combines emotional appeal and logical reasoning to strengthen the message on the importance of

vaccination. This narrative is used to create an emotional connection with the audience by evoking empathy and a sense of loss. At the same time, the story illustrates a clear cause-and-effect relationship: the refusal to get vaccinated led to death, while vaccination contributed to survival. This dual strategy makes the message both emotionally impactful and logically convincing.

*Exct 10, Exp 56*

*When a clinician tells you... This ward is no longer full... we think we are on the right track.*

This expression again combines emotional appeal and positive motivation through a hopeful narrative and a testimony of positive outcomes. The speaker shares a clinician's observation that a hospital ward once filled with severe malaria cases is now largely empty, suggesting significant progress due to vaccination. This testimony evokes hope and reassurance by illustrating visible improvement in the health system. Emotionally, it connects with the audience's desire for safety and relief from illness, while also motivating them by showing that the vaccination effort is yielding real, positive results. This dual approach enhances the credibility and emotional resonance of the message.

Under Relevance Theory, this message is persuasive because it gives clear and meaningful information that is easy to understand. The clinician's statement about the empty ward acts as simple proof that the vaccine is working. It connects with the audience's hope for health and safety, helping them to see the benefit of vaccination without the need to think too much or question the message. This makes the message more effective by linking positive emotions with real outcomes in a direct and simple way.

#### 4.5. Positive and Negative Motivation

Motivation as a persuasive strategy involves encouraging the audience to take action either by highlighting the benefits of compliance (positive motivation) or by warning of the consequences of inaction (negative motivation). In vaccination discourse, positive motivation may include framing the vaccine as a path to personal health, national recovery, or protection of loved ones. Negative motivation, on the other hand, points to risks such as illness, travel restrictions, or economic loss if one chooses not to get vaccinated. Both forms of motivation aim to influence behavior by linking the act of vaccination to personal and social outcomes that the audience values or fears. These outcomes are made explicit to help individuals evaluate the importance of the message and feel prompted to act accordingly.

[28] argue that motivation increases the relevance of a message by providing information that is directly tied to the audience's concerns and goals. It reduces cognitive effort by clearly showing what is at stake and what can be gained or lost. When people see that an action leads to a positive result

or helps avoid a negative one, the message becomes easier to process and more convincing. Studies such as Witte and [42] support this by showing that messages that balance fear with clear positive action steps are more persuasive in health contexts. In the ten extracts analyzed in the current study, several instances were noted where the speakers used either positive or negative motivation to prompt action and address vaccine hesitancy.

In Exct 1, Exp 6, and Exp 7, both use positive framing to encourage vaccination by focusing on desirable outcomes and shared responsibility as indicated below:

*Exct 1, Exp 6:*

*We are seeing other European countries are back to normalcy... what are these other countries doing that Kenya cannot do..."*

*Exct 1, Exp 7:*

*It is your civic duty and your patriotic duty... for protection of your loved ones and protection of your community..."*

In Exp 6, the speaker hints at normalcy by highlighting how other countries have resumed normal activities, suggesting that Kenya can achieve the same if more people get vaccinated. This comparison positions vaccination as a pathway to restoring everyday life. In Exp 7, the message shifts to civic responsibility, framing vaccination as both a personal and collective duty. By linking the act of getting vaccinated to protecting loved ones and the wider community, the speaker appeals to national values and social responsibility. Together, these expressions aim to motivate through optimism and a sense of purpose. Such framing makes the message easier to process and more persuasive by connecting it to outcomes that are meaningful and socially valued. This is, however, contrasted with Exp 8, where the speaker uses negative motivation by highlighting legal limitations and restrictions tied to vaccination status.

*Exct 1, Exp 8:*

*So if you want to travel, either you have the vaccine or you do not travel...."*

Rather than persuading through benefits, this approach relies on restriction to prompt action, emphasizing that access to certain freedoms is conditional. It serves as a deterrent to vaccine hesitancy by linking inaction to personal inconvenience or exclusion. This strategy increases relevance by making the outcome immediate and concrete, allowing the audience to process the implications quickly and recognize the cost of not adhering to the expected behavior.

*Exct 2, Exp 12:*

*The booster dose is so critical for us in this fight against any emerging variants of the COVID-19 virus."*

The speaker persuades the audience in Exp 12 by using positive framing. In this expression, the speaker emphasizes

the importance of booster doses by presenting them as essential in combating new variants. This positive framing encourages the public to view vaccination as a personal health decision and a meaningful contribution to national and global health security. It aims to promote unity and shared responsibility by showing that everyone has a role in protecting the population.

*Exct3, Exp 15:*

*Still, the single dose offers protection. The full dose will give you protection for three years.*

In Exp 15, the speaker follows a positive motivation strategy using the protective advantages of the single and full doses of the vaccine. This approach is aimed at stimulating action through demonstrating the usefulness of taking the vaccine, independent of the amount one takes. A guarantee like such given after taking a single dose helps stop fear or maybe doubt by those who might not conveniently access the complete dose at the same time. It assumes that the audience cares about their health and seeks ways to stay safe, as they can trust them. The speaker makes the message supportive and more inclusive by ensuring that the two doses are beneficial to the audience, who would not feel left out.

This motivation type is also useful for distracting one from uncertainty and focusing on something that is possible to attain by doing. The indication of the duration of protection up to 3 years creates confidence in the long-term efficiency of the vaccine. It presents vaccination as a medical demand and as a prudent and safeguarding procedure towards people and households. This is in relation to the philosophies of persuasive communication that place emphasis on positive results in making decisions. The speaker does not use fear or intimidation but refers to logic and hope and tries to encourage people to make conscious choices about health by demonstrating tangible personal gains.

In extract 4, Exp 18 and Exp 21 both use positive framing to encourage vaccination by promoting individual and collective responsibility. In Exp 18, the speaker stresses personal accountability, reminding listeners that protecting one's life and family is a personal duty.

*Exct 4, Exp 18:*

*The responsibility of securing your life is yours... of protecting your children is yours... "sio yangu, sio ya serikali..."*

*Exct 4, Exp 21:*

*It is not going to trick us again... this time we are ready. This time around, we are going to vaccinate everybody.*

This empowers individuals to take charge of their health decisions and reinforces the idea that vaccination is an act of self-care and responsibility. Expression 21 shifts the focus to national readiness and unity. The speaker assures the audience that the country is better prepared this time and emphasizes

that everyone will be vaccinated as part of a shared national effort. Both expressions frame vaccination as a proactive and positive step, either at the personal or collective level. According to Relevance Theory by [28], such framing increases the relevance of the message by connecting it to values the audience already holds, such as protecting loved ones and national pride.

In extract 5, which involves the launch of the HPV vaccine as a strategic measure to combat cervical cancer by the Ministry of Health, the campaign targets girls aged 10 to 15, aiming to provide them with a single-dose vaccine to prevent HPV infections that can lead to cervical cancer. Positive framing and the use of emotional appeal as strategies are depicted in Exp 22 and Exp 23, respectively.

*Exct 5, Exp 22:*

*The government taking such a big and bold step to prevent the girls and women of this country from cervical cancer is such a big step, and really, we congratulate you.*

*Exct 5, Exp 23:*

*We have lost mothers. We know what happens when you lose a mother. The whole society collapses.*

In Exp 22, the speaker frames the government's action as a bold and progressive step in protecting girls and women from cervical cancer. This positive framing presents vaccination as a mark of national progress and a commitment to women's health, which helps build public trust and pride in the initiative.

In Exp 23, the appeal shifts to emotion, as the speaker reflects on the pain of losing mothers to cervical cancer and the broader social consequences. By stating that "the whole society collapses," the message draws attention to such losses' deep emotional and structural impact. Together, these expressions reinforce the importance of vaccination as both a personal and societal necessity, increasing the relevance of the message.

Extract 6 focuses on the launch of a polio vaccination campaign in Kajiado County, Kenya, initiated by the Ministry of Health in response to recent detections of poliovirus in the region. The campaign aims to immunize children under the age of five, particularly in high-risk areas, to prevent the spread of the disease.

Exp 27 and Exp 32 both apply positive motivation strategies to promote participation in the polio vaccination campaign by focusing on assurance and national progress.

*Exct 6, Exp 27:*

*This campaign is one of the immunization strategies to ensure that we reach and protect all children against polio.*

*Exct 6, Exp 32:*

*The Ministry of Health is fully committed to the*



*health of all children. This includes procuring more cold chain equipment and reorganizing primary health care to improve access to immunization.*

In Exp 27, the speaker frames the campaign as part of a broader immunization strategy aimed at protecting every child. This positive framing highlights the long-term health benefits of vaccination, encouraging trust and cooperation from parents and communities. This is reinforced in Exp 32 by showing the government's commitment not just to health, but also to strengthening the health system. Mentioning investments in cold chain equipment and primary health care restructuring signals practical, sustained efforts to improve service delivery. These assurances appeal to the public's confidence in the system and create a sense of shared progress. In the same extract, in Exp 29, the speaker highlights the threat posed by external outbreaks to strengthen the justification for local vaccination efforts.

*Exct 6, Exp 29:*

*There is an ongoing similar outbreak in neighboring Somalia. These two occurrences put our children under five years old at serious risk of polio transmission.*

By referencing a concurrent polio outbreak in neighboring Somalia, the speaker frames the risk as not only internal but also regionally connected. This cross-border concern serves to heighten the perceived vulnerability of Kenyan children, especially those under five years, by showing how disease transmission can spread beyond national boundaries. The message aims to prompt swift public cooperation by presenting vaccination as a protective measure against an expanding threat.

In Exct 7, Exp 35, and Exp 38, both employ positive framing to promote COVID-19 vaccination and responsible health behavior. In Expression 35, the speaker links reduced infection rates and increased vaccination coverage to the reopening and recovery of the national economy. This frames vaccination not just as a health precaution, but as a key to restoring livelihoods and stability.

*Exct 7, Exp 35:*

*Reduced infection rates and increased vaccinations are two important ingredients in the continued opening of our economy.*

*Exct 7, Exp 38:*

*Seek medical care immediately to protect oneself and their loved ones.*

The text reinforces this perspective by emphasizing social responsibility. The speaker urges individuals to seek medical care not only for their safety but also for the protection of their loved ones. Consequently, the language encourages personal action as part of a collective duty, promoting vaccination and early medical intervention as ways of safeguarding family and community.

*Exct 7, Exp 39:*

*We welcome the announcement that all facilities must require vaccination certificates.*

This text illustrates the use of incentives or rewards as a persuasive strategy by highlighting the issuance of vaccination certificates. By requiring and issuing certificates, the government not only ensures compliance but also provides individuals with tangible recognition for their participation. This recognition serves as an incentive, making citizens feel acknowledged for taking a responsible and health-conscious step. It reinforces the idea that vaccination is not only a medical act but also a civic contribution worthy of formal affirmation.

*Exct 8, Exp 41:*

*We are protecting each other... a mother is protecting a child... a husband is protecting a wife.*

The highlighted expression uses positive framing to emphasize vaccination as both a civic responsibility and a means of protecting loved ones. The speaker highlights the role of individuals in safeguarding one another, illustrating how a mother protects her child and a husband protects his wife. This framing appeals to the audience's sense of duty and care within the family and community. On the other hand, Exp 43 shifts to negative motivation, illustrating the economic consequences of vaccine refusal. The narrative describes a scenario in which an unvaccinated individual falls ill, leading to the sale of a motorbike, which is their primary source of income, to cover medical expenses. This example highlights the real-world financial risks of not getting vaccinated, aiming to create a sense of urgency and responsibility.

*Exct 8, Exp 43:*

*Then you refuse to be vaccinated... the motorbike is sold... all the money is used for treatment."*

From the perspective of Relevance Theory, Exp 43 strengthens the persuasive impact of the message by making the consequences of inaction both concrete and personally meaningful. The reference to financial loss is easy for the audience to relate to, especially in low-income settings where a motorbike may represent a family's livelihood. By linking vaccine refusal to severe economic hardship, the speaker delivers a message that is highly relevant and immediately understandable, requiring little mental effort to process. This emotional and practical appeal increases the urgency of the message, making it more likely that the audience will see vaccination as a necessary and responsible action.

Extract 9 features a public address by Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe, urging unvaccinated Kenyans to get the COVID-19 jab following the arrival of a large shipment of vaccines from international partners. The speaker, in expressions Exp 47, Exp 49, Exp 50, and Exp 53, uses a motivation strategy in different ways, some positively and others through cautionary pressure.

*Exct 9, Exp 47:*

*So, as a nation, we appreciate the generosity of other nations. Through all this practice, it therefore means that Kenya stands at a very comfortable position as far as the vaccination of our people is concerned. There is no excuse for anybody to say that now we do not have vaccines, now we have long queues.*

In Expression, the speaker uses motivation by painting a picture of national progress and readiness. By stating that Kenya is now in a strong position regarding vaccine availability, the speaker creates a sense of accomplishment and shared success. This motivates the audience not through fear or pressure, but by affirming that all necessary components for vaccination are now in place. The tone is optimistic, aiming to inspire collective responsibility. There is a shift from asking people to act out of fear to asking them to act out of pride and unity. This message is impactful because it changes the narrative from scarcity to empowerment.

*Exct 9, Exp 49:*

*We have set that deadline very clearly and a long time ago to say that if you want to get on the train, if you want to go to a restaurant, if you want to go to a government office, if you want to get onto a plane, if you want to leave Kenya, you will have to be vaccinated. For that reason, we are telling Kenyans not to wait for the last moment.*

Exp 49 introduces a firmer, rule-based motivational approach. The speaker tells the audience that entry to major government facilities, such as trains, restaurants, and government offices, will only be open to vaccinated individuals. The strategy is not to be used to encourage through positive reinforcement, but with consequences. It is straightforward; non-vaccinated individuals will be restricted. Such a message makes people take decisions under outside force instead of inner trust. It resembles the scarcity principle, described and labeled by [43], according to whom people appreciate the chance more when its number is scarce. When hindering access, it is advantageous to attach conditions that will heighten the level of urgency and compliance desire, as explained in reference to the book: *Influence: Science and Practice*.

*Exct 9, Exp 50:*

*Anybody coming into Kenya must be vaccinated... Kenyans traveling out will also need to be vaccinated.*

In Exp 50, the speaker appeals to the practical needs of people by linking vaccination to traveling. People entering Kenya or those leaving the country have to be vaccinated. This causes individual freedom to be directly connected with health compliance in the population. It cannot be presented as a moral duty but is presented as a functional necessity. To people who are required to travel due to work, education, or personal reasons, vaccination is a tool and not a constraint. It

is particularly compelling that this appeal would go along with the identification of health behavior with mobility and opportunity.

*Exct 9, Exp 53:*

*We can keep the economy going provided we get our people vaccinated... governments have now developed structures to keep people safe.*

In Exp 53, the speaker presents vaccination as not just a health issue but as a key to keeping the economy running. Instead of focusing only on personal health, the message highlights how widespread vaccination helps the country remain open for business, protect jobs, and avoid lockdowns. The ministry official in this expression promises the citizens that there are already systems in place to make people safe. This kind of message is interesting to individuals who care about money, employment, and the country's development. It also makes individuals understand that their decision to get vaccinated has a greater good for the whole country. This changes the motive towards the common interest.

This expanded message finds a backup in the researches that associate communication of public health with economic behaviour. According to [44], people can better support and adhere to the vaccine campaigns when they are aware of the social and economic advantages of the vaccination. To decrease fear and embrace positive interaction, speakers can display how vaccines aid in preserving livelihoods and national stability. This reinforces the reason behind Relevance Theory, which hypothesizes communication as most effective when the message is straightforward, helpful, and has an immediate association with the actual life issues of people. The message of vaccination and economic security is easy to process in this case, and it provides people with a solid incentive to take some action.

According to [28], motivational appeals, whether positive or negative, work by enhancing the communicative value of a message in relation to the audience's goals, needs, and concerns. In these expressions, the speakers increase relevance by linking vaccination to practical outcomes such as national progress, economic stability, or personal freedom. This approach minimizes the cognitive effort required to evaluate the benefits or risks of vaccination, as the consequences are made clear and directly tied to real-life situations. Whether through reassurance or caution, these messages offer immediate and personally meaningful inferences, making them persuasive and easy to act upon. Additionally, in extract 10, the speaker uses positive motivation by appealing to community responsibility and collective care, as evidenced in Exp 54.

*Exct 10, Exp 54:*

*We are urging all caregivers in the lake regions to bring their children... and make sure to complete all the required doses.*

The speaker urges all caregivers in the Lake Region to bring their children for vaccination and to ensure completion of all required doses. This message frames participation in the malaria vaccination program as a shared responsibility and an act of care, reinforcing the idea that protecting children's health depends on proactive involvement from parents and guardians. This increases the communicative impact by connecting the message to familiar social values, making it both accessible and persuasive to the intended audience. These observations are supported by findings from Witte and [42], who note that effective health communication often relies on a mix of fear-based and efficacy-based appeals to shape behavior. Similarly, [45] found that motivational strategies that clearly outline benefits or consequences lead to greater message acceptance, especially when they match the audience's existing values or concerns. These studies affirm that the success of motivational strategies lies in their ability to deliver strong contextual effects that are cognitively accessible.

The first research question of this study sought to examine the persuasive strategies used in vaccination discourse by the Ministry of Health officials. In the current chapter, the researcher answers this by identifying and examining the strategies, which included: logical appeals (logos), credibility appeals (ethos), emotional appeals (pathos), and several motivational appeals. The chapter demonstrated the way in which speakers supported themselves by appealing to reason with the example of real excerpts of official vaccination campaigns. This application of logos made the messages more reliable and difficult to reject. Meanwhile, the mention of trustworthy organizations and respected personalities contributed to the credibility of speakers (ethos) and strengthened the faith of the masses in the vaccination process. The results also demonstrate how emotional appeals (pathos) were applied to appeal to people on a personal level. As an example, the mention of saving loved ones, avoiding pain, and returning to everyday life was meant to evoke emotions in people and motivate them to take action. Also, the fact that the audience was provided with strong motivation strategies (both positive, including promises of safety, freedom, and school reopening, and negative, including restrictions on movement or access to services) provided viewers with a clear incentive to accept vaccination. The persuasive strategies were well adapted to the Kenyan situation and assisted in presenting the vaccine as necessary and advantageous. Thus, the research question was answered sufficiently, which showed that persuasion was multidimensional, tactical, and contextual in this discourse, thereby achieving the first objective of the study.

The present analysis offers more detailed data than previous studies that focused only on vaccine uptake rates or hesitancy factors [15; 21; 23; 17] or the visual structure of the campaigns. In applying the Relevance Theory, the research shows how rational arguments, emotional appeals,

motivational arguments, and symbols of credibility are contextualized in utterances and how these contexts operate to shape the view of other members of society. The result goes beyond the descriptive statistics and slogan-based analyses found in the existing literature because it identifies the processes through which persuasion works. The findings are more detailed as pragmatic analysis reveals the shades of language use and forms a direct relationship between the form of the message and the persuasiveness that earlier uptake or communication-channel studies had not come to grips with.

## **5. Conclusion**

It was revealed in this study that vaccination discourse in Kenya used a range of persuasive strategies to shape public attitudes and stimulate vaccine uptake. Among these, the most central were logos revealed through facts, data, and cause-and-effect reasoning, which were given to justify the need for vaccination. This involved reference to death statistics, infection trends, and evidence from pharmacovigilance platforms in championing the vaccine as a good solution to public health threats.

Ethos was also common, primarily through the use of storytelling, analogy, and real-life examples, which created fear, sympathy, and hope. These essentially emotional narratives humanized the vaccine effort to stir urgency and emotional connection among viewers. Furthermore, messages are believed to have faced less resistance due to their prominence of credibility appeals; messages referenced authoritative bodies such as the Ministry of Health, WHO, and even well-respected public officials, increasing trust and perceived legitimacy. Additionally, calls to serve the nation and love of country, which increased willingness to comply, made vaccination a national responsibility.

Also, the discourse integrated motivational strategies in a combination of positive reinforcement and warning consequences. Positive motivation was seen in promises of a return to normalcy when the vaccination targets were reached, the opening of the economy, travel, and public gatherings. Negative motivation, which warned of travel restrictions, economic hazards, or health threats to those who were unvaccinated in statements, emerged on the other hand. These strategies were designed in a way that would appeal to individual and collective interests. Relevance Theory supported much of the analysis, demonstrating how minimum but well-chosen expressions were leveraged to steer audience interpretation with maximum cognitive impact. This section concluded that the persuasive strategies in Kenya's vaccination discourse were multi-layered, combining factual reasoning, emotional engagement, authoritative support, and social obligation to shape public response. These approaches were not only about delivering information but also about framing it persuasively to address hesitancy and mobilize public cooperation.

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