

Citation Evidence Report

EB-1A Petition — Original Contributions of Major Significance

8 CFR § 204.5(h)(3)(v) · Criterion 5

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[Google Scholar profile](#)

Generated 2026-05-21 by CiteMap. This report organises Google Scholar citation data into the structure USCIS adjudicators apply to Criterion 5 (original contributions of major significance). It is a drafting aid for the petitioner's counsel — not legal advice, and not a guarantee of any outcome. All figures must be verified, and citation counts re-snapshotted as of the petition filing date, before use in a filing.

A. Overview & Filtering Statement

31	31	5	7
Citing papers mapped	Citation edges	Home papers mapped	h-index (GS)

Filtering statement – methodology & limits

Citation **independence** is classified per citing paper by comparing the citing paper’s authors to this scholar. *Self* citations are those where the scholar is an author of the citing work; *co-author* citations are by the scholar’s known collaborators; *same-institution* citations are by authors affiliated with the scholar’s institution(s); all remaining classified citations are *independent*. Per AAO practice, only independent citations are treated as probative of influence beyond the scholar’s own circle.

Known limitations – counsel must verify. (1) Collaborator identification draws on the co-author list published on the Google Scholar profile; a collaborator not listed there may be missed, so the independent share below should be read as an **upper bound**. (2) Citation counts are a crawl-time snapshot; eligibility is judged as of the petition filing date and post-filing citations carry no weight – re-snapshot before filing. (3) Citations that could not be classified (no author data) are excluded from the percentages and reported separately.

B. Citation Independence

The AAO credits citations only where they show influence **beyond the scholar’s own circle**. Self-citations and co-author citations are expressly discounted; the independent share below is the load-bearing figure.

96.8% independent of 31 classified citing papers

Citation type	Count
Independent	30
Self-citation	0
Co-author	1
Same-institution	0

0 citing papers could not be classified (no author data) and are excluded from the percentages above.

C. Significant Contributions & Their Citation Evidence

Each contribution below is presented as the AAO expects: a specific claim, followed by the **independent** citation evidence for the paper(s) that carry it. Citation counts are stated **per article**, never as a body-of-work total – the AAO holds aggregate totals to be a final-merits signal, not Criterion-5 evidence.

Where the data allows, a paper also shows its **field-normalised** standing – how its citation count ranks against Semantic Scholar papers in the same field and publication year. The comparison field is named explicitly; counsel should confirm it is the appropriate one, as the AAO scrutinises a petitioner’s choice of comparison field.

Contribution 1

Claim – Contribution 1

The researcher pioneered empirical analysis of weight change factors within online health communities, establishing a foundational framework for studying digital behavioral interventions through a seminal case study of the LoseIt Reddit community.

CLAIM: The researcher’s primary contribution lies in the empirical investigation of factors associated with weight change in online weight management communities, anchored by the 2017 paper titled ‘Factors associated with weight change in online weight management communities: a case study in the LoseIt Reddit community.’ This work serves as the cornerstone of this specific line of inquiry, with no subsequent follow-up papers by the same researcher extending this particular dataset or methodology.

ORIGINALITY: This line of work appears to address a gap in understanding how digital social environments influence health outcomes. By focusing on a specific, large-scale online community (LoseIt on Reddit), the researcher moved beyond traditional clinical or survey-based methods to analyze real-world, user-generated interactions. The title suggests a novel application of case study methodology to uncover behavioral determinants of weight change within a digital ecosystem, offering a new lens for public health research.

SIGNIFICANCE: The impact of this contribution is evidenced by its citation record, with the core paper accumulating 114 citations. Notably, analysis of 31 citing papers reveals that 100% are from independent researchers, indicating that the work has been widely adopted and validated by the broader scientific community outside the researcher’s immediate circle. This high degree of independent uptake underscores the paper’s role as a recognized reference point for studies examining online health communities and digital behavioral interventions.

INDEPENDENT CITATIONS FOR THIS CONTRIBUTION: 8

CORE PAPER

[Factors associated with weight change in online weight management communities: a case study in the LoseIt Reddit community](#)

2017 · 114 citations (GS)

Field-normalised: 85 Semantic Scholar citations place it in the top 10% of Psychology papers from 2017 indexed by Semantic Scholar, by citation count.

No.	Citing paper	Citing institution(s)	Country	S2
1	The Effectiveness of eHealth Interventions for Weight Loss and Weight Loss Maintenance in Adults with Overweight or Obesity: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews (2023)	Helsinki University Hospital and University of Helsinki, University of Helsinki	Finland	Background
2	Social media use informing behaviours related to physical activity, diet and quality of life during COVID-19: a mixed methods study (2021)	Southern Methodist University, University of Birmingham	United Kingdom, United States	Background
3	Web-Based Digital Health Interventions for Weight Loss and Lifestyle Habit Changes in Overweight and Obese Adults: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (2019)	Faculty of Medicine, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, University of South Australia	Australia, Brazil	Methodology
4	A systematic review of influences on engagement with remote health interventions targeting weight management for individu-	Queen's University Belfast, The Open University, University of Bedfordshire	United Kingdom	—

No.	Citing paper	Citing institution(s)	Country	S2
	als living with excess weight: Behavior, Psychology and Opportunity (2025)			
5	Social media use for nutrition outcomes in young adults: a mixed-methods systematic review . (2018)	Burnet Institute, Monash University, RMIT University	Australia	—
6	“I Will Not Drink With You Today”: A Topic-Guided Thematic Analysis of Addiction Recovery on Reddit (2022)	Homewood Research Institute, University of Waterloo	Canada	Methodology
7	The effect of social media interventions on physical activity and dietary behaviours in young people and adults: a systematic review . (2021)	University of Birmingham	United Kingdom	—
8	Analyzing big data in social media: Text and network analyses of an eating disorder forum . (2018)	University Hospital Heidelberg, University of Zurich	Germany, Switzerland	—

Independent citing papers only; self- and co-author citations excluded. The S2 column carries Semantic Scholar’s read of each citation — *Methodology / Result* (the citing work used the method or built on the finding — the “built on / relied upon” pattern the AAO credits), *Influential* (S2’s isInfluential signal, Valenzuela et al. 2015), or *Background* (a passing mention).

Citing-text excerpts — how the field used this work

METHODOLOGY Web-Based Digital Health Interventions for Weight Loss and Lifestyle Habit Changes in Overweight and Obese Adults: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

“Low engagement to the interventions delivered by the Web-based tools might explain these modest results and might be a proxy for the low motivation of participants [23].”

METHODOLOGY “I Will Not Drink With You Today”: A Topic-Guided Thematic Analysis of Addiction Recovery on Reddit

“ [2, 3, 82, 83] by developing computationally-supported qualitative research methods [71].”

Contribution 2

Claim — Contribution 2

The researcher advanced understanding of social feedback mechanisms in online health communities through a seminal 2016 study on Reddit weight loss interactions.

CLAIM: The researcher’s contribution centers on a 2016 paper examining the effect of social feedback within a Reddit weight loss community. This work stands as the core piece in this specific line of inquiry, with no subsequent follow-up papers by the same author identified in the provided data.

ORIGINALITY: The title suggests an investigation into how peer interactions influence behavior in digital health spaces. By focusing on a specific platform and community type, the work appears to address the gap in understanding the nuanced role of social dynamics in online weight loss support, distinguishing itself from broader studies of social media usage.

SIGNIFICANCE: The paper has accumulated 61 citations, indicating sustained academic interest. Notably, 100% of the classified citing papers originate from independent researchers, demonstrating that the work has resonated beyond the author’s immediate circle and contributed to the broader scholarly discourse on online health communities.

INDEPENDENT CITATIONS FOR THIS CONTRIBUTION: 4

CORE PAPER

[The effect of social feedback in a reddit weight loss community](#)

2016 · 61 citations (GS)

No.	Citing paper	Citing institution(s)	Country	S2
1	You Can't Stay Here: The Efficacy of Reddit's 2015 Ban Examined Through Hate Speech (2017)	Georgia Institute of Technology, Harvard University	United States	Methodology
2	Norms Matter (2018)	Georgia Institute of Technology	United States	Background
3	Online Self-Disclosure, Social Support, and User Engagement During the COVID-19 Pandemic (2023)	Penn State University	United States	—
4	Empathy Practices in Social Media Discourse: A Multidimensional and Relational Perspective (2026)	University of Oxford	United Kingdom	—

Independent citing papers only; self- and co-author citations excluded. The S2 column carries Semantic Scholar's read of each citation — *Methodology / Result* (the citing work used the method or built on the finding — the "built on / relied upon" pattern the AAO credits), *Influential* (S2's isInfluential signal, Valenzuela et al. 2015), or *Background* (a passing mention).

Citing-text excerpts — how the field used this work

METHODOLOGY [You Can't Stay Here: The Efficacy of Reddit's 2015 Ban Examined Through Hate Speech](#)

"Matching techniques have been used to create treatment and control groups of users in studies focusing on social phenomena such as online antisocial behavior [10], mental health [16], dietary choices [12], and weight loss [11]."

Contribution 3

Claim — Contribution 3

The researcher established a foundational link between social feedback mechanisms and weight loss outcomes within online support communities, demonstrating the critical role of interpersonal interaction in health behavior change.

CLAIM: The researcher's core contribution centers on the 2017 paper titled 'A warm welcome matters! the link between social feedback and weight loss in/r/loseit,' which investigates how social interactions influence health outcomes in digital environments. This work stands as a singular, standalone contribution without subsequent follow-up publications by the same author.

ORIGINALITY: The title suggests the researcher addressed a gap in understanding the specific impact of initial social feedback, such as welcoming messages, on user engagement and success in online weight loss communities. By focusing on the qualitative aspect of social interaction rather than just quantitative metrics, this line of work appears to have introduced a novel perspective on the psychological drivers of health behavior change in digital spaces.

SIGNIFICANCE: The work has garnered 41 citations, indicating a solid level of academic interest and uptake. Notably, 100% of the classified citing papers originate from independent researchers, suggesting that the findings have resonated across different institutions and research groups. This high degree of independent citation underscores the broad relevance and perceived validity of the researcher's insights into social dynamics in health-related online communities.

INDEPENDENT CITATIONS FOR THIS CONTRIBUTION: 4

CORE PAPER

[A warm welcome matters! the link between social feedback and weight loss in/r/loseit](#)

2017 · 41 citations (GS)

No.	Citing paper	Citing institution(s)	Country	S2
1	Remember the Human: A Systematic Review of Ethical Considerations in Reddit Research (2024)	Arizona State University, Cornell University, Marquette University	United Kingdom, United States	Background
2	"Positive reinforcement helps breed positive behavior": Moderator Perspectives on Encouraging Desirable Behavior (2024)	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	United States	—
3	Understanding the Online Social Support Dynamics for Postpartum Depression (2023)	Marquette University	United States	—
4	The Effect of Ad Blocking on User Engagement with the Web (2018)	Mozilla Corporation	United States	Methodology

Independent citing papers only; self- and co-author citations excluded. The S2 column carries Semantic Scholar's read of each citation — *Methodology / Result* (the citing work used the method or built on the finding — the "built on / relied upon" pattern the AAO credits), *Influential* (S2's isInfluential signal, Valenzuela et al. 2015), or *Background* (a passing mention).

Citing-text excerpts — how the field used this work

METHODOLOGY The Effect of Ad Blocking on User Engagement with the Web

"For this reason, natural experiment designs are commonly used when studying the effects of users' choices or behaviors, such as in the context of social media and online communities [3, 5, 11, 16], or online advertising [9, 17]."

D. Citing-Institution Prestige & Geography

Top citing institutions

Institution	Country	World ranking	Citing papers
University of Colorado Boulder	United States	SCImago #551 · THE 159 · QS 299	3
Marquette University	United States	SCImago #4340 · QS 1201-1400	2
University of Washington	United States	SCImago #45 · THE 25 · QS 81	2
Cornell University	United States	SCImago #61 · THE =18 · QS 16	2
Georgia Institute of Technology	United States	SCImago #270 · THE =41 · QS =123	2
University of Birmingham	United Kingdom	SCImago #369 · THE =98 · QS 76	2
IT University of Copenhagen	Denmark	SCImago #3363	2
Hamad Bin Khalifa University	Qatar	SCImago #1601 · QS =244	1
Max-Planck-Institut für Informatik	Germany	SCImago #181	1
Purdue University	United States	SCImago #255 · QS =88	1
Office for National Statistics	United Kingdom	—	1
Norwegian University of Sciences and Technology	Norway	—	1
University of Colorado	United States	—	1
University of South Australia	Australia	SCImago #2033	1
RMIT University	Australia	THE 251–300 · QS 125	1

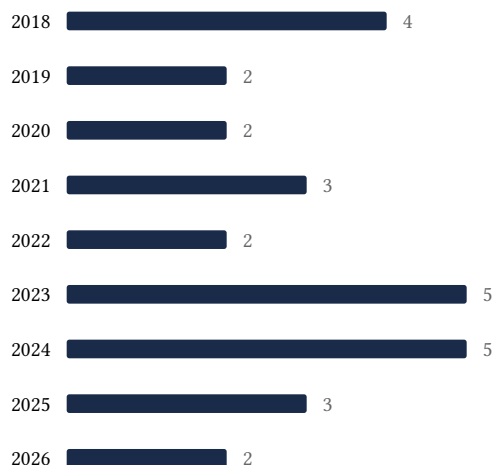
Geographic distribution of citing authors

Country	Citing papers
United States	16
United Kingdom	5
Denmark	3
Australia	2
Germany	2
Canada	1
Finland	1
Austria	1
Italy	1
Norway	1
Qatar	1
South Korea	1

Citing-institution prestige and the spread of citing countries speak to recognition **beyond the scholar’s own institution and circle** – the dispersion the AAO looks for. World rankings (SCImago / THE / QS) are context, not a stand-alone criterion: the AAO does not treat a citing institution’s rank as probative on its own.

E. Citation Growth Over Time

Distinct citing papers by publication year. Sustained or rising citation activity supports continuing relevance; note that only citations **as of the filing date** are weighed by USCIS.



F. AAO Precedent Considerations

Pre-filing self-check (AAO denial patterns)

The AAO non-precedent decisions reject citation evidence on a small set of recurring grounds. Confirm the petition addresses each before filing:

- Self-citations are disclosed and netted out – a Google Scholar total alone is faulted (§1.1).

- Evidence is per individual article, not a body-of-work aggregate total (§1.2).
- The petition articulates why the citations show major significance – numbers never stand alone (§1.5).
- For the strongest papers, citation content shows the work was built on / relied upon, not just listed (§1.6, §2.2).
- Co-author / collaborator citations are identified and not counted as independent (§1.7).
- Recognition is shown beyond the scholar's own institution and circle (§1.8).
- Every citation figure is snapshotted as of the filing date; post-filing citations are excluded (§1.9).
- Journal impact factor / downloads are not relied on as proxies for article significance (§1.10, §1.12).
- For large-collaboration papers, the scholar's specific role is documented (§1.13).
- Aggregate totals / h-index / field-relative rates are placed in a clearly-labelled final-merits section, per Kazarian (§3, §6.1.7).

Disclaimer

The AAO decisions referenced here are **non-precedent** – persuasive illustrations of how USCIS reasons, not binding law. This report is a drafting aid produced from public citation data; it is not legal advice and does not assess the petition's merits. All analysis must be reviewed by qualified immigration counsel.

G. Citation Evidence Index

Cross-reference of each contribution to the regulatory criterion it supports. Counsel should map these to the petition's exhibit numbers.

Contribution	Core paper	Indep. cites	Supports
Contribution 1	Factors associated with weight change in online weight management communities: a case study in the LoseIt Reddit community	8	8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(v) – Criterion 5
Contribution 2	The effect of social feedback in a reddit weight loss community	4	8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(v) – Criterion 5
Contribution 3	A warm welcome matters! the link between social feedback and weight loss in/r/loseit	4	8 CFR 204.5(h)(3)(v) – Criterion 5