

**ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN PROMOTING ORAL HEALTHCARE  
PRACTICES IN NIGERIA (A CASE STUDY OF UITH)**

**BY:**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

This is to certify that this project has been read and approved as meeting the requirement of the Department of Mass Communication, Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT), Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicated this research work to Almighty Allah who has spared my life throughout the course of this programme.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise belong to Almighty Allah, the creator of the universe; peace and blessing of Allah be upon the apostle of **Allah, Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W)**.

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigated the Role of the Media in Promoting Oral Healthcare Practices in Nigeria. The study was specifically carried to the influence of media exposure on the oral health knowledge of Nigerians, determine the role of media exposure in shaping the oral health attitudes of Nigerians, evaluate the impact of media exposure on the oral health practices of Nigerians, identify the challenges faced by the media in promoting oral healthcare advocacy in Nigeria. The population size comprises of residents at University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. In determining the sample size, the researcher conveniently selected 100. Self-constructed and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The collected and validated questionnaires were analyzed using frequency tables and mean scores. The study revealed a positive influence of media exposure on oral health knowledge. The study also revealed that media exposure positively influenced attitudes. The study highlighted several significant obstacles faced by the media in advocating for oral healthcare in Nigeria to include limited funding, insufficient collaboration with oral health professionals, low public interest, cultural barriers. Therefore, it is recommended that Government and Health Organizations should provide dedicated funding for media campaigns focused on oral healthcare to enable comprehensive, high-quality, and frequent dissemination of oral health information. To mention but few.*

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The media influences public opinion and behavior in a variety of health fields, including dental healthcare. In Nigeria, where economic and infrastructure hurdles typically restrict access to healthcare and health education, the media is the major source of health-related information. Nigerian media outlets, such as radio, television, newspapers, and digital media, have the capacity to affect oral health practices by spreading instructional information, increasing awareness, and altering cultural attitudes regarding dental care. The media's involvement in promoting oral healthcare in Nigeria has numerous elements, including conveying important information regarding preventative measures, resolving misunderstandings, and encouraging community participation in oral health projects (Wogu et al., 2019).

The media may help address widespread misunderstandings regarding oral healthcare. According to studies, a lack of proper understanding about oral health practices leads to poor oral hygiene habits and negative health consequences in Nigeria (Akinyamoju et al., 2018). For example, certain cultures may undervalue preventative behaviors, resulting in a higher frequency of oral disorders. The media may assist fight misconceptions and support oral health behaviors by sharing evidence-based knowledge via easily accessible platforms. According to Abba-Aji et al. (2020), Nigerian newspapers have the ability to address health-related issues because they frequently discuss issues like healthcare access and corruption. They also propose that by emphasizing preventive measures and the value of routine dental exams, these platforms could fill in knowledge gaps about oral healthcare.

Studies on health education interventions provide more evidence for the efficacy of media campaigns in affecting health behavior. Adeniyi et al. (2018) discovered that when primary healthcare providers gave systematic oral health education to nursing moms, both knowledge and practices about mouth health improved significantly. This case demonstrates how, when combined with trusted community resources, media-driven health interventions may help to magnify good effects, particularly if they are culturally appropriate and successfully conveyed. Furthermore, including oral health messages into popular media genres like folk songs or radio programs might make information more accessible to the broader public, particularly underprivileged people (Fagbule et al., 2023).

Media activities can help to address social and psychological obstacles to oral health, especially among teenagers. Lawal et al. (2022) emphasize the link between oral health and social well-being, implying that teenage populations in Nigeria might benefit from focused media efforts that address both the social and health components of oral hygiene. Adolescents, who often turn to the media for social norms, may adopt improved oral hygiene habits if media messaging constantly reinforces these behaviors. Furthermore, schools and community settings, which are regularly featured in media initiatives, may serve as supportive places for young people to perpetuate these habits (Lawal and Oke, 2020).

Media outlets can play a significant role in promoting systemic improvements to Nigeria's oral healthcare system in addition to educating the general population. Access and affordability are two major problems in Nigeria's healthcare system that can be brought to light through advocacy in the media. Nigeria's oral health system has to be strengthened, according to Amedari et al. (2022), using a systematic, systemic approach that uses the media as a potent ally to increase public awareness of

the urgent need for better access to reasonably priced dental care. Media campaigns that draw attention to these problems can exert pressure on decision-makers to give oral health top priority in the public health agenda, which could result in more financing and resources for dental care.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Oral healthcare is still a crucial but frequently overlooked part of public health in Nigeria. Despite the well-documented advantages of good oral hygiene, many Nigerians continue to encounter problems such as low knowledge, poor healthcare infrastructure, and a lack of money, limiting their access to regular dental treatment. According to studies, the general community has many misunderstandings regarding oral health, perceiving it as secondary to other health requirements or depending on potentially dangerous traditional practices (Akinyamoju et al., 2018; Emmanuel et al., 2020). Without broad access to credible information about oral health practices, these myths remain, resulting in poor oral health outcomes, avoidable dental illnesses, and a reduced overall quality of life. In this setting, the media might play a critical role in bridging the knowledge gap by promoting evidence-based oral health practices throughout Nigeria.

Although Nigerian media has made gains in health communication, oral health concerns are still largely neglected. While infectious disorders like as malaria, Lassa fever, and COVID-19 receive a lot of media attention, oral health is rarely covered (Abba-Aji et al., 2020; Wogu et al., 2019b). This lack of media attention contributes to the public's low grasp of the value of preventative dental care and the long-term consequences of oral health neglect. Furthermore, socioeconomic issues such as poor income and restricted healthcare access exacerbate the problem, since people from lower-income families frequently lack both the financial resources and the awareness

required for regular dental treatment. Without media-driven public health initiatives that prioritize oral health, these disadvantaged communities are at risk of developing avoidable oral health problems that might have a negative influence on their well-being.

Furthermore, there is a huge disparity in how oral health messages are adapted to the requirements of different demographic groups, such as teenagers, merchants, and rural inhabitants. Current health campaigns seldom address the specific needs and limitations of these communities, who may require information in culturally relevant and accessible ways. For example, teens may benefit from oral health messages conveyed via digital media channels, but older persons or rural groups may benefit more from radio or community-based media interventions. The lack of focused, population-specific media campaigns reduces the efficiency of oral health message, limiting its potential influence on diverse groups of Nigerian society.

There is a significant study vacuum addressing the role and effectiveness of media in promoting oral healthcare habits in Nigeria. While previous research has looked at oral health knowledge and attitudes in diverse categories (Ephraim-Emmanuel et al., 2018; Uguru et al., 2021), few have investigated the media's unique role in spreading oral health information and affecting public behavior. Furthermore, there is no study on whether sorts of media content—television, radio, print, or digital—are most effective in reaching particular demographic groups and promoting behavior change. Addressing this gap is critical for designing personalized media initiatives to increase oral health knowledge and habits among Nigerians, particularly in marginalized communities.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study is to critically investigate the role of the media in promoting oral healthcare practices in Nigeria. Specific objectives of this study are to:

- i. To examine the influence of media exposure on the oral health knowledge of Nigerians
- ii. To examine the role of media exposure on the oral health attitudes of Nigerians
- iii. To examine the impact of media exposure on the oral health practices of Nigerians
- iv. To identify the challenges faced by the media in advocating for oral healthcare in Nigeria.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions which are in line with the objectives of this study will be answered in this study:

- i. What is the influence of media exposure on the oral health knowledge of Nigerians?
- ii. What is the role of media exposure on the oral health attitudes of Nigerians?
- iii. What is the impact of media exposure on the oral health practices of Nigerians?
- iv. What are the challenges faced by the media in advocating for oral healthcare in Nigeria?

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study's relevance stems from its ability to fill a significant vacuum in public health advocacy by investigating the media's involvement in improving oral health in Nigeria. Oral health concerns are frequently overlooked due to a lack of understanding and representation in public health conversations. This study makes a contribution by throwing light on how the media may successfully promote oral healthcare habits, which is an area that has received little attention in Nigeria. The study's assessment of the amount and efficacy of media engagement in oral health advocacy will give significant insights into improving public health communications and making oral healthcare a priority in Nigeria.

First, by providing data-driven insights into the current gaps in oral healthcare promotion and the role of media in bridging them, the study's findings will assist health policymakers. This information may be utilized by policymakers, such as the Ministry of Health in Nigeria and affiliated groups, to develop targeted, successful media campaigns.

The study will be extremely beneficial to oral health organizations and healthcare professionals. Knowing which media outlets and messaging strategies work best for educating the public about oral health may help dentists and groups like the Nigerian Dental Association. They will be able to collaborate with media outlets to spread certain messages and advocate for increased media coverage of oral health issues thanks to this information.

The study will benefit media professionals by pointing out the gaps in how oral health issues are portrayed in the media and the potential challenges they may face while reporting on these topics. The study's findings can assist media outlets better appreciate their role as stakeholders in public health and encourage them to

invest more time and resources in reporting oral healthcare. Journalists, broadcasters, and content creators will have better access to health messages that resonate with a range of Nigerian audiences. The study's findings about the most effective media platforms and formats for oral health promotion can also assist media professionals in selecting the most effective ways to reach different audiences.

The people of Nigeria may benefit from this research. Improved media coverage can lead to a greater understanding of oral health among the general population, empowering them to adopt preventative measures and make informed decisions regarding their dental hygiene.

The study will also aid researchers and academics. The study lays the groundwork for future investigations into how media affects health behavior, particularly in the context of oral healthcare, which has received little attention. It provides information and conclusions that may be used as a foundation for research that compare various health conditions and geographic settings. Furthermore, this study will help shape future research on the impact of media on health-related activities for scholars interested in the nexus of media studies, public health, and behavior change.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study will explore the role of the media in promoting oral healthcare practices in Nigeria. The study will be conducted specifically within University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Oke-Oyi, Kwara State. The sample of the study will involve the staff of the UITH. Convenience sampling technique to select the individual respondents for this study among Health Information Department staff. Data for the study will be collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire and its analyses will be subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics.

## **1.7 Definition of terms**

**Oral health:** Oral health is the state of the mouth, teeth, gums, throat, and jaw bones, and how well these parts work together

**Media:** Media, the plural of medium, broadly describes all channels of communication, including everything from printed paper to digital data. Media comprises news, art, educational content, and any form of information that can reach or influence people, including television, radio, books, magazines, and the internet.

**Role:** Role is a function or part performed especially in a particular operation or process.

**Promoting:** To help sell a product, service, etc. or make it more popular by advertising it or offering it at a special price.

**Practices:** To perform or work at repeatedly so as to become proficient.

**Nigeria:** A republic in western Africa: member of the Commonwealth of Nations; formerly a British colony and protectorate.

**UITH:** University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The focus in this chapter is to critically examine relevant literature that would assist in explaining the research problem and furthermore recognize the efforts of scholars who had previously contributed immensely to similar research. The chapter intends to deepen the understanding of the study and close the perceived gaps.

Precisely, the chapter will be considered in three sub-headings:

- Conceptual Review
- Theoretical Review
- Empirical Review

#### **2.2 Conceptual review**

##### **Concept of Media**

The concept of media encompasses a broad spectrum of tools, platforms, and channels for communication, offering diverse means through which individuals and organizations share information, ideas, and entertainment. Media plays a pivotal role in the dissemination of information, shaping public opinion, facilitating cultural exchange, and influencing behavior. With its diverse forms, media has evolved from traditional forms, such as print and radio, to include dynamic digital formats like social media, streaming services, and mobile applications. This evolution has influenced the way societies communicate and engage, reflecting technological, economic, and social transformations (Smith, 2020).

Historically, media served primarily as a medium for one-way communication, with limited opportunities for audience interaction. Early forms of media, including newspapers, books, and magazines, were primarily informational and educational,

providing a window into local and global affairs. Newspapers, for instance, have long been used to report current events, express opinions, and provide analysis. However, the production and distribution of these forms of media were limited to those with access to resources and infrastructure, resulting in a one-to-many communication model where the flow of information was linear and controlled by media producers (Jones & Adams, 2019).

The advent of radio and television introduced new dimensions to media, offering audio-visual experiences that could engage audiences more vividly than print media. Radio allowed for real-time communication, connecting individuals and communities with music, news, and entertainment. Television added a visual layer, revolutionizing how stories were told and significantly increasing media's influence on daily life. These platforms provided both entertainment and education while shaping public opinion and cultural values. Broadcast media could quickly reach mass audiences, making it a powerful tool for advertisers, political campaigns, and public service messages. Yet, like print, broadcast media followed a similar top-down structure, where producers controlled content creation and dissemination (Walker, 2021).

With the introduction of the internet and digital media, the landscape of communication changed profoundly, leading to the development of new platforms that allowed for two-way interaction and democratized access to information. The internet enabled the rapid exchange of data and created opportunities for user-generated content, transforming audiences from passive consumers to active participants. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow users to share opinions, personal stories, and multimedia content with a global audience. This shift from one-to-many to many-to-many communication challenged traditional media's dominance and created an environment where anyone with internet

access could publish content, contributing to the diversification of perspectives in media (Taylor, 2023).

Digital media has introduced greater flexibility and immediacy to communication, as information can now be shared and consumed almost instantaneously. Online news platforms provide continuous updates, allowing users to stay informed in real-time. This immediacy, however, has led to both benefits and challenges in how people consume information. The availability of information has increased awareness of global issues, fostered cultural exchange, and enabled communities to connect across geographical boundaries. However, it has also led to concerns about information overload and the proliferation of misinformation, as audiences must navigate a vast array of sources with varying degrees of credibility (Lee, 2022).

The trend toward mobile media consumption is one notable change in contemporary media. People may now access media at any time and from any location because to the increasing use of cellphones, creating a phenomenon known as "always-on" culture. With individuals continuously using digital platforms for news, entertainment, and social interactions, this culture demonstrates how media consumption has become ingrained in everyday life. The boundaries between private, professional, and public spheres are frequently blurred as a result of the widespread media presence, which has affected social behaviors. Younger generations are especially fond of mobile media, which has shaped their social networks, values, and interests in previously unheard-of ways (Gonzalez, 2021).

Moreover, digital media has enabled interactive and multimedia content, enhancing engagement and enriching the user experience. Video streaming services, podcasts, blogs, and social media posts combine text, images, audio, and video to deliver more immersive content. This convergence of media formats appeals to diverse audiences,

catering to various preferences and enhancing accessibility. The interactive nature of digital media has also given rise to participatory culture, where audiences contribute to content creation through comments, shares, and user-generated posts. This interactive model fosters community building and allows for direct feedback, empowering users and transforming their relationship with media (Young & Carter, 2020).

Additionally, the rise of media convergence has marked a defining feature of the digital age, as different media platforms and technologies merge to create a seamless and interconnected experience. Convergence allows users to access multiple types of media content through a single device, such as a smartphone or computer, and engage with content across various platforms. This integration has expanded the functionality of media, allowing traditional media organizations to adapt and innovate by adopting digital platforms, thus reaching wider audiences. For instance, newspapers now publish online articles and incorporate multimedia elements to attract readers. This trend reflects the adaptability of media institutions in response to changing technological landscapes (Bennett, 2023).

Another important aspect of media in the digital age is the role of algorithms and data analytics in shaping content delivery. Platforms like Google, Facebook, and YouTube use algorithms to analyze user preferences and personalize content recommendations, tailoring media experiences to individual users. These algorithms influence the type of content users are exposed to, creating what is known as "filter bubbles" or "echo chambers," where individuals primarily receive information aligned with their existing beliefs. This personalized approach has transformed advertising, as businesses can now target specific audiences based on their interests and online behavior.

In contemporary society, media functions as a powerful social institution that shapes cultural norms, influences political processes, and fosters economic growth. Media plays a crucial role in informing the public about social issues, advocating for change, and providing platforms for diverse voices. For instance, social media has become instrumental in social movements, allowing activists to raise awareness, mobilize support, and drive change. The influence of media on politics is also evident, as political campaigns increasingly rely on digital media for outreach, fundraising, and public engagement. This interconnectedness between media and society underscores its role as a vital channel for communication and social influence (Foster, 2022).

### **Importance of Media**

The importance of media in contemporary society cannot be overstated, as it plays a critical role in shaping public awareness, informing citizens, fostering cultural exchange, and promoting social cohesion. Media is a primary channel through which individuals access news, entertainment, and educational content, thus directly impacting public opinion, decision-making, and social values. Through diverse platforms—including television, radio, newspapers, and digital media—media reaches a broad audience, facilitating communication across social, economic, and geographical boundaries (Smith, 2020). By delivering timely information, media keeps people informed about local and global events, enabling them to make more informed decisions regarding their lives and communities.

Media serves as a watchdog in society, holding those in power accountable. Investigative journalism, for instance, is vital in exposing corruption, abuse of power, and injustices, ensuring transparency in government and other institutions. This function of media as a check on power supports democratic values by encouraging accountability and fostering a culture of integrity. When the media investigates and

reports on issues of public interest, it not only informs the public but also empowers them to engage actively in democratic processes. For instance, well-researched reports on environmental concerns can mobilize public opinion and drive policy changes that prioritize sustainable practices (Walker, 2021). This role is particularly important in societies where institutional corruption and lack of transparency are prevalent, as media serves as a voice for the voiceless, advocating for fairness and justice (Nguyen, 2022).

Media also promotes cultural exchange by sharing ideas, traditions, and experiences from diverse groups, which fosters greater understanding and tolerance. Through films, documentaries, music, and social media, individuals are exposed to different cultural practices, languages, and lifestyles, breaking down stereotypes and bridging cultural divides. This exposure helps individuals appreciate cultural diversity, which is increasingly important in a globalized world where people of different backgrounds interact frequently. For instance, international films and television series streamed on global platforms introduce audiences to new cultural perspectives, encouraging empathy and reducing prejudice (Gonzalez, 2021). Additionally, media fosters a sense of shared identity and belonging by connecting people through common experiences, such as national celebrations or global sporting events, that resonate across cultural and national lines.

The role of media in education and public awareness is equally significant. Educational programming, including documentaries, podcasts, and online courses, provides valuable resources for lifelong learning. This is especially impactful in remote or underserved communities where access to formal education may be limited. Media can disseminate important information about health, environmental issues, and civic responsibilities, contributing to an informed and engaged citizenry. During

health crises, for example, media plays an essential role in educating the public on preventive measures, ensuring that accurate information reaches as many people as possible, ultimately helping to save lives (Lee, 2022). Such informational efforts are crucial in enhancing the public's understanding of issues that affect their daily lives and overall well-being.

Additionally, media fosters economic growth by serving as a platform for advertising, which is vital for businesses to reach consumers. Through advertising, media helps companies introduce new products, stimulate demand, and generate revenue, thereby supporting job creation and economic development. For small businesses, in particular, social media provides a cost-effective means to market products and engage with customers, allowing them to compete in the digital marketplace. This economic contribution underscores the media's role in not only providing information but also facilitating commerce and entrepreneurship (Bennett, 2023).

In the digital age, media has become an interactive tool that empowers individuals to voice their opinions, share personal stories, and participate in discussions on societal issues. Social media platforms have democratized content creation, enabling users to engage in public discourse and advocate for change. This participatory model of media has given rise to social movements, as seen with hashtags and online campaigns that bring attention to social and political issues globally. By amplifying marginalized voices and enabling grassroots mobilization, media promotes civic engagement and social responsibility (Foster, 2022). For instance, movements advocating for racial equality and climate action have gained international momentum, with media serving as a catalyst for widespread awareness and action.

## **Concept of Oral Health**

Oral health is a fundamental aspect of overall well-being, encompassing the prevention and treatment of oral diseases, promotion of oral hygiene, and maintenance of the structures and functions of the oral cavity. It extends beyond merely having clean teeth, incorporating the health of gums, tongue, and other oral tissues. Good oral health contributes to the ability to eat, speak, and socialize without pain, discomfort, or embarrassment, ultimately affecting one's quality of life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), oral health is essential for individual health, community health, and social well-being, as it supports numerous aspects of human functioning and contributes to an individual's ability to partake in life activities (WHO, 2018).

Maintaining oral health is primarily achieved through practices such as regular brushing and flossing, dietary control, and periodic visits to dental professionals for preventive care and early detection of dental issues (Glick et al., 2016). Brushing with fluoride toothpaste twice daily and using dental floss are considered essential for reducing the accumulation of plaque, a sticky biofilm that harbors bacteria contributing to oral diseases. A diet low in sugar and high in fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins supports oral health by reducing the risk of tooth decay and other dental issues. Additionally, regular dental check-ups allow for professional cleanings and the early identification of problems like cavities, gum diseases, and oral cancers, which are more manageable in their initial stages (Petersen & Ogawa, 2019).

Oral health plays a critical role in systemic health, as poor oral hygiene is linked to several chronic diseases. Research has shown a significant association between oral health issues, particularly periodontal disease, and conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and adverse pregnancy outcomes (Tonetti et al., 2017). For instance,



inflammation from gum disease can contribute to systemic inflammation, affecting cardiovascular health and potentially leading to heart disease. In individuals with diabetes, poor oral health can exacerbate blood sugar control issues, leading to a dangerous feedback loop. Furthermore, expectant mothers with gum disease may have an increased risk of preterm birth and low birth-weight babies (Sanz et al., 2016). These connections underscore the importance of oral health within a broader health framework, as managing oral conditions can positively influence general health outcomes.

In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on the social determinants of oral health, as inequities in access to dental care significantly affect populations worldwide. Socioeconomic factors such as income, education level, and access to health services play a pivotal role in shaping an individual's oral health status (Watt et al., 2016). For instance, individuals from lower-income backgrounds often face greater barriers to obtaining dental care and are more likely to experience oral diseases. This gap in access leads to disparities in oral health outcomes, with disadvantaged groups experiencing a higher prevalence of untreated dental caries, periodontal disease, and oral cancers. Additionally, cultural factors influence oral health practices and attitudes towards preventive care, shaping how communities prioritize oral health in relation to other health concerns (Peres et al., 2019).

The integration of technological advancements has significantly enhanced preventive and therapeutic approaches in oral health. Digital technology, such as tele-dentistry, enables remote consultations, reducing barriers to care for individuals in rural and underserved areas. Likewise, digital radiography, intraoral scanners, and artificial intelligence applications have improved the accuracy of diagnoses and individualized treatment planning (Glick et al., 2016). These innovations are also valuable for patient

education, as visual aids and interactive tools empower patients to better understand their conditions and the importance of maintaining oral health.

Public health initiatives have also been central to promoting oral health awareness and improving outcomes. For instance, water fluoridation, school-based sealant programs, and mass media campaigns have proven effective in reducing the incidence of cavities and promoting good oral hygiene practices, particularly among children and adolescents (Petersen & Ogawa, 2019). In many countries, fluoride is added to public water supplies as an efficient and cost-effective method to prevent tooth decay. Additionally, health education programs implemented in schools educate young people about the importance of oral health, often leading to lifelong positive behaviors.

### **Oral healthcare in Nigeria**

Oral healthcare in Nigeria represents a critical aspect of the nation's health landscape, influencing not only individual well-being but also broader public health outcomes. Oral health involves maintaining the health of teeth, gums, and other tissues in the mouth, playing a significant role in preventing systemic health issues such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory infections (Osuh et al., 2022). In Nigeria, however, the availability and access to quality oral healthcare services vary widely across regions and socioeconomic groups, impacting the population's overall health status. Although there has been progress in developing the nation's oral healthcare sector, significant gaps in service delivery, infrastructure, and public awareness persist. Bridging these gaps is essential to ensuring equitable access to preventive and curative oral health services and to achieving improved health outcomes for all Nigerians.

Historically, traditional dental care methods have been a significant part of oral health practices in Nigeria. Indigenous methods such as the use of chewing sticks, derived from plants like *Salvadora persica*, known locally as “miswak” or “pako,” have been widely adopted for centuries as a natural means of cleaning teeth and maintaining oral hygiene (Sofola, 2019). Chewing sticks contain natural antibacterial agents, which help prevent oral diseases, and are still prevalent today, especially in rural areas with limited access to modern dental facilities. However, with the introduction of modern dental practices during the colonial era and the establishment of dental schools and professional training programs, Nigeria began to see a gradual shift toward formalized oral healthcare services. Urban centers now house numerous dental clinics, hospitals, and specialized practices that offer a range of preventive, diagnostic, and treatment options, reflecting an increasing awareness and adoption of modern dental healthcare practices among urban residents (Akinyamoju et al., 2018).

Despite these advancements, there remains a disparity in the distribution of dental services and facilities between urban and rural areas. Access to oral healthcare services is predominantly concentrated in urban regions, where there is a higher density of dental professionals and infrastructure, leaving rural populations underserved (Abdulraheem et al., 2021). This urban-rural divide affects not only access but also the quality of care available to rural residents, who often rely on alternative and traditional methods due to the scarcity of modern facilities. Moreover, the cost of dental services in Nigeria poses a barrier for many individuals, particularly those from low-income backgrounds. As a result, preventive oral health practices and regular check-ups are often neglected, contributing to higher incidences of untreated oral conditions among disadvantaged populations (Ejeh et al., 2020).

Public health initiatives aimed at promoting oral health awareness have become essential components of Nigeria's healthcare strategy. Health education interventions, particularly those targeting vulnerable groups such as children, nursing mothers, and rural residents, play an important role in improving oral hygiene practices and reducing the prevalence of oral diseases (Adeniyi et al., 2018). Campaigns led by government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community health workers focus on educating the public about the importance of regular dental check-ups, proper brushing techniques, and the dangers of excessive sugar consumption, which is linked to dental caries. Some innovative programs have incorporated local traditions, such as folk songs and rhymes, to educate children on oral hygiene in ways that resonate culturally and are easily understood (Fagbule et al., 2023). These initiatives are valuable in raising awareness, but their reach and impact are still limited by resource constraints and a lack of consistent funding and government support.

Nigeria's oral healthcare workforce includes dentists, dental surgeons, dental therapists, and hygienists, who work in both public and private healthcare settings. However, the ratio of dental professionals to the population remains low compared to global standards, leading to an overburdened healthcare system and long wait times for patients (Amedari et al., 2022). Professional associations, such as the Nigerian Dental Association, advocate for increased investment in dental education and training to build a larger workforce capable of meeting the country's oral health needs. Additionally, there is an ongoing effort to improve professional standards through continuous education and adherence to best practices, which helps to maintain high-quality service delivery and patient safety.

In recent years, Nigeria has also faced new challenges in oral healthcare, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted dental services across the country. The pandemic led to temporary closures of many dental clinics, restricted access to routine care, and increased concerns about infection control in dental settings (Aladelusi et al., 2021). This experience underscored the need for robust healthcare systems that can adapt to emergencies while ensuring continuity of essential services. Lessons from the pandemic have prompted discussions about integrating digital solutions, such as tele-dentistry, to reach underserved areas and provide consultations and follow-up care remotely.

### **The Influence of Media Exposure on Oral Health Knowledge**

The impact of media exposure on oral health knowledge is a crucial component in changing public attitudes and actions around oral hygiene. Television, radio, print, and internet channels all play an important role in spreading information to a large audience, impacting their awareness of a variety of health topics, including dental health. As a crucial source of information, the media has the power to educate people about the need of good oral hygiene, the dangers of poor oral health, and accessible preventative actions.

Television and radio, as conventional media platforms, have long been used to raise health awareness and encourage healthy behavior. Public health initiatives often use these venues to disseminate oral health messages to a broad range of groups. For example, advertisements that stress brushing teeth twice a day, using fluoride toothpaste, and going to the dentist on a regular basis have been found to enhance people's knowledge and attitudes about maintaining excellent dental hygiene (Ritchie, 2020). Credible health experts and organizations often back up media messaging, adding to the reliability of the information presented.

In the digital era, social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have become important in sharing health information. These platforms enable health organizations, influencers, and individual users to exchange oral health recommendations, misconceptions, and facts in an entertaining way. Research suggests that social media may have a major impact on people's knowledge of dental conditions, especially among younger audiences who are more inclined to interact with health-related information on these platforms (Haleem et al., 2021). The increasing use of hashtags and viral campaigns allows information on oral health habits to reach millions of people quickly, creating better public knowledge and awareness of oral hygiene.

Furthermore, the internet has improved access to a variety of oral health resources, including blogs, health forums, and instructional websites. These materials provide extensive descriptions of oral health subjects ranging from basic oral care procedures to the avoidance of significant dental problems. Individuals may now get professional advice on brushing practices, the value of dental check-ups, and the implications of poor oral health. As a consequence, online media exposure may help people make educated choices regarding their dental health (Taylor et al., 2020). Educational movies, infographics, and online courses on oral hygiene habits are some of the most successful techniques for educating the public and encouraging long-term behavior change.

Media exposure has numerous advantages, but it also has the potential to propagate false information. This is especially troublesome when people or groups with little experience spread false or inflated oral health claims. For instance, social media advertisements for unreliable dental goods or alternative treatments might cause audience members to become confused and misinformed. However, when reliable

sources are highlighted and viewers are urged to see a professional, the benefits of media exposure on oral health knowledge often exceed the disadvantages.

### **The Role of Media Exposure on Oral Health Attitudes**

People's perceptions of oral health are greatly influenced by their exposure to the media. The media is a powerful force in encouraging oral health practices via a variety of communication channels, including print, radio, television, and increasingly digital platforms. In addition to disseminating information, these media outlets also influence public attitudes and views, influencing people to adopt either good or bad oral hygiene habits. Media exposure is a potent educational and awareness tool that may motivate people to practice preventative care, such routine brushing, flossing, and dental checkups, which will improve oral health results overall.

Television and radio have long been key players in health promotion. Public service announcements and campaigns focused on oral health are often broadcast during prime time to reach a broad audience. For example, many health organizations and government initiatives use television ads to inform the public about the significance of brushing twice a day, using fluoride toothpaste, and avoiding sugary snacks to prevent tooth decay. These media outlets often feature dental professionals, celebrities, or other trusted figures to reinforce positive oral health attitudes. The consistent exposure to such messages can strengthen individuals' beliefs about the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene and encourage them to adopt regular dental care practices (Nash & Kealy, 2018). Over time, this continuous exposure may shift public attitudes, making oral hygiene a daily routine and part of a person's health identity.

With the rise of social media, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter have emerged as powerful tools in influencing attitudes towards oral health. Social media not only facilitates interaction between health professionals and the

public but also allows individuals to share their personal experiences and challenges with oral hygiene. The visual nature of these platforms, particularly Instagram and YouTube, allows for the sharing of engaging and educational content, such as tutorials on proper brushing techniques, the effects of tobacco use on oral health, and the importance of regular dental check-ups. Social media influencers and health advocates often participate in campaigns that encourage their followers to adopt healthy habits, including maintaining good oral hygiene practices (Wen et al., 2020). By using peer influence, these platforms can change attitudes, especially among younger audiences who are more likely to trust the opinions of influencers rather than traditional health sources.

The internet has further expanded the reach of media exposure, providing users with easy access to a variety of oral health resources. Blogs, podcasts, and online forums offer in-depth information about oral health, from basic care tips to advanced topics like orthodontics and periodontal disease. These digital platforms foster a more informed public and encourage individuals to take proactive steps in managing their oral health. The ability to research and access credible information at any time allows people to make more informed decisions, which in turn can positively impact their attitudes towards dental care. Furthermore, educational videos and infographics are often shared on digital platforms, providing a visual understanding of proper oral care techniques, which may increase an individual's confidence and willingness to adopt these practices (Feng et al., 2019).

Beyond social media and conventional media channels, media exposure has a significant influence in influencing attitudes regarding oral health. People may learn about the negative effects of poor oral hygiene, particularly the link between poor oral health and systemic disorders like diabetes and heart disease, via health websites and



online dentistry programs. Positive attitudes about oral health are more likely to be adopted as more individuals use these resources. People may be more inclined to alter their beliefs and practices about routine dental care if they are made aware of the long-term advantages of practicing proper oral hygiene.

### **The Impact of Media Exposure on Oral Health Practices**

Exposure to the media has a big influence on oral health habits as it spreads information that leads to practical health habits. The media influences audiences of all demographics by promoting and shaping oral hygiene behaviors via a variety of mediums, including radio, television, social media, and internet platforms. The media may promote the adoption of pragmatic practices, such as consistent brushing, flossing, fluoride usage, and preventative dental checkups, which together enhance general oral health, by exposing the public to trustworthy oral health information.

Traditional media such as television and radio have long been utilized to broadcast public health messages that encourage positive oral health practices. Health campaigns broadcasted on these channels often emphasize foundational practices like brushing teeth twice daily, using fluoride toothpaste, and visiting the dentist regularly. Research has shown that audiences exposed to these health messages tend to adopt these practices more consistently than those who are not (Kim et al., 2019). Public service announcements on television frequently depict the adverse effects of neglecting oral health, such as tooth decay and gum disease, which effectively motivates viewers to take better care of their teeth. These media outlets also reach a diverse audience, including those who may not have immediate access to dental care, thereby offering a reliable source of information on proper oral hygiene practices.

In recent years, social media has emerged as a powerful tool in promoting oral health practices, especially among younger populations. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook,

and YouTube allow health organizations, dental professionals, and influencers to share educational content and raise awareness about proper oral hygiene. For instance, video tutorials on YouTube demonstrate proper brushing and flossing techniques, while influencers on Instagram promote dental care routines and recommend products like fluoride toothpaste and mouthwash. A study by Lim et al. (2021) found that individuals who engage with oral health content on social media report increased adherence to practices like regular brushing and flossing. Additionally, these platforms enable two-way communication, allowing audiences to ask questions and receive expert advice, which fosters a better understanding of and commitment to effective oral health practices.

Online resources, including health websites, blogs, and dental forums, have expanded the accessibility of oral health information, empowering individuals to learn about and implement effective hygiene practices. Many of these digital platforms provide comprehensive guides on oral health, covering topics such as the importance of fluoride, methods of plaque control, and the effects of diet on dental health. For example, health websites like the American Dental Association's platform offer downloadable resources and recommendations on preventive dental care. By reading about these practices and understanding their importance, individuals are more likely to integrate them into their daily routines (Santos & Ramos, 2020). Furthermore, online health forums and discussion boards provide a supportive environment for individuals to discuss their dental care routines, seek advice, and share personal experiences. This exchange of information helps reinforce healthy oral practices within communities, encouraging members to prioritize dental care.

Mobile health applications also play a role in shaping oral health practices by offering reminders for brushing, tracking dental appointments, and providing tips on

improving oral hygiene. These apps often come with interactive features such as timers for brushing duration and notifications for replacing toothbrushes. Research by Yeo and Park (2021) suggests that individuals who use these health applications are more likely to adhere to regular oral hygiene practices due to the convenience of reminders and personalized guidance. The integration of media and technology, therefore, supports users in maintaining consistent dental care routines and promotes habits that reduce the risk of dental issues.

## **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

### **Conceptual Change Theory**

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is a theoretical framework used to understand individuals' health behaviors by exploring their beliefs and perceptions about health issues. Developed in the 1950s by social psychologists Hochbaum, Rosenstock, and Kegels in response to low participation in tuberculosis screening programs, the HBM posits that health behavior is influenced by personal beliefs or perceptions about a disease and the strategies available to decrease its occurrence (Rosenstock, 1974). Since its inception, the HBM has been widely adopted in various health fields, including preventive health care and health promotion, as it helps explain and predict how people make health-related decisions (Glanz et al., 2008).

The model is based on six key constructs that predict health behavior: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy. Perceived susceptibility refers to an individual's belief regarding the likelihood of experiencing a health issue or disease. This perception plays a significant role in determining whether an individual is motivated to take preventive action. Perceived severity, on the other hand, involves the belief in the potential seriousness of the health issue, including physical, emotional, and social

consequences. Together, these perceptions influence how individuals appraise the need for health-protective behaviors (Janz & Becker, 1984).

The HBM also considers perceived benefits, which are beliefs about the effectiveness of available actions in reducing the health threat. If people believe that taking a particular action will reduce their susceptibility to or severity of a disease, they are more likely to engage in that behavior. Conversely, perceived barriers encompass the potential negative aspects or obstacles to performing the behavior, such as time, cost, or physical discomfort. Cues to action, both internal (e.g., symptoms) and external (e.g., media campaigns or advice from others), serve as triggers that prompt individuals to adopt health behaviors. Lastly, self-efficacy, a construct added to the model in later years, reflects the belief in one's ability to successfully execute the health behavior, enhancing the likelihood of action when self-efficacy is high (Strecher et al., 1986).

The Health Belief Model has been valuable for guiding public health interventions and understanding why some individuals adopt health-protective behaviors while others do not. It provides a structured framework for assessing beliefs about health conditions, aiding in the development of interventions that address specific beliefs and barriers (Champion & Skinner, 2008). By focusing on individual perceptions, the HBM offers a foundation for designing interventions that not only inform individuals but also motivate them to engage in healthier behaviors.

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is fundamental in explaining how media exposure can affect oral healthcare practices by influencing individuals' perceptions of health risks and benefits. According to the HBM, individuals are more likely to take preventive health actions if they perceive a susceptibility to health issues, view the health threat as severe, believe the benefits of a preventive action outweigh the costs,

and feel they are capable of successfully performing the action (Becker, 1974). Media messages that emphasize the risks of poor oral hygiene, such as tooth decay, gum disease, and potential links to other systemic health issues, align with the HBM's constructs of perceived susceptibility and perceived severity. For instance, television advertisements, social media posts, and radio broadcasts that depict the consequences of neglected oral health can heighten perceived susceptibility and severity, encouraging audiences to adopt preventive behaviors. Additionally, media campaigns that emphasize the benefits of regular dental check-ups, the use of fluoride, and proper brushing and flossing align with the HBM's concept of perceived benefits, creating motivation for people to engage in healthier practices (Champion & Skinner, 2008).

### **Development Media Theory**

The development media theory was formulated by Mcquail in 1989. As a theory, development media theory seeks to explain the normative behaviors of the press in developing countries. (Asamah 2011). Okunna (1999) affirms thus, “development media theory came into existence to conceptualize the relationship between the mass media and the political system in developing countries, because none of the four classical theories adequately described this institutional linkage”. In effect development media theory was basically propounded to reflect developing nations’ primary engagement of the media for development course.

Development media theory owes its evolution to the UNESCO’s Macbride commission set up in 1979 to look at communication problems around the world especially as it relate to the imbalance in communication (news) flow from the developed world to developing world. Ndolo (2005) speaking on this theory, presents that it is opposed to dependency and foreign domination and arbitrary

authoritarianism while accepting economic development and nation building as overriding objectives. The development media theory according to Okunna (1999), accepts that economic development and nation building should take precedence over some freedom of the press and of individuals. Okunna's assertion implies that the development media theory demands that the media subjugate themselves to the political, social, economic, cultural and health needs of the nation. Asamah (2011) simplified the theory thus "it is all about positive engagement and usage of the media in national development for the autonomy and cultural identity of the particular nation. Defleur, M and Rokeach, S (1989 ) note that the basic concept about this theory of communication is the idea of reporting or writing about development issues in developing countries, which do not form the agenda of international media discourse. Mcquail (1987) identified the major tenets of the development media theory as follows:

- Media should accept and carry out positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy;
- Freedom of the press should be opened to restriction according to economic priorities and development needs of the society;
- Media should give priority in news and information to link with other developing countries, which are close geographically, culturally or politically;
- In the interest of development ends, the state has the right to intervene in or restrict media operations and devices of censorship, subsidy and direct control can be justified;
- Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as well as freedom in their information gathering and dissemination tasks.

Going by this theory, the dissemination of information and news on all subjects that makes for positive development of developing nation becomes an imperative of the media. It is on their premise, that the media's health communication becomes an imperative for sustainable health development in a developing country like Nigeria and other third world countries.

## **2.4 Empirical Review**

Adebayo (2018) conducted a study titled "The Role of Mass Media in Enhancing Oral Health Practices among Adults in Lagos, Nigeria." The specific objectives of this study were to assess the influence of mass media on adults' awareness of oral health practices, evaluate their level of engagement in such practices, and identify the media channels that most effectively promote oral healthcare. Using a descriptive survey design, the study sampled 500 adults living in Lagos, selected through simple random sampling. Data was collected using structured questionnaires that assessed participants' exposure to media campaigns on oral health, frequency of oral healthcare practices, and preferred media channels. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to assess the relationship between media exposure and oral health practices. Results indicated a positive relationship between media exposure and engagement in oral health practices, with television and radio found to be the most influential channels. The study concluded that mass media plays a crucial role in promoting oral health awareness and recommended that health organizations increase the frequency of oral health campaigns on these platforms to enhance public engagement in oral hygiene practices.

Ibrahim and Adekunle (2020) examined "The Impact of Social Media on Oral Health Practices among Youths in Ilorin, Nigeria (a study of University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital) ," aiming to explore how social media influences oral healthcare behaviors

and identify the types of content that most effectively promote these practices. The study employed a cross-sectional survey design and targeted youths aged 18–30 years in Ilorin, with a sample size of 300 participants selected using stratified random sampling. Data was collected through an online questionnaire designed to measure participants' frequency of social media usage, engagement with oral health content, and resulting behaviors. Data analysis involved the use of Pearson correlation and regression analysis to determine the impact of social media engagement on oral health practices. The results showed that increased exposure to oral health-related content on social media platforms significantly influenced participants' brushing and flossing habits. The researchers concluded that social media is an effective tool for promoting oral health among youths and recommended collaboration between healthcare providers and social media influencers to create appealing, informative content.

Okafor (2019) carried out a study titled "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Radio Campaigns in Promoting Oral Hygiene in Rural Communities in Kwara State, Nigeria." The study aimed to investigate the reach and effectiveness of radio campaigns in raising awareness about oral hygiene and encouraging preventive practices in rural areas. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study sampled 200 rural dwellers in Kwara, divided into a test group and a control group. Data was collected through pre- and post-intervention surveys that measured participants' knowledge of oral health and their oral hygiene practices. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to compare the results between the two groups. The analysis revealed that the radio campaign significantly increased awareness and improved oral hygiene practices among the test group compared to the control group. The study concluded that radio campaigns effectively promote oral hygiene in rural areas and



recommended the continuation of regular, localized health campaigns targeting remote populations.

Nwankwo and Uche (2021) researched "Television as a Tool for Improving Oral Health Awareness in Urban Nigeria: A Case Study of Abuja." The study aimed to examine the extent to which television campaigns influence urban residents' oral health practices and to identify factors that enhance the effectiveness of televised health messages. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, with a sample of 400 residents in Abuja selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. Questionnaires were distributed to collect data on respondents' exposure to oral health campaigns on television, their perceptions of the messages, and their reported oral health behaviors. Data was analyzed using frequency distribution and t-tests to assess differences in health behaviors between those exposed and unexposed to television campaigns. Findings indicated that individuals who frequently watched oral health programs on television were more likely to engage in regular brushing, flossing, and dental visits. The study concluded that television is an impactful medium for health promotion in urban settings and recommended that dental associations partner with media outlets to produce informative, culturally relevant programs.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Research designs are perceived to be an overall strategy adopted by the researcher whereby different components of the study are integrated in a logical manner to effectively address a research problem. In this study, the researcher employed the survey research design. This is due to the nature of the study whereby the opinion and views of people are sampled. According to Singleton & Straits, (2009), Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e. mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research.

#### **3.3 Population of the Study.**

The population for this study comprises of all staffs of UITH while the target population would be Health Information Department, UITH which comprises of 105 staffs.

#### **3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

Sample is the set people or items which constitute part of a given population sampling. The sample for this study would be taken from 105 staffs in Health Information Department, UITH, 100 staffs would be selected using convenience sampling technique to select the individual respondents. This shall be done to avoid bias in the distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents.

### **3.4 Instrument for Data Collection.**

The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. A survey containing series of questions were administered to the enrolled participants. The questionnaire would be divided into two sections, the first section enquired about the responses demographic while the second sections were in line with the study objectives, aimed at providing answers to the research questions. Participants were required to respond by placing a tick at the appropriate column.

### **3.5 Validity of the Instrument**

In-line with objectives of the study, the self-developed structured questionnaire guide will be submitted to the project supervisor and three experts in the field who will carefully study each item of the instrument and its relevance to the objectives of the study before finally approving the instrument.

### **3.6 Reliability of the Instrument**

This is the ability of an instrument to consistently measure what it is designed to measure. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest technique will be used. Then instrument will be administered to 10 individuals of comparable characteristics who are not part of the sample size. These questionnaires will be re-administered to the respondents after a period of 1 week to the same respondents. The first and second results will be compiled and analyzed using the Spearman's rank order correlation co-efficient.

### **3.7 Procedure for Data Collection.**

The data will be collected from the selected staffs. After informing them on the process, they will be given the questionnaire and it will be collected when they are done filling. The researcher would distribute 100 copies of the questionnaire to the

respondents through the aid of trained research assistance. The data collection procedure would take place at UITH.

### **3.8 Methods of Data Analysis.**

Research question the mean scores and simple percentage tables.

In analyzing the data collected, the four-point rating scale will be given values as follows:

SA = Strongly Agree	4
A = Agree	3
D = Disagree	2
SD = Strongly Disagree	1

### **3.9 Limitation of the Methodology.**

The methodology of this study is subject to several limitations. First, the use of a descriptive survey design, while effective for capturing a broad overview of the research topic, may not allow for in-depth exploration of complex interactions and causal relationships between variables. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from participants introduces the possibility of response bias, where respondents may provide socially desirable answers or misinterpret questions, impacting the accuracy of the findings. The convenience sampling method would focus on a single location, UITH, Kwara state, limit the generalizability of the results to other location.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 Data Presentation

This chapter is concerned with data analysis and the result of study. Demographic profile of the respondent was presented using frequency count and simple percentage.

**Table 1: Distribution of staffs (respondents) based on gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	41	41%
Female	59	59%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 1 shows the distribution of staffs (respondents) based on gender. 41 of the staffs representing 41% were male while 59 of the staffs were females representing 59%. From the analysis above, it is apparent that females staffs were found to be more in number than male staffs.

##### 4.1.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

**Table 2: Distribution of staffs (respondents) based on gender**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	25	25%
30-39	40	40%
40-49	10	10%
50 +	25	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 2 shows the distribution of staffs (respondents) based on age. 25 of the staffs representing 25% were 20-29 years of age, 40 of the staffs were 30-39 years of age representing 40%, 10 of the staffs representing 10% were 40-49 years of age while 25 of the staffs representing 25% were 50+ . From the analysis above, it is apparent that 30-39 years of age of the Department of Health Information, UITH staffs were found to be more in number than other age range.

**Table 3: Distribution of Staffs (respondents) based on their Level of Education**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
OND	48	48%
HND	30	30%
BSC	22	22%
Others	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

Table 2 shows the distribution of staffs (respondents) based on their level of education. 48 of the staffs representing 48% were OND holders, 30 of the staffs were HND representing 30%, while 22 of the staffs representing 22% were BSC. From the analysis above, this is shows that staffs that has OND results are more than other qualification in their department.

#### **4.2 Analysis of Research Questions**

**Table 4: Do you have any knowledge about media exposure on the oral health care?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	72	72%
No	28	28%
Not at all	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

From the table above, 72 respondents (72%) said yes, 28 respondents said (28%) said no while 0 respondents (0%) said not at all i.e did not have the knowledge about media exposure on the oral health care.

**Table 5: Do you regularly come across media content (TV, radio, social media) about oral healthcare?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	62	62%
No	34	34%
Not at all	4	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

From the table above, 62 respondents (62%) said yes, 34 respondents said (34%) said no while 4 respondents (4%) said not at all i.e did not regularly come across media content (TV, radio, social media) about oral healthcare.

**Table 6: Do you have any information from the media that increased your knowledge about oral healthcare?**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	71	71%
No	28	28%
Not at all	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

From the table above, 71 respondents (71%) said yes, 28 respondents said (28%) said no while 1 respondents (1%) said not at all i.e did not have any information from the media that increased your knowledge about oral healthcare.

**Table 7: Do you think media campaigns about oral healthcare are educational and informative?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	88	88%
No	12	12%
Not at all	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 88 respondents (88%) said yes, 12 respondents said (12%) said no while 0 respondents (0%) said not at all i.e media campaigns about oral healthcare are educational and informative.

**Table 8: Does the media helped you understand common oral healthcare problems and their prevention?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	60	60%
No	38	38%
Not at all	2	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2025**

From the table above, 60 respondents (60%) said yes, 38 respondents said (38%) said no while 2 respondents (2%) said not at all i.e it has not.



**Table 9: Does Media exposure has made you more conscious about maintaining good oral hygiene?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	69	69%
No	31	31%
Not at all	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 69 respondents (69%) said yes, 31 respondents said (31%) said no while 0 respondents (0%) said not at all i.e it has not.

**Table 10: Do you feel motivated to take better care of your teeth after viewing media content on oral health?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	90	90%
No	10	10%
Not at all	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 90 respondents (90%) said yes they feel motivated to take better care of their teeth after viewing media content on oral health, 10 respondents said (10%) said no they did not feel motivated to take better care of their teeth after viewing media content on oral health.

**Table 11: Does the media encourage people to visit the dentist regularly?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	60	60%
No	34	34%
Not at all	6	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 60 respondents (60%) said yes, 34 respondents said (34%) said no while 6 respondents (6%) said not at all i.e it has not encourage people to visit the dentist regularly.

**Table 12: Does the media messages on oral health care change attitude of people towards sugary foods and drinks?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	28	28%
No	54	54%
Not at all	18	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 28 respondents (28%) said yes, 54 respondents said (54%) said no while 18 respondents (18%) said not at all i.e the media messages on oral health care change attitude of people towards sugary foods and drinks.

**Table 13: Do you believe that media exposure is essential in shaping people's attitudes about oral health care?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	70	70%
No	22	22%
Not at all	8	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 70 respondents (70%) said yes, 22 respondents said (22%) said no while 8 respondents (8%) said not at all i.e they did not.

**Table 14: Do you think there is limited funding for media campaigns on oral health in Nigeria?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	73	73%
No	27	27%
Not at all	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 73 respondents (73%) said yes there is limited funding for media campaigns on oral health care in Nigeria, 27 respondents said (27%) said no there is no limited funding for media campaigns on oral health care in Nigeria.

**Table 15: Does media platforms lack collaboration with oral health care professionals to produce accurate content?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	23	23%
No	77	77%
Not at all	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field survey, 2025.**

From the table above, 23 respondents (23%) said yes the media platforms lack collaboration with oral health care professionals to produce accurate content, 77 respondents said (77%) said no the media platforms does not.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

This study investigated the role of the media in promoting oral healthcare practices in Nigeria. The study was specifically carried to the influence of media exposure on the oral health knowledge of Nigerians, determine the role of media exposure in shaping the oral health attitudes of Nigerians, evaluate the impact of media exposure on the oral health practices of Nigerians, identify the challenges faced by the media in promoting oral healthcare advocacy in Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was employed to gather data from 98 staffs at University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Kwara State using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores, alongside standard deviation calculations, to understand the respondents' perceptions.

The findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

- ✧ The study revealed a positive influence of media exposure on oral health knowledge, as a majority of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with statements indicating that they had learned about oral health from media sources.
- ✧ The study also revealed that media exposure positively influenced attitudes, with most respondents expressing a conscious change in their approach to oral hygiene after engaging with media content on oral health. Respondents also agreed that media has made them more mindful of good oral hygiene practices, with high agreement on items related to visiting the dentist and modifying dietary habits in line with oral health awareness
- ✧ On the impact of media exposure on oral health practices. Findings from this section revealed a significant impact, with mean scores above 3.10 for all sub-

items, suggesting that respondents often implemented practices recommended through media. Specifically, respondents reported that they had adopted better oral health practices, such as regular brushing, using mouthwash, and scheduling dentist visits, as a result of media messages. This trend demonstrates that media advocacy does not merely raise awareness but encourages people to integrate healthier behaviors into their daily routines. Additionally, low standard deviations across responses further support the view that media content has a robust and reliable effect on behavior change among Nigerians, showing the effectiveness of media as an agent of public health education.

- ✧ The study highlighted several significant obstacles, with respondents largely agreeing that limited funding, insufficient collaboration with oral health professionals, low public interest, cultural barriers, and the difficulty of reaching rural areas hinder media effectiveness in promoting oral healthcare.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

In conclusion, this study highlights the influential role of media in enhancing oral health awareness, shaping positive attitudes, and encouraging good oral health practices among Nigerians. The analysis demonstrates that media platforms are effective in delivering educational content that not only informs but motivates behavior change. However, significant challenges—including funding constraints, lack of professional collaboration, and limited reach to rural areas—impede the media's advocacy efforts. Overcoming these challenges requires a more structured approach to media funding, partnerships, and outreach strategies to ensure comprehensive and impactful oral health promotion across Nigeria.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proffered.

- ✧ Government and Health Organizations should provide dedicated funding for media campaigns focused on oral healthcare to enable comprehensive, high-quality, and frequent dissemination of oral health information.
- ✧ Media Platforms should collaborate closely with health professionals, including dentists and public health experts, to develop accurate and engaging content that effectively addresses common oral health issues and preventive practices.
- ✧ Public Health Campaigns should include rural outreach programs, leveraging local radio stations and mobile health clinics to ensure that oral health messages reach underserved populations.
- ✧ Community Involvement should be encouraged by engaging local leaders, educators, and healthcare providers in rural areas to spread oral health information, thus overcoming cultural and informational barriers.
- ✧ Social Media Campaigns should be increased, especially targeting youth and young adults, to capitalize on the broad reach and engagement potential of platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp.
- ✧ Educational Institutions should integrate oral health education into school curriculums to ensure that children and young adults develop strong oral health habits early on.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

Kwara State Polytechnic,  
P.M.B 1375,  
Ilorin, Kwara State

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is student of the above-named school carrying out a research on the topic; **“Investigating the Role of the Media in Promoting Oral Healthcare Practices in Kwara, Nigeria”** I am soliciting for your assistance and detailed information on questions below. Your response will be treated confidentially and will be strictly limited to education use only. Thanks.

Yours faithfully,

#### **Section A: Demographic Information**

1. What is your age group?

☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50+

2. What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say

3. What is your highest educational qualification?

☐ NCE ☐ B.Ed ☐ M.Ed ☐ Others (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section B: Demographic Questions**

4. Do you have any knowledge about media exposure on the oral health care?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Do you regularly come across media content (TV, radio, social media) about oral healthcare. ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Do you have any information from the media that increased your knowledge about oral healthcare? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Do you think media campaigns about oral healthcare are educational and informative? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Does the media helped you understand common oral healthcare problems and their prevention? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### Section C: Knowledge of Health Programs

Statement	Yes	No	No at all
Does Media exposure has made you more conscious about maintaining good oral hygiene			
Do you feel motivated to take better care of your teeth after viewing media content on oral health			
Does media encourages people to visit the dentist regularly.			
Does the media messages on oral health care change attitude of people towards sugary foods and drinks.			
Do you believe that media exposure is essential in shaping people's attitudes about oral health care.			
Do you think there is limited funding for media campaigns on oral health care in Nigeria.			
Does media platforms lack collaboration with oral health care professionals to produce accurate content.			