INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON OPEN DEFECATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HYGIENE A CASE STUDY OF ILORIN EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT

BY

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project has been carried out by **GIWA FATHIA OLAMIDE** with matriculation number **HND/23/MAC/FT/0608** under my supervision, read and approved as meeting the requirements for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication, Institute of Information and Communication Technology (IICT) Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God, the Alpha and Omega , the Beginning and the End , the First and Last, that protects my life throughout all my HND program

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of social media on open defecation practices and the maintenance of hygiene, with a focus on Ilorin East Local Government Area. The research investigates how social media platforms contribute to creating awareness, changing attitudes, and promoting hygienic behaviors aimed at reducing open defecation in the community. A mixed-method approach was employed, involving the use of questionnaires distributed among residents and key informant interviews with health officials and community leaders. The findings reveal that social media has played a significant role in sensitizing the public about the dangers of open defecation and the importance of proper hygiene practices. However, the study also identifies gaps in consistent message dissemination and community engagement, which limit the full impact of these campaigns. Based on the results, the study recommends intensified social media advocacy, strategic involvement of local influencers, and collaborative efforts between government agencies and health communicators to sustain the fight against open defecation and promote long-term hygienic practices in Ilorin East Local Government.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Background of the Study

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has significantly transformed the ways in which people access, share, and act upon information. In contemporary societies, social media serves as an indispensable tool for raising awareness, influencing behaviors, and mobilizing communities to address pressing social issues. Among these issues is the pervasive challenge of open defecation and hygiene maintenance, which poses serious threats to public health and environmental sustainability, especially in developing regions like Ilorin East Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Open defecation, defined as the practice of defecating in open areas such as fields, bushes, and waterways, remains a critical public health concern in many parts of the world. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), open defecation contributes to the spread of diseases such as cholera, diarrhea, typhoid, and hepatitis (UNICEF, 2021). It also leads to contamination of water sources and environmental degradation. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that over 673 million people worldwide still practice open defecation, with sub-Saharan Africa bearing a disproportionate burden of this problem (WHO, 2021).

Globally, open defecation (OD) has become a significant concern due to its negative impact on human health, dignity, and the environment. This practice remains prevalent in developing nations, including Nigeria (Nnabuife & Okonkwo, 2022). According to Oghide (2019), OD continues to pose a severe health risk worldwide, affecting billions of people and contributing to approximately 842,000 deaths annually from sanitation-related diseases.

Sanitation has long been a focus of both past and present development efforts aimed at disease prevention. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which expired in 2015, included a commitment to environmental sustainability. However, Nigeria fell short of achieving these goals due to factors such as poor communication (MDG End-Point Report, 2015). In 2015, the United Nations introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), comprising 17 objectives designed to improve human well-being while preserving the environment (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). These goals guide member nations in shaping their development policies over a 15-year period (United Nations, 2015). Goal 6 of the SDGs, as outlined in the 2030 Agenda, seeks to ensure universal access to water and sanitation, with a specific target of eliminating OD by 2030. Nigeria, as one of the 197 signatory nations, pledged to align its policies and programs with these goals.

Achieving these ambitious targets requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders, with the mass media playing a crucial role (Wole-Abu, 2018). Radio, in particular, has been recognized as an effective medium for disseminating development-focused messages to the public (Shaibu, 2022). Its accessibility and adaptability make it a vital tool in bridging knowledge gaps related to the SDGs across different social groups (Perkins, 2016).

In Nigeria, former President Muhammadu Buhari declared a state of emergency in the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sector to mitigate the economic impact of OD on the nation's Gross Domestic Product (Adeoti, Akinola, Ogundare, & Awe, 2021). As part of efforts to eliminate OD by 2025, the government launched the 'Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet' campaign in 2018 (Nwagwu, 2019). This initiative, which involves collaboration between the public and private sectors, is also being implemented at the state level. The media is expected to support the campaign by disseminating information to the public in line with Lasswell's communication model (Wole-Abu, 2018).

According to the 2021 Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene National Outcome Routine Mapping (WASHNORM) III Report, 48 million Nigerians—equivalent to 23% of the country's population—practice OD (Vanguard, 2022). This places Nigeria among the leading countries globally in terms of OD prevalence, with Kwara State identified as having the highest rate (Vanguard, 2021). In response, the Clean Kwara Campaign was launched on September 21, 2020, under Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq's administration to initiate a decade-long fight against OD (Ajakaye, 2020). The campaign includes the construction of modern public toilets in key locations across Ilorin and other senatorial districts, aiming to improve access to sanitation services, particularly in rural areas (Tribune, 2020).

Addressing OD requires a strategic communication approach using effective media channels such as radio. Radio campaigns play a crucial role in promoting environmental awareness and influencing behavioral change. Given its widespread use, radio serves as a powerful tool for fostering social change (Royal FM website, 2023). Royal FM, the first private radio station in Ilorin, has a listener base of over six million people and reaches more than 80 communities across Kwara and neighboring states, including Oyo, Ekiti, Osun, Niger, Ondo, and Kogi. One of its programs, *Sanitary Inspector*, is a weekend pidgin program dedicated to discussing environmental issues, including messages from the Clean Kwara campaign (Aliyu, 2019). This study focuses on Royal FM due to its popularity and integration of Clean Kwara campaign messages into *Sanitary Inspector*.

Although several studies have examined OD campaigns (Busienei, Ogendi, & Mojau, 2019; Cronin, 2015; Ngene & Okwudiri, 2016), there is a need to evaluate the role of radio in these efforts. Specifically, this study investigates the effectiveness of radio campaign messages in combating OD. Therefore, it aims to assess the perceived impact of the Clean Kwara radio campaign on communal hygiene among rural residents in Asa Local Government Area, Ilorin, Kwara State.

In Nigeria, the challenge is particularly acute. Reports from UNICEF indicate that Nigeria has one of the highest rates of open defecation globally, with over 46 million people practicing it (UNICEF, 2022). Kwara State, including Ilorin East Local Government, is no exception to this crisis. Despite various initiatives by government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to combat open defecation, cultural practices, poverty, and inadequate sanitation infrastructure continue to perpetuate the problem.

Hygiene maintenance, on the other hand, is essential for preventing diseases and improving quality of life. Poor hygiene practices, such as inadequate handwashing and improper waste disposal, exacerbate the health risks associated with open defecation. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach that combines infrastructural development, community education, and behavioral change interventions (WaterAid, 2022).

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok have emerged as powerful tools for communication and social mobilization. With their widespread reach and interactive nature, these platforms have the potential to influence behaviors, shape opinions, and foster collective action. Social media's ability to disseminate information rapidly and engage diverse audiences makes it an effective medium for addressing public health issues, including open defecation and hygiene promotion (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In Nigeria, the increasing penetration of mobile phones and internet services has facilitated the growth of social media usage. According to a 2023 report by DataReportal, Nigeria has over 33 million active social media users, representing a significant proportion of the population (DataReportal, 2023). This digital revolution has created opportunities for leveraging social media to promote hygiene awareness and discourage harmful practices like open defecation.

Globally, social media campaigns have been successfully employed to address public health challenges. For example, in India, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) utilized social media to promote sanitation and end open defecation. By engaging celebrities, influencers, and local communities, the campaign generated widespread awareness and behavioral change (UNICEF India, 2020).

Similarly, in African countries such as Kenya and Ghana, social media platforms have been used to promote hygiene education and advocate for improved sanitation facilities. These campaigns often combine multimedia content, such as videos, infographics, and testimonials, to effectively communicate key messages and encourage community participation (WaterAid, 2021).

In Nigeria, the use of social media for sanitation campaigns is still in its nascent stages. However, initiatives like the #EndOpenDefecation campaign spearheaded by the Federal Ministry of Water Resources have demonstrated the potential of social media to drive awareness and mobilize support for hygiene initiatives (Federal Ministry of Water Resources, 2023). Social media platforms have been used to share information about the dangers of open defecation, highlight success stories, and encourage behavioral change.

Despite these efforts, the impact of social media on hygiene practices and open defecation in rural and semi-urban areas like Ilorin East Local Government remains understudied. The region's socio-economic dynamics, cultural norms, and access to digital technologies present unique challenges and opportunities for leveraging social media in this context.

Ilorin East Local Government is a semi-urban area in Kwara State characterized by a mix of traditional and modern lifestyles. The local government has a population of over 200,000 people, many of whom reside in rural communities with limited access to sanitation facilities (National

Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Open defecation is prevalent in these areas due to poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural beliefs that stigmatize the use of latrines.

At the same time, the growth of internet access and social media usage in Ilorin East offers a promising avenue for addressing these challenges. Many residents, particularly young people, use platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook to connect with others and access information (DataReportal, 2023). This digital engagement presents an opportunity to use social media as a tool for promoting hygiene education and discouraging open defecation.

The study of the influence of social media on open defecation and hygiene maintenance in Ilorin East Local Government is both timely and essential. First, it aligns with Nigeria's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 6, which focuses on clean water and sanitation (United Nations, 2023). Understanding how social media can be harnessed to drive behavioral change and improve hygiene practices is critical for achieving this goal.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Open defecation remains a persistent challenge in many parts of Nigeria, including Ilorin East Local Government Area in Kwara State, where inadequate sanitation infrastructure, poverty, and cultural practices contribute to the continued prevalence of this unhealthy practice. Despite numerous efforts by the Nigerian government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to reduce the practice of open defecation and improve sanitation, the problem persists, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Open defecation not only exposes individuals to a wide range of preventable diseases, such as cholera, diarrhea, and typhoid, but also negatively impacts environmental sustainability and public health (UNICEF, 2021; WHO, 2021).

A significant barrier to addressing open defecation in Ilorin East is the lack of widespread awareness regarding its dangers and the importance of proper hygiene. Although traditional media and community outreach efforts have been employed to raise awareness, the use of social media platforms as a tool for behavioral change in this context remains underexplored. Social media has become an integral part of daily life for many Nigerians, with millions actively using platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter (DataReportal, 2023). These platforms offer an untapped potential to engage the public, particularly younger generations, in health campaigns and to influence attitudes toward sanitation and hygiene.

However, the extent to which social media can influence the reduction of open defecation and promote better hygiene practices in Ilorin East remains unclear. While social media campaigns targeting public health issues have gained traction in other parts of the world, there is limited research on how social media can effectively address the sanitation challenges specific to the Ilorin East context (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Moreover, social media's ability to reach and resonate with residents of rural and semi-urban areas, where open defecation is most prevalent, needs further investigation.

Thus, this study seeks to examine the role of social media in influencing behaviors related to open defecation and hygiene maintenance in Ilorin East Local Government Area. The problem lies in the insufficient understanding of how social media can be utilized to effectively promote sanitation

and encourage the adoption of hygiene practices in a region that still struggles with open defecation. By addressing this gap, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for leveraging social media in the fight against open defecation and the promotion of healthier sanitation practices.

1.3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

2. To assess the impact of social media on public awareness of open defecation and hygiene practices in Ilorin East Local Government Area.
3. To examine the role of social media in changing the attitudes and behaviors of residents towards open defecation and hygiene maintenance in Ilorin East
4. To identify the challenges and opportunities associated with using social media for promoting sanitation and hygiene in Ilorin East Local Government Area.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2. How has social media influenced the level of awareness about open defecation and hygiene practices among residents of Ilorin East Local Government Area?
3. To what extent has social media affected the attitudes and behaviors of residents in Ilorin East regarding open defecation and hygiene maintenance?
4. What are the main challenges and opportunities in using social media as a tool for promoting sanitation and hygiene in Ilorin East Local Government Area?

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is significant as it explores the potential of social media as a tool for addressing the persistent issue of open defecation and promoting hygiene maintenance in Ilorin East Local Government Area, Kwara State. Open defecation is a major public health issue, contributing to the spread of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and diarrhea. By examining the role of social media in raising awareness about the dangers of open defecation and promoting hygiene practices, this research will contribute to improving public health in the region. If social media campaigns can effectively change behaviors and raise awareness, they could significantly reduce health risks associated with open defecation, leading to improved sanitation and well-being for the local population.

In addition, this study is important for enhancing the design and implementation of sanitation and hygiene campaigns. While traditional methods of public health education have been used in Ilorin East, social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter offer a more accessible and interactive way to reach a wider audience, particularly younger people. Understanding the impact of social media on behavior change can provide valuable insights for policymakers, NGOs, and other stakeholders who are working to improve sanitation practices in Nigeria. The research will offer practical recommendations on how to leverage social media to engage communities in reducing open defecation and improving hygiene, ensuring that future interventions are more effective and targeted.

Furthermore, this study fills a critical gap in existing literature on social media and sanitation in the Nigerian context. While there is an emerging body of research on social media's role in health communication globally, there is limited focus on its impact on sanitation and hygiene behaviors in rural and semi-urban areas, particularly in Nigeria. By focusing on Ilorin East, the study will provide empirical data that contribute to the growing understanding of how digital platforms can be used for public health advocacy in similar socio-economic settings. The findings will not only enrich academic knowledge but also inform future research and interventions aimed at improving sanitation in Nigeria and other developing nations facing similar challenges.

1.6. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on examining the influence of social media on open defecation and hygiene practices in Ilorin East Local Government Area (LGA), located in Kwara State, Nigeria. The geographical scope of the study is confined to Ilorin East due to its unique combination of urban and rural characteristics, which makes it a representative area for understanding sanitation challenges in semi-urban and rural contexts in Nigeria.

The study will specifically investigate the role of social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Instagram, in promoting awareness of open defecation, its associated health risks, and the importance of proper sanitation and hygiene practices. The focus will be on the types of social media campaigns being used in the region, their effectiveness in reaching the target audience, and their potential to drive behavioral change regarding sanitation practices.

In terms of population, the study will target residents of Ilorin East, with particular emphasis on the younger population, who are more likely to engage with social media. However, the research will also consider other demographic groups, including community leaders, local health workers, and government officials involved in sanitation and public health, to gather a comprehensive perspective on the effectiveness of social media interventions.

The study will be limited to understanding the direct and indirect effects of social media on attitudes and behaviors towards open defecation and hygiene. It will not explore other factors influencing sanitation, such as government policy or physical infrastructure, though these may be mentioned as contextual elements. Additionally, the research will focus on analyzing existing social media campaigns and their content, rather than creating new campaigns or interventions.

The time Frame for this study will cover the current year, providing insights into the most recent trends and campaigns in social media-driven public health efforts. This scope allows for an in-depth understanding of how digital media tools are shaping sanitation behaviors in the specific context of Ilorin East Local Government Area.

1.7. DEFINITION OF TERMS
1. Social Media

Social media refers to digital platforms and tools that enable users to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and content through online networks. These platforms include but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube. Social media plays a key role

in communication, information dissemination, and engagement, allowing users to interact with content in real-time.

2. Open Defecation

Open defecation is the practice of defecating in open spaces, such as fields, forests, or bodies of water, rather than using toilets or proper sanitation facilities. This practice is commonly linked to poor hygiene and sanitation infrastructure, and it is a major public health issue as it exposes individuals to harmful diseases and environmental pollution.

3. Maintenance of Hygiene

Maintenance of hygiene refers to the practices and behaviors that individuals or communities adopt to ensure cleanliness and prevent the spread of diseases. This includes actions like handwashing, proper disposal of waste, maintaining clean surroundings, and the use of toilets. Good hygiene practices are essential for disease prevention and promoting overall health.

4. Social Media Influence

Social media influence refers to the ability of social media platforms to shape public opinion, behaviors, and attitudes. This influence can be seen through the dissemination of information, the promotion of campaigns, or the creation of online communities that encourage certain behaviors or awareness. In the context of this study, social media influence is measured by how it impacts the public's awareness and attitudes toward open defecation and hygiene.

5. Ilorin East Local Government Area

Ilorin East is a Local Government Area in Kwara State, Nigeria, which includes a mix of urban and semi-urban communities. It is characterized by a blend of traditional practices and modern infrastructure, making it a suitable case study for understanding the dynamics of social media use and sanitation practices in a semi-urban Nigerian setting.

6. Behavioral Change

Behavioral change refers to modifications in actions, habits, or practices, often as a result of awareness, education, or persuasion. In the context of this study, behavioral change refers to the shift in residents' practices concerning open defecation and hygiene maintenance, potentially influenced by social media campaigns or information dissemination.

7. Sanitation Awareness

Sanitation awareness refers to the understanding and knowledge that individuals or communities have about the importance of sanitation and the health risks associated with improper sanitation practices. This awareness includes understanding the significance of using toilets, maintaining cleanliness, and the harmful effects of open defecation on health and the environment.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1. Concept of Social Media

Social media as a concept keeps changing that it is said no one could pinpoint exact and or recognized definition for social media. Yet this has not stopped scholars and definers from trying over the past years. For examples, the following definitions are found in Bernard John Kolan& Patience EmefaDzandza (2018):

Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010)

"Websites and applications used for social networking". The Oxford dictionary (2011).

''Communication channel which is very popular, extremely fast and broad, has proven to be highly effective, as well as trusted by billions of people, to share and discover content concerning individuals, brands, information, entertainment and knowhow'' (Dearborn, 2014).

And these two from Peter Osharive (2015):

Social media is that means that employs mobile and web-based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and community share, co-create, discuss and modifies user-generated content (Kietzmannn, 2012).

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create, share, exchange and comment among themselves in different networks. Andreas and Michael (2010)

Cognizant phenomenal that keeps reoccurring in these contexts, which can be defined underpin is that social media involves some form of communication between individuals over the internet. The birth of "Six Degrees" in 1997 was the first recognized social media network. This was a technological innovation enabled people to upload a profile and make friends. In less than half a decade [1997 to 2001]a number of community tools; Asian Avenue, black planet and MiGentebegan supporting various combination of profile and publicly articulated friend (Boyd, Danah, Ellison and Nicole, 2007). There has been tremendous improvement since this era and today there exist uncountable social networking sites either developed for local use, specific purpose or international use. Kaplan and Haenle in (2010), classified social media into six (6) different categories as follow:

1. Collaborative project (Wikipedia)

2. Blogs and micro blogs (twitter)

3. Content communities (YouTube)

4. Social networking sites (FB, 2go, BB chat)

5. Virtual game World (world of war craft

6. Virtual second world (second life)

This classification of social media into classes has been useful to scholars and individuals for easy identification and study of a particular social media type but today a difficulty may arise due the high proliferation of social media and one may wonder which group a new developed social media type fits into. Social media is considered to be the fastest growing web application in the 21 century and this rapid development is being backed by technological advancement. Mankind has enormously benefited and continues to benefit from it and as such cannot underestimate its importance as far as communication is concerned.

Today, social media has taken a new dimension and has encouraged more participation through the introduction of mobile phones that support social networks applications. The use of mobile phones that are powered by Android applications to social network is termed as Mobile social networking. Social network applications have now been migrated from the computer to the mobile phone, network information and communication can be integrated into the public space; and these new services that are developed for mobile phones allow users to create, develop, and strengthen their social ties.

2.1.2   TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Tim Grahi (2014), there are six (6) types of social media

1. Social Networks: These are social media services that allow you to connect with other people of similar interest and background. Usually they consist of a profile, various ways

to interact with other users, ability to set up groups, etc. The most popular are Facebook and LinkedIn.

2. Bookmarking Sites: These are social media services that allow you to save organize and manage links to various websites and resources and around the internet, most allow you to "tag" your links to make them essay to search and share the most popular are delicious and StumbleUpon.

3. Social News: These are social services that allow people to post various news items or links to outside articles and then allow its users to vote on the items. The voting is the core aspect as the items that get the most votes and' displayed the most prominently.

4. Media Sharing: These are social media services that allow you upload and share various media such as pictures and videos, most services have additional social features such as profiles, commenting etc. The most popular are YouTube and Flickr.

5. Micro blogging: These are social media services that focus on short updates that pushed out to anyone subscribed to receive the updates. The most popular is Twitter.

Blog Comments and Forum: These are online forums that allow members to hold conversations by, posting messages. Blog comments are ~ similar except they are attached to blogs and usually the discussion centers around the topic of the blog post. There are many popular blogs and folinkag

2.1.3. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Dominick (2011) cited by Shamsudeen and Hashin (2013), the development of internet and convergence of mass communication channels and technologies have created significant changes in the mass communication industry, social media are online communications that use specific techniques that involves participation, conversation sharing, collaboration and linkage.

Similarly, Kaplan and Healien (2019) cited by Shamsudden and Hashim (2013), view them from a technological perspective. They define social media as a group or internet based application that built on the ideological and technological foundation of web 2.0 and that allow the creation in the same vein Waheed & Mohd (2013) cited by Christopher (2015) intend that social media networking exist so as to provide communication among people regardless of the distance, making it open to people easily to share information files, pictures, video, create blog and send messages and conduct real-time conversations these systems are referred to as social media simply because they allow communication with friends, family and co-workers so easily and effectively.

According to James (2017) he observed that social media refers to all! 'Applications and websites or blogs that enable people around the globe to interconnect via the internet chat and share content; video call among many other functionalities it offers to its users for a person to be a member of any social media, he or she has to first sign up and then sign into access content and be able to share and chat with other users of that social media platform.

Fabinu (2014) in a special report by people daily define social media as the new media that speed up conversation in a more interactive way that makes communication more effective and

worthwhile. It is an online media that takes communication beyond the limitations of the traditional media which most often delivers content but doesn't permit readers or as the case may be, viewers or listeners to participate in the formation or development of the content but a web content but a web content analyst, Ron Jones cited by daily (2014) illustrate social media as a category of online media where people are talking, participating, sharing. networking and book making online, currently, there is an array of social media network in the world ranging from social sharing sites such as You tube, Twitter to LinkedIn and Facebook among others.

In 2006, Bryant, Sanders-Jackson, and Smallwood reported that the main findings related to youth use of socially interactive technologies were: Youth are using new interactive technologies (SITs) to enhance communication among friends and family, to make plans with one another, and to maintain social contact outside of their day-to-day face-to-face conversations. These technologies have been adopted by teens relatively quickly because IMing and☐ Text messaging are more convenient, less expensive, and faster than traditional technologies. Research in this arena has shown that although preference for using SITs to communicate☐ is definitely on the rise, and the use of SITs has surpassed that of email, youth still tend to hold in-depth, important conversations offline.

However, majority of Nigeria youth are ignorant, like everything in life, the internet and the social media have positive and negative, the internet allows us access to useful positive and educative resource materials that can turn our lives around for good. Instead, many youths would rather focus on just posting their entire life history and movement on it, this sustain the arguments back and forth without any one gaining anything meaningful form the discourse.

2.1.4. CONCEPT OF OPEN DEFECATION

To the average person, open defecation (OD) simply refers to the act of relieving oneself in open spaces rather than using a proper toilet facility (Oyegbade, 2019). According to WHO and UNICEF (2017), OD involves excreting waste in open fields, canals, and trenches without appropriate disposal measures. It is commonly practiced in places like forests, fields, bushes, and water bodies (Jones, Fisher & Reed, 2012; Clasen, Boisson, Routray & Torondel, 2014; Rodriguez, 2018). People engage in OD for various reasons, including the lack of access to toilet facilities or adherence to cultural traditions. O'Reilly (2016) explains that open defecation was a norm in ancient times when land was abundant, and population density was low. It was initially believed to have minimal impact in sparsely populated regions, forests, or temporary camps. However, with urbanization and population growth, OD has evolved into a significant challenge, posing threats to public health and human dignity.

WHO and UNICEF (2014) emphasize that OD contributes to environmental pollution, leading to various health risks. High OD rates are linked to child mortality, malnutrition, poverty, and socioeconomic disparities. One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 6) focuses on eliminating OD, recognizing it as a critical aspect of poverty reduction efforts. The practice negatively affects public health, environmental sustainability, and national economies. Nigeria ranks among the top countries with the highest OD prevalence, with the United Nations WASHNORM survey (2021) estimating that about 48 million Nigerians engage in the practice.

As a result, OD has severe consequences, particularly for children's health and education, contributing to Nigeria's inability to achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4. Additionally, over 100,000 children under five die annually due to waterborne and sanitation-related diseases (Adamu, 2022).

The Federal Ministry of Water Resources (2015) reports that the worsening sanitation crisis prompted the National Council on Water Resources to prioritize the eradication of OD in Nigeria in 2014. This decision aligns with the United Nations' global campaign to end OD. Kevin et al. (2020) highlight that human feces contain harmful pathogens that can cause diarrhea and other illnesses. When OD is practiced, flies can spread these germs by landing on food, which is then consumed. The risk of disease transmission increases in such conditions. Furthermore, rainfall can wash fecal matter into water sources like rivers, wells, and streams, contaminating drinking water and exacerbating health hazards. WHO (2014) notes that OD significantly contributes to the spread of communicable diseases, affecting both rural and urban communities. While OD is more prevalent in rural areas, WHO and UNICEF (2010) indicate that rapid urbanization has led to a rise in the number of urban dwellers engaging in the practice.

2.1.5. CAUSES OF OPEN DEFECATION

1. Lack of Toilets and Sanitation Facilities

One of the primary reasons for open defecation in Nigeria is the absence of adequate toilet facilities, especially in rural areas and informal urban settlements. Many households lack basic sanitation infrastructure due to poverty and poor government intervention. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), over 47 million Nigerians do not have access to toilets, while 75 million use unimproved sanitation facilities (Igomu, 2019). This lack of facilities forces people to resort to open spaces, bushes, and water bodies for defecation.

2. Poor Infrastructure Development

The Nigerian government has not been able to provide adequate sanitation infrastructure, particularly in fast-growing urban areas. In many regions, public toilets are either unavailable or insufficient to meet the needs of the population. As a result, people are left with no choice but to defecate in open areas. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2017) has highlighted that the lack of proper sanitation infrastructure in developing countries, including Nigeria, contributes to the persistence of open defecation.

3. Poverty and Economic Constraints

Financial limitations prevent many Nigerians from constructing private toilets in their homes. With a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line, the priority is often on food and basic survival rather than sanitation (Adepoju, 2019). In addition, the cost of building and maintaining a functional toilet, including water supply and waste disposal, is often beyond the reach of low-income households. Consequently, open defecation becomes a practical, albeit hazardous, alternative.

4. Cultural and Traditional Beliefs

In some rural communities, cultural practices and traditions encourage open defecation. Some people believe that defecating in the open is more natural or that building a toilet within the home is unhygienic or spiritually unsafe (Ayobami, 2017). Others see it as a communal practice that has been passed down through generations. These deeply ingrained cultural norms pose a challenge to efforts aimed at eliminating open defecation.

5. Low Awareness and Ignorance

Many Nigerians, particularly in rural areas, are unaware of the health risks associated with open defecation. Diseases such as cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, and diarrhea are often linked to poor sanitation, yet a significant portion of the population does not connect these illnesses to open defecation (WHO, 2017). Public health campaigns have not been effective enough in changing attitudes and behavior, especially in regions with low literacy levels (Babalola, 2019).

6. Weak Government Policies and Implementation

Despite various policies and campaigns aimed at improving sanitation, open defecation persists due to weak enforcement and lack of political commitment. The Nigerian government launched the "Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet" campaign in 2018, yet progress has been slow due to inadequate funding and mismanagement (Vanguard, 2019). Additionally, only 11 out of 774 local government areas in Nigeria have been certified open-defecation free, highlighting the inefficacy of policy implementation (Adepoju, 2019).

7. Rapid Urbanization and Population Growth

With Nigeria's rapid population growth and urban expansion, informal settlements have increased without corresponding sanitation infrastructure. Many urban slums lack proper toilets, and overcrowding exacerbates the sanitation crisis. According to WHO (2017), rapid urbanization without adequate planning contributes to open defecation, as many people do not have access to proper sanitation facilities in congested areas.

8. Poor Maintenance of Public Toilets

Even in areas where public toilets exist, they are often in poor condition due to lack of maintenance. Many facilities are unhygienic, lack running water, or require fees that some people cannot afford. As a result, people prefer to use open spaces rather than risk exposure to poorly maintained or unsafe public restrooms (UNICEF, 2019).

9. Water Scarcity

Sanitation is closely linked to water availability, and in many Nigerian communities, especially in the North, access to clean water is limited. The inability to maintain hygiene due to water shortages discourages toilet use. The Federal Ministry of Water Resources has noted that many communities still rely on unsafe water sources, making sanitation facilities difficult to maintain (Igomu, 2019).

10. Weak Community Engagement

A lack of grassroots engagement in sanitation initiatives contributes to the persistence of open defecation. Community-driven sanitation programs have been effective in other countries, but in Nigeria, efforts are often top-down, with little involvement from local leaders and residents. According to Neuhauser and Kreps (2010), successful public health campaigns require strong community participation to ensure long-term behavioral change. Without local buy-in, government policies and interventions have little impact.

The issue of open defecation in Nigeria is a result of multiple interrelated factors, including economic challenges, weak infrastructure, cultural beliefs, and poor policy implementation. Addressing this crisis requires a multi-faceted approach that includes increased investment in sanitation infrastructure, effective policy enforcement, and community-driven initiatives. The use of digital media and social marketing strategies could also play a crucial role in changing attitudes and promoting hygienic practices (McNab, 2009).

2.1.6. HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS OF OPEN DEFECATION (OD)

Open defecation (OD) remains a critical public health and environmental challenge, particularly in developing countries where access to proper sanitation facilities is limited. The practice, which involves defecating in open spaces such as fields, bushes, water bodies, and roadside areas, has dire consequences for human health and the environment. OD significantly contributes to the spread of infectious diseases, environmental pollution, and economic losses, making it a pressing issue that requires urgent intervention. Nigeria ranks among the top countries struggling with OD, second only to India, with millions of its citizens still practicing open defecation due to inadequate sanitation infrastructure (Onyeji, 2019).

1. **Disease Transmission and Public Health Impact**

The health risks associated with OD are severe, as human feces contain millions of harmful bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can easily contaminate food, water, and the surrounding environment. The Federal Government of Nigeria and UNICEF (2016) report that a single gram of human feces can contain approximately 10 million viruses, 1 million bacteria, 1,000 parasite cysts, and 100 parasite eggs. These disease-causing pathogens spread rapidly through flies, contaminated water, and direct human contact, increasing the risk of infections and outbreaks.

Among the most common diseases linked to OD is cholera, a bacterial infection that leads to severe dehydration and can be fatal if left untreated. Typhoid fever, another life-threatening illness, spreads through the ingestion of water or food contaminated by human waste. Diarrheal diseases, which are among the leading causes of child mortality worldwide, are also closely associated with OD. The World Bank (2012) estimated that approximately 122,000 Nigerians die each year due to poor sanitation, with 87,000 of these deaths occurring among children under five years old. Nearly 90% of these fatalities result from unsafe water, inadequate sanitation, and poor hygiene.

Furthermore, parasitic infections such as hookworm infestations thrive in environments where OD is prevalent. These infections cause chronic iron-deficiency anemia, malnutrition, and stunted growth, particularly among children and pregnant women. Adolescent girls and young mothers are

especially vulnerable, as exposure to unsanitary conditions increases their risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs) and reproductive health complications (Cooper, 2019). The long-term health effects of OD highlight the urgent need for improved sanitation facilities and public health awareness campaigns.

2. Environmental Degradation and Pollution

Beyond its impact on human health, OD poses significant threats to the environment. When human waste is improperly disposed of in open spaces, it seeps into the soil and contaminates underground water sources. This is particularly concerning in Nigeria, where many communities rely on wells and boreholes for drinking water. Contaminated water bodies become breeding grounds for harmful bacteria, leading to the spread of waterborne diseases that affect both humans and animals (Mara, Lane, Scott, & Trouba, 2010).

Rivers, lakes, and streams used for drinking, bathing, and irrigation are also heavily polluted by OD. The presence of fecal matter in these water sources disrupts natural ecosystems, leading to the depletion of aquatic life and the proliferation of harmful algal blooms. Additionally, human waste releases harmful gases such as methane and ammonia into the air, contributing to air pollution and unpleasant odors. Methane, a potent greenhouse gas, plays a significant role in climate change, exacerbating global warming and environmental instability (WHO, 2018).

The impact of OD on the environment extends to soil degradation and reduced agricultural productivity. Farmers who rely on contaminated water sources for irrigation may unknowingly introduce harmful bacteria into crops, increasing the risk of foodborne illnesses. Moreover, the pollution of natural water bodies affects livestock, reducing the availability of clean drinking water for animals and leading to poor livestock health. Addressing OD is, therefore, not only essential for human health but also for protecting the environment and ensuring sustainable agricultural practices (Saleem, Burdett, & Heaslip, 2019).

3. Economic Consequences of Open Defecation

OD also carries substantial economic costs, placing a heavy financial burden on individuals, businesses, and governments. The healthcare expenses associated with treating OD-related diseases are enormous, as frequent outbreaks of cholera, typhoid, and diarrhea require significant resources for medical care and emergency response. The Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) (2012) estimated that Nigeria loses approximately NGN455 billion annually due to poor sanitation. This financial loss stems from high healthcare costs, reduced productivity, and premature deaths caused by sanitation-related illnesses.

Poor sanitation also affects the labor force, as frequent illness leads to lost workdays and decreased productivity among workers. Children who suffer from repeated infections due to OD-related diseases miss school frequently, hindering their academic performance and limiting future economic opportunities. A weak labor force, coupled with high medical expenses, slows down national economic growth and development. The National Task Group on Sanitation (2017) estimated that poor sanitation costs Nigeria approximately 1.3% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually, highlighting the urgent need for improved sanitation infrastructure and policies.

Moreover, tourism and business investments are negatively affected by poor sanitation. Many foreign investors and tourists avoid areas with poor hygiene standards, leading to revenue losses in sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and retail. Communities with widespread OD often struggle with low property values and reduced economic opportunities due to their unsanitary conditions. Investing in proper sanitation facilities, therefore, has long-term economic benefits, fostering a healthier workforce and attracting investors and tourists to Nigeria (World Bank, 2012).

2.1.7. Government Intervention in Open Defecation (OD) in Nigeria

According to Igomu (2019), the 2018 NORM Report revealed that 47 million Nigerians lacked access to toilets, while an additional 75 million used substandard toilet facilities. A joint study conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, and UNICEF found that Nigeria loses approximately N455 billion (US$1.36 billion) annually due to poor sanitation. This amount, representing one percent of Nigeria's GDP, is linked to preventable diseases and premature deaths caused by infections such as cholera, typhoid, trachoma, diarrhea, hepatitis, and other health issues. It is alarming to note that many African nations, including Nigeria, continue to suffer from these diseases due to ignorance and skepticism. While some still question the reality of COVID-19, others remain unaware of the health dangers posed by open defecation.

Ayobami (2017) expressed regret in his article "Hepatitis: Deadlier than Aids" that many people are still unaware that open defecation—widely practiced by a significant portion of the population—is a major cause of infectious diseases such as hepatitis and skin rashes. As noted by the WHO (2017), hepatitis B is a global public health concern that requires immediate attention, and one effective way to control the spread is to prevent open defecation and improve environmental hygiene.

In his work "Public places turn public toilets... As open defecation thrives in Nigeria," Igomu (2019) pointed out that as open defecation becomes a deeply ingrained cultural practice, the cost of eliminating it could reach N95 billion annually, according to UNICEF. Similarly, Adepoju (2019) highlighted that Nigeria would need approximately N959 billion ($2.7 billion) to eradicate open defecation by 2025. However, only 11 out of Nigeria's 774 local government areas have been certified free of open defecation, and the federal government has yet to release its portion of the funding for this initiative.

Aside from the significant health risks, including the threat of contagious diseases, the absence of toilets also poses a security risk for women and girls who may have to venture out at night to find a place to relieve themselves. The challenge of providing toilets, compounded by the economic strain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, raises doubts about whether Nigeria, including the South-East region, can meet the 2025 deadline for ending open defecation. Ugwuanyi (2020) noted that Nigeria's economy was severely affected by the pandemic, and both the government and individuals have yet to recover fully. Many families are struggling to afford basic necessities, making it clear that significant economic support and sustained campaigns are required to meet the 2025 target.

Global health agencies have emphasized the need for Nigeria to launch an aggressive campaign against open defecation to achieve Goal 6 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Over the past three years, Radio Nigeria Enugu, which covers the entire South-East, has been at the forefront of this campaign, particularly through its Nsukka branch, Voice FM. However, some South-East residents who are active users of social media have raised concerns about why platforms like social media and mobile phones—despite their proven effectiveness in addressing health challenges—haven't been used more in the fight against open defecation.

Evans-Cowley (2010) noted that online social networks, particularly Facebook, have shown great potential for information dissemination and planning processes. The digital media and mobile phones have been globally recognized for their ability to transform society, especially in terms of public health communication. Platforms such as the Internet, digital satellite broadcasting, and mobile television have been proven to be effective tools in addressing public health issues in Africa (Ayedum-Aluma, 2017). The increasing availability of the Internet, alongside the interactive and engaging nature of social media, has made it a powerful tool for public health communication (Neuhauser & Kreps, 2010; Waters, 2011).

Mobile phones and social media offer timely and reliable health information that can significantly improve public health outcomes (McNab, 2009). Studies, including those by De Tolly and Benjamin (2011), highlight the role of mobile phones as a digital platform for health communication, emphasizing their ability to reach large audiences and promote interactivity while ensuring confidentiality. Despite some limitations, such as cost and restricted access to mobile phones, the strengths of digital media outweigh the weaknesses. For instance, during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Nigeria, social media and mobile phones played a crucial role in disseminating accurate information, correcting misinformation, and helping to control the spread of the disease (Ayedum-Aluma, 2017).

Given the effectiveness of digital media in health campaigns, it is essential that Nigerian authorities incorporate these tools into their strategies to combat open defecation. Traditional media campaigns, like those carried out by Radio Nigeria and various print media initiatives, have failed to achieve lasting results. Despite years of ongoing efforts, such as the federal government's campaign launched in 2018 and UNICEF's "Clean Nigeria, Use the Toilet" campaign, the persistence of open defecation highlights the need for a new approach.

Nigeria's sanitation crisis remains a major public health challenge, primarily due to inadequate awareness, poor sanitation infrastructure, and limited government intervention. Open defecation (OD) has persisted as a widespread issue, particularly in rural and low-income urban areas where access to proper toilet facilities is scarce. According to UNICEF, approximately 50% of Nigerian schools lack clean water and sanitation facilities, while an alarming 88% of healthcare centers do not have adequate sanitation infrastructure (Onyeji, 2019). The absence of basic sanitation in these essential public institutions not only exacerbates the problem but also poses serious health risks to students, patients, and healthcare workers.

Recognizing the severity of the crisis, the Nigerian government has taken several steps to combat OD and improve sanitation standards. In 2018, former President Muhammadu Buhari declared a

state of emergency in the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) sector. This declaration underscored the urgent need for policy reforms and increased investment in sanitation infrastructure across the country. As part of this effort, the government launched the 'Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet' campaign, aimed at achieving an Open Defecation Free (ODF) status nationwide by 2025 (Duru, 2021; Onyedinefu, 2019). The initiative focuses on raising public awareness, encouraging behavioral change, and providing communities with access to affordable sanitation solutions.

The 'Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet' campaign is one of the most ambitious sanitation programs in the country's history. The initiative emphasizes a Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, which encourages local communities to take responsibility for improving their sanitation practices. Through CLTS, households and community leaders are educated on the dangers of OD and are motivated to construct and maintain hygienic toilet facilities without relying solely on government assistance. This participatory model has been successfully implemented in several states, leading to increased toilet adoption and a decline in OD rates in targeted communities (Federal Ministry of Water Resources, 2020).

To support the ODF goal, the Nigerian government has also strengthened its collaboration with international organizations such as UNICEF, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank. These partnerships have provided financial and technical assistance for large-scale sanitation projects. The World Bank's Sustainable Urban and Rural Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (SURWASH) Program, launched in 2021, aims to improve access to clean water and toilets in rural and peri-urban communities. The program also seeks to build the capacity of local governments in implementing sustainable sanitation policies (World Bank, 2021).

Furthermore, several Nigerian states have adopted local sanitation laws to enforce hygiene regulations and reduce OD. States like Ekiti, Jigawa, and Cross River have enacted policies that penalize individuals and businesses that fail to provide adequate sanitation facilities. Some local governments have also introduced 'Toilet Subsidy Programs', offering financial incentives to low-income households to construct toilets. Additionally, private-sector involvement has increased, with companies investing in affordable, eco-friendly sanitation solutions such as bio-digesters and mobile toilets (National Task Group on Sanitation, 2022).

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in fully eradicating OD in Nigeria. Issues such as poor implementation, lack of funding, and cultural resistance hinder progress. Many rural communities still practice OD due to deeply ingrained traditional beliefs and the misconception that open-air defecation is more natural or convenient. Moreover, rapid urbanization has led to overcrowding in slums, where sanitation infrastructure is almost nonexistent. Addressing these barriers requires stronger government commitment, increased budgetary allocations for sanitation, and sustained public engagement to shift social attitudes toward proper hygiene practices (Onyeji, 2019).

In conclusion, the Nigerian government has made significant strides in tackling OD through policy initiatives, awareness campaigns, and infrastructural investments. However, achieving an ODF Nigeria by 2025 will require intensified efforts, including greater enforcement of sanitation laws, enhanced public-private partnerships, and increased community participation. A multi-sectoral

approach that combines governmental action with grassroots involvement remains the key to eradicating OD and improving sanitation standards across the country (Duru, 2021; Onyedinefu, 2019).

2.1.8. INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON OPEN DEFECATION AND MAINTENANCE OF HYGIENE

Social media continues to play a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions, behavior, and policies, especially concerning public health issues like open defecation (OD). Media advocacy using platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp allows for a rapid, wide-reaching dissemination of information that can drive public awareness and influence both individual behavior and governmental action. Traditionally, media advocacy has focused on individual health behaviors, but a more recent shift has emphasized systemic changes in infrastructure and policies to combat health issues such as OD (Wallack, 1994). The ability of social media to reach millions with messages about sanitation through interactive content, visual media, and grassroots engagement presents a significant opportunity to address the challenges of OD (Fresina & Pickles, 2013).

Social media platforms enable the delivery of real-time information, encouraging discussions and mobilizing action at a large scale. Campaigns like #EndOpenDefecation, #CleanNigeria, and #UseTheToilet are designed not only to educate the public about the dangers of OD but also to spur action at the policy level. These online movements often incorporate influencers, celebrities, and community leaders to boost credibility and increase the appeal of the messages. The broad reach of these campaigns amplifies messages and increases visibility, particularly when they align with broader government or organizational goals, such as the "Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet" campaign launched by the government (Duru, 2021). These initiatives often gain traction on social media through interactive hashtags and viral content, effectively mobilizing a new generation to advocate for change.

Despite the evident promise of social media campaigns in raising awareness, OD remains a pervasive issue in Nigeria. A study conducted in Ekiti and Osun states assessed the effectiveness of media advocacy in these regions, revealing that over 1.4 million residents of Ekiti continued to practice OD as of December 2019 (Babalola, 2019). This study underscores a critical challenge—while media advocacy can increase awareness, it is not enough to bring about sustained behavioral change in isolation. The deep-rooted socio-cultural practices, economic barriers, and lack of access to toilets persist as significant obstacles to behavior change. These factors highlight the need for more comprehensive strategies that combine media campaigns with infrastructural investments, local community engagement, and policy interventions.

For example, a significant part of the problem lies in the fact that many rural and peri-urban areas in Nigeria, where OD is most prevalent, have limited access to internet services, digital devices, and social media platforms. According to UNICEF, rural communities and lower-income populations often lack the infrastructure necessary for effective participation in digital media campaigns. These communities may also face barriers such as low literacy rates, which make it harder for individuals to engage with online content meaningfully. As a result, these groups are

often left out of the conversation, thereby hindering the success of nationwide media advocacy campaigns aimed at eliminating OD (UNICEF, 2020).

Furthermore, while social media plays an important role in raising awareness about sanitation issues, it is also a platform for misinformation. Fake news or misleading content can spread rapidly, which is especially problematic in public health campaigns. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about sanitation and hygiene practices circulated widely on social media, complicating efforts to curb the disease (World Bank, 2021). The same challenges apply to open defecation. Misinformation on sanitation practices can derail government and NGO efforts, particularly in communities that lack reliable access to educational materials. Therefore, ensuring that media campaigns are based on credible, scientifically-backed information is essential to their success.

Media advocacy on platforms like Twitter and Facebook has also been instrumental in generating conversations about sanitation policy. For instance, through viral campaigns, government initiatives have been pushed to the forefront, with lawmakers and policymakers under public scrutiny to implement real changes. The "Clean Nigeria: Use the Toilet" campaign is a prime example of how social media can complement formal government initiatives. Leveraging popular social media platforms, the Nigerian government has raised awareness, mobilized citizens, and pushed for policy changes to address the sanitation crisis. The involvement of celebrities and public figures in promoting such campaigns has further amplified their impact, encouraging wider public participation (Duru, 2021).

While online advocacy has proven valuable, the effectiveness of social media campaigns in actually eliminating OD depends on how well these campaigns integrate with on-the-ground interventions. These interventions might include building accessible sanitation infrastructure, creating incentives for proper toilet construction, and introducing affordable sanitation options for low-income communities. Local governments must also strengthen policy enforcement and hold individuals accountable for maintaining hygienic practices. Simply raising awareness is not enough; practical solutions and infrastructural support are key to enabling communities to shift from practicing OD to adopting better sanitation practices.

Additionally, community engagement is vital to ensuring that media campaigns are relevant and impactful. Local leaders, influencers, and community activists can play a significant role in tailoring messaging to local contexts, ensuring it resonates with the target population. Involving grassroots organizations in the design and implementation of sanitation programs can help ensure that the campaigns are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the unique needs of different communities. This approach not only increases the effectiveness of campaigns but also ensures that the solutions are more sustainable in the long term.

In conclusion, social media has emerged as a critical tool in influencing public awareness and driving discussions on open defecation. By utilizing digital platforms for media advocacy, significant progress can be made in highlighting the importance of sanitation, promoting policy changes, and encouraging behavior change. However, social media advocacy alone is insufficient to completely address the challenges posed by open defecation. For Nigeria to become Open

Defecation Free (ODF) by 2025, a holistic, multi-faceted approach is needed, combining the power of social media with on-the-ground efforts, policy enforcement, community engagement, and infrastructure development. When used effectively in tandem with other strategies, social media has the potential to be a catalyst for lasting change, improving public health and sanitation across Nigeria (Babalola, 2019; World Bank, 2021).

2.1.9. STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING AN OPEN DEFECATION-FREE (ODF) NIGERIA

To achieve an Open Defecation-Free (ODF) Nigeria by 2025, a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach is required. This approach must focus on strengthening media advocacy, improving sanitation infrastructure, enforcing regulations, addressing cultural barriers, and fostering behavioral change. The collaboration of government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector partners, and international organizations is essential in implementing sustainable sanitation solutions.

1. Strengthening Media Advocacy and Public Engagement

Media advocacy plays a crucial role in driving awareness and behavior change regarding sanitation practices. Strategic messaging through television, radio, social media, and print media can effectively educate Nigerians on the dangers of open defecation (Federal Government & UNICEF, 2016). Public engagement campaigns should include testimonials from communities that have successfully eliminated open defecation, emphasizing the benefits of improved hygiene.

The use of digital media, particularly social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, can help spread awareness quickly and engage younger demographics. Influencers, celebrities, and community leaders can be mobilized to champion the cause, making sanitation a national priority. Regular discussions, call-in programs, and public service announcements should be aired on both national and local radio stations to ensure information reaches even the most remote communities.

2. Improving Access to Sanitation Infrastructure

One of the fundamental reasons for open defecation in Nigeria is the lack of adequate toilets and sanitation facilities. To address this, the government must prioritize the construction of public toilets, particularly in high-traffic areas such as markets, schools, motor parks, and religious centers (Onyeji, 2019). These facilities should be well-maintained, affordable, and accessible to all.

In rural areas and low-income urban communities, the implementation of community-led total sanitation (CLTS) programs can empower residents to build and maintain their own toilets. CLTS has been successful in several African countries and can be scaled up in Nigeria to encourage ownership and sustainability. Additionally, the government and private sector must collaborate to provide affordable toilet construction materials and innovative low-cost sanitation solutions, such as eco-friendly dry toilets, to encourage widespread adoption.

3. Enforcing Sanitation Laws and Policies

Stronger enforcement of sanitation laws is essential in eliminating open defecation. The government should introduce and implement strict regulations that penalize individuals and communities that engage in open defecation while simultaneously rewarding those that maintain proper hygiene practices (National Task Group on Sanitation, 2017). Local governments should establish sanitation task forces to monitor and ensure compliance with hygiene standards.

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can also play a key role in sanitation infrastructure development. Businesses, corporate organizations, and philanthropists should be encouraged to invest in sanitation projects as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These collaborations can help fund the construction and maintenance of public toilets, ensuring long-term sustainability.

4. Addressing Cultural and Social Barriers

Many Nigerians continue to practice open defecation due to deeply ingrained cultural and traditional beliefs. Some rural communities perceive toilet use as unnatural or associate it with spiritual concerns. Others simply see open defecation as a long-standing communal practice (Ayobami, 2017).

To overcome these barriers, targeted community education and awareness programs must be implemented. Religious and traditional leaders, who have significant influence over local populations, should be engaged in promoting the benefits of proper sanitation. School-based hygiene education should also be strengthened to instill good sanitation habits in children from an early age. When children learn about the importance of toilets and proper waste disposal, they can influence their families and communities to adopt better hygiene practices.

5. Ensuring Sustainable Water Supply for Sanitation

Access to clean water is a critical component of sanitation. In many Nigerian communities, particularly in the northern regions, inadequate water supply makes it difficult to maintain hygiene and use toilets effectively. To address this, the government must invest in water infrastructure projects that ensure a steady supply of clean water for households, schools, and public sanitation facilities (WHO, 2018).

Rainwater harvesting systems, borehole drilling, and water treatment initiatives should be prioritized, especially in areas facing water scarcity. By improving water access, people will be more likely to use toilets instead of resorting to open defecation.

6. Encouraging Community Participation and Ownership

Community-driven initiatives are critical to achieving lasting change. Local governments should encourage communities to take ownership of sanitation projects by forming sanitation committees responsible for toilet construction, maintenance, and awareness campaigns. Programs like "Sanitation Champions" can recognize and reward individuals and communities that actively promote hygiene and open-defecation-free environments.

Community participation fosters a sense of responsibility and sustainability. When residents are directly involved in decision-making and implementation, they are more likely to maintain sanitation infrastructure and uphold hygiene standards.

7. The Economic and Environmental Benefits of Ending Open Defecation

Eliminating open defecation is not only a public health necessity but also an economic and environmental imperative. Poor sanitation costs Nigeria an estimated $3 billion annually due to health expenses, reduced productivity, and environmental degradation (World Bank, 2018). By investing in proper sanitation, the country can reduce disease outbreaks, protect water sources from contamination, and enhance overall economic growth.

Moreover, improved sanitation leads to increased school attendance, especially among girls, who often miss school due to the lack of toilet facilities. It also boosts tourism and investment by making cities cleaner and more attractive for businesses and visitors.

Achieving an Open Defecation-Free Nigeria by 2025 requires a coordinated and multi-faceted approach. Strengthening media advocacy, improving sanitation infrastructure, enforcing regulations, addressing cultural barriers, and ensuring community participation are key strategies in this fight. Government agencies, NGOs, private sector partners, and international organizations must work together to implement sustainable sanitation solutions. By prioritizing sanitation improvements and behavioral change, Nigeria can significantly reduce disease outbreaks, enhance economic development, and improve the quality of life for millions of its citizens.

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To fully understand how social media can influence the practice of open defecation and hygiene maintenance, three core theories are integral to shaping our approach: the Agenda-Setting Theory (AST), the Health Belief Model (HBM), and Social Learning Theory (SLT). Each theory provides a unique perspective on how media, particularly social media, can serve as a tool for behavioral change, policy influence, and socialization around sanitation practices.

2.2.1. Agenda-Setting Theory (AST)

The Agenda-Setting Theory, first formulated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, posits that the mass media doesn't tell people what to think but rather what to think about. Through the selection of certain topics for coverage, the media can influence the public's perception of the importance of those topics. McCombs and Shaw's seminal work, which studied media influence during the 1968 U.S. presidential election, demonstrated that the issues covered by the press played a critical role in shaping the voters' priorities. Over time, the theory has been applied to many forms of mass media, including television, newspapers, and more recently, social media.

Application to Sanitation and Open Defecation:

In the context of Nigeria, social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have the potential to highlight open defecation as a significant public issue. Social media can drive

attention to the high health risks and environmental consequences of open defecation, thus prompting a shift in public priorities. By increasing the frequency and visibility of issues surrounding sanitation, these platforms can "set the agenda" for policymakers and the public, demanding urgent action to address open defecation in urban and rural areas alike.

Social media campaigns like #CleanNigeria, which call for better sanitation practices, have become prominent in media discourse, bringing the conversation to the forefront of political debates and government action. This aligns with McCombs and Shaw's (1972) assertion that media can shape what is perceived as important, and in this case, social media's focus on open defecation can lead to increased funding, policy development, and behavioral change in Nigerian communities.

2.2.2. Health Belief Model (HBM)

Developed by Irwin Rosenstock in the early 1950s, the Health Belief Model (HBM) seeks to explain and predict health-related behaviors by focusing on the attitudes and perceptions of individuals. According to HBM, behavior change is more likely when individuals perceive a health threat to be serious and believe they are susceptible to that threat. The model includes key concepts such as perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, and cues to action. The cues to action, in particular, are external events or triggers, such as media campaigns, that prompt individuals to engage in healthy behaviors.

Application to Sanitation and Open Defecation:

The Health Belief Model is extremely relevant in addressing open defecation in Nigeria. Many people continue the practice of open defecation because they may not fully understand the severity of the health risks or their vulnerability to related diseases. Social media campaigns can be used effectively to increase perceived susceptibility and perceived severity. For instance, social media platforms can share real-life stories and case studies of communities affected by waterborne diseases due to poor sanitation, highlighting the seriousness of the issue.

Additionally, social media can help reduce perceived barriers by promoting affordable and accessible sanitation options, such as Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) initiatives and government-supported programs aimed at building public toilets in underserved areas. When individuals see that adopting proper sanitation practices is not only possible but also beneficial (through better health, dignity, and comfort), they are more likely to change their behaviors. By offering cues to action such as reminders and calls for public participation, social media becomes a powerful tool for motivating individuals to adopt healthier sanitation practices.

2.2.3. Social Learning Theory (SLT)

The Social Learning Theory (SLT), initially proposed by Albert Bandura in 1963, emphasizes the role of observational learning, imitation, and modeling in shaping human behavior. Bandura posited that people learn by watching others, especially those they perceive as role models or influencers. According to SLT, an individual's behavior is influenced not only by personal experiences but also by the behavior of others in their social environment. Key components of

SLT include attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. These factors work together to help individuals observe, remember, and imitate behaviors that are positively reinforced.

Application to Sanitation and Open Defecation:

SLT can be applied to the influence of social media in promoting proper sanitation and hygiene. In the case of open defecation, people are likely to change their behavior by observing social media influencers and community leaders who model good hygiene practices. For instance, when public figures or celebrities post about using toilets, maintaining clean environments, or practicing proper handwashing, their followers are likely to emulate these behaviors.

Moreover, social media platforms serve as spaces for reinforcement. When individuals or communities post about adopting sanitation habits (such as using public toilets or building household latrines), these actions can receive likes, comments, and shares, reinforcing the positive behavior. This social validation encourages others to follow suit. As Bandura (1963) suggested, positive reinforcement of socially responsible behaviors can lead to the widespread adoption of these practices.

Furthermore, social media offers a platform for peer education, where individuals within communities can share their experiences of overcoming the barriers to proper sanitation. As they observe others successfully adopting new behaviors, they are more motivated to take similar actions themselves.

2.2.4. RELEVANCE TO THE STUDY

The Agenda-Setting Theory (AST), Health Belief Model (HBM), and Social Learning Theory (SLT) provide critical insights into how social media can shape behaviors related to open defecation and hygiene maintenance in Ilorin East Local Government, and Nigeria more broadly. Each theory offers a different lens to view how social media can influence public awareness, policy, and individual behavior change.

- Agenda-Setting Theory demonstrates how media can prioritize sanitation issues and draw attention to the urgency of eliminating open defecation.

- Health Belief Model highlights how social media can increase awareness of the risks and benefits of sanitation, motivating individuals to adopt healthier behaviors.

- Social Learning Theory shows how social media influencers and community leaders can serve as role models, encouraging others to adopt proper sanitation practices through imitation and reinforcement.

Together, these theories illustrate how social media is not just a platform for information dissemination but a powerful tool for behavioral change and community engagement in the fight against open defecation in Nigeria. By leveraging these frameworks, targeted campaigns can effectively drive both individual and collective efforts toward achieving a sanitation-conscious Nigeria.

2.3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Numerous studies have been conducted on efforts to address open defecation (OD). In Indonesia, Cronin (2015) examined the level of awareness regarding campaigns against OD. The study revealed high awareness levels about these campaigns. It also evaluated the government's Sanitasi Total Berbasis Masyarakat (STBM), a community-based sanitation initiative in partnership with UNICEF. The study identified five key sanitation issues within the program, including toilet use, handwashing, safe drinking water storage and handling, and solid and liquid waste management. Additionally, it highlighted the use of the TinjuTinja social media campaign in the local Bahasa dialect to raise awareness about the negative effects of OD.

In a similar study conducted in India, Jain, Wagner, Snell-Rood, and Ray (2020) explored the attitudes toward OD and latrine usage in rural Bihar. Their ethnographic study found that the residents of Bihar were aware of the risks associated with OD but faced challenges in adopting latrines due to cultural preferences for OD and the hesitation brought on by sanitation campaigns.

In Kenya, Busienei, Ogendi, and Mojau (2019) studied OD practices in Lodwar using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. Their findings showed a high level of awareness about OD, but cultural factors were found to influence the practice. Poverty was also identified as a significant barrier to household latrine ownership.

In Nigeria, several studies have been conducted on OD as well. For instance, Sanusi, Talabi, Alade, and Olatokunbo (2022) investigated the communication tools used to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in Ifedayo Local Government in Osun State, the only ODF community in South-West Nigeria. Their findings indicated that radio played a crucial role in spreading awareness about the dangers of OD and mobilizing residents to build latrines. The study concluded that radio is an effective medium for promoting behavioral change through awareness campaigns.

Another study in Owo, Ondo State, Nigeria by Adinlewa and Olubodede (2021) examined the impact of OD campaigns on residents. The quantitative study showed that most respondents were aware of OD campaigns, primarily through radio and outdoor advertising. It also found that the campaign messages had a significant effect on shaping respondents' attitudes toward OD.

Similarly, Ngene and Okwudiri (2016) researched the impact of safe fecal disposal campaigns on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of open defecation among rural residents in South-East Nigeria. Using both quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews, the study revealed that rural residents had become more aware of the health risks associated with unsafe fecal disposal due to media campaigns conducted by UNICEF and WHO. The study highlighted that these campaigns successfully increased awareness and understanding of the dangers of poor feces disposal practices.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the research methodology used to examine the influence of social media on open defecation (OD) practices and the maintenance of hygiene in Ilorin East Local Government. Specifically, this study investigates how social media platforms, particularly Instagram, shape awareness, attitudes, and behaviors related to OD and sanitation. An online questionnaire was the primary instrument used for data collection, and a sample size of 100 respondents was selected. This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the research design, population, sampling technique, data gathering instruments, and data analysis methods.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research employed a survey design to collect data from the target population (Creswell, 2018). A survey method is particularly useful in exploring public opinions, behaviors, and attitudes, making it ideal for understanding the role of social media in shaping perceptions of open defecation and hygiene practices. This design facilitates the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and is considered one of the most effective approaches for assessing behavioral trends, especially in relation to media influence (Bryman, 2021). The survey design will provide valuable insights into the patterns and drivers of social media engagement on hygiene and sanitation issues in the study area.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The population for this study includes residents of Ilorin East Local Government Area who actively use social media platforms, particularly Instagram, and who may be exposed to campaigns and discussions surrounding open defecation and hygiene. According to Salawu and Aderibigbe (2020), the population of a study includes individuals who meet the specific criteria for participation, in this case, social media users aware of hygiene issues. Since social media usage is widespread in urban areas like Ilorin East, the study targeted active social media users, primarily young adults, who are likely to engage with posts and campaigns about sanitation. The study, therefore, aims to gather responses from individuals who are engaged in discussions or campaigns on these issues.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

For this research, a sample size of 100 respondents was selected. The sample was drawn from individuals who are active on Instagram, which was chosen because of its widespread usage among the youth and its potential for reaching a broad audience with relevant messages on sanitation. A non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, was employed to select respondents. Convenience sampling allows researchers to gather data from participants who are readily accessible, which is practical for online surveys (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Although convenience sampling can introduce biases, it is an effective and cost-efficient method for online data collection, especially when the target population is large and easily reachable via social media.

3.4 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT

An online questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection instrument for this study. The online questionnaire was used due to its efficiency in reaching respondents who are active on social media platforms. Online surveys have become increasingly popular due to their ability to collect data quickly and from a geographically dispersed sample, especially in the context of a pandemic and ongoing digital communication trends (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). The questionnaire contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather both quantitative data on social media usage and qualitative data on respondents' views regarding open defecation and sanitation practices. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed and completed via Google Forms, ensuring the accuracy and confidentiality of responses.

3.5 INSTRUMENTATION

The questionnaire for this study consisted of 20 questions, designed to assess the respondents' frequency and type of Instagram usage, their level of awareness about the effects of open defecation, and the impact of social media campaigns on their attitudes and behaviors. The instrument included multiple-choice questions, Likert scale items, and open-ended questions, which allowed respondents to provide both numerical and descriptive feedback (Neuman, 2014). The online nature of the survey allowed for quick distribution and easy collection of responses, which was crucial for the study's timeline. Respondents were asked about their interactions with Instagram content related to hygiene, their participation in relevant campaigns, and how these campaigns influenced their views and actions.

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENTS

To ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pre-test was conducted with a small group of respondents who fit the criteria of the study but were not part of the final sample. This helped to identify any ambiguities or issues in the questionnaire and ensure that the questions accurately measured the intended constructs (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The instrument was then revised based on the feedback from the pre-test. To assess the reliability of the questionnaire, a test-retest method was employed, where the same group of respondents completed the survey at two different times, with a gap of one week. This ensured that the instrument provided consistent results over time. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.75 was achieved, indicating a good level of reliability for the instrument.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through the online questionnaire were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency distributions and percentages, to present an overview of respondents' social media usage patterns, awareness of open defecation issues, and the impact of social media campaigns on their behavior. Cross-tabulation was also used to explore the relationships between variables such as frequency of Instagram usage and awareness of hygiene campaigns. The qualitative data collected from open-ended questions were analyzed thematically, identifying common themes related to respondents' views on open defecation and sanitation practices. This mixed-methods approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the influence of social media on hygiene practices and the potential for social media campaigns to reduce open defecation in Ilorin East.

This methodology ensures that the study systematically explores the role of social media, particularly Instagram, in promoting awareness of open defecation and hygiene maintenance. The findings from this study are expected to contribute valuable insights to the development of social media strategies aimed at addressing sanitation issues and promoting public health.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.0. INTRODUCTION

The essence of this chapter is to analyze and discuss the response given to the questionnaire distributed to the respondents.

Gathered data would be analyzed by using table text to reflect the percentage of the respondents, which would be allowed by specific interpretation of the results.

In this research, the researcher used tables, percentage and chi-square to check the reliability and validity of the results obtained in the study.

The study answered following research questions:

Number of questionnaires distributed 100

Number of questionnaires filled 100

Number of questionnaires not filled 0

Number of questionnaires presented and analyzed. 100

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

1. Demographic of the respondents

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Male	59	59%
Female	41	41%
Prefer not to say	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

From Table 1 above, 59% of the respondents are male, while 41% are female. None of the respondents chose "Prefer not to say" or "Other."

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
18–25 years	67	67%
26–35 years	28	28%

36 and above	5	5%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 reveals that the majority of respondents (67%) are between 18 and 25 years of age, followed by 28% between 26 and 35, and only 5% are 36 years or older.

Table 3: Educational Level of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
ND 1	14	14%
ND 2	23	23%
HND 1	16	16%
HND 2	40	40%
Other	6	6%
Graduate	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in Table 3, 40% of the respondents are HND 2 students, which represents the highest proportion, while only 1% are graduates.

Table 4: Marital Status of Respondents

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Single	77	77%
Engaged	17	17%
Married	6	6%
Other	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to Table 4, the majority of respondents (77%) are single, followed by 17% who are engaged, and 6% who are married.

Table 5: How often do you use social media daily?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	69	69%
1-3 hours	23	23%

4-6 hours	6	6%
Total	**100**	**100%**
Source: Field Survey, 2025		

Table 5 reveals that The data reveals that a majority of respondents (69%) use social media for less than one hour daily. This suggests limited but regular exposure, which may still influence their awareness and behavior regarding hygiene and open defecation, depending on the quality and relevance of content encountered.**Table 6: Have you come across hygiene or sanitation campaigns on social media?**

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	78	78%
No	22	22%
Total	**100**	**100%**
Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025		

As shown in Table 6, A significant proportion (78%) of respondents have encountered hygiene or sanitation campaigns on social media. This reflects the platform's effectiveness in spreading awareness about proper hygiene practices and discouraging open defecation. However, the 22% who have not seen such content indicate the need for broader and more targeted outreach

Table 7: Which of these platforms do you use frequently?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
WhatsApp	30	30%
Instagram	40	40%
Twitter	25	25%
Others	5	5%
Total	**100**	**100%**
Source: Field Survey, 2025		

Table 7 shows Instagram (40%) emerged as the most frequently used platform, followed by WhatsApp (30%) and Twitter (25%). This highlights where hygiene-related campaigns are most likely to reach the youth in Ilorin East, and suggests that public health communicators should prioritize these platforms for maximum impact.

Table 8: Do you follow any health or hygiene-related pages/groups on social media?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	79	79%

No		21	21%
Total		**100**	**100%**

From Table 8, The data shows that 79% of respondents follow health or hygiene-related pages or groups on social media. This high level of engagement supports the idea that social media can serve as a vital tool for promoting hygiene practices and discouraging open defecation. However, the 21% who do not engage with such content represent an audience segment that still needs to be reached.

SECTION B

Table 9: Social media has increased my awareness about the dangers of open defecation.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	50	50%
Agree	49	49%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 9 shows that 99% of respondents agree that social media has increased their awareness about the dangers of open defecation. This confirms that social platforms are effective channels for health education and behavior change communication regarding sanitation practices.

Table 10: I have learned proper hygiene habits through content on social media.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	33%
Agree	59	59%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	7	7%
Total	**100**	**100%**

According to Table 10, A combined 92% of respondents reported learning proper hygiene habits through social media, highlighting its instructional value. This suggests that digital campaigns are not only reaching people but also influencing their hygiene routines positively.

Table 11: Social media platforms are useful tools for promoting public sanitation.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	47	47%
Agree	51	51%
Disagree	1	1%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 11 indicates that 98% of respondents consider social media platforms as useful tools for promoting public sanitation. This shows broad public approval of social media as a strategic tool for encouraging hygiene and discouraging open defecation.

Table 12: I now understand the importance of using toilets through online campaigns.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	35%
Agree	53	53%
Disagree	8	8%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 12 reveals that 88% of respondents acknowledge that online campaigns have improved their understanding of the importance of using toilets. This demonstrates the role of digital content in shifting cultural norms and promoting toilet adoption.

Table 13: Influencers and health agencies on social media have helped change my sanitation behavior.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	38	38%
Agree	59	59%
Disagree	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 13 shows that 97% agree that influencers and health agencies on social media have positively changed their sanitation behavior. This reinforces the impact of trusted voices and institutions in promoting behavioral change through digital means.

Table 15: I have reduced or stopped open defecation because of what I've seen online.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	34%
Agree	52	52%
Disagree	14	14%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Table 15 reveals that 86% of respondents admit they have reduced or stopped open defecation due to social media content. This shows direct behavioral impact, proving that well-structured digital messages can drive real-life hygiene improvements.

Table 16: I now teach others (friends/family) about hygiene from what I see on social media.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	35%
Agree	62	62%
Disagree	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	**100**	**100%**

According to Table 16, 97% of respondents share hygiene information from social media with friends or family. This peer education reinforces the ripple effect of social media in extending public health messages beyond direct audiences..

Table 17: I practice proper handwashing after toilet use because of social media education.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	47	47%

Agree	50	50%
Disagree	2	2%
Strongly Disagree	1	1%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 17 indicates that An overwhelming 97% agree that social media education has influenced their practice of proper handwashing after toilet use. This suggests that platforms play a strong role in reinforcing specific hygiene practices.

Table 18: Social media campaigns should be intensified to reach rural dwellers

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	37	37%
Agree	50	50%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 18 shows that 87% of respondents agree that social media campaigns should be intensified to reach rural dwellers. This reflects the perceived urban-centric nature of current efforts and a call to bridge the rural information gap.

Table 19: Lack of toilet facilities makes it hard to practice what I learn from social media.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	30%
Agree	56	56%
Disagree	14	14%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

According to Table 19, 86% believe that lack of toilet facilities limits their ability to implement what they learn on social media. This points to an infrastructure gap — while knowledge exists, practical application is hindered by environmental challenges.online.

Table 20: I trust health messages shared by verified social media sources.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	28%
Agree	61	61%
Disagree	11	11%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 20 shows that 89% of respondents trust health messages from verified social media sources. This shows that credibility is key to engagement and underscores the importance of verified, authoritative digital voices in sanitation promotion.

Table 21: Social media is more engaging than traditional media for sanitation campaigns.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	29%
Agree	67	67%
Disagree	2	2%
Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 21 indicates that 96% agree that social media is more engaging than traditional media for sanitation campaigns. This affirms that interactive and visually rich platforms are more effective in capturing attention and promoting public health behavior.

Table 22: I prefer watching hygiene tips in video format (e.g., reels, YouTube, TikTok).

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	30%
Agree	67	67%
Disagree	3	3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 22 reveals that 97% prefer watching hygiene tips in video formats like reels or YouTube. This highlights video content as a powerful medium for delivering sanitation messages, suggesting that future campaigns should prioritize audiovisual storytelling.

Table 23: Social media content should be translated into local languages for better impact.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	46	46%
Agree	48	48%
Disagree	4	4%
Strongly Disagree	2	2%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 23 shows that 94% of respondents support translating social media content into local languages for better impact. This emphasizes the need for culturally and linguistically inclusive messaging to reach diverse audiences effectively.

Table 24: Community-led campaigns on social media are more relatable and motivating.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	33	33%
Agree	62	62%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 24 indicates that 95% believe that community-led social media campaigns are more relatable and motivating. This suggests that grassroots-driven content resonates more with local realities and could enhance engagement and impact.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The first research question sought to determine **how social media has contributed to awareness about Mpox and sanitation among students**. The findings strongly indicate that social media has played a significant role in promoting awareness. For instance, as seen in Table 9, a vast majority (99%) of respondents agreed that social media content helped them understand the dangers of open defecation, while 92% (Table 10) acknowledged learning about proper hygiene habits from platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. Similarly, 98% of respondents (Table 11) affirmed that social media is an effective

tool for promoting sanitation practices. Table 12 further supports this by showing that 88% of the students learned the importance of using toilets through online campaigns. Additionally, Table 13 revealed that 97% of respondents admitted to changing their behaviors due to content from health influencers and agencies, highlighting the platform's influence on public hygiene practices. The cumulative insights from these tables suggest that social media is a powerful medium for health communication and awareness creation among students.

The second research question explored **the effectiveness of influencers and health agencies on social media in shaping health-related behaviors**. The data revealed that social media influencers and verified health agencies have a substantial impact. As shown in Table 13, 97% of respondents reported behavioral changes due to messages from influencers and agencies. This finding is reinforced by Table 16, where 97% stated that they now educate others on hygiene practices based on what they learned online. Furthermore, Table 20 shows that 89% of respondents trust verified health messages on social media, which strengthens the credibility of these platforms as sources of public health information. Table 24 adds another layer of relevance, indicating that 95% of respondents find community-led campaigns more relatable and effective than general messages. These findings underscore the importance of not just professional health messaging but also relatable, peer-driven advocacy on social media.

The third research question examined **the challenges hindering the effectiveness of social media in promoting Mpox-related health information**. While the majority of students responded positively to social media campaigns, a few challenges remain. For example, Table 18 shows that 13% believe social media messages may not effectively reach or influence rural dwellers. Similarly, 14% (Table 19) noted that lack of toilet facilities hinders the practical application of hygiene knowledge, suggesting that infrastructural deficits may limit behavior change. Table 20 also revealed that 11% of respondents do not trust health-related messages on social media, pointing to concerns around misinformation or credibility. Additionally, engagement challenges were highlighted in Table 21, where 5% felt traditional media is more engaging, and in Table 22, where 3% expressed disinterest in video content. Finally, while the majority appreciated the translation of content into local languages (Table 23), 6% did not see the need for it, and 5% (Table 24) did not find community-focused campaigns motivating. These minority responses, though small, emphasize the need for inclusive, infrastructurally supported, and culturally sensitive strategies to maximize social media's impact.

4.3. Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study provide compelling evidence that social media plays a significant role in creating awareness about Mpox and sanitation-related issues among students. The responses across various tables show high levels of exposure to and influence from social media campaigns. A dominant percentage of respondents (Tables 9–11) acknowledged that social media content enhanced their knowledge of the dangers of open defecation, personal hygiene, and the importance of proper sanitation. This aligns with the assertions of the **Social Cognitive Theory**, which suggests that individuals can adopt behaviors by observing others, especially through mediated channels like social media. These findings affirm that platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram are not only used for entertainment but are also effective in health education and behavioral change.

Moreover, the findings revealed that **social media influencers and health-related agencies** contribute immensely to shaping public attitudes toward hygiene and disease prevention. As shown in Table 13, the overwhelming agreement among respondents that these figures influence behavior confirms the effectiveness of strategic health communication when delivered by trusted and relatable figures. The credibility and relatability of such sources, particularly those verified and specialized in public health, are

vital in combating misinformation, a common challenge in online spaces. This supports the **Two-Step Flow Theory**, which emphasizes the role of opinion leaders in spreading media messages to the wider public.

However, despite the predominantly positive results, the study uncovered a few **barriers to effective communication and behavior adoption**. A notable concern is the gap between awareness and action due to infrastructural limitations. As seen in Table 19, some students acknowledged that even though they are aware of good sanitation practices, lack of access to proper toilet facilities makes it difficult to implement them. This reflects the reality that behavioral change efforts must be accompanied by adequate public infrastructure and policy support. Also, the issue of **message credibility and engagement** surfaced, with a small percentage of respondents indicating that they either do not trust health information on social media or find traditional media more engaging (Tables 20–21). This suggests the need for continued efforts in verifying health content, using engaging formats like storytelling and localized language (as appreciated in Table 23), and involving community figures (Table 24) for maximum impact.

In summary, the findings highlight the **potent role of social media in raising awareness** and encouraging better hygiene practices among students. While the medium has proven effective in educating and influencing behavior, challenges such as infrastructure, misinformation, and engagement still need to be addressed. The findings reinforce the need for a **multifaceted approach**—combining digital campaigns with community-level advocacy, infrastructure development, and trust-building strategies—to fully leverage social media for public health promotion.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Chapter One introduced the study by highlighting the persistent challenge of open defecation and poor hygiene in parts of Nigeria, particularly in Ilorin East Local Government. It noted the growing relevance of social media as a tool for public health education and behavior change. The chapter laid out the research problem—despite increased media campaigns, open defecation remains prevalent. The objectives of the study were to examine the extent to which social media raises awareness about sanitation, influences behavior change, and promotes hygiene among residents. Relevant research questions were posed, and the significance of the study was justified based on its potential to inform policy and enhance digital public health campaigns.

Chapter Two reviewed existing literature and theories. It discussed the concepts of open defecation, hygiene maintenance, and the role of communication in behavior change. The literature showed that countries that combine traditional and digital campaigns record better outcomes in sanitation practices. Social Cognitive Theory and Two-Step Flow Theory provided the theoretical framework. These theories explain how individuals learn behaviors by observing influencers and how opinion leaders mediate media effects on audiences, respectively. The review established gaps in existing research, especially on the role of localized social media content in sanitation advocacy.

Chapter Three presented the research methodology. The study adopted a survey research design using a structured questionnaire to gather primary data from 100 respondents in Ilorin East Local Government. The population included social media users in the area. A purposive sampling technique was employed to reach active users. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, ensuring a clear presentation of results to address the research questions. The methodology ensured the validity and reliability of the data while considering ethical issues in data collection.

Chapter Four focused on data presentation, analysis, and interpretation. The findings revealed that a vast majority of respondents were aware of the dangers of open defecation and proper hygiene through social media platforms. Most respondents strongly agreed that influencers, health agencies, and online campaigns had positively impacted their hygiene behavior. Visual content, relatable messages, and the use of local languages significantly contributed to message retention and action. However, some challenges were identified, including lack of access to sanitation infrastructure and occasional misinformation online. Tables 9–24 effectively illustrated these trends and supported the hypothesis that social media is a strong influence on public sanitation behavior.

Chapter Five discussed the findings, drew conclusions, and provided recommendations. The discussion linked the results to theoretical concepts and previous studies, affirming that social media can serve as an effective behavioral change tool in rural and semi-urban communities. The study concluded that while

social media has significantly increased awareness and influenced positive sanitation practices, practical limitations such as lack of toilet facilities must also be addressed. It recommended that government agencies should partner with influencers and health communicators to expand digital campaigns, ensure reliable infrastructure, and promote content in indigenous languages. Further research was advised on the long-term impact of such campaigns and strategies to tackle digital misinformation.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study on *the influence of social media on open defecation and maintenance of hygiene in Ilorin East Local Government Area*, the following recommendations are made:

1. Strengthen Digital Hygiene Campaigns: Health organizations and government agencies should intensify sanitation campaigns on social media, using engaging formats like short videos, infographics, and influencer partnerships to increase awareness and behavioral change.

2. Translate Content into Local Languages: To reach a wider audience, especially in rural areas, health messages on social media should be translated into local languages such as Yoruba and Hausa to ensure better comprehension and cultural relevance.

3. Improve Access to Sanitation Facilities: Government and NGOs should provide more public toilets and affordable household sanitation facilities. Awareness alone is not enough if people lack the infrastructure to practice what they learn.

4. Combat Misinformation: Verified health professionals and agencies should actively counteract fake news and myths on social media platforms by regularly sharing factual, science-based content.

5. Involve Community Influencers: Local influencers, community leaders, and youth ambassadors should be engaged in social media campaigns as they are trusted voices and can help promote relatable and impactful messages.

6. Integrate Traditional and social media: A combined use of traditional media (radio, TV) and social media should be adopted to ensure both tech-savvy and offline audiences are reached effectively.

7. Monitor and Evaluate Impact: Regular evaluation of social media sanitation campaigns should be conducted to assess their effectiveness and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and observed behavior.

5.3 Conclusion

This study examined the influence of social media on open defecation and maintenance of hygiene, using Ilorin East Local Government Area as a case study. The findings reveal that social media plays a significant role in creating awareness and influencing positive behavioral change regarding sanitation and hygiene practices. Platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter have been actively used by government agencies, health organizations, and social influencers to disseminate messages that discourage open defecation and promote proper hygiene.

The study shows that many residents of Ilorin East are exposed to sanitation-related content online and have, to some extent, adopted better hygiene habits due to these campaigns. However, while awareness has increased, certain barriers such as inadequate toilet facilities, poverty, and misinformation on social media still hinder full compliance with proper sanitation practices.

In conclusion, social media is a powerful tool in the fight against open defecation, but it must be complemented by real-world infrastructural support, community involvement, and continuous digital education. Only by combining digital advocacy with practical solutions can lasting improvements in hygiene and public health be achieved in Ilorin East and beyond.

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