EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PUBLIC HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR DISEASE PREVENTION

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project has been read and approved as meeting part of the requirements for the awards of National Diploma in Mass Communication, Institute of Information and Communication Technology , Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God for his infinite mercy towards us for the successful completion of this project work. And also to our parents, for their parental support throughout the programme, we pray longer may you live to reap the fruit of your labour, and to our friends and loved ones, we pray God be with you all.

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Abstract

The emergence of social media as a dominant tool for communication has transformed the landscape of public health awareness and disease prevention. This study examines the effect of social media on public health awareness campaigns with a specific focus on how these platforms influence knowledge dissemination, perception of health risks, and behavioral responses related to disease prevention. Using a quantitative survey method, data were collected from 100 respondents across diverse demographic backgrounds to evaluate their usage of social media for health-related information, their exposure to health campaigns, and the impact of such content on their health decisions. Findings revealed that a significant majority of respondents actively rely on platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube for accessing health information due to their easy accessibility and real-time updates. Visual content formats like short videos and infographics were identified as the most engaging and influential. The study also discovered that social media campaigns have successfully increased awareness of health risks and encouraged preventive behaviors, including hand hygiene, vaccination, and healthy lifestyle changes. However, the research also highlighted challenges such as misinformation and the lack of verification practices among some users. The study concludes that social media plays a crucial role in enhancing public health awareness and can effectively complement traditional media in disease prevention campaigns. It recommends strategic content creation, collaboration with health professionals, and improved digital literacy to maximize the benefits of social media in public health communication.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has significantly transformed the landscape of public health communication, particularly through the rise of social media platforms. Social media has emerged as a powerful tool for disseminating information quickly and broadly, enabling public health agencies, professionals, and organizations to reach diverse audiences with crucial messages about disease prevention and health promotion (Moorhead et al., 2013). With platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, health campaigns can now engage communities in real time, break down communication barriers, and foster more interactive and participatory health communication strategies.

Globally, the use of social media in public health awareness has become increasingly prominent, especially in response to disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Ebola, and monkeypox. During such health crises, social media played a critical role in raising awareness about symptoms, prevention strategies, vaccination, and government health directives (Cinelli et al., 2020). These platforms facilitated the rapid dissemination of accurate information while also presenting challenges related to the spread of misinformation. Despite the risks, social media remains a central communication medium in the digital age due to its accessibility, immediacy, and ability to tailor messages to specific demographics.

In Nigeria, the application of social media in health communication has grown in significance, particularly among urban and tech-savvy populations. Organizations such as the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and non-governmental organizations frequently use Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp to share health education content and real-time updates. This approach has been shown to enhance public engagement and awareness, especially during public health emergencies (Olapegba et al., 2020). Nonetheless, the effectiveness of such campaigns varies depending on factors such as internet access, digital literacy, message design, and audience trust.

Public health awareness campaigns are crucial for encouraging behaviors that prevent disease, such as handwashing, vaccination, use of preventive medications, and adopting healthy lifestyles. Traditionally, these campaigns were disseminated through mass media such as radio, television, and print. However, these methods are often limited in scope and interactivity. Social media, by contrast, allows for two-way communication, feedback, and even peer-to-peer advocacy, making it a potentially more effective medium for behavior change (Heldman, Schindelar & Weaver, 2013). The participatory nature of social media can foster a sense of community ownership of health campaigns, thereby increasing the likelihood of sustained behavior change.

Despite its potential, the integration of social media into public health awareness in Nigeria also raises concerns. Challenges include the digital divide, misinformation, data privacy concerns, and the need for proper monitoring and evaluation frameworks. The absence of clear regulatory policies for health communication on social media also makes it difficult to measure the accuracy and credibility of the information disseminated (Adebisi et al., 2021).

Given the growing importance of social media in shaping public opinion and influencing health behavior, it becomes pertinent to assess its effect on public health awareness campaigns, particularly for disease prevention. Understanding how social media influences awareness, perception, and behavioral outcomes can inform the design of more effective health communication strategies in Nigeria and other developing countries.

The evolution of digital technologies has transformed the way information is created, shared, and consumed. Among these technologies, social media stands out as a powerful tool for communication and engagement. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube have become significant channels for public discourse, including health communication (Moorhead et al., 2013). These platforms allow individuals and institutions to disseminate information rapidly, thereby playing an essential role in public health awareness campaigns aimed at disease prevention.

Public health awareness is a crucial strategy used by health organizations and governments to educate populations about diseases and promote healthy behaviors. Tradit

ionally, mass media such as radio, television, newspapers, and posters have been the primary channels for public health campaigns. However, these traditional media are often limited in reach and interactivity (Heldman, Schindelar, & Weaver, 2013). In contrast, social media enables real-time interaction, immediate feedback, and the possibility of message virality, which enhances the reach and effectiveness of awareness campaigns (Ventola, 2014).

Social media's impact on public health was particularly evident during global health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, health agencies, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), used social media platforms to provide updates, debunk misinformation, and encourage preventive behaviors such as handwashing, mask-wearing, and vaccination (Cinelli et al., 2020). In Nigeria, platforms like Twitter and WhatsApp played a vital role in sensitizing the public, especially in urban centers where internet penetration is relatively high (Olapegba et al., 2020).

Despite its benefits, the use of social media for health campaigns is not without challenges. One major issue is the proliferation of misinformation, which can undermine public trust and hinder the adoption of preventive health behaviors (Adebisi et al., 2021). Social media's openness means that anyone can publish content, regardless of its accuracy, leading to the rapid spread of fake news and conspiracy theories about diseases and vaccines (Cinelli et al., 2020). This underscores the need for effective monitoring and fact-checking mechanisms in health-related content shared on these platforms.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of social media campaigns depends on factors such as audience demographics, digital literacy, message clarity, and engagement strategies. For instance, health messages that are tailored to the cultural and social context of a target audience are more likely to generate awareness and encourage behavior change (Heldman et al., 2013). Also, incorporating multimedia elements such as infographics, videos, and interactive content tends to enhance message comprehension and retention (Moorhead et al., 2013).

In Nigeria, the growing use of mobile phones and internet services has expanded t

he potential of social media as a tool for health communication. According to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), internet penetration in Nigeria stood at over 50% as of 2023, providing a viable platform for reaching a large segment of the population with health messages (NCC, 2023). However, rural-urban disparities and poor digital infrastructure remain key barriers to equitable access and participation in social media-based health campaigns (Adebisi et al., 2021).

Given these developments, it becomes important to evaluate the **effect of social media on public health awareness campaigns for disease prevention**. By understanding how social media influences public perception, knowledge, and behavior regarding disease prevention, health stakeholders can design more targeted, effective, and inclusive campaigns. This study aims to explore these dynamics, particularly in the Nigerian context, where the intersection of technology, health, and communication is rapidly evolving.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the increasing use of social media for public health communication, there remains a significant gap in understanding its actual impact on public health awareness and behavior change, especially in developing countries like Nigeria. While social media has the potential to enhance disease prevention campaigns, misinformation, digital illiteracy, and lack of access may undermine its effectiveness (Adebisi et al., 2021). Additionally, there is limited empirical data on how social media content influences individuals' attitudes and decisions regarding preventive health practices (Heldman et al., 2013). These concerns raise critical questions about the credibility, reach, and behavioral impact of social media-based health campaigns. Hence, this study seeks to assess the influence of social media in creating awareness and promoting preventive health behaviors in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of social media on public health awareness campaigns for disease prevention.

The specific objectives are to:

i.   Assess the extent of public reliance on social media for health-related information.

ii. Evaluate the effectiveness of social media platforms in disseminating disease prevention messages.

iii. Investigate the impact of social media on public knowledge and health-related behavior.

iv. Identify the challenges associated with using social media for public health awareness in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

i. To what extent do people rely on social media for health-related information?

ii. How effective are social media platforms in disseminating disease prevention messages?

iii. What is the impact of social media messages on the public's knowledge and health behavior?

iv. What challenges hinder the effective use of social media for public health awareness?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on digital health communication by providing empirical evidence on the influence of social media in public health awareness and disease prevention (Moorhead et al., 2013). Second, it will help public health institutions, NGOs, and communication experts design more effective campaigns that harness the strengths of social media while mitigating its challenges. Third, it highlights the role of digital literacy and access in the successful implementation of online health campaigns, particularly in resource-limited settings like Nigeria (Adebisi et al., 2021). Lastly, the findings can guide policymakers in formulating regulatory frameworks for credible and ethical dissemination of health information on social media platforms.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the use of social media platforms in public health awareness campaigns, with a specific emphasis on disease prevention. The study will consider major social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram. Geographical

ly, the research will be limited to a selected area in Nigeria, with participants drawn from both urban and semi-urban settings to ensure diversity in internet access and digital literacy. The timeframe for analysis will include recent public health campaigns, particularly those conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

i. **Effect:** An **effect** is the result or outcome of a particular action, influence, or event. In research, it refers to the measurable impact that one variable has on another.

ii. **Social: Social** relates to human society and the interactions, relationships, and communication between individuals or groups within that society.

iii. **Media: Media** refers to the various channels or platforms used to communicate information to a broad audience. This includes traditional outlets like newspapers and TV, as well as digital platforms such as websites and social networks.

iv. **Public: Public** pertains to the general population or community at large. It refers to people collectively, especially in the context of shared interests or common concerns.

v. **Health: Health** is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (World Health Organization, 1948).

vi. **Awareness: Awareness** is the state of being informed, conscious, or knowledgeable about a particular issue, event, or condition. In public health, it refers to individuals' understanding of health-related topics and risks.

vii. **Campaign:** A **campaign** is an organized and strategic effort to achieve a specific goal, often involving public outreach and communication. In public health, a campaign typically aims to educate or influence behavior on health issues.

viii.**Disease:** A **disease** is a disorder or abnormal condition that affects the structure or function of an organism, often characterized by specific symptoms and signs, and may be caused by infections, genetics, or environmental factors.

ix. **Prevention:** refers to actions or measures taken to stop something undesirable from occurring, particularly the onset or spread of diseases through proactive strategies such as vaccination, hygiene, and health education.

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CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The growing intersection between social media and public health communication has generated significant interest among scholars, health practitioners, and communication experts. As technology continues to evolve, social media platforms have become instrumental in shaping public discourse, particularly around health-related matters (Moorhead et al., 2013). These platforms enable instant sharing of information, facilitating wide-scale dissemination of health messages, especially during outbreaks and public health emergencies.

Over the past decade, researchers have increasingly examined the effectiveness of social media in raising health awareness and influencing health behaviors. Studies suggest that well-designed digital campaigns on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp can improve knowledge about disease prevention, promote behavioral change, and mobilize communities to adopt healthy practices (Heldman, Schindelar, & Weaver, 2013). The ability to engage audiences through visuals, interactive content, and real-time updates has made social media a preferred medium for many public health organizations.

Social media's role became more pronounced during global health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where it served both as a tool for information and a battleground for misinformation. While official health agencies used it to promote preventive measures, there was a parallel surge in misinformation that complicated public response and trust (Cinelli et al., 2020). These mixed outcomes have led researchers to explore the dual nature of social media as both a facilitator and a potential threat to public health communication.

In the Nigerian context, the use of social media for public health campaigns is expanding, driven by increased mobile internet usage and digital literacy among the youth population. Government bodies like the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have embraced digital platforms to disseminate timely health alerts and engage the public (Olapegba et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of these campaigns varies significantly d

ue to infrastructural gaps, regional disparities in access, and the public's varying trust in digital sources of information.

As such, it is crucial to explore existing literature to understand the theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and contextual challenges related to the use of social media in health awareness and disease prevention campaigns. This chapter reviews relevant studies, theoretical frameworks, and emerging themes to establish a foundation for analyzing the effect of social media on public health awareness in Nigeria.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

A **conceptual framework** serves as the structural foundation that guides a research study by outlining key concepts, variables, and the presumed relationships among them. It helps to clarify how the phenomenon under investigation in this case, the use of social media affects public health awareness and influences disease prevention behaviors. The framework is informed by previous research and theories, helping to link the study objectives with practical and measurable variables (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

2.1.1. Concept of social media as a communication tool.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram function as digital spaces where information is created, distributed, and consumed. These platforms allow users to engage in real-time discussions, share health tips, and access information from public health agencies (Moorhead et al., 2013). The **interactivity and speed** of communication enabled by social media distinguishes it from traditional mass media, making it an effective tool for public health campaigns (Ventola, 2014).

2.1.2. Public health awareness: which refers to the population's level of knowledge and understanding about health-related issues and disease prevention measures? Effective public health campaigns rely on not only disseminating accurate information but also ensuring that the public comprehends and acts upon it. Social media enhances this process by allowing for two-way communication and user engagement, thus reinforcing awareness and learning (Heldman, Schindelar, & Weaver, 2013).

2.1.3. Disease prevention: which involves proactive strategies to reduce the incidence and spread of illnesses. These include promoting vaccinations, hygiene practices, proper

nutrition, and timely medical consultation. When used strategically, social media campaigns can positively influence public attitudes and behaviors toward these preventive measures (Freeman et al., 2020). For example, campaigns around COVID-19, malaria, and Ebola prevention have shown that timely social media messaging can lead to increased compliance with health guidelines (Cinelli et al., 2020).

2.1.4. Moderating variables: such as digital literacy, internet accessibility, demographic factors (age, education, location), and message credibility. These variables can affect how individuals receive and respond to social media content (Adebisi et al., 2021). For instance, people with low digital literacy may struggle to differentiate between credible information and misinformation, reducing the effectiveness of awareness campaigns.

2.1.5. Social media usage, **public health awareness**, and **disease prevention outcomes**, moderated by individual and contextual factors. This structure provides a clear pathway for analyzing how and to what extent social media contributes to public health goals in Nigeria.

In designing an effective study on the effect of social media on public health awareness campaigns for disease prevention, it is essential to establish a strong conceptual framework that defines how the core concepts interact. The framework highlights the process through which social media acts as a channel of communication to influence public knowledge and behavior regarding disease prevention strategies. It draws on communication theory, health behavior models, and current literature on digital engagement for health advocacy (Moorhead et al., 2013).

2.1.6. Independent variable: These platforms have transformed how individuals consume and share information, providing a decentralized medium for health authorities, non-governmental organizations, and even individuals to participate in public health discourse (Ventola, 2014). With billions of users worldwide and a significant population in Nigeria actively engaging online, the reach and immediacy of social media present an unprecedented opportunity for public health communication (Statista, 2021).

2.1.7. Public health awareness, the **intervening or mediating variable:** refers to the public's understanding of disease risks, symptoms, transmission, and prevention strategies.

Awareness is a precursor to behavior change and can be enhanced through continuous exposure to relevant, clear, and culturally sensitive information. Studies indicate that when social media content is well-targeted and credible, it significantly improves health knowledge and increases the likelihood of adopting preventive actions (Heldman, Schindelar, & Weaver, 2013). For instance, awareness about handwashing and mask usage during the COVID-19 pandemic was largely propagated through Twitter and Facebook by health agencies such as the WHO and NCDC (Olapegba et al., 2020).

2.1.8. Disease prevention, the **dependent variable**, encapsulates the desired outcome of public health communication efforts. It includes a range of behaviors such as vaccination, regular medical check-ups, practicing safe hygiene, and avoiding misinformation. Research has shown that individuals who are more aware of disease prevention strategies through digital channels are more likely to adopt healthy practices (Freeman et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of these outcomes depends on how users interpret and act upon the information received.

The conceptual framework also incorporates **moderating variables** that can influence the strength or direction of the relationship between social media and health outcomes. These include:

- **Demographic factors**: Age, gender, education, and socioeconomic status can affect how individuals engage with health content online (Adebisi et al., 2021).
- **Digital literacy**: The ability to access, analyze, and evaluate digital content critically is essential for distinguishing reliable health information from misinformation (Cinelli et al., 2020).
- **Trust in source**: Users are more likely to act on health advice if it comes from credible organizations or verified experts, rather than unknown or unverified accounts (Kim & Dennis, 2019).

2.1.9. Health Belief Model (HBM): constructs such as perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, and perceived benefits, which influence individuals' motivations to act on health information. When users perceive a health risk to be serious and believe that taking action (e.g., getting vaccinated or wearing a mask) can reduce that risk, they are more likely to

change behavior—especially if these messages are delivered through channels they freq uently use like social media (Champion & Skinner, 2008).

Ultimately, this conceptual framework envisions a dynamic process: **social media co ntent** is disseminated, filtered through user perception and socio-demographic factors, le ading to either increased **awareness** or misinformation. This, in turn, affects the **public's willingness and ability to adopt disease prevention practices**. Understanding these path ways provides valuable insight into optimizing health campaigns for better outcomes.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework provides the structure and lens through which a research study i s examined and interpreted. It connects the researcher's inquiry to established theories, g uiding the *Source: Field Survey 2025* of data and helping to explain relationships among variables. For this study on *audience perception of social media user-generated content on security situations in Kwara State*, the theoretical framework draws primarily from **De velopment Media Theory** and **Uses and Gratifications Theory**, both of which offer insig ht into media consumption behavior and the role of media in developing societies.

2.2.1. Development Media Theory

Relevant in understanding how media, especially in developing nations like Nigeria, can be used as a tool for national development and public safety. According to McQuail (201 0), this theory posits that media should assist in the development process by promoting positive social change, national unity, and public enlightenment. In the context of securit y in Kwara State, development-oriented media content—including user-generated content on social media—can raise awareness, foster community vigilance, and support govern ment-led security campaigns. The theory supports a media landscape where content is n ot purely for entertainment but also a means of educating and mobilizing the populace t owards shared security goals (Baran & Davis, 2015).

Development Media Theory emerged in the 1960s as an extension of the normative th eories of the press. It was proposed to address the unique media needs of developing na tions, especially during post-colonial reconstruction and nation-building. The theory argu es that media in developing countries should not operate with complete freedom as seen

in Western liberal models but should instead function in support of national development goals such as economic growth, political stability, education, health, and social unity (McQuail, 2010). In this context, the media is expected to serve as a partner to the government, prioritizing developmental content over purely commercial or entertainment-driven output.

Unlike the libertarian or social responsibility models, Development Media Theory justifies state involvement or control in media activities, particularly to ensure that information disseminated aligns with national priorities. It accepts that press freedom may be restricted to curb content that could destabilize fragile political systems or promote division in ethnically diverse countries (Baran & Davis, 2015). The theory views the media as a tool that should support government initiatives, amplify developmental campaigns, and foster modernization in sectors like agriculture, education, and health.

A key feature of Development Media Theory is its emphasis on media as an agent of social change. In this sense, journalists are not just reporters but also educators and advocates of development. They are expected to promote literacy, raise awareness on civic duties, and help mobilize people for national programs such as vaccinations, elections, or agricultural reforms (Moemeka, 1994). This perspective reinforces the idea that media in developing societies has a moral obligation to facilitate nation-building, rather than merely entertain or profit.

Critics, however, argue that Development Media Theory often provides justification for authoritarian control of the press under the guise of national interest. In many African and Asian countries, governments have used the theory to censor dissenting voices and limit press freedom, undermining democratic participation and accountability (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Furthermore, with the rise of digital media and citizen journalism, the top-down model of information control proposed by the theory is increasingly being challenged in modern contexts.

Nonetheless, Development Media Theory remains relevant in discussions about how media can contribute to social and economic transformation in less-developed nations. Especially in rural and under-informed areas, media that is geared toward developmental

goals can play a vital role in promoting peace, security, and sustainable development (Nwodu & Fab-Ukozor, 2003). The theory provides a useful framework for evaluating media performance in contexts where national development is a pressing concern.

2.2.2. Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Which helps explain how and why audiences actively seek out specific media content to satisfy particular needs. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) introduced UGT to highlight the agency of media users in selecting and interacting with media based on personal motivations such as information, surveillance, personal identity, and social integration. In the context of user-generated content on social media, this theory explains how individuals use platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter to access real-time security information, share alerts, and connect with others during crises. It also underscores the participatory nature of social media, where users are not passive recipients but active contributors to the information ecosystem (Ruggiero, 2000).

(UGT) is a widely recognized framework in media studies that focuses on how and why individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy particular needs. Unlike earlier media theories that viewed audiences as passive recipients of messages, UGT emphasizes audience agency and the motivations behind media consumption (Blumler & Katz, 1974). The theory identifies various gratifications that audiences pursue, such as information, personal identity, integration, social interaction, and entertainment. This perspective is particularly useful in the age of social media, where users are not just consumers but also creators and distributors of content.

One of the central tenets of UGT is that individuals use media content to meet specific psychological or social needs. For instance, people may turn to social media platforms like Twitter or Facebook for **surveillance purposes**, such as staying informed about current events, especially in times of crisis or insecurity (Ruggiero, 2000). In Nigeria, where traditional media may not always provide timely updates, citizens rely on user-generated content for real-time information about security issues, including road blockages, protest activities, or violent outbreaks (Ojebuyi & Fadeyibi, 2019). This illustrates how the theory applies to modern communication environments in developing countries.

UGT also highlights the **interactive and participatory** nature of modern media consumption. With platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram, users are empowered to engage with content by commenting, sharing, or creating their own posts. This is especially relevant in discussions of security, where eyewitnesses often post photos or videos that alert others to danger or wrongdoing. The gratifications derived from such participation include a sense of belonging, social recognition, and the fulfillment of civic duty (Sundar & Limperos, 2013). In this way, the theory helps explain the motivations behind the spread of security-related user-generated content in Kwara State and beyond.

Moreover, the theory sheds light on the **diverse user motivations** found among different audience segments. For example, younger audiences may use social media primarily for entertainment and social bonding, while older users may seek news updates or safety information. These varying patterns of use reflect how media gratifications are influenced by individual differences such as age, education level, and personal experiences with insecurity (Rubin, 2009). Thus, UGT provides a flexible framework that can accommodate the evolving nature of media usage in complex social settings like Nigeria.

In the context of this study, UGT is instrumental in understanding how residents of Moro LGA in Ilorin perceive and engage with user-generated content related to security. It explains not only **why** they seek such content but also **how** they use it—to inform decisions, protect themselves, or mobilize their communities. This insight is vital for developing strategies that enhance the positive use of social media in security management and mitigate the risks of misinformation or panic-inducing content (Katz et al., 1973).

By integrating these two theories, this study benefits from a dual perspective: **Development Media Theory** emphasizes the societal role of media in promoting public welfare and security, while **Uses and Gratifications Theory** focuses on individual-level interactions and motivations in media usage. Together, they provide a comprehensive framework to assess how audiences in Moro LGA, Ilorin, perceive and engage with user-generated security-related content on social media.

2.3. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Several empirical studies have examined the influence of social media on public perception

on and security communication in Nigeria and beyond. For example, Adegbola and Gearhart (2019) explored the role of social media in political engagement and public awareness in Nigeria. Their findings indicated that user-generated content (UGC) not only enhanced civic participation but also shaped how citizens perceived issues related to governance and security. The study emphasized the growing reliance on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook for real-time updates, especially during moments of national insecurity, suggesting that UGC can function as a form of citizen journalism that complements traditional news sources.

In another study, Ojebuyi and Fadeyibi (2019) investigated the challenges of managing security-related information disseminated through social media in Nigeria. They found that while user-generated content enabled rapid information sharing, it also led to misinformation, fear, and unnecessary panic during crises. Their research revealed that many users lacked the skills to verify content before sharing, thereby compounding public insecurity rather than alleviating it. This aligns with the idea that the unregulated nature of UGC can pose both opportunities and threats in managing public safety.

Effiong (2021) conducted research on the use of social media by security agencies in Nigeria and found that citizen-generated content often provided valuable leads and situational awareness, particularly in conflict-prone areas. The study highlighted how user reports, photos, and videos served as early warning systems and helped to fill gaps left by official communication channels. However, the study also stressed the importance of media literacy among the public and the need for collaboration between social media users and security operatives to verify and act on credible information.

Similarly, Chiluwa and Adegoke (2013) analyzed social media discourse during the Boko Haram crisis and concluded that social media allowed individuals to express fears, seek help, and report violent incidents, sometimes before they reached authorities. Their analysis of Twitter posts revealed that user-generated content served as both a record of events and a mobilization tool, although it also spread alarmist messages at times. This study emphasizes the dual nature of UGC—its ability to inform and to inflame.

In a more localized context, Ibrahim and Abdulkareem (2020) studied social media use

in Kwara State during the #EndSARS protests. Their findings showed that young residents in Ilorin actively used social media platforms to share experiences with police brutality and coordinate peaceful protests. The researchers noted that social media became a rallying point for communities to discuss security-related issues that were often ignored by mainstream media. This suggests that in places like Moro LGA, user-generated content can play a critical role in shaping public opinion and mobilizing collective security actions.

Overall, empirical literature supports the assertion that user-generated content on social media has a significant impact on how individuals perceive and respond to security issues. While these studies reveal the strengths of social media in promoting awareness and civic engagement, they also underscore the risks associated with unverified or emotionally charged content. As such, there is a pressing need to balance freedom of expression with responsible content sharing to ensure that UGC serves the public good in contexts like Kwara State.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a **descriptive survey research design**. This design was chosen because it allows for the collection of data from a sample population to understand their views and experiences regarding the effect of social media on public health awareness campaigns for disease prevention. The survey method is suitable for examining the use of social media platforms and their effectiveness in disseminating health information.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises residents of [Ilorin west Metropolis], particularly individuals who are active users of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The estimated population for this study area As of the 2006 census, Ilorin West Local Government Area (LGA) in Kwara State, Nigeria, had a population of **364,666**. By 2022, projections estimated the population to have grown to approximately **548,300**. Covering an area of about **105 km²**, Ilorin West is recognized as one of the most densely populated LGAs in Kwara State

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size of **100 respondents** will be selected for this study using **simple random sampling**. This method ensures that each member of the target population has an equal chance of being selected, which helps in reducing bias and increasing the reliability of the results. The sample was drawn from different age groups, educational backgrounds, and social media usage levels to ensure diversity.

3.4 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used for data collection was a **structured questionnaire**. The questionnaire was divided into two sections:

- **Section A**: Demographic information such as age, gender, educational qualification, and frequency of social media usage.
- **Section B**: Questions related to the use of social media in public health campaigns, the respondents' awareness of health information on social media, and their att

itudes and practices towards disease prevention as influenced by social media. The questions were designed using a **Likert scale** format and multiple-choice questions to ensure clarity and ease of response.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure **validity**, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in public health and communication studies to confirm that it measures what it intends to measure. A **pilot study** was conducted using 15 respondents who were not part of the main study population, and necessary adjustments were made based on feedback.

The **reliability** of the instrument was measured using the **Cronbach's Alpha reliability test**, which gave a coefficient of **0.82**, indicating that the instrument is highly reliable.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The data collection process involved the **distribution of questionnaires** to the selected respondents both physically and via online platforms such as WhatsApp and email. Respondents were given ample time to complete the questionnaires, and follow-up messages were sent to ensure a high response rate. A total of **120 questionnaires** were distributed, out of which **110 were properly filled and returned**, yielding a **response rate of 91.7%**.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using **descriptive statistics** such as frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores. The results were presented in **tables and charts** for easy *Source: Field Survey 2025*. The analysis was done with the aid of **Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)** version 25. Hypotheses were tested using **Chi-Square (χ^2)** to determine the significance of the relationship between social media usage and public health awareness.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the study. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, and their **consent** was obtained. **Anonymity and confidentiality** of their responses were assured, and participants had the right to withdraw at any stage of the study without any consequences.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

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4.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected through the questionnaire based on the research objectives. The analysis is structured into three sections: Demographic data of respondents, responses to questions addressing the objectives, and *Source: Field Survey 2025* of findings. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed and successfully retrieved. The responses are tabulated and interpreted below. This chapter presents the results from the administered questionnaire, organized according to the research objectives and demographic information of respondents. Each question is presented in a tabular format, followed by a detailed *Source: Field Survey 2025* and analysis of the data.

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Question 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

The gender distribution indicates a fairly balanced participation, with 55% males and 45% females. This balance implies that the perspectives gathered are reflective of both genders, making the results inclusive and representative. This is important because health behavior, perception of social media content, and trust in digital platforms can vary across gender lines.

Question 2: Age of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15−20	20	20%
21−25	35	35%
26−30	25	25%

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
36 and above	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

Most respondents fall within the 21–25 age bracket (35%), followed by 26–30 (25%). This shows that the majority are young adults who are typically active on social media. The significant representation of people between 15 and 30 aligns with the known trend that youth are the dominant users of digital platforms, particularly for health and lifestyle information.

Question 3: Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ND	40	40%
HND	50	50%
Other	10	10%
Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey 2025

Half of the respondents (50%) have attained a Higher National Diploma (HND), while 40% have National Diploma (ND). This indicates that the respondents are relatively educated, which suggests they can comprehend and evaluate health-related content online. The 10% with other qualifications could include degrees or secondary education, showing diversity in the sample.

Question 4: Marital Status

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	65	65%
Married	30	30%
Divorced	3	3%
Widow	2	2%