

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED HEALTH  
EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS ON HEALTH PROMOTION AMONG YOUNG  
ADULTS IN BENIN METROPOLIS**

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BENIN CITY**

**DECEMBER, 2025**

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY  
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EDUCATION.**

**DECEMBER, 2025**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by **Maryann Osarumwense OSAGHAE** with matriculation number **EDU2102615** in the Department of Health Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin in partial fulfillment of the award of Bachelor of Science Degree in Health Education.

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to God Almighty, whose love, mercy, grace, wisdom, and favor kept me through this journey and enabled me to complete this degree with success.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study evaluated the effectiveness of social media-based health education campaigns on health promotion among young adults in Benin City. Although social media has become a significant avenue for spreading health information due to the increasing usage of digital platforms among young people, its influence on awareness, attitudes, and behavior is still under researched in the local setting. A descriptive survey design was used, and a structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 400 young adults chosen from all around Benin City. The data were analyzed using percentages and frequency counts.

According to the results, social media-based health education initiatives are very successful at promoting health in young people. According to respondents, social media has a major impact on their understanding of health concerns, their opinions and attitudes about healthy behavior, and their adoption of beneficial health habits like better hygiene, good nutrition, and preventive health screening. Significant sources of health-related content were found to be sites like Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

Because of its accessibility, interactivity, and broad reach, social media is essential for promoting health among young adults in Benin City, according to the study's conclusion. It advises that public health organizations, healthcare professionals, and NGOs increase their usage of social media for health communication, ensure the correctness of shared material, work with influencers, and create engaging, interactive campaigns to improve participation and efficacy. Additionally, the research indicates that future studies should analyze platform-specific effects and assess long-term behavioral changes brought about by digital health campaign

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

In today's digital era, social media has become one of the most powerful tools for information sharing, communication, and public engagement. Beyond entertainment and social interaction, these platforms now serve as vital channels for health education and health promotion, allowing organizations and individuals to reach diverse audiences instantly. According to Vasiloglou, Christodoulidis, and Stathopoulou (2021), social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (now X), TikTok, and YouTube have increasingly been used to disseminate health information, raise awareness, and influence positive behavioral changes among young adults. Similarly, Ventola (2018) emphasized that the interactive and visual nature of social media makes it an effective medium for promoting public health messages and engaging communities in preventive health practices.

Health organizations, government agencies, and influencers now use social media-based campaigns to educate the public on key health issues such as mental health, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, vaccination, and substance abuse prevention. These campaigns leverage videos, infographics, hashtags, and online challenges to encourage participation and behavior change. As noted by Chou, Gaysynsky, and Vanderpool (2020), social media has transformed health communication by providing real-time,

accessible, and participatory platforms that empower individuals to make informed health decisions.

The use of social media as a platform for health education began in the early 2000s following the emergence of platforms such as Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), and Twitter (2006). Initially designed for social interaction, these platforms were soon adopted by public health organizations for information dissemination due to their wide reach and interactive nature (Merchant & Lurie, 2020).

A major breakthrough occurred during the 2009 H1N1 (a subtype of the influenza A virus that causes a respiratory illness known as "swine flu" ) influenza outbreak when the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) actively used social media to share real-time health updates and preventive guidelines (WHO, 2009). This marked the formal beginning of global digital health campaigns. From 2010 onwards, governments and non-governmental organizations increasingly adopted social media for campaigns on HIV/AIDS, maternal health, and non-communicable diseases, particularly targeting youth populations (Oluwaseun, 2014). In Nigeria, social media began to play a significant role around 2014 when health campaigns on HIV prevention and Ebola awareness were conducted through Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) effectively used these platforms to combat misinformation and promote public health behaviors (NCDC, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 further accelerated the use of social

media for health education globally and in Nigeria, with campaigns such as #TakeResponsibility and #COVID19Nigeria reaching millions of young adults online (NCDC, 2021).

Today, social media is a central tool for health education campaigns because of its ability to provide rapid information sharing, promote engagement, and influence behavioral change, especially among tech-savvy young adults.

In Nigeria, where youth (ages 18-35) form a significant portion of the population, and mobile phone penetration continues to rise, health-related messages are often consumed via social media. Topics such as mental health, sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, drug abuse, and infectious disease prevention are frequently featured in online campaigns (Akinola & Adebayo, 2021). Benin City, a major urban center in southern Nigeria, has experienced an increase in such campaigns, particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This group is especially active on social media but also faces health risks (e.g. infectious diseases, lifestyle issues) .

This research project aims to systematically investigate and analyze the reception, interpretation, and resultant actions taken by young adults in response to such health education initiatives conducted through social media channels. By employing a comprehensive methodology that includes qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, this study endeavors to uncover not only the effectiveness of these campaigns in fostering an informed perspective on health issues but also to understand the nuances of

how messages are constructed, shared, and perceived within the digital landscape. Furthermore, the project will explore the potential barriers and facilitators that influence the engagement and responsiveness of young adults to health-related information presented in a social media context.

Ultimately, the findings of this research may contribute valuable insights to the design and implementation of more effective health communication strategies aimed at improving the overall health outcomes of the youth demographic. According to DataReportal's figures show that there were 36.75 million active social media user identities in Nigeria in January 2024, Kepios analysis shows that social media users in Nigeria increased by 5.2 million (+16.3 percent) between early 2023 and the beginning of 2024. The number of social media users in Nigeria at the start of 2024 was equivalent to 16.2 percent of the total population. This suggests that social-media campaigns could be an effective way to educate young people about health issues.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Social media has rapidly become one of the most influential platforms for health education, especially among young adults who are highly active users of digital technology. In Benin City, various health organizations, government agencies, and individuals constantly use platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to promote awareness on issues such as sexual health, mental health, substance abuse, and disease prevention. These campaigns are expected to improve health

knowledge and encourage positive health behaviors among young adults. However, despite the increasing number of social media-based health campaigns, many young people in Benin City still engage in unhealthy practices such as drug abuse, risky sexual behavior, poor dietary habits, and reluctance to seek medical care. This raises serious concerns about whether these campaigns are truly effective in achieving their intended goals.

Furthermore, the presence of misinformation, low digital health literacy, and limited evaluation of online health content make it unclear whether young adults are receiving accurate information or if these campaigns are influencing real behavioral change. While social media is widely used, there is insufficient empirical evidence in Benin City on how effective these campaigns are in shaping knowledge, attitudes, and health practices among young adults. This knowledge gap presents a pressing need to assess whether social media is merely spreading information or actually promoting healthier lifestyles and improving health outcomes.

The researcher was prompted to carry out this study due to the observable contradiction between the high exposure of young adults to health messages on social media and the continuous rise in preventable health issues among this population. Without proper assessment, it is difficult for policymakers and health educators to know if social media is a reliable and impactful tool for health promotion or if new strategies are required.

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of social media-based health education campaigns in promoting health among young adults in Benin City.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

What is the level of effectiveness of social media-based health education campaigns in promoting health among young adults in Benin City?

To what extent are young adults in Benin Metropolis exposed to social media-based health education campaigns?

To what extent do social media-based health education campaign affect young adults understanding and beliefs about health promotion in Benin City?

To what extent do social media-based health education campaigns improve the knowledge of young adults in Benin Metropolis?

To what extent do social media-based health education campaigns influence the perceptions of young adults towards health promotion?

### **Purpose of the Study**

1. To determine the extent to which young adults in Benin Metropolis are exposed to social media-based health education campaigns.
2. To determine the extent to which different social media platforms contribute to the dissemination of health education messages among young adults.

3. To determine the extent to which social media-based health education campaigns influence the attitudes of young adults towards health promotion.
4. To determine the extent to which social media-based health education campaigns influence the perception of young adults towards health promotion.

### **Significance of the Study**

The following are some of the groups that stand to gain from this study:

**Young adults and the general public:** This study has the potential to greatly benefit both young people and the general population. As the primary targets of social media-based health education campaigns, they will gain from a better knowledge of how these digital interventions may improve health knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The research will offer data on the kinds of social media material and tactics that are most successful in encouraging healthy lifestyles, illness prevention, and positive shifts in young people's behavior.

**Public health practitioners:** Public health professionals will gain insight from this study into the best methods for efficiently disseminating health information among young people in Benin City, such as including selecting the appropriate platforms and developing culturally specific messages. This is crucial for tackling local health concerns (such as malaria prevention, sexual health, COVID-19 immunization, etc. ) among a targeted population. It bridges the gap by offering information on social media health

messaging in a particular Nigerian urban environment. In low-resource environments, the results will advance the theory of health communication.

**Policymakers and NGOs:** By concentrating on strategies that produce actual behavioral change, this study also aids decision-makers and NGOs in using resources more effectively. Additionally, it might aid in creating more engaging and effective online campaigns. This study will offer genuine insights into how this particular demographic in Benin City engages with and reacts to online health messaging. This is significant because young people are frequently at a pivotal point in establishing healthy habits for life. Knowing what works (and what doesn't) can help inform more effective, focused strategies in the future (Okoye & Abah, 2021).

**Health communication specialist or Digital media strategist:** This study will be of great use to digital media strategists and health communication professionals since it offers evidence-based advice on how to plan, spread, and assess health education initiatives using social media. Social media has grown to be an essential channel for health communication in recent years, providing interactive and affordable tools for reaching a wide range of demographics, notably young people. (Moorhead et al. , 2019; Korda & Itani, 2017). The success of these campaigns, however, frequently depends on how effectively health messages are tailored, framed, and distributed across various channels. In terms of promoting health behaviors, this research will help communication

experts determine the most effective message formats, engagement tactics, and platform-specific strategies.

**Social media platform developers:** This study will educate platform developers on how to work with public health organizations and digital strategists in order to incorporate health promotion technologies like community. into social media settings, integrating verified health pages, AI-driven content filters, and challenges (Smailhodzic et al. , 2018; Keles et al. , 2020). Recent research has highlighted the significance of co-creating digital environments that promote user trust and facilitate favorable behavior (Ghahramani et al. , 2022). As a result, the findings of this study may help platform developers improve the health-promoting capability of social media systems, making sure that platforms not only contribute to the user's physical well-being but also to their mental health. as well as to the general well-being of their users.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study is limited to young adults (approximately 16–35 years old) in Benin City, Edo State. It focuses on social media–based health education campaigns rather than traditional media (TV, radio, print). We consider general health topics (e.g. disease prevention, vaccination, nutrition, mental health) but do not evaluate campaigns for any one specific disease. The primary data come from a cross-sectional survey; thus, we capture perceptions and self-reported behaviors at one point in time. No clinical or observational health outcomes are measured.

The sample is a convenience sample of residents in Benin City, so results may not generalize to all Nigerian youth or rural areas. Additionally, we rely on participants' recall and honesty in surveys, which may introduce response bias. We do not include younger adolescents (<18) or older adults, nor do we compare other cities. Finally, due to resource limits, we did not perform a longitudinal pre-test/post-test; instead we infer impact from reported changes. These delimitations mean the study assesses perceived campaign effects, which is appropriate for an undergraduate-level research but cannot establish long-term causality.

### **Definition of Terms**

- 1. Social Media:** social media refers to digital platforms and applications (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, WhatsApp, TikTok, and YouTube) that allow users to create, share, and interact with content and each other online.
- 2. Health Education Campaigns:** these are organized efforts aimed at informing or educating people about health topics to improve knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
- 3. Health Promotion:** health promotion involves activities that help individuals and communities improve their health and make healthier choices.
- 4. Young Adults:** young adults are individuals typically between the ages of 18 and 35 years.

- 5. Behavioral Change:** behavioral change refers to a shift in actions or practices of individuals—such as adopting healthier eating habits, using condoms, or quitting smoking—often as a result of exposure to health campaigns.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the review of literature for this study under the following subheadings:

- Theoretical perspective on social media use
- Concept of social media-based
- The role of social media in health promotion
- Effectiveness of social media-based campaigns
- Challenges and limitations of using social media for health education
- Strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of social media health campaigns

#### **Theoretical perspective on social media use**

There are many communication and behavioral theories that explain how and why people use social media for information and social interaction. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), which examines the reasons why individuals use media to meet their needs, is one of the most pertinent frameworks. certain requirements, such as knowledge, amusement, and social interaction (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). This idea helps to clarify why young people actively seek out health information on sites like Instagram in the context of current social media usage. using Twitter and TikTok to not only learn but also to interact with people and support their decisions on health.

Whiting and Williams (2018) claim that people utilize social media to satisfy psychological and social requirements like communication, information exchange, and self-expression. These motives affect how people engage with and react to online health education material in health communication. In a similar way, Ma and Alhabash (2017) discovered that the use of social media is motivated by both cognitive (knowledge-seeking) and emotional (entertainment, emotional support) rewards, which in turn influence how engaged users are and how likely they are to embrace the behaviors promoted by digital health campaigns.

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory offers a helpful viewpoint on social media use, highlighting that people acquire behaviors by watching other people online. Users emulate habits that they believe are advantageous or socially acceptable by being exposed to peers, influencers, and health professionals (Bandura, 2018). This demonstrates how, when credible and relatable role models share genuine experiences, social media sites may encourage good health habits among young people.

Social media campaigns that present relatable role models and success stories can enhance young adults' confidence in adopting health-promoting behaviors. For example, when young users observe peers successfully engaging in mental health practices, exercise routines, or healthy diets online, they may perceive such behaviors as attainable and relevant to their own lives (Zhao & Zhang, 2017).

Additionally, social reinforcement (likes, shares, and positive comments) strengthens behavioral intentions and can serve as a feedback mechanism that sustains engagement in health-promoting activities. According to Mahmood et al. (2021), digital health campaigns that encourage interaction and feedback tend to achieve greater behavioral outcomes because they replicate the positive reinforcement processes central to Social cognitive theory.

By employing role modeling, peer sharing, and interactive feedback loops to boost self-efficacy and enthusiasm for health behavior change, social media initiatives frequently depend on this approach. Mahmood et al. (2021) state that young people are more likely to have self-efficacy and want to alter their conduct if they are exposed to online health information that they can relate to.

Additionally, Li et al. (2022) demonstrated that younger users who participate in social media health groups are more likely to acquire good behaviors via social interaction. crucial elements of SCT, including reinforcement and reciprocal feedback.

In the Nigerian context specifically among young adults in Benin City the use of social media for health education aligns with the social cognitive theory principle that social environments shape behavior. Nigerian youths are among the highest social media users in sub-Saharan Africa (Statista, 2023), meaning that their exposure to health-related content is substantial. Therefore, applying SCT helps explain how exposure, modeling,

and reinforcement through digital platforms can lead to increased awareness, attitudinal change, and the adoption of health-promoting behaviors among this group.

In summary, Social Cognitive Theory offers a strong explanatory basis for this study, emphasizing that behavioral change among young adults is influenced by the interplay of cognitive, environmental, and social factors all of which are inherent in social media-based health education campaigns. By applying social cognitive theory, this research highlights how digital health communication can foster observation, modeling, and reinforcement to promote healthier behaviors among young adults in Benin City.

### **Concept of social media-based**

Social media is the use of online and mobile technologies to make it easier for people to create, share, and exchange information, thoughts, interests, and other forms of expression via the web. networks and virtual communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, Alalwan, 2018). In more current usage, social media is seen as a digital communication environment where users may create, consume, and engage with material in real time. on several platforms, including WhatsApp, X (Twitter), YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook (Niu, Willoughby, & Zhou, 2023).

Social media allows groups, professionals, and individuals to spread health information, increase awareness, and promote behavior change in the context of health education by engaging. digital initiatives (Chen & Wang, 2021, Mahmood et al. , 2021).

The early 2000s saw the advent of social media, with sites like Facebook (2004), LinkedIn (2003), and MySpace (2003) leading the way. facilitating online engagement by letting users establish personal profiles, interact with friends, and share material (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

The social media environment had grown significantly by the 2010s with the introduction of Twitter (2006), Instagram (2010), Snapchat (2011), and eventually TikTok (2016), all of which focused on real-time interaction and visual communication (Appel et al, 2020). These platforms established a participatory culture where users could, in real time, create, disseminate, and consume material (Hajli, 2018).

The mid-2010s saw a movement towards influencer marketing, social media analytics, and algorithm-driven content personalization, which gave businesses and public health organizations the ability to accurately reach target groups (Dwivedi et al. 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) increased the usage of social media for health communication as users turned to online resources. forums for news, health information, and social assistance (Limaye et al , 2020).

As a result, social media has transformed from a simple networking resource into a vital component of the worldwide digital infrastructure that supports education, communication, trade, and health promotion (Appel et al.2020, Niu et al, 2023).

The impact of social media on communication, education, and behavior makes it a vital component of modern society. Its significance can be assessed along the following lines:

### **Information Distribution and Connectivity**

The rapid dissemination of information across geographical and cultural divides is made possible by social media, which fosters worldwide connectivity (Al-Dmour, Al-Dmour & Masa'deh, 2021). It facilitates the quick dissemination of news, health information, and instructional material, particularly to young adults, who are the most frequent users (Romer et al, 2017; Chen & Wang, 2021).

### **Public Awareness and Health Promotion**

Social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are now useful resources for promoting health. These platforms are used by public health organizations to disseminate preventive measures, increase disease awareness, and encourage healthy behaviors (Limaye et al, 2020; Mahmood et al, 2021). Social media's interactive components, such as likes, shares, comments, and hashtags, increase message exposure and engagement, thereby improving health literacy.

### **Participation and empowerment**

Social media gives users the ability to express their opinions, share their experiences, and persuade others. This participatory aspect encourages peer learning and shared accountability for well-being in healthcare settings (Hajli, 2018; Li et al, 2022).

### **Education, marketing, and research**

Social media data is used by researchers and organizations to assess the effects of campaigns, monitor trends, and analyze public behavior (Appel et al , 2020; Dwivedi et

al , 2021). In education, it fosters digital learning environments where students learn and share knowledge outside of conventional classrooms.

### **Youth Involvement**

Young adults, who are frequently less receptive to conventional health education strategies, can be effectively reached through social media because of its accessibility and entertainment value (Niu et al, 2023). Social media influences young people's values, attitudes, and lifestyle choices through multimedia narrative, peer advocacy, and influencers (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022).

### **The role of social media in health promotion**

In today's health promotion, social media has grown to be an essential and potent instrument. Through online communication channels, it allows health practitioners, non-governmental groups (NGOs), government agencies, and public health organizations to share information, interact with audiences, and promote positive health practices. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (Twitter), YouTube, and WhatsApp are just a few of the sites that have changed how people consume and share health-related information because to their participatory and interactive nature. content (Chen & Wang, 2021; Niu, Willoughby, & Zhou, 2023).

Social media has become increasingly crucial in recent years for reaching young adults, who make up the most active and responsive online demographic. to digital material that

is graphic, straightforward, and easy to understand (Romer et al, 2017; Al-Dmour, Al-Dmour & Masa'deh, 2021).

### **Health Education and Information Dissemination**

Social media offers an effective forum for the rapid and widespread dissemination of health information. Social media is used by health organizations to disseminate evidence-based information on subjects like nutrition, disease, substance abuse prevention, sexual and reproductive health, and mental health. prevention (Mahmood et al, 2021; Limaye et al, 2020). For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Twitter and Instagram were used by influencers and organizations in the world health sector to disseminate preventative actions like mask use and vaccination, which aids in combating disinformation and promoting public compliance (Loomba et al, 2021).

Social media's real-time communication and interactive features let users ask questions, get immediate feedback, and participate in discussions, all of which promote health and improve knowledge retention. literacy (Chen & Wang, 2021; Li et al, 2022). In resource-constrained areas like Benin City, these affordances make social media a useful complement to conventional health education initiatives.

### **Health promotion and behavioral change**

Social media, in addition to information sharing, has a significant impact on health behavior through peer influence, modeling, and social reinforcement. Individuals can learn new behaviors by watching others, a process that happens organically on social

media through, according to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (2001). testimonials, shared health success stories, and campaigns for influencers.

According to studies, online communities help people develop healthier behaviors like consistent exercise, nutritious eating, and stress management (Mahmood et al , 2021; Li et al, 2022). For instance, young users have been inspired by health issues on TikTok and Instagram, like fitness regimens and trends promoting mental health awareness. to engage in minor but regular health behaviors (Niu et al, 2023).

Furthermore, social media is a platform for advocacy, where businesses and people may rally backing for health causes like immunization, mental health awareness, and vaccination. or HIV prevention (Alalwan, 2018; Appel et al , 2020). This grassroots strategy fosters community engagement and gives underrepresented perspectives a larger voice in discussions about public health.

### **Social Assistance and Community Development**

Social media encourages online health groups where people can share their experiences, find emotional support, and get guidance from their peers. These online communities offer a sense of connection and shared support, especially for those who are struggling with mental health issues, chronic illnesses, or conditions that are stigmatized (Li et al , 2022).

Peer groups on social media have been helpful in fostering mental health recovery by reducing isolation and offering casual care networks, according to Naslund et al. (2020).

Health professionals can use these platforms to pinpoint community concerns, keep an eye on trends, and take early action when misinformation or dangerous conduct surfaces.

### **Affordability and Availability**

Social media is a perfect platform for developing nations like Nigeria since it provides affordable access to health information. Social media, in contrast to traditional media, which frequently needs a lot of resources, allows health campaigns to connect with a large audience at very little or no cost (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022).

The growing usage of smartphones and mobile internet in Benin City has resulted in a situation where young people are always connected and exposed to digital health information. This accessibility offers a chance for continuous engagement and behavioral reinforcement, both of which are critical for long-term health promotion (Al-Dmour et al , 2021; Niu et al , 2023).

### **Combating Health Misinformation**

Social media has advantages, but it also has drawbacks, such the propagation of fake news. But it also functions as a remedial forum where reliable sources can refute misleading stories by fact-checking, using expert communication, and launching media literacy initiatives (Limaye et al, 2021 , 2020; Loomba et al, 2021). This dual role emphasizes the importance of social media in both spreading health information and fostering trust and believability in health communication.

## **Effectiveness of social media-based campaigns**

Social media campaigns have become an effective means of raising health awareness, promoting behavior change, and fostering community participation. Their ability to engage in interactive and customized communication while simultaneously reaching vast and diverse audiences is what makes them so effective. Through sharing, liking, and commenting on sites such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X (Twitter), health messages may quickly proliferate, increasing their reach and impact. (Niu, Willoughby & Zhou, 2023; Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022).

Audience participation, or the degree to which users engage with health information, is one of the most important indicators of the success of social media health campaigns. According to research, interactive components like videos, infographics, hashtags, and challenges can greatly boost engagement, which increases knowledge retention and awareness (Chen & Wang, 2021). As an illustration, health campaigns that employ visually appealing formats on Instagram or TikTok have been demonstrated to increase message retention and encourage the adoption of healthy practices (Mahmood et al , 2021).

Message trustworthiness and trust are additional elements that contribute to effectiveness. Campaigns with health professionals, influencers, or relatable peer figures are more likely to be accepted and result in beneficial changes in behavior (Al-Dmour, Al-Dmour & Masa'deh, 2021). The use of storytelling, as well as the perceived authenticity of

messages, can promote emotional connection and inspire people to make better decisions for their health (Limaye et al, 2020).

Social media platforms also facilitate focused communication through algorithms that aid in sending messages to particular demographic categories, like young adults, who are among the most frequent users of social media. This allows health professionals to customize communications according to audience choices, increasing the relevance and effect of their campaigns (Niu et al , 2023).

Social media-based campaigns are especially successful in addressing communication barriers brought on by restricted access to conventional healthcare in low- and middle-income nations like Nigeria. educational channels (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022). Health information can be shared quickly across various social networks via WhatsApp groups, Facebook pages, and online forums, promoting conversation and community-level involvement in health programs (Ojo, 2020).

Additionally, empirical research has revealed quantifiable results from these campaigns. For instance, Zhao and Zhang (2017) discovered that social media treatments based on behavioral change theories, like the Health Belief Model (HBM) and Theory of The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) resulted in notable advances in preventive health practices, such as physical activity, immunization uptake, and mental health awareness. In a similar way, Mahmood et al. (2021) found that young people's self-efficacy and

favorable attitudes toward fitness and mental well-being were improved by online campaigns that promoted healthy lifestyles.

Nevertheless, social media-based health education initiatives have their limitations. The efficacy of well-intentioned initiatives may be diminished by problems like excessive information, inaccurate information, and limited attention spans (Limaye et al, 2020). Therefore, the effectiveness of these campaigns depends on the strategic message design, the reliability of the sources, and the continuous interaction with the target audience.

Overall, there is evidence that social media-based health campaigns are successful in increasing awareness, enhancing health literacy, and affecting behavior change, especially among young people who are very active online (Chen & Wang, 2021; Niu et al , 2023). Such efforts are crucial to the promotion of health in contemporary society when they are well-planned and based on behavioral principles.

### **Challenges and limitations for using social media for health education**

While social media has transformed health communication, various challenges and limitations impact its efficacy as a medium for health education and promotion. These challenges pertain to the quality of information, audience engagement, accessibility, privacy, and sustainability (Limaye et al, 2020; Niu, Willoughby & Zhou, 2023).

#### **Misinformation and Health Disinformation**

A significant challenge is the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation. Social media platforms frequently lack sufficient mechanisms to authenticate the accuracy of

health-related information prior to its dissemination. Consequently, inaccurate or misleading information regarding vaccines, nutrition, mental health, and diseases circulates rapidly, often outpacing verified information (Wang et al, 2019; Islam et al, 2020). This spread of misinformation can undermine public confidence in health institutions and obstruct evidence-based health behaviors (Limaye et al, 2020).

For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the “infodemic” of false information on platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp had a profound impact on public comprehension and adherence to health guidelines (Cinelli et al, 2020). In low-resource contexts like Nigeria, where health literacy levels are highly variable, this represents a significant threat to the success of social media-driven health campaigns (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022).

### **Limited Access and Digital Divide**

In spite of the increasing prevalence of social media, digital inequality continues to be a pressing issue. Access to reliable internet, smartphones, and digital literacy is not uniformly available, especially in developing areas (Ojo, 2020). Young adults in urban centers such as Benin City may exhibit high levels of online engagement, yet marginalized groups may still encounter obstacles due to financial constraints, inadequate connectivity, or insufficient technical skills. These inequalities restrict the inclusivity and overall impact of health education initiatives (Niu et al, 2023).

### **Short Attention Span and Information Overload**

The rapid and ever-changing environment of social media fosters brief attention spans. Users are incessantly inundated with entertainment, advertisements, and news content, all vying for attention alongside educational posts (Mahmood et al, 2021). Consequently, health education messages may fail to maintain audience engagement sufficiently to effectuate significant behavioral change (Al-Dmour, Al-Dmour & Masa'deh, 2021). The relentless stream of content further contributes to information fatigue, causing users to withdraw from crucial health messages (Chen & Wang, 2021).

### **Privacy and Ethical Concerns**

A further limitation pertains to privacy issues, data security, and the ethical utilization of personal information. Numerous health campaigns depend on user-generated data, including engagement metrics or personal testimonials, which may place users at risk of privacy violations if not adequately managed (Ventola, 2014; Limaye et al, 2020). Additionally, open comment sections can occasionally result in cyberbullying, stigma, or harassment, particularly concerning sensitive health issues such as mental health, sexual health, or HIV prevention (Zhao & Zhang, 2017).

### **Absence of Professional Oversight and Regulation**

In contrast to conventional health communication methods, social media platforms frequently function with minimal professional supervision. Creators of health content may not possess adequate training, resulting in inaccuracies or biased interpretations of

medical information (Ojo, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of regulatory structures for online health communication in nations such as Nigeria complicates the process of holding individuals responsible for disseminating false or harmful information (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022).

### **Sustainability and Message Fatigue**

Ultimately, numerous social media campaigns face challenges regarding sustainability. Health promotion initiatives often reach their peak during particular events or crises (for instance, pandemics) and subsequently decline, which hinders the ability to achieve long-term behavioral change (Limaye et al, 2020). Ongoing engagement necessitates steady funding, innovative content, and technical proficiency resources that are frequently scarce in public health environments (Chen & Wang, 2021).

### **Strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of social media health campaigns**

The effectiveness of social media-based health education initiatives depends on how well they are organized, carried out, and maintained. Health communicators and organizations must use evidence-based, strategic tactics that improve message visibility, credibility, and engagement among the target audience in order to maximize impact (Niu, Willoughby & Zhou, 2023; Chen & Wang, 2021). The following tactics have been found to be essential for increasing the efficacy of social media health campaigns.

### **Applying theories of behavioral change**

The Health Belief Model (HBM), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) are examples of behavioral change theories that can be used to make communications action-oriented and psychologically convincing (Zhao & Zhang, 2017; Ajzen, 2020). By addressing elements including perceived susceptibility, attitudes, subjective norms, and self-efficacy, these theories direct the creation of messages. Campaigns that highlight the individual advantages of preventative measures, such as exercise or immunization, for example, typically elicit greater behavioral responses (Mahmood et al, 2021).

### **Targeted messaging and audience segmentation**

Targeting particular audience groups based on demographics, interests, and online activity is one of social media's main benefits. Data analytics are used in successful campaigns to segment audiences and provide tailored health messages that appeal to specific subgroups (Niu et al, 2023). For instance, youth-friendly language, popular trends, and visual styles from Instagram or TikTok might be used to create messages targeted at young adults (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022).

### **Working Together with Opinion Leaders and Influencers**

The legitimacy and reach of a message can be increased by collaborating with reputable influencers, medical experts, and local authorities. According to Al-Dmour, Al-Dmour, and Masa'deh (2021), influencers who model healthy behaviors and offer genuine tales

aid in normalizing these practices among their followers. Campaigns that used social media influencers during public health emergencies (like COVID-19) had much higher engagement rates than those that only used institutional accounts, according to Limaye et al. (2020).

### **Regular Observation and Assessment**

Campaign performance and impact must be evaluated by ongoing monitoring and evaluation (M&E). What works best can be ascertained using metrics like engagement rate, reach, click-through rate, and behavioral results (Chen & Wang, 2021). Campaign managers may improve tactics, modify messaging, and sustain audience engagement over time using regular feedback loops.

### **Encouraging Stakeholder Collaboration**

Collaboration between government organizations, non-governmental organizations, medical experts, and digital media strategists is necessary for effective health communication. Collaborations can improve the exchange of resources, guarantee the accuracy of material, and boost the longevity of campaigns (Adebayo & Omotayo, 2022). In Nigeria, collaborations with influencers and cellular firms might enhance the spread of messages among young adults in places like Benin City (Ojo, 2020).

### **Empirical Study**

Empirical studies show that social media-based health education can improve awareness and intention but may not always result in long-term behavioural change. International

studies (e.g Cho et al, 2016; PubMed, 2023) found that message design and interactivity play crucial roles in campaign success. Nigerian studies (e.g., Abjournals, 2022) showed moderate awareness but limited behavioural outcomes among youths, indicating a need for context-specific research in Benin City.

According to Limaye et al. (2020), social media initiatives during the COVID-19 epidemic effectively raised young awareness and preventive behavior. According to Mahmood et al. (2021), compared to static messaging, interactive health postings on Instagram increased engagement and memory.

Adebayo & Omotayo (2022) looked at young people in Nigeria and discovered that health ads on Instagram and Twitter enhanced health literacy and influenced good behavioral intentions. Participation in social media health groups improved users' perceptions of social support and adherence to healthy behaviors, according to Li et al. (2022). These results highlight social media's potential as a useful tool for health communication, particularly among young individuals who are tech-savvy and receptive to messaging from peers and influencers.

### **Summary of Review of Related Literature**

This chapter reviewed theoretical and empirical literature on social media-based health education campaigns. It identified a gap in the Nigerian context, particularly in Benin City, where little empirical evidence exists on the effectiveness of such campaigns in promoting health behaviours among young adults.

The literature reviewed highlights the increasing significance of social media as a platform for health education and promotion, particularly among young adults, who are the most active users of digital platforms. Various studies have demonstrated that social media enables the rapid dissemination of health information, encourages behavioral change, and fosters engagement through interactive communication. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), and TikTok have become key tools for public health agencies and non-governmental organizations to influence knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward healthier lifestyles (Mahmood et al., 2021; Nwankwo & Okoro, 2022).

Similarly, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) by Bandura (1986) provides insight into how young adults learn and adopt behaviors through observation and modeling within digital environments. Social media influencers and peers who model healthy behaviors act as role models, enhancing viewers' self-efficacy and promoting behavioral imitation (Bandura, 2004; Zhao & Zhang, 2017).

Empirical studies reveal mixed findings on the effectiveness of social media health campaigns. While numerous studies report positive outcomes—such as improved awareness, attitude shifts, and behavior adoption (Eze & Nwankwo, 2020; Mahmood et al., 2021)—others identify limitations, including misinformation, low message credibility, and inconsistent engagement (Ibrahim & Salihu, 2023). Despite these challenges, the

consensus remains that social media has tremendous potential to reach large audiences quickly and cost-effectively.

However, research specifically focusing on Benin City or Nigerian youth populations remains limited. Most available studies are concentrated in developed countries, creating a research gap regarding the local context, cultural factors, and media literacy influencing social media health education effectiveness in Nigeria. This gap underscores the need for the present study, which aims to empirically assess how social media-based health education campaigns affect health promotion behaviors among young adults in Benin City.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

- Design of the study.
- Population of the study.
- Sample and sampling techniques.
- Research instrument.
- Validity of the instrument.
- Reliability of the instrument.
- Method of data collection.
- Method of data analysis.

#### **Design of the study**

The research design of this study is descriptive survey research. It enables the researcher to gather data from a representative sample of respondents in order to characterize and examine their views, attitudes, and behaviors pertaining to the efficacy of health education programs on social media, this design is deemed suitable. Descriptive surveys are appropriate for research aiming to collect quantitative data on people's attitudes and behaviors without changing any variables, according to Creswell and Creswell (2018). The study's design will allow for an unbiased evaluation of how social media sites affect health awareness and promotion among young people in Benin City.

### **Population of the Study**

The population for this study was estimated to be 2,045,000 of young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 who were active users of social media residing in Benin City.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

A sample size of 400 young adults was selected from the total population of 2,045,000. The simple random sampling technique was used, giving every individual in the population an equal chance of being selected. Using this method, 400 participants were randomly chosen from the population. Data was then collected from the selected participants ensuring that their responses reflected the characteristics of the wider population of young adults using social media.

### **Research Instrument**

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from the selected participants. Knowledge was measured using Yes/No questions, attitude were assessed using a Point Liker Scale and perception using Yes/No to capture the intensity of participants feelings and responses to health messages on social media.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two experts in the department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education to ensure that the questions accurately reflect the study's goals and to confirm its validity.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

For the reliability of the Instrument, the test re-test method was used for the study. The instrument was distributed twice to 10 respondents who were not part of the study within the two sessions.

### **Method of Data Collection**

To reach a larger audience, the researcher distributed the questionnaires both physically and online (using Google Forms). The researcher made sure that respondents had enough time to complete their responses and that participation was voluntary and confidential. Given the prevalence of online behavior among young people, this hybrid approach to data collection fosters inclusion and increases response rates (Nwankwo & Okoro, 2022)..

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data obtained from the study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, and mean scores were used to summarize the data.

In addition, inferential statistics, particularly the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test, was employed to determine the relationship between social media campaigns and health promotion behaviors among young adults. The results are presented in tables and interpreted based on the research objectives.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings based on the data collected from respondents in relation to the research questions guiding the study.

#### Research Question One:

What is the level of exposure of young adults in Benin Metropolis to social media-based health education campaigns?

**Table 4.1 Below shows Respondents' Exposure to Social Media Health Education Campaigns (N = 400)**

<b>Variable (Exposure Statements)</b>	<b>Yes (%)</b>	<b>No (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Do you use social media platforms regularly?	360 (90%)	40 (10%)	1.90
Do you use social media enough to stay informed about current health campaigns?	280 (70%)	120 (30%)	1.70
Have you ever watched or participated in an online health awareness campaign?	250 (62.5%)	150 (37.5%)	1.63
Are you exposed to sponsored health promotion content on social media?	300 (75%)	100 (25%)	1.75
How frequently do you see health education content on social media?	270 (67.5%)	130 (32.5%)	1.68

The data presented in Table 4.1 provide a comprehensive overview of the level of exposure of young adults in Benin Metropolis to social media-based health education campaigns. The findings suggest that exposure is generally high, but varies depending on

the type and frequency of engagement. Specifically, 90.0% of respondents reported that they use social media platforms regularly, with a corresponding mean of 1.90. This indicates that social media is a central part of the daily lives of most young adults in the metropolis. The near-universal usage reflects both the accessibility of social media and its role as a primary channel for communication, information-seeking, and entertainment. The high engagement level implies that social media can serve as an effective platform for delivering health education content, as the vast majority of the target population is already active on these platforms.

When asked whether they use social media sufficiently to stay informed about current health campaigns, 70.0% responded affirmatively (Mean = 1.70). This suggests that young adults are not only present online but are selectively seeking content that is informative and relevant to health promotion. This pattern of active engagement indicates a population that is receptive to health messages delivered digitally, demonstrating that social media campaigns can reach an audience that is both accessible and attentive. It also reflects the evolving behavior of young adults, who increasingly rely on digital platforms as primary sources of information, rather than traditional media such as television or newspapers.

The finding that 62.5% of respondents have watched or participated in an online health awareness campaign (Mean = 1.63) underscores the level of interactive engagement beyond passive consumption of information. Participation in campaigns,

whether through online events, webinars, or challenges, suggests a deeper level of involvement where individuals not only receive health information but also engage with content in ways that may reinforce understanding and encourage personal action. Although this percentage is lower than general usage and exposure, it highlights the potential for social media campaigns to create active learning and participatory experiences that can influence attitudes and behaviors.

Exposure to sponsored health promotion content was reported by 75.0% of respondents (Mean = 1.75). Sponsored content, typically boosted to increase visibility, appears to play a crucial role in reaching young adults consistently. This demonstrates that strategic use of paid promotions can significantly enhance the reach of health education campaigns, ensuring that target audiences see messages multiple times, which is critical for retention and behavioral influence. Furthermore, 67.5% of respondents indicated that they frequently see health education content on social media (Mean = 1.68). This consistent visibility is important because repeated exposure to health messages reinforces knowledge, encourages reflection, and increases the likelihood of translating information into positive health practices.

Taken together, these findings indicate that young adults in Benin Metropolis experience high levels of exposure to social media-based health education campaigns. The combination of frequent social media use, active engagement with campaigns, and repeated encounters with health content suggests that social media platforms are well-

suiting to reaching and influencing this demographic. The results also imply that exposure alone may be sufficient to increase awareness and familiarity with health issues, but the data do not yet reveal whether this exposure translates directly into sustained behavior change — a matter that will be explored in subsequent research questions.

From a practical perspective, these findings highlight several important considerations for health educators and campaign designers. First, the high exposure indicates that social media is an effective channel for dissemination, but the level of participation (62.5% engagement in campaigns) suggests a need for more interactive and compelling content that encourages active involvement. Second, the use of sponsored content proves effective in ensuring visibility, suggesting that investment in paid promotions may enhance the reach and impact of campaigns. Third, while frequent exposure is beneficial for awareness, it must be coupled with strategies that encourage behavior adoption, such as clear calls to action, interactive tools, and peer engagement initiatives.

In summary, the evidence from Table 4.1 demonstrates that social media is a widely accessed, familiar, and influential platform for health education among young adults in Benin Metropolis. Respondents are consistently exposed to health campaigns and are generally receptive to the messages delivered, indicating that these platforms provide fertile ground for promoting health awareness, influencing attitudes, and potentially shaping health behaviors. The high mean scores across items further confirm the strong

level of engagement and exposure, providing a solid foundation for the effectiveness of social media as a tool for health promotion.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of effectiveness of social media-based health education campaigns in promoting health among young adults in Benin City?

**Table 4.2 below shows Effectiveness of Social Media–Based Health Education Campaigns Knowledge of health education campaigns**

<b>Variable (Knowledge Items)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Mean</b>
I have learnt new health information from social media campaigns	310 (77.5%)	90 (22.5%)	1.78
Social media campaigns have improved my understanding of health issues	295 (73.8%)	105 (26.2%)	1.74
I can recall at least one health education message seen on social media	325 (81.3%)	75 (18.7%)	1.81
Health information on social media is easy to understand	280 (70.0%)	120 (30.0%)	1.70
Social media campaigns increased my awareness of healthy practices	300 (75.0%)	100 (25.0%)	1.75

### Attitude toward social media health education campaigns

Variable (Attitude Items)	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean
Social media health campaigns are an effective way to promote health	140 (35.0%)	170 (42.5%)	60 (15.0%)	30 (7.5%)	3.05
I prefer receiving health information through social media	120 (30.0%)	165 (41.3%)	80 (20.0%)	35 (8.7%)	2.93
Social media campaigns motivate me to adopt healthy behaviors	110 (27.5%)	180 (45.0%)	75 (18.7%)	35 (8.8%)	2.91
Social media is a reliable source of health education	95 (23.7%)	160 (40.0%)	95 (23.7%)	50 (12.6%)	2.75
I trust health messages delivered through social media platforms	100 (25.0%)	155 (38.8%)	55 (13.7%)	90 (22.5%)	2.75

### Perception of health education campaigns

Variable (Perception Items)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Mean
Social media campaigns have changed my perception of health	285 (71.3%)	115 (28.7%)	1.71
Social media campaigns help correct wrong beliefs about health	295 (73.8%)	105 (26.2%)	1.74
Social media campaigns help influence my decision about my health	270 (67.5%)	130 (32.5%)	1.68
Health campaigns on social media have increased my interest in health issues	305 (76.3%)	95 (23.7%)	1.76
I believe social media is a useful platform for health promotion	320 (80.0%)	80 (20%)	1.80

### Research Question Three:

To what extent do social media-based health education campaigns affect young adults' understanding and beliefs about health promotion in Benin City.

**Table 3: Effect of Social Media-Based Health Education Campaigns on Understanding and Beliefs**

Statement	Yes	No	Mean
Have you ever gained new health information from social media health campaigns?	315 (78.8%)	85 (21.2%)	1.79
Are you familiar with the primary objectives of health education initiatives on social media?	290 (72.5%)	110 (27.5%)	1.73
Have you picked up any new health behaviors from social media campaigns?	275 (68.8%)	125 (31.2%)	1.69
Do you know of any health initiatives at the local or national level that are promoted on social media?	305 (76.2%)	95 (23.8%)	1.76
Has your understanding of good habits like hygiene, nutrition, or exercise increased as a result of social media?	320 (80.0%)	80 (20.0%)	1.80
I believe social media health campaigns provide accurate information	270 (67.5%)	130 (32.5%)	1.68
I believe campaigns for social media health have an impact on people's perspectives on leading a healthy lifestyle.	295 (73.8%)	105 (26.2%)	1.74
I believe people's health habits are significantly influenced by social media health initiatives.	280 (70.0%)	120 (30.0%)	1.70
I believe social media health campaigns help in raising awareness on critical health issues.	310 (77.5%)	90 (22.5%)	1.78

The findings presented in Table 3 demonstrate that social media-based health education campaigns have a notable and positive influence on young adults' understanding and beliefs about health promotion in Benin City. The responses to the knowledge-related items reveal a consistent pattern of strong agreement, with most of the young adults indicating that they have gained new health information and improved their understanding of healthy behaviors through social media. For example, 78.8% of respondents confirmed that they have gained new health information from social media campaigns (C1), while 80% reported that their understanding of good habits, such as hygiene and nutrition, has improved as a result of these campaigns (C5). These high percentages and mean scores approaching 2.0 indicate that social media platforms effectively serve as educational tools, enabling young adults to access valuable health information that contributes to informed health choices.

Furthermore, the findings show that social media is not only enhancing understanding but is also shaping beliefs and perceptions regarding health promotion. Items under Section E demonstrate that a substantial proportion of respondents believe in the accuracy and usefulness of social media-based health education. For instance, 77.5% of respondents agreed that social media campaigns help raise awareness on critical health issues (E2), reflecting confidence in these campaigns as credible sources of health information. Similarly, high affirmative responses to E3 and E4 suggest that many young adults recognize the influence of social media in shaping lifestyle decisions and the

adoption of healthy habits. This implies that beyond simple exposure, social media content is actively contributing to how young adults evaluate and interpret health-related issues.

The collective responses indicate that social media platforms are succeeding in stimulating both cognitive and behavioral interest in health matters. The fact that 68.8% of respondents acknowledged adopting new health behaviors because of social media campaigns (C3) demonstrates that these platforms are not merely informative but transformational. This shows a clear pathway between exposure, enhanced understanding, strengthened beliefs, and actual behavioral change—highlighting the broader relevance of social media as a health promotion tool. Additionally, the familiarity with local and national health initiatives promoted on social media (C4) shows that young adults are increasingly exposed to diverse health interventions through digital channels, further expanding their health literacy.

Overall, the findings reveal that social media-based health education campaigns contribute significantly to improving young adults' understanding and shaping their beliefs about health promotion in Benin City. The consistent pattern of high “Yes” responses across all items examined suggests that these campaigns are impactful, relevant, and effective in promoting positive health messages. More importantly, the results underscore the growing importance of social media as a major channel for health

communication in modern society, particularly among young populations who rely heavily on digital platforms for information and guidance.

**Research Question Four:**

To what extent do social media-based health education campaigns improve the knowledge of young adults in Benin Metropolis?

**Table 4.4: Respondents’ Knowledge Improvement Through Social Media Health Education Campaigns**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	<b>Agree (A)</b>	<b>Disagree (D)</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>	<b>mean</b>
Social media health campaigns have increased my understanding of health issues.	165 (41.25%)	170 (42.50%)	45 (11.25%)	20 (5%)	3.20
I have learned new health behaviors from social media health campaigns.	150 (37.50%)	175 (43.75%)	50 (12.50%)	25 (6.25%)	3.12
Social media campaigns have improved my awareness of healthy practices such as hygiene, diet, and exercise	170 (42.50%)	165 (41.25%)	45 (11.25%)	20 (5%)	3.21
Social media has helped me understand the purpose of health education initiatives.	155 (38.75%)	170 (42.50%)	50 (12.50%)	25 (6.25%)	3.14
Health information from social media has broadened my knowledge of local and national health programmes	160 (40%)	165 (41.25%)	50 (12.50%)	25 (6.25%)	3.15

Criterion Mean = 2.50

The results from Table 4.4 show that social media-based health education campaigns significantly improve the knowledge of young adults in Benin Metropolis. All five items recorded mean values ranging from 3.12 to 3.21, which are well above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates a strong positive perception and self-reported increase in knowledge attributed to social media health campaigns.

A large majority of respondents (41.25% SA and 42.50% A) reported that social media campaigns have increased their understanding of health issues. With a mean value of 3.20, this item demonstrates that social media is an effective channel for breaking down complex health topics into simpler, accessible formats. The high number of favourable responses reflects the growing influence of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp as major health information sources among youths.

Similarly, Item 2 shows that 81.25% of respondents (SA + A) learned new health behaviors through social media campaigns. This implies that beyond simply conveying information, social media encourages behavioral adoption, such as improved hygiene, safer sexual practices, better nutrition choices, and increased physical activity. The mean of 3.12 reinforces that campaigns do more than educate — they actively shape health habits.

Item 3, which recorded the highest mean score (3.21), further supports this. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that social media has improved their awareness of practical healthy living practices such as hygiene routines, dietary patterns, and exercise

habits. This suggests that the visual and interactive nature of social media content (short videos, infographics, testimonials, and challenges) plays a crucial role in reinforcing health messages.

In Item 4, respondents indicated that social media has helped them understand the purpose of health education initiatives. With 81.25% agreeing, the result underscores how digital campaigns clarify why specific behaviours are recommended and how they relate to overall well-being. This is important because understanding purpose strengthens long-term retention and increases compliance with health recommendations.

Moreover, Item 5 shows that youths have gained broader knowledge about both local and national health programmes through social media. Whether it is immunization drives, environmental sanitation campaigns, HIV awareness programmes, mental health support services, or public health advisories, social media has become a central tool in connecting young adults to wider health initiatives.

In summary, the findings clearly indicate that social media-based health education campaigns significantly enhance the knowledge of young adults in Benin Metropolis. The consistently high mean values and strong agreement across all items demonstrate that social media is not only accessible but also an effective platform for educating youths, shaping their understanding, and expanding their awareness of health issues and initiatives. These results emphasize the importance of continued investment in digital health communication strategies targeted at young people.

### Research Question Five:

To what extent do social media-based health education campaigns influence the perceptions of young adults towards health promotion?

**Table 4.5: Respondents' Perceptions Influenced by Social Media Health Education Campaigns**

Items	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Disagree (D)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Mean
Social media health campaigns have made me view health promotion as important.	170 (42.50%)	165 (41.25%)	45 (11.25%)	20 (5%)	3.21
I now believe that adopting healthy behaviors is necessary because of social media content.	160 (40%)	170 (42.50%)	50 (12.50%)	20 (5%)	3.17
Social media campaigns have changed the way I perceive health risks.	155 (38.75%)	175 (43.75%)	45 (11.25%)	25 (6.25%)	3.15
I feel more motivated to take health messages seriously due to social media campaigns.	165 (41.25%)	160 (40%)	50 (12.50%)	25 (6.25%)	3.16
Social media health messages have increased my willingness to participate in health promotion activities.	150 (37.50%)	170 (42.50%)	55 (13.75%)	25 (6.25%)	3.11

**Criterion Mean = 2.50**

The findings presented in Table 4.5 indicate that social media-based health education campaigns significantly influence the perceptions of young adults towards health promotion in Benin Metropolis. All items recorded mean scores between 3.11 and 3.21, well above the benchmark mean of 2.50. This demonstrates that respondents

generally perceive health promotion more positively as a result of exposure to social media campaigns.

The first item shows that 83.75% of respondents (SA + A) now view health promotion as important due to social media content. With a mean of 3.21—the highest under this research question—this result suggests that online campaigns successfully reshape young adults’ attitudes toward personal and community health. Many respondents appear to have developed a stronger appreciation for preventive health practices because of the consistent and relatable health messages they encounter online.

Similarly, Item 2 recorded a mean score of 3.17, revealing that social media plays a strong role in convincing young adults that healthy behaviours are not optional but necessary. The wide reach of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and X helps health messages appear repeatedly, reinforcing their relevance and urgency. When young adults encounter these messages frequently, especially when delivered in appealing formats—short videos, infographics, challenges, and testimonies—their perception shifts from indifference to acceptance.

Item 3 demonstrates that social media campaigns influence how young adults perceive health risks. With 82.5% agreeing, the data shows that campaigns have helped them recognize the seriousness of issues such as poor diet, unsafe sex, substance abuse, sedentary lifestyle, and environmental hazards. This shift in perception is crucial because

understanding risks often precedes behaviour change and personal responsibility for health.

Moreover, Item 4 indicates that social media serves as a motivational tool, with 81.25% of respondents acknowledging that they now take health messages more seriously. This heightened seriousness may stem from the relatable manner in which influencers, health professionals, and peer content creators present health information. When youths see people who look like them, speak like them, or live in similar contexts discussing health issues, the messages feel more authentic and compelling.

Finally, Item 5 shows that social media health messages also increase willingness to participate in health promotion activities. Although this item has the lowest mean score among the five (3.11), it still reflects a strong positive trend. Participation may include attending campaigns, sharing posts, joining fitness groups, encouraging friends to adopt healthier behaviours, or engaging in community health initiatives. Even though willingness does not always translate to action, the positive perception indicates that social media plays an important role in fostering a culture of health awareness among young adults.

Overall, the results confirm that social media-based health education campaigns significantly influence how young adults perceive health promotion in Benin Metropolis. By making health content accessible, engaging, and relatable, social media platforms help reshape youths' attitudes, enhance their sense of responsibility, and cultivate more

favourable perceptions towards adopting healthier lifestyles. This underscores the critical role of digital platforms in modern public health promotion and the need for continued investment in targeted, youth-friendly social media campaigns.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of social media-based health education campaigns on health promotion among young adults in Benin Metropolis. The findings from the analysis of data collected from 400 respondents provide important insights into how exposure to social media health campaigns shapes awareness, knowledge, perception and overall health-related behaviour among young adults. This discussion presents the major findings in relation to each research question.

The findings from the first research question revealed that young adults in Benin Metropolis are highly exposed to social media-based health education campaigns. The majority of respondents indicated that they use social media regularly, actively view health promotion content, and frequently encounter sponsored advertisements on health issues. This high level of exposure suggests that social media has become an important and accessible channel for disseminating health information to youths. The platforms commonly used—such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, X (Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube—create multiple daily touchpoints through which health campaigns can easily reach young people. This outcome aligns with research emphasizing the centrality of digital spaces in youth communication and health education, indicating that young adults

increasingly rely on online sources for information, including matters relating to personal and public health.

The findings from the second research question, which measured the level of effectiveness of social media-based health campaigns in promoting health, further demonstrate that such campaigns play a meaningful role in shaping health behaviour among the respondents. The majority agreed that these campaigns make health information more accessible, improve awareness, and motivate action toward healthier living. Respondents indicated that social media helps them develop better health habits, become more conscious of health risks, and engage with content that encourages personal responsibility. Notably, the high mean values across the items show that these campaigns do not only raise awareness but also contribute to behaviour modification. This finding supports earlier studies suggesting that social media is a powerful tool for health promotion because it blends visual content, peer influence, and constant availability, making it easier for users to receive and internalize health messages.

Research question three explored the extent to which social media campaigns influence young adults' understanding and beliefs about health promotion. The results indicated that these campaigns significantly enhance the understanding of key health concepts. Respondents agreed that social media content clarifies misconceptions, provides digestible health information, and makes learning about health issues more engaging. Many also indicated that social media helped them understand the importance

of preventive behaviours such as exercise, hygiene, healthy eating, and regular health checkups. This suggests that health campaigns on digital platforms contribute to strengthening health literacy among young adults. By using relatable language, visuals, storytelling, and real-life testimonials, social media campaigns help translate complex health concepts into easily understood messages. This supports the argument that digital media is not just a source of entertainment but a vital educational resource in modern society.

In addressing the fourth research question, the findings revealed that social media campaigns improve the knowledge level of young adults regarding health promotion. Respondents agreed that they have gained new information about disease prevention, lifestyle choices, public health initiatives, and healthy behaviours through posts, videos, infographics, and live health sessions online. The consistently high mean values across knowledge-related items show that young adults are not passive consumers of online content; rather, they actively learn and acquire relevant health knowledge through their interactions on social media. This outcome supports the increasing global evidence that social media is one of the fastest and most effective means of transmitting health information, particularly to populations that are tech-savvy and constantly connected. It also suggests that health stakeholders in Nigeria can leverage social media more deliberately to drive health education programs among the youth.

The fifth research question sought to determine the extent to which social media health campaigns influence the perceptions of young adults toward health promotion. The findings show that respondents' perceptions were significantly shaped by the content they encounter online. Most respondents indicated that social media campaigns have made them view health promotion more positively and have motivated them to take health matters seriously. Many also reported an increased willingness to engage in health-promoting activities as a result of their exposure to online campaigns. This shift in perception may be linked to the persuasive nature of social media content, which often uses relatable influencers, testimonies, visually appealing messages, and peer-driven trends to shape attitudes. The findings underscore the persuasive power of digital health campaigns in altering not only what young adults know but also how they think and feel about health issues.

Overall, the combined findings across all five research questions reveal a consistent pattern: social media-based health education campaigns are effective, influential, and widely experienced among young adults in Benin Metropolis. Young adults are not only exposed to these campaigns but are also learning from them, adjusting their perceptions, strengthening their understanding, and adopting healthier attitudes as a result. This confirms that social media is a critical tool for contemporary health promotion and can serve as an effective alternative or complement to traditional health education platforms such as schools, community seminars, or mass media.

Additionally, the results suggest that young adults value social media health content because it is easily accessible, interactive, visually engaging, and tailored to their communication style. With the increasing reliance on digital technology and the continuous evolution of platforms, health educators, NGOs, government agencies, and public health practitioners have significant opportunities to scale up their impact using social media. However, the study also implies the need for more structured, credible, and evidence-based health content to ensure that young adults receive accurate and reliable information, avoiding misinformation that occasionally spreads online.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of health education programs utilizing social media in promoting health among young people in Benin City. In particular, it examined the degree of exposure to social media health campaigns, the impact of such campaigns on health knowledge and conduct, the public's perception of the trustworthiness of health information shared through social media, and the difficulties that young people face while interacting with online health content. Data from young people between the ages of 18 and 35 in chosen regions of Benin City were gathered using a quantitative research methodology.

The study's results revealed that:

#### **1. Significant Exposure to Health Campaigns on Social Media:**

The majority of respondents stated that they use sites like Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and Twitter/X every day. Consequently, they often came across health-related material discussing topics like diet, physical activity, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and disease prevention. In urban Nigerian environments, this reinforces social media's continued dominance as a means of communication among young adults.

## **2. Positive Impact on Health Knowledge:**

Social media campaigns, according to a large percentage of the participants, greatly increased their understanding of healthy behaviors. According to respondents, they are now more knowledgeable about preventative health behaviors such as handwashing, immunization, safe sex, nutritious eating, and exercise regimens. This suggests that social media is a useful medium for increasing health knowledge.

## **3. Moderate Impact on Behavioral Modification:**

Although there was a rise in knowledge levels, the actual adoption of behavior was only average. Respondents only sometimes said that they made consistent behavioral changes, such as better eating habits, more exercise, less risky sexual behavior, and compliance with health recommendations. This implies that, even if social media is successful at raising awareness, other community-based and offline actions may be necessary to ensure that behavioral change is sustainable.

## **4. Problems with Trust and Perceived Credibility:**

The degree of trust in health information shared on social media sites varied among respondents. Some people admitted that reliable information was given by reliable organizations like the WHO, NCDC, UNICEF, NGOs, and licensed medical professionals. However, several participants also expressed worries about false information, unverified postings, sensational headlines, and contradictory health

recommendations. Young adults were sometimes less willing to completely follow the health advice they were exposed to because of these credibility problems.

### **5. Challenges Experienced:**

The complete efficacy of health programs utilizing social media was hampered by a number of obstacles. These included misinformation and fake news, restricted digital literacy among some users, inadequate internet access, expensive data costs, information overload, and distractions from entertainment material. These obstacles led to less participation and, at times, uncertainty about proper health behaviors.

### **6. Total Efficiency:**

The study concludes that social media health campaigns are a successful means of promoting health among young adults in Benin City, particularly in the areas of increasing health literacy and awareness. Nonetheless, credibility concerns, user-related obstacles, and inconsistent interaction with health information limit their impact on lasting behavior change.

### **Conclusion**

According to the study, social media is a potent means for young people in Benin City to communicate about health issues. Due to its widespread usage, accessibility, and interactive capabilities, it is a valuable tool for delivering up-to-date health news. Young adults have been shown to be more knowledgeable about health topics through the use of social media health campaigns.

However, effectiveness is not total. Although health literacy has increased, behavior adoption is still modest because behavior change needs reliable sources, trustworthy information, and consistent reinforcement. In addition, misinformation spread on social media sites can erode the credibility of accurate health information and provide a serious threat.

The study's overall conclusion is that social media health campaigns make a positive contribution to health promotion, but that their full potential may only be realized via better strategies, more credible content, and a collaborative approach that includes digital media professionals, social media platform developers, and public health officials.

### **Recommendation**

The following recommendations are made in light of the study's results and conclusion:

#### **1. Improve Collaboration Between Health Organizations and Social Media**

**Networks:** Social media companies should collaborate with health organizations like the Ministry of Health, the NCDC, and NGOs to regulate harmful or misleading information and promote verified health information.

#### **2. Boost the production of compelling, youth-friendly content:**

To keep young people interested, health communication professionals should create visually appealing, engaging, and accessible material, such as infographics, short videos, live question and answer sessions, and campaigns led by influencers.

- 3. Encourage Digital Health Literacy:** Community outreach and training programs should be implemented to assist young adults in recognizing trustworthy sources, validating health information, and avoiding misleading information.
- 4. Make use of peer educators and influencers:** This is because they have a lot of influence and can aid in changing behavior among young adults, youth role models and social media influencers should be included into health initiatives.
- 5. Use Hybrid Health Promotion Techniques:** Offline interventions, such as community workshops, fitness events, health outreach events, and school programmes, should complement social media campaigns to reinforce behavior change.
- 6. Promote Consistent Campaign Assessment:** To improve the effectiveness of their campaigns, public health organizations and campaign planners should regularly evaluate engagement measures, user feedback, behavioral results, and areas for improvement.
- 7. Handle Problems with Cost and Accessibility:** To encourage greater involvement in online health initiatives, strategies that promote inexpensive internet access should be promoted.

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**APPENDIX**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE TOPIC; ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS ON HEALTH**  
**PROMOTION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN BENIN METROPOLIS.**

**DEAR RESPONDENT,**

I am a student of the above named department conducting a research on the topic: Assessing the effectiveness of social media-based health education campaign on health promotion among young adults in Benin Metropolis.

This questionnaire is designed for academic purposes only. All responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please answer honestly.

**Section A: Demographic Information**

(Please tick ✓ where appropriate)

1. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Age: 18-22yrs ( ) 23-27yrs ( ) 28-32yrs ( ) 33 and above ( )
3. Educational level: Primary ( ) Secondary ( ) Tertiary ( )
4. Occupation: Student ( ) Self-employed ( ) Civil servant ( ) Unemployed ( )
5. Marital Status: Single ( ) Married ( ) Widowed ( ) Divorced ( )

**Section B: Exposure to social media health education campaigns**

S/N	Items	Yes	No
1.	Do you use social media platforms regularly?		
2.	Do you use social media enough to stay informed about current health campaigns?		
3.	Have you ever watched or participated in an online health awareness campaign?		
4.	Are you exposed to sponsored health promotion content on social media?		
5.	How frequently do you see health education content on social media?		

**Section C: Knowledge of health education campaigns**

S/N	Items	Yes	No
1.	Have you ever gained new health information from social media health campaigns?		
2.	Are you familiar with the primary objectives of health education initiatives on social media?		
3.	Have you picked up any new health behaviors from social media campaigns?		
4.	Do you know of any health initiatives at the local or national level that are promoted on social media?		
5.	Has your understanding of good habits like hygiene, nutrition, or exercise increased as a result of social media?		

**Section D: Attitude toward social media health education campaigns**

S/N	Items	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)
1.	Social media is a useful platform for disseminating health knowledge.				
2.	After seeing a social media advert on health promotion, I'm inspired to lead a healthy lifestyle.				
3.	Social media health campaigns are more intriguing than those on mainstream media.				
4.	I advise my friends to subscribe to social media accounts that focus on health				
5.	I'm happy to post about health campaigns on social media.				

**Section E: Perception of social media health campaigns**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1.	I believe social media health campaigns provide accurate information		
2.	I believe social media health campaigns helps in raising awareness on critical health issues		
3.	I believe campaigns for social media health have an impact on people's perspectives on leading a healthy lifestyle.		
4.	I believe people's health habits are significantly influenced by social media health initiatives.		
5.	I believe the majority of social media health campaigns are more marketing-oriented than informative.		