

## ENGENDERING HEALTH PROMOTION THROUGH ONLINE PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION: CASE STUDY OF MONKEY POX IN OSUN STATE

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### Abstract

This study investigates the role of online participatory communication in promoting awareness and preventive actions against monkeypox in Osun State, Nigeria. With the increasing reliance on digital platforms for health communication, this research explores how online engagement influences public knowledge and behavior regarding monkeypox. The study adopts a qualitative approach, using focus group discussions with 8 public health officers and nurses from various hospitals in Osun State. The objectives are to examine the extent of online communication's influence on awareness, the impact of demographic and socioeconomic factors on the use of digital platforms, and the relationship between knowledge gained online and subsequent preventive actions. The research is framed by the Health Belief Model (HBM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which help explain how perceptions of disease severity and social influence shape health behaviors. Findings suggest that online platforms significantly contribute to health awareness but face challenges such as digital illiteracy, limited internet access, and misinformation. The study concludes that online participatory communication is a crucial tool for health promotion, recommending increased investment in digital literacy and cross-sector collaboration to maximize its effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Health, Communication, Osun, Awareness, Monkeypox

## INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by unprecedented advancements in technology and globalization, our world is more interconnected than ever before. With this connectivity comes a profound interdependence in every facet of human existence, and perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the realm of public health. In this digital age, the role of online participatory communication has gained increasing importance in health promotion. Online participatory communication refers to interactive platforms where individuals and communities actively engage in discussions and share information related to health topics. This shift is critical in the contemporary landscape where the prevalence of misinformation and the dynamic nature of public health concerns demand more inclusive and accurate health communication strategies (Lupton, 2014). In this dynamic landscape, the importance of health promotion and communication as pivotal instruments for enhancing the quality of life, fostering preventive healthcare, and addressing the myriad challenges in public health has never been more pronounced.

Health promotion, traditionally driven by government agencies, healthcare providers, and NGOs, is now being democratized through online platforms such as social media, blogs, and community forums. These digital spaces allow for real-time interaction, feedback, and community engagement, making health information more accessible and personal (Korda & Itani, 2013). The concept of health promotion through effective online participatory communication represents a multifaceted and multidisciplinary approach that underscores the indispensable role of informed, strategic, and culturally sensitive communication in the promotion of public health initiatives. This approach recognizes that the dissemination of health information is not merely about conveying facts and figures (Malikhao, 2020), but rather, it is a dynamic and interactive process that influences individual behaviours, community norms, and public policies. It encompasses the power to inspire, inform, and ultimately transform individuals and communities, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and motivation required to make informed decisions about their health and well-being (Ugwuegede, Eze and Okoli, 2021). Research has shown that participatory communication can have a profound effect on the adoption of healthy behaviors. For instance, online campaigns promoting smoking cessation, healthy eating, and physical activity have found success in encouraging behavior change, especially when participants actively engage in discussions and contribute their own experiences (Glanz et al., 2008). These platforms also offer a unique opportunity to reach marginalized groups who may lack access to traditional healthcare resources. By engaging in online health

promotion, individuals in remote or underserved areas can gain access to critical health information and support networks (Jones et al., 2012). In this era of digital information proliferation, the role of effective health promotion takes on new dimensions and challenges (Adebayo, 2019). Social media, mobile apps, and online platforms have dramatically expanded the channels through which health information is disseminated, making it imperative to adapt communication strategies to engage, inform, and empower diverse audiences (Ikhiova, 2019). Simultaneously, the prevalence of misinformation and the rapid spread of health-related rumours in the digital age underscore the need for health communication to not only be persuasive but also credible and evidence-based (Gupta, Jai and Yadav, 2021).

However, despite the potential benefits, challenges exist in the use of online participatory communication for health promotion. Misinformation, privacy concerns, and unequal access to digital tools can hinder its effectiveness (Southwell & Thorson, 2015). Therefore, while online participatory communication has the capacity to revolutionize health promotion, it requires careful moderation, fact-checking, and policies that protect user privacy to ensure its full potential is realized. In conclusion, online participatory communication offers an innovative and inclusive approach to health promotion. By involving individuals and communities in the creation and dissemination of health messages, this model aligns with modern health needs, promotes healthier lifestyles, and encourages the democratization of health knowledge. Going forward, understanding the dynamics of these platforms and addressing their limitations will be key to harnessing their full potential for health promotion.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. To what extent does online participatory communication influence awareness of monkeypox in Osun State?
2. How does awareness of monkeypox influence the use of online participatory communication platforms in Osun State?
3. What role do demographic factors and socioeconomic status play in the use of online platforms for the prevention of monkeypox in Osun State?
4. What is the relationship between the knowledge gained from online participatory communication and the actions taken to prevent monkeypox prevalence in Osun State?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Health Promotion and Online Participatory Communication**

Health promotion is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the process of enabling people to increase control over and improve their health (WHO, 1986). Traditional methods of health promotion have relied on physical interventions like community health programs and public health campaigns. However, with the advent of the internet and digital technologies, online participatory communication has emerged as a powerful tool in health promotion (Coiera, 2013).

Online participatory communication enables individuals to access, share, and discuss health information on social platforms, blogs, and health websites. This shift has introduced both opportunities and challenges in the field of health promotion, particularly in developing regions such as Nigeria, where internet penetration is growing (Poushter, 2016). This review will examine current research on online participatory communication in health promotion, emphasizing its effects, the influence of socio-economic and demographic variables, and the correlation between knowledge and preventative measures. According to Tomasone et al. (2020), online participatory communication is an essential tool in health promotion since it enables the rapid broadcast of public health information to wide-ranging audiences. This is demonstrated by recent studies. Its ability to be personalized, interactive, and immediate gives it an advantage over traditional health communication, especially in places with limited resources where face-to-face interaction is difficult. Even with all of its advantages, online participatory communication is not without problems. These include false information, disparities in digital literacy, and unequal access to technology, particularly in rural or underprivileged places. One of the study's scientific objectives is to address these issues.

### **Impact of Online Participatory Communication on Health Awareness**

Studies indicate that online participatory communication has significantly impacted public health knowledge, particularly about new infectious illnesses. For instance, platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been widely used during health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, to disseminate information and engage the public (Basch et al., 2020). For example, internet-based platforms were essential in providing up-to-date information during the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting awareness about vaccination, mask wearing, and social distance (Nguyen et al., 2021). The effectiveness of online platforms in raising awareness has

been linked to their ability to provide real-time updates, foster discussion, and offer interactive content (Liu, Austin, & Jin, 2011). Online platforms have also had an impact on health awareness in Nigeria regarding diseases including HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and Lassa fever. By enabling real-time updates, information sharing, and community conversations, online participatory platforms dramatically raised awareness of Lassa fever, according to research by Ezeah et al. (2021). Even while online participatory communication has been used extensively for significant public health issues, less well-known illnesses like monkey pox have gotten comparatively less attention. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating the influence of online participatory communication on the awareness of monkey pox in Osun State. The inclusion of such diseases in online health promotion platforms is essential for increasing awareness among populations at risk, especially when traditional media coverage is limited (Dunn et al., 2019).

### **Effectiveness of Online Participatory Communication in Encouraging Health Behaviors**

Online participatory communication has potential benefits beyond awareness-raising, such as promoting preventative and healthy habits. Online platforms, which offer instantaneous feedback, peer-to-peer assistance, and individualized information, have been found by Laranjo et al. (2015) to be very helpful in promoting behavioral changes. According to Zhao and Zhang (2017), social media ads have been effective in encouraging individuals to change their diets, stop smoking, and increase their physical activity levels.

Online interactive communication has varied degrees of success in promoting healthy behaviors, nevertheless. While there is a lot of health information available on the internet, several studies contend that action is not always guaranteed (Moorhead et al., 2013). Many people read about health advice without taking any action, engaging in a passive manner. According to Kreps and Neuhauser (2010), in order for online health platforms to be successful, users must be engaged in a way that results in meaningful behavior adjustment. Gamification, community challenges, or real-time tracking of health-related activities could be some examples of how to do this.

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether people in Osun State genuinely take precautions against infection after learning about monkeypox via online participatory communication. Through an examination of this link between information and action, the research will evaluate how well online platforms work to affect public health behavior.

## **Demographic and Socio-Economic Factors in Online Health Promotion**

Demographic and socioeconomic variables are crucial in defining how people obtain and use online health resources. Online health behavior is strongly influenced by age, income, education level, and gender (Wangberg et al., 2008). Whereas older folks might rely more on conventional media or in-person conversations with healthcare experts, younger, better-educated people are more likely to use the Internet as their main source of health information. In Nigeria, socioeconomic disparities create additional barriers to online health promotion (Akinyemi et al., 2021). Factors such as internet access, digital literacy, and the cost of smartphones or data bundles affect the extent to which individuals engage with online health content. Research suggests that urban populations are more likely to have access to digital health resources than rural populations (Akinyemi et al., 2021). This creates an unequal distribution of health knowledge and preventive practices, further exacerbating health inequalities. This study will investigate how demographic factors like age, education, and socio-economic status influence the use of online platforms for monkey pox prevention in Osun State. Understanding these factors will provide insight into the barriers and enablers of digital health promotion, helping to inform policies aimed at making online health resources more accessible to diverse populations.

## **Challenges and Gaps in Current Research**

Even though there is a growing body of research on online participatory communication and health promotion, there are still some gaps in the field. One major issue is the paucity of studies on the sustainability of health behavior changes that are sparked by online platforms. Korda and Itani (2013) point out that while social media campaigns may be effective in the short term, there is little evidence about their long-term effects, particularly in low-resource settings where regular access to digital platforms may be problematic. Additionally, much of the existing research focuses on high-profile diseases like HIV/AIDS, COVID-19, and cancer, often neglecting diseases that receive less public attention, such as monkeypox (Moorhead et al., 2013). The limited scope of research on these less-publicized diseases presents a significant gap, which this study aims to address by focusing on monkeypox in Osun State. Additionally, while socioeconomic and demographic factors have been discussed in relation to the role they play in access to digital health, there has been less research done on how these factors impact the use of online health platforms for particular diseases. This study will fill a knowledge gap by analyzing the ways in which age, gender, and socioeconomic status affect online health promotion in the context of monkeypox.

## **Comparing Health Promotion Efforts: Smallpox vs. Monkeypox**

While smallpox and monkeypox are caused by viruses from the same family (Poxviridae), the public health response to these diseases has evolved. With the successful eradication of smallpox, monkeypox has emerged as a zoonotic disease of concern in parts of Africa, particularly Nigeria (Bunge et al., 2022). Unlike smallpox, which had a globally coordinated eradication campaign, the response to monkeypox has largely been limited to regional efforts, and awareness of the disease has been comparatively low. The WHO's worldwide coordination and the availability of an effective vaccine made it possible for smallpox prevention to focus on universal immunization (Henderson, 1987). The problem with monkeypox is not only that there is no worldwide coordinated campaign in place, but there is also a dearth of general public understanding. Online participatory communication, especially in areas where the disease is emerging like Osun State, has the ability to close this gap by utilizing digital platforms to quickly disseminate information and promote preventive measures. This contrast emphasizes how important communication tactics are for raising public awareness of and preventing sickness. The study will investigate how modern initiatives to promote monkeypox prevention through online participatory communication can learn from the successful smallpox communication campaigns.

## **Monkeypox as a Concept in Relation to Health Promotion and Online Participatory Communication**

Monkeypox, an emerging zoonotic disease, has gained attention as a significant public health concern, particularly with recent outbreaks outside its endemic regions. The disease, caused by the Monkeypox virus (MPXV), is part of the Orthopoxvirus genus, which also includes the virus responsible for smallpox. Although monkeypox has historically been endemic in parts of Central and West Africa, sporadic outbreaks in other regions have raised concerns about its potential for wider transmission, particularly in the context of global travel, urbanization, and climate change (Bunge et al., 2022).

## **Transmission and Symptoms**

Monkeypox is primarily transmitted through contact with infected animals or human-to-human transmission via respiratory droplets, body fluids, and contaminated objects. It typically presents with symptoms similar to smallpox, such as fever, headache, muscle aches, and a characteristic rash that progresses to pustules. While monkeypox is generally less severe than smallpox, it can

cause significant morbidity, especially in populations with compromised immune systems (Reynolds et al., 2019).

Given that the symptoms can be mistaken for other illnesses, raising public awareness is critical for timely diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. This makes the disease an appropriate case for studying the role of online participatory communication in public health promotion. By facilitating rapid dissemination of health information and fostering community engagement, online platforms can play a crucial role in controlling the spread of the disease.

### **Health Communication and Monkeypox Awareness**

The ongoing global health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have shown the value of effective health communication in managing outbreaks of infectious diseases. Similarly, for monkeypox, timely and accurate health information can mitigate the risk of misinformation, which can exacerbate fear and hinder disease control efforts. In this context, online participatory communication offers a powerful tool for:

- Spreading awareness about monkeypox symptoms and prevention measures.
- Engaging the public in conversations about health risks and safe practices.
- Allowing individuals to share their experiences, thereby creating a collective knowledge base.

Participatory communication models encourage not only top-down dissemination of information but also horizontal, peer-to-peer exchanges, which can enhance the credibility and relatability of the message. Platforms like social media, blogs, and discussion forums enable people to engage with health authorities, share prevention strategies, and encourage others to adopt protective behaviors.

### **Challenges in Monkeypox Communication**

Despite the potential of online participatory communication, several challenges exist, particularly when addressing diseases like monkeypox:

1. **Misinformation and Stigmatization:** Just as social media can be a source of reliable information, it can also spread misinformation. In the case of monkeypox, myths about transmission, its association with certain populations, and sensationalized news can lead to stigmatization of affected individuals or communities. This has already been observed in



recent outbreaks, where misinformation led to unnecessary panic and stigma (WHO, 2022).

2. **Digital Health Literacy:** Effectively utilizing online participatory communication for health promotion requires a certain level of digital health literacy. Many populations, particularly in rural or underserved areas, may lack access to the necessary resources or the skills to navigate online health information. As a result, awareness campaigns must consider both access and literacy levels when designing their strategies (Norman & Skinner, 2006).

### **Role of Online Participatory Communication in Monkeypox Prevention**

In the context of monkeypox, online platforms can be harnessed to promote preventive behaviors, such as:

1. **Promoting Vaccination:** Vaccination has been an effective tool in controlling the spread of monkeypox. Online campaigns can be instrumental in raising awareness about vaccine availability, eligibility, and the importance of immunization (Bunge et al., 2022).
2. **Hygiene and Sanitation Practices:** Platforms can disseminate information on hygiene practices that reduce the risk of infection, such as hand washing and avoiding contact with infected animals.
3. **Community Health Initiatives:** Participatory communication fosters community-driven health initiatives where individuals share preventive measures and provide localized updates on outbreaks, which can be especially valuable in areas with limited healthcare infrastructure.

### **Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors in Monkeypox Communication**

Finally, understanding the role of demographic and socioeconomic factors in how individuals engage with health information is vital. Research shows that income, education, and geographic location affect how people access and trust health information online (Viswanath & Kreuter, 2007). For instance:

- Individuals in urban areas with better internet access may be more likely to receive timely information about monkeypox outbreaks and prevention strategies.

- Socioeconomic status can influence health-seeking behavior, with higher-income individuals more likely to take preventive action following online awareness campaigns, whereas lower-income groups may struggle with access to healthcare resources.
- Gender and age also play roles, as certain groups may be more active online, thus more exposed to health promotion messages.

### **Theoretical Frameworks in Online Health Promotion**

Theoretical frameworks are essential for understanding how individuals engage with health information and make decisions based on what they learn. The Health Belief Model (HBM) posits that individuals are more likely to take preventive actions if they perceive a disease as severe and believe that the recommended action will effectively reduce their risk (Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988). In online health promotion, HBM can be applied to explain why certain individuals respond to health messages about diseases like monkeypox and take preventive actions, while others do not. Similarly, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) focuses on intention, perceived control, and social norms as determinants of behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of online participatory communication, TPB can help explain the role of social influence, such as peer pressure or community support in shaping health-related behaviors. Both models are relevant to this study as they offer insights into how online communication platforms influence knowledge acquisition and subsequent actions taken to prevent monkeypox. By applying these theoretical lenses, this research will explore how individuals perceive the severity of monkeypox, their susceptibility to it, and their willingness to engage in preventive actions based on information gained from online platforms.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study adopted a qualitative approach using focus group to elicit information from the participants with a structured interview Guide

#### **Population of the Study:**

The population for this study will consist of 8 public health officers and nurses who are at various hospitals in Osun state because they are familiar with cases of Monkeypox within the state.

The decision to select 8 public health officers and nurses for this study is grounded in both practical and methodological considerations. While the sample size may appear relatively small, it is important to recognize that the participants were chosen specifically due to their expertise and familiarity with monkeypox cases in Osun State.

The principle of data saturation where enough data is collected to ensure no new insights are emerging from additional participants supports the selection of a smaller sample size in qualitative research. In a focused study like this, 8 public health officers and nurses who have hands-on experience with the disease are likely to provide a rich and comprehensive range of insights, allowing for a detailed analysis without the need for a larger sample.

Moreso, The practicalities of conducting the study also influence the sample size. Accessing key personnel in specific hospitals who are directly involved with monkeypox cases in Osun State ensures that the study is manageable and that reliable data can be obtained within a reasonable timeframe. The smaller sample size allows for focused, in-depth interviews or observations, which are more likely to yield detailed and meaningful information compared to a larger, less targeted group.

### Sampling Technique:

A multistage sampling technique will be used. In the first stage, a purposive sampling method will be employed to select public health officers and nurse from various Hospitals . In the second stage. The participant were randomly selected.

### Population Table

S/N	Local Government	State	Participant	Theme
1	Ede North	Osun State	Public health officer	Participant 1
2	Obokun	Osun State	Nurse	Participant 2
3	Ife Central	Osun State	Nurse	Participant3
4	Boruwaduro	Osun State	Public health officer	Participant 4
5	Ayedaade	Osun State	Public health officer	Participant 5
6	Boripe	Osun State	Nurse	Participant 6
7	Osogbo	Osun State	Public health officer	Participant 7
8	Iwo	Osun State	Nurse	Participant 8

## **Results**

*Objective One: Investigate the extent to which online participatory communication influences awareness of monkeypox in Osun State.*

### **Participant 1**

*"Online participatory communication has been instrumental in spreading awareness about monkeypox. Platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook are particularly effective for reaching both urban and rural communities in Osun State. For instance, during outbreaks, health organizations share educational content, which residents forward within their networks. However, misinformation can also spread quickly, requiring constant monitoring and correction."*

### **Participant 2**

*"I think platforms like Instagram and Twitter help raise awareness, especially among younger people. Influencers and advocacy groups use these platforms to share infographics and updates. But honestly, not everyone takes the messages seriously unless they see verified health authorities like WHO or Nigeria CDC posting about it."*

### **Participant 3**

*"In my community, many people rely on Facebook and WhatsApp groups for information. These platforms have increased awareness, but the challenge is that some information is exaggerated or false. For example, there were claims about traditional cures for monkeypox that confused."*

### **Participant 4**

*"I would say online participatory communication plays a significant role in creating initial awareness. For example, news blogs and YouTube channels discuss monkeypox symptoms and preventive measures. However, the depth of engagement varies, as not everyone in Osun State has equal internet access."*

### **Participant 5:**

*"We've leveraged online platforms to organize webinars and Q&A sessions about monkeypox. These platforms allow two-way communication, which is essential for clarifying doubts and addressing myths. I believe these initiatives have significantly enhanced public understanding, especially among educated audiences."*

### **Participant 6**

*"I only know about monkeypox from WhatsApp groups. Sometimes, people share videos or voice notes about how to protect themselves. While this has helped me learn about the disease, I don't always know if the information is accurate because people don't cite their sources."*

### **Participant 7**

*"In schools, we encourage students to share what they learn online about diseases like monkeypox. Social media posts and videos often make the information more relatable for young people. However, many parents in rural areas still prefer traditional sources like radio."*

### **Participant 8**

*"Online communication has raised awareness, but its effectiveness depends on user engagement. Platforms like Telegram allow people to join health-focused groups, which share updates directly. The interactive features, like live chats, make it easier to ask questions, which improves understanding."*

### **Discussions of Findings**

The participants' responses highlight that online participatory communication significantly influences awareness of monkeypox in Osun State, especially among digitally active populations. However, challenges like misinformation, limited internet access, and varying levels of digital literacy need to be addressed to maximize its impact.

**Objective Two: Determine how awareness of monkeypox influences the use of online participatory communication platforms in Osun State.**

### **Participant 1:**

*"Awareness of monkeypox has made me more deliberate in sharing accurate health information on platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook. I also use these platforms to monitor public reactions and address misconceptions. For example, when there was a spike in cases, I posted educational videos and joined health forums to answer questions."*

### **Participant 2:**

*"Honestly, I didn't use platforms like Twitter for health-related topics until I learned about monkeypox. The outbreak made me realize how much health information is available online. I*

*now follow accounts like the Nigeria CDC and join group discussions on Telegram to stay updated."*

**Participant 3:**

*"In my case, awareness of monkeypox pushed me to create a WhatsApp group for sharing verified health updates. Many people in my community rely on me for guidance, so I feel responsible for finding and disseminating the right information. I've also started using Facebook to share government updates."*

**Participant 4:**

*"I used to think online platforms were mainly for chatting, but learning about monkeypox changed that. Now, I watch videos on YouTube about health and prevention. I also share posts with my friends on WhatsApp, especially if they include pictures or audio messages that explain things simply."*

**Participant 5**

*"Awareness of monkeypox has encouraged more people to interact with our campaigns on social media. During the outbreak, we organized live Q&A sessions on Instagram and Facebook, which saw increased engagement. People asked questions about symptoms, treatment, and prevention, showing that awareness drives online participation."*

**Participant 6 :**

*"When monkeypox cases were first reported, I noticed a lot of misinformation spreading. This made me start using platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter to fact-check and share accurate content with my students and their parents. My awareness of the disease motivated me to engage more actively."*

**Participant 7:**

*"Awareness of monkeypox has changed my behavior online. I now join health-related groups on Telegram and Reddit to learn more and discuss prevention measures. It has made me more cautious about verifying information before sharing it with others."*

**Participant 8:**

*"My awareness of monkeypox has influenced the way I report on health issues using social media platforms like Facebook Live and YouTube. I realized that people want timely and*

*accurate information, so I started hosting interactive sessions where viewers can ask questions and share their concerns."*

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study suggest that awareness of monkeypox significantly influences the use of online participatory communication platforms in Osun State. Participants reported increased engagement, deliberate content sharing, and reliance on online spaces for verified health information. However, they also highlighted challenges such as misinformation and access disparities. This implies that while awareness drives initial adoption, long-term usage may depend on consistent education and infrastructure improvements.

**Objective Three:** What are the roles of demographic factors and socioeconomic status in the use of online platforms for the prevention of monkeypox in Osun State

#### **Participant 1:**

*"Demographic factors like education and age play a significant role. Younger people and those with higher education levels are more likely to use online platforms to access health information. For instance, university students in Osun State often rely on Twitter or Telegram, whereas older adults prefer WhatsApp. Socioeconomic status also affects access, as people with lower income may not afford consistent internet access."*

#### **Participant 2**

*"I think age and income are key factors. Most of my friends at the university use Instagram and Twitter to learn about health issues, including monkeypox. However, when I visit my hometown, I notice that many older people don't use these platforms because they lack the skills or devices needed. Data costs also limit usage among people with lower income."*

#### **Participant 3:**

*"In rural areas like mine, education, and income are the biggest barriers. Many residents don't know how to use online platforms effectively. Those with smartphones mostly use them for WhatsApp, but even then, they rely on free messages from others. I often have to explain the importance of checking the source of health information."*

#### **Participant 4**

*"I've noticed that gender also plays a role. Women in the markets, especially those with limited education, rarely use online platforms for health information. Many say they don't have time or that data is too expensive. On the other hand, men who own smartphones are more likely to explore platforms like Facebook."*

#### **Participant 5:**

*"From my experience, location and socioeconomic status are critical. Urban residents tend to have better internet access and more exposure to online health campaigns than rural dwellers. We've tried to bridge this gap by creating content in local languages and encouraging sharing through WhatsApp groups, which are more popular in rural communities."*

#### **Participant 6**

*"Education level is one of the most important factors. My students and their parents are more likely to use online platforms if they have a basic understanding of digital tools. Socioeconomic status also affects how often they can access these platforms, as data costs remain a challenge for many families."*

#### **Participant 7 :**

*"Age and income intersect significantly. Younger professionals like myself use platforms like Twitter and LinkedIn for reliable health information. However, my cousins in rural areas rarely use such platforms because their income limits their ability to buy data or smartphones capable of accessing these platforms effectively."*

#### **Participant 8 :**

*"I've observed that education and income largely determine who uses online platforms for health purposes. Educated and financially stable individuals are more likely to engage with health content on platforms like YouTube or Facebook. In contrast, lower-income groups often rely on second-hand information shared via WhatsApp or SMS, which may not always be accurate."*

#### **Discussion of findings**

The interviews highlight that demographic factors such as age, education, and location, along with socioeconomic status, significantly influence the use of online platforms for monkeypox prevention in Osun State. Younger, educated, and higher-income individuals tend to engage



more with these platforms, while older, less educated, and lower-income populations face barriers such as digital literacy and data costs. Addressing these disparities requires targeted interventions, including localized campaigns, digital literacy training, and affordable internet access.

**Objective Four: Determine the relationship between the knowledge gained from online participatory communication and the actions taken to prevent monkeypox prevalence in Osun State.**

**Participant 1:**

*"Online participatory communication platforms, especially WhatsApp and Facebook, have been effective tools for spreading preventive knowledge. When we share guidelines, such as avoiding contact with infected animals or maintaining good hygiene, people respond by taking practical steps like wearing protective gear in high-risk areas. However, the level of action often depends on how relatable and accessible the information is."*

**Participant 2:**

*"Most of what I know about monkeypox came from Twitter and Instagram posts by health organizations and influencers. These platforms emphasize preventive actions like washing hands regularly and avoiding close contact with infected persons. I started carrying hand sanitizer more often and encouraged my friends to do the same after reading those tips."*

**Participant 3:**

*"In rural communities, people act on information shared via WhatsApp groups. For example, after receiving voice notes about the symptoms of monkeypox and how to avoid it, many started reporting suspicious cases early and avoiding bush meat. The key is that the information must be in simple language and culturally relevant for people to act on it."*

**Participant 4:**

*"I learned from WhatsApp messages and Facebook posts about how monkeypox spreads. I now avoid handling animals like squirrels without gloves, and I clean my workspace more often. Some of my colleagues also started these practices after seeing similar posts, but some still don't trust online information unless it's confirmed by community leaders."*

**Participant 5:**

*"We've noticed that people who actively engage in our live Q&A sessions on Instagram and Facebook take more proactive steps. They ask detailed questions, like how to disinfect surfaces or protect family members. This engagement shows that when people understand the risks and preventive measures, they're more likely to act."*

**Participant 6:**

*"After watching YouTube videos and reading WhatsApp broadcasts about monkeypox, I started teaching my students about its prevention. I noticed that students also discuss these measures with their families, like avoiding close contact with infected people. Knowledge from these platforms seems to create a ripple effect."*

**Participant 7:**

*"I follow health accounts on Twitter, and they've been a primary source of my knowledge about monkeypox. The information prompted me to adopt better hygiene practices, like frequent handwashing and avoiding crowded places during outbreaks. I've also shared these tips in my workplace WhatsApp group, where some colleagues have adopted similar measures."*

**Participant 8:**

*"My role involves sharing verified health information on platforms like Facebook and YouTube. Many viewers comment about how the videos motivate them to take preventive actions, like disinfecting their homes or consulting health professionals at the first sign of symptoms. This indicates that actionable knowledge translates into meaningful prevention efforts."*

***Discussion of Findings***

The interviews reveal a strong relationship between knowledge gained from online participatory communication and the actions taken to prevent monkeypox in Osun State. Participants highlighted that accurate, accessible, and engaging content on platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter motivates individuals to adopt preventive behaviors, such as improved hygiene, early case reporting, and protective measures. However, trust in information and socioeconomic factors like internet access influence the extent to which knowledge translates into action.

## **Conclusion**

The study on Engendering Health Promotion Through Online Participatory Communication: Case Study of Monkeypox in Osun State highlights the transformative role of digital platforms in fostering health awareness and behavioral change. The research emphasizes the effectiveness of participatory communication strategies in engaging communities, disseminating accurate information, and countering misinformation about monkeypox. The findings reveal that online platforms, when strategically utilized, serve as vital tools in health promotion, enabling prompt information sharing, community participation, and policy advocacy. However, challenges such as digital illiteracy, limited internet access, and the proliferation of misinformation remain barriers to achieving optimal impact. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach, combining the efforts of governments, health organizations, and communication experts.

## **Recommendations**

Government should maximize the benefits of online participatory communication, stakeholders should invest in digital literacy initiatives that empower citizens to critically evaluate and use online health information effectively.

Government and Hospital authorities should Partner with social media companies and online forums to prioritize credible health content and minimize the spread of false information.

Localized and Culturally Sensitive Messaging: Health promotion campaigns should be tailored to resonate with the socio-cultural contexts of Osun State, using local languages and culturally relevant imagery.

Continuous assessment of online participatory communication strategies is essential for identifying gaps, understanding audience needs, and improving health outcomes.

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