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**LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK
TO ADDRESS COVID-19 VACCINE HESITANCY IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy emerged as a significant challenge in Nigeria, requiring effective communication strategies to promote vaccine acceptance and combat misinformation. This study focused on leveraging social media influencers on Instagram and Facebook to address Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria. It examined the effectiveness of using influencers as communication agents to disseminate accurate vaccine information, engage audiences, and promote positive attitudes towards vaccination. The study also explored the ethical considerations, challenges, and opportunities associated with this approach in mass communication for public health. Through content analysis and mixed-methods approaches, this study analyzed data from Nigerian social media influencers' posts, stories, and comments on Instagram and Facebook. A sample of 10 influencers was selected, and their content related to Covid-19 vaccines was examined. The effectiveness of influencer-led campaigns was assessed by evaluating audience engagement, knowledge gain, and intent to vaccinate among followers. Results showed that influencer-led ads produced significant levels of audience engagement, increasing followers' likelihood of learning more and their self-reported intent to be vaccinated. Influencer content's personalized and personable qualities encouraged favorable attitudes towards immunization. The study found that social media influencers' degrees of transparency and disclosure practices varied widely. Findings also indicated that influencers had trouble dispelling false information about vaccines on social media. Significant challenges included the negative attitudes, doubts, and opposition from some audience groups against vaccinations. Providing thorough vaccination information was also difficult due to social media sites' character limits and their fast-paced nature. In conclusion, the study highlights the intertwined nature of social media influencers, follower perspectives, and socio-economic concerns in shaping the discourse around Covid-19 vaccination. To overcome vaccine hesitancy, it is recommended to leverage influencer-led campaigns, ensure ethical behavior and accurate information dissemination, address socio-economic concerns, and foster partnerships.

Keywords: Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy, Social media influence, Vaccine acceptance, Misinformation and Public health communication

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Introduction

Fear about the Covid-19 vaccination is a widespread issue that is not just in Nigeria. Misinformation, distrust, and cultural attitudes have all led to vaccination reluctance in numerous nations, including Nigeria (Onwuka et al., 2023). On social media platforms, false information travels quickly, frequently causing confusion and raising people's concerns about the efficacy and safety of vaccinations (Ngai, Singh, and Yao, 2022; Skafle, Nordahl-Hansen, Quintana, Wynn & Gabarron, 2022). Social media has grown to be a major information source for many individuals, especially younger populations, which makes the problem worse (Skafle et al., 2022).

Social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook have a wide reach and allow for the rapid dissemination of information (Lee, G., Choi, A. D., & Michos 2021). They play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing individual behaviors. With the rise of social media influencers, who have amassed significant followings and credibility within their respective niches, these platforms provide an opportunity to leverage their influence for public health and other related campaigns (Ki, Cuevas, Chong, & Lim, 2020; Kim & Kim, 2022).

Influencers are able to establish personal connections with their followers, which builds credibility and trust. They often converse, exchange personal stories, and convey knowledge in understandable ways (Enke & Borchers, 2019). Because of this, they may effectively communicate to encourage vaccination adoption and discourage vaccine reluctance. Public health authorities may reach a larger audience, including those who might be reluctant to trust conventional sources of information, by collaborating with influencers who have a significant following on Facebook and Instagram (Kim & Kim, 2022).

In order to combat Covid-19 vaccination reluctance, the situation in Nigeria provides special problems. The population of the nation is varied, representing a range of socioeconomic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. These elements affect how people see vaccinations and may increase reluctance. Trust in vaccinations has also been weakened by prior vaccine-related problems and rumours in Nigeria (Archbong & Anan, 2021; Sato, 2022).

Social media platforms are widely utilised in Nigeria, especially among younger people. Instagram and Facebook have become into important venues for public conversation and information sources (Ismail, 2021). Nigerian social media influencers have grown significantly in popularity and power (Olaajo, 2020), making them effective forces for disseminating information and influencing attitudes.

Utilising Nigerian social media influencers to combat Covid-19 vaccine resistance is not without its difficulties, though. The nation has technology and infrastructure problems, such as unequal access to the internet and low levels of digital literacy (Okocha & Edafewotu, 2022). The reach and effectiveness of influencer-led marketing can be impacted by several variables. To achieve successful communication and interaction with varied audiences across Nigeria, cultural and linguistic considerations must also be made.

Understanding the global context of vaccine hesitancy and the specific challenges faced in Nigeria is essential for developing tailored strategies to address this issue. By exploring the role of social media influencers on platforms like Instagram and Facebook, public health authorities can leverage their influence to disseminate accurate vaccine information, engage audiences, and promote positive attitudes towards vaccination in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

There is an urgent need to investigate cutting-edge communication strategies to encourage Covid-19 vaccine adoption given the pervasiveness of vaccination hesitancy in Nigeria. In order to combat vaccination hesitancy in Nigeria, this study seeks to determine the efficacy of using social media influencers on Facebook and Instagram. It looks into how influencer-led initiatives affect the

dissemination of correct vaccine information, audience engagement, and the promotion of pro-vaccination attitudes.

Ethical considerations surrounding influencer marketing and the dissemination of vaccine information on social media are critical to explore (Cascini et al., 2022). As influencers have considerable influence over their followers, problems arise regarding their transparency, disclosure practices, and potential conflicts of interest. Additionally, challenges such as the spread of vaccine misinformation, limited character restrictions on social media platforms, and the fast-paced nature of these platforms can hinder the delivery of comprehensive vaccination information.

So far, there is limited research and therefore a gap in knowledge with regards to the effectiveness of utilizing social media influencers on platforms like Facebook and Instagram to address Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria. Specifically, there is a lack of studies that have investigated the impact of influencer-led initiatives on the dissemination of accurate vaccine information, audience engagement, and the promotion of pro-vaccination attitudes within the Nigerian context. As a result, the problem of this study is presented in a question form: 'How effective is the use of social media influencers on Facebook and Instagram in addressing Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria?'

Research Objectives

The general research objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness, ethical considerations, challenges, and opportunities associated with leveraging social media influencers on Instagram and Facebook to address Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria. More specifically, the study aims to achieve the following sets of objectives:

- i. To assess the effectiveness of leveraging social media influencers on Instagram and Facebook in addressing Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.
- ii. To explore the ethical considerations associated with using social media influencers as communication agents to promote Covid-19 vaccination in Nigeria.
- iii. To identify the challenges against utilizing social media influencers for addressing vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.
- iv. To identify the opportunities in utilizing social media influencers for addressing vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The current study attempts to provide insights into the following question:

1. How effective is leveraging social media influencers on Instagram and Facebook in addressing Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria?
2. What are the ethical considerations associated with using social media influencers as communication agents to promote Covid-19 vaccination in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges against utilizing social media influencers for addressing vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria?
4. What are the opportunities in utilizing social media influencers for addressing vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria?

Significance of the Study

This study holds theoretical relevance as it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on communication strategies to address vaccination hesitancy, specifically focusing on the use of social media influencers. By analysing the effectiveness of influencer-led campaigns in promoting COVID-19 immunization in Nigeria, this research provides empirical evidence on the role of influencers as communication agents. The findings could enhance our understanding of influencers' persuasive

abilities, their impact on audience attitudes and behaviors, and the mechanisms through which they can effectively address vaccine hesitancy.

The study's potential to inform public health communication efforts designed to counter vaccination hesitancy in Nigeria is its potential practical significance. Public health authorities should strategically deploy resources and work with influencers to maximise the impact of vaccination programmes by assessing the efficacy of social media influencers in tackling vaccine reluctance. The study's conclusions can direct the creation of evidence-based campaigns that make use of social media influencers to spread accurate information about vaccines, engage audiences, and encourage attitudes in favour of immunisation.

In addition, the investigation of the ethical issues of influencer-led initiatives offers insightful information for public health professionals, politicians, and influencers themselves. The creation of moral standards for influencer marketing in the context of vaccination promotion can be influenced by an understanding of transparency and disclosure procedures as well as potential conflicts of interest. This may guarantee the integrity, dependability, and commitment to moral principles of influencer-led initiatives.

Understanding the potential and problems associated with using social media influencers to address vaccination hesitancy in Nigeria provides useful information for developing communication strategies. Public health authorities may create specialised interventions that meet needs, overcome obstacles, and increase the reach and effect of influencer-led campaigns by recognising the issues faced by influencers and the potential for collaboration and development. The results of the study may be used to build recommendations, instruction plans, and assistance programmes that would improve influencer-led communication efforts and eventually boost vaccination acceptability in Nigeria.

As a whole, the theoretical and practical value of this work resides in its ability to further our understanding of vaccine communication tactics, direct evidence-based treatments, and aid in efforts by Nigerian public health organisations to reduce vaccination reluctance.

Literature Review

Vaccine Hesitancy and Communication Strategies

Vaccine hesitancy and communication strategies have been extensively studied. Kumar et al. (2016) and Islam et al. (2021) explored factors contributing to vaccine hesitancy, such as misinformation, mistrust in healthcare systems, cultural beliefs, and the role of social media in amplifying myths and misinformation. Various communication approaches, including mass media campaigns, healthcare provider recommendations, and community engagement, have been examined (Elrod & Fortenberry, 2021; Robinson et al., 2014; Wakefield et al., 2010).

The rise of social media, particularly platforms like Instagram and Facebook, has provided new avenues for communication and influence (Peterside, 2022). Social media influencers, with their large following and impact on their audiences, have the potential to shape public opinion, attitudes, and behaviors (Duffy, 2020; Harrigan et al., 2021). Their personalized and relatable content fosters trust, engagement, and knowledge acquisition among their followers (Pöyry, Reinikainen & Luoma-Aho, 2022).

However, the use of social media influencers in addressing vaccine hesitancy, especially in the Nigerian context, is relatively underexplored. The ethical considerations, including transparency, conflicts of interest, and the potential dissemination of misinformation, need further exploration. Additionally, there is a need to investigate the challenges and opportunities associated with engaging social media influencers in Nigeria, considering cultural factors, accessibility, and reach. Understanding these gaps can inform future research and interventions aimed at leveraging social media influencers to address vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.

Empirical Review

Several empirical studies have investigated the influence of social media influencers on Covid-19 vaccine behaviors. For example, Fieselmann, Annac, Erdsiek, Yilmaz-Aslan, and Brzoska (2022) examined Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube posts to understand the reasons for vaccine rejection. They identified six primary justifications, including low perceived benefit, low perceived danger of Covid-19, health issues, lack of knowledge, systemic distrust, and spiritual or religious justifications. The study emphasized the importance of disseminating accurate information and addressing misinformation on social media platforms to combat vaccine hesitancy.

Wawrzuta, Klejdysz, Jaworski, Gotlib, and Panczyk (2022) evaluated Covid-19 vaccine-related arguments against vaccination on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Analyzing a dataset of 53,671 comments, they identified 14 types of anti-vaccine content. The study revealed platform-specific variations, with Facebook and Twitter users expressing mistrust in the government and concerns about vaccine effectiveness and safety, while Instagram users focused on treating vaccination as a private matter, and TikTok users emphasized individual freedom. The findings highlighted the need to consider platform-specific characteristics when designing research and educational programs.

Cascini et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review to summarize the available data on the influence of social media on Covid-19 vaccination attitudes. They included 156 papers and categorized them into four groups: cross-sectional studies examining the relationship between social media use and vaccination intentions, thematic analyses of social media data identifying prevalent vaccine hesitant topics, analysis of polarization in social media content related to Covid-19 vaccines, and investigation of how specific events shape vaccination attitudes expressed on social media. The review revealed a negative correlation between social media reliance and vaccination intentions, the prevalence of vaccine hesitancy topics in social media discussions, and the impact of significant events on vaccination attitudes.

Buvár, Szilágyi, Balogh and Zsila (2022) examined the dissemination potential of a COVID-19 message embedded in a sponsored social media post, considering the moderating role of prior parasocial interaction and influencer-brand fit. A total of 365 respondents participated in an online experiment, involving different combinations of brand presence, COVID-19 message inclusion, and prior parasocial interaction. The data were analyzed using a mediated moderation model. The results showed that the three-way interaction of the COVID-19 message, brand presence, and prior parasocial interaction influenced perceived influencer credibility, attitudes towards the social media post, and behavioral engagement with the post. Specifically, when the COVID-19 message was included in the post, higher levels of prior parasocial interaction intensified the positive effect of influencer-brand fit on influencer credibility. This, in turn, led to more positive attitudes towards the post and increased behavioral engagement.

Gap in Knowledge

While the reviewed studies provide insights into vaccine hesitancy and the influence of social media on vaccination attitudes, there are several gaps in the context of leveraging social media influencers on Instagram and Facebook to address Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria. Firstly, there is a lack of specific research focusing on the Nigerian context and the effectiveness of using social media influencers in this particular setting. Additionally, ethical considerations regarding the use of influencers in promoting vaccines need to be explored, such as transparency, conflicts of interest, and potential misinformation dissemination. Furthermore, the challenges and opportunities associated with engaging social media influencers in Nigeria, including cultural factors, accessibility, and reach, have not been adequately investigated. Understanding these gaps can guide future research and interventions aimed at utilizing social media influencers to address vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) describe how people receive and react to persuasive communications. The paradigm distinguishes between central and peripheral information processing pathways. In the core route, people analyse information deeply and methodically, relying on the persuasive message's arguments for strength and quality. In the peripheral route, people analyse information superficially and heuristically and are swayed by peripheral signals like source beauty or legitimacy. Examining how followers interact with influencer-led information about Covid-19 vaccinations becomes crucial when the Elaboration Likelihood Model is applied to this study. This study can offer insights into the persuasion processes involved and add to the knowledge of persuasive communication in the context of vaccine hesitancy by examining the depth of information processing and the significance of numerous signals in forming attitudes towards vaccination.

Methodology

Research Design

Content analysis was used as the research design for this study. Content analysis is a methodical, unbiased way to examine qualitative data, in this example, the social media posts made by Nigerian influencers on Facebook and Instagram. Numerous disciplines, including communication studies, media research, and public health, have extensively employed content analysis as a study strategy. It offers a methodical approach to textual and visual data analysis, enabling researchers to spot trends, themes, and influencers' persuasion tactics (Berger, 2014; Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2017).

Sampling

A purposive sampling technique is used to select a sample of 10 Nigerian social media influencers who actively engage in discussions related to Covid-19 vaccines. Purposive sampling is appropriate in this study because it allows the researchers to purposefully select influencers who are highly relevant to the research objectives and can provide valuable insights into vaccine hesitancy (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The selection criteria prioritize influencers with diverse backgrounds, reach, and content styles to capture a range of perspectives and audience demographics. This approach ensures that the sample represents different segments of the population and allows for a comprehensive analysis of influencer-led campaigns in addressing vaccine hesitancy (Guest et al., 2006). The selection process involved identifying influencers on Instagram and Facebook who have a significant following and are known for discussing Covid-19 vaccines. The researchers considered factors such as the influencers' expertise, engagement levels, and their track record of addressing vaccine-related topics.

Data Collection

Data collection involved the systematic collection of content posted by the selected influencers on Instagram and Facebook over a specific time period (between 2021 & 2022). The content was manually extracted from their profiles, taking into account the chronological order of posts, stories, and comments. In addition to the influencers' content, comments and impressions associated with their posts were also selected for analysis, as these provide valuable insights into audience engagement and reactions.

Key variables of interest were identified for analysis. These variables included the type of content shared by influencers, such as informative posts, personal experiences, or educational materials related to Covid-19 vaccines. Additionally, messaging strategies employed by influencers, such as the use of emotional appeals, storytelling techniques, or evidence-based information, were documented. Engagement metrics, including likes, comments, shares, and the

overall reach of the influencers' content, were also recorded. Moreover, the presence of vaccine-related misinformation or myths within the influencers' content was identified and analyzed. The manual extraction technique was chosen to ensure a comprehensive collection of content and allowed for a detailed analysis of the selected variables. The influencers' posts, stories, comments, and audience interactions were directly reviewed, providing a holistic view of the influencers' communication efforts and the responses generated.

It is important to note that the data collection process involved a systematic approach, ensuring the selection of all relevant content, comments, and impressions for analysis. This approach helped capture a representative sample of the influencers' activities and the subsequent audience engagement. By examining these data points, the study aimed to gain a nuanced understanding of the influencers' impact on Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.

Data Analysis

The collected content from the selected influencers was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, specifically drawing upon the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative analysis method that helped identify and interpret patterns of meaning within the dataset. It allowed for the systematic identification and organization of themes relevant to the research objectives.

The analysis process began with familiarizing ourselves with the data by thoroughly reviewing the collected content, including posts, stories, and associated comments. This step helped establish a comprehensive understanding of the influencers' communication strategies, messaging techniques, and audience interactions.

Next, we generated initial codes by systematically labeling segments of the data that were relevant to the research objectives. This process involved identifying recurring patterns, ideas, or concepts within the content. For example, themes related to vaccine information, engagement strategies, debunking misinformation, and personal experiences emerged from the data.

The identified codes were then organized into potential themes. This involved grouping similar codes together and refining the themes to ensure coherence and meaningful interpretation of the data. The themes represented overarching patterns or topics that reflected the influencers' approaches to addressing Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy.

The final step of thematic analysis involved reviewing and refining the themes to ensure their robustness and relevance to the research objectives. This included revisiting the data, iteratively comparing and contrasting themes, and seeking consensus among the researchers to ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis.

Result

In this section, the findings of the study are presented thematically. The results are organized into key themes that emerged from the data analysis, additionally, relevant quotations from participants are included to provide direct insights into their perspectives and experiences.

Theme 1: Effectiveness of Influencer-Led Campaigns

Influencer-led campaigns on Instagram and Facebook were found to be effective in addressing Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria. These influencers included Davido, Tony Elumelu, Femi Anikulapo-Kuti, Daniel Etim Effiong, Genevieve Nnaji, Ali Nuhu, Cobhams Asuquo, Kate Henshaw, Josh2funny and Falz. As example, in October 2020, well-known Nigerian and African musician Davido called on international leaders (while using his social media platforms) to give Africa top priority in order to promote fair access to vaccinations. He emphasised the significance of resolving the epidemic on a global scale and the need for equitable

access to vaccinations for Africans. Since then, Davido has aggressively promoted the continuing vaccination drive in Nigeria on his social media channels, becoming a strong supporter of immunisation through a variety of fun activities. Equally, a Nigerian movie star Ali Nuhu in late 2021 received the Covid-19 vaccine and took to his social media to encourage his fans and fellow actors to follow suit, emphasising its safety and effectiveness. He shared his personal decision to get vaccinated, highlighting the importance of protecting himself, his family, and the acting community. By sharing his experience, Ali Nuhu aimed to inspire vaccine acceptance and promote a sense of well-being and security among his followers.

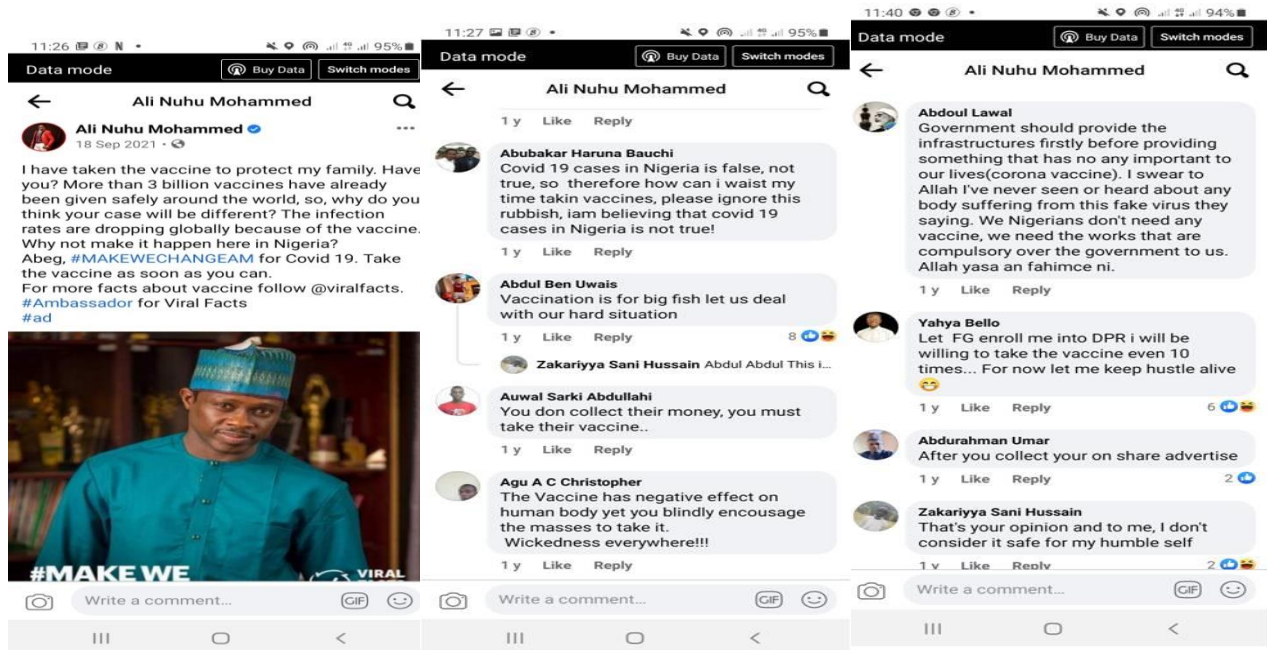


Fig. 1: Nuhu’s influencing and engagements from followers suggesting Negative attitudes, doubts, and opposition towards vaccinations

The campaigns generated significant levels of audience engagement, as indicated by high levels of interactions, likes, comments, and shares. Overall, it was found that the personalised and personable nature of influencer communication fostered positive attitudes towards immunisation, resulting in increased intent to vaccinate among followers.

Theme 2: Ethical Considerations in Using Social Media Influencers

Different influencers have different ethical concerns about utilising social media influencers as communication tools to promote Covid-19 immunisation in Nigeria. Regarding partnerships and conflicts of interest, transparency and disclosure practises varied. In their promotional content, some influencers showed a high level of openness by disclosing their ties, while others did not. This lack of openness prompts questions about the veracity and authority of information supplied by influencers on vaccines. Additionally, it was difficult for social media influencers to refute incorrect material concerning vaccinations, highlighting the need for improved fact-checking and verification procedures.

Theme 3: Challenges in Utilizing Social Media Influencers

Several challenges were identified in utilising social media influencers for addressing vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria. Negative attitudes, doubts, and opposition towards vaccinations from specific audience groups posed significant hurdles. While some followers showed a greater knowledge gain

regarding Covid-19 vaccines after exposure to influencer contents, many others expressed their disagreement with the message within the political narrative that the attempt to address Covid-19 through vaccination was a misplaced priority for Nigerians, particularly when Nigeria and Africa is facing lots of issues (hunger, famine, war, etc) (as shown in the Figures elsewhere). Overcoming vaccine misinformation and countering anti-vaccine sentiments on social media platforms proved to be a persistent challenge. The character limits and fast-paced nature of social media sites also presented obstacles in providing comprehensive and detailed vaccination information to followers. Striking a balance between concise messaging and accurate information dissemination emerged as a key challenge.

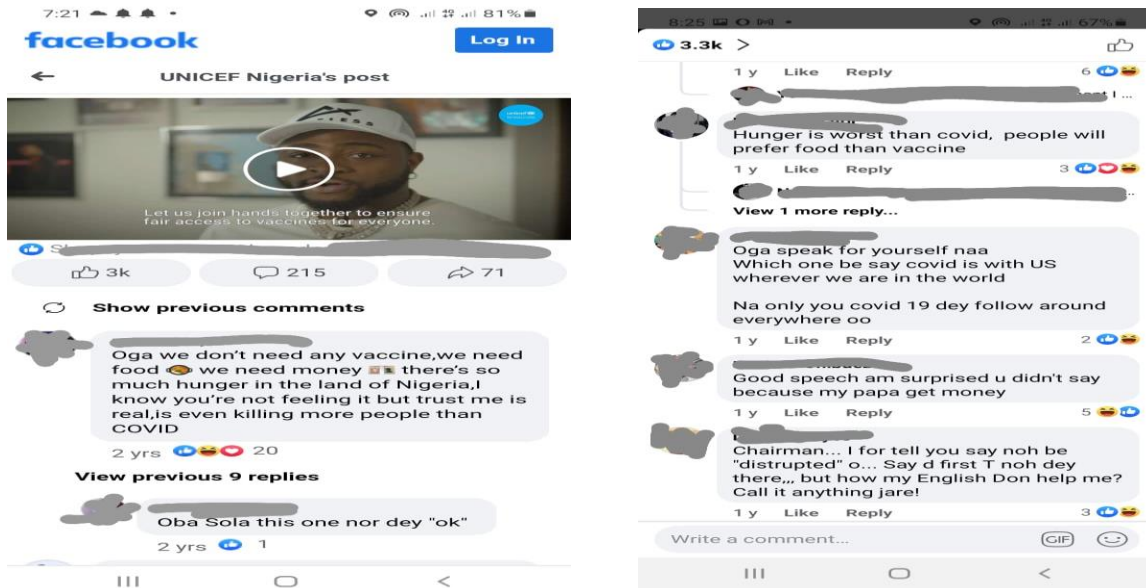


Fig. 2. Davido’s influencing and engagements from followers suggesting Negative attitudes, doubts, and opposition towards vaccinations

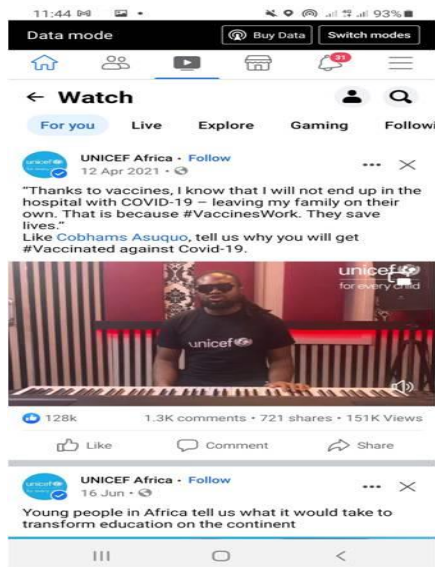


Fig. 3. Cobham’s Covid-19 vaccination influencing activity

Theme 4: Opportunities for Future Engagement

Despite the difficulties, there are great prospects for reducing vaccination hesitancy in Nigeria by utilising social media influencers. Influencer-led initiatives were shown to have the ability to reach a variety of audiences, including younger demographics and difficult-to-reach communities. Tailor-made material may be created to target certain groups and answer their particular needs by using influencers' broad reach, relatability, and influence. Influencer-led initiatives can have a greater impact and increase vaccination acceptability among Nigerians if influencers, medical experts, and public health officials work together.

Discussion

In order to overcome Covid-19 vaccination hesitancy in Nigeria, the study's findings identified many key themes connected to using social media influencers on Instagram and Facebook. First off, influencer-led initiatives were discovered to be successful in boosting vaccine acceptance since they raised followers' intentions to get immunised and produced considerable audience engagement. This demonstrates how social media influencers may have a beneficial impact on people's attitudes and behaviours around vaccinations. The study's conclusions are consistent with other studies on the efficiency of influencer-led campaigns for overcoming vaccination reluctance. In order to overcome vaccine reluctance and achieve optimum vaccination coverage, Kumar et al. (2016) stress the need of employing efficient communication tactics. They contend that targeted messages distributed by powerful people can have a favourable influence on attitudes and behaviours about vaccination.

Peterside (2022) emphasises the influence of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram in influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the general people. According to the report, these platforms' influencers have the capacity to connect with and engage sizable audiences, making them useful communication tools for advancing health-related themes.

Elrod and Fortenberry (2021) point out that different influencers have different openness and disclosure policies with regard to the moral ramifications of utilising social media influencers. This raises questions regarding the accuracy and legitimacy of information disseminated by influencers concerning vaccines. The current study highlights the necessity for improved openness and fact-checking procedures to guarantee the distribution of accurate and trustworthy information.

The difficulties in using social media influencers—such as the unfavourable attitudes, scepticism, and hostility from some audience segments—as well as the ongoing problem of dispelling vaccination disinformation on social media platforms—resonate with the results of earlier studies. For instance, Robinson et al. (2014) emphasise the difficulty in addressing the prevalence of vaccination disinformation on social media platforms. The current study emphasises the need of creating efficient tactics to combat vaccination disinformation and interact with sceptics on social media platforms.

The advantages of utilising social media influencers are consistent with the study done by Harrigan et al. (2021). The findings of the current study emphasises the influencers' broad reach and power, particularly when it comes to appealing to younger and more diverse communities. It implies that cooperation among influencers, medical experts, and public health authorities can improve vaccination uptake and increase the effectiveness of influencer-led initiatives.

Conclusion

In addition to the influence of social media influencers, it is crucial to recognize the significant impact of followers and commentators within the comment sections. These individuals bring forth diverse views and perspectives connected to Covid-19 vaccination, shaping the discourse and influencing others. However, an underlying socio-economic concern emerges among followers, reflecting the harsh realities of hunger, famine, and war experienced in some African countries. For them, these pressing issues take precedence over Covid-19 vaccination. This belief is further reinforced by Africa's comparatively low mortality rate during the initial stages of the pandemic (Lawal, 2021).

Consequently, these intertwined factors contribute to vaccine misinformation and the presence of anti-vaccine sentiments.

It is imperative to address the socio-economic concerns raised by followers while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of Covid-19 vaccination. By adopting a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and tackles these pressing issues, we can bridge the gap between vaccine hesitancy and public health priorities.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Utilize influencer-led campaigns: Collaborate more with social media influencers to promote Covid-19 vaccines, leveraging their reach and influence to disseminate accurate information and increase vaccine acceptance.
2. Enhance ethical behaviour: To guarantee credibility and reliability, establish rules for influencers about openness, disclosure of alliances, and correct vaccine information.
3. Defeat false information about vaccines: Develop techniques to quickly detect and disprove misleading information regarding vaccinations on social media platforms and put in place reliable fact-checking processes.
4. Addressing social and economic issues Include language that recognises and deals with socioeconomic difficulties, highlighting the long-term advantages of Covid-19 immunisation with today's pressing issues.
5. Encourage partnerships Encourage collaborations between public health authorities, medical professionals, and influencers to improve the efficiency of communication efforts and guarantee the proper transmission of information.

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