



## Newspaper Coverage and Port Harcourt Residents' Perception of Monkey Pox Outbreak

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### Abstract

This study examined the newspaper coverage and Port Harcourt residents' perception of Monkey pox outbreak. The objectives were to examine the prominence and frequency given to monkey pox outbreak in *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers*. To ascertain the level of awareness of Port Harcourt residents on monkey pox outbreak messages from newspapers reportage. The study adopted a mixed research method and the population of the study consisted of 732 issues of *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers* published between July 2021 to June 2022. For the audience perception, the population of Port Harcourt according to National Bureau of Statistics in 2022 stood at 3,325,000. The systematic random sampling technique was adopted to choose issues at interval of eight days and 46 samples from each newspaper. The sample size of 384 for the perception study was draw using Krecie and Morgan sample table. The study made use of coding sheet for content analysis and a questionnaire method for survey. Simple percentages and weight means score were for data analysis of content analysis and survey in order to gather data. The results revealed that *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers* gave low prominence to the story of Monkey pox outbreak and confirmation of cases of monkey pox had the highest frequency of reportage. Another finding showed that Port Harcourt residents were much aware of Monkey pox outbreak from newspaper reportage and they perceived the newspaper coverage as adequate and informative. The study recommended that newspaper should always place issues of health in strategic positions because placement is a strong index of prominence which allows for transparent and objective measurement.

**Keywords:** Newspapers, coverage, perception, monkey pox, outbreak.

### Introduction

Monkey pox according to World Health Organization (WHO) (2017) is a rare zoonotic virus transmitted from animals to humans. It is a pox-like disease first identified in 1958 among colonies of monkeys in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Monkey pox was first diagnosed in a 9-year old boy in 1970 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a central African country formerly known as the Zaire Republic. A major outbreak of the disease was subsequently reported in the same country between 1996 and 1997 (Odiboh, et al., 2017). Since then, endemic cases of Monkey pox have been reported in the rainforest regions of the Congo basin

spreading to other African countries including Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Gabon and Sudan (Bunge, et al., 2022). However, the first and the largest human Monkey pox epidemic outside the African continent so far was recorded in the United States of America with a total of 47 reported cases in 2003 (Sklenoska & Ranst, 2018). It is for this leap and spread that Monkey pox has been circumstantially categorized as a public health endemic requiring emergency action (WHO, 2017).

While humanity is still struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic, on May 7, 2022, a case of monkey pox was reported to the World Health Organization. The patient had a history of travel from the UK to Nigeria and then back to the UK (WHO, 2022). Monkey pox is a zoonotic disease commonly occurring in Central and Western Africa. The disease is caused by the monkey pox virus (MPV), a virus belonging to the genus Orthopoxvirus, which also includes variola, the causative agent of smallpox. The symptoms of monkey pox are similar to those of smallpox (Bunge, et al., 2022). Monkey pox virus has two major clades: West African and Congo basin clades. West African clade is less virulent and has a mortality rate of less than one percentage (<1%). The current epidemic is thought to be caused by Western African clade. The disease historically made sporadic endemics mostly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria and was extremely rare outside of Africa (Angelo, et al., 2019). However, in the current epidemic we are facing, there are nearly a hundred confirmed monkey pox cases in the USA, UK, and many other European countries as of May 21, 2022.

Monkey pox symptoms begin with fever, headache, muscle pains, swollen lymph nodes and tiredness. This is then followed with rashes that form blisters and scabs over the body. The incubation period is around ten days but typically two to four weeks before presenting symptoms (*The Guardian*, 2022). The virus is believed to circulate among certain rodents and squirrels. Eating these animals for food could be a source of transmission. Infection is diagnosed through testing a lesion for the virus DNA. The disease can appear similar to chickenpox. The transmission could be via contact with infected animals, humans or contaminated materials. Animal to human transmission occurs through bites, scratch, bodily fluids from an infected person and bush meat preparation and consumption (*The Guardian*, 2022). The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control said that from January 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2022, there have been 141 suspected cases in total and 36 confirmed cases from fifteen (15) states. The states were: Lagos (7), Adamawa (5), Delta (3), Rivers (3), Cross River (2), FCT (2), Kano (2), Bayelsa (2), Edo (2), Imo (2), Plateau (2), Nasarawa (1), Niger (1), Oyo (1) and Ondo (1). One death was recorded in a 40-year-old man with co-morbidity that was receiving immunosuppressive drugs (*Vanguard*, 2022).

Public health officials recognise the essence and existentiality of communication dissemination during disease outbreaks. They understand that prevarication during any outbreak is as dangerous as a frightening disease that spreads like wildfire. Therefore, the World Health Organisation (2018) maintains that "accurate information provided early, often, and in languages and channels that people understand, trust and use, enables individuals to make choices and take actions to protect themselves, their families and communities from threatening health hazards"(p. 9). When diseases break out, the mass media readily serve to mass-mobilise public awareness and enlightenment, which are expected to translate into mass actions against the emergent diseases. The media ought to create composite public forum to sensitise, inform, educate, and mobilise citizens of preventable measures to evade the spread of deadly disease as monkey pox. This requires professional journalistic devotion and humanitarian sensitivity in reporting public health. The need to understand health-conscious human behaviour, perceptions, social norms, emotions and fear of uncertainty in health issues through competent public health newspaper awareness is the focus of this study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Communication plays a crucial role in bringing about change in the society and should not be relegated to the background. It has the capability to change perceptions of the public regarding an issue. Mass media

are some of the channels that can be used to reach out to the public. They are expected to create awareness, enlighten, educate, inform and entertain people. Good health is an important indices for development of a society. It is only healthy members of the society that can afford to make positive contributions towards its growth and development. This indicates to the fact that sustainable development cannot be achieved if there exist health issues affecting the people. Hence, it becomes imperative for various forms of the media to make health issues public. One of the essential services of mass media in critical situations of health challenges like the Monkey pox epidemic, is to keep adequate surveillance of the event by regularly providing the public with updated information (Ogbodo et al., 2020). The media uses various available channels to inform, educate and sensitise the target audiences about the pandemic. Nevertheless, it becomes peremptory for Nigerian press to give significant coverage and interpretation to the various issues arising from the monkey pox outbreak. But, Okonu, et al. (2012, p.23) accused the press of “vulture reporting” in connection with events showing interest mostly when a newsy outbreak happens. Hence, giving the incidence undue publicity and manipulating its reports which in turn tends to bring more confusion than prevention. Based on these, the researcher is interested in providing empirical evidence that will establish the true trend of coverage of monkey pox incidence by Nigerian press with focus on the Nigerian newspapers and Port Harcourt residents' perception. There is no known study in Nigeria that has been able to fill this lacuna. A noble attempt to reduce this academic lapse/knowledge gap and provide empirical data for future researches, suffices for this study.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study was to examine newspaper coverage and Port Harcourt residents' perception of monkey pox outbreak. Specifically, the objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the prominence and frequency given monkey pox outbreak in *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers*;
2. To ascertain the level of awareness of Port Harcourt residents on monkey pox outbreak messages from newspapers reportage; and
3. To establish the perception of Port Harcourt residents on newspaper coverage of monkey pox outbreak.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Mass Media and Health Communication**

The mass media have the ability to effectively communicate health information and effective health information can affect individuals' awareness, attitudes and behaviour change (Uwom & Oloyede, 2014). Diedong (2013) observes that the print media (newspapers) play a central role in promoting the knowledge of people on issues of health as well as shaping our understanding of medicine and science in general. The print media's dissemination of health communication is important in shaping public beliefs and possibly behaviours (Asaolu, et al., 2016). The responsibility of newspapers in health enlightenment lies in their capacity and capability to teach, manipulate, sensitize and mobilize people through information dissemination. Newspaper reports and messages are seen as integral source of public policy depending on selection and presentation of issues (Diedong, 2013). Agbana and Usman (2014) say that the role of the mass media in health reportage would go a long way in putting health issues in the minds and lips of everyone. The media are significant source of health-related information and can shape the way we think about and discuss health issues. Media coverage may influence individual health decision and also help to prevent bad health and lead to changes in public policy and public perception. Uwom and Oloyede (2014) affirm that to be in good health, people need adequate information and knowledge on health matters. They need information on healthy lifestyle practices, preventive health measures, health conditions and diseases, and government health care programmes. The mass media are to help in creating awareness, accelerating information flow and mobilising the populace towards attainment of national goals and aspirations to ensure a total transformation of the society. The responsibility of the mass media is to serve public interest, thus it

behoves the newspapers to have a social conscience, be devoted to public welfare and public service, and be responsible to the problems in the society. Also, the mass media ought to be accountable to their audiences, to whom they owe accurate and timely news reportage, analysis and editorializing (Johnson, et al., 2016).

### **Empirical Review**

Ezegwu, et al., (2018) did a study on newspaper framing on monkey pox outbreak and its influence on media audience perception in South East region of Nigeria. The objective of the study was to examine the genre of the story, prominence, kind of frames, dominant frame and influence of the frame on south east media influence. Three newspapers (*The Guardian, The Punch and Vanguard*) were selected for the study which covered a period of four months. Mixed methods were used in the study (content analysis and survey research method). Results revealed that the newspapers used the straight news format most in reportage and the outbreak was not given prominence in the studied newspapers, especially in terms of placement. Also, the finding showed that the perception of the Southeast residents of the monkey pox outbreak was frightening. The reviewed study and the current study are related as both studies focus on Monkey pox outbreak, but whereas the reviewed study dwelled on the newspaper framing, perception of the media audience on how the monkey pox outbreak of 2017 were framed, the current study focuses on the newspaper coverage, awareness, perception of Port Harcourt residents on the monkey pox outbreak in 2022. The difference is on the scope and in areas of application.

Ben-Enukora, et al., (2020) carried out a survey on analysis of 2017 risk communication on human Monkey pox outbreak in Nigeria's news media. The objective of the study examined the level of prominence accorded to the human Monkey pox epidemic by the selected newspapers. Data for the study were adopted through the census method. Thus, all the editions of the selected newspapers within the study period were searched and reports on the Monkey pox epidemic were content analysed. Findings revealed that Monkey pox reports were placed in less prominent positions as straight news within the selected tabloids. Both reviewed study and the pioneer study are related as both studies focused on human Monkey pox epidemic but the points of divergence are on the scope and methodology.

Okanume (2018) carried out a study on perception of Warri metropolitan residents on online newspaper reportage of the Monkey pox virus vaccination hoax. The objective of the study was to ascertain how residents of Warri metropolis perceive Nigeria online newspapers reports on the Monkey pox virus hoax. The study administered copies of questionnaire for data collections from 400 respondents in Warri metropolis. The study revealed that Nigeria newspapers displayed the principle of prominence in reporting and creating public health awareness of the virus. The difference between the reviewed study and the present study is on the application and methodological approaches.

The current study is equally essential because it demonstrates the link between prominence and frequency of newspaper coverage of monkey pox outbreak in 2022, level of awareness and perception of the monkey pox outbreak. This study will establish how the public perceive the stories of monkey pox outbreak and not how the stories are framed. The level of awareness as a communication element makes the difference from other critics

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Framing Theory**

This theory was propounded by Erving Goffman in 1974. Frame theory is an expansion of the agenda setting theory of the press. The theory, besides accepting that the media focuses attention on certain issues they consider topical and thereby drawing the attention of the masses to it, also put forward that the way, manner and language with which such issue is presented to the masses largely influence the masses

perception of it (Ogbodo, 2018). In essence, framing theory opines that how a matter is presented to the audience influences the choices they make about such a subject matter (Goffman, 1974). The theory proposes that people interpret what is going on around their world through their primary framework. According to Goffman (1974), these primary frames are made up of natural and social frames through which an individual is able to interpret the communication stimuli coming his way on a daily basis. The theory, according to Scheufele (1999), makes four major assumptions: journalists select the topics they will present and still bear the professional responsibility of deciding how the selected topics would be presented to the audience. This means that framing theory believes that the media not only determines the issues audience think about but also influences how the audience think about the issue; and interpret information through their own frame. Audience frames may overlap or contradict the media frames, media frames are reinforced every time they are evoked, whether positively or negatively and frame building is a systematic process that occurs over time. Therefore, frame is simply the way a communication source sees and constructs any piece of communicated information or message with a view to subtly swaying the mind of the audience towards a predetermined sentiment. The theory is relevant to this study because the framing of newspapers on Monkey pox epidemic is a major factor that can either make or mar the individual and collective efforts to contain the virus in Nigeria.

### **Perception Theory**

The proponents of this theory are Berelson and Steiner in 1964. It simply states that individuals have ways of shutting out information that is not in line with what they believe in. Weimann (2010) described perception as the “complex process by which people select, organise, and interpret sensory stimulation into meaningful and coherent picture of the world” (p.21). It simply means that individuals most often process campaign message to suit the worldview they are conversant with. According to him, studies in human perception has shown that peoples values, needs, beliefs and attitudes play important roles in determining how they select stimuli from the enormous campaign content in their environment and how they ascribe meaning to such stimuli from their existing frame of reference. Anaeto et al., (2011) posit that “the theory tells us the process of interpreting message is complex and that these goals may be difficult to achieve” (p.66).

Perception as it were, is subjective, and therefore individualistic in nature. Whether implicitly or explicitly, the individual's ability to ‘choose’ which stimuli he will perceive has been portrayed as a filter through which all forms of communication must pass through (Weimann, 2010). This means that people screen campaign contents in such a way that it makes it easy for them to take what they like and discard what they dislike. For him, an unconscious filtration process therefore comes into operation, when there is need for an individual to choose what to pay attention to out the various information he is exposed. This filtering process is also referred to as the ‘ways’ through which people ‘consume’ contents of the media they have an inkling for and avoid the ones that are contrary.

Anaeto, et al., (2011) opine that perception can be influenced by a myriad of psychological factors including the predispositions of individuals that are based on their past experience, cultural expectations, motivations, moods and attitudes. All these factors are responsible for why people watch or listen or read certain things and ignore others. He further states that the concepts of selective attention, selective exposure, selective perception, and selective retention were formulated to explain how individuals manage and manipulate campaign message available to them. Baran and Davis (2015) refer to them as the selective processes and are “the defense mechanism that we routinely use to protect ourselves (and our egos) from information that would threaten us” (p.106). Every individual would likely go through these processes whenever there is information in the media. They decide if they are interested in the issue being discussed based on their existing belief or standard, if it is, only then will they let their defense mechanisms down. Relating this theory to the study, it is in line with people's perception, once a person has been exposed and given an attention to health messages, the next stage has to do with analysing the message to make sure it

is beneficial in the end. People will interpret the messages in a manner consistent with their preexisting attitudes and beliefs. The attitudes and beliefs of people are what give them the basis for interpreting messages gotten from the newspaper reportage.

### Methodology

This study adopted a mixed research method which combined content analysis and analytical descriptive survey design. Content analysis was used to analyse the manifest content of newspapers while the perception aspect of the study was carried out using descriptive survey design. The population of the study was all the issues of *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers* published between July 2021 to June 2022. The population of the study was therefore, 732. For the audience perception, the population of Port Harcourt according to National Bureau of statistics in 2022 stood at 3,325,000, a 4.86% increase from 2021. *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers* were purposively selected out of the other newspapers in Nigeria based on their number of daily publications, coverage and circulation, scope and readership. The systematic random sampling technique was adopted to choose issues with an interval of eight days. From the result of the constructed calendar forty six samples (46) from each newspaper were gotten, bringing the total sample size to ninety-two issues. The sample for the perception study was drawn using Krecie and Morgan sample table. Based on this, the sample size was 384 and multi-stage sampling techniques was adopted for the survey.

The units of analysis for this study were news stories, editorials, opinion column/articles, and features. Content categories: i. suspected cases, ii. Confirmation of cases iii. Prevention measures iv. Tension/controversy v. recovery of victims, vi. Government responses, vii. Death of victims, viii. Victims treatment, ix. Public social distancing. Category two; the second category refers to the system that the study used for the classification of media contents. Prominence: this has to do with the importance attached to a story and is based on the position a story occupies in a newspaper, the size of the headlines, and the use of pictures among others. Frequency: in the publication or coverage of news stories has to do with how often a particular issue is reported in the media. This study adopted Scott's formula to measure inter-coder reliability and the result was 0.74. The study used a coding sheet for content analysis and a questionnaire for survey with a 4-point likert scale. Simple percentages and weight means score were for data analysis of content analysis and survey in order to gather data.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

In the presentation and analysis of data below, research question one was used for content analysis, while research questions two and three were used for the survey analysis.

**Table 1: Presentation of Stories on Monkey Pox Published in *The Guardian and Vanguard***

Newspapers	July 2021 – December 2021		January 2022 – June 2022		Year total	
	Issues	%	Issues	%	No	%
<i>The Guardian</i>	21	48	16	53	37	50
<i>Vanguard</i>	23	52	14	47	37	50
Total	44	100	30	100	74	100

The table above showed that both newspapers had the same number of issues analysed and the data available were adequate for answering the research questions.

**Research Question One:** What is the prominence and frequency given to Monkey pox outbreak in *The Guardian and Vanguard newspapers*?

**Table 2: Placement of Monkey Pox Stories in *The Guardian Newspaper* between July 2021 to June 2022**

Content Category	Front page	Inside page	Centre spread page	Inside back page	Back page	Total
Suspected cases	0	3	0	0	0	3 (10%)
Confirmation of cases	0	10	0	0	0	1 (3.3%)
Preventive measures	0	5	0	0	0	5 (16.7%)
Tension/controversy	0	1	0	0	0	1 (3.3%)
Recovery of victims	0	2	0	0	0	2 (6.7%)
Government responses	0	1	0	0	0	1 (3.3%)
Death of victim	0	2	0	0	0	1 (3.3%)
Victims treatment	0	1	0	0	0	3 (10%)
Public social distancing	1	4	0	0	0	1 (3.3%)
Total	1 (3.3%)	29 (97%)	0	0	0	30 (100)

Table 2, revealed that *The Guardian newspaper* reported the story of Monkey pox, but none was given prominence and confirmation of cases of Monkey pox had the highest frequency of reportage.

**Table 3: Placement of Monkey Pox Stories in *Vanguard Newspaper* between July 2021 to June 2022**

Content Category	Front page	Inside page	Centre spread page	Inside back page	Back page	Total
Suspected cases	0	10	0	0	0	10 (22.7%)
Confirmation of cases	0	14	1	0	1	16 (36.4%)
Preventive measures	0	5	0	0	0	5 (16.6%)
Tension/controversy	0	1	0	0	0	1 (2.3%)
Recovery of victims	0	5	0	0	0	5 (16.6%)
Government responses	0	1	0	0	0	1 (2.3%)
Death of victim	0	2	0	0	0	2 (11.7%)
Victims treatment	0	1	0	0	0	3 (6.8%)
Public social distancing	0	3	0	0	0	1 (2.3%)
Total	0	42 (95.4%)	1 (2.3%)	0	1 (2.3%)	44 (100%)

Table 3, revealed that *The Guardian newspaper* reported the story of Monkey pox, but none was given prominence and confirmation of cases of Monkey pox had the highest frequency of reportage.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of awareness of Port Harcourt residents on monkey pox outbreak messages from newspapers reportage?

**Table 4: Level of Awareness of Port Harcourt Residents on Monkey Pox messages from Newspapers reportage**

options	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very much aware	109	28%
Much aware	244	64%

Less aware	18	05%
Not aware	11	03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 showed that majority of the Port Harcourt residents were much aware of Monkey pox outbreak from newspapers reportage.

**Research Question Three:** How do Port Harcourt residents' perceive newspaper coverage of monkey pox outbreak?

**Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation displaying the Weighted Mean Score of Port Harcourt Residents Perception of Newspaper Coverage of Monkey Pox Outbreak**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	$\bar{x}$	StD	Remark
1.	The newspaper coverage of Monkey pox outbreak makes me indifference	13 (52)	22 (66)	159 (318)	188 (188)	1.62	0.3	Rejected
2.	I perceive the newspaper coverage of Monkey pox outbreak as informative	152 (608)	189 (567)	36 (72)	5 (5)	3.27	0.72	Accepted
3.	Newspaper coverage of Monkey pox outbreak is adequate	149 (596)	165 (495)	58 (116)	10 (10)	3.19	0.81	Accepted
4.	I understand the newspaper coverage of Monkey pox because of the language used in the reportage	151 (604)	192 (576)	39 (78)	0 (0)	3.29	0.68	Accepted
5.	The newspaper coverage on monkey pox influences my decision on healthy habits	163 (652)	177 (531)	35 (70)	7 (7)	3.29	0.74	Accepted
6.	The newspaper coverage encourages me positively on the Monkey pox protocols	158 (632)	168 (504)	44 (88)	12 (12)	3.24	0.8	Accepted
7.	I now sees newspaper as a viable tool for dissemination of information on Monkey pox issues	149 (596)	182 (546)	51 (102)	0 (0)	3.26	0.7	Accepted
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.02</b>		<b>Accepted</b>

Data in Table 5 above revealed that the responses of the respondents perceived the newspaper coverage on Monkey pox outbreak as adequate, informative and newspaper as a tool for dissemination of health issues such as Monkey pox.

### Discussion of findings

From table 1 to 3, the study revealed that *The Guardian and Vanguard newspaper* reported the story of Monkey pox, but none was given prominence and confirmation of cases of Monkey pox had the highest frequency of reportage. This finding upholds the findings of Ezegwu, et al., (2021) that newspapers used the straight news format most in reportage and the outbreak of Monkey pox was not given prominence in



studied newspapers, especially, in terms of placement. Also, this study refutes the finding of Okanume (2018) that the study revealed that Nigeria newspapers displayed the principle of prominence in reporting and creating public health awareness of the virus. Finally, the framing theory upon which this study is anchored supports the findings of this study. The theory posits that the media focuses attention on certain issues they consider topical and thereby drawing the attention of the masses to it, also put forward that the way, manner and language with which such issue is presented to the masses largely influence the masses perception of it.

Table 4 showed that majority of the Port Harcourt residents were much aware of Monkey pox outbreak from newspapers reportage. The finding lend credence to the finding of Weimann (2010) when described perception as the complex process by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Also, the perception theory that keystones this study supports the finding of the study. This theory proves that people screen campaign contents n such a way that it makes it easy for them to take what they like and discard what they dislike. An unconscious filtration process therefore comes into operation, when there is need for an individual to choose what to pay attention to out the various information he is exposed. This filtering process is also referred to as the 'ways' through which people 'consume' contents of the media they have an inkling for and avoid the ones that are contrary.

Table 5, revealed that the respondents perceived the newspaper coverage on Monkey pox outbreak as adequate, informative and newspaper as a tool for dissemination of health issues such as Monkey pox. This finding refutes the study of Ezegwu, et al., (2018) that the Nigerian newspaper coverage of monkey pox outbreak were frightening by the Southeast residents. The perception theory that underpins this study gives backing to the findings of the study. The theory states that individuals most often process campaign message to suit the worldview they are conversant with. Also, it posits that human perception has shown that peoples' values, needs, beliefs and attitudes play important roles in determining how they select stimuli from the enormous campaign content in their environment and how they ascribe meaning to such stimuli from their existing frame of reference.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that the newspapers under study gave Monkey pox a low prominence in their reportage because most of the stories were tucked in the inside pages of the newspapers. This view revolves around the potency of the newspaper to report Monkey pox outbreak message in prominent positions with a maximum coverage that will expand the knowledge of the public on the issue of Monkey pox. In a pragmatic sense, the newspaper reportage and message are seen as integral source of public policy depending on presentation of issues.

Also, the study established that newspaper has the ability to effectively report health information and effectively affect people's awareness and perception. Hence, the newspaper dissemination of Monkey pox outbreak is important in sharing public beliefs and possibly behaviours. The way issues are presented in the newspaper guide how people perceive the message and how they conceptualise possible solutions to the problems presented or take to suggestions made.

Finally, the media indeed, has enormous power to influence the public and to determine what they think is more important based on the placement, space and size of page given to Monkey pox outbreak issues.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made.

- i. Newspapers should always place issues of health in strategic positions such as front pages, back pages and centre spread because placement is a strong index of prominence which allows for transparent and objective measurement.

- ii. Newspapers should endeavour to report stories of health issues in more details and on sensitizing and educating the public on the necessary steps to take in curbing the virus in order to help the sensitisation to be sparingly covered
- iii. Newspapers should ensure that stories of health issues reflect every aspect of the subject matter in order to influence people in every aspects of their lives.

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