



INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK AND TWITTER IN RAISING AWARENESS FOR ACHIEVING FITNESS/DIET CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG YOUTHS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Every individual has the right to live a healthy and fulfilling life. This study investigated the Influence of Social Media in Raising Awareness for Achieving Fitness/diet consciousness among Youths in Imo State using a survey research design. Anchored on Agenda Setting Theory, the objectives of the study among others were to assess the extent of exposure and awareness among youths in Imo State regarding fitness and diet consciousness information available on Facebook and Twitter, and to examine their influence on the fitness and diet consciousness behaviours and practices of youths in Imo State. With the aid of Wimmer & Dominick online calculator, a sample of 384 was drawn from a population of 1,867,838 residents of Imo State. The sampling technique employed in this study was the multi-stage sampling technique. The researchers found out among others that majority of the respondents were exposed to and aware of fitness and diet consciousness information on Facebook and Twitter (44.5%), which suggest that social media is an integral part of their lives. Also 31.3% actively seek out this information from these platforms; an overwhelming majority of 85.4% interestingly participate in health trends and challenges which show willingness to engage with initiatives aimed at improving fitness/diet consciousness. The researchers therefore recommend among others that, there is need to maintain the integrity and dependability of fitness and diet consciousness information posted on social media given the study respondents' emphasis on authoritative sources.

Keywords: Facebook, Twitter, fitness/diet consciousness, youths, Imo State

Introduction

The landscape of health awareness and promotion is changing dramatically. The omnipresence of social media platforms has undeniably augmented, and in some cases overtaken, traditional routes of information distribution, which were formerly dominated by television broadcasts and print media (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2022). Today, youths all over the world, with particular attention to youths in Imo State, Nigeria are bombarded with health-related information on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok. These platforms, lauded for their ability to distribute information at the speed of light, have grown into testing grounds for health education, advocacy, and awareness campaigns, particularly among young people (Ong &Toh, 2023). The conversation about fitness and diet consciousness has shifted dramatically in recent years. The omnipresence of social media platforms has augmented, and in some cases overtaken, traditional methods of information distribution such as television and print media. As a result, social media has emerged as a popular platform for health teaching, promotion, and awareness initiatives, particularly among young people (Stellefson et al., 2020).

Following this, social media have developed as a strong and widespread instrument in the digital era, characterised by fast technical breakthroughs and interconnection, with the astonishing potential to impact practically every part of our society (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019; Owe et al., 2023). One of the most significant and promising sectors of its numerous far-reaching effects is its influence on fitness and diet consciousness. Individuals, groups, and whole regions have never been more closely connected through virtual networks, and no field has this connectedness been more crucial than in the realm of public health. (Sevelius et al, 2020). Social media serve as a large canvas on which health education, advocacy, and awareness campaigns may be painted with vibrant and dynamic strokes. It is a platform where the voices of health professionals, influencers, and grassroots activists come together to disseminate knowledge and insights that enable kids to make educated decisions about their physical, mental, and emotional health. The impact is visceral in this case, encouraging a sense of shared responsibility for personal and community well-being (Fuentes & Christianson, 2018).

Using social media to raise awareness for achieving fitness and diet consciousness is rooted in the fundamental belief that every individual has the right to lead a healthy, fulfilling life (Iheanacho et al., 2024; Latha et al., 2020). Good health is not merely the absence of illness; it encompasses physical, mental, and social wellbeing. Raising awareness serves as a critical first step in this endeavour. It empowers individuals with knowledge, enabling them to make informed choices about their health, adopt preventive measures, and seek timely healthcare when needed. Furthermore, fostering awareness promotes a culture of health-consciousness that transcends individuals, permeating communities and institutions (Nair & Adetayo, 2019). Ultimately, it paves the way for healthier lifestyles, reduced healthcare burdens, and a brighter, more promising future for the youth of Imo State. By promoting awareness, we not only enhance the quality of life for individuals but also contribute to the resilience and progress of the entire society (Fuentes & Christianson, 2018).

In societies like Imo State, where a burgeoning youth population represents the future, investing in the fitness and diet consciousness of young people is an investment in the overall prosperity and sustainability of the region. Imo State, Nigeria, like many regions across the world, has witnessed a significant surge in social media usage among its youth population. As the largest and most populous state in the south-eastern region of Nigeria, Imo State is home to a vibrant and dynamic youth demographic. These young individuals represent not only the future of the state but also the agents of change who can shape the fitness and diet consciousness landscape for generations to come.

This study delves into the multifaceted realm of social media and its pivotal role in raising awareness and promoting fitness and diet consciousness among the youth population in Imo State. It examines the intricate interplay between the digital age and the pursuit of healthier lives, offering insights into the opportunities and challenges presented by this transformative influence. By exploring the objectives of this study, we aim to shed light on the broader implications of harnessing social media for the betterment of public health and individual wellness in Imo State. This study underscored the need to understand how social media platforms, especially Facebook and Twitter, are shaping the health and wellness landscape among Imo State's youth.

Statement of the Problem

While the potential of social media to disseminate health-related information and promote positive behaviours is evident, several critical issues demand investigation and understanding. Firstly, there is a pressing need to assess the extent to which youths are exposed to and engage with fitness and diet consciousness content on social media platforms. The problem arises in understanding whether the information accessed is accurate, reliable, and culturally appropriate, or if it is inundated with misinformation and sensationalism, potentially leading to confusion and misguided health choices. The influence of social media in motivating and sustaining positive fitness and diet consciousness behaviours

among the youth is an area of concern. It is essential to explore whether the awareness campaigns and interventions conducted through these platforms genuinely drive behaviour change or if they merely result in temporary interest and awareness without translating into meaningful actions or lifestyle adjustments. In the context of Imo State, Nigeria, a region characterised by a rapidly growing youth population and increasing reliance on digital communication channels, the influence of social media in raising awareness for achieving fitness and diet consciousness among youths demands clear understanding. Therefore, in light of these complex challenges, this study seeks to answer the question: to what extent are youths in Imo state exposed to and engage with fitness and diet consciousness content on social media platforms?

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Assess the extent of awareness among youths in Imo State regarding fitness and diet consciousness information available on Facebook and Twitter.
2. Evaluate the level of knowledge acquired by youths in Imo State through their engagement with fitness and diet consciousness information on Facebook and Twitter
3. Explore the perceptions of youths in Imo State towards fitness and diet consciousness messages conveyed through social media.
4. Examine the influence of social media information on fitness and diet consciousness on the behaviours/practices of youths in Imo State.

Review of Related Literature

Definition of Fitness and diet consciousness

It is pointless to emphasize that in the modern and recent times fitness and diet consciousness has become one of the most sought after and highly valued activities which goes ahead to buttress the saying that “health is wealth”. Health is a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being, not only the absence of sickness or disability, the enjoyment of the best possible health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being, regardless of race, religion, and political beliefs, economic or social situation. The health of all people is critical to achieving peace and security, and it is dependent on the complete cooperation of individuals and states (World Health Organization, 2023). It is therefore safe to say that, good health refers to a person's overall state of being, including physical, mental, and social components and individual choices, environmental forces, and social support systems all plays a role in this dynamic journey, thus, striving for excellent health and well-being is not only a personal goal, but it is also a collective commitment to produce healthier, happier, and more successful communities and societies especially among the Nigerian youths of which fitness and diet consciousness information is a beneficial factor. Ijaseun, (2023) states that the significance of good health among youths cannot be underestimated; it not only enhances their individual well-being but also contributes to personal financial stability.

Role of Youths in Fitness and diet consciousness

The youths in any society are like the oxygen of growth and development and therefore their fitness and diet consciousness which amounts to good health should be of utmost importance (Odoh & Eme, 2014). For example, the youths provides the highest labour force for production of goods and services to take effect which cannot be achieved if they are not in good health. The youthful population constitute over 70% of the 2006 census figure (Odoh & Eme, 2014). This demographic they said, is a valuable asset to Nigerian society if they are all in excellent psychological well-being. While it is critical to meet the needs of those who have pre-existing health concerns, it is also critical to focus on fostering fitness and diet consciousness in healthy people. Nigeria may develop a culture of well-being by implementing preventative measures and supporting healthy habits information resulting in a healthier population, particularly among youths.

Social Media and Health Communication

Health communication and information is vital for achieving fitness and diet consciousness. In the changing media and health landscapes, health communication and information requires more ways to disseminate new practices for health advocacy (Aver & Achakpa-Ikyo, 2022). Social media has become an integral part of our lives, shaping the way we communicate, interact, and seek information. With the rise of social media platforms, such as Facebook, what's up, Instagram, Twitter or x app, TikTok, Telegram, Thread, Snap-chat etc. individuals have gained the ability to connect with others globally and access a vast amount of information with just a few clicks. Health communication scholars have recognized the potential of social media as a tool for promoting fitness and diet consciousness among individuals, including Imo state youths. Social media platforms have the ability to reach a wide audience and provide information on various health topics. Studies have explored how social media can be utilized for health purposes, such as providing individuals with information on healthy lifestyle choices and practices, disease causes and prevention, and mental health supports (Ittefaq et al., 2022). For instance, ordinary citizens and medical students have been found to use social media as a source of health information and support, seeking advice and sharing experiences with others facing similar health issues. Furthermore, social media has also shown promise in raising awareness for achieving fitness and diet consciousness among Nigerian youths.

Ghahramani et al. (2022) the researchers conducted a literature analysis on the use of social media in health promotion campaigns with an emphasis on the methods for evaluating the effectiveness of programmes to alter behaviour. This addresses the gap in gathering data to expand health promotion initiatives and bring about long-lasting behavioural change. According to the findings, ten research (55.5%) chose quantitative methods, five studies (27.7%) mixed methods, and three studies (16.6%) employed qualitative methods. Facebook and YouTube were more frequently utilised as intervention tools to alter health-related behaviour. More people utilised Twitter and Instagram to track the trend of changing health habits. Six researches (33.3%) used the Social Cognitive Theory as their framework, whereas one study (5.5%) used the Trans-theoretical Model. Overall, the findings indicate that while social media may have the ability to influence behaviour change, social media health campaigns cannot estimate behavioural change over the long term.

Wakefield et al. (2010) carried out a research on the review of the use of mass media campaigns to change health behaviour. The researchers reviewed on the effects of mass media campaigns on a variety of health-risk behaviours, such as the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, risk factors for heart disease, sex-related behaviours, road safety, cancer screening and prevention, child survival, and organ or blood donation. They came to a conclusion that, large-scale media campaigns can bring about good changes in health-related behaviour or stop negative changes from occurring and evaluated the factors that affect these results, such as the concurrent availability of necessary services and products, the

accessibility of community-based initiatives, and the presence of laws that encourage behaviour change, they also went further to proposed that in order to ensure that the appropriate group is exposed to media messages, there is need for improvement in investing in longer, better-funded campaigns.

In another study on the Evolving role of social media in health promotion by Rajshri & Malloy (2023) the researchers provided reviews on the fact that social media significantly contributes to the dissemination of health-related content. Social media sites frequently communicate three key categories of content: health information, healthy practises, and social support. Social media has the potential to have a positive effect on people's fitness and diet consciousness through facilitating social support, facilitating access to accurate and current health information, and promoting healthy behaviour although the dissemination of false information and the potential for social media to widen already-existing health disparities are two limitations and hazards of social media use that must be understood.

Stellefson et al. (2020) in their study also on Evolving Role of Social Media in Health Promotion: Updated Responsibilities for Health Education Specialists , from the result of their review, sees social media as a translational tool for health promotion by fusing the principles of health education and health communication to look at (1) how social media users access, bargain, and produce health information that is useful and impactful for a variety of audiences, (2) ways to get around obstacles in the way of using social media for health promotion, and (3) best practices for creating and implementing a health promotion programme.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Agenda Setting Theory. Agenda Setting Theory, originally developed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1968, posits that media outlets play a crucial role in determining which issues and topics are prominent in the public's mind by giving them attention, while also influencing how these issues are perceived and prioritized. The majority of agenda-setting research is predicated on two basic premises: (1) the press and media do not accurately reflect reality; rather, they filter and mould it; and (2) the public tends to prioritise certain topics over others due to media focus on those issues. The time range for this phenomenon is one of the most important factors in the idea of mass media setting agendas. Additionally, the capacity for agenda-setting varies between media (University of Twente, 2019). This theory has been widely applied to the field of mass communication and has evolved over time to encompass the role of social media in shaping public discourse. According to Agenda Setting Theory, media can "prime" the audience to think about issues in a particular way by influencing both the prominence of issues and how they are perceived by the audience (Feezell, 2018; Alphonsus et al., 2022). This theory argues that media outlets have the power to set the public agenda by choosing which topics to cover extensively. In the age of social media, these platforms have become significant sources of information for youths. As such, they can shape the health-related issues that capture the attention of Imo State's youth population. Social media platforms often give prominence to specific health campaigns, fitness and diet challenges or trends, or well-being initiatives, thereby placing them on the radar of young individuals.

In the context of this study, Agenda Setting Theory offers valuable insights into how social media, particularly platforms like Twitter and Facebook, influence the awareness and prioritization of fitness and diet consciousness issues among youths in Imo State. Social media, through its real-time and viral nature, can amplify the visibility of fitness and diet consciousness campaigns. For example, a trending health-related hash-tag on Twitter can garner significant attention and raise awareness among Imo State youths. Social media can mobilize youths in Imo State to engage in health-related initiatives, support or advocate for policy changes, or participate in community health activities, all of which contribute to the promotion of fitness and diet consciousness.

In conclusion, Agenda Setting Theory provides a solid framework for understanding how social media platforms influence the creation of awareness and the prioritization of fitness and diet consciousness issues among youths in Imo State.

Methodology

The quantitative research design was adopted for this study. It made use of survey method to seek for audience responses. The population of this study consist of residents of Imo State that are 15 years and above but not more than 34 years. That is, people, both male and female living in Imo State that are between ages 15 and 34 years. A summation of age brackets that make up this population, according to Centre for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), equals 1,867,838. Therefore, the numeric population of this study consist of 1,867,838 residents of Imo state between the ages of 15 to 34 years.

Using the Roger Wimmer Online Sample Size Calculator, the study's population above was calculated at a 95% confidence level and a 5% error level to derive 384 as the sample size for this study.

The sampling technique employed in this study was the multi-stage sampling technique. The study area, Imo State, was first divided into three senatorial constituencies or clusters, each with its unique characteristics. These senatorial districts were identified as Imo North Senatorial District (Okigwe Zone), Imo East Senatorial District (Owerri Zone), and Imo West Senatorial District (Orlu Zone).

In the second stage of the sampling technique, a simple random sampling procedure was utilized to select two Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each of the three senatorial districts. This step aimed to ensure equal representation from all districts and resulted in the selection of the following LGAs: Okigwe and Isiala Mbano from Imo North, Owerri West and Owerri North from Imo East, and Orlu and Ideato South from Imo West.

Moving on to the third stage, the selected LGAs were described as semi-urban areas. From these LGAs, two communities were chosen from each of them, again using a simple random sampling method. The selected local governments and communities included Owerri West (Ihiagwa) and Owerri-North (Amakaohia) representing Imo East senatorial district, Okigwe (Otanzu) and Isiala Mbano (Umuduru) representing Imo North senatorial district, and Orlu (Amaifeke) and Ideato South (Umuezealla-Ogboko) representing Imo West senatorial district.

In the fourth stage of the sampling technique, non-proportionate quota sampling was employed to distribute 64 copies of the questionnaire across the selected six communities. This distribution represented the determined sample size for the study, ensuring that each community had an adequate representation in the sample.

Finally, in the fifth stage, the researchers purposively administered the research instrument to respondents. Before distributing the questionnaires, the respondents were first asked if they use Facebook or Twitter very often, ensuring that the study focused on individuals with relevant exposure to the subject matter.

A closed-ended questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was reviewed for content validity by experts to ensure that it adequately measured the variables used. A test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Five (5) youths of Imo State within the age brackets as used in this study were given the instrument to fill. After a week, the instrument was re-administered on the same set of respondents. The two responses were calculated using Cronbach Alpha; it resulted in coefficient of 0.89 and was considered reliable. Data collected from the field were analysed in simple frequency and percentage tables.

Discussion of Findings

With reference to the demographics of the respondents, majority at 72.4% are females with males comprising the rest (27.6%). The age distribution is concentrated in the 20-24 (32.0%) and 25-29 (26.0%) age groups, which align with active social media user demographics. Regarding educational qualifications, OND/HND holders (38.3%) predominate, followed by BSC (17.2%) and SSCE (17.2%) recipients. These demographics imply that the study can explore how social media influences health awareness among Imo State's youth, considering the variations in gender, age, and educational backgrounds, which may all play significant roles in shaping perceptions and behaviours related to health awareness through social media.

On extent of awareness regarding fitness and diet consciousness information among youths in Imo State, data collected provided valuable insights into the behaviours and preferences of youths in Imo State regarding fitness and diet consciousness information on social media platforms. Notably, a considerable portion of these youths engage with Facebook and Twitter, with 44.5% using these platforms "Sometimes," suggesting that social media is an integral part of their lives. Furthermore, 31.2% claim to be "Very aware" of fitness and diet consciousness information on social media, and 31.3% actively seek out this information, showcasing a proactive approach to accessing health-related content. Importantly, trusted sources for fitness and diet consciousness information predominantly include "Official health organizations" (41.6%), underlining the significance of authoritative sources. This data suggests that social media platforms are influential in disseminating health information, and understanding these behaviours and preferences can inform strategies to promote fitness and diet consciousness among Imo State's youth through social media channels, emphasizing the importance of reliable sources and proactive engagement.

The findings demonstrate that social media platforms, especially Facebook and Twitter, are influential in disseminating fitness and diet consciousness information among youths in Imo State. The data illustrates that these youths actively engage with these platforms, are aware of health-related content, and proactively seek out information. This information can be valuable for health promotion efforts targeting this demographic through social media channels. The emphasis on authoritative sources highlights the importance of ensuring the credibility and reliability of health-related content shared on these platforms. Overall, the findings suggest that social media is a promising avenue for promoting fitness and diet consciousness among Imo State's youth, provided that it leverages their active engagement and prioritizes credible sources of information. This study emphasizes the active engagement of youths with fitness and diet consciousness content on social media platforms and the importance of credible sources provide compelling support for the Agenda Setting Theory. They illustrate how these platforms effectively shape the youth's agenda, setting fitness and diet consciousness as important issues in their lives, while underscoring the role of gate keeping in influencing their information consumption and perception of these topics.

Coming to Level of knowledge of fitness and diet consciousness information, it was revealed that a significant majority, 89.9%, reported having knowledge and understanding of fitness and diet consciousness information, while a minority of 10.1% indicated otherwise. When it comes to the perceived reliability of fitness and diet consciousness information on social media, there is a range of responses, with a considerable proportion finding the information moderately reliable (39.6%), and smaller segments expressing varying degrees of trust, including very reliable (16.7%) and extremely reliable (6.3%). At the same time, some respondents expressed doubts about the reliability, with 4.2% stating it is "Not reliable at all." Regarding the frequency of accessing fitness and diet consciousness information, a majority, 54.2%, reported accessing it "Sometimes," indicating that social media platforms are used periodically for health-related content. The data highlights the prevalence of knowledge about fitness and diet consciousness information among respondents and their mixed perceptions of its reliability, shedding light on the dynamics of information consumption and trust in this context.

The finding indicates that the majority of youths in Imo State have acquired knowledge and understanding of fitness and diet consciousness information through their engagement with social media especially Facebook and Twitter. This underscores the effectiveness of social media as a means of disseminating health-related content. However, the mixed perceptions of information reliability indicate the importance of promoting credible sources and critical thinking among this demographic. Additionally, the periodic use of social media for health information suggests that youths in Imo State access health-related content from various sources, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to health education and awareness beyond social media alone. However, Ghahramani et al. (2022) in their research findings on the literature analysis on the use of social media in health promotion campaigns with an emphasis on the methods for evaluating the effectiveness of programmes to alter behaviour indicates that while social media may have the ability to influence behaviour change, social media health campaigns cannot estimate behavioural change over the long term.

Furthermore, this study sought to gauge the respondents perceptions of fitness and diet consciousness messages, and it was gathered that a significant majority of respondents, 56.3%, expressed a positive perception of these messages, indicating a generally favourable attitude towards fitness and diet consciousness content. Importantly, no respondents reported a negative perception. However, there is also a substantial portion of respondents, 43.7%, who maintain a neutral stance, suggesting a range of attitudes within the population. When it comes to engagement with fitness and diet consciousness messages, nearly 40% of respondents reported actively engaging with such content. However, a noteworthy 45.8% indicated that they were "Not sure," signifying a level of uncertainty or ambivalence about their involvement with these messages. The effectiveness of fitness and diet consciousness messages is another interesting aspect. Approximately 45.1% of respondents believe these messages are effective, while only 5.7% expressed scepticism by answering "No." The remaining responses fell into "Maybe" and "Sometimes," underlining the mixed perceptions regarding the impact of these messages. Lastly, the likelihood of taking action based on fitness and diet consciousness messages varies among the respondents. Over two-thirds indicated they are either "Very likely" or "Likely" to take action, reflecting a significant willingness to change their behaviour based on these messages.

The finding shows a generally positive perception and favourable attitudes towards fitness and diet consciousness messages on social media among youths in Imo state. While there is a range of attitudes, the absence of negative perceptions is noteworthy. The data also underscores the need for clarity and effectiveness in health messaging strategies. The high willingness to take action based on these messages suggests that they hold promise for promoting positive fitness and diet consciousness behaviours among the youth in Imo State, provided they are crafted and delivered effectively. This resonates with what Rajshri & Malloy, (2023) said in their findings that, social media has the potential to have a positive effect on people's fitness and diet consciousness through facilitating social support, facilitating access to accurate and current health information, and promoting healthy behaviour although the dissemination of false information and the potential for social media to widen already-existing health disparities are two limitations and hazards of social media use that must be understood.

Also, findings on Influence of social media health information on fitness and diet consciousness behaviours and practices explains important insights into the attitudes and preferences of the surveyed respondents concerning fitness and diet consciousness programs. An overwhelming majority, 85.4%, expressed a strong interest in participating in such programs, signalling a significant willingness to engage with initiatives aimed at improving health and overall well-being. When respondents were asked about their preferences for specific programs, a range of choices emerged, with the most popular ones being "Overall lifestyle change" (35.4%), "Healthy recipe" (25%), and "Exercise routine" (22.9%). These selections underline a strong emphasis on holistic lifestyle improvements, nutrition, and physical activity. The fact that 8.3% expressed interest in programs related to "Quitting a habit" highlights the importance of behaviour change for health enhancement. Additionally, the interest in "Improved sleep habits" (2.1%) and "Others" (6.3%) shows a diverse range of fitness and diet consciousness interests within the surveyed

population. Furthermore, more than half (54.2%) are willing to pay for these programs, indicating a personal commitment to investing in their health. However, it's noteworthy that 45.8% were not willing to pay, underscoring the importance of addressing affordability and accessibility to ensure inclusivity in these programs. These findings provide valuable guidance for designing and promoting fitness and diet consciousness initiatives tailored to the diverse preferences and financial considerations of the surveyed population. That is, the findings reveal a high level of interest and willingness among youths in Imo State to engage with fitness and diet consciousness programmes facilitated through social media. Their preferences centres on holistic lifestyle improvements, nutrition, and physical activity, with an acknowledgment of the significance of behaviour change. An overwhelming majority, 85.4%, expressed a strong interest in participating in such programs, signalling a significant willingness to engage with initiatives aimed at improving health and overall well-being, but the presence of respondents not willing to participate highlights the importance of addressing affordability and accessibility. These findings offer valuable guidance for designing and promoting fitness and diet consciousness initiatives tailored to the diverse preferences and financial considerations of the surveyed population.

Conclusion

This research therefore shades light on the profound impact of social media in raising awareness for achieving fitness and diet consciousness among the youth in Imo State. The findings underscore the pivotal role that platforms like Facebook and Twitter play in actively disseminating health-related information, with a significant proportion of youths engaging, seeking, and embracing this content. The study's results not only highlight the youth's positive perception and attitudes towards fitness and diet consciousness messages but also emphasize the importance of credible sources in this digital discourse. These findings collectively reveal the immense potential of social media as a promising avenue for promoting fitness and diet consciousness among Imo State's youth, provided that it leverages their active engagement and upholds the integrity of information sources.

According to the Agenda Setting Theory, the youth effectively shape their health discourse by participating in these online discussions and aligning it with the issues covered by the media. Their openness to participating in complete health initiatives and a variety of content preferences further demonstrate their openness to social media's potential to advance health behaviours. Finally, this study highlights the transformative potential of social media in promoting beneficial fitness and diet consciousness behaviours among young people in Imo State, laying the groundwork for effective and personalised health promotion initiatives in the modern times.

Recommendations

The researchers therefore recommend that:

1. There is need to maintain the integrity and dependability of fitness and diet consciousness information posted on social media given the study respondents' emphasis on authoritative sources. Public health agencies and health organisations should use these platforms aggressively to spread factual and scientifically sound content.
2. It is crucial to invest in the development of clear and effective health messaging strategies in order to capitalize on the overwhelmingly positive perception of fitness and diet consciousness messages on social media among youths in Imo State

3. Health promotion efforts on social media should include continuous monitoring and evaluation to assess the effectiveness of content and messaging because of the dynamic nature of social media platforms and the preferences and engagement patterns of youths may evolve over time.

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Influence of Facebook and Twitter in Raising Awareness for Achieving Fitness/Diet Consciousness among Youths in Imo State

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