

The Role of Social Media in Enlightening Nursing Mothers on the Practise of Exclusive Breast Feeding in Ekiti State

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Abstract

The globalization of technology which gave rise to Information Communication Technology (ICT) has changed the information seeking behaviour of human which has shifted attention from broadcast and print media to Social Media. Exclusive Breast Feeding (EBF) practice over the years has been a global discussion and its significance has been passed across to Nursing Mothers through several sources i.e. Open campaigns, Hospital Seminars, Television, Radio etc. and the efforts have not yielded desirable results. Little attention has been paid to the role of Social media hence the need to examine the role of Social Media in enlightening Nursing Mothers on the practise of Exclusive Breast Feeding in Ekiti State. The study adopted a Survey design with a study population of 952 Nursing Mothers. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for selecting 380 respondents as sample for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Data collected were analysed with statistics. Findings revealed that Nursing Mothers in Ekiti State are enlightened about EBF through several Social Media sources but Facebook and WhatsApp appear to be the most prevalent Social Media source of enlightenment on EBF practice, a large percentage of Nursing Mothers were encouraged to breastfeed their infants through the enlightenment obtained from Social Media, age and employment are the most prevalent demographic factors that influence the enlightenment on EBF and some of the challenges in the use of Social Media is the fact that it consumes time, poor network signal, high cost of data subscription etc. The study concluded that Facebook and WhatsApp are the most effective Social Media source on EBF. Therefore, the study recommended that stakeholders should push their adverts and campaigns on Facebook and WhatsApp more frequently

Keywords: Social media • Enlightening • Exclusive breast feeding • Nursing mothers

Introduction

To ensure sustainable development world over, effective communication is highly essential to drive the policies, plans and strategies of government, stakeholders and individuals. The media are a powerful tool that drive the all-round development of these key players. Mass media refers to diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience through a medium like broadcast media (television, radio), print media (newspaper, magazines etc.), digital media and the internet media (email, social media sites). The mass media through its campaigns and advertisements package programmes enhance the development and realization of set goals by government, organizations, individuals etc. Though it goes beyond

packaging the message but to ensure the message meets its target audience and its purpose well achieved. Many developmental campaigns have been carried out in Nigeria, which has touched every aspect of human endeavor ranging from politics, sports, education, economics, technology, health etc. One of such campaigns is on Exclusive breast feeding [1].

According to Nigeria's Federal Ministry of Health, exclusive breastfeeding refers to feeding babies with breast milk only, without giving them water, mixtures from local herbs or other forms of liquid and food. Drops such as vitamins, minerals supplements or medicines can however be given when they are prescribed. Knowing that breastfeeding has a lot of benefits for both the mother and the child especially in the improvement of cognitive ability, intelligence

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and good academic achievement, breastfeeding should be encouraged. Experience has shown that breast milk promotes sensory and cognitive development, and protects the infant against infectious and chronic diseases [2].

Nigeria demographic health survey evaluated Nigeria to have the highest number of stunted children in the continent and ranks third globally with more than ten million stunted children. Although breastfeeding is a widespread practice in Nigeria but there is a significant variation in rates of breastfeeding and complementary feeding. NDHS said the main indicator for malnutrition is stunting which is prevalent in South West, Nigeria with infant mortality rate of 40%. Ekiti State is a South Western State in Nigeria with an account of stunting and infant mortality rate of 17%, in children less than five years. This means that some percentage of children under five years have symptoms of malnourishment in Ekiti State. Exclusive breastfeeding practice in the state is below expectation which necessitate the current approach to EBF promotion in EKSUTH and FEITH being a Breastfeeding Friendly Hospital has at best only increased awareness through Anti-natal seminars, health talks, immunization orientations etc. [3].

The advent of technology which gave rise to Information Communication Technology (ICT) has shifted attention from broadcast and print media to social media. Social media has been defined as websites or web-based applications which allow profile creation, visibility of relationships between users, functionality for sharing, group and individual conversation. Social media over the years has provided open space for the exercise of the right to receive and impart information which has redefines public discourse and information sharing process. In Nigeria, before social media came about, there was a deep reliance by the people and the democracy on the conventional media i.e. print and broadcast media, for the dissemination of credible news information. The emergence of Social Media (SM) and social networking services to communicate in real-time and on-the-go by patients and health professionals was recognized as an important public health development. Emphasized that many people turn to social media for information than any other medium. Based on the above assertion it's believed that social media will be a better tool of enlightenment, hence the need to investigate the role of social media in enlightening nursing mothers on the practice of exclusive breast feeding in Ekiti State [4].

Objectives of the study

- Identify the Social Media sources from which nursing mothers get information about the practice of EBF
- Investigate the extent to which Social Media enlightens nursing mothers on the practice of EBF
- Assess the challenges faced by nursing mothers in Ekiti State in the usage of Social Media as an enlightenment platform for EBF
- What are the social media sources from which nursing mothers get information on the practice of exclusive breastfeeding?
- To what extent do social media enlighten nursing mothers on the practice of exclusive breast feeding in Ekiti State?What are the challenges faced by nursing mothers in Ekiti state on the usage of social media as an enlightenment platform for exclusive breast feeding?

Scope of the study

This study was delimited to the effectiveness of social media to enlighten nursing mothers in Ekiti State on the practice of exclusive breastfeeding. The study covered nursing mothers in Ekiti State using the two Teaching Hospitals in the State, which are Ekiti State Teaching Hospital (EKSUTH) and Federal Teaching Hospital Ido (FETHI), these two hospitals was selected because they have heavy traffic of nursing mothers [5].

Methodology

The research employed a survey design, this enabled the researcher collect and analyse data generated from a sample of the population. The researcher investigated nursing mothers that are currently attending post-natal care and immunisation as at April 2021 in Ekiti State with a total number seven hundred and fifty-six (756). The breakdown of the figure is as follows.

| S/N | Names of Teaching hospitals | Teaching Population |
|-------|--|-------------------------|
| 1 | Ekiti State Teaching Hospital (EKSUTH) | University Hospital 436 |
| 2 | Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido (FETHI) | 320 |
| TOTAL | | 756 |

Source: Antenatal and immunization register

Table 1: Breakdown of the population.

This study adopted a Total enumeration technique to sample all nursing mothers attending post-natal and immunisation at EKSUTH and FETHI. Copies of questionnaire were administered by the researcher to nursing mothers during their post-natal and immunisations talk over a period of one month. The researcher made use of trained assistants who are literate in the Yoruba language for interpretation. A total of 520 copies of the questionnaire was found useful, two hundred and forty-two (316) nursing mothers in EKSUTH and One hundred and thirty- eight (204) nursing mothers in FETHI. Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results and Discussion

Data was collected from 520 nursing mothers in Ekiti State. The respondents were drawn from Ekiti State Teaching Hospital (EKSUTH) and Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido (FETHI). The data are **presented in tables and figure below:** What are the social media sources from which nursing mothers get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding?

Table 2: Social Media sources.

| S. No | Social media sources | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | Std. dev |
|-------|----------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|------|----------|
| 1 | I get information on | 289 55.8% | 137 026.3% | 69 013.2% | 25 004.87% | 2.9 | 0.42 |

| 2 | I get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding through Facebook | 163 031.3% | 165 031.7% | 137 026.3% | 55 010.6% | 2.77 | 0.614 |
|---|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------|-------|
| 3 | I get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding through WhatsApp | 120 023.1% | 92 017.7% | 177 034.0% | 131 025.2% | 2.55 | 0.719 |
| 4 | I get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding through Instagram | 120 023.0% | 51 009.8% | 240 046.2% | 109 021% | 2.46 | 0.84 |
| 5 | I get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding through Twitter | 100 019.2% | 78 015% | 220 042.3% | 122 023.5% | 2.19 | 0.702 |
| 6 | I get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding through blogs | 251 48.3% | 72 13.8% | 180 34.6% | 17 03.3% | 2.66 | 0.695 |
| | I get information on the practice of exclusive breast feeding through interpersonal communication etc. | | | | | | |

Table 2: Social Media sources.

The result in Table 1 shows that 82.11% got information on the practise of exclusive breast feeding on Facebook. Also, 63% got information from WhatsApp. The table further shows that 41% got information from Instagram, 32.8% and 34.2% of the respondents got information via Twitter and blogs respectively. 6% of the respondents get information from other sources. Findings revealed that nursing mothers in Ekiti State are enlightened about exclusive breast feeding through several social media. Facebook and What Sapp appear to be

the most prevalent social media source of enlightenment on EBF practice. This finding supports the assertion of that social media platforms could be considered a pillar of support for breastfeeding mothers, especially Facebook. In a similar study by Paula titled media in women's infant feeding decisions, Facebook was found to be a major source of information for parents regarding exclusive breastfeeding. to what extent do social media enlighten nursing mothers on the practise of exclusive breast feeding in Ekiti state?

| | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | Std. dev |
|---|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|------|----------|
| From what I hear about exclusive breastfeeding on Social Media, I am encouraged to breastfeed my infant | 215 0.41.4% | 155 0.29.8% | 80 0.15.4% | 70 0.13.5% | 3.73 | 0.614 |
| I learnt that exclusive breast milk should be given during first 6 months through social media | 271 0.52.1% | 91 0.17.5% | 90 0.17.3% | 68 0.13.%1 | 3.77 | 0.599 |
| I learnt that breast feeding should be continued up to 2 years through social media | 248 0.47.7% | 122 0.23.5% | 84 0.16.2% | 66 0.12.7% | 3.55 | 0.702 |

Table 3: The extent to which social media enlighten nursing mothers.

Table 2 above shows that 71.2% are encouraged to breastfeed their infants through the enlightenment obtained on social media, while 70% of the respondents learnt through social media that exclusive breast milk should be given during the first 6 months. In the same vein, 71.2%learnt through social media that breast feeding should continue up to 2 years. The finding revealed that a large percentage of nursing mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants through the enlightenment gotten on social media. More so, nursing mothers have gained understanding from campaigns on social media that only breast milk should be given to infants during the first Six months while breast milk alongside other supplements are encouraged up to 2 years. Corroborated this assertion that social

media enlighten and influence the attitude of nursing mothers on the practise of exclusive breast feeding. What are the challenges faced by nursing mothers in Ekiti state on the usage of social media as an enlightenment platform for exclusive breast feeding? (Table 4).

| Challenges | SA | A | D | SD |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| The cost of internet data subscription to social media is too high | 167 0.32.1% | 130 25% | 115 22.1% | 108 20.8% |
| Too much time needed to stay on social media | 159 0.30.6% | 235 45.2% | 91 17.5% | 35 06.7% |
| Poor network signal | 189 0.36.4% | 150 28.9% | 105 20.2% | 76 14.6% |
| Cost of getting a smart phone is high | 64 0.12.3% | 95 18.3% | 205 39.4% | 156 30% |
| Language of EBF campaigns are not domesticated | 200 0.38.5% | 81 15.6% | 171 32.9% | 68 13% |
| Too many irrelevant information on social media | 248 0.47.7% | 102 19.6% | 109 21% | 61 117% |

Table 4: Challenges of nursing mothers on social media access to information on exclusive breast feeding.

The data collected in the table above indicates that 57.1% considered internet subscription as high, 75.8% perceived social media usage to be time consuming while 65.3% respondent agreed that poor network signal is a challenge. Also, 54.1% agreed that the language of EBF campaigns are not familiar and 67.3% of women agreed that there is too many information on social media. The findings indicate that the greatest challenge to the use of social media is that its time consuming, while poor network signal is also a key challenge. Affirmed this.

Conclusion

The role of media is to project policies, plans and strategies of government, stakeholders and individuals to create informed

decisions for the public. It is no longer news that the advent of ICT has changed the information seeking behaviour of humans as they now turn to social media for information. Social media has been found to be a strong predictor on enlightenment of nursing mothers on exclusive breastfeeding. World over, more people are turning to social media for information than any other medium of information. This study has established that Facebook and WhatsApp were recognized as a well-known social media source, making it obvious that Facebook and WhatsApp has proven to be very informative, in matters concerning exclusive breastfeeding. It also enlightened nursing mothers on the practice and benefits of EBF. The study suggests that stakeholders should push their adverts and campaigns more on Facebook, and WhatsApp.

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