

AUDIENCE PERCEPTION OF APROKO DOCTOR'S HEALTH CONTENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

This study assesses the audience's perception of Aproko Doctor's humorous health content on social media. The theoretical underpinnings for this study was elaboration likelihood model and source credibility theory. A mixed-methods approach was employed, specifically a multi-method quantitative research design, to comprehensively analyse both the content and the audience's perceptions. 82 health communication contents out of 107 posts on *Instagram* from July 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024, qualified for the content analysis; 393 survey responses from active social media users in Nigeria were analysed and presented using frequency and percentage tables and charts. The findings revealed that the audience positively perceives humour in health communication because it aids understanding and recall without downplaying the significance of health matters. Most respondents (73.3%) agreed, (26.7%) were neutral, and none disagreed that humour positively influences their willingness to follow the health advice given. This study concludes that humour in health communication boosts awareness and engagement; it is perceived positively by the audience and does not alter the credibility of the health message within the Nigerian context. However, source credibility is paramount, and the use of humour for impactful health communication should be controlled to prevent misuse. This study suggests that incorporating humour in health communication within the Nigerian context, following the audience's perception, is a worthwhile strategy for improved health awareness and behavioural transformation.

Keywords: Health Communication, Humour, Audience Perception, Social Media, Aproko Doctor.

INTRODUCTION

Health-related information is typically viewed as threatening one's well-being, and health-promoting messages are commonly confronted with resistance (Van't Riet & Ruiter, 2013). Opposed to formal, professional, and usually serious tones traditionally utilised in health communication, humour tends to reduce the importance placed on dangers, encouraging discussion of practical solutions and boosting the perceived effectiveness of the reaction. Humour in social interaction can evoke positive impressions for improved interpersonal interactions, aid coping while reducing conflict, and promote healthy outcomes. Inadequately conveyed and badly timed humour can harm personal perceptions and relationships (Booth-Butterfield & Wanzer, 2018, as quoted in Odunlami et al., 2020). According to Oyama and Opara (2017), health communication entails examining communication strategies aimed at informing and influencing decisions that enhance an individual's health and the community. It is aimed at changing the behaviours of individuals and communities regarding health, healthcare delivery, and policies. Health communication is a dynamic and ever-evolving discipline that involves using various platforms to convey health information enjoyably. It is a social marketing strategy aimed promoting

health acceptance and altering the behaviour of individuals (Airhihenbuwa, 2000, as cited in Oyama and Opara, 2017).

Social media have emerged as essential health communication channels in the digital age, providing healthcare professionals innovative ways to communicate with the public via health information dissemination (Moorhead et al., 2013). Researchers and health professionals have recently paid significant attention to social media and healthcare. Photo/video sharing apps like *Instagram*, *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Whatsapp*, and *Twitter* ('X') offer health professionals the ideal platform for communicating with individuals of diverse backgrounds with contents that comes in various forms and incorporates humour. *Instagram* has emerged as a particularly effective medium for visual health content due to its visual storytelling and engagement capacity, particularly among younger demographics, boasting over 1.2 billion global active users monthly in 2021 (Hu et al., 2014; Dixon, 2023).

Some healthcare communicators have adopted humour as one of the innovative techniques to convey health information. Prominent Nigerian health influencer, Dr Chinonso Fidelis Egemba 'Aproko Doctor' (Iheka, 2024, as cited in Njoku et al., 2024), a Nigerian medical doctor and social media influencer is a valuable role model in this regard. He is well-known for his health posts on various social media platforms, particularly on *Instagram*, inculcating humour as a technique to convey essential health information. Aproko Doctor's contents often features interesting videos and infographics that educate the audience on various health issues by integrating humour, local cultural references, and medical knowledge. This is a notable example of humour incorporated health communication within the Nigerian context.

Existing studies have identified the potential benefits of the use of humour in health communication, addressing the audience's perspective in countries other than Nigeria. Therefore, there are relatively limited studies on humour in health communication in Nigeria, although influencers like Aproko Doctor leads the way in its relevance. There is a need to assess audience perception of humour in health communication on social media, particularly within the Nigerian context, to identify its viability to improve success in the Nigerian health sector. Aproko Doctor's health communication provides an avenue to thoroughly investigate the audience's mental processes when health communication is humour-based. This study delves into examining audience's perception of Aproko Doctor's humorous health content on social media to fill this gap.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Optimising health communication strategies that successfully balance factual information dissemination and audience engagement requires careful consideration of audience perception. Onuora et al. (2020) contributed to understanding how audience perception of public health issues influences the effectiveness of the health message. It was indicated that audience perception of the realism of COVID-19 contributed significantly to the efficacy of *YouTube* animations on health behaviour.

While humour has been indicated to positively affect engagement and knowledge retention in health communication (Meyer, 2000; Nabi et al., 2007), the integration of humour in health communication requires careful examination, as the audience that reacts negatively to humour might overlook the intended health message or choose not to participate. Aproko Doctor's humour-based approach to health communication is intended to make health information interesting and beneficial for everyone. This approach poses vital questions regarding the significance, audience engagement and perception of humour in health communication. However, a review of literature indicates that there is relatively sparse empirical research on how audiences perceive and interact with humorous health contents on social media within the Nigerian context. Hence, this study investigates how audiences perceive the appropriateness and effectiveness of humour in Aproko Doctor's health contents, specifically, how it influences the reception and comprehension of the health information provided.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to;

1. investigate audience engagement (likes, comments, shares) with Aproko Doctor's humorous health contents compared to non-humorous health contents,
2. examine the audience's perception of Aproko Doctor's humour incorporated health messages,

3. assess the audience's perceived credibility of Aproko Doctor's health messages due to the incorporation of humour.

Literature Review

Health Communication in the Digital Age

Health communication is a field of study and practice that is interdisciplinary, it is based on evidence, strategic, theoretical, and creative communication to corroborate policies, practices and actions geared towards enhanced the health and well-being of individuals and groups (Society for Health Communication, 2017). How individuals connect and interact have been transformed by social media, via the emergence of social media platforms such as *Instagram*, *Twitter*('X'), *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, and *YouTube*, among others. It has become essential parts of the health communication scene, enabling individuals and organisations to interact and communicate to a broad audience on health-related information and learn about new procedures and treatments. Healthcare practitioners can interact with patients and the public, share health information, as well as encourage healthy behaviours through social media (Corona et al., 2023; Roy & Malloy, 2023). It also aids awareness of health promotions and policies, encouraging behavioural change, involving communities, obtaining data, encouraging advocacy and action (Stellefson et al., 2020).

Social media content creators, also called 'influencers', are emerging as a potent voice in public debate on various topics, including health-related attitudes and behaviours around the world (Michel et al., 2024). Freberg et al. (2011) expressed that social media influencers have become key players in disseminating health information, leveraging their large followings and personal brands to reach audiences that might not engage with traditional health communication channels. Hence, social media influencers that specialise in topics connected to health, with the unique role of circulating health messages while arousing emotion and influencing behaviour are health influencers (Albalawi & Sixsmith, 2017, as cited in Zou et al., 2020). Kostygina et al. (2020) indicates that the use of robust content design techniques, like memes and branded shareable message elements, along with competent content creators or social influencers, aids the spread of the brand and or message of health campaigns, to foster audience engagement and support. This suggests that social media influencers play a key role in facilitating change in health behaviours, primarily when humour, personal anecdotes, and relatable language are used to convey the message.

Some social media influencers are experts in their chosen niche, utilising social media to share knowledge and expertise. Several social media influencers focused on health and well-being promotion exist in Nigeria. Some prominent health influencers include Debbo Africa (a healthcare company), Aproko Doctor (Egemba Chinonso Fidelis), flying Doctor (Dr. Ola Brown), Dr Kelechi Okoro (Healthertainer), Dr Ify Aniebo RV, Nurudeen Shotayo (First Doctor), among others (Iheka, 2024 as cited in Njoku et al., 2024). Chinonso Fidelis Egemba, 'Aproko Doctor', a Nigerian medical doctor and social media influencer known educational and entertaining health posts on various social media platforms, particularly on *Instagram*, where he shares health tips, raises awareness about health issues, and advocate healthy behaviour, stands out for his style of incorporating humour in the dissemination of health information (Onuh, 2024).

Notably, health influencers on social media play a prominent role in successfully enlightening the public on health concerns (Ralman et al., 2023). However, it is apt to note that an influencers' credibility and relatability can impact the effectiveness of health communication significantly.

Humour in Health Communication

Humour has been widely recognised as a powerful communication tool, reducing resistance, dissolving barriers, and improving message retention (Nabi et al., 2007). A foundational research on the use of humour in medical teaching by Ziegler (1998) expressed that humour is an effective tool for minimising anxiety, arousing interest, enhancing message recall, and boosting overall communication effectiveness. Integrating humour into health communication has gained popularity as a strategy for improving audience interaction and information retention. Humour in health communication can help make complex or sensitive topics more straightforward and fascinating (Miller et al., 2021). Meyer (2000) asserts that humour is the most effective strategy for getting the audience to focus on the issue

and retain knowledge. Hendriks and Janssen (2017) indicated in their study that humour enhances the persuasiveness of health messages. Although the impact of humour was observed to differ based on gender. The low-threat humorous messages were preferred by women, as opposed to men who are more in line with the message's aims when it included humour and a substantial threat.

Ogba (2021) examined the use of humour (Comedy Skits) by some well-known Nigerian comedians to sensitise Nigerians about COVID-19 and the necessity to adhere to safety protocols. A persuasion theory, Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), served as the theoretical underpinning. The study ascertained that positive responses to humour incorporated messages connotes the effectiveness of comedy skits as a tool for sensitisation. Adding that, increasing socio-economic breakdown and inefficiency of the COVID-19 pandemic management, fostered a lack of confidence in government policies by most Nigerians; hence, the strategies employed to sensitise the citizens on safety protocols by comedians were more effective than the government's endeavour due to the creativity embedded.

Blanc and Brigaud (2013), in their study on the effect of humour in a particular type of print advertisement, preventive health adverts focused on alcohol, tobacco, and obesity, humorous health advertisements was shown to attract longer attention spans, are more persuasive, and its messages were easily identifiable than non-humorous ones. Similarly, according to a study by Brigaud et al. (2021) on the effect of humour on attention devoted to health messages by collecting eye-tracking measures. The result revealed that humorous messages were frequently scanned and revisited than non-humorous messages. This affirms that humour can draw people's attention to preventive health messages. These results point to the potential benefits of humour in preventive health messaging.

Suka and Shimazaki (2023) conducted a study on how effective humour appeal in health promotion materials is, printable posters were compared on themes like cancer screening, advance care planning, registration of donor, quitting smoking, and physical exercise. Advance care planning posters with hilarious pictures scored much higher than posters without humour. However, this was different for the cases of cancer screening, registration of donor, quitting smoking, and physical exercise. The overall result of the study revealed that message acceptance and persuasiveness increase using humour appeal to address health issues that lacks wide understanding and is prone to resistance. This suggests that humour appeal is a compelling hook to draw the audience's attention to health information they are unaware of or uninterested in, thereby making headway in public health communication.

McCreaddie and Payne (2012) explored patients' perspectives on using humour in health care, focusing on the use of humour between patients and clinical nurse specialists. The study found that patients view humour usage as essential to their interactions with medical professionals and other patients, as it influences how they manage and express their identities under difficulties or crises. Patients appreciated humour as generally endearing and perceived it to be present in complex and subtle ways. They want medical personnel (healthcare staff) to initiate and reciprocate humour (to make jokes and laugh).

Existing studies have authenticated the relevance of humour in health communication and the benefits of social media in dissemination of health messages. This suggests that humour in health communication can be an effective tool, especially on social media. However, studies examining how the audience perceives humorous health information specific to the African audience, particularly Nigeria, are relatively limited.

Theoretical Framework

This study is hinged on Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Source Credibility Theory.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), propounded by Richard Petty and John Cacioppo in 1986, further refined by O'Keefe (2013), 'provides a fairly comprehensive framework for organising, categorising, and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communications' (Petty & Cacioppo 1986, p .3, as cited in Ogba, 2021). It is relevant because it explains how humour affects the audience's cognitive processing of health messages. According to Griffin et al. (2015, p. 198), ELM has been the leading persuasion and attitude change theory. It explains the thinking process when individuals attempt to change others' behaviour through communication. Although not specific to humour, this model helps understand how humour affects

central and peripheral route processing of health information. It explains how individuals process messages through the central route, where information is actively processed. The individual evaluates it in a rational manner (deep processing based on message content) or the peripheral route, where the receiver does not actively process the information in a cognitive sense but instead relies on peripheral/superficial cues like humour or attractiveness, the style of the message, the credibility of the source, mood, and so on (Roseberry & Vicker, 2009).

ELM offers a detailed approach to examining the audience's perception of Aproko Doctor's humorous health communication. It suggests that humour may serve as a peripheral cue for processing Aproko Doctor's health message, potentially leading to increased engagement (i.e., when humour is used, the audience would likely engage through the peripheral route, leading to higher engagement without deep processing). While some may follow the central route, others drawn by the content's entertaining nature might initially process the message peripherally, with humour serving as an external cue or persuasive element. Comparing humorous and non-humorous contents using this model helps assess how engagement varies with message characteristics, whether humour leads to more superficial engagement or deeper cognitive processing of the health information. The model also supports and explains how humour in health communication can be seen as an external cue in processing health communication messages, thereby increasing acceptance and engagement and reducing resistance to health communication contents on social media. It generally helps examine whether humour in Aproko Doctor's health contents triggers peripheral processing, which makes the message more appealing and memorable, or it leads to central processing, where the audience focuses more on the health information.

Source Credibility Theory

Source Credibility Theory, postulated by Hovland, Janis, and Kelly in 1953, upholds that the believability of information or effectiveness of a message by the receiver is highly determined by the perceived credibility of the information source (communicator), positively influenced by three identified factors or elements used by the audience to evaluate credibility: perceived expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness of the source. The "more credible a source is, the more likely receivers will believe the information" (Onyechi, 2023, p. 80). According to Lowry et al. (2015), as cited in Igben and Oronukpo (2022), the perceived credibility of the source of communication greatly influences the credibility of all communication, regardless of the format. The effect of perceived expertise and trustworthiness on information processing and attitude formation was described by Hovland et al. (Lamm et al., 2016, as cited in Onyechi, 2023). Hence, this study focuses on expertise and trustworthiness in determining the audience's perceived credibility of Aproko Doctor's health messages due to the incorporation of humour.

Source Credibility Theory is applicable to particularly examine the audience's perceived credibility of Aproko Doctor's humorous health messages, to ascertain the credibility of social media influencers like Aproko Doctor as it relates to the audience's choice to believe and adhere to the humour-incorporated health information shared. This indicates that the more credible a social media influencer is perceived, the more likely the audience will engage, trust and adhere to the health information provided, regardless of the incorporation of humour. Despite the inculcation of humour by Aproko Doctor, if perceived as an expert in the medical profession, the audience is more likely to trust his health information. Although some audiences may perceive humour as making health messages more relatable or downplaying serious health topics, the humour approach may enhance or diminish trust.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mixed-methods approach, specifically a multi-method quantitative research design to comprehensively analyse both the contents and the audience's perceptions; content analysis of Aproko Doctor's posts and audience survey of active social media users was employed. Content analysis was used to systematically review and code engagement metrics, such as likes, comments, and shares on Aproko Doctor's health posts, using a coding guide and coding sheet. On the other hand, an online survey was used to assess the audience's perception of humour in Aproko Doctor's health contents, using Google Forms (questionnaire) for data collection. The questionnaire included questions

on audience demographics, familiarity with Aproko Doctor, audience perceptions of humour in health communication, its credibility and effectiveness in conveying health messages and appropriateness for serious health topics.

The population includes all health communication posts by Aproko Doctor, which are duplicated *Instagram, Twitter ('X'), YouTube, Facebook, and Whatsapp*, and all active users of the social media platforms in Nigeria, with an estimated population of approximately 36.75 million as of January 2024 (DataReportal, 2024). The primary data source is limited to Aproko Doctor's *Instagram* account, with over 1.8 million followers and 1644 posts as of October 25, 2024. 107 posts from July 1, 2024, to September 30, 2024 (third quarter of the year) were selected using purposive sampling to capture recent contents, 82 posts qualified for analysis as health communication posts. For the survey, a sample size of 400 respondents determined by Yamane's (1967) formula with a 95% confidence level and maximum variability ($p=0.5$); that is, a 5% margin of error was assessed via an online questionnaire circulated via social media platforms, using both available sampling (accessible and willing participants) and snowball sampling (existing participants sharing the survey with their social media networks) techniques. A total of 393 responses were obtained, providing a sufficient sample size for statistical analysis. Data collected using both methods were statistically analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using frequency and percentage tables and charts to illustrate the results clearly.

RESULTS

Content Analysis Results

Table 1: Content Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Content-Type		
Video	77	93.9
Image	5	6.1
Presence of Humour		
Humorous	54	65.9
Non-Humorous	28	34.1
Health Topics		
Nutrition/Diet	10	12.2
Exercise	1	1.2
Mental Health	1	1.2
Disease Prevention	12	14.6
Reproductive/ Sexual Health	7	8.5
Skin Care	2	2.4
Drug use/ misuse	3	3.7
Public Health Care Campaigns/Programmes	23	28.0
General Health Tips	23	28.0

Source: Content Analyst, 2024

Table 1 shows that 93.9% of the contents are videos. In comparison, 5% are images, indicating that videos are mainly used for Aproko Doctor's health communication, with humour predominantly used, having 65.9% humorous contents compared to 34.1% non-humorous contents. Most of the health contents focuses on public health care campaigns/events and general health tips, with 28% each, alongside disease prevention and nutrition/health, with 14.6% and 12.2%, respectively.

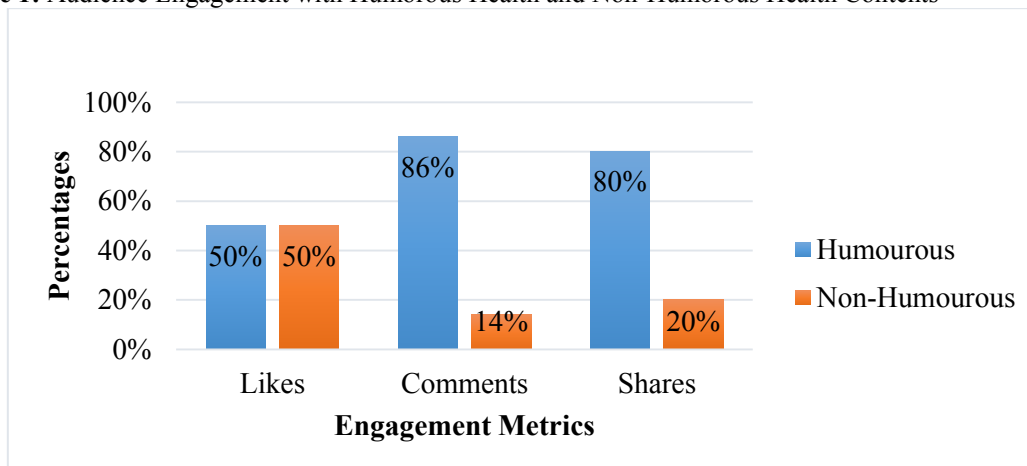
Table 2: Audience Engagement (Likes, Comments and Shares)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 100k	75	91.5
100k to below 200k	5	6.1
200k to below 300k	2	2.4
Comments		
Less than 5000	75	91.5
5000 to below 20,000	7	8.5
Shares		
Less than 5000	53	64.6
5000 to below 20,000	20	24.4
20,000 to below 35,000	4	4.9
35,000 to below 50,000	2	2.4
50,000 to below 65,000	2	2.4
65,000 to below 80,000	1	1.2

Source: Content Analyst, 2024

Note: Other ranges used in the coding guide with no data (0%) recorded are not indicated in Table 2.

Table 2 indicates that the highest range of engagement with the analysed contents, likes fall between Less than 100,000 (91.5%), Less than 5000 (91.5%) for comments and Less than 5000 (64.6%) for shares.

Figure 1: Audience Engagement with Humorous Health and Non-Humorous Health Contents

Source: Content Analyst, 2024

Figure 1 reveals that audience engagement is higher for humorous health contents than non-humorous health contents, with the highest range of likes on an equal range. At the same time, comments and shares are higher for humorous health contents than non-humorous health contents. The above suggests that the audience prefers both types of health contents, while humorous health contents is more likely to encourage audience engagement, thereby significantly increasing health contents' reach.

Survey Results

Table 3: Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age group		
18-24 years	109	27.7
25-34 years	259	65.9

35-44 years	22	5.6
55 and above years	3	0.8
Gender		
Male	158	40.2
Female	235	59.8
Educational level		
High school	30	7.6
BSc/HND	260	66.2
MSc	100	25.4
PhD	3	0.8
Occupation		
Student	112	28.5
Employed (Full-time)	117	29.8
Employed (Part-time)	38	9.7
Self-employed	104	26.5
Unemployed	22	5.6

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 3 shows the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. About two-thirds of them (65.9%) were between 25 and 34 years old, more than half (59.8%) were female, and 66.2% had BSC/HND. Only 5.6% were unemployed, 28.5% were students, and others were employed (full-time, part-time, self-employed).

Table 4: Audience Engagement with Aproko Doctor's Contents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Which social media platforms do you use the most		
Instagram	299	76.1
Twitter (X)	38	9.7
YouTube	6	1.5
Facebook	34	8.7
Whatsapp	16	4.1
How familiar are you with Aproko Doctor's health contents on social media		
Very familiar	246	62.6
Somewhat familiar	66	16.8
Not very familiar	57	14.5
Not familiar at all	24	6.1
How often do you view Aproko Doctor's posts or videos		
Every time	48	12.2
Frequently	91	23.2
Occasionally	123	31.3
Rarely	103	26.2
Never	28	7.1
Have you ever shared or discussed Aproko Doctor's health content with others		
Yes, frequently	66	16.8
Yes, occasionally	200	50.9
No, never	127	32.3
Which type of health content do you engage with		

more on social media		
Humorous	109	27.7
Non-Humorous	22	5.6
Both equally	262	66.7

Source: Survey, 2024

In Table 4, most respondents said they primarily use Instagram (76.1%), 9.7% use Twitter ('X'), 1.5% use YouTube, 8.7% use Facebook, and 4.1% use WhatsApp. A higher proportion of them were very familiar with Aproko Doctor's health contents on social media (62.6%), and 14.5% were unfamiliar. About 31.3% of them occasionally view Aproko Doctor's posts or videos, 12.2% view every time, 23.2% frequently do, 26.2% rarely do, and 7.1% never view his posts or videos. A higher proportion (50.9%) of them occasionally shared or discussed Aproko Doctor's health content with others, 16.8% frequently did, and 32.3% never shared his content. Two-thirds of them said they engage with humorous and non-humorous health contents equally, 27.7% engage more with humorous health contents, while only 5.6% of them engage more with non-humorous health contents.

Table 5: Perception of Respondents on Aproko Doctor's Humorous Health Messages

Variable	S	A	N	D	S
I find the use of humour in Aproko Doctor's health contents effective	19 5(49.6)	10 5(26.7)	93 (23.7)	0(0.0)	0 (0.0)
Humour in Aproko Doctor's posts makes health information more relatable	16 2(41.2)	10 0(25.4)	86 (21.9)	35 (8.9)	1 0(2.5)
I believe that humour in Aproko Doctor's posts helps in better understanding complex health information	17 9(45.5)	17 4(44.3)	37 (9.4)	3(0.8)	0 (0.0)
The use of humour makes Aproko Doctor's health contents more memorable	16 1(41.0)	16 3(41.5)	63 (16.0)	6(1.5)	0 (0.0)
Humour used in Aproko Doctor's contents detracts from the seriousness of the health issues discussed	35 (8.9)	64 (16.3)	11 7(29.8)	14 9(37.9)	2 8(7.1)
The use of humour in Aproko Doctor's health contents influenced my willingness to follow the health advice given	13 7(34.9)	15 1(38.4)	10 5(26.7)	0(0.0)	0 (0.0)
Inculcating humour is appropriate for conveying health messages	13 5(34.4)	19 3(49.1)	50 (12.7)	15 (3.8)	0 (0.0)

Source: Survey 2024

Table 5 shows respondents' perceptions of the Aproko Doctor's humorous health messages. A higher proportion (49.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they find humour in Aproko Doctor's health contents compelling, and 26.7% agreed. About 41.2% strongly agreed that humour in Aproko Doctor's posts makes health information more relatable, and 25.4% agreed. About 45.5% strongly agreed that humour in Aproko Doctor's posts helps better understand complex information, and 44.3% agreed.

A significant proportion of the respondents (45%), (37.9%) strongly Disagree, (7.1%) disagree that humour detracts from the seriousness of health issues, suggesting they perceive humour as an engaging tool rather than a distraction. A higher proportion of the respondents (73.3%), of which (34.9%) strongly agree and (38.4%) agreed that humour positively influences their willingness to follow health advice given. 34.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that inculcating humour is appropriate for

conveying health messages, and 49.1% agreed that it is appropriate for conveying health messages.

Table 6: Credibility of Humorous Health Communication Compared to Traditional Health Communication

Variable	SA	A	N	D	SD
I believe traditional, non-humorous health messages are more credible than humorous health messages	19(4.8)	67(7.0)	173(4.0)	116(9.5)	18(4.6)
I believe Aproko Doctor's traditional, non-humorous health messages are more accurate than humorous health messages	20(5.1)	46(1.7)	164(4.1)	138(5.1)	25(6.4)
The use of humour affects my perception of Aproko Doctor's credibility as a health information source	32(8.1)	87(2.1)	64(.3)	177(5.0)	33(8.4)

Source: Survey, 2024

Table 6 shows the credibility of health information presented with humour compared to traditional health communication approaches. A higher proportion of the respondents, 44.0%, were neutral about the belief that traditional non-humorous health messages are more credible than humorous health messages; 29.5% disagreed, and 4.6% strongly disagreed. In comparison, 4.8% strongly agreed, and 17.0% agreed, showing a lower level of preference for traditional health messages regarding credibility. About 35.1% of the respondents disagreed with the belief that Aproko Doctor's traditional, non-humorous health messages are more accurate than humorous health messages; 6.4% of them strongly disagreed, while 41.7% of them were neutral about it. A good number of respondents 53.4% disagreed that the use of humour affects their perception of Aproko Doctor's credibility as a health information source, with 45.0% disagreeing, 8.4% strongly disagreed, 22.1% agreed, 8.1% strongly agreed, while 16.3% were neutral.

DISCUSSION

The incorporation of humour in health communication is a dominant style used by Aproko Doctor to address numerous health topics, ranging from nutrition/diet and physical well-being, mental health, disease prevention, reproductive/sexual health, public health care and general health tips. Most audiences accessed Aproko Doctor's health contents on Instagram; it enjoyed active engagement due to its dual functionality of humour for entertainment and relief while providing health information, beneficial for well-being. The audience engagement metrics (likes, comments, and shares) in Figure 1 revealed that the audience prefers both types of health contents equally. In contrast, humorous health content is more likely to encourage audience engagement than non-humorous health content, significantly increasing health content reach. This complements the data presented in Table 4, which revealed that most respondents engaged with both equally, and the sharing rate of humorous health contents compared to non-humorous contents is high.

The study findings suggest that the incorporation of humour in health communication is advantageous for enhancing adequate health communication dissemination and engagement on social media, corroborating Suka and Shimazaki's (2023) and Ogba's (2021) study that validates humour as an effective sensitisation tool and a hook to draw the audience's attention. This supports the Elaboration

Likelihood Model as applied to this study, indicating that humour serves as a peripheral cue for processing Aproko Doctor's health message, potentially leading to increased engagement, acceptance and reducing resistance to health communication contents on social media.

Audience perception towards humour in health communication, particularly Aproko Doctor's humorous health contents, is positive following its adequate use, which makes it appropriate for effective health awareness in line with Booth-Butterfield & Wanzer (2018) as quoted in Odunlami et al. (2020). The incorporation of humour by Aproko Doctor makes health information relatable and memorable, simplifies the understanding of complex health information, as stated by Miller et al. (2021), without detracting from the seriousness of the issues and drives adherence intention in the audience for better health practices, as illustrated in Table 5. The findings support McCreaddie & Payne's (2012) finding regarding patients' perspectives of humour in health care, which indicates that humour is essential in healthcare interactions.

Thus far, the findings indicate that humour serves as an external cue or persuasive element in processing health communication messages, thereby increasing audience acceptability and engagement with health messages on social media. It triggers the audience's peripheral processing route, making the message more appealing and memorable, as well as the central processing route, where the audience pay attention to the health information embedded in line with the Elaboration Likelihood Model as applied in this study.

The integration of humour in health communication does not affect or enhance the accuracy and credibility of health messages; instead, source credibility is of vital concern compared to using humour to assess credibility. Aproko Doctor is viewed as a credible health information source; the audience trusts the health messages disseminated based on the source's expertise without necessarily considering the style or format of the health communication. It authenticates the position of Lowry et al. (2015), as cited in Igben and Oronukpo (2022) that the credibility of all communication is greatly influenced by the perceived credibility of the communication source regardless of the format. Notably, traditional non-humorous health communication approaches are not more credible and accurate than the humorous health communication approach as presented in Table 6. The majority believe that humour does not affect their perception of Aproko Doctor's credibility as a health information source.

This finding aligns with two elements of the Source Credibility Theory determinants and its postulation (expertise and trust), by revealing that humour does not enhances credibility, rather, prominence is given to factors like source expertise which fosters trust, adherence and possible intention to recommend Aproko Doctor's humorous health contents to others by sharing and other means. This supports the expression by Onyechi (2023, p. 80) on Source Credibility Theory, that the "more credible a source is, the more likely receivers will believe the information".

CONCLUSION

There is a need to balance factual information dissemination and the quest for audience engagement while adopting diverse health communication strategies. Health influencers on social media play a pivotal role in adequate public education on health issues (Ralman et al., 2023). However, the credibility of the influencers can significantly impact the effectiveness of health communication. The incorporation of humour, which reduces resistance and barriers and improves message acceptance and retention, should be carefully, moderately and adequately utilised to maintain its benefit. Humour in health communication can evoke positive perceptions and promote the adoption of healthy lifestyles and vice versa (Booth-Butterfield & Wanzer, 2018, as quoted in Odunlami et al., 2020).

This study's findings highlight that humour in health communication in the Nigerian context boosts awareness and engagement; it is perceived positively by the audience because it aids understanding and recall without downplaying the significance of health matters. It does not alter the credibility of the health message; rather, it is perceived as appropriate if adequately used. However, attention is needed to source credibility as much as possible and control in the use of humour for impactful health communication.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the study findings, the following are thus recommended:

1. Following the audience's positive perception towards the use of humour in health communication. The incorporation of humour in health communication within the Nigerian context is a worthwhile strategy for improved health awareness, retention and behavioural transformation. Hence, the combined use of social media and humour can be adopted by health communicators, traditional health professionals and social media strategists in their duty discharge and health communication activities.
2. The study highlights the ability of humour usage in health communication to boost awareness, engagement, understanding and recall without downplaying the significance of health matters. This indicates the need for government and public health authorities to adopt this strategy to improve health awareness campaigns and healthy lifestyles among its citizens.
3. Beyond this study's scope, other effective strategies that leverage the power of social media platforms for health communication; inculcating novel styles like humour while maintaining the credibility and impact of health messages should be harnessed.
4. Further studies can be conducted to examine audience perception via sentiment analysis of comments on Aproko Doctor's post on Instagram as well as focusing on other prominent health influencers and other channels through which humour can be integrated into health communication and practice within the Nigerian context.

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