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Prescription For the Passion: Exploring the Motivations of Ambassadors In the Know Your Medicine (KYM) Program

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INTRODUCTION

- Public health literacy relies on social trust; therefore transforming the rational use of medicines into an everyday community habit requires a trusted intermediary[1].
- To bridge this gap, the Know Your Medicine (KYM) Ambassador bridges this gap through a peer-education model that trains diverse community stakeholders to serve as health advocates, strengthening the connection between clinical instruction and daily health practices[2,3].
- Peer-to-peer interactions serve as the primary catalyst for behavioural change, thus understanding the specific motivational triggers that drive everyday citizens to enrol and actively champion rational medicines use within social circles is essential to sustaining the program's localized outreach.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to explore the driving forces of individuals enrolling as ambassadors for the KYM initiative.

METHODOLOGY

Study design	Phenomenological qualitative approach
Study population	Enrolled ambassadors of the KYM program in Malaysia
Sample method	Purposive sampling
Study instruments	Semi-structured guide (literature informed & expert validated)
Data collection	7 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs, total n=35) stratified by zone (Southern, Northern, Central, Eastern & Borneo)
Data analysis	Thematic analysis of 7 FGD transcripts

RESULTS

PERSONAL INTEREST

Informants felt intrinsic enthusiasm or passion for the purpose of the ambassadorial role. This personal connection often aligned with their values, making the role inherently appealing.

"saya sendiri pun memang aaa, minat sangatlah untuk erm... membantu pihak klinik aaa, untuk implementasi dia orang punya program ini kepada masyarakat dalam soal memberi aaa, pendedahan kepada masyarakat di semua kampung disana" (INFA8)

"saya alhamdulillah memang saya minat dengan kerja-kerja sukarela ni." (INFA30)

KNOWLEDGE & AWARENESS

Informants perceived the ambassadorial role as an opportunity for self-development, enabling them to deepen their understanding of the rational use of medicines. Additionally, they viewed it as a means to empower their community by sharing and promoting this valuable knowledge.

"Sebab saya juga mahu… saya ingin juga tahu macam mana cara-cara penggunaan ubat, ha…." (INFA7)

"bila saya jadi Duta ni, banyak ilmu yang saya boleh kongsikan kepada masyarakat lah." (INF21)

SIMILAR ROLES

For some informants, the decision was influenced by the fact that the ambassadorial role had similarities to their current roles. This overlap in roles allowed them to leverage their existing skills, experience and expertise, making the transition or assumption of additional responsibilities smooth and effortless.

"Jadi, kebetulan saya merupakan ahli panel penasihat klinik kesihatan. Dan dia punya fungsi sama dengan… DUTA dengan aaa, panel lebih kurang sama, yang mana dia punya fungsi, kami per…aaa, perantaraan di antara klinik dengan masyarakat di kampung. " (INFA6)

"masa setuju untuk jadi Duta tu pun, mungkin err saya banyak terlibat dengan pesakit juga sebab saya anggota kesihatan." (INFA19)

INVITATION

Ambassadors also enrolled through direct invitations ranging from informal peer requests to formal appointments by KKM representatives, implies the strategic efficiency of structured, network-based recruitment.

"Ha, jadi satu (1) surat tu dia telah dilantik sebagai Dutalah. Macam tiba-tiba dilantik sebagai tu... saya pun setujulah." (INFA33)

"Duta yang sebelum ni, dia bertukar ke Hospital A. So, dia minta saya jadi… gantikan tempat dia." (INFA19)

DISCUSSION

- Intrinsically, individuals enrol to satisfy their personal interest and desire for knowledge, while extrinsically, they are mobilized because the program leverages similar roles and direct invitations to easily bring them on board. This confirms that individuals volunteer when a role fulfils their internal values for self-development[4], driving ambassadors to not only help, but to grow, learn, and empower their communities[5].
- The influence of similar vocational backgrounds and direct invitations highlights how essential it is to utilize existing social networks. By recruiting established health practitioners and community leaders, the KYM initiative effectively engages individuals who already possess foundational leadership competencies and high task self-efficacy, thereby rendering their role transition seamless[6].
- This dynamic demonstrates that successfully adopting health recommendations at the community level relies on partnering with trusted local figures, as the public is significantly more likely to follow advice from familiar, reliable community leaders[7].

CONCLUSION

Sustaining local public health outreach requires shifting from passive recruitment to targeted mobilization. Strategies must actively recruit community-facing individuals by appealing to their dual motivations, by fulfilling their intrinsic desire for self-development while leveraging direct invitations within existing networks. Triggering these specific motivators secures capable mobilizers who possess the self-efficacy and local trust needed to act as intermediaries, effectively educating the public and turning rational medicine use into an everyday community habit.



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