

Radio Enlightenment Campaigns against Open Defecation: Audience Perception in Oyo East Local Government Area, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study assessed audience perception of radio enlightenment campaigns against open defecation issues in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. The study is designed to ascertain the nature of radio public enlightenment campaigns in Oyo East Local Government Area; to determine the effectiveness of radio medium in the campaigns against open defecation in Oyo East Local Government Area; and to know the factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area. Survey design was adopted for the study and data were gathered through the use of questionnaire. Two-hundred copies of the questionnaire were administered on the residents of the ten wards of the Oyo East Local Government Area, who constitute the respondents, and were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The findings show that radio public enlightenment campaigns were all about behavioural change communication, effective in the enlightenment of citizens against open defecation and stimulate positive attitudinal change. Findings also showed that some factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State are lack of public convenience by government, non-availability of water for sanitation, and false cultural beliefs. Radio has been the most effective medium in terms of the dissemination of health-related messages to widely dispersed audience, especially in the rural areas of Nigeria. Toilet sanitation campaigns should be sustained by the development agencies and partners, Ministries of water Resources and Ministries of Health both at State and Federal levels. Finally, it is recommended that government should sustain the use of radio for public enlightenment campaigns to bring about the desired positive change in behaviour against open defecation practice.

Keywords: Enlightenment Campaigns, Open Defecation Issues, Audience Perception

Introduction

According to Ministry of Water Resources (2015) 46 million Nigerians defecate in the open. One of the major reasons for iron deficiency anaemia among adolescent girls and young married is worm infestation that is attributed to open defecation. Open

defecation is not only a social stigma, but also contributes to sexual violence against young ladies and young married women. Many Nigerians and even under aged children die every year from diarrhea which is attributed to water, sanitation and hygienic problems. James (2014:11) notes that “public convenience is conspicuously absent in many rural and urban areas of Nigeria”. Many people defecate in the open, which, of course, causes epidemic of diseases. A heap of domestic waste welcomes visitors in most major cities of Africa, especially Nigeria. The government at all levels seem not to have made any commitment to make the surroundings clean, and evacuate a heap of waste in different parts of their states. The unpleasant stench emanating from the waste constitutes a threat to the well-being of the people.

Radio has been an unrivalled medium with regard to ubiquity, on-the-spot coverage of newsworthy events and instant dissemination of messages to widely scattered audience occupying a definite geographical space (James, 2014). One of the factors that endears radio medium to literate and non-literate members of the society, rural and urban sectors, and the haves and the have-nots is that the medium has the capability to live and reflect the cultural practices and other social realities of its host community. Government, non-governmental organisations and individuals listen to and use radio for different reasons including dissemination of information to the people about the health, agriculture, education, economy and mobilising the people to support government policies and programmes, among others. James (2014:22) notes that:

Radio unites diverse ethnic groups and can build national consensus, and make the citizens to toe the path of national unity. It has the tongue of diverse ethnic nationalities, and remains a powerful tool with regard to public sensitisation on educational and health issues and other socio-economic development indices

An examination of radio health-related campaigns showed that enlightenment about open defecation issue is largely lacking in Oyo East Local Government Area, and by extension Oyo State. Most radio stations in the State air enlightenment campaigns generally on health issues. However, of all the anti-health practices, open defecation remains the commonest practice among people in Oyo East Local Government Area. Studies have not been conducted about radio public enlightenment campaigns against open defecation, especially in Oyo East Local Government Area. United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) and other development partners and agencies campaign vigorously against open defecation practice, especially in schools, but a manifold of rural and urban citizens have not embraced the sensitisation campaigns for apparent reasons: some of those campaigns are hardly observed beyond primary and secondary schools; some campaigns embarked upon on radio are aired generally about

health practices, not emphasizing open defecation issues among people of Oyo East Local Government Area.

The enlightenment campaigns by their nature and effectiveness have set objectives (such as to change behavior, encourage sanitation, and personal hygiene) by those who design and present them via communication channels. However, the recipients of the campaign messages hold one form of opinion or perception about these campaigns. Hence, this study examines audience perception of the nature, effectiveness and factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State in spite of radio campaigns.

Statement of the Problem

Citing UNICEF/WHO, Duncan (2017:1) observes that “15 million people have no sanitation facility and are forced to defecate in the open. The average proportion of open defecators in developing countries is 16%, and in the least-developed countries 20%. Most of these open defecators are poor and live in the rural areas of developing economies”. The adverse effects of open defecation, according to Duncan (2017:1), are “acute effects include infectious intestinal diseases, including diarrheal diseases which are exacerbated by poor water supplies, sanitation, hygiene, adverse pregnancy outcomes, and life-threatening violence against women and girls”.

James (2014) observes that a host of communication means have been employed to sensitise the rural and urban citizens against open defecation practice and enlighten them to embrace sanitation before and after toilet use. A number of development agencies (such as World Health Organisation, World Bank, Non-Governmental Organisations, Ministries of Water Resources, Ministries of Health) have taken the campaigns against open defecation to schools, market places and worship centres. Both interpersonal and machine-assisted means of communication have been employed to enlighten the members of the public about the health risks of open defecation practice to the health of citizenry. However, it is noticeable that in spite of face-to-face enlightenment campaigns against open defecation issue in market places, religious centres, motor parks and jetties, the practice has continued unabatedly among people. The audience as fundamental stakeholders in the eradication of open defecation practice have their opinion or understanding of these campaigns. Therefore, this study examines perception of the nature, effectiveness and factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East LGA in spite the radio campaigns.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the audience perception of the nature of radio public enlightenment campaigns in Oyo East Local Government Area;

2. To determine the audience perception of the effectiveness of radio medium in the campaigns against open defecation in Oyo East Local Government Area; and
3. To know the audience perception on the factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area in spite of radio campaigns.

Research Questions

1. What is the audience perception of the nature of radio public enlightenment campaigns against open defecation issue in Oyo East Local Government Area?
2. What is the audience perception of the effectiveness of radio medium in the campaigns against open defecation in Oyo East Local Government?
3. What is the audience perception on the factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area in spite of radio campaigns?

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarification

Open Defecation

According to Ministry of Water Resources (2015) Open defecation is a condition where human faeces are disposed of in the fields, forests, open bodies of water, beaches or other open spaces or disposed with solid waste. It involves resorting to an open field, bush, stream, river, a body of water or sea for the purpose of excretion in lieu of an enclosed or designated toilet or latrine. This health-risky behaviour is more common in developing societies of Africa and Asia where a larger population is ensnared by poverty, false cultural beliefs and other social limitations. Oyo State is one of the states in Nigeria with higher incidence of open defecation practice. Oyo East Local Government Area, being a rural-urban Local Government Area, witnesses a higher incidence of open defecation practice. Some of the reasons for the ingrained open defecation practice in the Local Government Area could be traced to the non-availability of public latrine or convenience, inadequate public sensitisation about risks associated with open defecation practice, poverty, and lack of latrines in most of the households in the Local Government Area. The surrounding bushes in the ten wards of the Local Government Areas are littered with human faeces, with appalling stench oozing from there.

Radio as an Effective Medium of Public Sensitisation

Radio is one of the most commonly used broadcast media. Radio is present nearly everywhere, and in nearly all cases, radio is the first medium to be considered when development messages are targeted at people in the rural areas and semi-urban centres. In Nigeria, radio was established by the Colonial powers before independence, and used from the outset for political, educational, and administrative purposes. During the First World War, government used the resources of wireless transmission and radio as a war effort.

In a developing country like Nigeria, the role of radio cannot be overtaken by any medium, not even the television with its capabilities. It is difficult to envision a world without radio, and nearly every household has at least a radio set. Radio has been found to be one of the most effective media of transforming a hitherto underdeveloped society to developed polity (Olowu, 2008:19). What makes radio particularly interesting and appealing, however, is its interactivity; its capacity to provoke dialogue and to solicit the participation of local population. Radio is truly, indeed, a powerful communication tool. Undoubtedly, radio is an instrument in educating people and disseminating information in the society and it has since inception become an indispensable component of development. The capacity of radio in reaching the mass audience of the country was realised early; and government of various countries, including Nigeria, made a valuable use of it. Today, radio is found both in the urban and the rural areas of Nigeria, and if properly used, radio is of immense importance in educating, enlightening and motivating people, especially farmers in the rural areas, who need development most. This is because radio possesses many unique characteristics.

James (2014) notes that radio medium being one of the cheapest of and the most pervasive of media of mass communication has capability to disseminate messages rapidly, pervasively and can speak the local dialect of the target audience. It is the only medium that readily identifies with the local culture of the people. This is one of the reasons development agencies and communication scholars across the world have suggested the integration of radio medium with the indigenous media for the development messages to be more effective. In spite of the urban-centric nature of radio medium, its capability for enlightenment of illiterates and semi-literates, especially in the rural areas of Africa cannot be compared.

Radio Sensitisation and Open Defecation Issues

A look at all the media of mass communication available for the wide circulation of messages and other pieces of information, radio medium takes the lead in many fronts. Radio is a vital component of the development plans or programmes of the most African nations because of the medium's unique features and the rural nature of many developing communities on the African continent. A good number of people occupy isolated geographical locations scattered all over the places in many African nations.

Radio, being a ubiquitous medium, can engage the issues of development with people irrespective of their geographical locations or isolated habitations. Most communication scholars have researched extensively on radio medium, and in the process unearthed its strengths and, in few instances,, the medium's weaknesses. Apparently, development agencies, non-governmental organisations, donor agencies and other humanitarian organisations are commonly injected the use of radio medium in their development and humanitarian activities in the developing societies because of the medium's easy access, familiarity and its capability to package and report development messages in people's dialect and language.

However, non-government organisations, development agencies and government at all levels have failed to make use of radio to propagate serious health risks associated with open defecation practice for the enlightenment of the masses. UNESCO (2013. P.33) notes that" According to the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey, 2013, more than 68% of households had a radio and 48% had a television at home. While under CLTS, traditional rulers and preachers of churches/mosques are involved, use of radio, television and the Town Announcer are not so much in vogue." Most times when radio medium is employed for health campaigns, open defecation practice, which is one of the commonest anti-health practices, is conspicuously not mentioned in the content of radio message or broadcast. Apart from the appalling stench oozing from the human faeces which can cause a serious health problem, human faeces breeds flies of all sorts, which are a major cause of cholera outbreak in the developing nations of Africa.

Effectiveness of Radio Campaigns on Open Defecation Issues

Development agencies and partners as well as government has been creating awareness on the monster of open defecation in Nigeria. Mass media, especially radio is deployed to effect behavioural change in people practicing open defecation. This has taken various forms such as using alternative media and interpersonal communication. Radio has been used extensively in Nigeria for health-related messages and other development purposes, especially health messages targeted at rural areas of Nigeria (James, 2014). This is because a vast number of Nigerians still inhabit the rural areas of Nigeria, with no adequate access to other forms of mass media such as television, magazines, newspapers, and Internet as a result of poverty, illiteracy and stark lack of basic social amenities. Although, alternative media such as posters, pamphlets and leaflets have also been used to propagate information about open defecation, they hardly cover a large number of people as radio medium covers simultaneously. Radio dramas and talk shows are aired using local languages that most rural and urban dwellers can understand. This accounts for why the health workers in Nigeria, apart from interpersonal communication and house-to-house campaigns, make use of radio medium to sensitise citizenry about the health risks involved in open defecation. One-to-one communication situation is very important in the adoption of a certain health

practice, as this usually takes place during house-to-house campaigns, doctor-patient meeting, and face-to-face discussion with individuals in the community.

Local Language and Effectiveness of Open Defecation Campaigns

Language has been the means of communication among a group of people from time immemorial. Effectiveness of campaigns against open defecation relies heavily on the use of language. It is the best facility available for mass media writers, public relations managers as well as health education officers to reach out to people in an attempt to educate them to adopt a specific health practice or discontinue a particular anti-health behaviour. Most health programmes meant for the people in most rural areas of Nigeria fail because of the use of the language that the locals find difficult to comprehend. Health programmes packaged in local languages are widely embraced because it eases understanding and questions could be asked on any grey area. To disregard the language of the target prospects in the campaigns against open defecation is to ignore their culture. Such anti-open defecation campaigns may not be widely embraced by the people for which the messages are meant. Oyero (2003) observes that language does not exist independent of a culture, that is, it is socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determine the texture of our lives. Language is a very important component of culture and it is a learnt behavior, which can be enhanced or facilitated through direct or indirect context and acculturation.

Centrality of Language to Open Defecation Campaigns

Language plays a vital role in communication. Communication is void, baseless, useless and formless in the absence of language. Language is a facility that gives communication a form and is an important vehicle of communication. According to Oyero (2003) “when a person’s language is used to communicate to him, the consequence is that he will have greater understanding than when another language is used”. In essence, the choice of language to use is important to propagate anti-open defecation campaigns. According to Gathigi (2009) notes that vernacular radio plays an important role in peoples' daily lives among Kikuyu language, using radio medium to obtain information about what is happening *locally* in Kenya. Similarly, Seidu, Alhassan and Abdulai (2011) note radio can play a vital role in the rural area, especially when it uses local languages to communicate directly listeners. The use of local language remains a vital instrument to educate and mobilise the unschooled citizens in the rural areas to embrace certain health practices or discontinue a particular anti-health behaviour.

Perception Theory

The study is hinged on perception theory. The theory is relevant to this study because audience of mass media are active and have the ability to sift through media messages and select which message to expose to, attend to and retain. Mass media are

set up to arrest the attention of the audience and persuade them to pay attention to disseminated messages and make appropriate changes in attitudes, beliefs or produce the desired behavioural responses. The perception theory assumes that the process of interpreting messages is complex and that these goals may be difficult to achieve (Solomon, Onabajo and James, 2008). (Solomon, *et al*, 2008) citing Berelson and Steiner (1964) note that perception is the “complex process by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world”. Selective perception refers to the people’ perception to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes, and other psychological factors. People cannot respond to the same message in the same way as intended by the source because members of the audience have individual differences, and are of different backgrounds, languages and cultures.

Methods

The study was designed to investigate the audience perception of radio enlightenment campaigns against open-defecation issues in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. Survey method was used for this study because it availed the researcher the opportunity to have access to different respondents that had relevant information on the subject being investigated. Tuckman (1972) observes that “survey method is the process of extracting information from a target population through the use of observations, questionnaire or interviews, and subjecting the data that are obtained for statistical analysis for the purpose of drawing conclusions”. It was used basically to harvest the knowledge, belief and opinions of people about open defecation issues in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of the residents of the ten wards of Oyo East Local Government Area. The houses without toilets or latrines were selected for the administration of questionnaire. Oyo East Local Government Area has a 2016 projected population estimate of 174, 300 (National Population Commission, 2017). The residents who do not have toilets or latrines represent 72 percent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

Sample Size

The sample size of this study was two-hundred respondents for the questionnaire drawn from the population of residents of Oyo East Local Government Area, whose houses have no toilets or latrines.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sample was used for the study. Purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on the characteristics of a population. A homogeneous purposive sample is however used for this study. A homogeneous purposive sample is one that that is selected for having a shared characteristic or a set of characteristics. In this case, it is residents of houses without toilets or convenience were purposively selected were given questionnaire to fill in this study. The researcher went to the ten

wards (Agboye/Molete; Ajagba, Alaodi/Modeke; Apaara; Apinni; Balogun; Jabata; Oke-Apo; Oluajo; and Owode/Araromi) of the Local Government Area and administered copies of questionnaire on respondents irrespective of their locations.

Instrument of Data Collection

The primary source of data for this research involved the use of questionnaire. The questionnaire was used because a wide variety of respondents were involved. There were two sections in the questionnaire. Section A comprises demographic data of the respondents, while section B contains questionnaire items on radio enlightenment campaigns on open defecation issues. The questionnaire is close-ended.

Method of Data Analysis

Data gathered from the survey were sorted and tabulated in frequency distribution tables and percentages.

Findings

A total of 200 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents, 198 were retrieved and found usable.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age, educational qualifications, and language(s) spoken

<i>Age</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
20-25	54	27
30-35	68	34
40-45	22	11
50-55	42	21
60 and above	14	7
Total	198	100
<i>Educational Qualifications</i>		
WASSCE	82	41
OND	16	8
NCE	44	22
DEGREE	46	23
HIGHER Degree	10	6
Total	198	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 1 indicates that 68 respondents representing 34% were aged between 30 and 35, while 14 respondents representing 7% were aged 60 years above. 82 respondents representing 41% were holders of West African Secondary School Certificate Examination, while 10 respondents representing 6% were holders of higher degrees.

Table 2: Audience Perception of the nature of radio public enlightenment campaigns in Oyo East Local Government Area

<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Creating awareness about neat and smell-free convenience/toilet	12	6
Behavioural change communication	68	35
Toilet Sanitation campaigns	52	26
Sensitisation about risks associated with open defecation	32	16
Clean environmental campaigns	22	11
Enlightenment about comfort associated with the use of private toilet	12	6
Total	198	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 2 shows that 12 respondents representing 6% affirmed that radio enlightenment campaigns were about creating awareness about neat and smell-free convenience/toilet, 68 respondents representing 35% stated that radio public enlightenment campaigns were all about behavioural change communication, 52 respondents representing 26% affirmed that radio public enlightenment campaigns centred on sensitization about risks associated with open defecation, 32 respondents representing 16% stated that radio enlightenment campaigns were all about sensitization about risks associated with open defecation, 22 respondents representing 11% affirmed that radio enlightenment campaigns about open defecation issues were about clean environmental campaigns, while 12 respondents representing 6% affirmed that radio public enlightenment campaigns centred on enlightenment about comfort associated with the use of private toilet.

Table 3: Audience perception of the Effectiveness of radio medium in the campaigns against open defecation issue

<i>Options</i>	<i>frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Radio is effective in mobilizing citizens to practice toilet sanitation	18	9
Radio is effective in the enlightenment of citizens against open defecation	70	36
Radio is effective in the sensitization about safe toilet use	22	11
Radio is effective in educating citizens about the use of private toilet	18	9
Radio is effective in effecting positive attitudinal change	50	25
Radio is effective in informing households of health implications of open defecation	20	10
Total	198	100

Source: fieldwork, 2019

Table 3 shows that 18 respondents representing 9% stated that radio is effective in mobilizing citizens to practice toilet sanitation, 70 respondents representing 36% affirmed that radio is effective in the enlightenment of citizens against open defecation, 22 respondents representing 11% affirmed that radio is effective in sensitizing people about safe toilet use, 18 respondents representing 9% said that radio is effective in educating citizens about the use of private toilet, 50 respondents representing 25% stated that radio is effective in effecting positive attitudinal change, 20 respondents representing 10% stated that radio is effective in informing the households of health implications of open defecation, while 18 respondents representing 9% stated that radio is effective in mobilizing the citizens to practice toilet sanitation.

Table 4: Audience perception of the factors Militating against open defecation-free practice in spite of radio campaigns in Oyo East Local Government Area

<i>Options</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
The issue of poverty	34	17
Religious beliefs	10	5
Lack of public convenience by government	64	33
Non-availability of water for sanitation	62	31
Inadequate toilet facilities by households	22	11
Cultural beliefs	6	3
Total	198	100

Source: fieldwork, 2019

Table 4 shows that 34 respondents representing 17% affirmed that poverty is one of the factors militating against open defecation free practice, 10 respondents representing 5% stated that religious beliefs is one of the factors militating against open defecation free practice, 64 respondents representing 33% stated that lack of provision of public convenience by government is a factor militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area, 62 respondents representing 31% stated that non-availability of water for sanitation is also a factor militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State, 22 respondents representing 11% affirmed that inadequate toilet facilities is one factor militating against open defecation free practice, while 6 respondents representing 3% stated that cultural beliefs is a factor militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Discussion of Findings

What is the audience perception of the nature of radio public enlightenment campaigns against open defecation issue in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Answers to Research Question 1 can be found on Table 2. The results showed that radio public enlightenment campaigns were all about behavioural change

communication. The results also showed radio public enlightenment campaigns centred on sensitization about risks associated with open defecation, some respondents affirmed that radio public enlightenment campaigns centred on enlightenment about comfort associated with the use of private toilet. Ngwu (2017) citing USAID (2010) avers that behavioural Change Communication is the process of working with individuals, families and communities through different communication channels to promote positive health behaviours and support an environment that enables the community to maintain positive behaviours. It uses mass and social media, community-based media, and interpersonal communication channel to increase individual knowledge, encourage changes in attitudes, and practices among specific audiences (Ngwu, 2017).

What is the audience perception of the effectiveness of radio medium in the campaigns against open defecation in Oyo East Local Government?

Answers to Research Question 2 can be found on Table 3. Results showed that radio is effective in the enlightenment of citizens against open defecation; it influences positive attitudinal change; it is effective in informing the households of health implications of open defecation, and it is also effective in mobilising the citizens to practise toilet sanitation. Ngwu (2017) citing Akinson (2016) avers several reasons why the practice of open defecation has continued unabated in developing countries especially in the rural areas; it can be voluntary or semi-voluntary, but in most cases it is due to the lack or limited access to alternatives (i.e., modern toilets) and unavailability of a clean, safe, and attractive toilet at the very time of performing the act due to filthy, dark or foul-smelling toilets, personal safety of the user (e.g., criminals are known to gather in wait for possible victims in some toilet), some toilets are located in some distance away and may be dangerous to get there at night, where the available toilet is dilapidated and the user may fear a collapse or danger for children and where the toilet enclosure does not provide enough privacy for the user.

What is the audience perception on the factors militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area?

Answers to Research Question 3 can be found on Table 4. The results showed some factors that are militating against open defecation-free practice in Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State. Those factors are lack of provision of public convenience by government, non-availability of water for sanitation, and false cultural beliefs. Citing PM NEWS (2017), Ngwu (2017) avers that practice of open defecation is a global developmental and health issue facing developing nations. This is an ancient practice where people excrete in bushes, rivers, lakes, streams and other open spaces outside the designated toilets. This can occur deliberately due to unwholesome cultural practices, superstitions, and personal unhygienic behaviours. It could also be as a result of unavailable or lack of access to modern toilet facilities.

Conclusion

Radio has been a very effective medium with regard to making audience embrace positive behavioural change. Besides, radio is a very effective medium in the enlightenment of people against open defecation. Besides, Toilet sanitation campaigns should be sustained by the development agencies and partners, Ministries of water Resources and Ministries of Health both at State and Federal levels

Recommendations

Government should sustain the use of radio for public enlightenment campaigns to bring about the desired positive change in behaviour against open defecation practice. The campaigns should be more focused on rural sector of the society because a larger percentage of the population, with an ingrained open defecation practice, inhabit the rural areas of Oyo East Local Government Area of Oyo State.

As effective as radio medium is in the sensitisation of people against open defecation practice, efforts should not be spared in the enlightenment of the rural populace using local languages for the open defecation-free messages to be more effective.

Development agencies and partners should further fund dramas, talk shows and programmes on radio aimed at sensitising people about the health risks associated with open defecation.

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