

Listeners' Response to Radio Benue Indigenous Language Messages on COVID-19

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Abstract

This study assessed listeners' response to indigenous language messages on Radio Benue, Makurdi on COVID-19 pandemic in the State. The study sought to investigate indigenous language messages on Covid-19 available to residents of Makurdi metropolis on radio Benue Makurdi, assessed responses of Makurdi residents on Covid-19 indigenous language messages on radio Benue and assessed the extent the messages have mitigated spread of the pandemic in Benue. Specific emphasis was placed on jingles in indigenous languages in the state-Tiv, Idoma, Igede, and Etulo. The theoretical framework is The Health Belief Model (HBM) which assesses peoples' beliefs and behaviours, and predicts how they will behave in relation to their health and how they are persuaded and comply with health care messages. The study used survey research method and the stratified sampling technique. The questionnaire which was used as an instrument of data collection was administered to 384 respondents who are residents of Makurdi metropolis. Results showed that messages disseminated in indigenous languages through jingles on radio had more lasting effects than the ones disseminated in English Language. This is attributed to the fact that it educated more people enabling them to stay alive as a measure of containing the spread of the pandemic. Conclusion was drawn based on the fact that residents of Makurdi were knowledgeable about the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of the radio indigenous language messages broadcast to them through radio Benue, Makurdi, which has mitigated the spread of the virus in the metropolis. The study recommended that to effectively combat the spread of COVID-19 through awareness creation, attention should be focused on more packaging and dissemination of content in indigenous languages of the host community.

Keywords

COVID-19; Indigenous Language; Jingles; Songs, Pandemic

Introduction

Every human possesses an innate desire to communicate and so communication is fundamental if life expectations are to be met since it is the very bane of existence. It is the channel through which thoughts, intentions and desires are expressed. Taiwo (2020) posits that indigenous communication serves the traditional means of conveying messages, all social and value exchanges of indigenous products like the health practices

Oredola, Oyesomi and Peter (2020) also stressed the importance of indigenous communication in health communication. In the same vein, Oyesomi, and Salawu, (2020) aver that indigenous communication is an indispensable medium of communication in the cultural traditions of Africans and has been used to promote co-operation, mobilization and participation among African people.

Health communication researchers have established the value of indigenous languages. Meuter et al (2015) observe that understanding language in the context of a medical encounter

is critical for understanding the problems that might result when patients and healthcare practitioners speak a different language. Amery (2017) established that the communication gap between health professionals and indigenous people has a significant impact on health outcomes. The communication gap is most pronounced in remote areas where cultural and linguistic differences are greatest, therefore affirming the need for understanding the indigenous language to bridge the gap. Van Beek (2016) notes that since values are important to emotional wellbeing and mental health, the language which contextualizes and holds those values must not disappear else, the community will become more vulnerable to stress and health challenges. Citing Reyhner, Van Beek (2016) states that the use of the native language goes beyond communication to connect people with their past. It involves situating them in their emotional and social vitality, involving them in their own identity and wellness as well as their connection to the community. Thus, indigenous language is vital to positive identity, relationships and health as a bond between self, the outside world and culture or community.

In another study conducted by Taff et al (2018), the impact of indigenous language use on wellness was examined. The findings revealed that using indigenous languages has beneficial effects on the health of descendant language users and if such use is suppressed, it may affect the well-being of the people.

The global health crisis unprecedented by the novel corona virus poses a major health and economic challenge as it impedes human development. It is both a cause and consequence of underdevelopment as well as slows down the economic development all over the world. Therefore, placing an enormous socio-economic burden on affected countries causing more detrimental effect on economic and social development. Covid-19 itself holds Africa and even developed nations back and stalls development. In containing the spread of the virus, the use of radio jingles in indigenous language at the community levels in communicating Covid-19 control measures cannot be over-emphasized. The media play an influencing role by contributing to public opinion formation (McQuail, 2007; Soola, 2007; Severin and Tankard, 2001; Watson, 2003; Baran, 2002). They have pervasive influence on their audience. This is more so with broadcasting. Radio as a broadcast medium is particularly praised for its strength in enhancing the development process particularly in the rural areas (Ugande, 2005).

The Covid-19 pandemic is accompanied by lack of proper information making it difficult to find accurate life-saving information. Languages matter during the Covid-19 pandemic, as they are an intrinsic part of human rights and fundamental freedoms of their users, including access to accurate life-saving information and healthcare (Iyil, 2019).

Nigeria's quest for effective control of Covid-19 spread started with the aggressive use of all communication channels to reach out to people in all nooks and crannies of the country. Most of these messages were in English Language which is alien to educationally disadvantaged people, thus more proactive measures were adapted and one of those measures was the use of jingles in indigenous languages to close the gap and ensure reach to the people on how to stop the spread of the virus in the country. Also speaking in favour of radio, Soola (2002) contends that on a global scale, but particularly in developing countries, radio as a medium of communication has been a most potent communication innovation. Its monumental success in health projects in several developing countries is a loud testimony of its potentials. Ebo (1998) also holds that radio is the most popular mass medium even in the rural areas. The villagers depend so much on it as the bearer of news and instructions. It is particularly very useful in mobilization and mass education.

The efficacy of indigenous languages use on radio in disseminating health and educational messages in rural communities cannot be overemphasized due to the fact that radio is a medium that reaches every corner of the country. It is cheap and potable, information carried on radio has a good chance of getting across to a large proportion of the population; radio has immediacy as messages can get to the furthest part of the country as they are happening and radio beats literacy barriers as there is no need to be able to read and write before you can listen and understand the radio programmes. This is because message on radio can be delivered in indigenous language.

This study is delimited specifically to investigating listeners' response to radio Benue, Makurdi indigenous messages on COVID-19 to residents of Makurdi Metropolis. Geographically, the researchers studied respondents across council wards that make up Makurdi Metropolis. It seems that the messages disseminated in indigenous language have more lasting effects than the ones disseminated in English language. This study therefore seeks to ascertain whether the messages disseminated in indigenous language has more lasting effects than the ones disseminated in English language.

Study objectives

The broad objective of this research is to assess listeners' response to Radio Benue on COVID-19 pandemic in Benue State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. investigate indigenous language messages on covid-19 available to residents of Makurdi metropolis on radio Benue, Makurdi.
- ii. assess response of Makurdi residents on Covid-19 indigenous language messages on radio Benue, Makurdi.
- iii. assess the extent the messages have mitigated the spread of the pandemic in Benue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language

Language is a set of symbols which embodies beyond its literal meaning, all the customs, ideas, beliefs, values, orientation and disposition of a group of people. It brings about social bonding and interactivity between parties concerned. It is a definite way of identifying a people.

Language is the principal means of communication for all tribes and tongues and gives room for precision. Language is an integral part of human behaviour. It serves as the main channel of interaction between people in the society to share ideas and experiences (Salawu, 2006, Oyesomi, Salawu & Olorunyomi, 2017). Emeka-Nwobia (2015) affirms that the storehouse of a people's identity and way of life is their language which could be transferred to other people as well as newer generations. As such, language, whether indigenous or foreign, is an indispensable tool in life because there is no aspect of human activity that can be successful without the use of language. Language is the mainstay of any society, institution or group of people; a lack of it renders a society incommunicado (Jibri-Daura, 2014).

According to Adedimeji (2009), language bridges the gap between knowledge and ignorance and helps man to access and express his thoughts. Since language is innate and unique to man, it gives man the ability to express issues, concepts as well as moods, feelings and attitudes. It captures man's world of reality, fosters development, peaceful co-existence, cultural transmission, and knowledge advancement. Language is the unique property of man and all his developments, be it intellectual, ethical, political, social or economic revolves entirely on the instrumentality of language. Beyond cultural transmission; language allows people to relate with those from other communities, ethnic groups, clans, races and nations. Language is a powerful tool which must be wield judiciously. It has engendered close ties with countries of the world in terms of trade relations, political relation, educational relations, and so on. At the same time, language has also been used as a tool of cruelty and domination through the realities of slavery and colonization. For institutions and organizations, language is critical. Institutions that have employees who are skillful in language can communicate and achieve the aim of the institution.

Popoola, (2014) posits that though every living creature communicates, the ability to speak and understand a language makes it possible for individuals and groups to interact freely, communicate and share experiences amongst themselves moves this thesis further by stating that: The appeal of language resides precisely in its capacity to meet the needs of man for self-expression and for communication of experience in his day-to-day engagements with the world around him.

These assertions point to the fact that language is indispensable and as long as culture remains, language will also be of great value to man and the society. Local or indigenous language is used by people to express their cultures and traditions from days of old to the present through

the language of their culture which is referred to as indigenous language

Language is a very salient aspect of communication and indigenous communication. It is the means through which thoughts and intentions are expressed locally and it is only when a language is understood that a message can have the intended effect- inform, entertain or persuade. Specifically, the media that use indigenous languages are important for the purpose of information, mobilization and continuity i.e. survival of the language and culture (Salawu 2004a, 2004b).

Sirbu, (2015) also posits that in the expression of culture, language is a fundamental aspect. It is the tool that conveys traditions and values related to group identity and a common language is one of the most certain proof of the historical continuity of a community of people. And as a tool of communication among members of a society, language is influenced by the very society where it functions. Moreover, being the most significant tool of communication, a particular language which is mastered by some people has often been the determining factor in turning these people into a separate group as a people, a nation or state.

Indigenous Language

Nigeria is a country of over 190 million people in West Africa (World Population Prospects, 2019) and is easily the most populous country in Africa. The country is divided into six geopolitical zones for easy administration. Nigeria is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual nation. There are about 250 ethnic groups and over 500 indigenous languages in Nigeria. These figures portray the multi-cultural and multi-lingual dimensions of the country. The major ethnic groups in the country are Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa and so their languages (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa) are predominantly spoken. Other ethnicities and languages are Fulani, Ijaw, Itshekiri, Tiv, Urhobo, Kanuri, etc. According to Layeni (2019) there are several ethnic groups in Benue State. Each one has a unique and prominent culture, history and beautiful people. There are many ethnic groups in Benue state – Tiv, Idoma, Iggede, Etulo, Abakpa, Jukun Hausa, Akweya and Nyifon. According to IPC (2013) Only in Benue state there are about 14 languages spoken. The major languages are Idoma, Iggede and Tiv. The other minority languages are Akpa, Basa, Eloyi, Iyive, Izi-Eza-Ikwo-Mgbo, Kukele, Oring, Otank, and Wannu. A variant of the English language called 'pidgin' is also spoken by the less educated class and at informal settings.

Researches have established the supremacy of indigenous language over foreign language, and have also established that no matter the level of corrosion or corruption a native language has suffered as a result of the influence of a foreign language, the (native) language still remains the language that speaks in the idiom of the people. Without using the language of the people, development will only be communicated at the people; not to the people, and not with the people (Salawu, 2006, David 2003, Umera-Keke 2010, Salawu 2015, Sirbu 2015). Salawu (2006) passed a vote of confidence in the use of the indigenous language media in Africa by describing them as local agenda setters and pace-setters, reflecting the original essence of African languages.

Language and Health Communication.

Olaoye (2013) pictures indigenous language as the most effective engine of a people's culture and explains that indigenous languages are treasures of cultural heritage and self-identity. That is, the indicator of history and self-identification. For instance, people are sensitive about their language. People tend to tolerate, listen, understand and cooperate with those who can either understand or speak similar language with them. It portrays that those persons' value and belief system are akin to theirs. In some communities, help comes easily to those who speak indigenous language. They even get to make purchases at the marketplace at lower prices instead of high prices offered to visitors. Indigenous language is part and parcel of culture. Culture is a channel through which people communicate, propagate and develop their knowledge and attitudes towards life (Siddiqui, 2019).

Since, no society can function without culture, and culture is symbiotic with language; Indigenous language is a positive tool in the hands of any university that anticipate success.

Even the government recognizes the importance of indigenous language in Nigeria (National Policy on Education, 2004). Hence, every child is mandated to learn the language of the immediate environment. In schools, every child is expected to learn one of the three prominent Nigerian languages: Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo (Omoniyi, 2012). In 2009, Siddiqui (2019) noted that the United Nations (UN) observed the International Year of Indigenous Language aimed at raising the awareness of local languages across the world and the need to preserve them. Indigenous language is a means of promoting social interaction, national cohesion and cultures globally.

Ogunyombo and Bello (2020) lay emphasis on the fact that the role of communication in health care is that of information, education and motivation. The information one has about a particular health condition helps such one to assess one's risk level and seek for solutions in time in case of any danger.

Indigenous Language Media

The origin of the African indigenous media is usually associated with Christian missionaries who chose to establish a press in the local language for their evangelical activities (Salawu, 2003, 2007). Today, different mass media platforms are channels of indigenous communication. They are used to carry indigenous information. Indigenous language use by the media promotes cultural history and indigenous harmony.

According to Wilson, Hearne, Cordova, and Thorner (2017), indigenous media may be defined as forms of media expression conceptualized, produced and circulated by indigenous peoples around the globe as vehicles for communication including cultural preservation, cultural and artistic expression, political self-determination and cultural sovereignty. Indigenous media overlap with, and are on a spectrum with other types of minority produced media, and quite often they share a kingship regarding many philosophical and political motivations.

Deer (2019) avers that indigenous knowledge includes all of the knowledge indigenous people have of plants and animals, our spirituality, and our worldview and the media can be one of the means to transmit this indigenous knowledge from elders to the younger ones. We have a tremendous opportunity to record our knowledge because in the past, it was always transmitted orally and by showing people. We always keep that in mind when we transmit knowledge that sometimes we have to do visually, because in previous centuries we didn't have writing. Now we have this opportunity to use modern media to do it in a different way. You can do it in print; you can do it through audio and video recordings. The mass media channels are the channels of indigenous communication. Radio is used to carry indigenous information. Salawu (2006) passed a vote of confidence in the use of the indigenous language media in Africa by describing them as local agenda setters and pace-setters, reflecting the original essence of African languages.

Hubley (1993) asserts that radio has remained the most powerful and credible information and entertainment medium in most developing countries like Nigeria. Because it is affordable and accessible, radio is the most popular medium in Nigeria especially with the recent upsurge in the use of FM radio stations. Portable battery-operated radio sets are frequently brought to farms and other rural locations, even in the remotest parts of Nigeria. This availability gives radio the capacity of being heard by a large, diverse audience. Accordingly, he posits that radio as a medium is a very powerful instrument in spreading health related messages to the sub-literate population because it reaches a huge audience quickly and allows the people to interact with one another more easily than television viewers or newspaper readers.

Collaborating Hubley's view, Sharecast, (2018) states that radio has become the most popular and effective medium for information dissemination to a larger audience. Use of radio by several humanitarian agencies in Nigeria for general and behavioural change messaging substantiates the aforementioned statement.

By implication, radio influences our understanding of the world around us because media content can spread basic messages about the nature of reality. Public health campaign is a way of getting messages across to a target audience. It involves the use of media and messaging. It

also organizes sets of communication activities to generate well-defined outcome in a target audience within a time. The authors' opinion on radio being a powerful medium of information has been exemplified by messages on Covid-19 packaged in jingles prepared in indigenous languages, appealing to all categories of audiences and potentially influencing them to adopt responsible, healthy behaviors that can contain the spread of the pandemic in the society.

Jingles as a tool for promoting indigenous language

Jingles are short songs used for advertising or for informing. They promote products, services and ideas. Radio jingles have been around as long as radio itself. Ever since advertisers first realized the ability of mass media to reach thousands of potential customers, radio was destined to become a powerful tool to advertise their products (Sager (2020). Songs or music is a big memory trigger for jingles. Music can invoke both emotion and nostalgia. A well written jingle will stay with consumers, playing on repeat in their heads, helping to achieve in top of mind awareness of the brand (Leighton, 2010)

Sager' (2020) study conducted by the University of Vienna found that 89% of the study's participants said they considered jingles to be a highly effective advertising method. The same study also concluded that the usage of jingles is more effective than the use of slogans (by themselves)'. Accordingly, he posits the motive for any jingle is to induce a reaction from the listener- directly or indirectly. No matter the timing of the commercial-30 seconds or more, Sager (2020) provides the traits of an effective jingle:

- i. Brevity/simplicity: in the world of jingles, being clear and concise is everything. Listeners should not have to think too much about the meaning or purpose.
- ii. Catchiness: Effective jingles leave an imprint on the listeners mind in that 'earburg' sort of way. Even if the jingle is ostensibly annoying, its goal has been accomplished if listeners cannot get it out of their heads.
- iii. Strong message: a good jingle can communicate the basic value position of the message in a few words. Often, these jingles will leverage some kind of slogan to accomplish this as well.
- iv. Pathos: effective jingles have an element of what Greeks call 'pathos'. They connect on a positive emotional level with the listener. This is achieved by carefully selecting your music and verbage.

The importance of indigenous media

The importance of indigenous language media cannot be overstressed. A representative of the United Nations Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) observed that the lack of indigenous education emphasized a representative of indigenous youth, would continue to set indigenous youth apart from their cultures. Stressing that education was the key to self-determination, she recommended that educational instruction take place in indigenous languages (UN, 2003). Sui & Sun (2019) establish the importance of indigenous media:

- i. **Strengthens indigenous identities**
Indigenous media strengthens indigenous identities by showcasing tribal heritage, helping to maintain local languages and providing a public sphere for debate about indigenous issues. Indigenous media can also convey significant meaning as an indicator of cultural and societal change.
- ii. **Preserves traditions**
When indigenous society encounters change, media is an important means to engage with social movements, cultural changes and the maintenance of endangered languages. Indigenous media records and preserves traditions, enhances and facilitates cultural forms such as music and crafts, and can also build connections to the wider world. Quality media productions can positively represent indigenous people and raise cultural visibility. Indigenous information is preserved and adapted by being used and communicated to others since indigenous channels mainly carry information about local

issues.

iii. Interaction with audiences and Bridging communication gaps

Journalists use social media to interact with audiences and receive direct feedback. Audience feedback can lead to improved effectiveness. Conflicts can occur when ancient traditions encounter the modern world but indigenous media can act as a platform for indigenous voices and also provide unique interpretations.

iv. The marketing of tribal goods like agricultural products, arts and crafts and other unique products made with cultural knowledge, local historical memories and tribal lore

Indigenous media has become key to raising awareness of indigenous cultures and products at national and international levels. Indigenous media has become key to raising awareness of indigenous cultures and products at national and international levels. Media can also introduce local artists, writers, musicians, dancers and other traditional specialists to a wider audience and thereby enhances the cultural values of local and traditional knowledge.

v. Indigenous channels are important conduits of change.

Traditional 'does not mean static. Time and again the community is informed about happenings through mediated channels and change is necessitated (Mundy and Lloyd 2018). Consciously tapping indigenous channels can help development agents, change agents, government or other stakeholders to make explicit use of indigenous channels to discover the local situation and get reactions to project initiative and projects. Much progress has been made in the COVID 19 pandemic (Mundy and Lloyd 2018)

The Coronavirus Pandemic and the utilization of indigenous languages for health promotion using Radio Benue Jingles on COVID-19

On 30th January 2020, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (WHO's highest level of alarm). All countries were warned to prepare for containment, active surveillance, early detection, isolation, case management, and contact tracing.

WHO (2020) traces the emergence of a novel Corona Virus on 31st December 2019, officially referred to as COVID-19. According to Shereen and Siddique, (2020, the novel coronavirus disease is a highly transmittable and pathogenic viral infection caused by severe respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2(SARS-CoV-2), which originated from the Hunan seafood market at Wuhan, China and spread around the world beginning at the end of 2019. The virus was first isolated from persons with pneumonia in Wuhan city, China, and was named as Wuhan coronavirus or 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCov) by the Chinese Researchers.

According to WHO (2020), the virus can cause a range of symptoms, ranging from mild illness to pneumonia. Symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, sore throat, and headaches. In severe cases difficulty in breathing and deaths can occur. Considering the current situation and spread of the disease, globally, the Director General of WHO declared the outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). Regencia, Siddiqui and Uras (2020) report that global infections approach 20 million as almost 20million people around the world have been diagnosed with COVID-19, more than 12.1 million have recovered and 732,689 have died.

In Nigeria, statistics on COVID-19 reveals that 49, 068 cases were confirmed, 36,497 cases were discharged and 975 deaths recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, (Oyekanmi 2020). Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 spreads between people through direct, indirect (through contaminated objects or surfaces) or close contact with infected people via mouth and nose secretions. These include saliva, respiratory secretions or secretions droplets. These are released from the mouth or nose when an infected person coughs, sneezes, speaks or sings. For example, people who are in close contact (within 1 metre) with an infected person

can contract COVID-19 when those infectious droplets get into their mouth, nose or eyes. When physical distancing is not possible, wearing a fabric mask is an important message relayed to protect others, (WHO, 2020). According to NCDC (2020), there is no specific cure yet for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials to test various potential antivirals. Current management of cases aims to relieve the symptoms while the body's immune system fights the illness. As the coronavirus disease spreads daily in an unprecedented vulnerable country like Nigeria characterized by high levels of poverty and malnutrition and other disadvantages affecting indigenous peoples, it is critical to ensure the sharing of correct life-saving information and resources about Covid-19 in lesser-used, minority and indigenous languages.

The use of indigenous media in dealing with the novel life threatening coronavirus has been enhanced in Benue with the active use of radio. Radio seems more appropriate in this era of health crisis to disseminate indigenous content since it reaches large number of people around the world and have profound influence on society too. In addition to this, both media are essential because they cater for the need of the rural people who are unlearned. Use of jingles has master minded the spread of health campaign messages on coronavirus.

Accurate information about Covid-19 such as on hygiene, physical distance, quarantine and prevention are the emphasis of these jingles. The original jingle which is in English is accompanied by other indigenous languages spoken in Benue like Tiv, Idoma, Etulo, Igede and Pidgin.

The English version of the jingle which has been relayed in many indigenous languages in Benue has this information:

'Corona virus or Covid-19 is an infectious disease that attacks the human respiratory system and is spread primarily through droplets of saliva when an infected person is speaking or discharge from the nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze. You can protect yourself from contracting this virus by thoroughly washing your hands with soap and water regularly each day or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands. Maintain a distance of at least three metres with other people, practice respiratory hygiene and drink a lot of water daily. Also, try to gargle with warm water and salt or vinegar. Please, stay safe and immediately seek medical attention if you develop a fever, cough or experience difficulty breathing during this trying period'.

The following paragraphs show other indigenous languages used in the health awareness campaign.

i. TIV

Corona virus ka angev mbu sha ijoahan mbu hegh mbu mbu ve, mbu lu tsaren ior sha tar wuee yo. Hanma Or mbu yange ga, nahan se kor iyol tsaha sha u lun tsembelee, er u oon ave hanma shighe, man u soron haregh asev tsembelee.

De lumun corona virus a de ve ikyua a we ga. Alier u hii uoon sha ican, shin u ngu tehen, shin iyolhian ngi a we yo, za fese za nenge a Ortwer. Alier u sember hidden ken ityar i corona virus alu ker yo, lu ken iyou we tswen I kuma ayange pue kar anyiin nahan. Alier akav a mnyion ne tese sha iyol you yo, za fese pe Ortwer a lu yo. De luun ikyua a or u nan tehen ga, de zough uwegh a Or ga.

De yesem a adikpo shio ga. Lu nen zwa mom, man kura nen atindi ne, sha er se zenda corona virus ken tar wase u Benue kera yo.

Loho ne ka iniongon i Radio Benue sha u zendan bo uange ne ken tar wase kera.

ii. IDOMA

Ukoronaviroshi aman ku civic-19 nya wooche no bóóbi néhi, oke ge junwalu laya kowu oófu KO he, noke ge nyila tájé bipu kóda béka'hé kóché nolooche nya lé gbóbu é'ma eko noyói kela, kóókó aman koyói tachihoa.

Alófu gbiyó nmokpo kooche nya nma lo yói nabó kaló lóólóhi igbaléwa mlukwó mlénkpó no ge pé a échi doodu aman kobi óda noibo ge bi ge le nabó nehi ku hand sanitiza.

Ahi be labó kwikpeyi, énwu mlokonu kunó'n. Be yó ligbo laché óha bikpo okwéyi'kpo éhili a eko doodu, ka kla be liyó tu yengée mlo yói gwénkpó nwune échi doodu du, abe cheyi tikwu yói bienkpó obóla wuló mlóma ka be le nipoko ka'a.

Ódam kiye iyuwó lóhin nayói lósawula, ókó aman ka ge fowu mélé'n, le yé gunéchi boobu ahi kpeko bonu no'n. Kocho be klólé épuleko noyó. Enya ukpé kéjénji kéwa yóó.

iii. IGEDE

Corona virus ole kiiwuru nyi Covid-19 inyinyi ri eduru ohe ole kooju onginyi o.ode ohuko- 'huko oti jee chikila onginyi mi ori ongole elo ayela jionu dang lee oduojwo bala ochanyibwo k'enyi nyiojwo lee enyi nyieju nyamu agba jung kefu.

Akpahi juilong chaji k'eduru owe aka jung ka vula otabwo nyang lenyi bala ucha ka wuu lee ang oguwabwo ole alokirara wuru nyi hand sanitizer kpa tudu abwo nyang uka wuu.

Hinyo la okpa abwo kefu nya ahi, onu bula okwunyi nyang .Aya apate itu danginyi ikila uka wuu.

Akpilong cheri-cheri bala anwenyi uka wuu. Aya ima dala enyi ochila bwebwebwe ka kpenyi owa efu nya ukpiroko-nyang.

Ori inyiro alang kpakpa ka ojwo adung, inyiro awurung ila lee oje dihu guawule ka akele k'ube utoji ola onuabwo nyang kiwulang ye uuwa.

iv. ETULO

Coronavirus li otse o nawi tɛ mi es mi onɛ on n du. Es mabe eyi Niaeria otse n kpa dz fu.

O li tu otse n mi onɛ onawi O k kw kw yi ingais /emi ingis , onawu dz yi otse n ni. Nadi na abu y ba dz oky k miyikpa Es , nadi (inb) state nawi ots mabi coronavirus n idifwi mi efu, ma abu difwi odz -dz ewo maba abu dz saan ba, dafi o L kwɛ okwɛ, ewo L dza abu atsi, o L dɛ otse ma ma, nan mmye omy -my maba abu kpa L k esho ye yi es , di y L fya abu mfy omyi mmy saan n , fya na abu ba mbi inaaais ama onawu y oy -y mi obi idɛ n iky nu ma kidi ewo maba abu. Mana, a ky abu dz k m eab iyo-dɛ- n o di odz -dz ewo maba abu saan

Abu ya ani i abuwɛ eyi ka dz mbɛ-bɛ mi imbe nawi ibi inaaais tɛ. Na abu fya o sa abɛ mi eni yi uvu o kye ewo abu dz k saan aLɛ onɛ du. Nya o ni inaaais abɛ b yi o k imb onawi ibi inaaais tɛ. Ki na abu ka tsa atsihee, fya o kye ay anawutɛ onawu L saan tuku ondu maba abu b yi nahatan ba akubɛ maba abu.

Ne eyi kye abɛ kokyi y ka o li coronavirus n onya tɛ mi kp s mgb eyi Benue.

Esɛ n tɛ mi odzu idɛ mabi Radio Benue ikye o nye etas mi mbe mabi coronavirus.

Theoretical framework: The Health Belief Model

The strength of the Health Belief Model lies in the fact that it was developed by researchers working directly with health behaviours (Norman and Conner 2017). According to Glanz, the HBM was one of the first models to adapt theory from the behavioural sciences to health problems and it remains one of the most widely recognised conceptual frameworks of health behaviour.

The Health Belief model proposes that people are most likely to take preventive action if they perceive the threat of a health risk to be serious, if they feel they are personally susceptible and if they feel there are fewer costs than benefits to engaging in it. Therefore a central aspect of the HBM is that behaviour change interventions are more effective if they address an individual's specific perceptions about susceptibility, benefits, barriers and self-efficacy. According to Laranjo (2016), this model can be used as a pattern to evaluate or influence individual behavioural change in the corona pandemic. The model proposes that a person's behaviour can be predicted based on how vulnerable individuals consider themselves to be. 'Vulnerability' is expressed in

the HBM through risk (perceived susceptibility) and the seriousness of consequences (severity). For example, this could include how 'susceptible' they feel they are to contracting coronavirus and how 'severe' the consequences of being infected are, or how 'susceptible' they are to the disease, and how 'severe' the consequence will be (Death for example). A person's decision to perform the health-promoting (or damaging) behaviour will be based on the outcome of this 'weighing up' process. Self-efficacy is also added to the HBM to enable prediction of behaviour. Self-efficacy is person's perceived confidence of their ability to perform that behaviour (<http://www.ukg>).

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is related to this study because it assesses peoples' beliefs and behaviours and predicts how they will behave in relation to their health and how they are persuaded to comply with health care messages. By implication, health campaign messages on COVID-19 that portray the danger of transmission through risk (perceived susceptibility) and the seriousness of consequences can provide an 'incentive' for people to change their behaviour like doing more of social distancing, spotting symptoms and the importance of personal hygiene like in the constant washing of hands under running water with soap. Thus this initiates their confidence in their ability to perform and sustain the recommended behaviour with little or no help from others.

Methodology

The research design used for this study is the survey and questionnaire was employed as tool for data collection. The population of this study comprises the entire people living in Makurdi metropolis which is 348, 990 (National Population Commission, 2019).

The sample size for the study is statistically determined using the formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 Pq}{d^2}$$

According to Araoye (2004) in Kusugh (2007) this formula can be used where the population size is greater than 10, 000 (>10,000)

Where,

n = Desired sample size (where population is > 10,000)

z = the standard deviation usually set at 1.96 since a significant level of 95% is desired.

P = the proportion in the target population estimated to have particular characteristics under study.

q = Iop (that is the proportion of the population that does not share the characteristics under study).

d = degree of accuracy desired.

Thus;

z = 1.96 level of significance = 50%

p = 50% = 0.50

q = (I-P) = 0.5

d = (0.05)²

n = $\frac{z^2 Pq}{d^2}$

d²

= $\frac{(1.96)^2 (0.50) (0.5)}{0.05^2}$

= 3.8416 x 0.50 x 0.5

0.0025

= 0.9604

0.0025

n=384

Therefore, the sample size for the study was statistically determined to be three hundred and Eight Four (384).

To determine the sample for this study, multistage sampling strategy was employed to select respondents for this study. Firstly, Makurdi was divided into major settlement areas of High-

Level; North Bank; Akpehe; New G.R.A; Old G.R.A; Gboko Road; Kanshio; Wadata; Ankpa Ward; Modern Market; Wurukum; and Nyiman. Osuala (2007) notes that this involves dividing the population into separate strata known as a stratified sampling technique. The population was stratified into segment for a manageable level and questionnaires were administered to them.

Secondly, random sampling was used in selecting streets in the major settlement areas. Two streets were selected from each settlement areas identified above. The third stage was the selection of households. Here purposive sampling technique was used to select compounds from each of the selected streets. A total of eight (8) houses were purposively selected on each street, bringing the total number of houses selected to one hundred and ninety-two (192) households. Two respondents were randomly selected in each house bringing the total number of respondents to three hundred and eight four (384); this selection was based on those who listen to radio messages without interpretation.

Data Presentation

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics - simple percentages and tables of summary in order to ease comprehension. 384 questionnaire were administered, 340 were retrieved (representing 89% response rate) and found usable. Below is the presentation of the data in tables.

Table 1: Indigenous language messages on COVID-19 available to residents of Makurdi metropolis on Radio Benue, Makurdi

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Hamma Or mbu yange ga, nahan se (TIV) kor iyol tsaha sha u lun tsembelee, er u oon ave hanma shighe, man u soron haregh asew tsembelee	225	66
Alófu gbiyó nmokpo kooche nya (IDOMA) nma lo yói nabó kaló lóólóhi igbaléwa mlukwó mlénkpó no ge pé a échi doodu aman kobi óda noibo ge bi ge le nabó nehi ku hand sanitiza.	45	13
Akpahi juilong chaji k'eduru (IGEDE) owe aka jung ka vula otabwo nyang lenyi bala ucha ka wuu lee ang oguwabwo ole alokirara wuru nyi hand sanitizer kpa tudu abwo nyang uka wuu.	30	8
O li tu otse nE mi onD ongwí O (ETULO) kE kwEkwE yi inggisE/emi ingisE, ongwu dzE yi otse nE ni.	40	11
Others	-	-
Total	340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Data in Table 1 sought to know indigenous language messages on COVID-19 on Radio Benue, Makurdi that residents of Makurdi Metropolis listened to. The results indicate that 225 (66%) of Makurdi residents listened to the message in Tiv, 45 (13%) of Makurdi residents admitted listening to a message in Idoma, 30 (8%) of the respondents listened to messages in Igede, while 40 (11%) of respondents agreed that they have listened to the message in Etulo.

The implication of the data above is that all the sampled respondents have listened to COVID-19 indigenous language messages on radio Benue, Makurdi and are knowledgeable about the disease.

Table 2: Residents of Makurdi Metropolis' response to COVID-19 Radio Benue, Makurdi indigenous language Messages

Options	Frequency	Percentage
I totally believe in the message	312	92
I am panicky, worried and express fear on messages about the COVID-19 Pandemic	18	5
I self-isolate myself	10	3
Others	-	-
Total	340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Data in Table 2 sought to know the response of residents of Makurdi metropolis to radio Benue, Makurdi indigenous language messages on COVID-19. The results show that 312 (92%) of Makurdi residents said they totally believe in the message, 18 (5%) of the residents were panicky, worry and express fear on radio Benue, Makurdi indigenous language messages on the COVID-19 Pandemic, while 10 (3%) of the residents said they self-isolated themselves.

This result implies that the radio Benue, Makurdi indigenous language messages on COVID-19 were impactful as shown by the highest respondents of 312 (92%) who said they totally believe in the radio messages.

This goes to show that the people belief in the messages led them to respond positively to indigenous language messages on Covid-19 through radio Benue, Makurdi in terms of behavior change that kept the rate of infection low in the state as compared to Kano and other states of the federation

Table 3: Extent indigenous language messages on Covid-19 have mitigated spread of pandemic in Benue.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
I wash my hands regularly under running water and constantly use hand Sanitizers to prevent me from contracting the virus	98	29
I wear face mask while in the public places	83	24
I no longer mingle with people in churches, mosques, markets, joints, and clubs	92	27
I sneeze in my flex elbow	67	20
Others	-	-
Total	340	100

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Data in Table 3 sought to assess the extent the messages have mitigated the spread of pandemic in the state. The result indicates that 98(29%) of Makurdi residents said they regularly wash their hands with hand sanitizers under running water, 83 (24%) of the residents correctly agreed that they wear face masks while in public places, 92 (27%) of the respondents agreed that they no longer mingle with people in churches, mosques, markets, joints, and clubs while 67 (20%) of the residents stated that they sneeze in flex elbow when they want to do so in a gathering.

The implication of this result is that messages disseminated in indigenous languages through jingles on radio had more lasting effects than the ones disseminated in English Language. This is attributed to the fact that it has educated more people and has enhanced the spread of valuable life- saving messages in people's local dialects on modalities that could be put in place to enable them stay alive as a measure of containing the spread of the pandemic. It enabled residents of Makurdi metropolis to cultivate positive attitudes towards preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Discussion of Findings

This study assessed the listeners' response to indigenous language messages on Radio Benue, Makurdi on COVID-19 pandemic in the State. Specifically, the study sought to identify indigenous language messages on Covid-19 available to residents of Makurdi metropolis on radio Benue Makurdi, assessed responses of Makurdi residents on Covid-19 indigenous language messages on radio Benue and ascertained the extent the messages have mitigated spread of pandemic in Benue.

Findings in the study established that there are indigenous language messages on radio Benue, makurdi dedicated to enlighten the residents of Makurdi metropolis on COVID-19 pandemic. The findings are affirmed by (66%) of Makurdi residents who said they listened to indigenous language messages on radio Benue, Makurdi on COVID-19 in Tiv, (13%) in said they listened to the messages in Idoma, (8%) of Makurdi residents listened to the message in Iggede, (11%) of the respondents listened to radio message in Etulo. This is supported by Bruce (2011) study which found that radio provides an outlet for the broadcast of health information to consumers in their local dialects.

Another finding revealed that (92%) of the residents of Makurdi metropolis totally believe in the messages and positively responded to Covid-19 protocols that kept the rate of infection low in the state as compared to Kano and other states of the federation. It led them to develop positive attitudes to the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of behavioral change. The finding This shows that the positive response of the people triggers imbibing of desired behaviours such as regular hand washing with alcohol based sanitizer under running water, wearing of face masks while in publics, maintaining social/physical distancing and a host of others that are capable of stopping spread of the virus in the state. These findings are further supported by Kann, Brenner and Allensworth's (2001) that public health education is also an effective tool that helps improve health in developing nations. It not only teaches prevention and basic health knowledge but also conditions ideas that re-shape everyday habits of people with unhealthy lifestyles in developing countries. This type of conditioning not only affects the immediate recipients of such education but also future generations will benefit from an improved and properly cultivated ideas about health that will eventually be ingrained with widely spread health education.

The study also revealed that Radio messages disseminated in indigenous languages through radio Benue, Makurdi have more lasting effects than the ones in English language. These messages influenced residents of Makurdi metropolis by giving them correct information about Covid-19 and as such they cultivated positive attitudes towards preventing spread of the virus. They are actually influenced/ knowledgeable about the COVID-19 pandemic. This is attested to by (29%) of the residents who correctly agreed that they wash their hands regularly with hand sanitizers under running water to prevent them from contracting the virus being the highest respondents. (27%) of the respondents who agreed that they no longer mingle with people in churches, mosques, markets, joints, and clubs, (24%) of the residents said they wear face mask while in the public places, and (20%) of the residents pointed out that they sneeze into their elbows.

The implication of this result is that the radio messages were actually making impact by giving the correct information about COVID-19 and as such residents of Makurdi metropolis became knowledgeable about the virus and were greatly influenced by the indigenous language messages broadcast on radio. This became a big deal as one of the weapons to stop the spread of the disease among residents of Makurdi metropolis. The findings are supported by Collinson, Khan and Heffernan's (2015) study which found that mass media campaigns can be used to provide information on current and effective vaccination, drug therapy and social distancing measures. Public health education campaigns that include informative literature (i.e., pamphlets), posters, newspaper articles and advertisements, radio and television messages as well as social media outlets (i.e., twitter, Facebook) are used daily to inform the public and enable them gain knowledge on current health issues. Hornik's (2002) study also found that mass media outlets can aid in dissemination of health information. The study found that mass media campaigns can elicit positive knowledge and bring about behaviour change as well as prevent negative

attitudes in individuals.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Radio Benue has made remarkable use of indigenous language messages during the corona pandemic. Residents of Makurdi were knowledgeable about the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of the radio Benue, Makurdi indigenous language messages broadcast to them. This has helped in creating the right awareness which has mitigated the spread of the virus in the metropolis. The study also established that collaborative use of indigenous language messages in the health awareness creation on corona pandemic is considered as an indispensable tenet of the media (radio) in fulfilling their fundamental obligation of informing, entertaining and educating.

Recommendations

- i. Outdoor indigenous media eg billboards with indigenous language messages should be used to complement radio or other indigenous media platforms
- ii. The government, NGOs and other stakeholders in health could sponsor more health programmes that are targeted to people in their indigenous languages
- iii. There should be more indigenous language programming and content on radio. Some discussion programmes for example could be interactive encouraging viewpoints of people in their local dialect
- iv. Jingles should be updated regularly with new trends in the disease. In turn, different versions of the jingles should be relayed at different times to communicate more safety measures.
- v. Also, as prescribed by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2016), in order for communication programmes to have impact, it should disseminate appropriate health content that satisfies the following criteria: accuracy, availability, balance, consistency, cultural competence, evidence based, reliability and repetition.
- vi. Indigenous language messages about COVID-19 as used by radio Benue, Makurdi should be replicated by other stations in other states. States like Kano should take a cue from Benue.

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