

## Mass Media and the Campaign against HIV/AIDS in Kano State, Nigeria Study of Nasarawa Local Government

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### **Abstract**

The paper examines the role of mass media in the campaign against HIV/AIDS in Nasarawa Local Government area of Kano State, Nigeria. Agenda setting theory was employed, and survey research method was adopted. Findings revealed that frequent mass media messages should be aired subsequently on HIV/AIDS since it has contributed positively to the reduction of the virus. Majority of respondents have knowledge of what HIV/AIDS means, how it could be infected and prevented. The study shows that campaign messages could help to reduce HIV/AIDS virus as well as help in creating awareness thereby reducing the risk of getting infected. A large proportion of respondents believed that strong mass media messages could help to reduce the virus prevalence. Based on the findings the study recommends that, more programmes should be aired on health. Kano State Government should provide technical and financial support to media stations in order to disseminate more information on health.

**Keywords:** *Mass Media, HIV/AIDS, Government, Health*

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## **Background to the Study**

Communication is crucial in any human society because it helps in creating understanding among individuals and groups as well as society. The concept of communication is being subjected to different interpretations by scholars in different places and in different time. According to Bedregal (2005), communication is the process of creating or sharing meaning in informal conversation, group interaction, or public speaking, and for the concept to be properly understood and how the process work there was the need for proper understanding of the essential elements involved such as participants (who), messages (what), context (where), and channels (how). Communication takes place among individuals and groups and as such this gave rise to different forms of communication among which include intrapersonal (within one self) meditating, interpersonal (between two individuals), group (more than two individuals), organizational (formal or informal, horizontal or vertical) and mass communication which largely targets and focus to diverse and dispersed individuals who may have no physical contact with each other and specifically employ the use of mass media technology to reach the target audience (Bitror, 2003, Folkerts and Lacy 2004).

According to Sambe (2005), mass communication combines the techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devices (press, radio, film, etc) to disseminate symbolic contents to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audience at different places in the world. Communication constitutes human activities which is based on some certain principles, and must be purposeful in order to achieve a given goal. (Udoaka and Iwokwa (2008)

According to Bedregal, (2005), mass media can be categorized into two major sections; the print media and the electronic media, while the print media simply entails the text-based media like newspaper, magazine etc, the electronic media on the other hand entails Television, radio and computer. All these constitute sources of information and communication to individuals and groups based on accessibility. Radio appeals to the large percentage of Africans, both rural and poor urban dwellers. In developing world, they have daily newspaper circulation that is being distributed primarily in the cities; however poverty and high level of illiteracy constituted a limit to which people use the newspapers and magazines. Radio is the most important medium in Africa; because of it accessibility most African countries will seek to use television and radio to foster development by teaching people how to improve their standard of living and prevent themselves against diseases.

On the other hand, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a clinical condition that occurred from infection with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which progressively damages the body's ability to protect itself from disease organisms (Grubman and Oleske, 1996, Letamo, 2005 UN, 2003). HIV kills the T4 helper cells, which are resident of Lymphocytes that are relevant to the body's defense against diseases. Bakare, 2006). Grubman and Oleske (1996), described AIDS as a progressive degenerative disease that targeted major organs and systems including the immune system and the central nervous system. The first case of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was recognized in 1981 in the United States of America, and its impact has cost serious threat on the economies of the developing world (UNDP 2001:122 Grubmam and Oleske, 1996).

### **Statement of Problem**

HIV/AIDS courses serious menace to our lives. The prevalence rate of the disease in Kano State is increasing due to the lack of knowledge on the danger of the disease by people, a lot of people claim ignorance of the existence of the disease. This led to the increase in the number of people living with HIV/AIDS. Communication campaign to fight the diseases therefore must be very vital, and the success of communication campaign must be strategic which should be aligned to the achievement of specific and measurable outcomes, critical elements to the campaign's success should include identifying and understanding the target audience, and finding the most effective media to reach them. It is in the light of the above, the research seeks to find out the relevance of mass media in the campaign against HIV/AIDS in Nasarawa Local Government area of Kano State.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- (a) To ascertain the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS among the residents of Nasarawa Local Government area of Kano State
- (b) To examine the perception of HIV/AIDS campaign among residents of Nasarawa Local Government area of Kano State
- (c) To find out the effectiveness of the campaign among the residents of Nasarawa Local Government area of Kano State

### **Research Questions**

- (a) What is the level of awareness on HIV/AIDS among residents of Nasarawa Local Government Area of Kano State?
- (b) What is the perception of the HIV/AIDS campaign among residents of Nasarawa Local Government Area of Kano State?
- (c) How effective is the campaign against the epidemic among residents of Nasarawa Local Government Area of Kano State?

### **Review Literature**

#### **Mass Media and HIV/AIDS Campaign**

Mass media play significant role in increasing and improving people's knowledge especially on HIV/AIDS, it effectively increase knowledge about HIV transmission, and also improve self-efficiency especially in the use of condom, it also influence some social norms, and increase the amount of interpersonal communication among different individuals and Group about the danger of the disease. (Singh, 2009).

Mass media campaign especially on health can be of paramount important in influencing HIV related outcomes among people. There are so many programmes in Kano State radio and television stations on HIV/AIDS these include "who get this rain coat" beside there are some adverts on both media (television and radio) some of these adverts include "AIDS no dey show for face, 'zip up' use condom, and AIDS is real." The campaign helps people in understanding the danger of the virus and how to take precautions.

Mass media have special place in our lives today, media programme can provide real information especially on health issue. That is why Frelmuth and Kirby, (2000,) reveals that

the behavior change communication is important especially in increasing knowledge, attitude change, and even promote service for prevention, care and support as well as improve skill and sense of self efficiency among the populace.

Mass media provides information among people at large; it displays information about health and even makes people aware in order to prevent the spread of various infectious diseases. Mass media as an agent of informing, socializing, and mobilizing, have the power to structure issues, and influence people's perception and general understanding about their health. The media have pivotal role to play particularly in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Many media organizations strive hard in promoting awareness of HIV/AIDS and educating people about the facts of the epidemic and how to prevent themselves (Ayankogbe, Omotola, Inemi; Ahmed and Manafa; 2003). According to national surveys conducted in the United States 72% of Americans identify television, radio and newspapers as their major primary source of information about HIV/AIDS.

Survey research was also conducted in India and findings revealed that more than 70% of respondents had received their information about HIV/AIDS from television. Mass media have an enormous power in influencing, educating and empowering individuals to fight against the disease. But levels of awareness and even the knowledge about HIV/AIDS differ widely around the globe (Eaton and Flisher, 2000, Letamo, 2005, UNAID, 1999, WHO, 2000)

One of the most obvious roles of mass media is to open channels of communication and foster discussion about health. According to some researches, behavior change communication would assist in this regard for sharing ideas, information and messages for HIV/AIDS prevention. A combination of verbal and nonverbal communication would help to promote HIV/AIDS information to people. (Wangulu, 2008, Nooar, 2009).

The success of any communication campaign must be strategic which should be aligned to the achievement of specific and measurable outcomes, critical elements to the campaign's success must include identifying and understanding the target audience in which the messages must be address to them. And finding the most efficacious media to reach them, Vogel, Schwarze, Wasmuth, Spengler, Saverbruch, Rockstroh, (2010).

The research employed agenda setting theory which was originated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald L. Shaw in 1972 with a core idea that the media must emphasize on an issue that influences the audience and also to view the issue as important (McQuail, 2005). Agenda setting is viewed as the setting of agenda on people's belief and attitude. Thus, the media, by focusing repeated and major attention on an event or set of related of events such as news, information and/or advert messages on health prevention transferred the event into an issue that is highly discussed by the people across the Globe.

Agenda setting posits that audiences learn these salient issues from the news media, thus, incorporating a similar set of weights and importance into their own personal agenda. Folarin (1998) add that, the mass media have an impact on agenda setting in that they have the ability to choose or emphasize certain topics thereby causing the public to perceive the issues

or topics as important. This implies that the mass media predetermine what issues are considered as important as a given time in a given society. Mass media play pivotal role through their packaging, framing and disseminating information about various issues on HIV/AIDS to the people and even made them play agenda-setting role. The media sets the public agenda, in the sense that they may not exactly tell you what to think about but influence on what should think about.

### **Methodology**

Survey research was adopted. Wimmer and Dominick (2011), Babbie (2001) and Gunter, (2000) suggested that survey deals with people; their perception, knowledge, understanding as well as opinion about current condition on a particular phenomenon. Babbie, (2001) Sees survey as an account of some research enquiry which has been done by specific organization method. Survey is selected for this research.

### **Population of the Study**

The population of this study is the entire residents of Nasarawa Local Government. Nasarawa Local Government is one of the Local Governments in Kano state with its headquarters at Bompai area. The Local Government was created in 1984. According to the 2006 population census, Nassarwa Local Government has a population of 596,669. The Local Government has a land mark of 3.4sqm; and it is bordered by Fagge, Kumbotso, Municipal Tarauni and Ungogo Local Governments.

In social science, it is not all population that is studied; some part is selected to represent the whole population. Sample is the subset of the population that represents the entire population for easy generalization (Wimmer and Dominick 2011). Probability sampling was therefore employed. The most basic type of probability sampling is the simple random sampling where each subject or unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected. Simple random sampling was employed.

The various segment that formed the sample population of this research are the eleven wards of the Local Government namely; Dakata, Tudun Murtala, Tudun Wada, Gwagwarwa, Gawuna, Hotoro North, Hotoro South, Giginyu, Gama, Kauran Goje, Kawaji. A total of 275 questionnaires were distributed to the ten wards at random whereby each ward has its number of questionnaires. The table below shows the number of questionnaires that was administered to each ward.

**Table 1.**

Wards	No. of questionnaires	Percentage %
Gwagwarwa	25	10
Giginyu	25	10
Gawuna	25	10
Gama	25	10
Tudun Murtala	25	10
Tudun Wada	25	10
Kaura Goje	25	10
Hotoro North	25	10
Hotoro South	25	10
Kawaji	25	10
Dakata	25	10
TOTAL	275	100

The questionnaires were self-administered to the selected respondents, i.e., personal administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents by the researcher. Frequency tables was used and weighed in simple percentages. Two hundred and seventy-five (275) copies of questionnaires were distributed but only two hundred (250) were properly filled and returned to the researcher. Therefore, the analysis of the study was done based on the number of properly filled questionnaires.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	104	41.6%
Female	146	58.4%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 2 indicates that 104 (41.6%) respondents are male, while 146 (58.4%) respondents are female. Therefore, this means that most of the respondents are female.

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 25 years	75	30%
25 – 30	123	49.2%
30 – 35 years	52	20.8%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 3 indicates that 75 (30%) respondents are between the ages of 20 to 25 years. 123 (49.2%) respondents are between the ages of 25 to 30 is 52 (20.8%) respondents are between the ages of 30 to 35 years. Therefore, most of the respondents are between the ages of 30 to 35 years.



**Table 4:** Distribution of respondents by religion

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	132	52.8%
Islam	117	46.8%
Traditionalist	1	0.4%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 4 indicates that 132 (52.8%) respondents are Christians. 117 (46.8%) respondents are Muslims. 1 (0.4%) respondent is a traditionalist; most of the respondents are Christians.

**Table 5:** Showing the frequency of listening to HIV/AIDS messages

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	107	42.8%
Strongly agree	78	31.2%
Disagree	43	17.2%
Strongly disagree	22	8.8%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 5 indicates that 107 (42.8%) respondents listen to HIV/AIDS campaign messages. 43 (17.2%) respondents do not listen to HIV/AIDS campaign messages. It could be deduced from the above table that most of the respondents listen to HIV/AIDS campaign messages.

**Table 6:** Knowing a lot about HIV/AIDS through different media outlet

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	122	48.8%
Strongly agree	82	32.8%
Disagree	38	15.2%
Strongly disagree	8	3.2%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 6 indicates that 122 (48.8%) respondents know a lot about HIV/AIDS. 38(15.2%) respondents don't know a lot about HIV/AIDS. Therefore, the above table indicates that majority of respondents are aware of HIV/AIDS campaign through different media outlet.

**Table 7:** Listening to HIV/AIDS campaign messages once in a while

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	94	37.6%
Strongly agree	88	35.2%
Disagree	50	20%
Strongly disagree	18	7.2%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 7 indicates that 94 (37.6%) respondents listen to HIV/AIDS campaign messages once in a while. 50 (20%) respondents do not listen to HIV/AIDS campaign messages once in a while. Therefore, most of the respondents listen to HIV/AIDS campaign messages once in a while.

**Table 8:** Mass media campaign on HIV/AIDS should be aired everyday

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	124	49.6%
Strongly agree	111	44.4%
Disagree	10	4%
Strongly disagree	5	2%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 8 indicates that 124 (49.6%) respondents are of the opinion that frequent mass media messages should be aired every day on HIV/AIDS while 10 (4%) respondents are not of the opinion that frequent mass media messages should be aired every day on HIV/AIDS. Therefore, majority of the respondents are of the opinion that mass media messages on HIV/AIDS should be aired every day.

**Table 9:** Mass media should display more dramas and jingles on HIV/AIDS Prevention and treatment

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	115	46%
Strongly agree	98	39.2%
Disagree	21	8.4%
Strongly disagree	16	6.4%
Total	250	100%

**Source:** Researcher's field work 2020

Table 9 indicates that 115(85.2%) respondents are of the opinion that mass media programme should display more dramas and jingles on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, while 21 (8.4%) respondents disagreed to the statement.

### Discussion of Findings

The research findings disclosed that frequent mass media messages should be aired every day on HIV/AIDS as indicated in table 7, since it has contributed positively to the reduction of the virus, higher number of respondents has knowledge of what HIV/AIDS means, and how it could be infected and prevented. The study shows that campaign messages could help to reduce the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS as well as help in creating awareness thereby reducing the risk of being infected. A large proportion of respondents believed that strong mass media messages could help reduce the virus prevalence. The study shows that campaign messages on HIV/AIDS had help in educating the residents of Nasarawa Local Government Area of Kano State.



## Conclusion

The study examined the role of mass media in the campaign against HIV/AIDS among residents of Nasarawa Local Government Area of Kano State. The result discovered that mass media play significance role in the eradication of HIV/AIDS. Majority of Respondents received different messages on HIV/AIDS through different media channels.

## Recommendations

1. Kano State Government should provide financial and technical support to media stations in Kano State in order to disseminate more information on health.
2. Media stations should monitor and evaluate campaign messages on HIV/AIDS through research in order to ensure that the message gets to the target audience.
3. Every member of the society should contribute positively to the campaign against HIV/AIDS.
4. Non-Governmental Organization should sponsor HIV/AIDS programme on different channels of Communication in Kano State.

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