

INFLUENCE OF MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS
ON HIV/AIDS AMONG STUDENTS OF
FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
ABEOKUTA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The spread of HIV/AIDS has become a social, economic and political concern in Nigeria, particularly in the rural areas where there is low literacy rate, superstition, and different social and cultural taboos. Government and other voluntary organizations have been using the mass media campaigns as remedial tool to fight against the HIV/AIDS. Every year millions of naira is spent on media programmes and campaigns (television programmes, newspaper advertisements, radio messages, campus press boards and other form of communication to combat against the HIV/AIDS in tertiary institutions). The objective of the study is to find out the impact of mass media campaigns to awareness, attitude and possible preventive measures on our campuses. The study adopted a descriptive research design and the population for the study comprised of all students at the Federal College of Education, Abeokuta. 250 students aged 15 years and above were selected as samples randomly. The study finds that majority of the students have a sufficient exposure to the mass media campaigns but much are expected in the area of prints media. Television and radio are the main source of

knowledge about the HIV/AIDS among the students. The study concluded that the role of mass media cannot be overemphasized in the control of HIV/AIDS infections among the students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Keywords: Mass Media, Campaigns, HIV/AIDS, attitude, awareness, preventions.

Introduction

Today, HIV/AIDS is influencing every segment of society in Nigeria. Because of high rates of HIV/AIDS, the epidemic is deepening poverty, reversing human development, worsening gender inequalities, overburdening the government, swaying the economy and lowering the reputation of the country. In the absence of possible treatment, intervention programmes such as awareness, information spreading and knowledge sharing have the significant impact to minimizing HIV/AIDS and diminishing high risk behaviours among people. In this regard, mass media campaigns have been used with high frequency around the world to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS (Palmgreen, Noar, & Zimmerman (2007). The subject of HIV/AIDS is one of the very many topical issues of global concern that is deep rooted in the social studies. UNICEF (2004) observed that about 25-28 million adults and children in Sub-Saharan African live with it. World Health organization (WHO, 1998) also reported that more than one million children born by HIV/AIDS positive mothers, about nine out of every ten HIV positive children die before they are one year of age. However, because a large population of Nigeria is illiterate and living in rural areas, it is very important to educate them about the dangers of HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, mass media campaigns are frequently employed since it is in their ability to reach every person in an effective way, giving such mass media campaigns great potential as an instrument in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS (Cohen 2005). However, from the past few years, it is believed that Nigeria has been paying more attention to HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and with the assistance of these campaigns it remained successful to reduce the pace of HIV/AIDS. On the other hand, it is found that mass media campaigns

are not fully able to change the attitude and behaviour of people particularly in rural areas as it is expected. Sex is a taboo topic in Nigeria, thus the spread of information about HIV/AIDS prevention is inhibited. Stigma and discrimination continued to be important barriers to prevention, care and treatment (UNICEF, 2004).

Over the past two decades, mass media have been used all around the world as a tool in the combat against HIV/AIDS (Liskin, 1990; Myhre & Flora, 2000). Although there have been theoretical debates on how and why mass media communications influence behaviour, there is considerable empirical evidence showing that the mass media can be used for attitude and behavioural changes associated with HIV/AIDS (Bertrand, et al., 2006; Oakley, Fullerton, & Holland, 1995). In the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, mass media intervention programmes focused on behavioural change that limits one's risky behaviour and promotes safer sex. More recent mass media intervention programs have expanded to addressing the full continuum of HIV/AIDS issues, from prevention to treatment to care and support (McKee, Bertrand, & Becker-Benton, 2004). The target audience of most mass media campaigns has been the general public, especially youth (Bertrand, O'Reilly, Denison, Anhang, & Sweat, 2006).

Mass media HIV/AIDS campaigns utilize multiple channels of delivery (Myhre & Flora, 2000). Those that employ television media appear to be most cost-effective, as television broadcasts reach the majority of the population. Television campaigns usually yield the strongest impact in terms of HIV/AIDS awareness, transmission knowledge, interpersonal communication and behavioural change, as opposed to campaigns using other channels, such as radio or print media (Chatterjee, 1999; Keating, Meekers, & Adewuyi, 2006; Sood & Nambiar, 2006). The effectiveness of interventions is influenced not only by the type of channel of delivery but also by the level of exposure to media messages. For example, a study of an HIV/AIDS mass media campaign in Kenya (Agha, 2003) revealed a dose-response relationship, whereby a higher intensity of exposure to the campaign media led to more favourable outcomes such as safer sex, higher perceived self-efficacy in condom use negotiation and higher perceived condom-efficacy. Fatusi (2004), observed in

the study conducted that most Nigerians consider all forms of mass media acceptable for reaching the populace with information about HIV/AIDS and family planning. Radio was the most accepted (89.3%), followed by television (82.3%), and the print media (79.8%). The survey also found that most Nigerians listen to radio regularly, with 50.4% indicating that they listen to radio most every day; another 18.9% listen at least once a week. 28% watch television every day or almost every day and 12.9% watch television at least once a week. Thus, the media habits of Nigerians are such that a good proportion can be reached through well-packaged mass media programs, particularly radio programs. The success recorded with the use of mass media techniques in family planning in Nigeria lends credence for their use in HIV/AIDS control, as well as for other health and social development activities.

This paper investigates and discusses the awareness level of students, knowledge of prevention and their attitudes towards those living with the HIV/AIDS scourge on our campuses.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does mass-media campaign influence students' awareness on HIV/AIDS infections?
2. To what extent does mass-media campaign affects students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS infections?
3. To what extent does mass-media campaign prevent HIV/AIDS among students'?

Method

The population of the study includes the entire population of the students at the three levels of study at the Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Through a purposive and random sampling procedure, samples of 250 participants were considered.

The questionnaire titled "Effects of Mass media Campaigns on HIV/AIDS among Tertiary Institution" was the main instrument used for the data collection; it contains 15 items which sought information on the variables such as awareness, attitude and

preventive knowledge. The instrument was both face and content validated through the assistance of experts in the field of educational evaluation while its reliability was ensured through a test-retest approach. The reliable coefficient of 0.85 was obtained. The data was analysed through the use of descriptive statistics including frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

Result

Research Question 1: To what extent do mass media campaigns influence students' awareness on HIV/AIDS infections?

Table 1: Awareness on HIV/AIDS

S/N	QUESTIONS	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (X)	Std. Dev.
1.	There are radio programme that is intended to help prevent infection of HIV/AIDS among students'?	30 (12.0)	3 (1.2)	61 (24.5)	155 (62.2)	1.90	0.637
2.	There are television programme that is intended to help prevent infection of HIV/AIDS among students'?	44 (17.7)	9 (3.6)	40 (16.1)	156 (62.7)	2.06	0.693
3.	There are campaign programmes among the campus press clubs in the prevention of HIV/AIDS among students'?	67 (26.9)	9 (3.6)	51 (20.5)	122 (49.0)	2.01	0.788
4.	There are periodicals on the possible preventions of HIV/AIDS among students'?	52 (20.8)	12 (4.8)	56 (22.4)	130 (52.0)	2.11	0.784
5.	There are bulletins and flyers available on campus addressing the prevention of HIV/AIDS among students'?	64 (25.7)	15 (6.0)	71 (28.5)	99 (39.8)	2.15	0.874

Table 1 reveals that there is a remarkable influence of mass media on the awareness level of HIV/AIDS infections among students'. This could be noticed in the responses of the respondents, for instance, they confirmed that there are radio programmes that focus on the prevention of HIV/AIDS ($X=1.90$), there are television programmes targeted at preventing HIV/AIDS ($X=2.06$), campus press clubs also assist in the campaigns to prevent the infections ($X=2.01$), there are periodicals targeting at prevent the scourge ($X=2.11$), and also preventions through bulletins and fliers are pronounced on campus ($X=2.15$). These points to the fact that mass media contributed immensely to the awareness level of students' on the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Research Question 2: To what extent do mass media campaigns affects students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS infections?

Table 2: Attitude to HIV/AIDS

S/N	QUESTIONS	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (X)	Std. Dev.
1.	If a student became sick with HIV, would you be willing to care for him/her?	34 (13.6)	48 (19.2)	130 (52.0)	38 (15.2)	2.69	0.891
2.	If a student is infected with HIV, would you keep it a secret?	70 (28.1)	43 (17.3)	57 (22.9)	78 (31.3)	2.31	1.072
3.	Pre-testing for HIV should be compulsory before admission into schools.	46 (18.5)	30 (12.1)	85 (34.3)	87 (35.1)	2.86	1.095
4.	Students' with the virus should be segregated amidst his/her colleagues.	62 (25.1)	111 (44.9)	51 (20.6)	23 (9.3)	2.14	0.902
5.	Should an infected person be admitted into the school hostels?	81 (9.7)	24 (37.7)	49 (19.8)	93 (37.7)	2.06	0.956

Table 2 result reveals influence of students' attitude towards those of their counterpart that are living with the scourge. The study show that HIV/AIDS awareness and campaigns has a major impact on the level of knowledge the student attained with a significant change in attitude and behaviour. This was evident in the responses from the various respondents. Willingness of students' in caring for an infected person (X= 2.69) will knowing of a person's status of the scourge be kept secret (X= 2.31), should pre-testing of the disease be made compulsory before school admissions? (X= 2.86), students with the virus should be isolated (X= 2.14), and should an infected person(s) be allowed in the hostels? (X= 2.06). The responses also show that the mass media assisted the students in their attitudinal responses to those with the scourge.

Research Question 3: Can media campaigns prevent HIV/AIDS among students?

Table 3: Preventive Measures

S/N	QUESTIONS	SD	D	A	SA	Mean (X)	Std. Dev.
1.	Appropriate use of condoms prevent HIV/AIDS	68 (27.3)	53 (21.3)	75 (30.1)	53 (21.3)	2.45	1.107
2.	The use of family planning pills help in reducing HIV/AIDS risk	60 (24.0)	92 (36.8)	59 (23.6)	39 (15.6)	2.31	1.005
3.	I can get vaccinated to prevent the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS	80 (32.4)	81 (32.8)	65 (26.3)	21 (8.5)	2.11	0.959
4.	Strong faith and belief in a religion could prevent HIV/AIDS	109 (43.8)	76 (30.4)	53 (21.2)	12 (4.8)	1.87	0.909
5.	The use of traditional herbs helps prevent HIV/AIDS infections.	109 (43.8)	77 (30.9)	42 (16.9)	21 (8.4)	1.90	0.968

Table 3 reveals that effective media campaigns plays a tremendous role in awakening students consciousness in applying appropriate preventive measures in the prevention of HIV/AIDS scourge. Use of condom prevent the virus ($X= 2.45$), family planning piles help reduce the infections ($X= 2.31$), vaccination could help prevent the virus ($X= 2.11$), religious faith and beliefs could help prevent it ($X= 1.87$), and the use of traditional medicines could also help tp prevent the virus ($X= 1.90$).

Table 4: Showing the frequency of the mass media that most address the very many issues that have to do with the scourge.

Mass Media that Provides Most Information on HIV/AIDS	
Television	155 (62.2)
Radio	61 (24.5)
Press Boards	30 (3.0)
Periodicals	3 (1.2)

The result of table 4 reveals that according to the respondents, television programmes provides them the maximum information on HIV/AIDS while 24.5% often got information through the radio programmes. Students press boards and periodicals provides them less information respectively.

Table 5: Showing correlation among study variables.

Variables	Pearson coefficient	Decision (< 0.05)
Awareness and Mass-media	0.727	Sig.
Attitudes and Mass-media	0.168	Sig.
Preventive measures and Mass-media	0.273	Sig.

Table 5 above reveal that the potency and efficiency of mass media on the awareness level of the students on HIV/AIDS is significant at (0.727) coefficient, it is also significant on the attitudinal reactions

of the students towards those of their colleagues that are infected with the virus at (0.168) coefficient. Lastly, on the preventive measures, it shows that mass media also has a great impact on the preparation of the students in approaching prevention of the scourge effectively at (0.273) coefficient.

Discussion of Findings

Three research questions were generated based on the reviewed literature. These questions led to the three findings which are discussed here in details.

The first research question, "To what extent do mass media campaigns influence students' awareness on HIV/AIDS infections?" This study found that there was a remarkable influence of mass media campaigns on the awareness level of HIV/AIDS infections among students because of its vast expanse of awareness level through radio channels, and campus press activities, circulation of periodicals, flyers and bulletins. This finding corroborated the submissions of Cohen (2005) that mass media campaigns are frequently employed since their ability to reach every person in an effective way, given such mass media campaigns great potential as an instrument in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS.

The finding could be as a result of students' accessibility to televisions, radios, campus press boards, periodicals, bulletins and very many other means of ensuring that information reach the ambient of all and sundry. With more mass media programmes aiming at preventing this scourge, the society can then be rests assured that more of the information will reach a larger proportion of the students' populace.

The second research question, "To what extent do mass media campaigns affects students' attitude towards HIV/AIDS infections?" This study found that a fair departure from the usual phobia that people with HIV/AIDS should not be seen around those without the scourge. Students are now very ready to assist and care for sick colleagues, they are also well informed that they does not necessarily need to keep information of an infected person secret so as for them to be able to get appropriate care, a pre-test is also favoured for a condition of admission into schools, those with the scourge should

also be well admitted and adequately integrated into the society. Though, a sizeable number of the student populace still don't have good disposition towards those living with the scourge. This finding also corroborated the submission of (UNICEF 2004), that mass media campaigns are not fully able to change the attitude and behaviour of people particularly in rural areas as it is expected. Sex is a taboo topic in Nigeria, thus the spread of information about HIV/AIDS prevention is inhibited.

The third research question, "Can media campaigns prevent HIV/AIDS among students?" This study reveals that students are adequately exposed to various preventive measures that could be of help in the prevention of the spread of the scourge. Appropriate use of condom could be of immense help in the prevention and reduction of the scourge. Appropriate use of condom could be of immense help in the prevention and reduction of the scourge, the use of family planning pills as a possible measure in the prevention and reduction of the scourge, the use of family planning pills as a possible measure in the prevention was rejected and this actually shows that the potency of it could only be traced to the protection against unwanted pregnancy, been vaccinated does not prevent HIV/AIDS, religious belief, strong faith and trado-medical herbs also does not prevent the infection but rather abstinence of all forms.

The findings also corroborated the submission of (Agha, 2003) that a dose-response relationship, whereby a higher intensity of exposure to the campaign media led to more favourable outcomes such as safer sex, higher perceived self-efficacy in condom use negotiation and higher perceived condom efficacy. All these portend that effective use of the precautionary measure will actually help in the reduction and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

The findings also reveal that television campaigns is the most use and most effective in reaching the wide populace about the possible preventions that could be of help in the reduction of the scourge. Though, the radio is seen to the closest to the television but not with that high patronage but, reasonably still one of the media to be reckoned with in aiding the drastic reduction of the scourge.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The impact of the mass media campaign is effective with regards to changing attitude and behaviours to adopt preventions. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered for better awareness of students on the HIV/AIDS scourge among the tertiary institution students-the sustenance of mass media must be maintained for easy and wide coverage of the expected circulation of all necessary information that could help in sensitizing the students in having precautionary measure. Attitudinal change must be ensured as one of the potential ingredient in ensuring HIV/AIDS prevention in our society.

It is also very important that a continuous campaigns strategy be designed for disseminating valuable information that will continuously educate the mind of the students on the various challenges that could possibly impede the prevention strategies. Television and radio seen as the most viable in this study should be sustained for effective spread of information on the scourge.

The mass media has a valuable role to play in disseminating information about HIV/AIDS and Nigeria's strategic frame work to fight this disease. The challenge lies with ensuring good implementation on a continued basis. Thus, the document needs to be widely distributed; the capacities of stakeholders must be developed for effective implementation; and good oversight of the implementation and coordination must be ensured to bring the vision of the findings to reality and effectively check the spread of HIV in Nigeria. In summary, the study suggests that mass media campaigns are useful tools to fight against HIV/AIDS in rural areas if designed efficiently and followed carefully.

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