ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Radio Programme Effectiveness on Malaria Prevention among Awka Residents.

OPARA, NDIDIAMAKA Ph.D & MMAJU, SOMTOCHUKWU UCHE

Abstract

Assessment of Purity FM radio programme on malaria prevention is an evaluation of how the radio is used for sensitization of Awka residents on how to prevent malaria among them. Ailments and fatalities have severally occurred with grave consequence to families. It became necessary to find if Purity fm has been able to create the desired awareness about how to prevent malaria, the extent to which the residents understand the presented prevention techniques and whether the station's programmes have been effective in persuading prevention methods for the malaria scourge. The survey research method was adopted to obtain data from 384 residents in Awka selected through the Wimmer& Dominick sample size calculator from the city's stations listenership. The social learning theory was used to explain obtained results. It was found that 62% of radio listeners, become aware of malaria prevention methods, 96% understood the various prevention methods as presented and 56% adopted the suggested methods. The study concluded that majority of radio listeners in Awka were sensitized to adopt the suggested malaria prevention techniques. It was recommended that malaria prevention items be subsidized to become affordable to many more residents. The programme should not cease because malaria is not a seasonal ailments. Details about the toxicity of recommended insecticides be thoroughly explained in the programme to remove fear about its use.

Keywords: radio programme, malaria prevention, purity fm, assessment.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the media in Nigeria have been awash with the provision of more than ₦240billion for the purchase of treated mosquito nets to be purchased and distributed in Nigeria by the federal government as proposed in the 2022 budget proposal (AIT, 2021, CHANNELS, 2021). The amount was justified by the claim of malaria as a major fatality cause among pregnant women and children. For instance, the NMCP strategic plan 2009-2013 (NCDC, 2015) believes that malaria accounts for about 30% hospitalizations and 60% outpatients' visits in Nigeria. It asserts that about 225,000 deaths annually involving children less than five years of age are traceable to malaria while 11% of maternal mortality and 10% of low birth weights are caused by malaria (MIS, 2010). The import is that malaria scourge is devastating to Nigerian families among which Awka residents belong, hence the desire to devise radio programmes to address the health issue.

Malaria is transmitted by mosquitoes as the primary vector. The health people (2010) believe that plasmodium falcipanium transmitted by mosquito bites account for more than 95% of malaria infection cases. It becomes vivid that efforts should be geared towards the eradication of the mosquitoes and where not possible, makes the vector unable to access humans so as to prevent malaria contraction. This view suggests why the direct elimination of mosquitoes or their reduction as well as their inability to prey on humans form the kernel of the radio programme on malaria prevention. It is believed that where mosquitoes are incapacitated, malaria prevention can improve among residents in Awka as the basis for the radio programmes on malaria prevention on Purity fm station. How this belief is acquired by Awka residents becomes measurable like in this study.

Mosquitoes particularly the Anopheles species carry the disease around in the rain forest zone in Nigeria. Agbo (2016) says that the five ecological strata from south to north "define vector species dominance, seasonality and intensity of malaria transmission: mangrove swamps, rain forest, guinea-Sudan and Sahel savannah". Awka is in the rain forest zone; hence, predisposing the town to all seasonal malaria infested mosquitoes with range of entomological incubation rate (EIR) OF 18 to 45 infective bites for persons in a year for the anopheles gambiae and 12 to 54 for the anopheles funestus (Adekoya, 2001). It means that humidity of the area makes mosquitoes survive throughout the year to

wreck havoc on the residents. The radio programme on malaria preventions therefore deal with how the incidence of mosquito bites can be minimized in order to reduce the prevalence of the malaria scourge in Awka town in particular. The study investigated whether the preventive strategy for limiting mosquito bites is understood by the residents as a thrust for this study since the victor survives all-year-round in the environment.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

How to persuade radio health programme listeners to consider choosing a malaria prevention method on exposure to the presented programme is a problem in the use of the radio for public enlightenment. Purity FM Awka programmes are easily accessible in Awka metropolis and was used for health education on how to prevent malaria among the citizenry. It became necessary to assess whether the presented programmes were effective in persuading listeners' adoption of any of the suggested malaria prevention methods. This study believes that those who are exposed to the radio programmes learn lessons that aid their need satisfaction. It means that the provided information in the programme should be capable of satisfying audience interest for persuasion and behavioural change to occur. What therefore, was the lesson learnt by the listeners from the Purity FM radio health programme? How did the listeners react towards the suggested malaria prevention approaches? Can the radio programme be said to persuade method consideration and adoption in order to prevent malaria among the residents? These and other raised issues form the focus of this study.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the study was to determine whether radio listeners of Purity FM radio health programme on malaria prevention were persuaded to adopt prevention approaches after being exposed to the programme. Specifically, three goals were set to be achieved by the study as follows:

1. To find the level of Awka residents' exposure to Purity FM as to become aware of the health programme on malaria prevention.
2. To know the extent to which the residents understood the cause of malaria and its prevention methods.
3. To determine whether any significant relationship existed between understanding the prevention method and its adoption by the audience in Awka metropolis.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The three questions posed to direct the study were as follows:

1. What is the level of exposure of Awka residents to Purity-FM health programme on malaria prevention?
2. What is the extent of malaria cause identification and understanding of how it can be prevented?
3. Did any significant relationship exist between listeners understanding of malaria and adoption prevention method?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The only research hypotheses presented for testing as a guide to research findings were as follows:

H_o: listening to purity fm health programme on malaria prevention did not persuade consideration and choice of a prevention method.

H_1: there was a significant effect on the consideration and use of a particular prevention method after listening to malaria prevention methods on purity fm by Awka residents.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Awka metropolis including wards within 15kilometres radius from Aroma junction served as the environment where Awka residents are located. Purity FM as radio Nigeria Awka transmits from the area and it's received by persons within that sphere of coverage in the metropolis. The study investigated the level of exposure of the residents to the health programme of the station as to become aware of malaria prevention methods, the extent to which the cause of malaria was indentified so as to understand adequate prevention measure to adopt and to determine if any significant relationship

existed between listenership and method adoption. Only the opinion of the adult residents in Awka was obtained through the survey research method. The social learning theory was used to explain how the residents were able to choose any method while the uses and gratification theory enabled the study to explain the significant nature of the programme's effect on listeners.

SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

Findings made from the study will advise government and donors on the predominant method considered for use by Awka residents. In that way, the expected provisions will be tailored to meet the expectations of the users. Any found defect will also be noted and remedial actions contemplated for addressing it so as to increase patronage to the presented methods.

Results obtained from the study shall provide insight into how radio programmes are used by listeners to deal with their needs in the society like in malaria prevention. Programme producers, such as health programme producers will understand the extent to which audience need satisfaction drives programme awareness, consumption and understanding in audience interest satisfaction.

Scholars and researcher will enjoy added literature in radio use in public affairs particularly in public enlightenment for health purpose. Any identified issue then becomes researchable in order to provide a more holistic knowledge on how the malaria scourge can be addressed with a greater result in the society. It will also provide the basis for replicative studies in the use of media for malaria prevention on other human environments.

CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

Okunna and Omenugha (2000) believe that radio is a pervasive audio medium capable of reaching listeners within an expansive sphere of coverage. Its adaptability to cultural environments makes its use apt in different areas in the society. This view explains why radio uses language to address issues of public concern like malaria as a health hazard. It is through audio presentation of facts that mental picturisation; necessary for understanding raised issues are delivered (Owuamalam, 2003). The use of radio therefore, makes public affairs programme on malaria prevention easily accessible to Awka residents.

Radio programmes are "the major commodities which broadcast stations offer to their consumers. They are designed to satisfy a specific need of the station's audience as the reason for tuning to the radio station. It is audience interest satisfaction that is addressed by radio programme content (Orajiaka, 2007). For instance, how to deal with malaria through its prevention is worrisome to Awka residents. Consequently, the issue was used by Purity fm Awka in health programmes to discuss the issue as a public concern and proffer solution to the malaria scourge.

The radio programme therefore, had a mission, to deal with malaria that torments society as its objective (Owuamalam, 2017). It sought to create awareness about the vector that conveys the ailment and how it can be dealt with in order to protect persons and prevent the ailments. The programmes were therefore, aimed at prevention rather than cure. It

Malaria prevention formed the broad theme for the programme with treatment of the respective methods as the sub-themes. The programme production strategy provides listeners with an opportunity to learn and understand programme contents as educational in nature with a dialectic effect (Owuamalam, 2006). The presentation of the programme during the rainy season shows an understanding that sensitization is required to propel Awka residents to deal with mosquito as malaria vector within the rain-forest zone where Awka belongs. In that way; reduction of mosquito bites through preventive methods was expected to be embraced by the listeners. It became necessary to determine how the programme was understood and used by the listeners to satisfy their audience needs.

The social learning theory was considered important to this study because it sees "people as learners whose cognitions could make a difference in the acquisition of new attitudes and behaviours" (Miller, 2002, p.339). For instance, humans sleep normally without protection against mosquitoes

that carry malaria parasites; (plasmodium) as the causative agent of malaria (IOM, 2003). It means that what causes malaria must be identified and known so as to understand how its prevention can occur. In that way, persons exposed to media content like radio programmes on malaria prevention learn to appreciate what causes malaria and how it can be prevented such as like through the experience of Awka residents exposed to the health programme of Purity FM Awka.

The social learning theory was relabeled by the lead developer of the theory, Albert bandura prior to 1990 to the social cognitive theory. The basic tenet is that observation models emulation as a learning process and a behavioural change effects. Baran and Davis (2000, p.184) view the modeling process as imitation based on "direct, mechanical reproduction of behaviour". The import is that the created image in the head of the programme consumer is actualized to reproduce the expected behaviour as the effect of being exposed to the presented radio programme. In that way, the radio listener imbibes the learnt lesson from the Purity FM health programme on how to combat the vector and be free from, malaria.

Also, the Uses and Gratification theory was considered relevant to this study. The basic instinct of humans is to avoid pain hence the desire to seek ways of preventing ailments or adverse health situations like in malaria that may result in fatalities. The individual therefore, seeks information as to how malaria could be prevented hence their exposure to the Purity FM health programme on malaria prevention. This desire for information is expected to be satisfied by the presentation from the health programme. Miller (2002) sees the desire as need to be satisfied and calls it the "expected gratification". Also, Rubin (1977) advances selectivity, in the programme type to be exposed to, attention in the sense of what is to be derived from the exposure and involvement as the effect of being exposed to the media content. It is the effect that could be ascribed to as the obtained gratification which is what the programme consumer does with the programme content. It is how they "obtained gratification" matches with the expected gratification that can attest to whether a behavioural change will occur or not. Katz, Blumler and Gurenvitch as the developers of the theory provide the basis for measuring how observed behaviour matches programme objective after consumption. (Miller, 2002).

Omu (1978) extols the essence of public enlightenment of a confidence building strategy through the provision of relevant public information. He studied how the early press in Nigeria broadcast the horizon of political consciousness of the citizenry in understands how to meet their civil obligation and demand performance from the colonial government. The import of his study was the creation of awareness through exposure of media audience to knowledge expected to help in human response to situations within ones environment. In the present study, an evaluation of Awka residents' exposure to programme content on malaria prevention from Purity FM Awka sensitized the listeners on how to deal with mosquitoes as malaria causing vectors. The efficacy of the programme in achieving attitudinal change about mosquitoes and consequent behaviour in respect of malaria prevention become notable.

Schramm (1984) believes that for development including improvement occurs when the spirit of the humans as audience is elevated in order to stimulate both the spiritual and physical interest in embracing change. This view explains why Nworgu (2012) believes that a unique selling proposition ought to be initiated in persuasive communication and aligned to societal needs and experience for any meaning but impact to be expected as behaviour changes.

Development communication is necessary in changing public opinion in favour of a given cause.

Owuamalam and Owuamalam (2003) argue that information contained in the message must be stimulating enough to motivate mass appeal necessary for mass mobilization. It means therefore, that a successful radio health programme like that of Purity FM must identify a societal problem and provide suggestions as to how to deal with it. The idea therefore, formed the template for assessing Purity FM radio programme effectiveness on

malaria prevention among Awka residents.

Agbo (2016) evaluated Purity FM programme, "Gbochie Oria Iba" among pregnant women in rural areas of Anambra state and found the programme rewarding to the women as they were able to know how to protect themselves against mosquito bites. The current study was not demographically oriented and urban residents were investigated to ascertain how they addressed malaria prevention among themselves after listening to the same radio station's health programme

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was used to obtain data from a sample of Awka residents' population who listened to "your health" on Purity fm Awka. The sample was used as a faithful representation of the population (Owuamalam, 2012). The population in this study concerned only those who listened to Purity fm in Awka (Nwogu, 2000) and particularly listeners of the radio health programme. The sample was used since it would be difficult to identify and study the entire population of radio listeners in Awka, within the allotted time for the study (Nwodu, 2017). It is believed that result obtained from the sample use can be generalized across the population it represented (Asika, 2005), hence, the decision to use the sample determined by this study.

Listeners of Purity fm in Awka is assumed to be above 100,000 persons and the Cozby's formular at 5% margin of error was used to determine the sample size as 384. The sample was allocated to four wards in Awka equally at 96 each. The parity method (Okoro, 2000) was applied since the exact population of radio listeners in each ward was unknown otherwise, the proportionate percentage method would have been used. The simple random without replacement method (Gravetter & Frazano, 2005) was used as a probability sampling technique to select four out of the 10 wards in the town. names of all the wards were written on separate sheets of paper, folded, mixed in a bowl from which one was selected at a time and not returned thenafter to the bowl. The selected name of the ward was written and the procedure was followed for three more times to obtain the four desired wards. The selected wards were Ifitte, Umuokpu, Obinagu and Amaenyi. Each ward got a sample of 96 respectively.

The questionnaire was used as tool for data collection. It enabled the study to ask the same set of questions to different respondents as the basis for data collection and measurement. The instrument was tested for structural coherence and statically competence (Wimmer&Dominick, 2011) using the face value approach. The certification of the measuring instrument indicated its validity as tool for data collection.

Also, the pilot study approach was used to determine reliability for the measuring instrument. The test and retest method (Okeke, 2006) was applied in Amawbia, Awka, using 10 respondents. Obtained results show similarity in the two conducted tools. Which confirms that the tool for data collection was reliable each time it was used for a similar study in a research environment?

The frequency table method was used to present obtained data. The tables were numbered serially for easy identification with specific titles. Data were placed in mutually exclusive categories (Nwodu, 2017) so that no item fell into two categories at the same time. The simple percentage method was used to determine what and why questions while the how questions were dealt with rough the weighted mean approach which Owuamalam (2012) calls the Likert scale. The five-point scale was used in the study also to test the only hypothesis formulated for the study. Obtained result aided in discussing made findings. The seven questions posed to guide the study were as follows:

1. Do you listen to purity fm (radio Nigeria, Awka)?
   (a) Yes (b) no (c) sometimes
2. Are you aware of "your health" programme on purity fm on malaria prevention?
   (a) Yes (b) no (c) can't say
3. How do you understand the message in the programme for malaria prevention?
   _____
   _____
4. What have you learnt from the programme?
   _____

5. Has the programme affected your attitude to mosquitoes?
   (a) Yes (b) no (c) not sure
6. Which method of malaria prevention is acceptable for use by you?
7. The presented malaria prevention methods make me adopt preventive measures against mosquito bites.
   (a) Very true (b) true (c) not really (d) false (e)very false

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The three questions asked in the study, based on the three stated objectives were answered using the above questions in the above questionnaire. The research questions (RQ) were presented and answered, it was also seen that 20 copies or 5. 20% of the questionnaire administered through the convenience method (Mojekwu, 2000) were invalid for the study hence the use of 364 valid copies of the study.

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

What is the level of awareness created by Purity fm on malaria prevention?

The study firstly determined if respondents listened to Purity fm and its health programmes. The level of exposure to the radio and its contents was first established so as to certify the competence of the respondents to participate in the study. Item 1 in the questionnaire was used for answering the question the study. Obtained data were analyzed as follows:

Table 1: Respondents Exposure to Purity FM Programmes

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	278	76.37
No	12	3.30
Sometimes	74	20.33
Total	364	100.00

Result show that more than three-quarter of the respondents listened to purity FM. It means that the level of exposure to the programmes of the station was high at 76%. The study decided to remove responses from the 12 respondents who do not listen to the station because they are incompetent to discuss the programme they were not exposed to it. It means therefore, that 352 responses should provide the data needed to deal with the study.

Again, the researcher used item 2 in the questionnaire to obtain data related to the extent of programme awareness for the prevention of malaria through "your health". Obtained data were analyzed as follows:

Table 2: Extent of Awareness Created on Malaria Prevention by Purity FM

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	226	62.09
No	18	4.95
Can't Remember	120	32.96
Total	364	100.00

Above result shows that more than three-fifths of the respondents were aware of the health programme on malaria prevention through the health programmes of purity FM, Awka. While one-third did not remember if they became aware of malaria prevention through the radio station and less than one-tenth were not aware. It shows that majority of the respondents at 62% became aware of malaria prevention through purity FM. Again, the study decided to leave out provided data from those who were not aware of malaria prevention through purity FM Awka. It implied that the study was continued with 344 respondents.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

What is the extent of message understanding derived from the presented methods for malaria prevention in the programme?

Item 3 in the questionnaire was used to know how the message in the malaria prevention programme was understood by the respondents. Obtained data were analyzed to determine if the purpose of the programme was appreciated by the listeners as radio audience of the Purity FM health programme through malaria cause identity. The details were as follows:

Table 3: Malaria Cause Understanding by the Residents.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Mosquito bites	283	77.75
Sand flies	16	4.40
Can't really say	65	17.85
Total	364	100.00

Result above shows that the extent of understanding of the cause of malaria was high at 78% or more than three-quarters of the respondents could identify mosquito bite as the major vector for malaria transmission? It means that more than half of the respondents and indeed, majority understood what causes malaria. Above investigation was necessary because the respondents ought to identify the cause correctly in order to appreciate what has to be done to prevent the vector's access to humans.

Again, the researchers enquired whether respondents understood how malaria can be prevented by residents in Awka. Item 4 in the study was used to know if residents as radio programme listeners were able to understand how to deal with mosquitoes in order to prevent them from accessing humans with their bites. Obtained data were analyzed as follows:

Table 4: Knowledge of Malaria Prevention Methods

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Use of insecticide treated nets at bed time	190	52.20
Use of insecticides as sprays in rooms	124	34.06
Taking of malaria prevention medicine	34	9.34
Confused about the methods	16	4.40
Total	364	100.00

Result above shows that more than half of the respondents become aware that insecticide treated nets used as covering at bed time prevents mosquito access to an individual, while more than one-third learnt about the use of insecticides as spray to kill and demobilize mosquitoes and abate , one-tenth understood that anti-malaria medicines can prevent malaria. It means that a high level of understanding about how malaria can be prevented existed at 95% in Awka metropolis.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE

What attitude did the purity-FM malaria prevention methods make you to adopt?

How the respondents reacted to malaria prevention information on the programme level to the use of item 5 in the questionnaire to even know whether the health programme moved the listener as respondents to adopt any recommended prevention approach. Obtained data were analyzed as follows:

Table 5: Effects of Programme on Malaria Prevention Method Adoption

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Persuaded to use mosquito nets	198	54.40
Moved to use insecticides	102	28.02
Thought about combining different methods	64	17.58
Total	364	100.00

Above result shows that more than half of the respondents were persuaded to use mosquito nets, less than one-third preferred the use of insecticides and less than one-fifth thought about mixing the prescribed methods. It shows that the predominant method understood and desired for use was the insecticide treated mosquito net.

Also, the study desired to know why there was only a marginal majority desiring insecticide treated mosquito nets. Item 6 was designed to deal with the issue. Obtained result was used to ascertain result for not preferring mosquito net by an outstanding majority as follows:

Result below shows why the use of the mosquito nets is marginally acceptable for use by majority of the radio programme listeners. It means that its availability was bemoaned by one-third of the respondents. While about one-fifth was concerned about the toxic nature of the net and the others, less than one-quarter considered the widening of the net to let in mosquitoes when thorn. It shows that concerns of the inadequacies about the net

constituted 66.48% which made most of them preferred either the insecticide or a mixture of both.

Table 6: Reason for Low Acceptance of the Mosquito net option

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Mosquito nets require hangars to be fixed at extra cost.	84	23.08
Mosquito nets are treated with insecticides that can be toxic in nature	73	20.05
Mosquito nets when they become vulnerable to the vector	85	23.35
Not easily available for use	132	33.52
Total	364	100.00

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The only research in the study was tested to know whether any significant relationship existed between exposure to the health programme of Purity-FM on malaria prevention and the adoption of recommended approaches by the respondents. The tested hypothesis was:

H_O: Residents' exposure to Purity-FM malaria prevention health programme did not persuade adoption of recommended approaches.

H_1: There is a significant desire to adopt the recommended malaria prevention methods after listening to the Purity-FM health programme.

Item 7 in the study was used to address the formulated hypothesis. Obtained data was presented and analyzed as follows:

Table 7: Radio Programme Effect on Prevention Method Adoption

Item 8	Response						Total	Mean value $\overline{X}$
Listening to the malaria prevention health programme on purity fm made me consider the adoption of a particular option for preventing mosquito bites.	Code	VT=5	T=4	NS=3	F=2	VF=1	15	$\frac{1256}{364}$
	Frequency	25	188	82	64	5	364	
	Code value	125	752	240	128	5	1256	$= 3.45$
	Result							$\overline{X} = 3.45$
	Percentage	6.87	51.65	22.53	17.58	1.37	100.0	

Results above shows that the calculated mean value X_{cal} was 3.45 3.5, which is greater than the decision point value or table value mean, X_{tab} of 3.0 by a difference of 0.5 which is significant as equal to half or 1 when raised to a whole number. It means that $X_{cal} > X_{tab}$, hence the alternate hypothesis, H_1 is accepted while it's null, H_O is rejected. It means that there is a significant effect on the choice of a malaria

prevention option after listening to the health programme on malaria prevention from Purity fm Awka residents.

Also, it was established that 58.54% or more than half of the listeners were persuaded to adopt a malaria prevention method after being exposed to the health programme of the purity fm while less than one-fifth or 18.95% disagreed. It shows that majority of the exposed listeners of the Purity fm radio health programme on malaria prevention were persuaded to choose any prevention method as presented.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The high level of exposure to the Purity fm programmes at 76% shows the level of attention paid to media content expected to provide the needed information in respect of how to deal with health challenges. Consequently more than three-fifths or 63% of the respondents became aware of malaria and its prevention from being expected to the health programmes of purity FM Awka. Selectivity of the programme type resulted in the high level of created awareness. The import is that the need to deal with malaria through the preventive approach led to the media exposure level showing that more than half of the respondents required information on malaria prevention. The effect of the programme shows the significance of the relationship with content on interaction which is a measure of behaviour change as effect of content consumption (Oskamp, 2000). It also measured how the expected gratification matched the obtained gratification (miller, 2002) as the main thrust of uses and gratification as applicable to this study. The result shows a significant relationship, $X_{Cal} > X_{tab}$ at 3.50.

The social learning theory showed how the respondents as listeners of the malaria prevention programme were able to identify mosquitoes as the parasite vector that needs to be eliminated in order to be free from malaria. The lesson learnt from what happens to persons bitten by mosquitoes lead to the adoption of a preferred method for denying access to mosquito bites. The cognition of mosquito bite consequence and how malaria can be prevented is the result derived by the 78% of respondents who identified mosquito bites as the major cause of malaria and persuading 95% of the respondent to adopt measure to deal with the vector. The result of the media interaction through the health programme consumption made it possible for more than half of the respondents to adopt the insecticide treated nets as a preventive measure. The value obtained from the tested hypothesis, therefore showed that the learning process resulted in more than half of the respondents being persuaded to adopt a particular approach for preventing malaria. It means that a significant desire to adopt a recommended malaria prevention method after listening to the Purity FM health programme was established.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following findings were made in the study:

- The level of exposure to the purity FM health programmes was high at 76%. This finding shows that majority of Awka residents sought information on how to combat malaria resulting in 62% of the respondents to become aware of malaria prevention strategies. The finding satisfied the first objective of the study.
- The extent of understanding of what causes malaria was high at 78%, while 95% learnt how to protect themselves from the vector by reducing the incidence of mosquito bites.
- The adopted approach as recommended showed that the programme content was understood by the Awka residents. The finding satisfied the second objectives.
- The level of established relationship between programme content and its effect in persuading method adoption shows that the relationship was significant at 3.5 which is higher than the decision point value of 3.0. The finding satisfied the expectations of the third research objective.

However, it was also found that the low acceptance of the insecticide treated net could be traceable to cost, availability and its chemical hazard potentiality. It means that a review is required to enhance a better acceptability.

It is concluded therefore that persuasion occurs easily where issues of public concern like malaria is addressed in a convincing manner on a regular basis. It is the marriage of ideas with solution to a problem that persuades acceptance.

RECOMMENDATION

Three recommendations from made findings in the study are as follows:

1. Distribution of insecticide treated nets should be made more transparent and easily available to users so as to serve its purpose in reducing incidence of malaria. The more persons that get the net, the more protection rendered to Awka citizens against mosquito bites and malaria.
2. The chemical nature of the insecticide need to be explained so as to allay the fears of users in respect of its toxicity. It must not be a case of running away from mosquitoes and getting involved in suffocation.
3. The item used for crafting the net needs to be revisited in order to ensure durability of the nets. In that way, confidence would be built in the use of the net by Awka residents.

CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETY

The study has shown that effective public enlightenment can change people's attitude and behaviour towards dealing with a health situation of public concern. Exposure to a well conceived radio programme produces the desired effects in the adoption of remedial measures to deal with the particular health issue.

Scholars would appreciate an added literature on health information and behaviour change. It will help researchers to posit studies in public opinion change from a health perspective in replicative studies.

REFERENCES

Asika, N. (2005). *Research methodology in behavioural science.* Lagos: Longman, Nigeria. Gravetter, F.J. and Forzano, L.B (2005). *Research methods for the behavioral sciences*. Belmont C.A.: Wadsworth.

Katz, E., Blumler, J., and Gurenvitch, M. (1974). Utilization of mass communication by the individual. In J.G. Blunder and E. Katz (Eds.), The uses of mass communication current perspectives on gratification research. Beverly Hills, C.A.: Sage.

Institute of medicine (2003). The future of the publics health in the 21st centering Washington D.C. National Academy Press.

Miller, K. (2002). *Communication theories: Perspectives, process and Contexts.* Boston: McGraw Hill.

Mojekwu, J. (1989). *Quantitative analysis*. Lagos: APCON Miller, K. (2002) *Communication theories: perspectives, process and contents.* Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Okeke,T.C. (2005). Research method, a guide to success in project writing. Bauchi Multisys Nigeria

Okoro, N. (2000). *Mass communication research: Issues and methodologies*. Nsukka: AP Express Publishers.

Nwodu, L.C. (2017). *Research methods in social behavioural sciences.* Enugu: Rycce Kerex Publishers.

Nworgu, K.O. (2008): Creative considerations in transit advertising. International *Journal of Communication Studies:* No.2 Vol.1 74-86.

Okunna, C.S. and Omenugha, K.A. (2000). *Introduction to mass communication.* (3rd ed.) Enugu: New Generation Book.

Omu, F. (1979). Press and Politics in Nigeria 1880 –1973. London: Longman Group Limited.

Orajiaka, I.P (2007). Forward. In E.O.Owuamalam : Radio-TV production. (1st ed) Owerri: Top class Agencies Limited.

Oskamp, S. (1989).*Attitudes and opinion.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice – Hall, Inc.

Owuamalam, B.I. and Owuamalam, E.O. (2003).*Community development in action.* Rev. ed. Owerri: Top class agencies Ltd.

Owuamalam, E.O. (2012). *Data analysis research project writing*. A practical approach. Owerri: Top Class Agencies Ltd.

Owuamalam, E.O. (2016). *Community and rural broadcasting.* Owerri: Top Class Agencies Ltd.

Schramm, W. (1984). How humans communicate. In W. Schramm and D. Roberts (Eds) *The process and effects of mass communication.* Rev. ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Wimmer, R. D. and Dominick, J. R. (2012).*Mass media research*: An *introduction.* 6th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.