

## INFLUENCE OF BROADCAST MEDIA CAMPAIGNS ON CREATING AWARENESS ON EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING: A STUDY OF OWERRI URBAN

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**ABSTRACT:** The study investigated the influence of broadcast media campaigns on creating awareness on exclusive breastfeeding. The study was anchored on the health belief model. The survey method was adopted; the study has a population of 555,500 from which a sample size of 385 was arrived at using the Australian sample size calculator. The study adopted the multistage sampling technique and questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that 54% of the respondents are moderately aware of broadcast media campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding, 94% of the respondents said campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding is a good public enlightenment programme and 64% of the respondents agreed that exclusive breastfeeding campaign on the broadcast media has helped them in actualizing the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively. It was further revealed that 46% of the respondents affirmed moderate compliance to exclusive breastfeeding practice. Therefore, the study recommended the need for more awareness campaigns and the need for more exposure of the women to such publicity in order to highly intensify their practice of exclusive breastfeeding.

**Keywords:** Breastfeeding, Mass media, Campaign, Women, Awareness.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Lately, there has been an intensive campaign to promote "Exclusive Breastfeeding," which has raised significant awareness about breastfeeding. The media have the potential to help expecting and lactating mothers learn the profits of, and steps to actualise exclusive breastfeeding. People repeatedly seek information about helpful medicinal products to help them achieve better health and wellbeing (Catalán-Matamoros & Peñafiel-Saiz, 2019). The media (both mainstream and digital) are one of the foremost foundations for information relating to medical innovations, and health education to the public. The media's effects on its viewers are widely documented, and the volume and type of information offered in the media can affect beliefs, opinions, and perceived norms, all of which influence behaviour (Catalán-Matamoros & Peñafiel-Saiz, 2019).

Thus, the sustainability of any development programme is dependent on how effective the development programme is communicated. This submission is based on our understanding that communication is the right "oracle" to achieving development. Recently, researchers have argued that communication and development are so closely related that there cannot be development without communication (Okon, 2014). This argument gave rise to the popularisation of the concept of development communication (DEVCOM) or communication for development initiative of media scholars and academics.

In a developing country like Nigeria, strategies, plans and policies on development projects can only be effective and the desired results achieved if the programme is properly communicated (Nzete, 2010). This is what scholars refer to when they discuss development communication. For example, Nwabueze (2008) sees development communication as conscious efforts by a sender of packaged message aimed at persuading, encouraging and convincing the receiver to adopt and participate in actualising the development plan. It is used to bring about behavioural change towards the desired development in the society.

This advocacy is the production of basic information and knowledge to influence division within the environment where the development programme like exclusive breastfeeding is required.

In the first six months of life, newborns are only given breast milk and no other liquids, tea, herbal preparations, or food, with the exception of vitamins, mineral supplements, or medicines (Motee & Jeewon, 2014, p. 54). Breastfeeding is a unique source of nutrition. It plays an impotent role in the growth, development and survivals of infants (Sharmin, Chowdhury, Khatun, & Ahmed, 2016). This is why breast milk is

biologically appropriate food for babies. When babies are not breastfed, they are at risk of a number of illness and developmental difficulties in both the short and long Term (Pitman & Berrtt, 2007).

Due to the positive effects of exclusive breastfeeding on the development of babies and their mothers, health practitioners and others have been paying more attention to the practice in recent years (Okafor, Agwu, Okoye, Uche, & Oyeoku, 2018). Okafor *et al.* (2018) highlight some of these illnesses such as gastrointestinal infections, respiratory tract infection, early childhood obesity, diarrhoea, and pneumonia. Breastfeeding exclusively saves the lives of the most vulnerable infants under the age of six months by avoiding illness-causing bacteria in artificial milk, boosting their immune system, and providing all necessary nutrients and prevent dehydration (Okafor *et al.*, 2018).

The important role of early nutrition in later life of human health and development is evident in scientific research into health and development. In 2001, World Health Assembly endorsed the recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding by mothers for six months and even up to two years. Regardless the advantages associated with exclusive breastfeeding, the proactive adoption of this behaviour by lactating mothers has remained minimal in developing counties (Kuma, 2015). This is why researchers contend that the baby-friendly initiative seems not to have done much in Nigeria (Okafor *et al.*, 2018). This is evident in the 2018 breastfeeding report published by Nigeria Ministry of Health. The report shows that only 17% of exclusive breastfeeding practice was adopted which is the lowest in the Continent (Federal Ministry of Health, 2015).

The government has been promoting the health of children and mothers through the promotion of appropriate breastfeeding practices, in collaboration with some social welfare organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children Education Fund (UNICEF), and maintains that human breast milk is the ideal food for a young infant. Breast milk has a unique quality that meets an infant's nutritional needs during the first year of life, which is critical for ensuring optimal infant and child health, growth, and development. Breast milk, they claim, is not polluted and contains protective chemicals that fight bacteria that cause a lot of infections in babies. This indicates it has an anti-infective element in it that keeps infections at bay.

Exclusive breastfeeding is communicated through various communication channels, television, radio, newspaper, magazines, new media, flairs, banners, poster, interpersonal communication, and infant welfare at hospital and antenatal classes. To actualise the desired behavioural change (Exclusive breastfeeding), it is necessary to utilise the media since they have the capacity to reach a wider audience.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Breastfeeding is the most natural way for humans (mammals) to feed their babies, and it is the primary source of nourishment for the first few months of life (Savino, 2008). Furthermore, research have indicated that exclusive breastfeeding for six (6) months is the most beneficial method of newborn nutrition, and that it should be continued even if the kid eats supplemental foods after that (Victora *et al.*, 2016; AAP, 2012; WHO, 2011).

It is apparent from the foregoing, that the media have the potentials to help expecting and lactating mothers learn the benefits of, and steps to actualise exclusive breastfeeding. However, studies in health communication in Nigeria have failed to adequately interrogate the role of the media in the actualisation of exclusive breastfeeding. Many of the studies that we found in Nigeria focused on media reportage of health crisis and user generated applications to monitor diseases as well as mainstream media use in learning the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. As a result, if mothers refuse their newborns this critical opportunity, the infants are likely to be malnourished, a circumstance that has serious consequences for the child's health and development.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study raised the following questions to guide the study:

1. What is the level of awareness of the women on broadcast media campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding in Owerri metropolis?
2. What is their perception towards Exclusive Breastfeeding campaigns?
3. What is the level of compliance as regards the campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding practice?

## IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF)

Exclusive Breastfeeding is distinct from Predominant Breastfeeding (PBF), in which breast milk is the primary source of sustenance for newborns, but they are also given other liquids such as water, tea, juices, oral rehydration salt solutions, or ritual fluids (Labbok & Taylor 2008). Exclusive breastfeeding, as defined by WHO and UNICEF, is the practice of a mother or a wet nurse feeding an infant exclusively breast milk or expressed breast milk. Both the WHO and UNICEF recommend that mothers nurse their babies exclusively for the first 6 months and then continue breastfeeding for another 2 years or beyond, rather than stopping EBF after 4-6

months. Although there are numerous benefits to exclusively breastfeeding an infant for the first six months of life, many studies in developing countries focus on the "weaning's dilemma," which involves deciding between the protective effects of exclusive breastfeeding against infectious diseases and the (theoretical) insufficient breast milk to meet the infants' energy and micronutrient needs beyond that.

Breastfeeding, on the other hand, continues to be the finest source of newborn nutrition and immune protection, as well as providing remarkable health benefits to moms (Victora et al., 2016; AAP, 2012; Setegn et al., 2012; WHO, 2011). Similarly, the World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that exclusive breastfeeding is the best cost-effective intervention for reducing infant death in underdeveloped nations (2001, 2009). Breastfeeding alone offers the perfect nourishment for infants for the first six months of life, according to the 1990 Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion, and Support of Breastfeeding, because it contains all the water, nutrients, antibodies, and other factors an infant requires to thrive. As a result, it has a significant impact on the survival, health, nutrition, and growth of a child. It is a unique way of giving perfect meals for newborns' healthy growth and development. The relationship between the mother and child during breastfeeding has good consequences on the child's life in terms of stimulation, behaviour, speech, sense of wellbeing and security, and how the child interacts with other people, according to a UNICEF (2015) paper. It also reduces the chance of developing chronic diseases later in life, such as obesity, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, childhood asthma, and childhood leukemias, and allows newborns to perform better on cognitive and behaviour tests throughout adulthood than formula-fed kids. Breastfeeding also benefits maternal health in the immediate aftermath of birth by lowering the risk of post-partum haemorrhage. It delays the return to fertility in the near term and lowers the risk of type 2 diabetes, breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer in the long run.

In addition, research have indicated that exclusive breastfeeding for six months is the best approach to nourish a newborn (Victora et al., 2016; AAP, 2012; Setegn et al., 2012; WHO, 2011). Exclusive breastfeeding, in which the infant receives only breast milk and no other food or drink, including water, as recommended by WHO (2011) and AAP (2012), has also been shown to lower infant mortality related with common childhood illnesses such as diarrhoea or pneumonia. This is due to the fact that breast milk contains antibodies from the mother, which aid in illness prevention. The newborn gains antibodies to infection, receives nutrition for physical and mental growth, emotional stability, and attachment to the mother thanks to colostrums in breast milk. Breast milk production is a dynamic and physiologically sensitive process that adjusts to meet the infant's needs as the environment changes. During the winter, for example, breast milk will include more fat. To reiterate UNICEF's earlier message, the mother benefits from Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) by experiencing lactation amenorrhea, a rapid return of the uterus to its normal size, prevention of postpartum haemorrhage, reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancer, low risk of osteoporosis, and emotional satisfaction.

### **Mass Media and Maternal Health**

Without a doubt, the mass media are instruments for disseminating information and scouting the environment for what is known as SWOT—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—and reporting it to society. Because the mass media are instruments for disseminating messages from sources to receivers, they are tasked with raising public awareness about societal concerns and drawing people's attention to anything that poses a threat, fright, or fear to our well-being. Maternal health and mortality are themes that all people are concerned about; it is predicted to be one of the issues of interest to the media, which has been certified to affect people's minds (Odesanya et al., 2015).

According to Odesanya et al. (2015), mass media such as radio, television, and other forms of media can be effective in shaping people's attitudes. They went on to say that the media can be a powerful tool not just for spreading knowledge and understanding about advances, but also for pushing people to seek out more information and assisting them in applying that information to their own attitudes. Similarly, communication specialists are beginning to favour the entertainment-education strategy, which employs the element of enjoyment in the mass media to transmit intended messages. Songs and dances are used to convey essential messages to the audience in this approach. In situations where radio is limited, such as when a demonstration is required, television has proven to be beneficial (Atakiti & Ojomo, 2015).

## **V. EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Eze (2020) conducted a study on media campaign and exclusive, and it was revealed that despite the enormous benefits of exclusive breastfeeding that have been well established and an enormous campaign that has created tremendous awareness on the need to exclusively breastfeed babies, social structure of communities and social interaction within the community influence mothers' perception and the level of acceptance of the campaign messages. Uwalaka and Nwala (2020) carried out a study on social media influence on exclusive breastfeeding among expecting mothers using a survey research design findings revealed that breastfeeding mothers in Port Harcourt that reported receiving information about and learning about exclusive breastfeeding through social media platforms are more likely to report actualising exclusive breastfeeding, controlling for all

other factors in the model. Based on the findings, we conclude that social media are the most efficient means of communicating exclusive breastfeeding information and messages following the availability and portability of internet-enabled mobile phones. In a study on the effects of exposure to mass media and interpersonal counseling on exclusive breastfeeding, Phuong, Nguyen, Kim, Nguyen, Lan, Tran, Marie, Ruel, Edward, and Frongillo (2016) discovered that exposure to both mass media and interpersonal counseling had additive effects on EBF as well as related psychosocial factors when compared to no exposure. Further data imply that integrating different behaviour change therapies results in bigger improvements in psychosocial aspects, which in turn improves breastfeeding behaviour positively. In a study on broadcast media messages and maternal health among reproductive women in Ilorin, Utalor (2019) discovered that women in Ilorin rely on broadcast media as a major source of maternal health information, but that radio is more effective than television in disseminating maternal health messages (58.2 percent). Maternal health messages were rarely pushed through other programs other than discussion shows and health programs (31.4 percent, 41.2). Women agreed that broadcast media has a favorable impact on their attitudes about maternal health. In addition, it was discovered that women used broadcast media as a primary source of maternal health information, and that women had a favorable opinion of maternal health messages broadcast on television. In a study on the effects of exposure to mass media and interpersonal counseling on exclusive breastfeeding, Phuong, *et al.* (2016) discovered that exposure to both mass media and interpersonal counseling had additive effects on EBF as well as related psychosocial factors when compared to no exposure. Further data imply that integrating different behaviour change therapies results in bigger improvements in psychosocial aspects, which in turn improves breastfeeding behaviour positively. In a study on broadcast media messages and maternal health among reproductive women in Ilorin, Utalor (2019) discovered that women in Ilorin rely on broadcast media as a major source of maternal health information, but that radio is more effective than television in disseminating maternal health messages (58.2 percent). Maternal health messages were rarely pushed through other programs other than discussion shows and health programs (31.4 percent, 41.2). Women agreed that broadcast media has a favorable impact on their attitudes about maternal health. In addition, it was discovered that women used broadcast media as a primary source of maternal health information, and that women had a favorable opinion of maternal health messages broadcast on television. The Hypotheses result confirmed that awareness of women on maternal health has positive influence on their attitude and Perception of maternal health messages on broadcast media positively influences attitude of women towards maternal health. In a study on mass media campaigns and exclusive breastfeeding in Vietnam, Naugle (2016) found that mass media alone, in the form of two 30-second advertisements, was ineffective in modifying EBF behaviour. Where other intervention strategies were used with the mass media effort, however, the mass media campaign resulted in larger EBF behaviour change. The findings also demonstrated that the mass media campaign had effects through a process of social dispersion in geographic areas where the intervention had numerous components. Samuel, Uzoma, Innocent, and Nnenna (2019) conducted research on a media campaign promoting exclusive breastfeeding among moms. It was discovered that antenatal channels, rather than traditional media channels, remain the primary source of information for women in the region about exclusive breastfeeding. The study concludes that traditional media platforms must do much more, particularly in terms of enlivened programme design and committed publicity, to properly occupy their place in this campaign role, given the heterogeneous nature of the audience they serve, which predisposes them to reach even potential mothers (those who are not yet expecting a child).

## VI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research was based on a health belief model. The health belief model (HBM) is a social psychological health behaviour change model that was created to explain and predict health-related behaviours, especially in terms of health-care utilization. Godfrey Hochbaum, Irwin Rosenstock, and Stephen Kegels, social psychologists of the US Public Health Service, established the HBM in the 1950s, and it is still one of the most well-known and commonly utilized theories in health behaviour research. People's perceptions about health issues, perceived advantages of action and obstacles to action, and self-efficacy, according to the HBM, explain their engagement (or lack thereof) in health-promoting behaviour. In order to trigger the health-promoting behaviour, a stimulus, or cue to action, must also be present.

The theory maintains that people's health behaviours are the makers of what people perceive and think about the threat to themselves, the benefits to be obtained if a suggested action is adopted, the cost of the action, the impact of the external forces such as age, status, education, family etc. other motivating factors and self-confidence (Amannah & Ugwu, 2018 as cited in Mbiereagu & Etumnu, 2021).

The relevance of this theory to this study is hinged on the fact that nursing mothers or women who are in the prime of child bearing may likely have positive attitudinal disposition towards the information and communication strategies on the campaign on exclusive breastfeeding because of the perceived benefits from the campaign messages.

## VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Research Design:** Survey methodology was adopted for the study. The method was chosen because it was considered appropriate as it involves sampling of opinion of different people using questionnaire in order to elicit information on what is being studied. Population of this study comprises of residents of Owerri metropolis in order to find a possible solution to which involves residents of the area as respondents. However, the 2016 population of Owerri metropolis according to National Bureau of Statistics is 555,500

**Sample Size:** In determining the sample size, the researcher used the Australian sample size Calculator and derived 385.

**Sampling Technique:** Multistage sampling technique was used to select the representatives of the sample. At the first stage the researchers selected all the three local governments in Owerri Metropolis which includes; Owerri Municipal, Owerri North and Owerri West. At second stage, out of the three local governments, the researchers selected two communities from each of them. Selected communities from Owerri Municipal were Amawom and Umuororonjo. From Owerri North were Egbu and Orji. While from Owerri West includes; Nekede and Obinze. This gives a total of six (6) communities to be studied. At third stage the researchers selected 64 residents purposively from each of the communities for the study, making a total of 385 residents from all the selected communities. At the fourth stage from the selected 64 residents, 385 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to them for adequate representation. This means that the researchers purposively distributed 64 copies of the questionnaire to each of the communities at a different day interval.

**Instrument of Data Collection:** The researchers used Questionnaire as the instrument of data collection in the study.

**Method of Data Analysis:** The researchers used simple percentages and tabulations for the quantitative analysis.

### VIII. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data collected from the field through questionnaire as an instrument was presented in tables using numbers and simple percentages. The researcher distributed 385 copies of the questionnaire to the communities. From the numbers distributed, 374 (97%) copies were retrieved and found valid. This means that 11(3%) copies were lost to the field.

**Table 1: Analyzing the responses of respondents on the women's level of awareness on broadcast media campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	58	15%
High	92	24%
Moderate	198	54%
Low	26	7%
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, 2021

The analysis from table 1 above indicated that 54% of respondents are moderately aware of broadcast media campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding. This suffices that the respondents are moderately aware of exclusive breastfeeding campaigns on broadcast media in Owerri metropolis.

**Table 2: Analyzing the responses of respondents on whether campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding is a good public enlightenment programme**

Option	Frequency	Percent
Yes	350	94%
No	-	0%
Can't say	24	6%
Total	374	100%

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Analysis from table two above revealed that 94% of the respondents said campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding is a good public enlightenment programme. This alludes that exclusive breastfeeding campaign is worth continuing as the respondents affirmed that the campaign is a good one.

**Table 3: Analyzing responses of respondents on exclusive breastfeeding campaign on the broadcast media has helped me actualize the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively.**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	132	35%
Agree	238	64%
Disagree	4	1%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%



Total	374	100
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Source: Field survey, (2021)

The table 3 above showed that 64% of the respondents agreed that exclusive breastfeeding campaign on the broadcast media has helped them in actualizing the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively. The implication of this is that the higher percent of the respondents affirmed that exclusive breastfeeding campaign has been helpful to them.

**Table 4: Analyzing responses of respondents on the level of compliance as regards the campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding practice**

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	81	22%
High	113	30%
Moderate	173	46%
Low	7	2%
Total	374	100

Source: Field survey, (2021)

It is prima facie from table 4 above that 46% of the respondents affirmed moderate compliance to exclusive breastfeeding practice. This implies that the respondents moderately practice exclusive breastfeeding prior to the campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding.

## IX. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Interpretatively, the data analyzed indicated that 54% of the respondents are moderately aware of broadcast media campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding. 24% and 15% of the respondents indicated high and very high awareness level respectively, while 7% said their awareness level is low. This suffices that the respondents are moderately aware of exclusive breastfeeding campaigns on broadcast media in Owerri metropolis. There's no gainsaying the fact that the women in Owerri metropolis are aware of exclusive breastfeeding campaigns on the broadcast media. This revelation is similar to the findings of Uwalaka and Nwala (2020) which revealed that breastfeeding mothers in Port Harcourt reported receiving information about and learning about exclusive breastfeeding through social media platforms.

Analysis from table two revealed that 94% of the respondents said campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding is a good public enlightenment programme. While 6% of the respondents can't say. This alludes that exclusive breastfeeding campaign is worth continuing as the respondents affirmed that the campaign is a good one. Also in table three, it showed that 64% of the respondents agreed that exclusive breastfeeding campaign on the broadcast media has helped them in actualizing the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively, 35% and 1% strongly agreed and disagreed respectively. The implication of this is that the higher percent of the respondents affirmed that exclusive breastfeeding campaign has been helpful to them. However, this suffices that the women hold a positive perception towards exclusive breastfeeding campaign. This finding is consistent with Utalor (2019), who found that women had a favourable attitude about broadcast media messaging about maternal health. However, contrary to the findings of Eze (2020), despite the well-established benefits of exclusive breastfeeding and a massive campaign raising awareness about the need to exclusively breastfeed babies, the social structure of communities and social interaction within the community influence mothers' perceptions and acceptability of the practice. Theoretically, this finding is supported by the health belief model given the fact that nursing mothers or women who are in the prime of child bearing may likely have positive attitudinal disposition towards the information and communication strategies on the campaign on exclusive breastfeeding because of the perceived benefits from the campaign messages.

Analysis of finding revealed that 46% of the respondents affirmed moderate compliance to exclusive breastfeeding practice, 30% and 22% indicated very high and high compliance respectively. This implies that the respondents practice exclusive breastfeeding moderately prior to the campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding. This result is similar to Utalor's (2019) findings, which found that women agreed with the statement that broadcast media favorably affect their attitudes regarding maternal health. The health belief model, which indicates that people's beliefs about health challenges, perceived benefits of action and barriers to action, and self-efficacy explain participation (or lack thereof) in health-promoting behaviour, backs up this finding. Given this established fact, nursing mothers or women who are in the prime of child bearing may likely have positive attitudinal disposition towards the information and communication strategies on the campaign on exclusive breastfeeding because of the perceived benefits from the campaign messages.

## X. CONCLUSION

Consequent upon the foregoing findings, the study strongly affirms that the health benefits of exclusive breastfeeding practice both for infants and mothers as propagated through media campaigns cannot be overemphasized. Exclusive breastfeeding is communicated through various communication channels, television, radio, newspaper, magazines, new media, flairs, banners, poster, interpersonal communication, and infant welfare at hospital and antenatal classes. To actualise the desired behavioural change (Exclusive breastfeeding), it is necessary to utilise the media since they have the capacity to reach a wider audience.

## XI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Given the fact that the respondents are moderately aware of exclusive breastfeeding campaigns on broadcast media in Owerri metropolis, women, young girls and lactating mothers are however encouraged to avail themselves the opportunity of being highly exposed to exclusive breastfeeding campaigns on the media (both mainstream and digital) as being moderately exposed to such campaign is not enough.
2. Having established the findings that the women hold a positive perception towards exclusive breastfeeding campaign, it is recommended that appropriate communication strategies should be developed for more publicity on exclusive breastfeeding campaign since the media have great influence on the people. Hence, the need for the effective realization of the noble and worthy objectives of exclusive breastfeeding media campaigns.
3. Since the respondents practice exclusive breastfeeding moderately prior to the campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding, the need for more awareness campaigns and the need for more exposure of the women to such publicity in order to highly intensify their practice of exclusive breastfeeding.

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