

Public perception of the use of television in promoting healthy water consumption

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Abstract - The Mass Media plays a crucial role in advocacy and publicity, influencing people's mindset and perceptions, thereby affecting their behavior. This study focuses on understanding the public perception of television's role in promoting healthy water consumption in Kaduna state, with the aim of managing solid incidents. Using the magic bullet theory of the press and a survey research design, 60 respondents were sampled through stratified sampling. The study revealed that television programs enlighten people about the importance of using hygienic water and increase their knowledge about water usage. It concludes that television is instrumental in achieving SDG goals by propagating the significance of healthy water consumption among Kaduna state residents. The study recommends that all media organizations in Kaduna state should implement similar programs to raise awareness about the importance of clean drinking water. Additionally, television programs should educate the public about water contamination and its effects on human health.

Keywords: television programs; public perception; mass communication; water management

1. Introduction

Across Africa, poor waste management practices, such as indiscriminate dumping of trash in water bodies and uncontrolled areas, have aggravated the already precarious sanitation conditions. This issue is not confined to a particular region; it is a global concern, affecting cities worldwide, including Nigeria. While the responsibility for managing water pollution lies with the local government, it faces significant challenges due to a combination of financial constraints, institutional weaknesses, inappropriate technology selection, transportation limitations, disposal methods, and public apathy towards cleanliness and sanitation.

Water pollution, at its core, involves the accumulation of solid waste resulting from human and animal activities, commonly referred to as garbage, refuse, rubbish, or trash. Despite the negative impact these materials may have, they hold the potential for recycling and can be transformed into valuable resources. The scope of municipal water pollution encompasses waste from households, non-hazardous waste from industries, businesses, markets, yards, and streets. The consequences of this waste problem extend beyond the immediate dumping sites, affecting not only the land but also the air and water, thereby posing substantial risks to human health and other essential natural resources.

Simply put, the problems with cleanliness that Africa, including Nigeria, faces are made worse by inappropriate garbage disposal, notably the habit of dumping trash into water bodies and unregulated sites. Due to institutional and budgetary limitations, a lack of suitable technological adoption, transportation challenges, and a general lack of public interest in environmental cleanliness, local governments struggle to manage water pollution.

To lessen the burden of water contamination, the situation demands for swift action and efficient waste management techniques. To minimize the negative impacts on sanitary standards and environmental health, it is essential to emphasize the value of trash recycling and correct disposal. To enable local governments to effectively handle this urgent issue, adequate financial support and institutional improvements are essential. Additionally, community involvement and awareness programs may be extremely effective in creating public participation and a sense of responsibility for environmental protection and sustaining cleanliness.

Solid waste from human and animal activity, such as trash and rubbish, which can be recycled for financial gain, is included in water contamination. Municipal water pollution, which affects land, air, and water and poses health risks, includes garbage from homes, companies, factories, and markets. Environmental dangers can result from improper garbage management and handling. Waste can offer both immediate and long-term health problems if it is not adequately kept, collected, transported, and disposed of. In the long term, improperly maintained trash dumps can pollute sources of drinking water and draw rats, flies, and mosquitoes that can spread disease. The improper disposal of combustible objects can also start fires, damaging the environment and sending hazardous chemicals into the atmosphere. Water contamination can result from rain washing waste-related particles into surface waters. The scent of trash is also unpleasant and disruptive to the environment.

Environmental challenges were formerly thought of as technological and financial difficulties. Nevertheless, in recent years, social elements of environmental issues, such as public awareness. People's views, sociocultural practices, and beliefs, as well as their beliefs, all have an impact on how household garbage is managed.

Environmental dangers might arise from improper garbage management and processing (Idamah, 2015). Waste that is not properly kept, collected, transported, and disposed of can cause both immediate and long-term health problems. Poorly maintained garbage sites have the potential to harm groundwater and drinking water sources over time. Uncovered mounds of decaying trash attract flies, which can spread infections that are faecal-oral. Additionally, particularly during wet seasons, mosquitoes like *Anopheles* may endure and spread illnesses like malaria and yellow fever. Rats also proliferate in and near waste places, spreading illnesses including cholera, dysentery, and diarrhea (Himsworth et al, 2013; Ajayan & Saharsh, 2003).

When flammable objects like polythene, tires, plastics, and electronic components are disposed of together, the danger of fire from inappropriate garbage handling increases, which can result in unintentional fires that are challenging to put out. Burning such substances causes the emission of harmful gases into the environment, which adds to pollution and results in the destruction of recyclable resources. Rain may carry waste-related particles into surface water, and it even has the potential to pollute groundwater (Himsworth et al, 2013; Ajayan & Saharsh, 2003).

Not only is the garbage stench unpleasant, but it also makes the surroundings look bad. In the past, environmental difficulties were primarily seen as technological and financial problems. However, in recent years, studies like environmental sociology and environmental psychology have begun to place more emphasis on the social aspects of environmental problems, such as public awareness and attitudes toward the environment (Kalantari & Asadi, 2009). According to Navez Bouchaire (1993), referenced in Banjo et al (2009), attitudes, sociocultural beliefs, and behaviors are all directly related to how household garbage is managed.

Communication via broadcast media is vital since, in cultural views, women are frequently associated with cleanliness. Broadcast media can assist change people's views towards controlling water contamination by increasing public knowledge. According to Olgyaiová et al (2005), To inform and educate the public about waste management and water cleanliness, communication becomes crucial. For instance, broadcast media, including government-owned and commercial stations, can play a big role in Kaduna, Nigeria, a state with high rates of water contamination. According to Nwabueze (2007), these stations might affect societal norms and values and promote ecologically friendly behavior. By enhancing people's living circumstances, effective communication may make a beneficial difference in their life (Okunna, 2002). Additionally, it may be a potent tool for public awareness-raising and education (McQuail, 2010), enabling the negotiation of opposing points of view (Carvalho, 2009, in The European Commission for Environment, 2009).

According to the European Commission for the Environment's 2009 Environmental Policy, human perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors – which are connected to values, preferences, and worldviews – are both the root of environmental issues and the means of correcting them. As a result, they view communication as being essential to understanding how all of these factors relate to one another. To what degree, though, does the public's opinion of television's role in encouraging healthy water use among Kaduna city residents?

Our towns and environment are both affected by the problem of water contamination. Every individual has the ability to produce garbage, making them a part of the issue. According to Kalantari and Asadi (2010), the issue of waste management and water hygiene is based on people's attention to and attitudes toward the environment, or on the degree of environmental concern, which may be influenced by environmental awareness, attitudes and behaviors, values, and actions. Social attitudes are one of the challenges facing water pollution control, according to Agarwal (2005). Nwabueze (2007) and Rukeh and Ogbemi (2007) are two researchers who have studied communication as a technique for water hygiene. That is, there is a problem with the media's subpar coverage of environmental issues. all of these problems identified, regular enlightenment campaigns by the broadcast media, the lack of commitment on the part of the government and the lack of conscious effort and concern towards the environment by individuals are identified as problems hence the basis for these studies. The major goal of this study is to determine how much television adds to water hygiene awareness initiatives.

2. Method

In this study, the researchers used a method called survey research design, which was suggested by Sobowale (2015). This design is suitable for studying how the public perceives and responds to certain issues, as mentioned by Ohana (2013).

To collect data, the researchers conducted interviews with 60 participants. They selected the participants using a multistage sampling technique. First, they divided the respondents into different groups, and then they purposively chose individuals for the interviews. Using this survey research design and interview method, the study aimed to understand how the public perceives and feels about the issue being investigated. This approach allowed the researchers to gather detailed data and analyze how different factors influence the participants' opinions and actions.

The use of interviews as a data collection tool allowed the researchers to directly interact with the participants, gaining valuable insights into their thoughts and feelings about the topic. This helped the researchers gain a deeper understanding of the public's perspective on the environmental issue in question. Overall, the survey research design with interviews as the data collection method provided a structured and systematic way to explore the public's perception and response to the specific environmental issue being studied.

3. Results and Discussion

Out of the 60 people interviewed, half of them (30) said they regularly watch the program, which helps them use water responsibly. Four participants mentioned that the program increased their

knowledge about different ways to use water, and 16 individuals said it improved their health by encouraging healthier water habits.

The study highlights the importance of traditional media, like TV shows, in spreading messages about environmental care. TV programs have a wide audience, especially in rural areas, and can inspire people to protect the environment actively.

Communication is powerful; it can shape beliefs and actions. People trust the media as a reliable source of information, and this can lead to significant changes in how they think and act in various aspects of life.

In summary, communication plays a crucial role in helping people understand and connect with their environment. By promoting interaction, learning, and responsible behaviors, it contributes to creating a more environmentally aware society. This study emphasizes the vital role of effective communication in driving positive changes and motivating individuals to take better care of the environment.

3.1 Awareness and Attitude towards Water hygiene

In Nigeria, public attitudes regarding waste management and water cleanliness are examined in the literature study. There are few researches on public knowledge of water contamination, but there is a wealth of information about individual and group awareness of and attitudes toward waste management (Ifegbesan, 2009; Macawile & Sia Su, 2009). Ifegbesan adds that in order to address waste management concerns, public knowledge and attitudes are essential.

Ifegbesan (2009) discovered that secondary school pupils in Ogun State had significantly negative views about trash management while having high levels of environmental awareness and understanding of waste-related issues. This emphasizes how important it is to comprehend attitudes and awareness as they relate to environmental behavior. According to McQuail (2010), attitudes are fundamental predispositions or mental frameworks toward objects.

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, in Ifegbesan (2009)), attitude toward a notion may be described as an individual's or a group's overall sense of favorability or unfavorability toward that idea. Numerous researches have shown that awareness and attitudes are positively and frequently significantly correlated. For instance, Olson, Bowman, and Roth (1984), in Ifegbesan (2009), discovered a positive correlation between knowledge test scores and attitude test scores for all topics examined in their study on the efficacy of an educational method to increase knowledge and attitudes for environmental conservation. This suggests that increasing knowledge has a favorable effect on environmental management attitudes as well.

Environmental awareness studies have also looked at socio-demographic factors to understand people's perceptions and ideas about the environment. Gender, age, and educational attainment are among factors that Longe et al (2009) contend can affect how people see the control of water pollution. It is anticipated that as people become older, their understanding of environmental hygiene and sanitation would rise, increasing their interest in the control of water pollution. According to Tikka, Kuitunen, and Tyns (2000), education also has a significant impact on how individuals view and behave toward waste management.

According to research Longe et al (2009), respondents' average monthly income is a significant factor that may influence how they view and feel about managing water pollution. Additionally, it has been demonstrated repeatedly in several environmental studies that socio-demographic characteristics have an impact on environmental attitudes and awareness (Lone et al, 2009).

Understanding environmental issues and their management has progressed from relying on technical/mechanical fixes to emphasizing human behavior modification to encourage responsible environmental behavior (REB). This shift was noted by Kalantari and Asadi (2010), who noted that over the past few decades, research on environmental attitudes, ecological behavior, and their effects on the environment has increased in both developing and developed countries, shifting the emphasis from technical and economic to social issues.

According to Kalantari and Asadi (2009), environmental attitudes are a significant predictor and element of environmental behavior. To comprehend attitudes toward environmental management, a variety of theoretical and empirical techniques have been investigated (Tarrant et al., 2003). Since the 1970s,

the idea of environmental attitudes has drawn considerable attention from researchers (Dunlap et al., 2004), with dimensionality playing a key role in these investigations. Environmental attitudes were once thought of as a one-dimensional phenomenon. However, further study explored the complexity of environmental perspectives.

For instance, factor analysis was employed by Albrecht et al. (2002) to identify three dimensions: "man over nature," "limits to growth," and "balance of nature." Three variables were used by Cluck et al. (2003) to construct environmental attitudes: "environmental worldview," "environmental concern," and "environmental commitment." Respondents' overall opinions about the environment, its connection to industrialization and economic progress, and the effects of science and technology on the environment are reflected in their environmental worldview. Concern for the environment is related to beliefs about how the environment interacts with society and personal views of particular environmental issues. According to Vogel (2002), referenced in Kalantari and Asadi (2009), environmental commitment refers to respondents' beliefs about their dedication to improving environmental quality, including their readiness to pay greater taxes or prices and make personal sacrifices for environmental preservation.

According to Partanen-Hertell et al (1999, quoted in Olgyaiová et al (2008), environmental awareness is viewed as a mix of motivation, knowledge, and abilities that emerges when people recognize unpleasant or dangerous changes in their environments that cannot be quickly reversed. Environmental awareness is crucial for encouraging sustainable habits and encouraging people to make ecologically responsible decisions. Public incentive to attain environmental friendliness may be significantly increased through media education on trash management.

3.2 Communication and water pollution

According to research, effective communication is key to encouraging environmentally beneficial behavior. According to professionals like Rim-Rukeh and Ogbemi (2007), communication enables people to comprehend how natural resources interact with the environment. Barr (2003) noted that communication can improve people's attitudes toward waste reduction and their knowledge of environmental principles, allowing them to take part in managing water pollution more successfully. Environmental communication is a concept that tries to educate people about environmental issues, deter harmful behavior, and foster a commitment to environmental protection (Nwabueze, 2007).

Since communication is central to human activities and can help coordinate resources for efficient environmental preservation, it is crucial in environmental management. To inform and educate the public on environmental issues and trends, several communication methods are used. Due to its importance, communication is crucial in preventing water contamination. Among the important functions of communication, Rim-Rukeh and Ogbemi (2007) mention bringing attention to environmental concerns and encouraging responsible conduct, particularly with relation to water pollution control. Additionally, it aids in the identification of regions in water pollution control that require immediate attention by governments and agencies.

Additionally, communication can play a crucial role in incorporating the public's and community leaders' interests in environmental activities. All stakeholders can collaborate for sustainable environmental practices by recognizing their responsibilities, relationships, and contributions through their perspectives and attitudes (Macawile and Sia Su, 2009). Effective communication is about inspiring individuals to pursue shared objectives, according to Okunna (2002). Agbanu and Nwabueze (2007) support the use of traditional media in environmental management, especially for reaching out to rural populations and enlisting their support for environmental protection.

All living things must be able to communicate with one another in order to coexist in the environment. Beyond merely disseminating information, it also shapes our attitudes and behaviors and has the power to alter our beliefs and worldviews.

Radio is regarded as a very successful and well-liked medium for addressing a sizable and varied audience. It is accessible, reasonably priced, and doesn't require a high degree of literacy to grasp. Radio continues to be one of the most powerful and efficient means of spreading environmental messages in developing nations like Nigeria (Nwabueze, 2007). On the other hand, television has a significant impact

because of its audio-visual superiority. It can simultaneously reach a large audience and create an enduring imprint on their minds.

Radio and television were found to be the most accessible, practical, and efficient media for providing environmental information in a study carried out in Southwest Nigeria (Banjo et al, 2009; Oluwalanu et al, 2023). In comparison to print media, these mass media outlets are more affordable and offer extensive geographic coverage.

Both radio and television can be utilized as effective environmental communication tools to raise public awareness and consciousness about environmental issues, particularly water pollution management. Broadcast media can use various forms of communication, such as radio jingles, television commercials, news bulletins, public service announcements, and health programs, to educate the public about the importance of protecting the environment. It is crucial to note that the extent to which the broadcast media dedicate airtime to environmental news can significantly influence people's attitudes towards the environment. By promoting environmental enlightenment campaigns through radio and television, we can encourage individuals to adopt an environmentally friendly attitude and take action to safeguard the environment.

Researchers have made noteworthy discoveries regarding the various factors that influence individuals' alertness and responsiveness to environmental challenges. Among these factors are age, gender, educational attainment, and social standing, which have been shown to have significant effects. These findings align with the outcomes of previous research conducted by Longe et al (2009), where it was found that individuals' awareness of environmental health and sanitation was notably influenced by their income, gender, and age.

Beyond mere awareness, perceptions and attitudes towards the environment have been demonstrated to play a crucial role in shaping individuals' behavior. Notably, studies by Freduah (2004) and Folarin (2005) have revealed that people's past experiences, cultural expectations, and social relationships can heavily influence how they perceive and interpret environmental messages. Consequently, these perceptions lead to the formation of specific attitudes and actions towards environmental management, particularly concerning issues like water pollution.

It is evident that individuals who possess a deeper understanding of environmental issues and feel a sense of responsibility to take action are more inclined to engage in responsible environmental behavior. Such behavior is influenced by a combination of cognitive factors (knowledge and understanding), psycho-social factors (attitudes and sense of responsibility), and demographic factors (gender and education level). In this context, attitude encompasses three essential components: cognitive (thoughts and beliefs), affective (feelings and emotions), and behavioral (readiness for action). The interplay of these components significantly influences how individuals perceive and interact with their environment. For instance, people's attitudes towards the environment may impact their decisions on where to reside and how they treat their surroundings.

Undoubtedly, people's perceptions and attitudes towards the environment hold significant sway over their behavior and actions concerning environmental issues like water pollution. Recognizing and understanding these factors offer valuable insights for designing effective environmental campaigns and strategies aimed at encouraging positive behavioral changes and fostering responsible environmental practices. By tailoring initiatives to address specific cognitive, psycho-social, and demographic factors, we can enhance the likelihood of successful outcomes in environmental conservation efforts.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study focused on the impact of the TV program "Health is Wealth" on Kaduna State Media Corporation (KSMC) and its effectiveness in raising awareness among the viewers. The findings showed that the program successfully influenced how people perceive and take action to improve their health, especially regarding safe drinking water. It has been particularly effective in promoting healthy practices and preventing waterborne diseases like typhoid.

The program's wide coverage allowed it to address various health-related issues, including water-related ones that are crucial for overall well-being. By creating awareness and encouraging positive changes, the TV program has proven to be a valuable resource for the public.

The study emphasizes the importance of media initiatives like "Health is Wealth" in spreading vital information and fostering positive changes in behavior among the audience. Such programs play a critical role in enhancing public health and improving the overall quality of life for individuals in the community.

Recommendations

It's essential for all media organizations in Kaduna state to start similar programs that raise awareness about the importance of drinking clean water. These programs can educate the public about proper water hygiene and healthier practices for a better life.

Television programs are influential and can play a crucial role in identifying water-related diseases and explaining how unclean water can harm human health. By providing accurate information in engaging ways, these programs can help people understand the risks of using contaminated water.

To reach more people, including those in remote areas, the Kaduna state government should actively support and sponsor these programs on both radio and TV. This will make the information about clean water practices more accessible and visible to rural communities that may not have easy access to other sources of information.

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