

## EVALUATION OF RADIO ADVOCACY MESSAGES ON COVID-19 VACCINATION IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This study was carried out to evaluate the contribution of radio advocacy on covid-19 vaccination exercises in Benue State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design with the questionnaire used as the research instrument for data collection. Data collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics. The findings showed that the level of access to radio advocacy and awareness on Covid-19 vaccination by people in Benue State is relatively high. Most radio stations in Benue state, as another finding indicated, were fully involved and highly advocated on covid-19 vaccination exercises. The study concluded that although covid-19 advocacies of the stations may have served as effective sources and tools for awareness creation and influencing of public behaviours, there are other intervening variables that may likely hinder such efforts and needs to be considered while embarking on subsequent campaigns, so to elicit effective public response to their messages. The study therefore recommended that radio stations in Benue state should continually improve on their broadcast of outbreaks of diseases such as covid-19, especially by increasing the time and duration of broadcast in a week, widen its scope of content and formats by making intensive research, as well as translating it to other local languages and dialects.

**Keywords:** Media Evaluation, Radio Advocacy Messages, COVID-19 Vaccination

### Introduction

Health education of people is important in facilitating healthy advancement in living conditions of people. As rightly observed by Aghamelu (2010), “the issue and question of public health advocacy, education, awareness creation and campaigns, mobilization and monitoring have become a very crucial factor in the realization of the national objectives in attaining effective health management standards in Nigeria”. As it is noted through adequate sensitization, mobilization and enlightenments, people’s compliance or response to health tips could yield positive changes in patterns of healthy life. This is pertinent because, attaining a less polluted health and environmental status in any society of today is not all about fumigating the environment and as well providing

medicine to combat diseases and sicknesses, but also about providing adequate and ideal information so that people can engage in appropriate and informed practices and preventive measures to achieve desired goals (Ezegwu, 2015).

Effective Communication is acknowledged as being largely a major way of ensuring success in most social change campaigns and development efforts of societies. However, Ango, Illo, Abdullahi, Maikasuwa and Amina (2013) caution that, achieving success in the communication of social campaigns such as health, the environment and agriculture, and so on is largely dependent on the nature and extent in the use of mass media in mobilizing the public for a desired change. Thus, the foregoing analogy brings to mind Marshal McLuhan’s popularly held thesis, “Medium

is the Message”, which imply that adoption of relevant and appropriate communication systems or channels with well couched information on the subject matter, can go a long way in achieving effective delivery of an intended message to the public.

Radio has been found to serve considerably in public awareness campaigns by providing large segments of the people the required information and education due to a number of advantages. This is seen in the ability of radio medium to beat distance and has immediate delivery effect on listeners even in rural areas. Furthermore, radio is favoured as a medium of communication in rural communities because of the advantages ascribed to it, in form of transcending the barrier of illiteracy and demanding less intellectual capability to comprehend, than print media massages (Folarin, 2009; Naghmana, 2012; Ugande, 2015).

The pervasiveness of radio has no doubt made it an influential medium of mass communication especially in developing societies of sub-Saharan Africa with Nigeria being one among them. Interpersonal communication avenues could play parts in health education, but researches have shown that such channels (interpersonal) have great deal of limitations (Kombol, 2018; Ugande, 2015). This may be observed in the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, as “social distance” is being emphasized as one of the preventive protocols, thereby limiting personal communication to some extent, hence, radio is argued to be more appropriate in this regard.

Radio has been useful in the health sector for over time. Through various programme formats, themes and topics, radio messages often advocate for strict adherence to good hygiene and other ideal heath practices amongst people (Thompson, 2018). As outlined by Natyav (2011) health

education entails the conscious release of practicable information on health-related practices for public compliance.” Again, he stated some of the areas for enlightenment to include: prevention of diseases; environmental sanitation programmes such as those on covid-19 - the ongoing “compulsory use of face mask” and “hand wash” awareness campaign to prevent spread of Corona Virus diseases, also known as Covid-19 pandemic among others.

Since mass media organizations in all the federating states of Nigeria were mandated to improve their efforts in disseminating comprehensive information concerning the spread of covid-19 and its socioeconomic effects, it is quite known that mass media in Benue State have since been playing integral role of creating awareness and advocating for positive behavioral changeto prevent more spread of covid-19 with an ongoing campaign being on “ need for public vaccination exercise” which is faced with mixed feeling and resistance from the public (The Voice, 2021).What is however not certain is the extent to which efforts are been made in the campaign by radio medium, and the nature of influence such advocacy may have had on behaviors of Benue public, especially on compliance with vaccination exercise that is gradually being made compulsory in some corporate climes. It is in line with this reasoning that this study is necessitated to assess radio advocacy and the influence such messages may have on behaviours of Benue populace towards compliance with covid-19 vaccination exercise.

The foregoing is quite questionable as to whether the nature, manner and extent to which advocacy on covid-19 being broadcast by radio stations in Benue State and other mass media are perceived and have elicited desired response by Benue populace or otherwise, which gives vent to ask how radio advocates on Covid -19 vaccination and have influenced the behaviours of Benue public towards compliance with vaccination exercise in Benue State. This study sets out therefore, to assess the extent to which radio stations in Benue State have advocated messages on Covid-19 vaccination, so as to determine the how such messages have influenced the behaviours of Benue populace towards compliance with the vaccination exercise in Benue State. Arising from the objectives of this study, research questions are raised to guide the study as follows:

- (iii) What was the level of access to radio advocacy messages on Covid-19 Vaccination among listeners in Benue State (2020)?
- (iv) In what formats, nature of radio information, and frequency were radio advocacy messages on Covid-19 vaccination communicated to listeners in Benue State (2020)?
- (v) How did radio advocacy messages influence the adoption to Covid-19 vaccination among listeners in Benue State (2020)?
- (vi) What factors which may have hindered effective access to radio advocacy messages on covid-19 vaccination among listeners in Benue State (2020)?

## Literature Review

### Radio and Health Communication

Radio is a medium of communication that transmits audio signals that are received aurally by large and heterogeneous audience.

In other words, radio is said to be a wireless medium of transmitting signals through free space by electromagnetic radiation of a frequency significantly below that of visible light in a frequency range, from about 30kHz to 300GHz. These waves are called radio waves. Electromagnetic radiation travels by means of oscillating electromagnetic fields that pass through the air and the vacuum of space. Radio is a form of mass communication that uses radio waves to transmit audio content to a large audience. It has been a widely used medium for communication and entertainment for many decades. Health communication, on the other hand, refers to the dissemination of information and messages related to health issues, with the aim of promoting awareness, knowledge, and behavioral change among individuals and communities (Ngwenya, O., et al. 2021).

The concept of radio and health communication involves using the medium of radio to convey health-related information, promote healthy behaviors, and improve public health. It utilizes the power of radio to reach a wide range of populations, including those in remote areas or with limited access to other forms of mass media (Arunga, O. G., et al. 2022). As one of the genres of the mass media, radio has a long, significant and interesting mark in the history of development communication. Uche (1989) and Nwanwene (2000) says radio own its growths to the discoveries made in the field of electricity and magnetism by James Clark Maxwell, in 1874 and Heinrich Herzt in 1887.

In Nigeria, radio broadcasting started in 1932 as a service for monitoring and relaying programmes from British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for the interest of her colonial servants. The positive results of radio experiment led to proposal which started in 1933. This proposal was

accepted by the colonial government that the system be installed in densely populated areas such as Kano, Ibadan and Lagos. Ciboh (1997) avers that, radio's main duty was to set aside for local programmes featuring news, entertainment and local announcements. The radio distribution service (RDS) opened several in Ibadan, (1939) and later Kaduna, Enugu, Abeokuta, Jos, Zaria, Calabar and Port Harcourt. Health wise, radio has helped people to comprehend and appreciate some aspect of most of the advocacy messages for healthy living. Cases in point, child immunization, family planning, among other health issues are mostly communicated to people through radio.

### **Covid-19 Vaccination Awareness and Adoption**

Covid-19 Vaccination Awareness and Adoption refers to the efforts and strategies aimed at increasing public knowledge and understanding about Covid-19 vaccines and encouraging people to get vaccinated. It involves disseminating accurate information about the safety, efficacy, and importance of Covid-19 vaccines, addressing misconceptions or doubts, and addressing any barriers or concerns that may prevent individuals from getting vaccinated (Acquah & Opare, 2022).

Vaccination awareness advocacy messages focus on educating the public about the benefits of getting vaccinated, the science behind the vaccines, the vaccination process, and the potential risks caused by the disease itself. These advocacy messages use various channels and platforms, such as social media, television, radio, print media, and community outreach, to reach a wide audience and ensure accurate information reaches individuals from different backgrounds.

The word 'vaccination' once mentioned, usually throws up thoughts about

other terminologies such as 'immunity', and 'vaccine'. Perhaps, they could be said to usually run paripasu when operationalizing them conceptually. To have a better glimpse about this major concept 'vaccination', it is thoughtful one should offer short explanation on the other terms as mentioned in the above. So, the United State Department of Health and Human Services (2021) explain 'immunity to mean a protection from an infectious disease. If one is immune to a disease, he or she can be exposed to it without becoming infected. The United State Center for Diseases and Control (2019) attest that immunity is the ability of the human body to tolerate the presence of material indigenous to the body and to eliminate foreign substances. This discriminatory ability to eliminate foreign substances is performed by a complex system of interacting cells called the immune system. Since most organisms (e.g., bacteria, viruses, and fungi) are identified as foreign, the ability to identify and eliminate these substances provides protection from infectious diseases. Immunity is generally specific to a single organism or group of closely related organisms (National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, 2019). It is also from the term 'immunity' that another world 'immunization' derives.

### **Theoretical Review**

This study is anchored on the Health Belief Model (HBM). This is health communication model propounded by Becker (1974) from the work of Rosen stock (1966). This model can be used as a pattern to evaluate or influence individual behavioural change. The model proposes that a person's behaviour can be predicted based on how vulnerable the individual considers themselves to be. 'Vulnerability' is expressed in the HBM through risk (perceived

susceptibility) and the seriousness of consequences (severity). These two vulnerability variables need to be considered before a decision can take place. This means a person has to weigh up the costs/benefits (Karl, Fischer, Druică, Musso, & Stan, 2022; Naidoo and Wills 2000) or pros/cons of performing a behaviour. For example, this could include how 'susceptible' they feel they are to contracting an illness, for example mumps, and how 'severe' the consequences of having mumps is, or how 'susceptible' they are to an injury, for example falling off a bicycle without protective clothing, and how 'severe' the consequence will be. A person's decision to perform the health-promoting (or damaging) behaviour will be based on the outcome of this 'weighing up' process. Self-efficacy is also added to the HBM to enable prediction of behaviour. Self-efficacy is a person's perceived confidence of their ability to perform that behaviour.

The HBM includes four factors that need to take place for a behaviour change (such as Covid-19 vaccine intake) to occur: (1) The person needs to have an 'incentive' to change their behavior. For example: An 'incentive' for a person to stop smoking could be the desire not to smoke around a new baby; (2) The person must feel there is a 'risk' of continuing the current behavior. For example: By not taking preventive measures, such as compliance with anti-malarial drugs in a high malaria risk area, a person would feel that they would be putting themselves at 'risk' of contracting malaria; (3) The person must believe change will have 'benefits', and these need to outweigh the 'barriers'. For example: A person may believe that the benefits of using a bicycle helmet means they are less likely to have a serious head injury if they fall off their bicycle. They also identify that the barriers to wearing one; they are cumbersome to carry throughout the day. The 'benefits' must outweigh the 'barriers' in order for a change to be made; and (4) The

person must have the 'confidence' (self-efficacy) to make the change to their behavior. For example: A person must believe they have the ability to cut down their fatty food intake to help them lose weight and are 'confident' about their abilities to do this.

Health Belief Model is relevant to this study because it provides solid framework in guiding health campaigns or interventions such as the COVID-19 Vaccination. It shows that interventions using this model usually aim to influence the 'perceived threat of disease' variable and hence change the susceptibility/severity balance. The main way of doing this tends to be directing information that has an emotional appeal or contains a strong fear or emotional response.

### **Empirical Review**

Empirical studies existed to that demonstrate how the media, including the radio have been instrumental to health awareness and education programmes. A very recent study by Ojoboh, Kasiari, Erubami, & Olu (2024) which explored the influence of radio music broadcasting on the perception, attitudes and behaviour of women towards COVID-19 vaccine acceptance in twelve rural communities of Delta State revealed that radio is a major source of information on COVID-19 vaccines among the respondents, and radio music broadcasting has a significant positive influence on the respondents' perception, attitude and behaviour towards COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and willingness to be vaccinated. Specifically, the findings indicated that increased exposure to radio music broadcasting on COVID-19 vaccine tends to enhance the respondents' overall acceptance of the vaccine as well as their willingness to get vaccinated.

Nwodu, Nsude, Emechebe, & Ezeali (2023). The study examined Anambra state residents' attitude towards radio campaign

messages on compliance to covid-19 protocols and found that majority of the residents are highly aware and knowledgeable about COVID-19 radio campaign messages. The study also found that the radio campaign message has highly influenced the audience to use face masks and also adhere to hand washing protocol. A study by Hong (2023) presented evidence from the Korean government's corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccination campaign, which successfully applied a social marketing approach and findings revealed that communication is a powerful tool for influencing public opinion and attitudes toward various health-related issues, such as vaccine reluctance, provided it is well-designed and thoughtfully conducted. In particular, social marketing techniques that alter the target audience's behaviors for the public good can substantially improve vaccine uptake if adopted as a communication strategy in immunization programs to counter public hesitancy.

Similarly, in their study, Noimot&Onwunali (2022) found out that the respondents were aware about Covid-19 messages (91.5%) and they heard these messages from multiple media. 62.8% of the respondents were able to recall some of the Covid-19 which was not commensurable with behavior as vaccination rate was only 18.1% for 1st dose and 8.5% for 2-time vaccination respectively. Cajetan, Jumbo, & Etumnu (2021), revealed in their study that at an average of 85% the Imo State residents to a large extent are exposed to broadcast media campaigns on COVID-19 as it relates to their health. Further finding indicated that at an average mean of 3.0 (N=370) respondents are of the view that broadcast media campaigns on COVID-19 have caused a lot of panic, though, through the media campaigns on COVID-19 they are made to believe that unhealthy exposure to infected person they can contract it.

Similarly, Uzochukwu, Nwosu, & Okeke (2022) investigated the audience exposure, awareness and compliance with COVID-19 pandemic messages among Anambra state residents and found out that the residents of Anambra state were significantly exposed to messages on COVID-19 pandemic; it also discovered that the social media was the most predominant media platform that Anambra residents used in accessing media messages on COVID-19 pandemic; this was closely followed by the television and the radio. The study also revealed that Anambra people were appreciably aware of media messages on COVID-19. Surprisingly, the study showed that irrespective of the fact that Anambra residents were exposed to COVID-19 campaign messages, they did not really comply with them. Finally, the study found that a number of factors like: religion, disbelief in federal government, fear of dying from COVID-19 vaccines and the residents' perception of COVID-19 as hoax played key roles in the non-compliance position taken the respondents.

Olawunmi&Babatunde (2022) studied and found that 60% of respondents are persuaded to comply with the COVID-19 safety protocols as a result of mass media messaging on the pandemic and that wearing of facemask is where the media placed emphasis. Another major finding of the study is that 195 respondents (65%) were not vaccinated compared to 105 (35%) vaccinated. The reason for non-vaccination ranges from non-belief in the efficacy of vaccine to non-availability.

In a study by Babatope, Ilyenkova, & Marais (2023), acceptance rates ranging from 24.3% to 49.5% were observed across the four studies conducted among the high-risk populations in Nigeria, while the acceptance rates among the low-risk populations ranged from 26.0% to 86.2%. Themes such as socio-

demographic factors, perception of risk factors, and concerns about the vaccine's safety and efficacy act interchangeably as facilitators and barriers to the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, whereas political factors, conspiracy theories, and cost primarily act as barriers to vaccine uptake. Substantial heterogeneity was observed in COVID-19 vaccine acceptance rates among adults in Nigeria. More than half of the studies reviewed reported acceptance rates below 60.0%. A multidisciplinary approach is recommended in engaging important stakeholders, to effectively address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in Nigeria.

### Methodology

The study adopted surveyresearch design. The population of the study comprised the entire radio listeners in Benue state, Nigeria. The choice of all people of Benue State is because the disease is a pandemic, hence every person could be assumed to be at risk of contracting the disease in one way or another. The approximated population for the entire state is 4,219,244, derived from the 2020 National Population Commission of Nigeria’s web and National Bureau of Statistics web (2020). The sample size of the study was 400 respondents which was derived from a total study population of 4,219, 244 using the Taro Yamene’s statistical formula. The choice of Taro Yamene’s formula was informed by virtue of its suitability in the determination of samples from a heterogeneous and finites population.

### Results and Presentation of Data

**Table 1: Advocacy Messages on Covid-19 for Compliance with vaccination exercises among Radio Stations in Benue State, Nigeria**

Response	No of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes, they do	329	86
No, they do not	Nil	Nil
I am not certain	55	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

As contained in the formula, ‘n’ is the sample size sought; ‘e’ represents the level of significance (0.05); and ‘N’ is the population size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where;

- n = Sample size sought
- e = Level of significance (0.03)
- N = Population size

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{4,219,244}{1 + 4,219,244 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4,219,244}{1 + 4,219,244 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{4,219,244}{1 + 10548.11}$$

$$n = \frac{4,219,244}{10549.11}$$

$$n = 399.9$$

$$n = 400 \text{ Approximately}$$

The research instrument of data collection in this study was the questionnaire. Data was collected through the personal administration of the questionnaire. Data obtained for this study was presented using tabular formats and expressed in percentage scores.

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 1 showed the general awareness of respondents on whether radio stations in Benue state engage in advocacy campaigns on covid-19 pandemic to influence publics towards compliance with vaccination exercises or otherwise. Out of 384 respondents, 329 (86%) respondents attested that radio stations carry out advocacy campaigns on vaccination against covid-19. However, 55 (14%) respondents, in minority were not certain on whether radio stations engage in advocacy campaigns to influence positive behaviour of people towards complying with Covid-19 vaccination or otherwise.

**Table 2: Means by Listeners mostly Access Radio Broadcasts on Stations in Benue state**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
I mostly use my personal radio set and listen to radio broadcasts stations	81	21
I mostly use my handset set phone to listen to radio broadcasts	42	11
I mostly listen to either my personal transistor radio sets, or my car radio set or the radio application on my handset phone.	61	16
I listen to radio broadcast when and where ever I come across its broadcasts	200	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 2 revealed the means with which respondents mostly use to access radio broadcasts messages in Benue state. It can be observed that 81 (21%) of the respondents agreed that they mostly use their personal radio set and listen to radio broadcasts stations, 42 (11%) agreed that they mostly use their handset set phone to listen to radio broadcasts. Also, 61 respondents, representing 16% indicated that they mostly listen to either their personal transistor radio, or their car radio set or the radio application on their handset phone. Lastly, Majority 200 (52%) respondents said I listen to radio broadcast when and where ever I come across its broadcasts. Thus, it implies that respondents listen to radio broadcast whenever and wherever that come across it.



**Table 3: Distribution of respondents on how frequent they access broadcasts messages of radio stations in their locations**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
I access radio waves constantly in my location (throughout the day)	58	15
I access radio waves only in the morning and evening times from my location	203	53
I only access radio waves through some identified spots in my location and at certain hours	69	18
I only access radio waves at night in my location.	12	3
I only access radio waves in the morning from my location	42	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

The thrust of information on table 3 was to know the extent to which respondents access radio waves in their location. Out of 384 respondents sampled, 58, representing 15% attested that they access radio waves constantly in their location (throughout the day). Then, 203 respondents representing 53% were of the opinion that, they access radio waves only in the morning and evening times from their location. 69 other respondents representing 18% also said, they only access it through some identified spots in their location and at certain hours, while 12 other respondents representing 3% revealed that they only access radio waves at night in their location. And 42 respondents representing 11% maintained that, they mostly access radio waves in the morning from their location. It can be concluded that majority of the respondent access radio waves only in the morning and evening times from their location.

**Table 4: Respondents' Knowledge on kinds of radio programmes which they mostly access information on covid-19 vaccination**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
News	42	11
Drama	Nil	Nil

Discussion	92	24
Commercials/advertisements	Nil	Nil
Public service announcements	146	38
Music	Nil	Nil
Interview	46	12
Health	58	15
Sports	Nil	Nil
All in the above	Nil	Nil
None in the above	Nil	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 4 revealed the formats or kinds of programmes on which information on covid-19 vaccination is disseminated the most on radio stations in Benue state. Data on the table shows that 42 respondents representing 11% attested that, they mostly listen to messages of covid-19 vaccination on news programmes, 92 other respondents representing 24% attested that they mostly listen to information on covid-19 vaccination through discussion programmes. Also, 146 respondents representing 36% said they mostly get information on covid-19 vaccination from public service announcements PSAs programmes, 46 other respondents representing 12% also disclosed that they mostly access information on covid-19 vaccination from interview programmes that are broadcast on radio stations. Lastly, 58 respondents representing 15% said they mostly have access to messages on covid-19 vaccination on Health programmes that are broadcasts on radio stations in Benue state. This implied that majority of the respondent access information on covid-19 vaccination from public service announcement.

**Table 5: Respondents' descriptions on the nature of messages that are broadcasts about Covid-19 vaccination by radio stations in Benue State**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>No of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Informative and enlightening	46	12
Educative and convincing	61	16
Persuasive and influential	27	7

Demonstrative to the ear	35	9
All in the above	215	56
None in the above		
I can't say		
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 5 showed the opinions of respondents about the value or utility they make from listening to covid-19 vaccination awareness messages on radio stations in Benue State. The table revealed that 171(44%) respondents who said the messages are informative and well enlightening. Again, 13 (3%) majority respondents testify that, the messages are educative and convincing. 7 (2%) other respondents were of the opinion that the messages were influential. However, 197(51%) other respondents described the messages as having all the above-mentioned features of being informative, enlightening, convincing, and influential. The result in the above table simply implies that, a greater number of 51% majority respondents value the information on covid-19 pandemic more in terms of being highly informative, enlightening, as well as influential and convincing for one to easily take the vaccination while interacting in public domains. This implied that majority of respondents described the messages as having all the above-mentioned features of being informative, enlightening, convincing, and influential.

**Table 6: Respondents' ratings on the extent to which advocacy of radio stations have influenced their behaviors towards compliance with Covid-19 vaccination exercise in Benue**

**State**

Level of Acceptance	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Very high extent of 80% - 100%	Nil	Nil
High extent of 60%-80%	123	32
Average extent of 40-60%	207	54
Low extent of 20% - 40%	54	14
Very low extent of 10-20%	Nil	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 6 revealed respondent's opinions on the level or extent to which they feel those radio messages have enhanced their knowledge and influenced their behaviours towards compliance with covid-19 vaccination exercise. 123 (32%) of the respondents attested that the messages

enhanced their knowledge and compliance on a high extent. However, 207(54%) majority of the respondents maintain that the extent of influence and compliance with those messages was on the average. Lastly, 54 (14%) other respondents revealed their level of influence and compliance to being on the low level. It can be concluded that most of the respondent agreed that the extent to which advocacy of radio stations have influence their behavior towards compliance with covid-19 vaccination exercise was on the average.

**Table 7: Number of times respondents’ have already complied with Covid-19 vaccination exercise due to their level of awareness and influence from those radio messages**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
I have taken the first Jab of its vaccination already	119	31
I have taken the second jab of its vaccination also	38	10
I am yet to take even the first jab	227	59
I am not willing to go for the exercises	-	-
I cannot say exactly	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

The table showed the nature of response towards covid-19 vaccination exercise by respondents based on their claim from previous tables in the level of being influenced by radio messages on covid-19 vaccination exercise. From the table, only 157 (41%) of the respondents affirmed that, they have taken the first jab of covid-19 vaccination exercise. However, 227 (59%) majority of other respondents said they are well knowledgeable but are yet to take even the first jab of that vaccination exercise. This implies that most of the respondent are well knowledgeable but are yet to take even the first jab of that vaccination exercise.

**Table 8: Perceived Factors that likely hinder effective awareness creation on covid-19 vaccination by radio stations in Benue State**

<b>Respondents’ perception</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
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Lack of interest in listenership to the messages by residents	27	7
Lack of frequent access to transistor radio sets in rural areas of the state	31	8
Limited time and duration of broadcast of messages (Non repeat broadcast times)	15	4
Inadequate of expansion of the messages to other formats (Drama, Documentary, and Commentary, Discussion)	42	11
Inadequate reach in transmission by the various stations	27	7
Illiteracy and poverty during and after lockdown	19	5
All in the above	223	58
None of the above	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2024.**

Table 8 revealed the public opinions on whether there are factors that likely hinder effective awareness creation in the relay and access of covid-19 vaccination messages by radio stations and members of the public in Benue State. From the data collated, 27 (7%) attested that there is lack of interest in listenership to the messages by members of the public. 31 (8%) other respondents said, there is lack of access to transistor radio sets among people I rural areas of the state, while 15 (4%) respondents maintain that there is limited time and duration of broadcast of such messages (None repeated broadcast times). Again, 42 (11%) other respondents opine that, there is inadequate expansion of the messages to other formats (Discussion, Drama, Documentary, and Commentary), while 27 (7%) respondents said, there is inadequate reach in transmission by the stations. 19 (5%) others mentioned illiteracy and poverty as an impediment. However, 223 (58%) majority of respondents maintain that all of the above-mentioned factors are likely barriers to effective relay and access to radio awareness messages on covid-19 vaccination among people in Benue state. It can be concluded that they are hindered from accessing radio awareness messages on covid-19 by all factors mentioned above

### **Discussion of Findings**

Based on the analysis of the data, it has been found that the level of access to radio

advocacy and awareness on Covid-19 vaccination by people in Benue State is relatively high. As indicated from the findings, majority of people were those who attested that they usually listen to radio broadcast stations in Benue State. What is not impressive is evidenced where majority 52% of people only listens to radio messages only when and wherever they come across such broadcasts. This suggests that, although there have been available information and ample means of accessing it, majority of the populace have not been those that dedicate efforts towards accessing news information on mass media of radio, but only access it when chance permits.

Another finding is that there was significant public attestation that most radio stations in Benue state had highly advocated for public compliance with covid-19 vaccination exercises. This is evidenced as majority of responses indicated that, radio stations largely disseminated information on covid-19 vaccination through dedication of public service announcements (PSAs) programmes with ample time and only its content for broadcasts.

Thus, it could be inferred from the forgoing findings that, performances of radio stations in advocating for public participation in covid-19 vaccination exercises was highly and well understood. This is quite suggestive that radio stations lived up to their major functional roles of Agenda setting, provision, education, enlightenment, correlation and communication of ideal information to elicit positive public response. By this performance, radio stations in Benue State could be described as being socially responsible as enshrined in the tenets of theory, and as well lived up to assumptions of Agenda setting theory. Findings here also corroborates those of Anietie, Mfreke, Edidiong, Abraham, Michael, and Emmanuel (2020) who conducted research

entitled “Assessment of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Ongoing Programme Awareness Campaigns on Corona Virus in Nigeria.” And concluded that there is access to Nigerian Television Authority ongoing program awareness campaigns on Covid-19, thus recommending that NTA should maintain the tempo of daily awareness programme on “Corona Virus Disease” and improve in her efficiency.

In addition, the finding also revealed that advocacy messages of majority radio stations have influenced behaviours of majority people towards participating in covid-19 vaccination exercises to an average extent. Having all attested of those messages being influential, majority 54% of people rated the level of influence to an average level or extent of 40%-605 and was followed by other 32% responses suggesting the level of influence of being to a higher extent of 60%-80%. However, those responses were against 14% other people in minority who rated the influence on a low extent of 20%-40%. Although, the level of influence as rated by majority of people may not have being impressive, majority of people still attested and mention other ways those advocacies have being influential to their behaviors. It is well established by media professionals and scholars like Maxwell & Hansen (2006) that, the duration of time with which a consumer gives to one broadcast content is capable of making them respond to its intended message if it suites their desires. More so, the higher exposure and average influence attested to by majority 52% respondents is in agreement with assumptions of Agenda setting theory and that of information processing. As held in the agenda setting school of thought, the “continuous relay of selected and particular messages by the media unconsciously influence the audience on what to think about, thereby determining their behaviours

towards the intended content of such a message to some extent.

Also, finding indicated that only 40% out of 100% minority of people sampled have receive covid-19 vaccine. As follow up to the foregoing, majority 31% out of 40% people disclosed that, they have only taken a first jab of the vaccine. Thus, the expected public response to covid-19 vaccination exercises could be interpreted as ironically and relatively being on a low level. There is therefore no correlation between the acclaimed level of influence radio messages may have had on the behavior of people and their level of participation in the exercises. Although that being the case, findings on table 16 revealed certain reasons most people were yet to participate in the vaccination exercise to include from fear, inaccessibility of vaccine, inability to make up mind, uncertainty in decision and lastly public feelings of exercise not being necessary again. Therefore, those reasons enumerated in above have quite confirmed that there may have been genuine factors that limits the expected compliance with covid-19 vaccination exercise, even as there have being much awareness creation by radio stations and the level of influence being to n a higher extent.

Furthermore, it is indicative in findings of the study that, there are likely factors hindering effective dissemination of covid-19 vaccination messages by Radio stations in Benue state. Thus, challenges can result in significant setback of human endeavours. They therefore need to be averted or always be managed to the barest minimum level. As may be observed, it is likely that, the challenges perceived in the relay of covid-19 vaccination messages by radio stations have resulted in the average level of influence that is exerted on people instead of its being on the high side. Thus, it can be inferred from the foregoing findings

that, much of the efforts being made to advance or enhance awareness on covid-19 vaccination results in some waste of both human and financial efforts of those media organizations, since they are not well utilized.

Thus, perceived challenges being faced by both radio stations and members of the public does not in any way undermine the efforts and value derived by majority of people from the messages. However, it is not out of place for radio stations to improve on the services. As confirmed by McLuhan (2009) “every human life is subject to change”. Therefore, both radio stations, needs to keep undergoing changes, so as to sustain their current spice on modern learning in the society. And achieving this feat is subject to adherence to realistic suggestions made by majority respondents on improving relay and access to radio broadcast messages one of which is the ongoing covid-19 pandemic and particularly its vaccination exercises.

## **Conclusion**

Since this study was necessitated by existing pandemic causing much negative effects that needed awareness by media organizations for effective response in managing the menace, findings at the disposal have so far given overwhelming evidence to enable one conclude that, Radio stations in Benue state fulfilled their socially responsibility role by ensuring effectively creation of awareness on covid-19 vaccination to people in Benue state, thus urging them to comply with ways of preventing its spread through their consistent broadcast of messages. Again, it is concluded that, although covid-19 advocacies of the stations may have served as effective sources and tools for awareness creation, and influencing of public behaviours, there are other intervening variables that may likely hinder such efforts

and needs to be considered while embarking on subsequent campaigns, so to elicit effective public response to their messages.

grey areas to achieve greater result in their advocacies.

### **Recommendations**

- i. Radio stations in Benue state should endeavour to continually improve on their broadcast of outbreaks of diseases such as covid-19, especially by increasing the time and duration of broadcast in a week, widen its scope of content and formats by making intensive research, as well as translating it to other local languages and dialects.
- ii. Radio stations in Benue state and health agencies should embark on more awareness creation and campaigns on the need for Benue people, especially those in rural areas to acquire more radio devices for accessing radio information on covid-19 in their various destinations.
- iii. Government and Non-Governmental organizations should endeavour to encourage other sources of creating awareness, and access to information on covid-19 vaccination exercises such as use of community extension workers or agents to ensure proper counseling and encouragement of people on a face to face about covid-19 vaccination exercises, as this will overcome the yoke of other intervening variables that limits effective response to the exercises.
- iv. Lastly, Radio stations in Benue state should always go on public opinion research through their covid-19 programmes to ascertain public knowledge, acquisitions and compliance with vaccination exercises from time-to-time, as this will help them to discover shortcomings and improve on certain



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