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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO FOR MENSTRUAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS AMONG MARRIED WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS OF OYO STATE

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ABSTRACT

Despite United Nations' efforts at making nations of the world to realise that menstrual health management is a global public health issue and human rights concern, studies have shown that there are no policies that border on women's menstrual health in most developing nations. This study is designed to investigate the effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among married women in rural areas of Oyo State. Survey method is adopted for this study. The objectives of the study are to understand the effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State and to know what methods of menstrual health campaigns adopted by radio medium in educating women in the rural areas about menstrual health management in Oyo State. Survey Method is one of the frequently used research designs in communication studies to test opinions, attitudes, thoughts, views and beliefs of a group of individuals. It is descriptive, analytical and could also be used to test associations. Findings showed that woman-to-woman (Peers) channel is the most effective medium of enlightenment campaigns about menstrual health practices. Findings also showed that poor information-seeking habit of women is the barrier to radio menstrual health campaigns in the rural areas of Oyo State. Therefore, it is recommended that inclusion of reproductive health management and menstrual health literacy has become urgent in the curricular of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Government policies at federal, state and local government levels in Nigeria must also prioritise women reproductive and menstrual health management for sustainable development in Oyo State and Nigeria at large. A unit that must be christened as Reproductive and Menstrual Health Unit must be established in the Ministry of Health of Oyo State and at each of the Local Government Areas of Oyo State to oversee the menstrual health management and practices of illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State.

KEYWORDS

Investigation, Effectiveness, Menstruation, Health Campaigns, Married Women.

Introduction

Menstrual practices are forbidden from open discussions in many African societies, and are always misunderstood by women and their husbands (Zipp and Hyde, 2024). A healthy woman is a healthy family, and a healthy family is a healthy nation. The foregoing underscores the importance of women in the

attainment of sustainable development goal policies of the government of developing nations (Priyanka et al., 2024). The quest for all-round healthcare for the rural areas of Nigeria continues to re-echo in spite of huge budgetary allocations to health sector in Nigeria. Radio is a vital component of development process in most developing societies of Africa. Radio complements house-to-house health campaigns. While radio

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medium reaches a larger number of people with less effectiveness, house-to-house health campaigns reach fewer people with more effectiveness. Radio medium is the most accessible medium of mass awareness, education and enlightenment campaigns in developing nations, where a larger percentage of the people are entangled by illiteracy, poverty and misery. Knowledge of sexual and menstrual health empowers women to take sound decision with regard to their health management generally (Sserwanja et al., 2022). Radio medium's use of local languages endear the medium to millions of uneducated people in the grassroots of developing world. Radio is beginning to emerge as a popular medium of development and health communication. However, little or nothing is known about effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among women in the rural areas of Nigeria (Enoch et al., 2022). Talabi et al., (2024) conducted a study on influence of radio messages on the awareness and adoption of malaria preventive messages among rural dwellers in the South-West, Nigeria and found that radio has been a popular medium for enhancing and sustaining public enlightenments about important health behaviour in the rural areas. Challenges exist in the adoption of radio medium to target the women for menstrual health campaigns in the rural areas, due to the nature of occupations of women in the rural areas of Oyo State. Exposure to radio health-related messages has contributed to behavioural change with regard to menstrual health (Karlyn, 2001). There is a general lack of knowledge and self-care during menstruation among illiterate women in the rural areas (Dessi et al., 2024).

A stark lack of awareness about menstrual health management has killed many women in the rural areas of Oyo State through deadly infections. Menstruation is a global public health issue among women, especially the illiterate ones living in the rural areas of developing nations. Shame, disgust and embarrassment accompany public discussion of menstrual health management among women in Africa where many people are predominantly unschooled about menstrual health and needs (Thomas and Melendez-Torres, 2024). Provision of facilities and enlightenment needs for menstruating women in most health centres and hospitals in the rural areas of Oyo State is conspicuously lacking. Menstruation remains an underreported health issues globally as a result of social class, level of education, level of income, and other undisclosed influences (Gaire et al., 2024). Destitute females and poor women are often neglected in the health information dissemination system. Radio, by structure and operation, is targeted at the educated and the elite in society (Sharma et al., 2024). Menstruation is a significant social and psychological change that women experience. Incomplete and erroneous information about safe menstrual practices and menstrual management is a serious barrier to menstrual health among illiterate women (Kanameet et al., 2024). Illiterate women require information before, during and after their menstrual process (Oktavia et al., 2024).

Aziz et al., (2024) conducted a study on knowledge and practices related to menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in urban and rural areas and found that 71% of women in the urban areas practice good menstrual health management compared to women in the rural areas. At some point in their lives, many women experience menstrual disorders. Menstrual issues lower the productivity of most women in rural areas of Oyo State (Okamoto et al.,). Menstruation concerns sexual maturity, growth, fertility, and the modifications in various parts of the body (Dhiya and Wittiarika, 2024). Menstrual health is

crucial to the attainment of sustainable development goals, but government in Nigeria has paid lip services to the issues that border on menstrual health among women, especially those residing in the rural areas of the country (Aziz et al., 2024). Quality menstrual management concerns the health of women, equal quality education, gender equality, job opportunities, and good sanitation practices (Aziz et al., 2024).

Good menstrual health practice is an indication of women's good reproductive health management. However, illiteracy, lack of self-care, poor hygienic practices, socio-cultural issues, poor access to relevant supplies and poor disposal of menstrual pads have serious health consequences on the well-being of women in the rural areas of Nigeria and other developing nations of Africa (Panda et al., 2024). Prioritising menstrual health management must be an important idea among individual women in developing societies (DeMaria et al., 2024). Uneducated women are entangled by poverty and abysmal lack of knowledge about menstrual health management. Most women in the rural areas re-use the already soaked and used sanitary pads or a piece of cloth during their menstrual periods (Shanmugham et al., 2024). In some parts of African societies, socio-cultural and religious beliefs affect good menstrual health practices among illiterate women in the rural areas. Poverty and illiteracy place a restriction to access of sanitary pads by women in the rural areas. Menstrual health management practices are limited by poverty, inadequate health information and illiteracy, with adverse health effects on women's menstrual hygienic practices (Czura et al., 2024). Menstruation is a major psychological and physiological modifications in the life of women. Menstrual research and policies re-echo more than ever before in Nigeria. Menstrual health practices require clean water, adequate toilet facilities, privacy safety and used-pads disposal (Sambo et al., 2024). Despite its importance to women's reproductive health, good menstrual health practices remain poorly understood among illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State. Women's menstrual health management is given less importance in most developing nations of Africa and Asia due to gender inequality that is still a prevailing circumstance in those nations (Aziz et al., 2024). In spite of rising cases of menstrual health issues among female, unmet menstrual health needs have become a threat to the well-being of illiterate women living in the rural areas of Oyo State (Gambadauro et al., 2024).

Despite United Nations' efforts at making nations of the world to realise that menstrual health management as a global public health issue and human rights concern, studies have shown that there are no policies that border on women's menstrual health in most developing nations (Aziz et al., 2024). Consequently, this study is aimed at investigating the effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among married women in the rural areas of Oyo State. The objectives of the study were to: understand the effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State, to know what methods of menstrual health campaigns adopted by radio medium in educating women in the rural areas about menstrual health management in Oyo State, and to ascertain the barriers to effectiveness of radio medium on the campaigns for menstrual health practices among illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State.

Health belief model is adopted to explain this research work. Health belief model is very crucial in explaining health risk factors and behavioural modifications and HBM is one of the earliest health-related theories used to explain human health related behaviours and health-related decision-making (Sala Eldin et al., 2024). Several factors influence people's acceptance or rejection of health measures in rural areas of Oyo State. Poor knowledge of menstrual health practices, illiteracy, poor access to enlightenment campaigns on menstrual health practices, socio-cultural issues, socio-religious influences are factors that determine women's menstrual health practices in rural areas of Oyo State (Wongrith et al., 2024). Health belief model is a psycho-social model used by researchers to explain people's health-related behaviour (Omranian et al., 2024). Health belief theory assumes that illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State adopt or decline certain health measures based on women's perceived risks of contracting menstrual infectious diseases, the fear of severity of infectious diseases arising from menstrual poor health practices, women's challenge of taking actions to prevent diseases arising from poor menstrual health practices such as cultural barriers, taboos, shame and stigma of discussing about menstrual health practices in the open. Women's perceived benefits of taking up the regular menstrual health practices also trigger the adoption of safety measures aimed at preventing the infectious diseases arising from poor menstrual health practices. Women's views about implementing recommended health behaviour represent another issue that triggers adoption or declining of recommended menstrual health management practices among illiterate women in rural areas of Oyo State (Omranian et al., 2024).

Materials and Methods

Quantitative method of research is adopted for this study. Quantitative method of research obtains numerical data and analyses such data using any of the statistical methods (McLeod, 2023). Survey Method is one of the frequently used research designs in communication studies to test opinions, attitudes, thoughts, views and beliefs of a group of individuals. It is descriptive, analytical and could also be used to test associations (Safdar et al., 2016). Survey method is adopted for this study because a large number of respondents are involved in this study. Questionnaire was used to harvest the opinions, thoughts, beliefs and views of illiterate women about the effectiveness of radio on menstrual health campaigns in the rural areas of Oyo State.

The study used multi-stage sampling method to access the respondents in rural areas of Oyo State. Multi-stage sampling method is adopted in household survey designs when a large number of respondents are involved in a study, when data collection design involves face-to-face interviews as well as cost considerations (Chen et al., 2022). Oyo State is divided into three senatorial districts. Each of the three senatorial districts is further divided into local government areas. Local government areas in Nigeria can be classified into rural-rural, urban-rural and urban-urban local government areas. Each of the three local government areas were purposively selected on the basis of their rural-rural nature. Purposive sampling represents the samples whose characteristics are relevant to the study under investigation (Andrade, 2021). Purposive sampling is used to collect relevant data from homogenous groups (Lopez, 2023). Purposive sampling is adopted when the study focuses on special characteristics, features, behaviour, attributes and personalities. Thus, local government areas that have rural-rural hallmarks were purposively selected for the study. The local government areas

selected in Oyo State include Iseyin Local Government Area from the Oyo North Senatorial District, Ibarapa East Local Government from the Oyo South Senatorial District and the Afijio Local Government Area from the Oyo Central Senatorial district. 400 respondents filled the copies of the questionnaire. The population size of each local government determines the number of respondents selected for the study. In Iseyin Local Government areas, 150 respondents were selected to fill the questionnaire, in Afijio Local Government Area, 150 respondents were selected to fill the questionnaire, while in the Ibarapa East Local Government Area, 100 respondents were selected to fill the questionnaire. In simple random sample, each member of the subset of the population has an equal chance of being selected. A simple random sample is most convenient and effective when the members or subjects of the population of research interest have similar, homogeneous and uniform characteristics. Thus, illiterate women in the rural-rural local government areas of Oyo State were selected for this study based on their knowledge of radio medium's effectiveness on the campaigns about menstrual health in the rural areas of Oyo State.

It is simply not possible to access all the respondents in their various location, thus convenience sampling is adopted. Convenience sampling is a convenient method adopted by researchers to access their various respondents at shopping malls, schools, house, clubs and markets. Convenience sampling means reaching those elements or subjects that are readily available (Leiner, 2016). Researchers also turn to online convenience samples as sources of survey responses that are practically easy and cost-effective to obtain (Coppock and McClellan, 2019). Therefore, the convenience sample is used to reach the respondents or samples for the study based on their closeness and availability to the researchers. However, 395 copies of the questionnaire were returned and found useful to this study. Thus, respondents who were seen on the streets, markets, schools and malls in the selected local government areas were given copies of questionnaire to fill. Data were gathered and analysed through the use of frequency and percentage. Statistical package for social science version 16 was used to analyse the data that were gathered

Results

Table 1: Effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Woman-to-Woman (Peers) Channel of enlightenment about Menstrual Health Practices is most effective	155	38.2%
Women's Health Practices are Seldom Reported on Radio	116	29.4%
Health issues about male get better Coverage on radio than female health-Related issues	67	17%
Most Radio Health Programmes are aired	57	15.4%

in English that illiterate women do not understand		
Total	395	100

Source: Field work, 2024

Table one shows that 155 respondents representing 38.2% stated that woman-to-woman (Peers) channel is the most effective medium of enlightenment campaigns about menstrual health practices, 116 respondents representing 29.4% affirmed that women’s health practices are seldom reported on radio, 67 respondents representing 17% affirmed that health issues about male get better coverage on radio than female health-related issues, while 57 respondents representing 25.4% posited that most radio health programmes are aired in English that illiterate women do not understand.

Table 2: Enlightenment Campaigns Methods of radio menstrual health among illiterate women

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Drama	68	17.2%
Interviews	134	33.9%
News	152	38.5%
Programme Sponsorships	41	10.4%
Total	395	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 2 shows that 68 respondents representing 17.2% posited that drama is the enlightenment campaign method employed by radio for menstrual health among illiterate women, 134 respondents representing 33.9% maintained that interview is the enlightenment campaign method adopted by radio for menstrual health among illiterate women in the rural area, 152 respondents representing 38.5% posited that news is the enlightenment campaign method is used by radio for menstrual health among illiterate women in the rural area, 41 respondents representing 10.4% maintained that programme sponsorship is the enlightenment campaign method is used by radio for menstrual health among illiterate women in rural area of Oyo State.

Table 3: Barriers to effectiveness of radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Cultural Barriers	52	13.2%
Stigma	124	31.3%
Religious Beliefs	67	17%
Poor Information-Seeking Habit of Women in the Rural Areas	152	38.5%
Total	395	100

Source: Field work, 2024

Table 3 shows that 52 respondents representing 13.2% stated that cultural practices are the barrier to radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women, 124 respondents representing 31.3% maintained that stigma is the barrier to radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women, 67 respondents representing 17% stated that religious belief is the barrier to

radio for menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women, while 152 respondents representing 38.5% stated that poor information-seeking habit of women is the barrier to radio menstrual health campaigns in the rural areas of Oyo State.

Discussions

Most respondents (38.2%) stated that woman-to-woman (Peers) channel is the most effective medium of enlightenment campaigns about menstrual health practices. Face-to-face health campaigns about menstrual hygienic practices have been found to be more effective than radio menstrual health campaigns. The findings align with that of Oktavia et al., (2024) who found that safe menstrual practices and menstrual management are more effective on interpersonal platforms such as house-to-house campaigns, face-to-face interactions and peer-to-peer means of menstruation-related health information system in the rural areas of developing nations. However, women prefer peer information system about menstrual health practices because they hardly understand the elitist messages of radio about menstrual health practices

Most respondents (38.5%) posited that news is the enlightenment campaign method is used by radio for menstrual health among illiterate women in the rural area. News reportage on radio is transient, and therefore, illiterate women cannot comprehend transient nature of menstruation-related health campaigns embedded in news reportage. The findings align with Gambadauro et al., (2024) who found that in spite of rising cases of menstrual health issues among female, unmet menstrual health information needs have become a threat to the well-being of illiterate women living in the rural areas of Oyo State.

Most respondents (38.5%) stated that poor information-seeking habit of women is the barrier to radio menstrual health campaigns in the rural areas of Oyo State. The findings align with major postulations of Health Belief Model which states that women view about implementing recommended health behaviour triggers acceptance or rejection of menstrual health practices. The findings also align with Wongrith et al., (2024) who found that poor knowledge of menstrual health practices, illiteracy, poor access to enlightenment campaigns on menstrual health practices, socio-cultural issues, socio-religious influences are factors determining the adoption or rejection of menstrual health practices by women in rural areas of Oyo State. Predominant illiteracy among married women in the rural areas of Oyo State is a conspicuous barrier to women’s menstrual health behaviour in Oyo State

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main sources of information among illiterate women in the rural areas about menstrual health management are the peers. Radio has failed when it comes to menstrual health campaigns among illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State. Inclusion of reproductive health management and menstrual health literacy has become urgent in the curricular of primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Government policies at federal, state and local government levels in Nigeria must also prioritise women reproductive and menstrual health management for sustainable

development in Oyo State and Nigeria at large. Health education officers in rural-rural local government areas, nurses and medical doctors have a role to play in the enlightenment of illiterate women on the good menstrual health management to attain the development goals of the government. However, radio can also benefit from hosting women to talk about menstrual health practices to enlighten other women. Radio should also anchor programmes of menstrual health in local dialects understood by illiterate women in the rural areas

In lieu of radio medium which failed to deliver relevant menstrual health information among illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State, visual materials must be used to educate women in the rural areas of Oyo State about the importance of good menstrual health practices

A unit, funded by Oyo State Government and Local Government administrations in Oyo State, and operated by public health experts, must be established and christened as Reproductive and Menstrual Health Unit must be established. Such Unit must also be established in the Ministry of Health of Oyo State. Each of the Local Government Areas of Oyo State should also have such Unit to oversee the menstrual health management and practices of illiterate women in the rural areas of Oyo State.

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