

ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DARLING AND BIZZIBODI RADIO STATIONS IN CREATING AWARENESS AGAINST DRUG ABUSE IN OWERRI MUNICIPAL

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the effectiveness of Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations in creating awareness against drug abuse in Owerri Municipal. The study made use of the agenda-setting and uses and gratifications theories. A sample size of 384 was adopted. The survey research method was used for this study and questionnaire was used for data collection. The study raised three research questions to help guide the study. The study revealed that respondents to a high level listen to drug abuse messages on Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations. The study also revealed that the respondents hold a positive perception towards the drug abuse messages aired on the radio stations. The study recommended that government and opinion leaders should keep broadcasting more messages on radio as a majority of the respondents in Owerri municipal LGA have and listen to the radio. Furthermore, broadcasters should present drug abuse messages in native tongues of their target audience so as to increase awareness, interest and garner more audience. Finally, drug law enforcement bodies such as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) should frequently create awareness messages on radio.

Keywords: Drug Abuse, Bizzibodi Radio, Darling Radio, Owerri Municipal,

INTRODUCTION

Drug abuse is the intentional and obsessive use of illegal drugs, for which its effect can lead to a gradual destruction of the human body. The act of drug abuse usually starts from taking psychoactive drugs for the purpose of relief or entertainment which in turn starts having a negative effect on the body. Examples of such drugs are: marijuana, cocaine, opiates, methamphetamine, alcohol, heroin, ecstasy, lysergic acid diethylamide, tobacco and so on.

Drug abuse or substance abuse refers to the use of certain chemicals for the purpose of creating pleasurable effects on the brain. Ananya (2021) states that there are over 190 million drug users around the world and the problem has been increasing at an alarming rate, especially among young adults under the age of 30. Ananya (2021) further listed the three categories of drugs that can be overused as:

- Depressants: These cause depression of the brain's faculties; examples include sleeping pills (barbiturates) and heroin.

- Stimulants: These cause stimulation of the brain, giving rise to alertness and increased bursts of activity. A rapid heart rate, dilated pupils, raised blood pressure, nausea or vomiting and behavioural changes such as agitation and impaired judgment may also result. In severe cases, there may be delusional psychosis which can occur with the use of cocaine and amphetamines.
- Hallucinogens: This causes hallucinations and an "out of this world" feeling of dissociation from oneself. Hallucinogens may cause distorted sensory perception, delusion, paranoia and even depression. Examples include ecstasy, mescaline and lysergic acid diethylamide.

Currently the most abused drugs in the world, which the users use recreationally, are marijuana and hashish (Ananya, 2021). In Owerri, Imo State, the most currently abused drug is methamphetamine or meth for short. Methamphetamine is a potent central nervous system stimulant that is mainly used as a recreational drug and less commonly as a second-line treatment for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and obesity. It is popularly called "mkpurummiri" or ice in local parlance because it looks like ice block. It is also called "guzoro" because of the euphoria effect one gets after taking it (Ojiego, 2021). This situation did not go unnoticed by Imo State House of Assembly lawmakers; as according to Adedeji (2021), Imo State House of Assembly lawmakers moved against drug abuse in the State, describing it as an impediment to the development of the state. This move was made to curb the menace of drugs especially "Mkpurummiri" consumption among Imo State youths. According to Abubakar (2011) most of the drug dealers in Owerri currently hawk substances such as cannabis, cocaine and heroin in pinches within the state. A little sum of N50 can get you *Indian hemp*. Also, the ones hawked on the street are adulterated because of the high cost of the pure ones.

Furthermore, drug abuse is seen in various different age groups and individuals from nearly all walks of life and socioeconomic strata. However, Ananya (2021) explains that men are more likely to abuse drugs than women; single people are more likely than married individuals and urban dwellers more likely than rural dwellers. Prisoners, street children and younger individuals are also more likely to abuse drugs.

There are different ways of taking in drugs which ranges from taking it in through the mouth orally, inhaling it through the mouth, snorting it through the nose or using syringe to inject it into the bloodstream. Despite the efforts, policies and sanctions enacted by health and government bodies, such as National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), National Agency for Foods and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Pharmacist Council of Nigeria (PHC) in Nigeria, the obtaining or purchasing of drugs is still increasingly high. Abusers usually get their drugs from pharmacist, drug dealers, friends or peers, open drug markets, drug hawkers on the street.

Around 275 million people used drugs worldwide in 2020, while over 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders according to the 2021 World Drug Report, released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). National Drug Use Survey revealed that in 2018, over 3 million people suffered from drug use disorder in Nigeria (Okorodu, 2021).

Drug abuse is also more rampant among the youths especially in the universities. The aftermath or consequence of drug abuse like any other addictions does not become obvious in the early stages of consumption. It initially starts like a tiny trickle of water, quite unnoticeable, if not managed at the initial stage it can become difficult and almost impossible to manage. The worst

cases in drug abuse can lead to overdosing which can result in death. There is no cure for drug abuse, instead it can be managed by consulting therapists, receiving counselling, attending self-help meetings of recovering addicts and overall, living a healthier, cleaner life.

One of the means of spreading awareness and dissuading people from drug abuse is the use of radio. Radio is an electronic device used to broadcast or relay messages to a large heterogeneous audience using electromagnetic waves. Radio usually encompasses a two-way form of communication, whereby there is a message to be relayed and there is an audience to receive it. In scientific terms, radio is the transmission of a certain kind of electromagnetic energy through the air. Electromagnetic energy is energy that is radiated (meaning emitted) by an object and travels in waves, similar to the way sound is transmitted (Cathleen, 2021).

Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations are located in Havana Plaza and 48 Wetheral Road respectively all in Owerri, Imo State. Bizzibodi radio station in creating awareness against drug abuse uses Mike Ikoku who is the Chief Executive Officer of the radio station to address the youths on the dangers of hard drugs. Darling radio station in creating awareness against drug abuse airs an interactive programme which involves youth leaders from selected tertiary institutions where the dangers of drug abuse are discussed. Due to the prevalence in the use of hard drugs in our society by youths, this study set out to find out the success rate of the radio stations under review in creating awareness against drug abuse.

Statement of the Problem

Radio is one of the cheapest and common devices used in disseminating messages in the world today; one of such messages is drug abuse. Over the years drug abuse has been a consistent illegal behaviour noted in society which has led to deaths, mental illness, and health complications etc. Government, health practitioners and many others have used the radio as a platform to educate, enlighten and inform both the young and old of the dangers posed by drug abuse and the best ways to avoid becoming addicted to it.

In recent times, Owerri, the Imo State capital has seen a surge in drug abuse cases that have led the State Assembly to wade into the menace that has nearly overtaken the municipality. Hence, this study is focused on assessing the effectiveness of awareness creation by Bizzibodi and Darling FM radio stations on drug abuse in Owerri Municipal.

Research Questions

1. What is the listenership level to drug abuse messages on Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations?
2. What is the audience perception of drug abuse messages on Darling and Bizzibodi radio stations?
3. Have the drug abuse messages on Darling and Bizzibodi radio stations been effective in creating awareness against drug abuse in Owerri Municipal?

Theoretical Framework

The Agenda Setting Theory can be described as the ability of the media to set the agenda for what people think about. Agenda Setting Theory was first introduced in 1972 by two college professors, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. The theory is of the notion that what the

media deem relevant to broadcast will eventually be what the public will be focusing on. According to Zain (2014) the agenda setting theory discusses how the mass media has an influence in making some certain issue a public agenda. The public agenda is the main focus or prime issue which the members of society or the public are concerned about. The theory also elaborates the connection in terms of relationship between the emphasis that the mass media put on an issue and the media audiences or the public's reaction or attitudes to such issue.

The theory is of the notion that what the media deems relevant to broadcast will eventually be what the public will be focusing on. The theory is of two basic assumptions. The first assumption is that the media modifies and tunes what we see than just reflecting stories to the audience. The second assumption is that the more the media gives attention to a particular story, the more the public is likely to see the topic as important. Valenzuela (2007) is of the view that the agenda-setting role of the news media is not limited to focusing public attention on a particular set of issues, but also influences our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news. This becomes clear when we think about the concept of an agenda in abstract terms. Theoretically, the items that define an agenda are “objects.” In most agenda-setting research, these objects are public issues, but they also could be public figures, organizations, countries or anything else that is the focus of attention. In turn, each of these objects has numerous “attributes,” those characteristics and traits that describe and define the object. While some attributes are emphasised, others receive less attention, and many receive no attention at all. Just as objects vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object.

The agenda setting theory was used for this study because the theory holds that the media set the agenda, news or topic to be talked or thought about. In line with this assertion, the theory is of importance to this research because it examined Bizzibodi and Darling radio as a channels of mass communication used to lay emphasis on what the publics of Owerri Municipal Council will think about when it comes to health-related messages like drug abuse.

The Uses and gratification theory dates back to the 1940s, when scholars began to question why people consume various media. Initially, researchers focused on the gratification which the media users derive from the messages they consume. This continued up to the 1970's when researchers decided to extend their research into finding the outcomes of media use and the social and psychological needs that media gratifies. This theory was propounded by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in 1974. As media technologies continue to proliferate, research on uses and gratifications theory is more important than ever for understanding people’s motivations for choosing media and the gratifications they get out of it.

Uses and gratifications theory is based on two principles about media users. The first principle states that media users are active and engaged in the selection of the media they consume. Two, there is always a reason for selecting their medium of interest. This reason in turn helps them to meet their specific wants and needs. On the basis of those principles, Vinney (2019) outlines the five assumptions of uses and gratifications:

- Media-use is goal-directed. People are motivated to consume media.
- Media are selected based on the expectation that it will satisfy specific needs and desires.
- Media influence on behaviour is filtered through social and psychological factors. Thus, personality and social context impact the media choices one makes and one’s interpretation of media messages.

- Media are in competition with other forms of communication for an individual's attention. For example, an individual may choose to have an in-person conversation about an issue instead of watching a documentary about the issue.
- People are usually in control of media and therefore not particularly influenced by it.

Taken together, uses and gratifications theory stresses the power of the individual over the power of the media. Individual differences mediate the relationship between media and their effects. This results in media effects being driven as much by the media user as by the media content itself. So, even if people take in the same media message, each individual will not be affected by the message in the same way.

The uses and gratifications theory is of importance to this research because Bizzibodi and Darling radios produce and disseminate programmes which their audience use to gratify the need to be informed, educated or updated, one of such being drug abuse. In line with that, the research assessed how effective the message on drug abuse gratified the audience.

Literature Review

Touitou (2016) writing on "Drug abuse: Implication on national development in Nigeria: the role of the mass media," arrived at the conclusion that adolescents observe and listen to messages naturally if portrayed in a fun, relaxing programmes, especially on television. Thus, the media should endeavour to put more effort into providing anti-drug messages within entertainment shows. Similarly, Ude-Akpeh (2017) concluded that exposure to radio campaign messages on drug abuse presented by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, made youths aware of drug abuse and its consequences in Onitsha. This position was drawn from the study on evaluation of NDLEA campaign influence on drug abuse among youths in Onitsha Metropolis. In the same way, Palmgreen and Donohew (2006) in their study on "Effective mass media strategies for drug abuse" surmised that mass communication will always be an important tool of information dissemination, education and persuasion, which is capable of influencing people to adopt healthier lifestyles.

In a study conducted by Ajaebu (2015) entitled radio listening habits among students in Redeemers University, Osun State and their attitude towards programmes, found out that majority of the students who responded to the survey have access to radio, but they have a challenge in listening. The study summarised that most students in the university have access to radio but do not always make use of it and the highest station preferred by the students is Beat FM Oyo. Likewise, Edegoh et al. (2013) in their study radio listening habit of rural women in Idemili South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Nigeria revealed that a good number of rural women listen to radio regularly and programmes that are of more interest to them is agriculture and health related programmes. The study recommended the utilization of radio by government and its agencies for disseminating messages for rural women.

In addition, Onyebuchi et al. (2019) conducted a study on, assessment of radio listening habits of undergraduate students of Imo State University. The purpose of this study was to find out how often students of Imo State University listened to radio. In their findings over 80% of the students studied listened to radio programmes often, which led to the conclusion that the level of radio listenership among Imo State University students is high. Ogu et al. (2021) equally found from their research on curbing adolescent, illicit drug use in Owerri Metropolis, that in order to curb illicit drug use in adolescent, government should embark on projects which

include: strict border control, enforcement of laws by drug agencies, involvement of parents, health promotion, raising more awareness and sensitization campaigns. The study also found out that 96.8% of its respondents are aware of drug sensitization and campaigns within the metropolis.

Abubakar et al. (2021) conducted research on the burden of drug abuse in Nigeria in which they observed that the burden of drug abuse is growing despite several drug laws, policies and strategic plans to prevent it. The prevalence is higher among the younger population; males; undergraduates; secondary school students and commercial vehicle drivers. The most abused drugs include cannabis, amphetamine, codeine, cocaine and heroin. The major sources for the drugs were pharmacies/patent medicine stores, drug hawkers, friends who are abusers and drug pushers. The findings of this study are in tandem with Ogu et al (2021). In related research conducted by Adepeju and Osunwoye (2022) on drug abuse among Nigerian youths and its consequences, the study concluded that the effects of drug abuse have been more devastating on the youths. The study averred that the family, church, community, school, government and the media all have roles to play, especially in creating awareness about the consequences of drug abuse. Similarly, Nahvizadeh et al. (2014), in their research on the review study of substance abuse status in high school students in Iran, discovered that drug use is relatively high in the adolescent. The consumption level of the drugs shows that hookah was abused 15.5%, sedatives (without medical prescription) 40.7%, alcohol 37.7%, strong analgesics 10.2%, opium 8.7%, hashish 6.7%, ecstasy 6.6% and heroin 4.9%. These findings are in line with Ogwang (2017) that worked on drug abuse and morals of the youths in Kansanga and found out that many young men are led into drug abuse due to high exploitation by the society and band wagon groups. Equally, unemployment, low level of education, lack of awareness and lack of parental guidance are some of the contributing factors that make them abuse drugs such as heroin etc. Furthermore, Aguocha and Nwefor (2021) equally conducted a study on prevalence and correlation of substance use among undergraduates in a developing country and they concluded that there is a high rate of psychoactive substance use among students. Also, the highest determinants of this use of psychoactive substance are influenced by age, religion, place of residence, family and peer pressure. To draw the curtain on the empirical review, there are several studies (Deedenwii (n.d); Okoye et al 2022; EMCDDA, 2013) that agree that the media is effective in creating awareness and influencing its listeners.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was used in this study. The survey design was used because of the nature of the study and the fact that it allows for direct data collection from selected participants. The population of this study is made up of residents of Owerri Municipal in Imo State. According to the last population census conducted in 2006, Owerri Municipal has a population of 127,213. Therefore, to get an estimated population for the year 2023, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) population projection was adopted.

$$P = 1 + 2.9/100 \times \text{the projected year}$$

where p = current estimated population;

1 is constant;

100 = percentage;

Projected year = difference between the year of last census count and the present year of the research work, which is $2023 - 2006 = 17$.

Applying this, we have

$$P = 1 + 2.9/100 \times 17$$

$$P = 1.493$$

The present estimated population of Owerri Municipal is $1.493 \times 127,213 = 189,929.009$

To determine the sample size for this study seeing that it will be difficult to study the entire population, the Australian sample size calculator was adopted with a population size of 189,929. Thus, the size for the study came to 384 respondents.

The research work adopted the multi-stage sampling technique which includes: purposive, simple random sampling and accidental sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique was used to purposively choose Owerri Municipal. This is because Darling and Bizzibodi radio stations are located in Owerri municipal. In the second stage, the simple random sampling was used to select three villages out of the five villages that make up Owerri municipal. Here each of the five villages was assigned a unique number. Each number was placed in a bowl and shaken thoroughly. The researchers picked numbers from the bowl and the villages picked were: Umuororonjo, Amawom and Umuoyima. Accidental sampling technique was used to distribute copies of the questionnaire to respondents in the three villages. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The data gathered from the respondents were calculated and presented using standard deviation, mean, percentage and tables.

ANALYSIS

Table 1

Demographic Data

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	241	62.1%
Male	143	47.6%
Total	384	100%
Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-20	106	27.6%
21-30	207	53.9%
31-35	45	11.7%
35 and above	26	6.8%
Total	384	100%
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	290	75.1%
Married	94	24.9%
Total	384	100%

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	218	56.8%
Civil Servant	115	30.0%
Self Employed	43	11.2%
Others	8	2.0%
Total	384	100%

The table above represents the demographic responses. It is worthy to note that from the table above, the respondents for the study were the right ones as they were majorly young and mostly singles. The only surprise in the demographic response is that the majority of the respondents were females who outnumbered the males with 14.5% or 98 respondents.

The data gathered from the respondents were calculated and presented using standard deviation, mean, percentage and tables

Table 2

Number, Mean and Standard Deviation of the Listenership Level to Drug Abuse Messages on Bizzibodi and Darling Radio Stations?

ITEMS	N	MEAN	SD	DECISION
You listen to the radio jingle about drug abuse entitled "if anybody is giving you gbana, si mba o" on Bizzibodi radio	242	3.82	0.78	VHL
You listen to the radio jingle about drug abuse entitled "gupu mu na inu ogwu ike" on Darling radio	244	3.84	0.814	VHL
Grand Mean		3.83		VHL

As seen in the table above, the respondents indicated to a very high level with means ranging from 3.82 to 3.84 that they listen to drug abuse messages on both radio stations. Summarily, the grand mean of 3.83 based on the real limit mean fell on a very high level of listenership of drug abuse messages on the radio stations under study.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on Perception of Drug Abuse Messages on Bizzibodi and Darling Radio Stations

ITEMS	MEAN	SD	DECISION
The mode of presentation of drug abuse messages on radio is easy to understand.	3.90	.712	Accepted
The drug abuse messages on Darling and Bizzibodi radio stations have added to my knowledge on drug abuse	3.40	7.24	Accepted
The drug abuse message on Bizzibodi and Darling radio encourages people to adopt healthier lifestyles	3.90	.761	Accepted

As seen in table 2, the respondents with means above the 2.5 minimum mean for acceptance accepted all the items. What this implies is that their perception towards drug abuse messages on the radio stations is positive.

Table 4

Number, Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Effectiveness of the Drug Abuse Messages in Creating Awareness against Drug Abuse in Owerri Municipal.

ITEMS	MEANS	SD	DECISION
The messages/jingles on Bizzibodi radio station have educated you appropriately on drugs.	3.03	0.85	HL
The messages/jingles on Darling radio station have educated you appropriately on drugs.	3.26	0.756	HL
You feel motivated to stay away from drug abuse after listening to the radio messages.	3.91	.724	VHL
Grand Mean	3.4		HL

The table above shows with means ranging from 3.03 to 3.91 that to a high level, the drug abuse messages on both radio stations educated the respondents appropriately on drugs which led to a very-high-level mean of 3.91 in motivating the respondents to stay away from drug abuse after listening to the radio messages. With the grand mean of 3.4, this implies that to a high level, the messages on both radio stations were effective.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first research question raised by the study was to ascertain the listenership level to drug abuse messages aired on Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations. The researchers found that respondents indicated to a very high level with means from 3.82 to 3.84 to listening to drug abuse messages from the radio stations. This is strengthened by the position of Onyebuchi et al. (2019) who averred that students have and listen to their choice stations for select programme content. Again, it is pertinent to state that the agenda setting theory that was used as a fulcrum for this study is apt, as the media in this case Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations are setting the discussion rolling by broadcasting an important topic like drug abuse. Also, the uses and gratifications theory is apt because of the high listenership level of the audience to drug abuse messages on the aforementioned radio stations. The listeners use the programmes to gratify the need to be educated and informed on the abuse of drugs.

The second research question examined the audience perception of drug abuse messages aired on Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations. The findings show that the respondents accepted all the items in the cluster. The study shows that they hold a positive perception towards the drug abuse messages aired on the radio stations under study. This finding is in consonance with that of Touitou (2016) who found out that adolescents observe and listen to messages naturally if portrayed in a fun, relaxing programme, especially on television.

In looking at the last research question raised by the study which sought to find out if the drug abuse messages aired on Darling and Bizzibodi radio stations were effective in creating

awareness against drug abuse in Owerri Municipal, the researchers found out that the messages educated the respondents appropriately on drugs which led to a very-high-level mean of 3.91 in motivating the respondents to stay away from drug abuse after listening to the radio messages. The grand mean of 3.4 indicated that to a high level, the messages were effective. This finding is similar to those of Nwagbara et al (2018) where they revealed that radio is a very important tool in creating awareness about critical issues. Also, Patil et al (2019) concur with this finding where they concluded that the radio is very effective in creating awareness because the messages it delivers can be disseminated in various regional languages, resulting in better understanding of the communication delivered amongst the rural population. This speaks to the effectiveness of the agenda-setting theory in setting the agenda that cause people to discuss vital and important issues like drug abuse.

Similarly, this study does justice to a research conducted by Adepeju and Osunwoye (2022) on drug abuse among Nigerian youths and its consequences where the study concluded that the effects of drug abuse have been more devastating on the youths and recommended that the government and the media all have roles to play, especially in creating awareness about the consequences of drug abuse.

Conclusion

The findings from this study reveal that Bizzibodi and Darling radio stations aired drug abuse messages which the respondents adjudged as educative, and also knowledgeable and effective in dissuading drug abuse among residents because of the high awareness created by the radio stations. The study also indicates that for the continued desired effect to be achieved from the awareness creation, these radio stations should make the programming on drug abuse expository, easy to remember and more frequent. The study among other things recommended that government, opinion leaders and community leaders should broadcast more messages about drug abuse on radio in Owerri Municipal. This is because large populations of the residents still have and make use of the radio, despite the advent of the social media and television. It also recommended that, radio stations should carry out more programmes and jingles on drug abuse, and promote the messages in ways that would garner more audience and spread awareness. The researchers posited that electronic media professionals should adopt the style of transmitting drug abuse messages in the local or native tongues of their target audience so as to encourage and promote listenership in the community, while making the messages easy to understand and remember.

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