

**Perception of the Utilisation of Tungba F.M Radio for the Dissemination of COVID–19 Messages among the Final Year Students of Mass Communication of Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu**

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**Abstract**

This study was carried out to determine the use of Tungba FM radio station for the dissemination of COVID–19 messages. The rationale for the study was to determine the extent to which the radio station was used to disseminate information on COVID-19 in Lagos State. The population of the study comprises final year mass communication students of Lagos State Polytechnic. Survey research design was adopted, while questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The findings showed that Tungba FM serves as an important source of information on COVID-19 pandemic. The findings also showed that Tungba FM radio programmes on COVID-19 pandemic were well-explained and that the messages on COVID-19 pandemic positively affected the health attitude of the respondents. Thus, it was concluded that Tunde Radio programmes on COVID-19 have positive influence on the respondents. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was among others recommended general health and hygiene tips should be regular features of radio programmes because most of the health crises are results of careless lifestyle and habits which are avoidable.

**Keywords:** Uses, Dissemination, COVID-19, Tungba F.M, Lagos

**Introduction and Motivation for the Study**

Coronavirus is a kind of common virus that causes an infection in your nose, sinuses, or upper throat. Most coronaviruses aren't dangerous. COVID–19 is a disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 that can trigger what doctors call a respiratory tract infection. It can affect your upper respiratory tract (sinuses, nose, and throat) or lower respiratory tract (windpipe and lungs). It spreads the same way other coronaviruses do, mainly through person-to-person contact. According to World Health Organisation (2021), the COVID–19 (coronavirus disease 2019), virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

The virus can lead to pneumonia, respiratory failure, heart problems, liver problems, septic shock and death. Cennimo (2021) wrote that on January 30, 2020, the WHO declared the COVID–19 outbreak a global health emergency and on March 11, 2020, the WHO declared COVID–19 a global Pandemic. Nigeria, like every other concerned government started restricting its citizens' movement as a measure to curb its spread across the country. While world and regional government struggled to prevent the deadly virus from exterminating their citizens, necessary measures like restriction of movement, lockdown, and sharing of tips on how to curb the medical menace that threatens humanity. One major means governments are using is the mass media. Mediated messages were disseminated through media platforms to guide and direct people in lockdown and keeping them updated on latest development.

Though the mainstream media are doing their job, special publics like rural settlements and suburban settlers need medium which will directly serve their information need during critical time like this. Radio stations like Tungba FM 100.9 readily became handy for government and international agencies to reach rural and suburban publics. Tungba FM is a radio station licensed to practice in Ikorodu community. The station founded by Odo Gbolahan and was formally commissioned in 2019. Tungba FM broadcasts in Yoruba language, Ijebu dialect and English language with focus on cultural and community events. It operates on the frequency 100.9 and bears its official name "Tungba FM 100.9." the station first started as an online radio few months before its full terrestrial transmission in same year. Few months after it started full operations, the coronavirus hit and the government began a massive media campaign to reduce the impact of the damages that may happen. The community radio which was not only close to the grassroots people of Ikorodu, broadcast safety and precautionary messages in Yoruba language, Ijebu dialect and in English language to the diverse audience of Ikorodu.

The recent cases of corona virus in Nigeria in the early wake of 2020, have kept many critics wondering about the messages disseminated through the mass media. Some researchers, scholars, government critics and development communication experts expressed their findings, views and opinions, on the impact of different media messages on attitudinal changes among various segments of the target population of the campaign against global epidemic and how people react to the messages (Ogundeji, Talabi & Fafiolu, 2013). It is in line with the foregoing that this study was conducted to find out how the people of Ikorodu reacted to messages on COVID–19 Pandemic on Tungba Radio.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which the students of Lagos State Polytechnic listen to radio messages on the COVID–19 epidemic.
2. Identify how Tungba FM radio messages influence attitudinal change of students of the students of Lagos State Polytechnic on how COVID–19 epidemic can be contracted, managed and prevented.
3. Find out how Tungba FM radio programmes enable the redirecting of the mindset of the students of Lagos State Polytechnic in time of the COVID–19 epidemic outbreaks.

### **Literature Review**

Radio as medium of mass communication became popular in developing societies for many reasons. Oyetoro, Joshua & Aduradola (2013) believe that radio by nature is the ideal medium for development in Africa as it provides access to large number of people, both literate and non-literate. They point to the many advantages of the medium which makes it a choice medium of communication when compared to other media, radio is relatively cheaper, simple to use, portable

and operate virtually everywhere with or without electricity supply. Among the many benefits or advantages of radio is that it creates channel for interactive communication and serve as source of dialogue on issues or rural development. Scholars believe the medium serves as platform for democratic and pluralistic expression of the communities, and means of raising public awareness and motivation (Daramola 2014; Oyero *et al* 2013). Asemah (2011) in a bid to highlight the special contribution of radio (and television) to rural development wrote that rural broadcasting entails the use of community radio and television to carry out developmental programmes to the rural dwellers.

Community radio, also called rural radio, is a radio that is about, for by and of a specific marginalised community whose ownership and management representative of its community that pursues a participating development agenda, and that is non-partisan and non-sectarian (Quarmyne, 2009; Daramola, 2014). Adegbola & Oyedele (2013, p. 288) gave a more simplified and reasonable explanation to what community radio is. They wrote: “any radio station that is owned, operated, controlled and used to communicate development issue, mobilise and encourage people of a community to participate in the process of development without profit motive is known as a community radio.” Daramola (2014) expatiated on this by writing that community radio refers to a radio station owned and controlled by a community defined either geographically or as a community of interests and it is not profit oriented. It is also believed by some scholars that community radio could be owned by non-governmental organisation working in communities or by a group of people within the community, associations, trust or a foundation (Adesemoye & Acheme, 2021).

Asemah (2011) believes that rural radio can be used to mobilise the people at the grassroots level for community development and national consciousness. He argued that no serious mass-oriented development programme in rural areas of Africa will survive without the active involvement of the people within the traditional system. In this view, Daramola (2014) explains that the origin of community radio can be traced to repressive experiences of many communities who were marginalised by city media and therefore they opt for community radio as a tool for highlighting their rights and raise issues concerning their interests. Community radio, therefore, represent the voice of rural people, minorities, oppressed, voice of the poor even within a large urban settlement.

Daramola (2014) is of the opinion that community radio can best be used for the re-information of previously accepted activities that will satisfy the people. By implication, this will enhance many virtual areas of community development like the health services or the agricultural extension services. Scholars believe that there are many ways community radio would enhance good governance including sensitising the rural population on the importance of democracy, discuss issues that affect them in terms of communal conflicts, health emergencies, hospitals, good roads, etc. (Julius-Adeoye, 2013).

In a study conducted by Chudey, Akpoveta & Ogbemi (2014) on teenagers’ response to local radio messages on HIV/AIDs campaign in Ogwashi-Uku, Delta State, it was found that most secondary students get information concerning HIV/AIDs through radio messages and it was recommended that since radio messages are good means of obtaining information concerning HIV/AIDs. In a study conducted in 2014 by Chinedu & Ngonso to examine media coverage of infectious disease, it was found that issues of infectious disease were not prominent in the Nigerian print media. Afolayan, Abuya, Kumuyi & Adewole (2011) examined the role,

challenges and prospects of the mass media in the implementation of the health components of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They found that the health related MDGs have gained wide spread acceptance in Nigeria through the instrumentality of the media.

### Theoretical Underpinning

The study was anchored on agenda setting theory. Walter Lippmann who in 1922 conducted a survey to find out how the media determine public opinion on topical issues initiated the idea of the theory. He found from his study that the members of the public do not necessarily respond to the actual events that occur in society, but to the pictures of those events reported by the media in their daily coverage of issues in society (McCombs, 2008, p. 4 as cited in Oboh 2014, p. 42). Okhakhu & Asan-Ate (2011, p.42) wrote that the agenda-setting theory, according to Daramola (2003, p.66) is based on the assumption that there is a relationship between news coverage and public perceptions of the important issues. The media indirectly and sometimes, directly determine what issues are important. It is on this note that this theory is related to this study.

### Methodology

Survey research design was adopted in this study while questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection. The population of the study comprises full time mass communication students of Lagos State Polytechnic. According to the Departmental Secretary, ND1 is 186, while ND2 is 161. HND1 is 142, while HND 2 is 111; giving the total number of 600. Therefore, the population of the study is 600. Using the Slovin's formula of sample size determination, a sample size of 240 was arrived at. The convenient sampling technique was used to serve the students in each level of the department. Of 240 copies distributed, 232 copies were duly filled and returned.

**Table 1. Level of Respondents**

Item	Frequency	Percentage
HND I	44	19%
ND II	70	30%
HND I	74	32%
HND II	44	19%
Total	232	100%

A large number of the students who participated were in third year (HND1), which means they are mature enough to understand media messages.

**Table 2. Age Bracket**

Years	Frequency	Percentage
16-20	52	22%
21-25	138	60%
26-30	42	18%
31 above	0	0
Total		100 %

The age bracket of the students who partook in the survey was 60%. They're mostly young people who took part in the study.

**Table 3: Listening to Tungba FM Programmes provides helpful Information on COVID-19**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	66	28%
Agree	86	37%
Undecided	48	21%
Disagree	26	11%
Strongly disagree	6	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

The data in the above table show that the radio station provides useful information on COVID-19.

**Table 4: Tungba Radio programmes serve as Important Sources of Information about COVID-19**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	54	23%
Agree	84	36%
Undecided	58	25%
Disagree	32	14%
Strongly disagree	4	2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

The data gathered in the above table reveal that Tungba FM is serving as an important source of information on COVID-19.

**Table 5: Tungba FM Radio Programmes on COVID-19 Pandemic are well explained**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	80	34%
Agree	64	28%
Undecided	34	15%
Disagree	26	11%
Strongly disagree	28	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data in the above show that COVID-19 is well explained on the programmes of the radio station.

**Table 6: Responses on learning Preventive Measures against COVID-19 Pandemic through Tungba FM**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	80	34%
Agree	56	24%
Undecided	26	11%
Disagree	32	14%
Strongly disagree	38	16%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

The data in the above table show that the respondents have learnt preventive measures through the COVID-19 preventive measures on Tungba FM.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The results collated showed that 37% of the respondents agreed that listening to Tungba FM programme provided helpful information, 28% strongly agreed, 21% were neutral, 11% disagreed, while 3% strongly disagreed. The implication of the findings is that the radio station adequately provided information on COVID-19. This finding is similar to that of Chudey, Akpoveta & Ogbemi (2014) who found that secondary school students usually get information on diseases through radio. This corroborates the popular belief that radio is a veritable tool to reach various strata of the society (Asemah, 2011; Daramola, 2003; Adesemoye & Acheme, 2021).

The findings showed that Tungba FM serves as an important source of information on COVID-19 pandemic. This is in line with the agenda setting role of the media which says that the media set public agenda. This shows that radio station sets agenda for health communication as it relates to COVID-19. The findings also showed that Tungba FM radio programmes on COVID-19 pandemic were well-explained. The findings also showed that the messages on COVID-19 pandemic positively affected the health attitude of the respondents towards COVID-19 pandemic. The findings also showed that the respondents were greatly aware of COVID-19 preventive measures.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it is safe to conclude that Tunde Radio paid serious attention to the coverage of COVID-19 and that the programme had positive influence on the respondents. Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Local government authorities in collaboration with relevant institutions (CDC, United Nations and other health related agencies) show review health emergency plans and remind the people of any eventualities through community radio.
2. The Nigerian government should make effort to establish or facilitate the establishment of more community radio across many communities in the country.
3. General health and hygiene tips must be a regular feature of community radio programmes because most of the health crises are results of careless lifestyle and habits which are avoidable.

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