

RESEARCH ARTICLE

STRATEGIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION OF COVID-19 PREVENTION STRATEGIES AND VACCINATION NECESSITY IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated an urgent communication intervention to prevent its spread in Nigerian tertiary institutions and to convince local people to willingly participate in the vaccine procedure, overcoming any fears or doubts they may have. Effectively reaching the intended audience requires utilizing the health message tool, and these health messages should be carefully created and structured to embody the characteristics of crisis communication, namely being informative, persuasive, and captivating. The study utilizes the Health Belief Model and Trans-theoretical Model of Behavior Change to demonstrate that information units in tertiary institutions have specific roles to fulfill to effectively reach all segments of the target audience with the message on COVID19 prevention and vaccination participation. These roles are outlined in a detailed media plan that is expected to be implemented by PR outfits as a guide to achieve communication goals. Based on the findings gathered from a survey conducted at four (4) Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State, Nigeria, this study suggests that communication is essential and health communication should not be disregarded as unimportant because it determines the strategies for survival. These tactics form the substance of health messages, which are specifically designed to promote changes in behavior and modifications to improve health within the boundaries of the institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential in all societies since it is the foundation on which they are formed and propelled. It also significantly influences the pace of sustainable growth. Effective communication is crucial in everyday life, since it facilitates mutual understanding and is essential for individuals to effectively convey their skills and information, regardless of their location. Communication is the process of transferring vital information from one person to others who are supposed to receive it (Clampit, 2016). For effective communication, both parties must have a mutual understanding to ensure the successful sharing of information. Interpersonal relationships are established by conversation, which serves to link individuals and provide necessary information. Communication is a fundamental aspect of our human nature. Communication serves as a means for us to share knowledge and also represents our capacity to convey symbolic meaning. These two roles represent the transmission and ceremonial perspectives of communication, as described by James Carey. Carey (1989) acknowledged that communication has both an instrumental purpose, such as facilitating the acquisition of

knowledge, and a ceremonial function, which represents people as members of a social society. Communication is the process of exchanging symbolic representations to convey shared understanding. It encompasses both the transfer of information and the performance of social rituals (Rimal & Lapinski, 2009). Intervention activities aimed at altering behaviors can be classified as communicative acts. By primarily emphasizing the transmission aspect of information sharing, these endeavors frequently overlook the ritualistic activities that occur naturally throughout conversation. When adopting the transmission perspective of communication, it is important to consider the channels used to spread intervention messages, the intended recipients of the message, how the audience reacts, and the characteristics of messages that have the most significant influence. The mentioned concerns encompass the fundamental elements of the communication process, namely the channel, source, receiver, and message. From the ritual perspective, target audiences are perceived as individuals who belong to social networks, where they connect, participate in social ceremonies, and receive significance from the performance of customary behaviors. Strategic health communication involves the analysis and implementation of effective methods to provide promotional health information, such as through public health campaigns and health education initiatives. The objective of distributing health information is to impact individual health decisions by enhancing health literacy.

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Health communication is a specialized field within healthcare where experts utilize communication tactics to educate and persuade the public in order to enhance health outcomes (Schiavo, 2013). Research in health communication aims to improve communication tactics to educate individuals about methods to improve their health or mitigate specific health hazards. This is achieved by tailoring the message to suit the audience and the circumstances. Every time communication occurs, it is important to carefully consider the most suitable method of delivering information to effectively reach the intended audience. This can include many channels such as personal encounters, television, internet, and other kinds of mass media (Leo, 2002). The rapid proliferation of internet communication technologies, specifically the emergence of health websites like MedlinePlus, Healthfinder, and WebMD, online support groups, web portals, customized information systems, telehealth programs, electronic health records, social networking platforms, and mobile devices such as cell phones and PDAs, indicates that the available media options are constantly evolving. Health communication takes place in a wide range of social and cultural settings, such as homes, schools, and workplaces. When crafting messages, it is important to consider the varying levels of health literacy and education among the audience, as well as factors like demographics, values, socioeconomic issues, and other influences on effective communication. According to Noar Et Al (2007), personalizing a health message is a strategic approach to enhance the persuasiveness of health communication. In order to effectively and efficiently provide health communication messages to specific audiences, health communication experts need to gather a comprehensive and tailored set of high-quality material that is specifically designed for the target demographic segments. Understanding the target audience for the material is crucial for delivering it effectively. Poor communication is a perplexing phenomenon that has harmful effects on the healthcare industry and the well-being of patients. Communication encompasses several elements such as verbal speaking, vocalization, intonation, nonverbal gestures, attentive listening, and other related factors. Interpersonal relationships involve a process aimed at achieving mutual understanding. Hence, in order to accomplish the established objectives, it is imperative to develop a well-crafted health message that addresses COVID-19 prevention and vaccine acceptability within tertiary institution communities, while adhering to the guidelines of health communication.

RESEARCH CONCERN

Strategic health communication can be seen as a crisis communication technique, particularly when the health message is intentionally created in response to a current health problem (reactive) or an anticipated health disorder epidemic (proactive). Health communication should not be quickly summarized or disregarded as trivial, as it encompasses the techniques necessary for survival. An expedient and responsive written response to the pandemic situation, particularly regarding its impact on Nigerian tertiary institutions communities, is crucial for effective health communication. These informational outputs are coordinated by the information units of the management systems implemented in the respective institutions. Meanwhile, the 'community' referred to here encompasses all individuals who are actively and

passively residing, managing, and existing within the physical boundaries of the institution. The well-being of this community should be a top priority, making them the intended recipients of any health-related messages created and delivered within the community. It is indisputable that the majority of the target audience often do not receive the desired information from the sources of the communication. This is mostly due to the disparity in individual health literacy and the effectiveness of health information dissemination through mass media. Corporate health communication aims to bridge the gap that has emerged between health literacy and the utilization and response to health information. The intended outcome of this initiative is to improve health literacy. However, obstacles such as the use of complex medical terminology, poorly constructed messaging, and a lack of general education have hindered the complete achievement of these objectives. Hence, the main focus of this research presentation is on the essential strategies required to effectively communicate and disseminate information about the new pandemic, its prevention methods, and the motivation for accepting vaccinations to the intended audience. It is crucial to ensure that this communication is prompt and efficient, without being hindered by gaps in health literacy or the influence of mass media. Any omission or obstruction in this process would pose a significant challenge to the institution's community.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research article are to

- Find out why the health message crafted for the consumption of the target audience within the Nigerian tertiary institutions (inorder to induce a healthy lifestyle) 'may' not actually get to all of them.
- Analyze the measures needed to be utilized in order to ensure that the entire target audience here is reached with the message.
- Define the strategies necessary for adoption in the writing of a persuasive and effective health message regarding COVID19 prevention and vaccination acceptance in tertiary institutions.
- Consider the appropriate time interval necessary for the consistent communication of the health message to the target audience as well as the need for a feedback system in order to measure audience's responses.
- To find out the need for a feedback system towards the measurement of audience's response

From the above objectives of the research article, the following research questions are presented;

- What are the factors behind the fact that some segments of the target audience within the institutions' communities may not be reached with the health message?
- What approaches are essential to be adopted in ensuring that the entire target audience is reached with the message?
- What strategic writing strategies and inclusions will make the health message persuasive and binding enough?
- What time interval will be necessary for adoption by the institutions'information outfits to communicate the health message consistently to the target audience?

- In a bid to measure and analyze audience's responses, is there any need for the provision of a feedback system by the management?

RE-ACTIVE CORPORATE HEALTH COMMUNICATION IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Gwyn (2002) opines that health communication increases the audience knowledge and awareness of a health issue and with this, the chances of survival is increased in the face of the COVID19 pandemic, and the chances of virus contraction is somewhat curtailed. Re-active strategic health communication is defined, pointing specifically to messages intended to implement and introduce certain preventive strategies over an outbreak within the community of concern in order to limit the chances of affected cases explosion. The Nigerian tertiary institution communities are compositions of people of different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds and as such, a health message is liable to have varying impacts on the recipients owing to the diversity of their strata. Moreover, health message in this regard are deliberately crafted in order to influence behaviors and attitudes towards health issues concerning COVID19. Freimuth & Quinn (2004) asserts that every health message argues against misconceptions about health. Significantly, with the inflow of information from various sources and links, target audience within the institution communities would have built their perceptions and perspectives around their various feeds and as such, for a health message to implement it's full objectives and also reach its aims, such must be crafted to argue and influence the misconceptions that have arisen as a result of circumstances.

There are many reasons and purposes why health communication is necessary to be adopted as a veritable dimension of communication in a bid to address the pandemic situation at hand. According to Atkin & Silk (2009), due to there being a diverse culture that makes up the communities, nonverbal and verbal communication between Communication sources (experts) and recipients can lead to improved health outcomes. With this, the category of health message is defined, showing that such can come in the form of a written document (memo, Press release, Internet softcopy, journal, wallspace, etc) and can as well come to play as interactions during health sessions, congresses and workshops.

When assessing how affective a health message is, the key determinant is the degree of audience reception, the quality and quantity of the message, the dissemination channels and the larger communication environment. It is possible that within the same community, some segments of the recipients can be more receptive to the message than others. Also, the media channel and how the message is reached by the audience can affect the effectiveness of the health message (Atkin & Silk, 2009). Meanwhile, the efforts and effects of "campus" health message are often counter affected by alcohol, tobacco and clubbing commercials. The advertisements for these items are often made to be glamorous and will contradict what was said in the health message. This serves as one of the reason why the effects of health messages on the target audience may not be very visible. When developing messages for health communication initiative regarding COVID19 within the tertiary institution communities, Communication professionals/experts must rely on the lessons learnt from their previous experiences (significantly, the 2011 Ebola virus outbreak) as well as on their professional judgement about the

strategies that are most likely to succeed. Health messages that are not compelling and persuasive are most likely based on decisions that lack empirical evidence of effectiveness and this owes greatly to the limitation in the availability of relevant research. In the light of this, a persuasive COVID19 prevention message must be extensively based on research in order to establish the credibility of variables used in the message. There are at least two types of publics for health message; those inclined to agree with the message and those inclined to disagree. Therefore, communication about preventing COVID19 within Nigerian tertiary institutions should seek to mobilize the former group and persuade the latter. Communication initiatives designed simply to increase the awareness of COVID19 prevention strategies may not be sufficient to effect change within the communities; to influence public opinion and response, communication will need to reflect important societal values (upheld within the communities) that resonate with large audience and when formulating communication strategy, it is important to recognize and address challenges from the segments opposed to the health messages as well as the policies and adjustments being supported by the communication strategy. Adversely, a loose health message will create an opportunity for the recipients to form opinions based on their biases; thus leading to differences in responses to the message. To eliminate this, using personal narratives to convey information about the COVID19 prevention strategies within the communities can lead people to focus more on the role of personal responsibility. Inclusively, health messages must clearly spell out equal opportunities for all recipients and, changing the way that messages are conveyed can largely alter recipients' responses.

STRATEGIC HEALTH MESSAGE REACH-OUT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: The intended readership of a publication, advertisement or other messages specifically catered, forms the target audience and according to Kotler & Armstrong (2005), it is a particular group that is predetermined. Considering the demographic information of the various segments of the target audience within the institutions' communities is important to the corporate health communication because it gives a basic background of the recipients intended for the message. Moreover, the consideration of the recipients' psychographic, behavioral and geographical information can help in the predetermination of the channels to be adopted in the Communication as well as the message format in order to ensure an extended reach. Failure to identify these trends can lead to no change at all. Due to the diverse composition of the institutions' communities, it is quite probable that the intended Health message fails to effectively reach all individuals. This can be attributed to several causes, including inadequate reception, subpar print quality, and server issues. The issue of perceptual disparities is of great importance in this context. Individual and unique experiences greatly influence people's perspectives on the world and their methods of communication. The communication officer has a specific perspective when it comes to the health message, aiming to persuade recipients to change their health habits. However, the recipients interpret the same message differently, considering various factors. As a result, the original intention of the communication may not be achieved due to differences in perception.

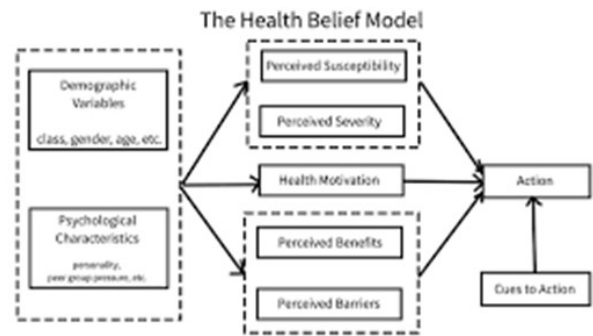
Selective perception refers to the inclination to either overlook or excessively concentrate on certain aspects. In the context of health communication, this fault can be related to the use of inadequate communication channels. Presenting a health message on COVID19 prevention with excessive amounts of information might provoke dread. The apprehension of being unable to remember any knowledge due to excessive loads can also result in the failure of the fundamental purpose of communication. However, if the communication contains unfamiliar information, such as new procedures or concepts, the likelihood of experiencing overload significantly rises. These communications can be divided into smaller, easier-to-understand parts to decrease the quantity of information that needs to be processed at once. An effective strategy involves initially making a prominent declaration and subsequently providing additional information at a later time. The major duty of the Communication officer is to ensure that the receivers have comprehended the message.

Reaching a target audience is a staged process and a successful appeal to the target audience requires a detailed media plan, which involves many factors in order to achieve an effective COVID19 prevention campaign within Nigerian tertiary institutions. According to Kelly & Jugenheimer (2008), the range of factors to be considered in a detailed media plan includes; target, media types, media tactics, media vehicles, media units, media schedule/calendar, media promotions, media logistics and contingency plans. Each of these sections goes into even more detail, such as media units, (which includes the size of a print advertisement), media types (which includes memo, press release, internet platforms, Journal, wall-space, etc - that is, using the one considered most appropriate), media tactics (considering the alternative media type to be used if the premier media fails in the role of a total coverage), media schedule/calendar (identifying the time interval that will be suitable enough for a consistent communication of the message to the target audience, whether daily, weekly, fortnightly, etc.), Media logistics (providing a feedback system/facility for the audience in order to enable interactivity towards responses measurements), etc. Media planning is an essential strategy to ensure that the health message reaches all sectors of the target audience. Neglecting this aspect might result in inadequate coverage, as emphasized by Kotler & Armstrong (2005).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For an actualized COVID19 prevention communication within the tertiary institutions, the communication planner must consider the location (significance of the message contents), the illocution (intention of the communication outfit) and the perlocution (how the message will be received by the recipients) of the health message. This study shall be further examined using Health Belief Model and Trans-theoretical Model of Behavior Change as theoretical parameters.

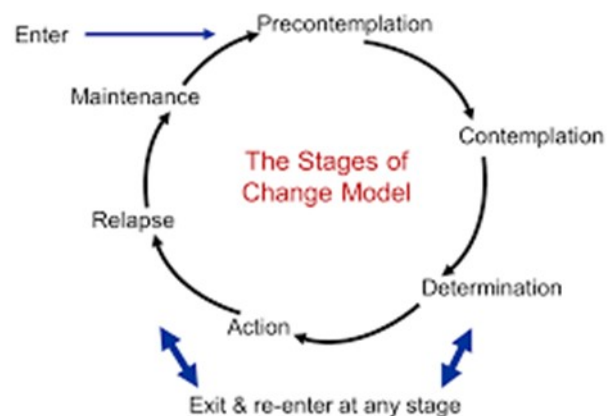
Health Belief Model: The Health Belief Model is a theoretical model that can be used to guide health promotion and to explain and predict individual changes in health behaviors. It is one of the most widely used models for understanding health behaviors. This model focuses on the beliefs of the various segments of recipients that exists within the Nigerian tertiary institutions and as well predict health behavior.



The Health Belief Model can be used to design short- and long-term interventions through the health messages. The five key action-related components that determine the ability of the Health Belief Model to identify key decision-making points that influence health behaviors are:

- Gathering information by conducting a health needs assessments and other efforts to determine who is at risk and the segments that should be most targeted.
- Conveying the consequences of the health issues associated with risk behaviors in a clear and unambiguous message, to understand perceived severity.
- Communicating to the target audience the steps that are involved in taking the recommended action and highlighting the benefits to action.
- Providing assistance in identifying and reducing barriers to action.
- Demonstrating actions through skill development activities and providing support that enhances self-efficacy and the likelihood of successful behavior changes.

These actions represent key elements of the health belief model and can be used to design or adapt health promotion or COVID19 prevention messages within tertiary institutions.



Trans-theoretical Model of Behavior Change

The trans-theoretical model of behavior change assesses an individual's readiness to act on a new healthier behavior (prescribed in the health message) and provides strategies, or processes of change to guide the individual (Diclemente, 2005). This theory in response to this article analyses the varieties of recipients' responses to the health message using the stages of change which includes;

- Pre-contemplation (recipients responses that shows the unreadiness to take actions regarding the message in the near future)

- Contemplation (responses that shows the readiness to take action in the near future)
- Preparation (responses that shows the readiness to act according to the message in a 'nearer future')
- Action (responses that shows the willingness to swing into behavioral change/actions immediately in regards to the message)
- Maintenance (recipients who swing into immediate actions most likely respond to the message through their conscious efforts to sustain the change in behavior towards preventing contraction).

At this point in time, the message has effectively reached the whole target population through suitable media. However, the variations in health beliefs affect the promptness of responses and subsequent changes in behavior.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the multi-instrument survey research methodology. The survey was deemed highly appropriate because to its effectiveness in evaluating the opinions, attitudes, and actions of individuals within a certain domain, given a sufficiently large population. This methodology utilizes sampling techniques such as questionnaires and interviews to enable the researcher to draw a comprehensive conclusion about the target population. The study population consisted of students and staff from four tertiary institutions in Rivers State: Captain Elechi Amadi Polytechnic (Rumuola), University of Port Harcourt (Choba), Rivers State University (Diobu), and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (Rumuolumeni). The approximate total population was 60,000 individuals. Hence, the research included a working population of 60,000 individuals. According to the guidelines provided by Singh & Micah (2014) for determining sample size in a specific population, a sample of 40 participants (10 participants from each of the 4 tertiary institutions) was randomly chosen from the overall population being studied. More precisely, the participants were selected because they are part of the academic community at the higher university. The study utilized both hardcopy and online questionnaire formats as data collection tools, employing the Survey Monkey (Momentive) mobile application. The adoption of the two formats in the study was to expedite the accumulation of substantial quantities of data within a brief timeframe. The questionnaire consists of a single section comprising a disclaimer and a sequence of 12 questions. The assessment consists of 11 multiple-choice questions and 1 question that requires a written response. A total of 40 copies of questionnaires were distributed, however, only 38 of these copies were retrieved and utilized for the research. The respondents consisted of 17 males and 21 females.

RESULTS

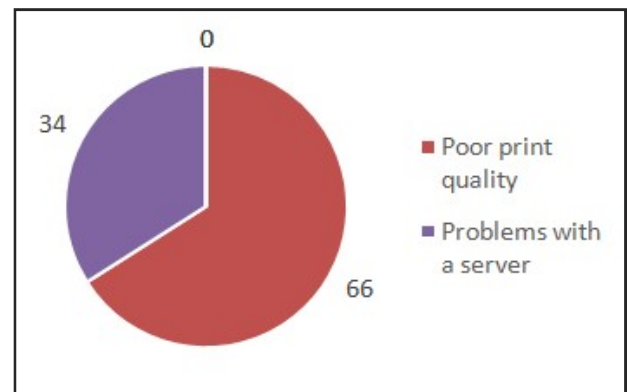
Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One: *What are the factors behind the fact that some segments of the target audience within the institutions' communities may not be reached with the health message?*

Table 1. Challenges to Institutional Health Communication

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Poor print quality	25	66
Problems with a server	13	34
Total	38	100

Source: Field work 2020



As seen in the table below, survey responses about the reasons for the unreachability of certain groups of the target audience mostly point to issues with the server and poor print quality. The chart presents that 66% of the entire population agrees that poor print quality is the outstanding factor why the entire target audience is not totally reached. Meanwhile, 34% of these argues that the factor rather lies on the problems associated with internet servers.

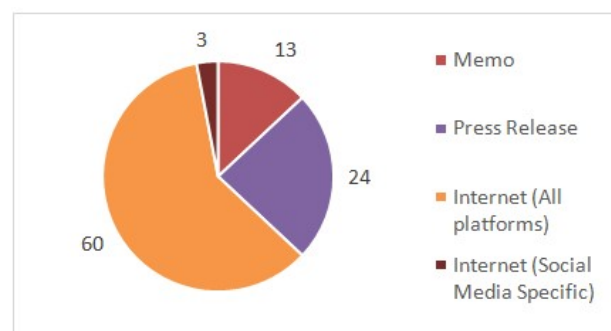
Research Question Two: *What approaches are essential to be adopted in ensuring that the entire target audience is reached with the message?*

Table 2. Effective Approaches to Institutional Health Communication

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Memo	5	13
Press Release	9	24
Internet (all platforms)	23	60
Internet (Social Media specific)	1	3
Total	38	100

Source: Field work 2020

Questionnaire responses regarding the optimal communication medium to effectively reach the complete target audience with the health message.



This chart deduces that 60% of the respondents admitted that the appropriate channel of health communication within tertiary institutions is the internet (all platforms).

Meanwhile, 24% admitted the use of Press releases, 13% agreed on the use of memo while 3% of the entire population admitted the use of the internet, specifically the social media platform.

Research Question Three: *What Corporate writing strategies and inclusions will make the health message persuasive and binding enough?*

To answer this question, certain inclusions like "spelling out patterns and costumes that are to be generally adopted to prevent the virus" "recent health adjustment policies/programmes put in place by the management"and "the necessity of Covid19 vaccination" were considered.

Table 3. Corporate Writing Strategies and Inclusions

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Recommended patterns & Costumes, vaccination promotions - and - all health adjustments policies (should be included in the health message)	32	84
Only the recommended patterns & costumes (should be included in the message)	5	13
Only the vaccination promotions and health adjustments policies/programmes by the management (should be included)	1	3
Total	38	100

Source: Field work 2020

The table above presents that 84% of the respondents opines that the health message should include/inform on the recommended patterns and costumes, vaccination promotions as well as the health adjustment policies/programmes (which are the strategic responses/reactions of the institutions management towards the pandemic). Meanwhile, 13% are of the opinion that only the information on the recommended patterns and costumes should be included in the message while 3% posits that the health adjustment policies and vaccination promotions should be included (and these two groups of opinion are concerned with the elimination of information overloads).

Research Question Four: *What time interval will be necessary for adoption by the institutions'information outfits in order to communicate the healthmessage consistently to the target audience?*

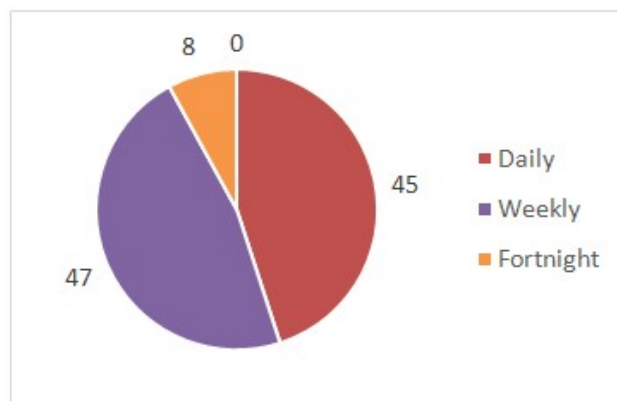
Table 4. Effective Timing of Institutional Health Messages

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	17	45
Weekly	18	47
Fortnightly	3	8
Others	-	-
Total	38	100

Source: Field work 2020

Questionnaire responses to the appropriate communication time interval necessary for adoption. From the chart, 45% of the entire population agrees that the appropriate time schedule for effective health communication is on a daily basis, meanwhile, 47% of these opines that a weekly basis

communication is most appropriate while 8% agrees on a fortnightly basis.



Research Question Five: *In a bid to measure and analyze audience's responses, is there any need for the provision of a feedback system by the management?*

Table 5. Feedback Provision

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	79
No	8	21
Total	38	100

Questionnaire responses on the need for the provision of a feedback system during health communication. The table above posits that 79% of the respondents are in support of a feedback system/facility while 21% argue that the feedback system is not necessary.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings according to the research questions posed are discussed as follows;

Research Question One: *What are the factors behind the fact that some segments of the target audience within the institutions' communities may not be reached with the health message?*

Everybody likes crisp-looking, high-quality printer document especially in today's increasingly digital age. Poor print quality arises as a result of irregular routine maintenance of printing facilities. Environment contamination (dust, packaging debris or spilled product can all find their way into the printhead or print nozzle thereby resulting in poor quality). Poor coder setup (which implies positioning the printhead too far away, too close or at the wrong angle or badly adjusting the triggering photocell) also leads to the situation of the poor printing of a health message copy. Internet softcopies can be used to disseminate the health message through various internet platforms. But this can be impeded as a result of the problems associated with the internet server (in use). An internet server crash leads to the crash of the website where the health message is published as well as the loss of the information on the used platforms and this could be as a result of unpredictable events such as fire outbreak, theft or a major cyber-attack. Other major problems associated with the internet server

includes, slow page load (if a page takes longer than necessary to load, a recipient will abandon it), viruses and cyber hacking (can lead to the distortion of the information), website/platform traffic overload (when a server is unable to handle the high amount of traffic, it can slow down website speed and hurts functionality).

Research Question Two: *What approaches are essential to be adopted in ensuring that the entire target audience are reached with the message?*

A memorandum, also known as a memo, is a written communication tool frequently employed inside a business setting for internal correspondence. A health message can be conveyed by a memorandum and exhibited on a public information board. Furthermore, it may be disseminated to the many departments within the institution for on-site exhibition. A press release is a formal communication distributed to journalists with the aim of conveying information, issuing an official statement, or making an announcement. Health messages may be given to members of the media through both physical and technological means. Regardless of the medium, a health message can be effectively presented as a press release. This will effectively disseminate health information to the general people outside of the institutions. The Internet is a worldwide network of interconnected computer networks that use the Internet protocol suite (TCP/IP) to facilitate communication between networks and devices. The use of technology has facilitated novel modes of social engagement, pursuits, and affiliations within higher education institutions. This enables the administration to effectively communicate with different groups of stakeholders at any given moment, conveying messages and receiving feedback through various recognized platforms. Similar to other administrative communications sent inside the institution community, health messages may also be transmitted over the internet to reach a broader range of the target audience segments. Moreover, the ownership of internet-enabled devices by the receivers will significantly enhance the effectiveness of this communication method. Social media refers to interactive digital platforms that enable the creation, sharing, and exchange of information and other kinds of expression through virtual communities and networks. Presently, all higher institutions own commonly acknowledged social media accounts (in addition to their official websites) via which information is made available to the community. Disseminating the health message on social media is commendable due to the susceptibility of the platform, which would undoubtedly facilitate the dissemination of information and expand the audience reach.

Research Question Three: *What Corporate writing strategies and inclusions will make the health message persuasive and binding enough?*

The following are the strategies that have been adopted towards the prevention of the continuous spread of the corona virus and these strategies can be included in the health messages meant for COVID19 prevention within tertiary institutions.

Preventive pattern:In order to mitigate the transmission of COVID:19, the following precautions are advised - Regularly and meticulously cleanse your hands by thoroughly washing them with warm water and soap, ensuring to vigorously

massage your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds. Utilize hand sanitizer in situations where appropriate handwashing is not feasible, refrain from touching your face, Avoid physical contact such as shaking hands and hugging as it can transmit COVID-19 from one person to another. Refrain from sharing personal items and make sure to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Clean and disinfect surfaces using alcohol-based disinfectants. Take social distancing seriously by maintaining physical distance from others. Avoid gathering in groups and refrain from eating or drinking in public places as the virus can be transmitted through food, utensils, dishes, and cups.

Recommended Costumes:It is essential to always use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Increased coverage of the body results in enhanced protection. Coveralls provide the highest level of protection, followed by long gowns and aprons. Respirators, when used in conjunction with coveralls, may provide superior protection compared to masks worn with gowns. Gowns equipped with integrated gloves at the cuff, facilitating simultaneous removal of gloves and gown while ensuring coverage of the wrist area, as well as gowns tailored to fit snugly at the neck, have the potential to minimize contamination. In addition, incorporating tabs onto gloves and face masks might potentially reduce the risk of contamination..

Health policies/programmes: Various institutions' administrations are expected to implement distinct policies and programs to mitigate the pandemic within their respective localities. The extent to which the institution's location is impacted by the virus will decide these measures. Hence, while certain establishments may opt for conducting health sessions for specific groups within a small population, others may choose alternative methods. However, regardless of the program chosen, it is crucial to ensure its connection to the entire community by utilizing wallspaces and campus media jingles to engage the entire population.

Covid19 Vaccination:Vaccination programs for COVID-19 have commenced in several African countries, including Nigeria. These programs aim to immunize the population against the virus responsible for causing COVID-19, known as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), in order to address the ongoing pandemic in the country. While specialists continue to gather knowledge regarding the COVID-19 vaccinations, there are evident advantages to becoming vaccinated, one of which is maintaining a significant and secure distance from contracting the sickness. Therefore, all these are necessary to be included in the health message in order to enrich its information contents.

Research Question four: *What time interval will be necessary for adoption by the institutions' information outfits in order to communicate the health message consistently to the target audience?*

Findings indicate that health messages can be communicated to the target audience at any time schedule and the importance of scheduling time for communication cannot be under-emphasized. Communication scheduling involves strategically planning and determining the optimal timing for transmitting information to the intended audience, with the aim of accomplishing certain goals and priorities within the given

timeframe. When executed proficiently, this aids the communication organization in comprehending what can feasibly be accomplished within a specific timeframe and in determining the suitable timing for any other communication endeavor. Every time period establishes the contingency schedule for unforeseen events, and a known time interval will maintain the target audience in a state of anticipation at that specific moment.

Research Question Five: *In a bid to measure and analyze audience's responses, is there any need for the provision of a feedback system by the management?*

Finding indicates that feedback is necessary in communication because it helps the sender determine the influence and impact of the message on the receiver - this can be majorly done through the latter's responses. Feedback maintains alignment by establishing a transparent and candid channel of communication. Regardless of whether the feedback is delivered orally or through a survey, it is important for the receivers to be aware that their message has been comprehended and that their opinion holds significance. Soliciting comments can serve as a catalyst for receivers to more effectively adapt to their health situations. Recipients love feeling acknowledged and enjoy being asked to offer feedback on their modifications about the health message. This input might be utilized to inspire or cultivate a more enhanced partnership. Input may be misconstrued as criticism, yet it is crucial to have ongoing input throughout all sectors of an institution's community in order to stay aligned with goals, devise strategies, enhance goods and services, build relationships, and achieve other essential objectives.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Effective communication is essential in all societies and plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development. Communication has a vital role in the everyday life of individuals, as it facilitates the development of interpersonal connections, among other benefits. Strategic health communication entails the examination and use of distributing promotional health information, with the aim of influencing individuals' health choices to bring about behavioral change. Health messages regarding COVID-19 prevention and vaccination acceptance in Nigerian tertiary institutions can be communicated through various means such as memorandums, wall spaces, press releases, bulletins, and internet softcopies. However, when developing these messages, the content creator should rely on previous incidents related to COVID-19 and their professional expertise to determine the most effective strategies for conveying persuasive and compelling health information. A loosely conveyed health message will not have a tangible effect on behaviors, but a typical COVID-19 preventive communication should explicitly emphasize the need of personal accountability and provide equitable chances. The Nigerian tertiary institutions consist of diverse individuals from various backgrounds. Reaching this target audience with health messages necessitates a systematic approach that involves a comprehensive media plan. This plan must consider multiple factors to ensure the success of a COVID-19 prevention and vaccination awareness campaign within Nigerian tertiary institutions. Ultimately, to effectively communicate strategies for preventing COVID-19 at Nigerian

tertiary institutions, media planning is the most effective technique. It ensures that the health message reaches and influences all sectors of the community's population.

RECOMMENDATION

- The duty for promoting Covid19 prevention and immunization inside higher institutions should be shared together and not just entrusted to the administration. This is because if an epidemic occurs inside a certain institution's community, it will present a significant health risk and hinder the progress of academic activities and fulfillment of curricular programs at the afflicted school.
- The developers of Covid19 prevention messages must be highly intentional, utilizing all the techniques of persuasive communication to engage a wide audience. Media planning is a complex process that requires skilled professionals to handle all its various aspects. The interconnectedness of the components means that a failure in one might result in an unforeseen decline in all. This highlights the necessity of having a suitable contingency plan.
- Simply communicating the message to the target audience is insufficient; it is also necessary to monitor the replies and the public's adherence to the message requirements. In order to guarantee this, the feedback system must include flexibility and responsiveness to facilitate the monitoring of behaviors and the analysis of changes.

DISCLOSURE

The research was carried out in 2020, however its publication was delayed until 2024 to enhance the overall quality of the study. During this time, the researchers were able to conduct more thorough empirical and theoretical examinations in line with the research results and this led to the development of the study's theoretical section which offers valuable insights into the study's objectives. In addition, the researchers' participation in other institutional research programs and their dedication to teaching objectives contributed in some ways to the delay in publishing the results.

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