

Research Article

Evaluation of 2018 Immunization Communication Campaign in Agege Local Government Area, Lagos State, Nigeria

Olanrewaju Kayode, LAGADA-ABAYOMI¹ and Temitope Joseph, MUSOWO²

¹Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Nigeria

²Department of Social Sustainability, Centre for Sustainable Development (CESDEV),
University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Corresponding Author Email: olanrewajulagada@gmail.com

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Abstract: The study examines the extent to which communication strategies adopted at the local level influence the effectiveness of immunization campaigns at the grass root. Survey technique was used with the application of both qualitative and quantitative research. 289 questionnaires were distributed and also two key informants were interviewed to form the sample size for this study. From the finding of this study, it was revealed that the multiple communication strategies adopted by the health officers to disseminate information on the immunization campaign, have positive influence on the participants' reception and cognition of the messages, with the 289 (100%) of the respondents were aware of immunization campaign in the LGA. However, the interpersonal means of communication such as advocacy; community dialogue and meetings with stakeholders play the major roles, complemented with other channels, as confirmed by the key informants. Also conclusion were made in which one of the conclusion was that use of interpreters for the respective ethnic groups in the 2018 immunization campaign especially at the advocacy meetings truly facilitated the mobilization.

Keywords: Evaluation, Immunization, Communication Campaign.

Introduction

Background to the Study

Immunization is the process of making a person or animal resistant to infection. Immunization (or vaccination) protects people from disease by introducing a vaccine into the body that triggers an immune response, just as though one had been exposed to a disease naturally. According to Immunize Canada (2018) every year, more than 10 million children in low and middle-income countries die before they reach their fifth birthdays. Most die because they do not access effective interventions that would combat common and preventable childhood illnesses. Infant immunization is considered essential for improving infant and child survival (WHO, 2017).

Communication is an invaluable tool in routine and campaign childhood vaccination activities, as well as in other health programmes. Effective communication strategies have possibility of complementing and boosting other immunization components, such as service provision, quality of care, capacity-building and the skills of health personnel, and disease notification and surveillance to bring forth success (Open Education, 2017).

Oku, *et al.*, (2017) state that the role of health communication in vaccination programmes cannot be overemphasized. It has contributed significantly to creating and sustaining demand

for vaccination services and improving vaccination coverage. Effective communication could improve uptake of childhood vaccination, address incomplete vaccination or missed children, further strengthen routine immunization programmes, and encourage the use of new and underused vaccines. The Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy (WG) considered whether poor communication was a determinant of vaccine hesitancy and concluded that communication was a tool to address vaccine hesitancy, rather than a determinant. The WG also noted that poor communication can undermine vaccine acceptance in any setting (MacDonald, Guirguis, the SAGE Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy: (2015).

Communication interventions have made significant contributions to the immunization coverage in Nigeria in regards to the behavioural change of knowledge, attitude and practice of the decision makers and caregivers.

Numerous communication interventions have been implemented with the aim of increasing acceptance of routine immunization and breaking the transmission of wild poliovirus and other vaccine preventable diseases. However, implementing these communication interventions has been challenging especially at the grass root where the beneficiaries reside. The challenges could be addressed when researches are embarked upon to identify the communication shortcomings and propose solutions. As a result, the thrust of this study is to examine the influence of communication campaigns on the success of immunization exercises at the local level, with the topic, Evaluation of 2018 Immunization Communication Campaign in Agege Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Statement of the Problem

Globally, twenty-seven million children do not receive routine immunization which resulted in the deaths of 2 million children every year (Abdulkarim, 2011, cited in WHO 2017). In Nigeria, child immunization remained low over the last decade (Abdulkarim, 2011). Immunization is an important component of primary health care and in routine immunization programmes, virtually all vaccines, except oral polio vaccine, is administered through injection. Vaccines against six childhood killer diseases are the most important vaccines to public health. Yet, diseases preventable by vaccine account for the deaths of a quarter of the 800,000 child deaths in Nigeria every year (Abdulkarim, 2011).

Several factors have been identified to be responsible for ineffective immunization programmes. They include poor funding, corruption, cultural barriers, illiteracy among the target population, ineffective communication among others (WHO, 2016). Communication plays an essential role in health improvement. It is difficult to imagine how a message could be delivered to promote healthy choices if we could not communicate.

The communication process is a multi-dimensional transaction influenced by a variety of factors. Hence, theories are used to explain ways or strategies through which health messages could better be understood and practiced (MacDonald, Guirguis, the SAGE Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy (2015). In health promotion, the successful exchange of information between the practitioner and target population is an area that has received mixed attention. It is therefore, necessary to elicit researches that would examine immunization communication campaigns in regard to creation of awareness, advocacy, media channels, community sensitization and social mobilization. The outcomes tend to propose solutions to the low coverage of immunization and rejection of vaccines in the country. This study, therefore, examines communication strategies adopted at the local level and how effective the strategies

have influence on immunization campaigns at the grass root. In this regard, the study looks at specific communication approaches used in the 2018 immunization exercises in Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State with focus on the first round of year 2018 National Immunization plus Days (NIPDs) and assesses their effectiveness in achieving the objectives laid down by the local government authority for the immunization programme. Thus the topic of the study reads, Evaluation of 2018 Immunization Communication Campaign in Agege Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the communication strategies employed by Agege Local Government Area (LGA) in Lagos State towards implementation of 2018 immunization exercises in the area with focus on the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days, while the specific aim is to measure the following objectives:

- 1) To identify the communication campaign strategies adopted in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State.
- 2) To ascertain the challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege LGA, Lagos State.
- 3) To assess the level of effectiveness of the communication campaign strategies employed in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege LGA, Lagos State.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it is concerned with goal three (3) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is the focus of the governments in the world presently, to improve good health and well-being of their citizenry. The findings would assist the related authorities to improve on their communication campaign strategies for effective immunization exercises, even at the local level. The study would also contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the effectiveness of immunization campaigns in Nigeria, with special reference to the role of communication in the success of the campaigns at the grass root.

2018 Immunization in Lagos

Lagos State in the South West is the most economically important state of Nigeria and the nation's largest urban area with an estimated population of over twenty one million. The state consists of twenty Local Government Areas (LGAs) and thirty two Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs), and one of the most populated state in the country with land Area of 3,474 km² (1,341sq ml).

According to the Special Adviser to the Lagos State Governor on Primary Health Care, Dr. Olufemi Onanuga (2018), 3,609,538 children were targeted during the first quarter vaccination campaign in the state. The objective of the campaign was to immunise at least 95 per cent of children aged nine months to five years with measles vaccine in all local government areas regardless of their previous immunization status. The measles vaccination campaign was implemented in two streams, the first phase was held in Alimosho, Agege, Ajeromi-Ifelodun, Amuwo-Odofin, Epe, Ikorodu, Lagos Island, Lagos Mainland, Mushin and Ojo local government areas between 17 and March 22, 2018 and the second stream was held from March 22 to 29, 2018 in Apapa, Badagry, Eti-Osa, Ibeju-Lekki, Ikeja, Ifako-Ijaiye, Kosofe, Oshodi-Isolo, Somolu and Surulere LGAs.

The mop-up exercises were carried out for the first and second streams from March 21-22 and March 28-29, respectively in wards and communities adjudged not to have been adequately covered, as set out in the objectives of the campaign. Two types of vaccination posts, the Fixed Post and the Temporary Fixed Post were used for the campaign. The Fixed Vaccination Posts were located at permanent health facilities where immunisation was provided between the hours of 8am and 4pm. The fixed posts also served as depots for storage and distribution of vaccine and other supplies to the temporary fixed sites. The Temporary Fixed Vaccination Posts on the other hand were located at selected public and private schools, mosques, churches, town halls, houses of traditional leader, bus stops or terminals, motor parks, streets and markets, and hard-to-reach areas and border communities. Immunisation was provided at these sites from the hours of 8am to 4pm. Over 4,526 house-to-house mobilizers were mandated to encourage eligible children that fall within the operational target population to visit the immunization posts for measles vaccine and the other antigens. 4,526 fixed and temporary fixed posts were set up for the campaign.

The state equally joined other states of the federation to implement the **First Round of Year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs)**, a 4-day immunization campaign against Poliomyelitis in all Primary Health Care Centres, Secondary Health Facilities and other designated Centres in the 20 Local Governments and 37 Local Council Development Areas across the State between Friday 27th and 30th of April, 2013 with the mop-up exercise between 1st and 2nd of May, 2018. The exercise was carried out between 8.00 am and 1.00pm daily.

The main objective of the campaign was to vaccinate all children under 5 years against the disease with 2 drops of Oral Polio Vaccine irrespective of their immunization status and aimed at reducing the number of unimmunized children in the state as well as improving the herd immunity of the environment against the Wild Polio Virus. The NIPDs strategy employed the combined usage of the fixed posts, house-to-house and transit teams for the delivery of polio antigens and other scheduled antigens such as BCG, BOPV, pentavalent, Measles, Yellow Fever and HBV (Onanuga, 2018).

The flag-off ceremony of the April 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) held on Thursday at the Lagos Mainland Local Government Area Secretariat for awareness creation presided by Dr. Olufemi Onanuga, Special Adviser to the Governor on Primary Health Care. Dr. Onanuga explained that Poliomyelitis is one of the major vaccine-preventable killer diseases of children under the age of five, emphasizing that it is a highly contagious faeco-oral disease that can be easily transmitted through poor personal and environmental hygiene. The communication strategies used to implement the campaign were similar to those of the previous exercise (Measles Immunization Campaign) such as announcements, community dialogues, mosque and church announcements, sensitizations with schools and advocacy meetings with LGA chairmen, ward councillors, supervisory councillors for health, and key traditional and religious leaders among others.

The Second Round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs), polio vaccination campaign for children aged zero to 59 months was also held in Lagos State from Saturday 30th June to Tuesday 3rd July, 2018 at all designated sites. According to the Special Adviser to the Governor on Primary Health Care, Dr. Olufemi Onanuga (2018) in a news briefing with journalists on the level of preparedness for the campaign at a Flag-off ceremony at Agege Local Government Secretariat. A target population of 4,823,122 children was to be covered during the vaccination campaign.

The NIPDs involved house-to-house, transit and fixed post teams. 752 fixed posts were mounted, 4859 house-to-house and 1712 transit teams were set aside for efficiency. Children at home, markets, churches, mosques, major car parks and social events venues were targeted. Various incentive activities were implemented to attract children and caregivers to vaccination posts and the vaccination campaign was held between the hours of 8am and 2pm daily for four days. The goal of the State government for the campaign was to increase the number of children between zero and 59 months who receive two drops of oral polio vaccine irrespective of their previous immunization status, with the aim to boost the herd of immunity against poliomyelitis. For the success of the vaccination campaign, some training sessions were conducted to strengthen the capacity of relevant health workers. The State government also embarked on massive media campaigns involving airing of jingles while LGA social mobilizers are moving within communities to sensitize and mobilize citizenry effectively. The communication strategies include town announcements; community dialogues; mosque and church announcements; sensitizations with schools; and advocacy meetings with LGA Chairmen, Ward Councillors, and Supervisory Councillors for Health, and key traditional and religious leaders. Appealing to people on the programme during the news briefing, Onanuga said, "I hereby seize this opportunity to encourage our parents and care givers to ensure that their children and wards are taken to the primary health care clinics to receive vaccine and all other scheduled immunizations. This campaign is another window of opportunity to protect our children from vaccine preventable diseases".

Finally for 2018, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Week (MNCH) came up from 13th to 20th July 2018 Week which begins on Monday across the state. The MNCH Week offers a veritable platform to simultaneously contribute to the reduction of child morbidity and mortality and improving maternal health indices. The week included routine immunization; Vitamin A supplementation; growth monitoring and promotion, screening for malnutrition and appropriate counseling/management/referral; distribution of deworming medicine, and distribution of Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials aimed at improving the health seeking behavior.

In addition, tetanus toxoid were given to women of child-bearing-age, who were also counseled on key household practices like exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding and basic hygiene. Antenatal care and family planning services were provided (Onanuga, 2017). Similar communication campaign was also adopted to reach the target audience, Consequently, as part of Lagos State Government's efforts to enhancing immunization exercises and fight against vaccine preventable diseases, several communication strategies are initiated which include:

- i) Sensitization, advocacy seminars and some training sessions were conducted to strengthen the capacity of relevant health workers.
- ii) Community dialogues with relevant stakeholders.
- iii) Advocacy meetings with LGA Chairmen, Ward Councillors, Supervisory Councillors for Health among others.
- iv) Religious platform (mosque and church) announcements.
- v) Community mobilization and awareness programmes (Town announcements).
- vi) Advocacy meetings with key traditional and religious leaders.
- vii) LGA social mobilizers are moving within communities to sensitize and mobilize citizenry.
- viii) Mass media campaigns (jingles/programmes).
- ix) Organising press conferences and briefings to create awareness.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Social Cognitive and Fear Appeal Theories, to determine the people's attitudinal change in response to the adopted communication campaign strategies and the messages therein.

The Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was propounded by N.E Miller and Donald, in 1942 while A Bandura and R.H broadened the meaning in 1963. Social Cognitive theory posits that learning occurs in a social context with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the person, environment, and behaviour. The unique feature of SCT is the emphasis on social influence and on external and internal social reinforcement. Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008) assume that the theory explains how people acquire and maintain certain behavioural patterns. The theory considers the unique way in which individuals acquire and maintain behaviour, while also considering the social environment in which individuals perform the behaviour. This sometimes, could be determined by the individual school of thought and the experience he or she would have required for long time. Religion could also play a major role in human's attitude.

There are some actions that could be seen as abomination in a religion practice that, along the way could stand as hindrances to development in a target system. For example during the national population census in 2006, it was reported that some Muslims in the Northern part of country prevented their wives and adult female children from being counted especially by the male officials. Likewise, some certain Christians do not believe in observing national anthem/pledge and other national events. The theory is relevant to health communication, for it deals primarily with cognitive and emotional aspects of behaviour for understanding behavioural change. The Social Cognitive Theory has had a strong impact in considerations of health communication. The application of the theory in this area moves people from a consideration of the often limited consequences of media depictions to the purposive development of media campaigns to change health related behaviour (Anaeto *et al.*, 2008).

Methodology

Descriptive design was used for this study. The descriptive design focuses on the use of survey research method. This aspect of the study entails the collection of opinions on the effectiveness of the 2018 immunization communication campaign strategies in Agege LGA, Lagos State. Meanwhile, the survey method was supplemented with key informant interview to give credible insight to the study. The key informant interview entailed interview with the top health officials and experts who participated in the immunization exercise and hereby provided qualitative data for this study.

Study Area

Agege LGA was selected for this research, based on the fact that it is a sub-urban segment of Lagos State that is inhabited by semi- and barely educated as well as restless illiterate citizens forced out of their rural environments of various regions of Nigeria.

Population of the Study

Participants in the 2018 immunization exercise in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), of Lagos State constituted the population of study. They included nursing mothers, parents and guardians. The selection of this population is based on the fact that they are the regular caregivers and participants in immunization exercises. The Key informants were purposively selected from the related health institutes in the local government area as those who

participated in immunization campaign, to be able to give insight into the arguments. The total population of residents in Agege LGA is estimated one million, ninety one thousand one hundred and twenty. The inhabitants of Agege Local Government are multi-ethnic although the Aworis, a sub Yoruba ethnic are the indigenous inhabitants (Agege LGA/Orile-Agege LCDA: 2018). The inhabitants of the area are essentially Yorubas with the presence of sparse population of non-Yoruba speaking people including Hausa who dominate some parts of the area. Agege LGA is made up of thirteen (13) wards.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Three hundred and fifteen (315) participants were drawn for survey from seven (7) wards of Agege Local Government Area (LGA). But, two hundred and eighty nine (289) questionnaires were properly filled and returned to represent the data for this study. The seven wards were selected via purposive sampling method. The rationale behind the selection of the wards is the concentration of non-Yoruba indigenes, especially the Hausas who are believed to show negative attitude to immunizations. Also, the respondents of the key informant interview were purposively selected as the top health officers who participated in the 2018 Immunization exercises of the area.

Instrument of Data Collection

Structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data for the study. The questionnaire used in this study was comprised of multiple choice questions (close-ended questions) and open ended questions. The key informants interviewed for the study are, the Chief Health Education Officer, Agege Local Government who is in charge of mobilizing and sensitizing participants for immunization exercises in Agege LGA, and the Apex Community Health Officer in Orile-Agege who is in charge of coordinating and supervising other community health workers for immunization and other health related campaigns in Orile-Agege Primary Health Centres.

Method of Data Analysis

Data from returned questionnaires already coded were entered using software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and then analysed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Analytical tools such as tables and percentages were employed to communicate the findings, hence created room for simple presentation, interpretation and easy understanding of the findings. Transcript of the key informants was also used to corroborate findings from the survey.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The communication campaign strategies adopted in the first round of Year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State
The preparation of immunization campaigns in Agege Local Government Area (LGA) kicked off with the planning meetings within the LGA team which consists of senior health officers in the LGA, then, advocacy visits to the key stakeholders; Social Mobilization Committee, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Relevant school authorities in Agege LGA, Traditional leaders in Agege LGA. The communication campaign strategies used include the followings;

Community Dialogue

This is the second major communication channel through which participants were massively mobilized for the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIDPs) in Agege LGA. As the name implies, 'Community Dialogue', the dialogue involves the people living

in the same geographical area, cum various ethnic, religious and other groups. So, the community leaders would be involved and also invite various stakeholders in the area.

Compound Meeting

This is another communication strategy adopted by Agege Local Government during the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) to mobilize participants. This approach was meant to address some specific issues bordering on a particular unit of the community that could possibly prevent smooth running of the immunization exercise in the area.

Collaboration with MDAs

This is a partnership approach with the related ministries, departments and agencies in the LGA to be able to create enabling atmosphere for the smooth running of the immunization campaign in all the institutions.

Training of the community mobilizers

This was the follow-up action after several advocacy visits and meetings with the relevant stakeholders in Agege LGA. This entails training and retraining of the community mobilizers including announcers, who are recommended by the Social Mobilization Committee, to assist in mobilizing people from their respective wards for the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs). The following were the campaign media used in frequency and percentage as presented in the tables below.

1. Production of below-the-line media

This was the stage of decision making in producing eye-see items for immunization campaigns such as banners, hand bills, postals and other literature. The items which contain several information about the programme, such as duration, date, time, places of receiving the vaccines, were hung at various strategic areas to create awareness.

2. Motor rally campaigns

This is a mobile measure of sensitizing residents on the incoming immunization exercise. This was intensively used to complement the advocacy visits and meetings with the stakeholders. Therefore, the campaign was able to reach residents at the grass root. According to the Chief Health Education Officer, an open roof vehicle was hired to convey the announcers with use of public address system (PAS) and band set of drums to create awareness for the programme.

3. Entertainment rally show

The concept involves adapting entertainment measures infused into sensitizations to attract participants. According to the Chief Health Education Officer, the mascot was employed to attract children. And while the children were outside, some of their parents came out to know what was happening. So, the venue was leveraged upon to sensitize parents and guidance on the immunization programme, while postals and hand bills were shared among them.

4. Employment of more interpreters for indigenous languages

The outcome of the research attests to the essence of local languages in the implementation of the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) in Agege LGA. Interpreters were employed as ad hoc officers in mobilization capacity. The mobilizers accompanied the health educators to different advocacy visits and meetings as well as other community dialogues and compound meetings to interpret in their respective languages. This

embraced the clarity of messages to members of the ethnic group and averted any possible misconception.

5. Radio and Television

Radio and television were also among the communication channels through which messages on the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) passed to people. Some jingles and announcement were made by the state government on the programme through the channels. However, the traditional media did not have much influence on the reception of the information by the participants.

Table 1. Media through which Respondents received information during the 2018 1st round of NIPDs in Agege LGA

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	39	13.1
Television	10	3.5
Newspaper	10	3.5
Community Leaders	25	8.6
Posters/Handbills	32	11.1
Health workers in Clinics/Hospital	22	7.6
Motor rally/Street sensitization	124	42.9
Friend/Relations	18	6.2
Multiple Sources	4	1.4
Others	5	1.7
Total	289	100.0

The challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State

Challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State are shortage of Manpower, participants asking for gratifications, shortage of fund and making sure health workers and non-health workers worked together to achieve success.

Table 2. Challenges encountered by respondents in the frequency of reception of the immunization messages

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Use of Foreign Language or Local Language you did not Understand	50	17.3
Lack of electricity to receive the messages	22	7.6
Non-Usage of community/religious leaders to pass the messages	48	16.6
Unclarity of the messages	38	13.1
So busy to access information	15	5.2
None	116	40.1
Total	289	100.0

Effective of the communication campaign strategies employed in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State

The effectiveness of the communication strategies adopted by Agege LGA towards implementation of the first round of 2018 National Immunization is further analysed through the survey:

Table 3. Respondents Knowledge and Acceptance of NIPDs in Agege LGA

Respondents awareness of the 2018 1st round of NIPDs in Agege LGA		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	289	100.0
No	0	00.0
Total	289	100.0
Respondents Allowing Child/Ward to be Immunized during the 2018 1st round of NIPDs in Agege LGA		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	289	100.0
No	0	00.0
Total	289	100.0
Respondents voluntarily release of child/ward for the immunization during the 2018 1st round of NIPDs in Agege LGA		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	275	95.2
No	14	4.8
Total	289	100.0

Table 4. Media was mostly used by respondents to receive messages on the immunization by respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	39	13.1
Television	10	3.5
Newspaper	10	3.5
Community Leaders	25	8.6
Posters/Handbills	20	6.9
Health workers in Clinics/ Hospital	44	1.4
Motor rally/Street sensitization	4	15.2
Friend/Relations	8	2.8
Multiple Sources	124	42.9
Others	5	1.7
Total	289	100.0

Table 5. Frequency of exposure by respondents to the messages of immunization campaign during the 2018 1st round of NIPDs in Agege LGA

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Always	14	4.8
Very Often	21	7.3
Often	112	38.8
Sometimes	132	45.7
Rarely	10	3.5
Total	289	100.0

Table 6. Respondents Understanding importance of Immunization vis a vis message received about the campaign

Respondents rate of understanding the importance of the immunization campaign		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	45	15.6
High Extent	52	18.0
Some Extent	104	36.0
Low Extent	60	20.8
Very Low Extent	9	3.1
No Extent	19	6.6
Total	289	100.0
Respondents rate understanding the messages received on the immunization exercise		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very High Extent	46	15.9
High Extent	84	29.1
Some Extent	123	42.6
Low Extent	29	10.0
Very Low Extent	5	1.7
No Extent	2	0.7
Total	289	100.0

Table 6 comprises two related variables which talked about respondents' understanding of the importance of immunization campaign and respondents understanding the messages received on the immunization campaign.

Table 7. Respondents Reception of immunization messages in indigenous language

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	244	84.4
No	45	15.6
Total	289	100.0

Table 7 shows that 224 (84.4%) of the respondents received the immunization messages in their indigenous language while 45 (15.6%) of the respondents did not received the immunization messages in their indigenous language.

Table 8. Respondents Exposure rate to immunization messages in indigenous language

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Always	16	5.5
Very Often	65	22.5
Often	133	46.0
Sometimes	26	9.0
Rarely	4	1.4
Never	45	15.6
Total	289	100.0

Table 8 showed that 133 (46%) of the respondents often received the immunization messages in their indigenous language, 65 (22.5%) reported that they received the immunization

messages in their indigenous language very often, 26 (9%) of the respondents sometimes received the immunization messages in their indigenous language, 16 (5.5%) claimed they always received the immunization messages in their indigenous language while 4 (1.4%) and 45 (15.6%) they rarely or never received the immunization messages in their indigenous language. This analysis above showed that most of the respondents were mostly exposed to the immunization messages design in their indigenous language which made most of them to understand the message intended in the campaign.

Table 9. Demographic Data of Respondents

Language	Frequency	Percentage
Hausa	74	25.6
Yoruba	103	35.6
Igbo	51	17.7
Others	61	21.1
Total	289	100.0
Type of Motherhood	Frequency	Percentage
Nursing mother	244	84.4
Non Nursing Mother	45	15.6
Total	289	100.0
Profession	Frequency	Percentage
Trader	49	17.0
Artisan	56	19.4
Employed	37	12.8
Self Employed	93	32.2
Employer	42	14.5
Unemployed	12	4.2
Total	289	100.0

Discussion of Findings

The communication campaign strategies adopted in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos State?

The findings reveal that most of the respondents (42.9%) received information on Immunization exercises through the motorised or street sensitization. Other sources of information include radio with 13.1%; posters and handbills with 11.1%; community leaders with 8.6%; health workers in health centres/hospital with 7.6% and friend/relations with 6.2%. The two key informants interviewed for the study affirmed that advocacy and community dialogue were the most effectively used for the campaign which was complemented by the motorized/street sensitization. It is, therefore, found further that the respondents mostly receive the message through multiple source with 42.9%. This implies that the multiple communication strategies adopted by the health officers to disseminate information on the immunization campaign, have positive influence on the participants' reception and cognition of the messages.

The challenges encountered in the implementation of the communication campaign strategies in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State?

Most of the respondents (40.1%) believed that there were no challenges so far encountered in receiving information during the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA as the health workers regularly and efficiently disseminate information of the programme during the period. However, some respondents (17.3%) pointed out that the use of foreign language or local languages they did not understand was the hindrance for better reception of the messages. This argument could be held as majority of the respondents falls into the category of first school leaving and secondary levels which could be occasioned for their low understanding of English language. It was also argued personally by some participants that some of the nursing mothers were newly married from their villages to Lagos and this may require them sometimes to understand the new languages. Therefore, use of more indigenous languages may be accorded more attention for better understanding. 13.1% of the respondents observed that unclear or ambiguous messages prevented understanding of the message. This is another shortcoming that may need attention as some of them insisted that each of the immunization campaign should be clearly explained to have a good insight for it. 7.6% of the respondents complained of lack of electricity to receive the messages, while 5.2% was too busy to access information on the immunization campaign. On the part of the organizers, the challenges focused on the operation. Both key informants interviewed believed that the major challenges encountered during the implementation of the first round of 2018 National Immunization Plus Days (NIDPs) were the constraints of recruiting and training the non-health workers for effective mobilization as well as inadequate funds to provide adequate sensitization materials and pay the mobilizers at when due. It was also confirmed that some of the nursing mothers believed that the immunization campaigns are too many and too consistent. This is due to the fact that barely one month that the measles immunization campaign was implemented was when the NIDPs campaign began. These are some of the regular challenges encountered during implementation of immunization campaigns in Agege LGA, as stressed by the key informants and observed in the process of the research.

Effectiveness of the communication campaign strategies employed in the first round of year 2018 National Immunization Plus Days in Agege LGA, Lagos State

Virtually all the participants (100%) responded positively to the knowledge of immunization generally and specifically of the first round of 2018 NIDPs in Agege LGA as the majority of the respondents (95.2) voluntarily released their children/wards for the immunization. Invariably, the success was a result of intensive communication approaches adopted by the health workers as the 42.9% of the respondents got aware of the first 2018 NIDPs through multiple sources. This buttresses the submission of the key informants interviewed and the report on the programme that almost the 98% of coverage was recorded at the end of the campaign. This infers that 203,262 OPV target population proposed in the campaign by the LGA, 192,385 were immunized and 3.9% was wastage. With this achievement, the LGA is able to strengthen and improve the coverage as highlighted in the objectives of the campaign.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

This study has been able to examine the communication strategies adopted in Agege Local Government Area (LGA) in the first round of the 2018 National Immunization Plus Days and assess how the approaches were effectively adopted towards the implementation of the immunization campaign. At the end of the study, it is safe to conclude that:

One, that the specific communication approaches adopted for this immunization exercises in Agege LGA are advocacy, community dialogue, compound discussion, motorized/street

canvassing, regular sensitization at the health centres/hospitals and distribution of postals, hand bills and banners. The most effective approaches out of these include advocacy, which was intensively supplemented by motorized/street sensitization. The caregivers support the use of the motorised rally, motorized campaign and the street sensitization as they facilitate effective awareness on immunization campaigns, hence messages got to the grass root. Radio and television were also used from the state level for awareness creation, but have little impact on the message reception. Two, the health workers employed the communication strategies efficiently to the success of the first round of 2018 immunization campaign. Therefore, the mobilization capacity enhanced the other efforts to achieve the 98% coverage recorded for the programme.

According to the key informants interviewed, the wide coverage is attributed to use of local languages to sensitize the people at the grass root for better understanding. It was confirmed that the use of interpreters for the respective ethnic groups in the 2018 immunization campaign especially at the advocacy meetings truly facilitated the mobilization. As a result, the longtime hurdle of accessing the Hausa community was resolved and the turn out rate of the Hausa people to the immunization campaign was high. This implies that indigenous languages play vital role in effective communication at the grass root. Three, from the observation, emphasis needs to be laid on the explicit description of each immunization campaign during sensitizations, as some of the respondents complained of having little knowledge of the significance of the first round of the 2018 NIDPs though their children were voluntarily allowed to be immunized. Thus, they have the knowledge of the essence of immunizations.

Conclusion

In all, communication strategies, when appropriately deployed, play vital role in encouraging immunization acceptance among the caregivers and increase the coverage of the exercise. Meanwhile, the communication approaches such as advocacy meeting and community dialogue could entrench the interest of the participants towards the immunization. Invariably, the result would enhance the government's efforts to eradicate vaccine preventable diseases in the country.

Recommendations

Given the findings of the study, the followings are hereby recommended:

- 1) The health workers/mobilisers need to make their messages explicit on each immunization campaign, to enable participants have clear understanding of the programme and respond accordingly. Therefore, every communication approach or tool employed in semi-city or rural area should be able to deliver comprehensive information to the people.
- 2) The use of local languages in disseminating information in the local areas such as Agege should be more encouraged. More local languages could be introduced to pass information both at the advocacy meetings and the general sensitizations. People at the grass root have a strong conviction in their indigenous languages for better understanding of information. Therefore, Igbo, Ebira, Igala among other few languages can be introduced by the health workers/mobilisers in Agege LGA. The essence is to sustain the coverage achievement recorded, as these ethnic groups also constitute the high number of the population in Agege LGA.
- 3) Government needs to provide enough funds for the implementation of any immunization campaign to be able to procure sufficient sensitization materials and pay the mobilizers and other workers at when due. As projected in the interview with the key informants, when adequate funds are provided and properly disbursed to various sections, more persons will be

employed to satisfactory carry out the immunization exercises. Therefore, Public-Private Partnership initiative should be more strengthened in the health sector and encourage more collaboration towards adequate funding of immunization exercises at both federal, state and local levels of the country. This would go a long way to achieve an appreciative coverage in each immunization exercise.

4) More training facilities can be employed for training of the immunization workers other than in-house staff alone. There is a room to engage health education consultants as experts to train the ad hoc workers that will be used in immunization exercises, especially the non-health workers. This will fast track the cognitive ability among the workers and improve the knowledge of the in-house staff including the health educators. The idea of adopting the in-house staff alone to train the workers may slow down the activities and eventually become an impediment to the success of the programme.

5) The trend of the LGA's health offices holding regular meetings with the State Mobilization Committee and Ward Health Committee should be maintained, to be able to enhance the mobilization capacities with regards to immunization and other health related campaigns.

6) Likewise, the mop-up exercises should be enhanced to enable the health officers achieving their established objectives by ensuring that all the target population is immunized.

In conclusion, this study was conducted among the residents of Agege Local Government Area (LGA). It is hereby, recommended that prospective researchers should conduct studies in other local government areas of the state or other states to ascertain the role of communication strategies in implementing their immunization campaigns.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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