

American Journal of Communication (AJC)



**THE IMPACT OF JINGLES IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST COVID-19 AMONG RURAL
DWELLERS-A SURVEY OF TAI LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF RIVERS STATE**

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined the impact of jingles in the fight against the Corona virus, which for some time now has been devastating the entire human world. Faced with this dreadful health challenge, concerned authorities have been seeking ways of creating more awareness in the society, particularly among the rural people. Three research questions--What qualities of the jingle make them appropriate and effective enough for rural enlightenment about COVID-19? Is the rural population being sufficiently informed about the deadliness and social stigma of the Corona virus? Can the use of jingles bring about desired positive behavior toward the Corona pandemic were raised to obtain the necessary data?

Methodology: The study employed the qualitative and quantitative methods with the questionnaire used to gather the necessary data: The target population was the rural people and the sample/sampling technique consisted of one hundred people. The data

collection tool was the primary source and the data, which was analyzed by the percentage method, was collected through surveys and semi-interviews.

Findings: The findings indicate that advertising--generally--is highly persuasive and informative, broadcast advertisement penetrating and far reaching, the jingle very effective in capturing people's attention and in bringing about a positive change in the behaviour of people towards the Corona virus.

Unique Contribution of the Study: This study is significant in that it presented the jingle as a potent marketing communication device, yet to be maximized and exploited and as a tool capable of overcoming social and psychological barriers to disseminating socially valuable information, such as the COVID-19.

Key words: *Jingles, COVID-19, dwellers, impact, fight, rural*

INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of the dreaded deadly Corona Virus, otherwise described as COVID-19, sometime in 2019, diverse methods have been utilized to create massive public awareness of the new disease, so as to limit the number of people who could fall victim to it. Different forms of communication, mass communication inclusive, have maximally been taken advantage in order to achieve the aforementioned end. As a matter of fact, most if not all, the messages or programmes of both print and electronic media—respectively—have been used to acquaint mass media audiences of the extreme deadliness of this new world-wide killer disease.

News, editorials, feature articles, public opinion write-ups, documentaries, commentaries, advertisement, including jingles, and among others, press releases, have gone out, carrying strong messages of precaution and general enlightenment about Corona virus pandemic which is believed to have caused the death of hundreds of persons across the world. All the methods employed have, doubtless, been contributing significantly to achieving the goal for which the information has been disseminated. Jingles are a form of advertising, which is concerned with the use of language in a manner that persuades people to patronize a service or product that is being advertised (Leighton 2018).

Whether print or electronic, advertising is widely believed to markedly impact its target audiences, influencing them to change the attitudes of current and potential customers (Sunday 2008). Jingles, which belong to electronic media advertising have been found out to be particularly effective in persuading people to behave in a specified way as indicated in an advertisement. ATSWA (2009) points out how advertising is pertinent to spreading the Corona virus message when it notes that advertising since the early 1960s has been directed increasingly towards matters of social concern such as health awareness and anti drink driving campaigns.

The success of the jingles as an advertising strategy largely lies in the fact that it combines such elements as music, rhyme, repetition, among others. Speaking of the impact of jingles, Husbsch (2009) notes that “some of the biggest products and companies in the world are successful not just because of customers satisfaction but because customers like a particular jingle in an advertisement. A good jingle catches the customer’s attention and makes him think twice about your product”.

The increasing spread as well as deadly devastation of this virus has already caused hundreds of thousands of deaths across the world, in addition to a huge economic damage it has done. According to the Nigeria Centre for Diseases Control, (NCDC), the Corona pandemic has caused the death of more than four thousand persons—as of the months September, 2020. On account of the gravity of the diseases, more effective and wider avenues for public awareness about the disease needs to be explored and maximally taken advantage of, so that its current ravages can be limited, if not contained. Doing anything else would be unwittingly promoting this new world’s scourge, which quite glaringly, is bent on destroying the civilization we have for a considerable while now enjoyed.

The rural population must be guided at all cost against this terrible societal menace that is first spreading fear and death in the world today. Certainly, jingles are especially appropriate to and ideal for increasing COVID-19 awareness among rural dwellers, because the radio and the television, which often broadcast jingles, are the mass media more often accessible to the rural population.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Why are jingles highly appropriate and ideal for the enlightenment of rural people about COVID-19?
- Is the rural population being sufficiently informed about the deadly Corona pandemic?
- Can the use of the jingle bring about desired positive behavior towards the Corona pandemic?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since the emergence of corona virus, a number of strategies have been used to make the masses, particularly the rural population, aware of very contagious nature and the deadliness of the new diseases.

There is no denying the fact that the mass media have substantially and consistently dedicated a significant part of their contents to addressing the menace that has been created by the Corona Virus. Apart from the mass media, some pertinent forms of communication have been substantially utilized in an effort to reduce the grave social dangers posed by the disease.—public communications, group communication, inter and intra-personal forms of communication have all been successfully employed.

Even though the jingles, with greater usage, may prove highly effective in creating COVID-19 awareness among the rural population, this form of communication has only too sparingly been deployed, much to the people resulting in rural dwellers poor access to critical COVID-19 information. This paper seeks to examine how jingles can be exploited and maximized in the continuing effort to inform the masses, particularly the rural population of the dangers and ravages of the Corona pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mass communication scholars the world over have always recognized the jingle as an essential form of advertising, particularly broadcast media advertising.

By advertising, according to Obe (2008), is meant “a paid form of communicating a message by the use of various media, it is persuasive, informative and designed to influence purchasing behaviour or thought pattern”. The American Marketing Association (AMA), cited in Obe (2008), also describes advertising as “a paid form of non-personal presentation of ideal goods or services by an identified sponsor”.

The fact that broadcast media advertising, to which jingles belong, is a highly effective and widespread means of advertising has been acknowledged by many mass communication scholars as well as advertisers. Olubunmi (2013), gives emphasis to the foregoing point when she writes that, because advertising informs, educates, persuades and reminds, it is especially critical to the worldwide effort and fight against the new deadly and ravaging disease.

Jingles are of immense societal relevance for, as a form of advertising, they help in turning the minds of those who listen to them towards a desired end. (Obe 2008). In other words, the jingle is a highly-persuasive marketing communication device which is often designed in such that they are worth paying attention to their composers or creators achieve this by demonstration the ability to skilfully and briefly manipulate sound symbols and effects as well as ideas in order to inform and persuade people to the bidding of the jingle message (Sunday 2012). Here lies the power which can easily alter the perception and beliefs of people about the issues of life. The Jingle, a form of broadcast advertisement have over the years been exploited to build a society described by the jingle creator the

messages of jingles are largely designed and aimed at making human beings live in a particular way, which may lead to the realization of a better life for those concerned.

Olubunmi (2013) speaks of this when notes that advertising is educational and it enable to learn about new products and services as well as well helping to raise standard of living among humans the use of the jingle over the broadcast media the radio or the vision is meant to one device of provide society with pertinent information that can help its member live improved lives the association of the jingles with the broadcast media, especially the radio has made this form of advisement of tremendous societal relevance. The radio in addition to the television takes the jingle messages very far into rural communities where this communication device is known available in large numbers, implying wider reception of the jingle message.

Aderibigbe (2002) corroborates this fact when he notes that the radio is “the one medium of mass communication which makes information available to the widest possible audience”. Communication experts believe that people could be informed of what happening or what has happened is. The role of information as the pivot in the growth and development of societies cannot be over emphasized.”

Speaking of the tremendous advantages of the broadcast media, (the radio and the television, in particular) Agbana (2013) notes that “Apart from their dynamism and diversity, the broadcast media have numerous potentials which accord them enormous respect as tools of advertising. Their demonstration ability, education, information and entertainment function place the sector in vantage positions too”. He further adds that the broadcast media, along with their advertising has a massive and tremendous reach, unqualified by other contending media, in addition to their being “invisible penetrators whose effects and influence are intrusive, persuasive and hardly checkable”. (P65). Sunday (2012) underscores the reason jingles are effective for creating awareness about COVID-19 among the rural population. He notes that a form of advertising the jingle seeks to gain consumer’s audience’s attention, generate a desire, and capture interest and move reader or listener to do something about the subject matter being advertised.

Aderigbigbe (2013) writes of the advantages of using jingles in COVID-19 creating awareness. He posits that the media that often broadcast the jingle (the radio and the television) are simple, immediate, can be directly received in homes and can put members of the audience in touch with one another. To Obaje (2017), jingles essentially are “commercial programmes which use specific appeals to attention of potential consumers rouse their interest and illicit consumption action from them”. According to Wikipedia, “Jingles are a form of sound rendering which contains one or more hooks and meaning that explicitly promote the product or service being advertised usually through the use of one or more advertising slogans”. The source describes a jingle as “a short song or tune use in advertising and for other commercial uses. The jingle has been further described as a radio or TV advertising slogan set to a memorable melody”. ([https://money. How Stuff works Com](https://money.howstuffworks.com)) Wikipedia provides the following as titles of popular jingles: “Jingle Bell”, “Every Christmas”. Tombroadcasting (2020) goes further to demonstrate the use of the jingle in advertising. The example given goes thus:

“For towing

Andy’s towing

We’ll get you going

Call 888”

The use of jingles in above advertisement demonstrates the striking music effect often produced when jingles are used in advertisements. Jingles are of tremendous advertising importance. Leighton (2020) acknowledges this fact when he writes that “few things can drive an advertising message home like a catchy jingle”. He further explained that because jingles use repetition often they are easy to remember-which helps the advertisement to be more effective.

Another importance of jingles, identified by Leighton, is that they help to define what you have to offer. In other words, “jingles should tell” the world what you have to offer that your competitors do not. Again jingles, according to Leighton, attract customers as they can make their listeners feel an emotional connection to the brand or product advertised.

Jingles as a form of advertising

Being a short song or tune used in advertising, jingles possess the basic features of advertising, especially the electronic media one. Since it is a form of advertising which, according to Sunday (2013) “Is based on the assumption that words have the power to produce change-a change in thinking, attitudes, beliefs and, ultimately, behaviour, the jingle must contain certain words and have a structure that express the strong information intended by the advertiser.

He points out that the jingle must be simple, sound as if it is worth paying attention to, as well as reflect “...the ability to manipulate symbols and ideas in order to inform and persuade people”. Continuing on, Sunday (2013) submits that jingles, like other forms of advertising, must inspire, determine goals reveal the benefits of the advertised product or service, make the service or product stand out and appeal to the target audience.

That jingles may be maximally exploited to convey critical information meant for the benefit of the mass of the people has been widely acknowledged. Corroborating this fact, the Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia (2005) notes that, “Having proven its force in the movement of economic goods and service advertising (or the jingle) since 1960 has been directed increasingly towards matters concern. Health awareness and anti-driving campaigns are two examples of the use of the advertising industry as a means to promote public welfare”. Thus, employing the jingle to create wider awareness of the Corona pandemic is quite appropriate and expedient at the moment.

From the above reviews, it can be concluded that different forms of mass media messages often been utilized to inform members of the public of diverse societal developments. Advertisements particularly the broadcast type- which exploits a great deal of jingles have often been described as being very important to the activity of mass communication, especially marketing communication. A study that examines how the communicative device of jingles can be used to give the rural population more awareness about of the dreaded Corona-pandemic is therefore highly necessary and timely.

METHODOLOGY Research design

The study employed the quantitative and qualitative methods in obtaining information from the target groups.

The survey approach was utilized to gather quantitative data in a sample population, while interviews were used to illicit their views on the same aspects of the subject matter.

Target population

The population used for the study comprised fairly educated youth and elders.

Sample/Sampling technique

The purposive sampling technique was used to draw 100 respondents from the population, fifty literate respondents were youth and the other fifty were used in analyzing the data. The characteristics sought from the respondents included age, educational background and social status copies of the questionnaire were administered directly.

Data collection tool

For the purpose of the study, primary data was collected and used. The primary data was collected through surveys and semi-interviews conducted with highly knowledgeable rural persons.

Data Analysis Technique

The percentage method was used to measure as well as analyze the responses of respondents.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study follows the social marketing theory which, according to Folarin (2006) has close affinity to the persuasion theories of mass communication. He describes the former theory concerned with using the best methods to design messages that work, in addition to anticipating social and psychological barriers to the effectiveness of mass mediated information.

In order to achieve maximum marketing communication effects, Folarin (2006), further argues that communication success which may involve scientifically derived techniques of persuasion are formulated and utilized in an effort to promote some socially valuable information.

He concludes that this theory employs strategies that “may simply amount to unabashed saturation of advertising in the final analysis. The theory is relevant to this study because, the jingle is a very effective and persuasive form of electronic media advertising which seeks to overcome social and psychological barriers in communication. Again the Corona-virus messages, which the jingle are used to communicate, are socially valuable information which members of the public ought to accessed.

Discussion of findings

RQ 1: What qualities of jingles make them highly appropriate and effective enough for rural enlightenment about Covid-19?

To elicit answers for research question one, different questions were asked respondents. First, what characteristic of the jingle makes it especially ideal for rural dwellers?

Out of 100 respondents, 55% opined that the jingle is best for the rural people because the media it uses (particularly the radio) is more easily accessible to the rural population than other forms of the mass media. 30% of them said the musical and highly emotional quality of jingles makes it ideal for a population that is mostly illiterate. Another 15% said that jingles are ideal for the enlightenment of the rural people because this form of advertising is often short, repetitive and so can be easily remembered.

According to them, because jingles easily grab attention, are catchy and in the form of music, the rural people could more easily pay attention to its message. Asked to provide another reason the jingle is especially suitable for the rural population, 80% of the respondents explained that the print media products (newspapers and magazines) were more expensive and they rarely got to the rural areas, while 20% believed that jingles, with their messages, can be easily heard on the radio or television

which are commonly available in their neighbourhood. From the responses above, it is clear that jingles can prove a most effective means to convey Covid-19 messages to the rural population.

RQ2: Is the rural population being sufficiently informed about the deadliness and social stigma of the Corona-virus?

Table 1: Amount of Covid-19 information available to rural dwellers

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	20%
No	80	80%
Total	100	100%

From the responses above, 80% of the respondents believed that the current means of informing the rural people about the corona virus was not sufficient while 20% were of the view that the amount of Covid-19 awareness information was grossly inadequate.

When asked to explain why they took their respective stands, 60% of them said that most of the current mass media messages about COVID-19 have been straight news, commentaries, features, editorials and opinion articles-which are rarely accessible to the majority of the rural people. 40% explained that the language often used by the channels for sending covid-19 information to the rural people has been too sophisticated and complex for them. They said that they would prefer a simpler and more attractive communication approach. The responses to research question two thus revealed that the rural population currently lack sufficient information about the coronal virus.

RQ 2: Can the use the jingle bring about desired positive behavior towards the Corona pandemic?

Table 2: Changing rural behavior toward s covid-19

Option	Frequency	Percentage
(a) Yes	65	65%
(b) No	35	35%
Total	100	100

In seeking answers to the above question, 65% of the respondents said yes, explaining that the effective and constant used of jingles over the radio can change the behavior of the rural dwellers towards the corona virus, while 35% of them answered no.

In trying to find out why the respondents choose their respective optioned 40% of them noted that a rural community saturated with Covid-19 jingles would begin to live more carefully, wearing nose marks, constantly washing their hands and using hand sanitizers as directed by our health officialspractices which are not yet in common use in most rural communities. 30% of respondents believed that obeying the health rule of social distancing as well as avoiding large gatherings of people and another 30% were of the view that the Covid-19 jingles will easily keep the danger and deadlines of the disease in the memory of the rural population. The responses above easily yield the deduction that the constant use of the radio or television jingles could bring tremendous success in the fight against the highly contagious corona virus. The study is found consistent with earlier studies carried

out by Huebsh (2009), and Leighton (2008), both of which stress the fact that jingles are highly effective in capturing the attention of people and turning their minds to do certain things they could never done.

CONCLUSION

From this study, it is evident that the jingle can prove to be a very effective tool in the fight against the coronal virus, if maximally utilized.

Since jingles are a form of advertising which persuasively and entertainingly educates, informs, reminds it can effective and successfully used to spread Covid-19 awareness among the rural people, who are easily attracted to a communication device. The jingle, full of repetition, music and emotion and commonly aired on the radio and television-found everywhere in rural communities easily appeal to most members of the rural population for which reason, it is considered ideal for this reason it is ideal to utilize it in the fight against the virus among these rural people. Although the jingle can bring about a marked positive change in the behavior of rural people towards the corona pandemic, it is yet to be maximized. The findings of this study was found in line with the conclusions about the tremendous communicative power of the jingle put forward by Agbana (2008), Huebsch (2009) and Leighton (2018).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended

- The three levels of government and other health authorities concerned should, henceforth, consider and take seriously the use of jingles in disseminating information about the grave dangers and extern deadliness of the Covid-19 scourge.
- The mass media should think up ways of enhancing and maximizing the utilization of jingles in the public fight against the Corona pandemic.
- Advertising practitioners and other public information disseminators should design and compose via stroking, information filled jingles.
- The authorities of our electronic media disseminator the radio and television should provide more airtime to Covid-19 jingles.
- The rural people themselves should take the greatest advantage of the invaluable Covid-19 information conveyed through Jingles.

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