



**EFFECT OF RADIO CAMPAIGN IN PROMOTING EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AMONG WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS: A STUDY OF RESIDENTS IN ENUGU NORTH AND SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY**

**Onovo Ikemefuna Freedom<sup>1</sup> and Nebo Chiegbuodo Eunice<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu, <sup>2</sup>School of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ohodo Enugu. [ikemefunaonovo6@gmail.com](mailto:ikemefunaonovo6@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract**

The focus of this research was on Effect of Radio Campaign in Promoting Exclusive Breastfeeding among Women in Rural Areas (A Study of residents in Enugu North and South Federal Constituency). The ultimate aim of the study was to assess the extent to which radio campaign is used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency and to find out whether radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas. The researcher adopted the Agenda Setting Theory and the Health Belief Model as the theoretical framework of the study. The survey research method was adopted for the study. The population of the study was 1033560. A total of 400 copies of questionnaire were administered to the sample of the study while 375 were successfully returned for statistical analysis. The data was analysed using tables, frequencies and percentages. Findings of the study revealed that Radio campaign is extensively used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency. It was also discovered that Radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas. However, Women in rural areas do not comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns. Part of the recommendations of the study was that Frequent and constant portrayal of information about exclusive breastfeeding should be disseminated to nursing and expecting mothers as to create more access to information on good health care practices. Also, radio as well as other broadcast channels should adopt a more strategic approach towards mobilising nursing and expectant mothers towards proper infant and maternal health care practices which exclusive breastfeeding is part of.

**Keywords:** Radio Campaign, Exclusive Breastfeeding, Rural Area, Enugu North, Enugu South

**Introduction**

**Background to the Study**

This study investigates the effectiveness of radio campaigns in promoting the adoption of exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas with a view to examining the impact of the medium in knowledge, awareness, attitudes and practice as well as highlighting the relevance of radio in enhancing the general well-being of mother and child after birth. Only when the proper message is delivered via the appropriate channels to the appropriate audience at the appropriate time can effective communication take place. The importance of radio broadcasting is growing from strength to strength because it is a tool used in mobilizing, sensitizing, educating, informing and entertaining the mass of its listening audience in and across the globe (Okeke, Chibuike & Ono, 2021).

The media, especially radio have been on the frontline in promoting policies that will better the society. This the media do through setting agenda for public discourse and discussions. The media have the capacity to shape the type of information that gets to members of the public through their gatekeeping process but when the media

constantly project a particular message, it means that premium importance has been placed on such message and it is very vital for societal wellbeing and such messages or information can be based on exclusive breastfeeding among women in the society (Bosch, 2022).

In line with the established background, Davis (2020) notes that the “breast has been viewed as an organ designed to produce milk. The lobules are the glands that produce the breast milk.” Then, according to Centre for Disease Control (2022) exclusive breastfeeding means feeding your baby only breast milk, not any other foods or liquids (including infant formula or water), except for medications or vitamin and mineral supplements. The American Academy of Paediatrics and the World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for about the first 6 months, with continued breastfeeding along with introducing appropriate complementary foods for up to 2 years of age or longer (Centre for Centre for Disease Control, 2023).

Based on the importance of health awareness, there is need for constant portrayal of messages concerning breastfeeding among women and even men in Nigeria. The family constitute of man and woman hence when the woman is not knowledgeable enough, the man can wade in. Additionally, efforts to promote general awareness of public health issues, which is the traditional goal of information, education, and communication programmes, have built a good foundation for health activities. Expecting and nursing mothers should be educated extensively on maternal and child health issues. Health programmes on radio are expected to be effective enough to influence nursing and expectant mothers to modify their behaviours in ways that will promote healthier lives. So it is imperative to appraise the role of radio in promoting effective maternal and infant health in Enugu urban.

Many medical experts, including the American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, strongly recommend breastfeeding exclusively (no formula, juice, or water) for 6 months. After the introduction of other foods, it recommends continuing to breastfeed through the baby’s first year of life (Taylor and Cameron, 2023). However, cultural and traditional issues, religion and other social issues hamper proper breastfeeding of new born babies especially in Nigeria.

Based on the foregoing, the radio being the most used media channel in rural areas such as Enugu North Federal Constituency should be deployed as a means of campaigning and sensitising the rural dwellers about the importance and significance of exclusive breastfeeding especially in a language and dialect the people understand hence the researcher is poised to fill the gap in this study.

The main objective of the study is on Effect of Radio Campaign in Promoting Exclusive Breastfeeding among Women in Rural Areas (A Study of residents in Enugu North and South Federal Constituency). The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. Assess the extent to which radio campaign is used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency.
2. Find out whether radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas.
3. Ascertain whether women in rural areas comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns.

The research questions for this study are:

1. To what extent is radio campaign used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency?
2. Does radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas?
3. Do women in rural areas comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns?

## Literature Review

### ***Concept of Radio Broadcasting***

Broadcasting involves transmission of useful information, ideas, knowledge, attitudes, feelings, etc., in form of signals through the airwaves to a heterogeneous and widely dispersed audience simultaneously. It can also be conceived as the dissemination or spreading of information, facts and ideas to the general public either in audio or both audio and visual. The mass media engender and provide the communication required for effective governance, politics and overall development of other facets of the society, (Aliede & Ogado, 2018).

Radio is a wireless transmission that only has the audio element (Ajisafe, 2021). Thus the radio can only be listened to. This nature of radio makes the production of programs cost-effective because few pieces of equipment are required than television. Furthermore, radio receivers are often simplistic in nature thus cheap and affordable, especially to rural people. Battery-operated radio sets make users less dependent on electricity supply and the medium is portable. Portability of the medium ensures that listeners incorporate the medium into their occupations.

### ***Concept of Exclusive Breastfeeding***

The breast refers to the front of the chest or, more specifically, to the mammary gland. The mammary gland is a milk producing gland. It is composed largely of fat. Within the mammary gland is a complex network of branching ducts. These ducts exit from sac-like structures called lobules, which can produce milk in females. The ducts exit the breast at the nipple (Davis, 2020).

According to Taylor and Cameron (2023) “breastfeeding is when you feed your baby breast milk, usually directly from your breast. It is also called nursing or chest-feeding. Making the decision to breastfeed is a personal matter. It is also one that is likely to draw opinions from your friends and family.” Hassan and Hossain (2023) noted that a baby who is exclusively breastfed is one who only consumes breastmilk from his or her mother, a wet nurse, or expressed breastmilk; they do not consume any other liquids or solids, including water, with the exception of oral drops, rehydration solution, or syrups containing vitamins, minerals, or medications. Pitman & Berrtt, (2007) in Iheanacho et al. (2021) alluded that when babies are not breastfed, they are at risk of a number of illness and developmental difficulties in both the short and long term.

Not breastfeeding or weaning prematurely is associated with health risks for mothers as well as for infants. Epidemiologic data suggest that women who do not breastfeed face higher risk of breast cancer and ovarian cancer, as well as obesity, type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and cardiovascular disease (Abdulla, et al, 2022). On the other hand, there is a 30–200% higher risk of chronic illness development in the absence of breast milk. In addition, there is a correlation with increased risk of childhood obesity, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, leukemia, SIDS, and infectious morbidity such as otitis media, gastroenteritis, and pneumonia (Black, 2024).

Currently, Nigeria is rated number one by World Health Organization above Pakistan as the highest country with cases of Infant Mortality Rate in 2020 at 59.181 deaths per 1000 live births a 2.44 percent decline from 2019. The Infant Mortality Rate for Nigeria in 2019 was 60.662 deaths per 1000 live births.

### ***Radio Programmes for Empowering Nursing Mothers***

Iheanacho et al, (2021) opined that exclusive breastfeeding is communicated through various communication channels, television, radio, newspaper, magazines, new media, flairs, banners, poster, interpersonal communication, and infant welfare at hospital and antenatal classes. To actualise the desired behavioural change (Exclusive breastfeeding), it is necessary to utilise the media since they have the capacity to reach a wider audience.

Radio programmes is an appropriate medium for reaching rural areas which at the moment are still in the dark in terms of access to information via the mass media. This situation places the rural areas at a disadvantage vis-a-vis the urban areas. The rural areas as a result, are unaware and passive about government programmes and development projects instituted by government. With programmes on radio, information is brought to the doorsteps of the rural dwellers, the illiterates and the poor, etc. The communication issues and activities brought to them ranged from trade, business, politics, government activities and entertainment (Eze, 2020).

Therefore, the relevant radio programmes can be used to empower nursing mothers at the grassroots level in the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding. Such programmes can be used to sensitize and raise the consciousness of expecting and nursing mothers. This is because in the rural areas, no developmental programme or project can succeed without effective awareness creation to the people of the area. The relevant radio programmes can serve as a source of cultural, political, educational, and enlightenment programmes for the people, leading them towards self-actualisation and the development goals of the general society. Thus, through songs, instructions, drama, music, education, etc, rural people can be effectively guided with direction on development programmes. Of course, exclusive breastfeeding is a developmental programme because of the health impact it pose on the society. Radio maintains close contact with listeners thus helping to structure programme in line with the likes and needs of the people. The radio through the programme gives the people advice-on the spot advice and assistance on how to solve their social and economic problems as well as their agricultural problems through extension officers. Through radio programmes, rural women can be invited to bare their minds on what their perception about exclusive breastfeeding. Under-nutrition is estimated to cause 3.1 million child deaths annually worldwide. About half of all child deaths have been associated with under-nutrition. It has been estimated that optimal breastfeeding of children under two years of age has the potential to prevent 1.4 million deaths in children aged under five in the developing world annually (Atimati, 2018).

Again, radio broadcasts or programmes on exclusive breastfeeding should be aired in languages as well as dialects that the locals understand speak. The impact of use of mother tongue in promoting health care among rural dwellers cannot be overemphasised.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on two theories and they are the Agenda Setting Theory and the Health Belief Model.

#### ***Agenda Setting Theory***

The agenda setting theory of the mass media explains that the mass media through their news offerings determine not only the issues members of the society talk about, but also how they talk about them. The media can also place pictures in our minds (Okenwa, 2002, p.112). McCombs and Shaw (1972, 1976) in (Ndolo, 2006) write that “Audience not only learn about public issues and other matters through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media places upon it.”

#### ***Health Belief Model***

The study is anchored on the Health Belief Model (HBM) propounded in the 1950s by Godfrey Hochbaum, Irwin Rosenstock, and Stephen Kegels as a social psychology paradigm. This model explains how individuals engage in health-promoting behaviour by analysing their beliefs about health risks, perceived benefits of taking action, perceived obstacles to taking action, and self-efficacy in their capacity to take action.

Based on agenda setting theory, it is expected that the constant portrayal of messages about exclusive breastfeeding by radio will go a long way to make nursing and expectant mothers perceive it in a certain way. If the messages on exclusive breastfeeding do not direct their attention or thinking toward good maternal and infant health practice, the messages will certainly register a certain perception of the messages in their minds. The

agenda setting perspective will go a long way to enhance the efforts of the government and the media in the struggle to reduce infant and maternal mortality through proper education of expecting and nursing mothers especially as it concerns exclusive breastfeeding for women in rural areas such as communities in Enugu North and South Federal Constituency.

The HBM's applicability to this study depends on the assumption that lactating mothers or women in their reproductive prime may exhibit a positive disposition towards the information and communication tactics used in the radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding.

### **Empirical Reviews**

In line with the current study, other studies relevant to the study were empirically reviewed in this section.

Adams (2024) conducted a study on the role of community radio station in rural development in Nigeria. The aim of the study was to address the role of community radio on rural development in Nigeria by applying library based research method, necessary information were generated through literature review. Drawn from Democratic Participant Theory. This study highlights that community radio has brought positive impacts particularly in eight thematic areas (i.e. Education, politics suitability, agricultural transformation, promoting participatory democracy, voice of voiceless, information/ discussion forum on local issues, empowering unprivileged rural people and contribution on good governance). Thus, better to offer radio programs by the local level authorities in such thematic areas for strengthening the rural development process in general and the rural community development process in particular.

Iheanacho, et al. (2021) investigated the influence of broadcast media campaigns on creating awareness on exclusive breastfeeding. The study was anchored on the health belief model. The survey method was adopted; the study has a population of 555,500 from which a sample size of 385 was arrived at using the Australian sample size calculator. The study adopted the multistage sampling technique and questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that 54% of the respondents are moderately aware of broadcast media campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding, 94% of the respondents said campaigns on exclusive breastfeeding is a good public enlightenment programme and 64% of the respondents agreed that exclusive breastfeeding campaign on the broadcast media has helped them in actualizing the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively. Part of the recommendations was that the media needs to sustain exclusive breastfeeding awareness campaign.

### **Methodology**

Research design adopted for this work is survey. Area of the study is Enugu North and South Federal Constituency. Population of the study is the yearly projected population growth figure. Therefore, projected figure was multiplied by 18. Thus:  $10603 \times 18 = 190854$ . The population of study now is;  $190854 + 443604 = 634458$ . Population of study = 634458. The sample size for this study was derived from the population using online Australian sample size calculator stated thus: Therefore, the sample size is 400. The sampling technique that the researcher made use of is the cluster sampling techniques. For measuring instrument, this study used a formal questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was distributed by hand to the respondents, who were instructed on how to fill it out in a way that effectively addresses the study's hypotheses and research problem. The questions were structured in both closed- and open-ended formats.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

At the course of this study, the researcher administered four hundred (400) questionnaires. However, the returned copies of the questionnaire are three hundred and seventy five (375) copies. The tables below gives a description and presentation of the demographic details of the respondents.

**Table 7:** To what extent is radio campaign used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Great Extent	151	40.2%
Very Great Extent	81	21.6%
Low Extent	93	24.8%
Very Low Extent	50	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Field Survey 2024**

The table indicates that 151 of the respondents representing 40.2% said that radio campaign is used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency to a great extent, 81 respondents, representing 21.6% said to very great extent, 93 of the respondents representing 24.8% have low extent, while 50 representing 13.3% of the respondents said to a very low extent.

**Table 8:** Does radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	115	30.6%
Strongly Agree	93	24.8%
Disagree	107	28.5%
Strongly Disagree	60	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Field Survey 2024**

The table indicates that 115 of the respondents representing 30.6% agreed that radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural, 93 respondents representing 24.8% strongly agree, 107 representing 28.5 respondents strongly disagree while 60 of the respondents representing 16% said strongly disagree.

**Table 9:** Do women in rural areas comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns?

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	95	25.3%
Strongly Agree	94	25%
Disagree	92	24.5%
Strongly Disagree	94	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Field Survey 2024**

The table indicates that 95 of the respondents representing 25.3% agree of the opinion that women in rural areas comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns; 94 of the respondents representing 25% strongly agree, 92 of the respondents representing 24.5% disagree while 94 representing 25% strongly disagree.

**Discussion of Results**

In all, three hypotheses were tested for statistical support. All the alternative hypotheses tested positive. The focus of research question one was on whether Radio campaign is extensively used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency. It holds that Radio campaign is

extensively used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency. Radio has also been used to preach about the importance of family planning, maternal and child mortality as well as exclusive breastfeeding which has been adopted by many homes. There is a lot of disinformation and misinformation, so people still want to check if it is not said on radio then it is not fact. That is why radio is popular and celebrated in Africa (Mutsaka and Satchel, 2023).

In research question two, the focus was on whether Radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas. It holds that Radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas. Hugelius et al (2019) stated that radio also has the potential to cost-effectively reach a large number of affected people in areas with severely damaged infrastructure. Radio could, therefore, contribute to health recovery and wellbeing from both individual and community perspectives.

Research question three dwelt on whether Women in rural areas do not comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns. It holds that Women in rural areas do not comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns. Based on the foregoing, the outcome of this study is in consistent with Iheanacho, et al. (2021). It was discovered that in rural areas, problems of religion, superstitious beliefs, traditional and cultural practices still hinder effective exclusive breastfeeding in rural areas in Nigeria.

Summary of the findings of the study is therefore presented as follows:

1. Radio campaign is extensively used in promoting exclusive breastfeeding among women in rural areas in Enugu North Federal Constituency.
2. Radio campaigns that promote exclusive breastfeeding have significant effect on women in rural areas.
3. Women in rural areas do not comply to exclusive breastfeeding as a result of radio campaigns.

The findings of this study have necessitated some conclusions to be drawn from it. Having explored messages from radio on exclusive breastfeeding, it is seen that enough and adequate strategic contents have been disseminated to get nursing and expectant mothers acquainted with the adoption of measures to ensure healthy living for the women and their children. The radio is very effective in promoting maternal and infant health hence the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding. It has the capability of appealing to all categories of women – literate and illiterate, urban and rural dwellers alike. Radio communicates in dialects and uses the local language to reach the target audience. Mass media is generally a powerful means of socialising people towards maintaining a proper and adequate healthy living. This is because people's attitude and behaviour towards health was seen to be basically changed because of exposure to media messages. However, the barrage of well packaged and designed messages on exclusive breastfeeding has been hindered by suppositious beliefs, religious and traditional beliefs as well as other primordial sentiments.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Frequent and constant portrayal of information about exclusive breastfeeding should be disseminated to nursing and expecting mothers as to create more access to information on good health care practices. Again, government should organize a forum and publicise it through the media for medical practitioners to visit communities and hospitals during antenatal periods to educate women on infant and maternal health.
2. Radio as well as other broadcast channels should adopt a more strategic approach towards mobilising nursing and expectant mothers towards proper infant and maternal health care practices which exclusive breastfeeding is part of. Radio messages for rural women on exclusive breastfeeding should be created in languages and dialects the local people understand better.
3. Radio messages should be designed to change the orientation, attitude, behaviour, superstitious beliefs, and mindset of people in rural areas in a positive light in order to completely adopt exclusive breastfeeding. The media must always highlight the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, not only to mothers but also husbands.

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