

A Comparative Study of Health Education Strategies in Family Planning

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Abstract

Background: Changes in behavior and adoption of new ideas are very complex and multifaceted, and have resulted in several decades of research, which have produced several theories and conceptual models of dissemination of awareness and adoption of new ideas.

Objective: To find out which medium is more effective in creating public health awareness regarding family planning and to investigate the factors involved in making effective public health campaigns in the district.

Study type and settings: The cross-sectional study was conducted in four Tehsils of District Kasur i.e. tehsil Kasur, tehsil Chunian, tehsil Kot Rada Kishan and tehsil Pattoki.

Methodology: By using simple, random and clustered sampling technique, six hundred (600) survey questionnaire forms, three hundred (300) in English for literate / educated people and three hundred (300) in Urdu for illiterate people were distributed. The administrative division of Kasur District was used to make clusters. Each tehsil was considered as a cluster in order to cover the both rural and urban areas. One hundred and fifty (150) questionnaire forms were distributed to be filled in each cluster / tehsil. The chi-square test was applied to identify the significance of difference of health education strategies provided by health workers and mass media regarding family planning.

Results: It was found that only 38% people know about vaccination campaign, 45% people know about nutrition, 48% people know about sanitation and 61% people know about the contraception. The study also found that mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) disseminates (29%) and interpersonal communication (health workers / change agents) contribution is 71% in creating awareness about the use of contraception in family planning.

Conclusion: It was found that health workers/ change agents were more effective than mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) in creating awareness about contraception among masses in District Kasur. Affirming diffusion of innovations that after the initial flow of information through the mass media the spike in adoption is caused by interpersonal communication and mediation of opinion leaders.

Key words: Mass media, change agents, health workers, contraception, awareness.

Introduction

What is socially acceptable in a society is known as social awareness. Mass media

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TUH conceptualized the project & did the drafting, revision and writing of manuscript. AZ did the literature search. IAA performed the data collection. Statistical analysis was done by TUH & AZ.

(TV, radio, newspaper) plays an important role in modern society in this regard. Mass media depends on the factors such as age, education, economic growth, personal needs, social scenario and availability of proper components, along with the quantum and frequency of media use.¹

Mass media causes developmental changes, through its flow of information to the masses. It is observed that the people living in traditional societies consider the media as magic.² The mass media helps people gain a new outlook of life. It is a fact that mass media is a bridge between traditional societies and modern societies.³

Diffusion of innovations and information theory by Everett Rogers is an appropriate theory. It has been applied to examine the influence of mass media and compare its' effectiveness with interpersonal communication with regard to shaping

to public opinion, enhancing awareness and changing behavior.

It is found that interpersonal meetings and increased in clientage interest with the help of advocacy by health workers, tilted the people attitudes and behavior towards public health and increased vaccination and family planning awareness.⁴ The contacts with peers and service providers is considered as similar to interpersonal communicators.

It is found that interpersonal communication is a significant predictor to disseminate information about public health. The information, which is disseminated by the media aware general public. This can change behavior of masses, provided the masses are willing to accept it.⁵

Interpersonal communication, however, has its own limitations. For instance, it has been observed that the involvement of communication officers, field workers, outreach agents, public counselors is not suitable and workable for interpersonal campaigns at large scale. Nevertheless, the efficiency of the above mentioned communication agents have always been substantial in low scale campaigns, especially in those areas where public sector departments have certain organizational limitations.⁶

The studies showed high rate of diarrhea in Pakistan due to environmental situation at home. The role of lady health workers is more powerful as compared to mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) in creating awareness to improve the status of nutrition in children.⁷

The trends of media consumption are very interesting. The trends show that radio is one of the most effective tool in such communication campaigns. The dissemination of information through radio is easy, its coverage is relatively high, and it is popular among masses. The results indicate that approximately 38% of females have listened to family planning related messages on radio. This is quite significant if we compare it with TV and newspaper.⁸

Breast feeding is also considered as one of the methods of family planning. However, when asked from breastfeeding mothers, it was learnt that there has not been any positive relationship found between breastfeeding and contraception.⁹

The mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) increased the adoption of female condom in Tanzania. The study agreed that health workers have more impact than mass media on individual's attitudes to use a female condom. The contacts with peers and service providers are considered interpersonal communicators.¹⁰

According to Brown and Campbell (1991), the campaign developers study the norms, customs and cultural values of the target audiences from

different angles before every campaign. The research indicates that mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) campaigns are not producing good results but on the other hand these campaigns are more effective with the support of personal interaction.¹¹

Community health workers (CHWs) are good tool of interpersonal communication and giving health facilities at door step but then there are many areas that are overlooked. Doctors are not ready to work in rural areas and far flung places.¹² It is noted that the majority of people can be saved from diseases and illnesses in the neglected rural areas by creating awareness about clean water and waste-disposal systems.¹³ CHWs can assume a wide variety of roles in healthcare. Anybody can be trained as community health workers due to the versatility of this profession.¹⁴

Community health workers (CHWs) are local inhabitants and trained to serve the people of their respective community for basic public health and nutrition services. These CHWs, generally are working under the administrative and financial control of Ministry of Health.¹⁵

The work of CHWs in accessing mental health care is also important. It is observed that all of the mental health professionals are working in the capital cities of all African countries and no one in rural areas because mental health is not considered a public health issue in these countries.¹⁶ The governments poorly managed public health services and people are receiving low-quality and inconsistent care.¹⁷ PACT (Prevention, Access to Care and Treatment) is following the community health worker model in the field of public health. The professionals of PACT with the help of other health workers visit patients at their door step to ensure medical compliance and social support.¹⁸

A study was conducted on the importance and effects of CHWs on public health in the United States. The program of CHW was developed to target the patients of childhood asthma related to poor families. The CHWs were equipped with anti-allergen bedding, low-emission vacuums, and cleaning kits. It was found that the CHW were more effective and significant as compared to the in-clinic care group, although the CHW interaction did not produce results up to mark in reduction of the use of emergency care services.¹⁹

A study indicates that CHWs intervention did not improve the infant health, significantly. The only improvement is in diagnosing the asthma more effectively in infants.²⁰

There is no proper explanation of impact of interpersonal communication. There is, also missing use of linkage between health workers / change agents and mass media in disseminating the public health awareness.

The product of this diffusion is that the members of that community and social system, adopt a new idea or behavior.²¹

The present research was focused on family planning i.e. contraception in District Kasur, Punjab, Pakistan. In our country government departments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other social change agents are serving in creating awareness about contraception. Whereas, mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) and health workers/ change agents are providing information and involved in persuasion. Therefore, it was useful to have a comparative analysis of their effectiveness in the light of Roger's theory for the purpose of giving guidance to strategic communication planners involved in creating health awareness.

Methodology

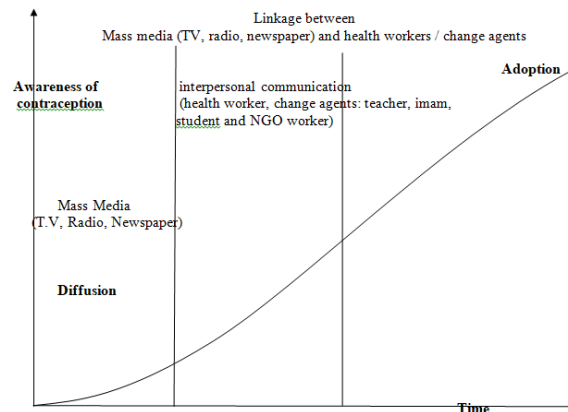
The corss-sectional study was conducted in four Tehsils of District Kasur i.e. tehsil Kasur, tehsil Chunian, tehsil Kot Rada Kishan and tehsil Pattoki by using clustered sampling technique. Six hundred respondents were selected who were divided according to gender, education, and location. The population between the age of 18-45 or above were enrolled for this study. Both married and unmarried adults were studied having formal or no education.

Six hundred (600) survey questionnaire forms, three hundred (300) in English for literate/ educated people and three hundred (300) in Urdu for illiterate people were distributed .The administrative division of Kasur District was used to make clusters. District Kasur is administratively divided into four Tehsils e.g. Kasur City, Chunia, Kot Rada Kishan and Pattoki. Each tehsil was considered as a cluster in order to cover the both rural and urban areas. One hundred and fifty (150) questionnaire forms were distributed to be filled in each cluster/ tehsil. Questionnaires were filled using random sampling technique. Sample size was calculated using the rule of thumb as suggested by Foxcroft and Roodt (2010) that recommends 10 respondents per item per construct. There were 30 questions in the questionnaire of each language hence 300 respondents for questionnaire in each language was extracted.

The researchers, personally, supervise the research assistants to make sure that quality data is collected. The researchers made sure that the questionnaires submitted to them were completely filled.

The study showed that more than 56% of the population were regularly being visited by health

workers. Only 8% responded that health workers visit them rarely.



Conceptual framework on contraception/ family planning in district Kasur.

All data was retrieved from field assistants and kept at a secure location to prevent data from adverse weather conditions and damage of any form. The Chi-Square test was applied to identify the relation between health workers / change agent and mass media regarding the contraception family planning.

The study was approved by the Ethical Review Committee of the School of Media and Mass Communication, Beacon house National University, Lahore in 2014.

Results

Most of the respondents were aware of family planning. Only 6.2% of them did not have any information regarding family planning.

Total 61.2% of the respondents were fully aware of contraception. This equated with above results that showed a large number of people were aware of family planning.

The results obtained on whether the respondents received information of family planning through mass media were quite shocking. Merely 29.5% of the respondents said that they received information through mass media. However an overwhelming 44.8% did not reply to any option.

In contrast to the mass media, 61.2% of the respondents got information about family planning through health worker. Only 7.2% said that no such information was received by health worker.

When the respondents were asked about change agents. They answered that they mostly got information of family planning through health workers (53.5%). The percentage of people who receive such

information from NGOs' workers is merely 1.5% (Table-1 & 2).

Most of the respondents thought that change agents were more effective than health workers. However one third of them did not second this view (Table-3 & 4).

When asked whether mass media was more effective in creating awareness, the respondents were largely neutral (38.8%). However, one fourth of them agreed that mass media was more effective in creating awareness.

More than 78.4% of the respondents agreed that contraception is necessary for a prosperous family. Those who disagreed were less than 1%.

Table 1: Opinion about the comparative effectiveness of Health Workers and Mass Media.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Agree	326	92.0	234.0
Agree	70	92.0	-22.0
Neutral	20	92.0	-72.0
Disagree	36	92.0	-56.0
Strongly Disagree	8	92.0	-84.0
Total	460		

Chi-Square Test

<i>Health worker are more effective than mass media</i>			
Chi-Square	767.565 ^a		
Df	4		
Asymp. Sig.	.000		

It means that health workers/ change agents are more effective in creating awareness about contraception as compared to mass media in District Kasur.

Table 2: Health worker are more effective than T.V Cross-Tabulation.

Count	<i>If from others, whom</i>						Total
	Health worker	Teacher	NGOs worker	Any other	6		
If yes, from which medium	TV	69	19	7	8	17	120
	News papers	2	4	0	0	5	11
Total		71	23	7	8	22	131

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.542	4	.014

It means that health workers / change agents are more effective in creating awareness about contraception as compared to Radio in District Kasur.

Table 3: Health worker are more effective than radio.

Count		<i>Health worker are more effective than mass media</i>					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Dis-agree	Strongly Dis-agree	
Do you listening radio?	Yes	46	12	10	8	6	82
	No	274	58	10	28	2	372
Total		320	70	20	36	8	454

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.710 ^a	4	.000

Table 4: Health worker are more effective than newspaper Cross-tabulation.

Count		<i>Health worker are more effective than mass media</i>					Total
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
Read Newspaper	Yes	187	47	14	28	7	283
	No	125	20	6	8	0	159
Total		312	67	20	36	7	442

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.556	4	.032

This analysis corroborates this statement that the role of health workers/ change agents, (interpersonal communication) is more important and effective than mass media in creating awareness about public health among masses in district Kasur.

Discussion

This research focused on the role of mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) and interpersonal communication (health workers / change agents) in creating awareness about public health in district Kasur, keeping in view three theories, diffusion of innovation theory, agenda setting and symbolic interaction. Quantitative survey technique was used

after sampling drawn from the population of related to the district Kasur.

It was found that only 8% respondents watched TV for 4 hours or more, 85% respondents do not watch TV advertisements in district Kasur. Only 1% respondents, listened to radio for 4 hours or more, 91% respondents do not listen to radio advertisements. Seventy nine percent respondents did not read advertisement. On the other hand, health workers visited 74% respondents in district Kasur. Findings were consistent with those from the 2011–2015 International National Survey of Family Growth published in 2018. It is found that females received more information through interpersonal communication opposite to earlier practices which involved mass media only. Interpersonal communication was also more helpful in spreading awareness about condoms as compared to mass media.¹⁷

The study found that only 38% people knew about vaccination campaign, while 45%, 48%, and 61% of the people knew about nutrition, sanitation, and contraception respectively in district Kasur. The study also found that contribution of interpersonal communication (health workers/ change agents) was 71% while the rest (29%) of contribution was made by mass media (T.V, radio, newspaper) in disseminating the information in creating awareness about public health in district Kasur.¹⁸

This study strengthens the fact that Health workers/ change agents are more effective in creating awareness about public health as compared to mass media in district Kasur, The results suggest that emphasis is given to more personal forms of communication, and community-based educational outreach.¹⁹ There was more awareness about contraception as compared to vaccination in district Kasur. The World Bank report suggested that this region has seen a decreased maternal mortality since 1990. This decline might be due to number of factors including improved reproductive health communication.²¹ There is more awareness about vaccination as compared to nutrition in district Kasur, there is more awareness about sanitation as compared to nutrition in district Kasur. National studies of Ghaffar et al regarding Pakistan's contribution. (RMNCH) in 2015 gave the similar notion that Pakistan has seen positive contributions in reproductive health due to formulation of guidelines set by WHO.²²

In the context of Pakistani society, large scale interpersonal communication campaigns are very difficult. They have certain limitations. These include vast area, huge population, and limitation of resources, lack of training, availability of masses at homes and lack of education. However, with the help of non governmental and private sector organizations

and stakeholders, these limitations can be overcome. An integrated communication campaign can be designed where private and public sector get together and work on such initiatives. Mass Media can be used as an effective tool in spreading awareness. However, the role of communication officers, lady health visitors, outreach agents and NGOs can be very crucial. Policies should be designed with participatory approach, in which all participants should be equally involved, even with the masses. Integrated communication campaigns should be designed where mass media and communication officers can combine their power. This will significantly improve the effectiveness of behavior change communication campaigns.

Conflict of interest: None declared.

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