

Radio broadcasting in the era of HIV/AIDS: Can this be the magic bullet?

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Abstract

In this study, we assessed the relevance and effectiveness of radio broadcasting as a strategy that facilitates the adoption and use of safer sexual practices among students at a South African university. Based on ethnographic data, the article highlights that the essential and critical contribution of campus radio lies in its ability to create a social space for HIV/AIDS communication. The overall aim of this study was to assess the relationship between exposure to radio broadcasting messages and the adoption of safer sexual practices. Our analysis suggests that campus broadcasting can be instrumental in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and education.

Keywords

Behaviour change, critical awareness, HIV/AIDS communication, mass media, social space

1. Introduction

Despite all the various health and HIV/AIDS campaigns that have been introduced and undertaken at South African universities since the emergence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, recent statistics continue to suggest and single out universities in the country as havens of the epidemic (Stremlau and Nkosi, 2001). The prevalence rate of the epidemic in most of the country's universities continue to rise amid all campaign efforts tailored to reduce further transmission and infection (Higher Education HIV and AIDS Programme [HEAIDS], 2009). Based on a prevalence study conducted by HEAIDS, the mean HIV prevalence for students in South African universities was estimated to be around 3.4 percent in 2009 (HEAIDS, 2009). Against such evidence, this study sought to ascertain whether campus radio could be used as a health promotion strategy that would see a reduction in incidences of HIV/AIDS transmission and infection at a South African

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institution of higher learning. Before looking at the use of radio in health promotion, in the following section, we give an overview of the South African HIV/AIDS issue.

The South African HIV/AIDS context

In South Africa, an estimated 5.7 million people are living with HIV and AIDS today and the figure is regarded as the highest number of people in any country (UNAIDS, 2011). The most affected age group are those aged 15–49, with prevalence among most university students varying by each province (UNAIDS, 2010). It is estimated that there are 1.9 million AIDS orphans where one or both parents are deceased in South Africa, and that the HIV and AIDS epidemic is responsible for half of the country's orphans (UNAIDS, 2010). South Africa's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic was largely characterized by a lack of political will on the part of the government especially during the Mbeki presidency. However, the past five years have witnessed improved and renewed commitment from the government to address the severe and drastic impact of the epidemic. In an effort to upscale its responsibility and taking HIV/AIDS seriously at national level, the South African Government launched a major HIV counselling and testing campaign (HCT) in 2010 (South African National Aids Council [SANAC], 2011). A principal aim of the HIV counselling and testing (HCT) campaign launched in April 2010 is to scale up awareness of HIV. The government aims to bring about general discussion of HIV throughout the country by using the media. Strategies include publicizing the availability of free testing and counselling in health clinics through door-to-door campaigning and billboard messages, and using vox pops to highlight personal experiences and expel the myths and stigma of HIV. Since its implementation, the HCT campaign has had a notable impact on the availability and uptake of HIV testing and treatment (SANAC, 2011). In addition to this, there is a number of large-scale communication campaigns related to raising awareness of HIV and AIDS as well as broader health-related issues. For example, '*Khomanani*', meaning 'caring together', has been running since 2001 and was the health department's premier AIDS-awareness campaign. It used the mass media to broadcast its messages including radio announcements and the use of situational sketches on television. Through its National Strategic Plan 2007–2011, the South African Government has developed and supported prevention, care and support strategies for different groups of people such as pregnant women, sex workers, gays and lesbian in the fight against HIV/AIDS (SANAC, 2010).

Radio broadcasting and HIV/AIDS communication

The use of radio as a vehicle of empowerment is gaining intellectual currency or prominence in development, public health and health promotion literature. The mass media particularly radio is perceived to be extremely powerful in involving the target audiences with the essential and abstract matters of health (Godwyll and Ngumbi, 2009). Emerging evidence from different parts of the African continent tend to suggest that radio broadcasting is the most effective and reliable source of HIV/AIDS education and information (Wellings and Macdowall, 2000). Studies conducted in Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia (World Health Organization, 2002) have revealed that radio remains the only reliable instrument for facilitating health literacy and public communication on HIV/AIDS among citizens especially in rural areas where such information is scanty or limited. In their study on the effects of multi-media campaigns in Uganda, Bessinger et al. (2004) found a positive association between exposure to radio messages and increased knowledge on Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV/AIDS. These studies have shown that radio broadcasting has the capacity to influence both behavioural and attitudinal changes which can result in citizens being better placed to avoid HIV/AIDS infections (Wellings, 2002; World Health Organization, 2002).

Using campus radio and other forms of educational media is not a uniquely African strategy. Wellings and Macdowell (2000) highlighted that during the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, many European countries developed public education programmes in schools and colleges to raise awareness among students. Misra and Agarwal (2005) revealed that the use of radio in Indian schools is increasingly seen as the only strategy that can facilitate health promotion among both learners and teachers.

Health promoters and public health physicians have identified several distinctive advantages of using radio as a vehicle for health promotion. One common advantage of using radio is that it reaches a wider audience than any other medium of behaviour change communication (Adam and Harford, 2001). Radio can directly reach those who might not have access to health information and facilities due to cost or distance. Most significantly, radio is interactive and encourages continuous dialogue and discussion even after the broadcast. These discussions are often associated with a change in attitude and behaviour. Manyozo (2009: 1) suggests that radio is useful and relevant in community mobilization and development mainly because it is 'pervasive, local, extensive, available, readily understood, personal portable, speedy, and efficient'. However, for radio messages to be effective, they need to reflect the real situation of the target audience (Godwyll and Ngumbi, 2009). Radio messages need to model behaviour and attitude change and clearly show 'the benefits to the listeners of behaviour change and raise their motivation to change within their own socio-cultural context' (Godwyll and Ngumbi, 2009: 82).

Kissam et al. (2003) are of the opinion that the identity of the radio station is an important determinant of health promotion effectiveness. It is the perceived identity of the radio station that will cause people within the target population to accept health promotion messages leading to behaviour change. In a study conducted in Mozambique, Karlyn (2001) found out that exposure to radio messages contributed to individual intent to change sexual behaviour. Karlyn (2001) concluded that radio messages influenced individual self-efficacy and a change in sexual practice. Thus, 'health-related behaviour is related to perspectives about the message source and its social identity' (Kissam et al., 2003: 8). However, there are various counterfactual assumptions that can be posed against this perceived correlation between radio station identity and health promotion effectiveness. As this article will show, there are various factors that determine efficacy of health-related messages disseminated through local (campus) radio among university students.

Radio, behaviour change communication and self-efficacy

There is growing evidence that suggests that communication plays a crucial role in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS (Gahaku, 2010; Skuse, 2002; Waeber and Orengo, 2008). Gahaku (2010: 155) argues that radio 'has the potential to provide information, knowledge, attitude and skills that will inform and lead to positive moral behaviour'. The use of broadcast media in disseminating health information is also well established in literature (Gahaku, 2010; Wango, 2001). Previous studies conducted on health education have demonstrated that broadcast media has the potential of shaping people's identity and makes them adopt health protective behaviours. In Kenya, for example, music is reported as promoting sexual morality among the youth as it addresses issues of sex (Gahaku, 2010). It promotes and encourages public communication about sex in a society which views sex as not a subject of open discussion and debate. In cases where parents are reluctant to talk about sex, especially in traditional and patriarchal African society, radio has proved useful and worthwhile (Gahaku, 2010). Skuse (2002) perceives radio as a strategic tool for human development. Abroms and Maibach (2008) are also of the view that media does influence behaviour change especially at an individual level. Similarly in a study conducted by Bertrand et al. (2006) in selected developing African countries, radio was seen as having an impact on knowledge transmission and HIV/AIDS

reduction. In Uganda, for example, the use of mass media is seen as instrumental in promoting safe sexual behaviour and practices including the use of condoms (Bessinger et al., 2004).

Other studies conducted in countries such as the US and Brazil have also shown that radio is instrumental in promoting self-efficacy for condom use and abstinence (Horner et al., 2008; Noar and Palmgreen, 2009). These findings are also consistent with those of Keating et al. (2006) and Bessinger et al. (2004) where an association between radio messages and self-efficacy was established. Such findings showed that broadcast media help in facilitating discussion on condom use between partners which significantly reduces the risk of HIV infections. Agha (2003) suggests that there is a very strong correlation between exposure to media messages transmitted through radio and behaviour change. For Agha (2003) radio increases personal risk perception and awareness. According to Van Rossem and Meekers (2007) radio has the potential of building self-confidence on individuals which will make them to be open on issues related to health and sexuality. In other words, it promotes safe sexual negotiations between partners in a sexual relationship. All these studies indicate that radio stimulate positive social and behavioural changes among people in society.

Broadcast media, HIV education and awareness

The media, both print and electronic, has a profound impact on HIV/AIDS education and prevention. Studies suggest that there is a strong correlation or association between exposure to the media and the ability to acquire HIV/AIDS knowledge which can help an individual avoid risk HIV/AIDS infection (Agha, 2003; Keating et al., 2006). According to a South African Broadcasting Corporation Report (SABC, 2007: 12) on broadcast media and HIV/AIDS awareness, radio and television 'can help reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS by bringing attention to the sexual behaviours, attitudes, and traditions driving the epidemic'. Murthy (2010) revealed that communal radio listening among women in Mozambique has proved to be useful in generating and building HIV/AIDS knowledge and education. Muthy's findings showed lower newspaper readership among women, leaving radio as the only source of reliable HIV/AIDS information.

Waeber and Orenge (2008) concluded that radio broadcasting promotes community literacy on health issues. The results from their study showed that women who reported listening to the local community radio station in a village in Madagascar indicated that they have gained useful knowledge related to pregnancy, family planning and breastfeeding. These results reflect that people listening to radio are most likely to gain useful knowledge and understanding on health issues. Metcalf (2005) also argues that radio can play a critical and central role in enhancing understanding of HIV/AIDS especially amongst vulnerable groups of people. Waeber and Orenge (2008: 70) are of the view that 'with radio, even the very poorest members of the community can have access to information, which can help to tackle everyday problems'.

Mass media and HIV/AIDS testing and counselling

The use of mass media in promoting safe sexual practices and the need for HIV/AIDS testing and counselling is well established in literature. For example, an evaluation of the effectiveness of mass media campaigns in Kenya performed by Marum et al. (2008) showed that mass media campaigns have the capacity to increase the use of HIV testing and counselling services. Similarly, exposure to radio and newspapers significantly resulted in people accessing more services related to HIV/AIDS counselling and testing and the increased attendance to health clinics. In another study conducted by Seberty-Kuhlmann and Kraft (2008) results showed that radio broadcasting was associated with women seeking HIV testing and services such as Preventing Mother-to-child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT). The potential of mass media in influencing HIV/AIDS testing and counselling can therefore be overemphasized.

Radio broadcasting and HIV/AIDS: The case of a South African university

This study is based on an ongoing HIV/AIDS campaign programme which uses radio as a tool to encourage and promote HIV/AIDS education among students at a South African university. The campaign aims at building health literacy among members of the university community particularly on matters related to HIV/AIDS prevention, safe sexual practices and other behavioural responses. The use of radio as a health promotion tool at this university is seen as a response to low levels of public communication and engagement among students on HIV/AIDS and other health-related topics (HEIADS, 2009). Radio broadcasting sessions and programmes are led by students who are contracted by the university to work at the campus radio station on a part-time basis. The mechanism of disseminating HIV/AIDS messages was based on live panel discussions, open air broadcasting at university stadium or student cafeterias and road shows within the university. Also, in some instances local celebrities were invited to the university radio studios to openly discuss HIV/AIDS issues on live radio talk shows. The most significant aspect of this campus HIV/AIDS campaign is that radio listeners within and outside the university had a chance to phone the studios and take part in the live radio discussions and talk shows.

Radio messages and topics which were broadcasted as part of this campaign to facilitate public communication on HIV/AIDS included condom use, abstinence, sexual negotiation, safe sexual behaviour, stigma and antiretroviral therapy. It is also imperative to state that the radio broadcasting campaign at this university is a partnership between the university, civil society and community HIV/AIDS advocacy groups. The campaign taken as a whole was not informed by another existing successful radio health or awareness raising campaign within or outside South Africa.

Objectives of the study

The central objective of the study was to assess the use of broadcast media in disseminating HIV/AIDS information and knowledge at a South African university. The specific objectives of the study were:

- a) To capture the perceptions of university students on the use of campus radio in the fight against HIV/AIDS in South Africa.
- b) To ascertain whether broadcast media can be useful in promoting self-efficacy on condom use and other HIV protective behaviours.
- c) To establish if radio can generate social capital for HIV/AIDS prevention.

Theoretical framework

The study employed an integrated theoretical framework comprising Habermas's (1962) ideas on the 'public sphere' and Ajzen's (1991) 'Theory of planned behaviour'. Such an eclectic approach assisted in understanding the use and effectiveness of radio messages in HIV/AIDS prevention strategies and efforts. The two theories are briefly discussed below.

Habermas and the public sphere

This study draws theoretical insights from Habermas's (1962) notion of the 'public sphere' where citizens voluntarily discuss issues of general concern and reach rational consensus through discourse, deliberation and civil debate. Habermas defines the public sphere as 'a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed and access is guaranteed to all citizens' (1962: 49). For Habermas, a portion of the public sphere comes into being in every

conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body. The public sphere is simply where matters of general interest can be discussed and settled by rational argumentation and discourse. According to Calhoun (1993: 50) by public sphere, Habermas meant a 'model of norms and modes of behaviour by means of which the very functioning of public opinion can be guaranteed for the first time'. These norms and modes of behaviour include: a) general accessibility, b) elimination of all privileges, and c) discovery of general norms and rational legitimations. Thus, any form of discursive interaction within the public sphere is governed by accessibility, equality and openness. Habermas's notion of the public sphere denotes that citizens behave as a 'public body' and have the freedom to express and publish all their opinions on all matters of general concern (Habermas et al., 1964). The central importance of the public sphere greatly lies in 'its potential as a mode of societal integration' (Calhoun, 1993: 6). Public discourse is seen as coordinating human life leading to public opinion necessary for human freedom and emancipation.

Within the context of HIV/AIDS prevention, the theory helps to conceptualize the need for the creation of a public social space for health awareness and public communication on HIV/AIDS related issues. In this case, campus radio is perceived as a useful platform, or social space or public sphere for university students to openly share ideas, narrate their experiences, and acquire knowledge that enables them to prevent or avoid HIV/AIDS infection. Campus radio as an ideal form of the Habermasian public sphere provides an easy access to appropriate and reliable health information which will raise critical awareness among students on all such factors that might predispose them to HIV/AIDS and other opportunistic infections. Radio broadcasting as a form of behaviour change communication will make students within the university to experience specific changes in their knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS. Such knowledge will make them change their behaviour so that their chance of engaging in risky sexual encounters and behaviours are minimized.

The theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour recognizes the factors that might influence the relation between attitude and behaviour. It places much emphasis on the process of planning and judgement guiding action. The theory of planned behaviour assumes that the most immediate determinant of one's behaviour is his or her own intention to engage in that behaviour. According to the theory of planned behaviour, intentions to perform a particular behaviour are influenced by subjective and attitudinal norms (Ajzen, 1991). For Ajzen (1991), attitude is conceptualized as the positive or negative evaluation of one's behaviour. On the other hand, 'subjective norm' is considered as the social pressure from significant others to perform or not to perform the intended behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In other words, the theory of planned behaviour treats what people do as the outcome of considering their own views, the views and expectations of important others, and their own capacities. Human behaviour is perceived is guided by behavioural belief, normative beliefs and control belief (Ajzen, 1991).

In this study, the theory of planned behaviour helps in explaining behaviours of the participants after their exposure to radio messages. The focus is on looking at how behavioural control can affect the adoption or performance of behaviours by students as a way of preventing themselves from HIV/AIDS.

II. Methodological issues

Study design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research approach, using a case study design in an effort to understand the efficacy of campus radio in promoting HIV/AIDS awareness among

university students. A case study was useful as it places more emphasis on contextual detail (Barbie and Mouton, 2001). The design allowed the researcher to fully understand the connection between broadcast media and HIV/AIDS. The use of the idiographic model of qualitative research (case study) was also useful in yielding a complete and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. There are several advantages that qualitative methods offer in social scientific research. The use of a qualitative approach allowed the researchers to capture and communicate the participants' stories (Patton, 2003) based on their views related to radio messages focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention. The messages were aired on each day of the week (Monday to Sunday) between 6 pm and 8 pm. Several topics were covered in the radio talk shows discussing issues such as sexual relationships, ways of preventing HIV/AIDS infection, voluntary counselling and testing, HIV/AIDS status disclosure, and safer sexual negotiation.

Population, sample and sampling procedure

The population for this study comprised senior students (third year and postgraduate students) at a South African university. A sample of 40 students was conveniently and purposively selected to be part of the study. The average age of the participants was 23.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviewing was used to collect data. The focus of the study was to capture and document qualitative accounts of the participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in English and proved useful in providing in-depth and contextual information regarding the use and importance of campus radio as a tool for HIV/AIDS awareness and public communication within the institution under study. The semi-structured interviews also created an interactive environment which allowed the participants to share their own unique narratives and perspectives. The interviews were conducted by assistant researchers trained in qualitative data collection. No form of incentive was used to reward the participants. The duration of each interview ranged between 20 and 30 minutes. Examples of questions in the interview guide were:

- a) 'What role does campus radio broadcasting play in the fight against HIV/AIDS?'
- b) 'How useful are HIV/AIDS related radio messages within the campus?'
- c) 'Can radio messages create awareness on ways of behaviour that are HIV/AIDS protective?'

Data analysis

Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the data. It involved manually looking and establishing the relationship between themes emerging from the data. Thematic content analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Once the relationships were established and collated, they were used to make inferences about the relationship between campus radio and HIV/AIDS awareness, education and prevention.

III. Results

Radio and critical awareness

Evidence gathered in this study showed that the efficacy of campus radio lies in its ability to generate critical awareness among university students on health-related issues including HIV/AIDS. Student participants in this study revealed that there were several important programmes that were

aired on the local campus radio which they considered beneficial in assisting them to avoid risky lifestyles. One student revealed that:

Campus radio has been a medium of awareness since I came here in 2007. I get to know more about current issues in politics, science, sport and health through the campus radio. For example, I got to know about the outbreak of swine flu through our campus radio.

Similar sentiments were also echoed by another student who revealed that:

We learn so many issues through this radio and we have been empowered a great deal especially on national politics and matters relating to education and health.

One other reason why campus radio is seen as a useful source of health awareness is low readership levels among students especially on current issues facing contemporary society. Some 83 percent of the participants revealed that they relied on the radio for current news because they considered reading newspapers and journals which are not academic as time-consuming. One student majoring in history indicated that:

I find it very difficult to understand or comprehend some other things from newspapers and especially journals. The language they sometimes use is hard to understand. The radio makes it much easier to understand as the presenters also translate important things into Xhosa or any other indigenous South African language.

Table 1 reveals that the majority of the students (84%) considered campus radio as their primary source of health information essential for building HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge.

The results of the study as shown in Table 1 indicate that campus radio was considered as the primary source of health-related information followed by formal lecture sessions (8%) and workshops and exhibitions within the campus (5%). Newspapers and magazines were considered as least important in transmitting health knowledge that would build students' awareness on HIV/AIDS and other related health issues. The findings of this study are consistent with Habermas's views on the public sphere. Habermas (1964) idealized the public sphere as an arena for communication and awareness. Evidence in this study has shown that Habermas's notion of the public sphere can be adapted to inform interventions aimed at raising awareness on HIV/AIDS at the institution where the study was carried out.

Radio as a life world consisting of lived experiences and cultural norms

Participants in the study considered campus radio as a horizon or arena for everyday communication and engagement within the university. Through campus radio, students communicated with each other and sought common understanding. What makes campus radio more effective in promoting health within the campus according to one postgraduate student interviewed was that:

It carries all sorts of assumptions about who we are as students and what we value as African students. It transmits socially and culturally accepted norms and values that enables us to avoid risky behaviours such as having multiple partners and sex before marriage.

Another participant indicated that:

campus broadcasting allows us to share our experiences as students and this will enable the whole student community to learn from individual experiences. Different radio programmes aired on this radio station address issues like dating, sexual relationships, career choice, health living and teenage pregnancy.

Table 1. Perceived primary sources of health information.

Source of information	Number of respondents	
	(N)	(%)
Campus radio	34	84
Formal lecture sessions	3	8
Workshops and exhibitions	2	5
Newspapers and magazines	1	3
Total	40	100

The above responses are quite indicative of the fact that a majority of the student participants were of the perception that campus radio broadcasting created a public space for communication and discussion on sex, health and HIV/AIDS related topic or issues. Some 65 percent of the participants indicated that radio was assisting them to learn and internalize some of the norms and values that are socially approved and sanctioned within the broader society. A female participant highlighted that through the radio, they are socialized in such a way that they behave in all ways accepted by the outside society. She revealed that:

Through campus radio we acquire knowledge and information that prepares us for life outside the university. We learn on how to become responsible citizens of society and also how we can take responsibility over our lives. We have also benefited from radio discussions on topical issues such as premarital sexual relationships, same sex marriages and polygamy. Through these discussions, I am now quite aware of the different perceptions on these issues and all the dangers they are associated with.

Applying Habermas's notion of the public sphere was useful in this study as a way of understanding how radio created a social space for HIV/AIDS engagement. The results of the study indicated that campus radio is idealized as a public sphere where university students shared knowledge on HIV/AIDS issues.

Campus radio and social capital formation

Study findings indicated that radio broadcasting generates a high stock of social capital which is shared among the students within the university. Social capital in this regard is defined as:

The sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network. (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998: 243)

Some 68 percent of the study participants revealed that campus radio broadcasting facilitated a networking environment where students could actively participate and exchange ideas on health and HIV/AIDS related issues. According to one participant:

Campus radio is a rich source of health information which is useful in preventing the further transmission of HIV/AIDS. The information I get through our campus radio will also benefit my friends who are even at home and even my sisters as I make it a point that I share this information with them.

The creation of social capital within the university is reported as taking place through discussion sessions within the dining rooms, television rooms or student rooms. One student revealed that:

It is through the various forms of interaction occurring in our hostels and dining rooms that we encourage each other to practise safer sex and avoid risky encounters. I have been equipped on HIV/AIDS through these interactions and meetings.

Empowerment, radio dialogue and HIV/AIDS literacy

Emerging evidence from the study showed that radio broadcasting facilitated student dialogue on issues that they considered personal and 'scared'. Some 58 percent of the participants agreed that efficacy of campus radio broadcasting lied in its ability to create dialogue. One participant reasoned that:

Campus radio broadcasting allows us to open up on several personal issues as we debate with each other usually on the things we consider to be controversial and personal. These debates are both stimulating and empowering. I have personally benefitted a great deal from such discursive interactions and all I can say is that I have been empowered.

It is quite clear that from this study that empowerment is an end product of radio broadcasting and comes through in several ways, notably, sharing and information exchange on HIV/AIDS.

In this study 63 percent of the participants revealed that they were aware of the different services and support they can get from different health service providers on campus such as the campus clinic and the counselling unit mainly as a result of campus broadcasting. The emerging consensus among the participants was that campus radio broadcasting was useful and critical in making them aware of such services on campus. A postgraduate participant highlighted that:

Information about HIV/AIDS services on campus is very scanty especially when you are new here. What the campus radio has done is to make sure that in all its broadcast messages, it mentions something about the campus clinic and the monthly voluntary testing and counselling programmes on campus. This will go a long way in increasing our knowledge on where to go when we need information or health services on our campus. Our campus is so big so sometimes it becomes difficult to locate essential services.

Radio broadcasting within the campus was considered useful and essential in that it allowed students to locate and access the much needed information, health facilities and HIV/AIDS testing and counselling services without any difficulty. In other words, campus radio was reported as orienting new students on where they would get essential health services within the campus.

Radio messages, subjective norms and self-efficacy

Results of the study also showed that there is an association between radio messages and self-efficacy for condom use. Sixty percent of the female students who were part of the study revealed that they are now insisting on condom use in their personal sexual relationships mainly because of the messages they got through the campus radio. These female students perceived radio messages as empowering and useful in building their self esteem and confidence especially on issues related to their sexuality and personal being. One female participant revealed that:

I am now more confident to insist on using a condom each time I am having sex with my partner. I now know that it is my constitutional right to say no to sex if am not in the mood. I think we need to appreciate the work that the guys at the campus radio station are doing.

From this response, it is quite clear that there is an association between campus radio broadcasting and the building of self-efficacy for condom use among female students at the university.

Basing on the theory of planned behaviour which asserts that attitudes, subjective norms and self-efficacy inform one's decision to perform certain behaviour, the results of this study show that social pressure from peers was significant in making students decide on using condoms on each sexual encounter. Study participants revealed that upon listening to radio messages on HIV/AIDS, they engaged in discussions with their peers and chose on whether to apply or not what they had learnt. It is the discussions and influence of friends that might have led to the performance of particular behaviours, such as safer sexual practice or abstinence.

IV. Discussion

The results of this study have shown that broadcast media have a critical role to play in HIV/AIDS prevention especially in the context of a selected South African university. As has been shown in the study, radio messages have the capacity and potential to change personal attitudes and behaviours which can protect one from HIV/AIDS infection. The importance of broadcast media in HIV/AIDS interventions is well established in literature. Keating et al. (2006) argue that radio increases public knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS. One benefit that accrues from the use of radio in disseminating health messages is that it builds critical knowledge and education (Agha, 2003; Noar and Palmgreen, 2009). Previous studies in health education have also singled out the mass media especially radio as allowing learning on health and HIV/AIDS to take place and thereby increasing public knowledge (Abdellatif, 2004; Hill, 2004). There is agreement in recent literature that mass media messages can play a significant role as an intervention for HIV/AIDS prevention (Bessinger et al., 2004; Karlyn, 2001; Mbananga and Becker, 2002).

The results also confirmed the importance of campus radio broadcasting in generating social capital among university students at this particular institution. Besides building a common identity and social cohesion, campus radio broadcasting can also be a source of social capital useful for HIV/AIDS prevention. Radio broadcasting within the campus is considered useful in creating a social space for public communication on HIV/AIDS. The generation of social capital as the findings of this study tend to show remain a significant contribution of campus radio programming and broadcasting at the studied university. Social capital in the form of students coming together in groups or associations to discuss or share HIV/AIDS knowledge is reported as enabling students to avoid risky behavioural practices. In this study, social capital is generated through the different forms of participation in student networks, groups or associations mainly facilitated as a result of campus broadcasting. Radio is considered as building trust and mutual understanding among students. This finding is consistent with prior research on broadcast media and social capital. For example, literature on broadcast media and social capital highlights the importance of media messages in generating social capital useful for health (Van Vuuren, 2001). However, there are very few studies that have been conducted to show whether the generated social capital have led to a reduction in incidences of HIV/AIDS prevalence. Evidence gathered in this study clearly indicated that campus radio broadcasting generates social capital that increased knowledge to students, their families and friends at this particular university. Social capital generated through information sharing and exchange was reported as useful in creating identities that are protective to HIV/AIDS. An interesting finding in this study was also the significant interaction between campus broadcasting and the formation of social capital useful for the sharing of information on sex, voluntary testing and counselling services and any other form of assistance related to HIV/AIDS. These findings are also similar with those Hall et al. (2010) in

their assessment of the potential of 'black radio' in disseminating health messages among African American audiences in the United States. There was conclusive evidence in their study that radio can be effective in promoting social learning whereby people learn from each other and reciprocally exchange public health messages and information.

There is conclusive evidence from this study that radio dialogue and other interactive programmes generated through radio are considered empowering. The indication from the findings of this study is that campus broadcasting was useful in building HIV/AIDS literacy among university students who were part of this study. This is also confirmed by recent studies that have shown a direct link between exposure to radio and the promotion of debate and discussion on HIV/AIDS and other public health related topics (Godwyll and Ngumbi, 2009; Hall et al., 2010; Karlyn, 2001). This study has successfully shown that campus radio provide and create an interactive forum that focuses on empowering listeners on issues related to HIV/AIDS education and prevention. The understanding is that when students get empowered through radio they will then become aware critical information and knowledge on HIV/AIDS. The notion of HIV/AIDS literacy is not new in literature. Schenker (2005: 2) defines it as:

The capacity of individuals and/or communities to obtain, interpret and understand basic HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and care information, skills and services and the competence to use such information, skills and services to prevent HIV/AIDS infection and related stigma and discrimination, to know of and understand their HIV/AIDS status and to enhance the physical, mental and social well-being of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The use of radio as a vehicle of empowerment and health literacy is well elaborated in literature (Agić and Scheffer, 2003; Hall et al., 2010; Manyozo, 2009; Schenker, 2005). Such literature suggests that the use of mass media particularly radio creates empowerment and active citizenship.

For the female students interviewed, campus radio broadcasting was found to have a strong impact on safer sex negotiation, leading to condom use for each sexual encounter. The results from the study show a positive association between radio messages and insistence on condom use. Radio broadcasting within the campus was reported as encouraging safe sexual practices and the adoption of other HIV/AIDS protective lifestyles such as abstinence from any sexual activity. In other words, radio messages assisted in building self-efficacy and increased the participant's capacities for safe sex negotiation.

The findings in the study have also shown a relationship between radio messages and the building of self-efficacy for condom use and adoption of protective lifestyles. These findings are largely consistent with previous literature that reports a positive relationship between exposure to the media and self-efficacy for condom use (Gahaku, 2010; Skuse, 2002). The results of the study also show that the sharing of knowledge and information on HIV/AIDS and other health related issues result in change in personal behaviour and attitude.

V. Conclusion

This study has highlighted the importance of campus radio broadcasting in promoting health within South African universities. The building of HIV/AIDS awareness, knowledge and social capital stands to be among the key factors that underlie and define radio broadcasting efficacy. Campus radio broadcasting is reported in this study as building HIV/AIDS protective behaviours and attitudes. As highlighted earlier, evidence gathered in this study suggest that radio broadcasting creates social spaces for public communication and engagement on HIV/AIDS. Participation in public debates and discussions on HIV/AIDS is considered empowering and thereby leaving students better placed to access health facilities, information and voluntary and

counselling services within the university. One central inference that can be drawn from the evidence collected in this study is that radio broadcasting is an essential health promotion strategy that easily makes people to become aware of the various social, health or economic realities affecting their society. Thus, campus radio has been perceived as empowering as it leads to health literacy and self-efficacy. Given all the benefits associated with radio broadcasting, a significant lesson that can be learnt is that there is need for integrating radio broadcasting into other existing mechanisms or strategies for health promotion and HIV/AIDS prevention. In other words, there is a severe need to mainstream radio broadcasting in HIV/AIDS prevention especially in areas where HIV/AIDS knowledge and information is fragmented, scanty or limited. It is quite clear that there is also a need to scale up HIV/AIDS prevention interventions in South African universities and all such interventions should have the capacity to build students' understanding of the pandemic.

VI. Implications for social work practice

The research findings from this study might be useful in informing new and existing social work interventions in South African schools and universities where the use of broadcast media in gaining increasing prominence. In particular, the use of context specific interactive platform to address challenges posed by HIV/AIDS needs urgent attention in South African universities. There is a need to integrate radio broadcasting into existing social work interventions in South African universities. The results of this study can also help future policies on the need for radio broadcasting in the fight against HIV/AIDS in areas where there is perceived limited knowledge and communication on sex, health issues and HIV/AIDS. The study recommends that future research focuses on the relationship between HIV/AIDS messages or information and reduction in HIV/AIDS transmission. In the case of campus radio broadcasting, it will be worth looking at whether radio broadcasting messages can lead to a reduction in HIV/AIDS prevalence in a particular institution or university. However, this might not be that easy to determine but still remains a prospective area of social enquiry.

Results from this study raise fundamental implications for social work particularly in the fight against HIV/AIDS in institutions of higher learning in South Africa. The use of broadcast media in preventing HIV/AIDS within society is not new as has been highlighted earlier in this article. However, its use as a mode of health promotion in social work demonstrates that it can be a useful method to building an understanding of HIV/AIDS. The findings presented in this article along with previous studies of this nature provide a clear illustration of the various factors associated with campus/radio broadcasting in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The study remains useful and significant as it can inform health promotion policy and HIV/AIDS prevention efforts on how to use or mainstream radio broadcasting in all existing interventions and mechanisms designed to mitigate HIV/AIDS transmissions in institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

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