

Print Media Coverage of the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme (2016-2017)

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Abstract

Print media coverage of the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme, January 2016-March, 2017 – a study of *The Guardian* and *Tide* Newspapers, formed the basis of this research work. What prompted interest in this study is the reported cases of low patient awareness of the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme and accompanying complications in Nigeria. In respect of the project, research questions were raised and related literature were consulted and reviewed. The research methodology used was content analysis. The study is anchored on two theories- the Agenda setting theory and the Gatekeeping theory. Basically, the research is aimed at discovering whether the level of Exclusive Breastfeeding information, education and awareness that Nigerians are exposed to from the print media is adequate to educate them on the importance of the programme. However, findings from this study show a dismal level of coverage of the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme by the Nigerian print media. Therefore, a huge responsibility lies on the shoulders of the print media as agents of change, education, information and awareness to ensure that this ugly trend is reversed. Health officers and other relevant care professionals must realise that Exclusive Breastfeeding information, education and awareness is not only for the elites or metropolitan dwellers alone. The media must as a matter of urgency write for the interest of the public putting into consideration, the large population of the downtrodden rather than the elites.

Keywords: *.Breastfeeding .Mortality .Pre-natal .Post-natal and Killer-diseases*

Introduction

The mass media play a significant role in modern society as they bring about life in the world, thus, influencing many aspects of our political, social and economic patterns. This aspect of the media is not represented in the health sector as little or no publications are made to project the health sector. The press which is the watchdog of society ought to emphasized more on the Exclusive Breast Feeding programme (EBF) to create awareness of the impact and its significance to satisfy curiosity, reduce uncertainty, and better understand how nursing mothers can fit into the six (6) months Exclusive Breast Feeding advocated by the Government in Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the press interpret messages to the society; the interpretation of medical terms should not be left out, in more or less explicit and ethical ways, since more than 40% of the people do not understand medical terms, thus, the media play the gatekeeping role by controlling the information that is transmitted to their audiences while reporting issues that concern individuals in society. Research has shown that Exclusive Breast Feeding may lower baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is an unexpected death that kills babies without any sickness. For infants to survive, grow and develop properly, they require the right proportion of nutrients. According to AAP (2012), breast milk which is rich in nutrient and antibodies contains the right quality of fat, sugar, water and protein. These nutrients are major prerequisites

to the health and survival of the baby. When a child is exclusively breast fed, his immune system is strengthened, enabling it to live, as threatening illness like pneumonia and diarrhoea among other infections could be prevented. According to AAP (2012, p.112) babies who are not breast fed for six months of life are 15 times more likely to die from pneumonia compared to new-borns that are breastfed exclusively for six (6) months after births. According WHO (2015) 220,000 children could be saved every year with Exclusive Breast Feeding. It recommends that colostrum, the yellowish sticky breast milk that is produced at the end of pregnancy is ideal for new born to be given within the first one hour of birth; a process referred to as early initiation. This makes infants breast fed within the first one hour of birth to be three times more likely to survive than those who have their first breast milk after a day.

WHO (2015) posits that Exclusive Breast Feeding is expected to be given from birth up to six months and continuous breast feeding is recommended with appropriate complementary food until the child celebrates his/her 2nd year birthday without water, food or drinks. The only exceptions are rehydrated salts and syrups that contain medicine. It becomes essential that counsellors encourage and support mothers initiate exclusive breast feeding.

Government, family members and community health workers all have a role to play in the survival of new-borns through the update of exclusive breast feeding.

Statement of Problem

Breastfeeding exclusively for 6 months is not a common practice in developed countries and appears to be rarer still in developing countries. A limitation to the uniform recommendation of exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life is the lack of understanding of reasons for the gradual reduction in the exclusive breastfeeding, even among the highly motivated women, in the lactation period of interest.

According to AAP (2012) most of the working class women who do not practice exclusive breastfeeding put the blame on constraints from work while others blamed cultural practices. Tradition and career were the strongest factors affecting the attitude of the mothers towards exclusive breastfeeding. Women with higher education and higher income were less likely to breastfeed. Similarly, employed mothers, mothers with lower numbers of children and those who delivered by caesarean section were less likely to fully breastfeed. It is also important to note that independent of maternal socioeconomic, demographic and biomedical characteristics, maternal pregnancy overweight and obesity have been identified as factors that reduce the duration of breastfeeding. It is therefore the intention of this research to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of exclusive breastfeeding among nursing mothers and to find out the factors that influence these.

The commonest reasons for not breastfeeding exclusively include insufficient breast milk and socio-cultural practice of giving water to babies because of the hot climate. Also, there is a lot of misunderstanding about the adequacy of breast milk especially where the baby cries indicating inconvenience mostly assumed by the mother to be hunger. Many of the nutrition-related diseases can be reduced on our society if mothers will fully subscribe to the idea of exclusive breastfeeding. Thus, media owner have not seen it important to give adequate coverage to issues on breast feeding.

The demand for advert has made media managers to pay less attention to the Exclusive Breast feeding programme. Every medium has its set goals to achieve, and one of this is making profit which is finance. Finance is what gives media houses money to pay bills and it cannot be made through mere news stories except through advertising. This has been one of the major reasons that make media houses to shy away from reporting the exclusive breast feeding as 30% of the paper is for news stories while 70% is for adverts.

It therefore implies that the nation needs the mass media to create awareness for the Exclusive Breastfeeding programme in Nigeria. The question is, have the mass media done enough in terms of awareness creation, information dissemination and sensitization of the populace on the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme? Have they allotted good space to stories on the exclusive breastfeeding?

Research Questions

To direct the focus of this research, the following questions are used as guide to the study:

1. To what extent do the media cover the Exclusive Breast Feeding programme?
2. What is the proposition of space allotted for the Exclusive Breast feeding Programme by the media?

Literature Review

Breastfeeding, also called nursing, is the process of feeding human breast milk to an infant, either directly from the breast or by expressing (pumping out) the milk from the breast and bottle-feeding it to the infant. Breastfeeding and breast milk provide an infant with essential calories and nutrients.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Policy Statement on breastfeeding, women who don't have health problems should exclusively breastfeed their infants for at least the first 6 months of life. The AAP suggests that a woman should try to breastfeed her infant for the first 12 months of life because of the benefits to both the mother and the infant.

Although breastfeeding is the recommended method for feeding infants, and breast milk provides most of the nutrients an infant needs, it does not provide infants with adequate vitamin D. NIH(2012,p.1) recommended daily vitamin D intake which is 400 IU per day for all infants and children beginning from the first few days of life, as human breast milk contains a vitamin D concentration of 25 IU per liter (about 4 cups) or less. Therefore, to meet the 400 IU daily requirement, supplementation is required.

Not all of breast milk's properties are understood, but its nutrient content is relatively consistent. Breast milk is made from nutrients in the mother's bloodstream and bodily stores. Breast milk has an optimal balance of fat, sugar, water, and protein that is needed for a baby's growth and development.] Breastfeeding triggers biochemical reactions which allows for the enzymes, hormones, growth factors and immunologic substances to effectively defend against infectious diseases for the infant. The breast milk also has long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids which help with normal retinal and neural development. Because breastfeeding requires an average of 500 calories a day, it helps the mother lose weight after giving birth.

Traditionally, Japanese women gave birth at home and breastfed with the help of breast massage. Weaning was often late, with breastfeeding in rare cases continuing until early adolescence. After World War II Western medicine was taken to Japan and the women began giving birth in hospitals, where the baby was usually taken to the nursery and fed formula. In 1974 a new breastfeeding promotional campaign by the government helped to boost the awareness of its benefits and its prevalence has sharply increased. Japan became the first developed country to have a baby-friendly hospital, and as of 2006 has another 24 such facilities (New Beginning 2003 p.181).

In the Egyptian, Greek and Roman empires, women usually fed only their own children. However, breastfeeding began to be seen as something too common to be done by royalty, and wet nurses were employed to breastfeed the children of the royal families. This was extended over the ages, particularly in Western Europe, where noble women often made use of wet nurses. The Moche artisans of Peru (1-800 A.D.) represented women breastfeeding their children in ceramic vessels (Larco ... 2001)

In the Qur'an it is stated that a child should be breastfed if both parents agree:

Mothers may breastfeed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing ... And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable. (parts of Surat al-Baqarah 2:233, The Noble Qur'an)
...and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months... (part of Surat al-Ahqaf 46:15 The Noble Qur'an)

Islam has recommended breastfeeding for two years till 30 months, either by the mother or a wet nurse. Even in pre-Islamic Arabia children were breastfed, commonly by wet nurses.

Mother's milk was considered best for babies, but the quality of the breastmilk was found to be varied. The quality of breast milk was considered good only if the mother had a good diet, had physical exercise and was mentally in balance. In Europe (especially in France) and less in the USA it was a practice among the higher and middle class to hire a wet nurse. If it was too difficult to find a wet nurse, people used formula to feed their babies, but this was considered very dangerous for the health and life of the baby.

The Tide Newspaper

The Tide Newspaper is one of the Nigerian dailies published by Rivers State Newspaper Corporation. It commenced production on December 1, 1971. Since it is funded by the state government, the news coverage is more inclined towards the interests of the people of Rivers State.

The Tide Newspaper is the most respected source of news and information for readers in the Country, with the latest stories on politics and current affairs, business and technology, sports, culture and the arts, as well as the popular *city life* supplement, with nightlife news, restaurant reviews and top events.

The Guardian Newspaper

The Guardian was established in 1983 by Alex Ibru, an entrepreneur, and Stanley Macebuh, a top journalist with the Daily Times newspapers. The Guardian was a pioneer in introducing high-quality journalism to Nigeria with thoughtful editorial content. The paper was first published on 22 February 1983 as a weekly, appearing on Sundays. It started daily publication on 4 July 1983. In the early 1980s the Guardian had a long-running campaign against the use of traditional chieftaincy titles, calling for Nigerians to be addressed simply as "Mr" or "Mrs".

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories which are; Gatekeeping Theory and Agenda Setting theory.

Gatekeeping Theory

Gatekeeping Theory was first instituted by social psychologist Kurt Lewin in 1943. Gatekeeping Theory is the process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the Internet, or some other mode of communication. Gatekeeping is the "process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people every day, and it is the centre of the media's role in modern public life". Lewin (1943) in turn sees Gate keeping as 'nothing but to block unwanted or useless things by using a gate'. Here the person who makes a decision is called "Gatekeeper".

Buttressing this, Geiber as cited in Ohaja (2003,p.64) asserts that "News is what newspapermen make it". A most important newspaperman is obviously the editor. Gatekeeping studies reveal that the editor's idiosyncrasies play a key role in the choice of items for publication in his newspaper, thus, this theory is apt for the study as it agrees with media role in the placement of information in the paper.

Agenda Setting Theory

Lippman (1922) stated that the media help to 'put pictures in our mind'. This explains the power of the mass media to set agenda and raise issues of public importance. The Agenda setting Theory explains the effect of mass communication on culture and society. It describes the powerful influence of the media, the ability to state and define what issues are important in society. McCombs and Shaw's (1968) study of the American presidential election proposed the agenda setting theory. They noted that members of the audience not only learn about public issues through the media, they also learn how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the mass media place upon it.

This theory is therefore appropriate for this study as a guide post, since the Exclusive Breastfeeding programme is supposed to be made public by the media for enlightenment, sensitisation and mobilization.

Research Design

The Content Analysis method was adopted in this study. Ohaja (2013.p14) states that, Content Analysis refers to the examination of the manifest content of communication to discover the patterns existing therein. Such manifest content could be advertisements, news stories, features, opinion articles, editorials, letters-to-the-editor, cartoons, photographs and other illustrations in a newspaper or magazine. The study therefore, looked into the manifest contents of communication in two select widely read newspapers, within 15months time frame, from January 2016 to March 2017.

Sample Size

The sample size consists of 45 issues of each of the newspaper publications for 15 months or at least 6 issues per month. This was determined by selecting a copy of each of the dailies for the period under review.

Sampling Technique

The sampling size are issues in 15 months for each of the papers, the 'Systematic Random Sampling technique' was adopted for this study

After a ballot of the dailies, one national newspapers and one state newspapers were chosen – The Guardian and Tide Newspapers.

This study covered a 15-month time frame; January 2016 March 2017. To arrive at the issues for study for each newspaper, the researcher took a representative sample of 90 issues in 15 months. This will amount to 90/15 or 6 issues of each newspaper per month.

There are 365 days in a year/100 days = 465 days. Therefore, if the researchers take a representative sample of 90 issues in 15 months, that will mean 465/90 of the issue in 15 months.

Suppose the researchers, systematically chose 10 as working number, then the 10th of January becomes the first issue. If the researcher count off another 10 days, it will arrive at 20th of January, and that becomes the 2nd issue. And so, systematically, the remaining 25 issues will be 30 January, 9 February, 19 February, 1st March, 11 March, 21 March, 31 March, 10 April, 20 April, 10 May, 20 May, 30 May, 9 June, 19 June, 29 July, 9 July, 19 July, 28 August, 8 August, 18 August, 28 August, 7 Sept., 17 Sept., 27 Sept., 7 October, 17 October, 27 October, 6 November, 16 November, 26 Nov., 6 Dec., 16 Dec., 26 Dec., 5 Jan., 15 Jan., 25 Jan., 4 Feb., 14 Feb., 24 Feb., 6 March, 16 March and March, 26.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data for this study was collected from 45 issues of each of *The Guardian and Tide* Newspapers from January-2016 – March 2017 as follows:

MONTH	DATES OF ISSUES
JANUARY	10 th , 20 th , 30 th
FEBRUARY	19 th , 9 th ,
MARCH	1 st , 11 th , 21 st , 31 st , 30
APRIL	10 th , 20 th , 30 th
MAY	10 th , 20 th , 30 th
JUNE	9 th , 19 th , 29 th
JULY	July,9 July,19, July,28
AUGUST	August,8, August,18, August,28
SEPTEMBER	Sept.,7, Sept.,17,Sept.,27
OCTOBER	October,7,October,17,October, 27,
NOVEMBER	November,6, November16, Nov.,26
DECEMBER	Dec.,6, Dec.,16, Dec.,25
JANUARY	Jan.,5, Jan.,15, Jan.,2
FEBRUARY	Feb.,4, Feb.,14, Feb.,24
MARCH	March,6, March,16 and March,26

Stampel as cited by Modestus (2014, p.20), did a study comparing the results from sample sizes of 6, 12, 18, 24 and 48 issues of a newspaper with the issues of a whole year. The results showed that a sample size of 12 for one year was just as effective in producing reliable results as that involving higher figures, Ohaja (2003, p.86).

The Guardian Newspaper

January 2016

Tuesday 10, January - Nothing reported

Friday 20, January - Nothing reported

Thursday 30, January - Nothing reported

FEBRUARY 2016 Saturday 9, 2016 - Nothing reported

Tuesday 19, 2016 - Nothing reported

MARCH 2016 Saturday 1, March - Nothing reported

Tuesday 11, March - Nothing reported

Friday 21, March - Nothing reported

Monday 31, March - Nothing reported

APRIL 2016

Thursday 10, April - Nothing reported

Sunday 20, April - Nothing reported

Wednesday 30, April - Nothing reported

MAY 2016

10th May - Nothing reported

20th May - Nothing reported

30th May - Nothing reported

June 2016

Monday 9, June - Nothing reported

Thursday 19, June - Nothing reported

Sunday 29, June

July- Dec., 2016 NIL reports'

Jan., 6 - March, 26 , 2017 NIL

The Tide Newspaper

JANUARY 2016

Tuesday 10, January	-	Nil Information
Friday 20, January	-	Nil Information
Thursday 30, January	-	Nil Information

FEBRUARY 2016

Saturday 9, 2016	-	Nil Information
Tuesday 19, 2016	-	Nil Information

MARCH 2016

Saturday 1, March	-	Nil Information
Tuesday 11, March	-	Nil Information
Friday 21, March	-	Nothing reported
Monday 31, March	-	Nothing reported

APRIL 2016

Thursday 10, April	-	Nothing reported
Sunday 20, April	-	Nothing reported
Wednesday 30, April	-	Nothing reported

MAY 2016

10 th May	-	Nothing reported
20 th May	-	Nothing reported
30 th May	-	Nothing reported

JUNE 2016

Monday 9, June	-	Nothing reported
Thursday 19, June	-	Nothing reported

July - Dec 2016 Nil

Jan., 6 - March 26, 2017 NIL.

Code Sheet Legend

CD	-	Code
Mt	-	Month
D	-	Day
Dt	-	Date
S/L (cm)	-	Space/Length
SPP	-	Story position/Placement
SLT	-	Slant

Discussion of Findings

Data were collated and analysed from 90 editions of *The Guardian and Tide* Newspapers from Jan., 2016 to March 2017 spanning to 45 editions in all.

In the entire Fifteen (15) months, there were no stories on Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme. However the study had to proceed as advised in Ohaja (2003, p.112) 'where there is a time constraint, the researcher can proceed with the available issues.'

Research Question 1: (To what extent do the media cover the Exclusive Breast Feeding programme?)

From the findings of this study, the Nigerian Print media as represented by The Guardian and Tide Newspapers did not create space and illustrations to stories on Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme.

For instance, of the 90 issues of the two newspapers studied, no issue was reported on Exclusive Breast Feeding Programme.

Research Question 2: What is the proposition of space allotted for the Exclusive Breast feeding Programme by the media?

There were no spaces allotted the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme as the media were busy covering other issues like, politics, sports, advert and others, rather than give attention to the Exclusive Breast feeding programme as to encourage mothers.

Another challenge faced by the media is the negligence on the part of the health workers who pay little or no attention to use the media for the sensitisation of the people on the benefits and importance of the Exclusive Breast Feeding programme.

Summary/Conclusion

Media content on the Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme is very low; efforts should be made to ensure that more awareness on the issue of exclusive breastfeeding is made prominent.

Editorials or cartoons should be used to illustrate the importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding Programme to enable the rural dwellers and other mothers take advantage of the programme and safeguard the lives of the children at the most vulnerable stage of life

Health workers who pay little or no attention in the use of the media to sensitize the people on the benefit and importance of the Exclusive Breast Feeding programme, should try their best possible to engage the media in all their programmes. Health education pertaining to breastfeeding and exposure to its importance should be emphasized regularly.

Media managers need to de-emphasize profit and ensure that government programme on Exclusive Breastfeeding is achieved to stop infant mortality.

Recommendations

Government should stern on the need to exclusively breastfeed children during the first six months of their lives.

The media should represent the interest of the public and not the elites.

Health care professional should lay more emphasise on the need for exclusive breastfeeding.

More information on exclusive breastfeeding should be made available to the public to enable them know the importance and benefits.

Increase media content on Exclusive Breast Feeding in the print and electronic media in Nigeria is very necessary. However, the researcher recommends that further studies should be carried out to ascertain the reasons why, the Nigeria Print media do not set agenda on Exclusive Breast Feeding programme of the Government.

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