

**COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY 103.9 MMUST FM TO
CAPTURE LISTENERS' ATTENTION REGARDING COVID-19**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirement for the award of Master of
Science in Communication Studies degree of Masinde Muliro University of Science and
Technology.**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my parents Mr. Michael Adeya Oduma and Mrs. Nereah Akoth Ogol for their motivation, counselling and unwavering support during this period.

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred unexpectedly and spread rapidly, prompting the media to play a crucial role in informing and educating the public about it. This saw media stations such as 103.9 MMUST FM adopt strategies to reach their audience promptly. The strategies adopted by the media station and the engagement of participants from 2020 to 2021 form the basis of this study. The research specifically intended to determine the communication strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to disseminate COVID-19 information, to establish the factors that affected the audience's attention and participation in 103.9 MMUST FM's communication regarding COVID-19 and to evaluate the relevance of the radio station's messages and programming for COVID-19 pandemic communication. The Framing Theory and Social Cognitive theories were used to explain this study. A mixed-method approach was adopted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from the respondents. The study area was Lurambi Sub-County, which has a high population as compared to the other eleven sub-counties in Kakamega County. This made it a high-risk area for the spread of the Virus. This is because close interaction made it easier for the spread of the virus through the respiratory droplets, such as saliva. It is in the area where the station's signal is strongest, hence suitable for this study. The target population for quantitative data was the 188,212 residents of Lurambi Sub-County (KNBS, 2019). For qualitative data, the target was 2 producers from the radio station and 2 COVID-19 health experts whom the radio station had hosted during the pandemic, between 2020 and 2021. To obtain the sample size for the study, Krejcie and Morgan's Sampling formula was used to pick 115 residents of Lurambi Sub-County. 2 MMUST FM producers and 2 COVID-19 health experts interviewed by the radio station were identified purposively for the study too, making it a total of 119 respondents. The instruments used for quantitative data collection were questionnaires for the residents of Lurambi Sub-County and interview guides for the key informants, providing qualitative data. The validity of the questionnaires was determined through peer debriefing, an external audit, and a prolonged period of field participation. At the same time, trustworthiness was established through participant validation of the qualitative data. Instrument reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were edited, coded, and entered into the computer for analysis with the aid of statistical software (SPSS v27). The study employed descriptive statistics for quantitative data, utilizing frequencies, percentages, tables, graphs, and charts to enhance clarity. Thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data obtained from the interviews, and the results were presented in the form of themes. This study discovered that the communication strategies employed by MMUST FM to disseminate their COVID-19 pandemic communication were: Language use, Dedicating an entire program to the dissemination of COVID-19 information, Consistency in communicating about the COVID-19 pandemic, Use of experts and role models, Frequency in airing information about the COVID-19 and Openness observed during the broadcasts. This study will help inform the structure of health communication on pandemics for radio, enabling it to reach its target audience effectively. It also recommends that every household should have access to a radio set for better reach of the target audience with information of public interest that affects them. Further research should be done on gender roles and participation in the radio stations' public health programs.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- Dr:** Doctor
- TV:** Television
- VC:** Vice Chancellor
- FM:** Electromagnetic Frequency
- CA:** Communications Authority of Kenya
- Prof:** Professor
- IRI:** Interactive Radio Interaction
- REV:** Reverend
- WHO:** World Health Organization
- MCK:** Media Council of Kenya
- SGBV:** Sexual and Gender Based Violence
- SARS:** Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
- MMUST:** Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology
- AMARC:** World Association of Community Broadcasters
- NACOSTI:** National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
- UNESCO:** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- COVID-19:** Coronavirus Disease of 2019
- MMUST FM:** Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology Radio

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

BROADCAST This is the airing of audio content through a radio station for a particular audience within a scheduled time frame.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY A planned approach created for consistently passing information in an area. It could be through printed material, digital platforms or by interpersonal communication. This is done within a specified period to reduce the health risks and preventive measures against a disease.

COVID-19 The Corona Virus disease of 2019 is a contagious respiratory illness in humans caused by the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). It originated in China in 2019 and became a world pandemic in 2020. It spread through fluid-drops from coughs, sneezes or talks with an infected person

LISTENER'S ATTENTION This describes the level of concentration or engagement of listeners to a broadcast in a radio station while keeping away from distractions or switching to a different media station.

103.9 MMUST FM A campus-based radio station found in Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and is operated by the Journalism and Mass Communication Department. Its frequency is 103.9 and the signal covers Lurambi Sub-County in Kakamega County with its listeners being the residents of the Sub-County. The broadcast content is to inform, entertain and educate its listeners.

- SECURITY** These are the rules and regulations that make sure there is guided movement
- PROTOCOL** of people at every border or between counties to prevent the spread of a contagious disease
- INFODEMIC** A medium through which unverified information that may cause anxiety
- SPACE** is disseminated to an audience. This information tends to cause anxiety or tension that may worsen the situation.
- PRODUCER** A person who oversees the development of a program in a radio station from its creation to completion while organizing the financial and administrative aspects.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter provides information on the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and justification of the study. It also highlights the scope and limitations of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

According to WHO (2018), effective risk communication during a pandemic involves a set of skills employed by stakeholders and specifically how they learn and apply them. It examines how frequently time-based and the most accurate information is conveyed, and how uncertainties expected are relayed to maintain public trust and credibility. This has left us with the impression that mitigating 21st-century pandemics requires not only new technologies and techniques but also improved attitudes and skills across various health issues. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about multi-sectoral participation in its response, such as international participation, individual characteristics and interests in the pandemic. Health implications and economic crises that emerged through their participation were also realized (Okeke et al., 2022).

Siche (2020), says that for the cases of contagion not to increase, governments took more drastic measures to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The premise of any measure adopted was to protect the health and food security of the population, to the detriment of economic growth. This saw governments impose some social measures, such as a security protocol on our borders, and announce their approach through the media to ensure proper mitigation.

According to Anyonje et al. (2022), multiple communication channels can be used in the process of effective messaging during a pandemic. They include print, broadcast and electronic media that provide options for choosing the best and most strategic means of communication about hygiene, isolation, quarantine, and personal protection for its target audience. This study looks at those at the grassroots level within communities.

Madhav et al. (2018) note that communication models can help mitigate a pandemic and can be applied over time. An example is the model from the Nipah outbreak in Bangladesh 2010, where it was found that messages about the sources and strategies to reduce the risk of infection were more effective when relayed by trusted local authorities in a way that was relevant and relatable in the shared situations of those in the community.

The communication models developed since the break of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and even used in mitigating other pandemics like the Ebola in West Africa in 2013-2016 and the influenza in 2009, state that the communication media used should be transparent, dynamic to meet public needs, engaging, relevant and empathetic and caring enough to calm public emotional distress to achieve its effectiveness in pandemic (Quinn, 2013).

Okeke et al. (2022) state that between the years 2019 and 2022, the private sector in Nigeria, among other stakeholders, had also been extensively involved in the fight against the COVID-19 virus in their Private coalition against COVID-19 (CACOVID). These include community radios, which are mostly privately owned, allowing the community to engage in processes and learning opportunities, and they collaborated with the public sector to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic. This saw the community-based media altering some of the communication strategies, such as existing policies, programming, and practices within their institutions, and providing learning opportunities to advance healthcare systems in collaboration with efforts to end the pandemic.

McBurnie (2020) states that community Radios can be highly effective when used for educational purposes during a pandemic. The best case is Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on education. This allows learners to receive lessons and interact from the comfort of their homes, without the need to attend classes, thereby avoiding the traditional 'chalk-and-talk' approach through radio broadcasts. It is best adapted for a community sharing the same educational values and systems, but with low connectivity and technological advancements. This study demonstrated how MMUST FM emerged as a community-based station, making its purpose relevant in the fight against COVID-19 between 2020 and 2021.

According to Seeger & Reynolds (2020), social marketing and health promotion perspectives, which dominate health communication discussions and directives, often deliver messages to people in specific socio-demographic groups, even during pandemics. Vaughan & Tinker (2009) state that, the audience composition would help in choosing which medium applies in addressing their education, culture, language or even the visual appeals to be used. Community Radio can be used for example in a case of pandemic communication in a refugee population since it is for the community and can use one language that they understand.

Quinn (2013) states that during a pandemic, especially in its early stages, practical and relevant communication is crucial in reducing public fear, enhancing risk awareness, motivating the public to take action, and gaining their confidence and trust. This helps prevent any public anxiety, which could develop into public panic and herd behaviours that could cause social disorder and harm population health if it is not managed.

Oloo and Orwenjo (2022) continue to explain that the local languages were used to report and create awareness about the pandemic. However, cases occurred where misconceptions on the reporting of the disease were seen, leading to a downplay on the gravity of the disease and an

increase in panic that is uncalled for. If so, this study examined the effectiveness of the strategies employed by MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also gave focus on how the station addressed socio-demographic factors within the communities to enhance their listenership and participation.

WHO (2018) emphasizes the complexity of an effective outbreak response for mitigation, comprising elements that should be harmoniously coordinated. These include coordinating the responders, providing comprehensive health information, effectively communicating the risks, and offering health interventions as needed. Here, communicating the risk to help in mitigation during the pandemics involves talking to the people by the relevant authorities and health experts, listening to assess the reactions of the public, and lastly managing the rumors and misinformation from the people and instantly correcting them without delay to rule out the chances of community radio being an ‘infodemic’ space, as in the case of MMUST FM which was the station of focus in this study.

Oloo and Orwenjo (2022), however, recommend that a more pragmatic and communicative approach to medical translation should be looked at, especially with pandemic communication, since this will ensure that not so much is lost in the translation process of the medical terms to the local languages or dialects. Oloo and Orwenjo (2022) refer to a study done among the vernacular radio presenters in the rural areas of Kenya. It states that the translation of the medical terms as used during the COVID-19 pandemic into local languages brought about new terms and concepts to the languages and dialects, which needed to be used by the radio stations to broadcast to their community members. This study looks at how community radio programming has been effective during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Communications Authority of Kenya recognizes MMUST FM as a community radio station, and the station has been at the forefront of serious public health communication during the COVID-19 pandemic period to the people of Lurambi Sub-County. The Sub-County has a high population and this

made the disease more prevalent in this area as compared to other neighboring areas in Kakamega County (MMUST, 2022).

According to Seeger and Reynolds (2020), while several types of research conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that a communication process exists for every stage of a pandemic, there is a lack of comprehensive research on whether the strategies employed for the COVID-19 pandemic were similar to those used previously. This study, therefore, examined the new participants engaged, the new measures, and technologies adopted by MMUST FM, a community radio, in the process of disseminating information about the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2021, as compared to other pandemics.

1.2 Statement of Problem

COVID-19 affected a large number of people across the world between 2019 and 2022. During this period, many organizations and countries relied on communication as a viable strategy for containing the spread of the virus, which had reached the alarming magnitude of a pandemic. In Kenya, communication about the COVID-19 pandemic was conducted through mass media channels, including newspapers, television, social media, and radio, with an effort to reach deeper into the communities. However, the new measures, participants and technologies used for COVID-19 communication on such mass media are yet to be thoroughly studied to indicate their relevance during the pandemic as compared to other pandemics.

The pandemic spread so fast, and the community media needed to employ systems to help its stakeholders survive the pandemic by disseminating critical information about it. At the time of the pandemic, there were only two community radio stations registered with the Communications Authority of Kenya, which disseminated information on COVID-19. These were MMUST FM and Abiengo FM. Of the two, only MMUST FM saw the COVID-19 pandemic as an issue of concern and gave it a priority by allocating a health program for it

called ‘The COVID-19 Pandemic Interactive Radio Show with Experts on COVID-19’ in 2020, when the pandemic was at its peak. Now that the pandemic has ended and people have eased up, we need to analyze and evaluate the expertise invested in developing communication strategies and broadcasting COVID-19 information. We also need to be informed about how much people trusted the local media to provide them with information concerning their health, which contributes to its relevance and success, in this case, 103.9 MMUST FM. This radio station is among the community media outlets that disseminated COVID-19 information between 2019 and 2021.

Strategically positioned in highly populated areas such as Kakamega County, where the number of those infected continued to rise at the peak of the pandemic, 103.9 MMUST FM was a key media house worth studying. The radio station was highly successful in disseminating COVID-19 information and it was therefore necessary to study the strategies used to attain this level of achievement. This study seeks to investigate the communication strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to capture listeners’ attention regarding COVID-19.

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of this research was to evaluate the communication strategies used by MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic and this was achieved through the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the communication strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to disseminate COVID-19 information.
2. To establish the factors that affected listener attention and participation in 103.9 MMUST FM COVID-19 pandemic communication.

3. To determine the relevance of MMUST FM's messages and programming for COVID-19 pandemic communication.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What were the communication strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to disseminate COVID-19 information?
2. What were the factors that affected listener attention and participation in 103.9 MMUST FM COVID-19 pandemic communication?
3. How relevant were 103.9 MMUST FM's messages and programming for COVID-19 pandemic communication?

1.5 Justification of the Study

During the COVID-19 pandemic, community radio was utilized in broadcasting political, entertainment, and commercial messages to the communities and those at the grassroots level. The governments, businesses, and groups also utilized this communication space to talk about their activities, policies, engagements and directives around the pandemic to the communities at the grassroots level. In Kakamega County, as stated by the Communications Authority of Kenya's quarterly reports for the financial year 2021/2022, there were only two community radio stations, which are MMUST FM and Abiengo FM, at the time. (CA, 2022).

Of the two, the researcher discovered that only MMUST FM saw the COVID-19 pandemic as an issue of concern and gave it a priority by allocating a health program called 'The COVID-19 Pandemic Interactive Radio Show with Experts on COVID-19' in the year 2020 when the pandemic was at its peak (MMUST, 2022). The program, among other communication strategies, was created to address any issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic for the benefit of its community within Lurambi Sub-County.

The audience in the area, which is highly populated, was the target for the messages regarding the pandemic on the need for adhering to the government's directives on curbing the pandemic. This is because it was in such highly populated areas where the virus was highly contagious (Mukoche, 2023). This research aimed to determine the effectiveness of MMUST FM's COVID-19 communication strategies during the pandemic in promoting desirable and effective health communication to its community, compared to other radio stations and alternative media, as well as similar situations.

Reddy & Gupta (2020) state that the media used for communication in all stages during pandemics should be the best and most strategic for relevance and effectiveness. Community radios provide a valuable public communication space for addressing serious health issues to the community members they serve. They can engage them in understanding ideal situations during a health crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, there is a relationship between pandemic communication and community radio health promotion messaging to an audience that has not had a proper platform for the longest time (Fulmer, 2012).

The communication strategies applied during pandemics have also been used over time; therefore, this study found the new ones developed during the COVID-19 pandemic by MMUST FM.

Engay & Arguelles-Manda (2024) note that the communication models for pandemics have been used over time. Therefore, the study determined whether they are the same as those used in other pandemics and clearly highlighted the new ones introduced by the MMUST FM for effectiveness.

Shariq and Zia (2013) state that a radio operating within a 10-kilometer aerial distance can be termed a community radio. MMUST FM operates within Lurambi Sub-County, where its signals are the strongest, and beyond, hence termed as a community radio. Lurambi Sub-

County also has the highest number of people in Kakamega County and, therefore, is viable for this study. Community radios are a mass medium for the people, with the people, and by the people. This study identified the factors that affected the production and delivery of COVID-19 messages to the people of Kakamega town, while considering the factors that may impact the listener's attention and participation of community members during the health broadcasts.

The researcher also examined the aspect of feedback that completes a definite communication process to determine how it was achieved by MMUST FM while airing their program on COVID-19 (Mezghanni, 2020). It also examined how MMUST FM had incorporated education levels, culture, language, and age, among other factors, into their program as required by the policies governing the functionality of community radio stations in Kenya (Midoes, 2016).

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted on the communication strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to capture the listener's attention regarding COVID-19, between 2020 and 2021. The researcher examined the relevance of the radio station's programming in communication regarding COVID-19, the communication strategies adopted, and the factors that influenced its listeners' attention and participation in the broadcasted messages and content. The study was conducted at 103.9 MMUST FM because it was the only registered community radio station, according to CA quarterly reports for the financial year 2021/2022 within Lurambi Sub-County and it has its signal range covering Lurambi Sub-County and its environs (CA, 2022). This area has a high population index, hence posing a high risk during the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The target population for the study was the residents of Lurambi Sub-County, MMUST FM producers, and COVID-19 health experts because it is in the sub-county that the

radio signal is strongest; therefore, there are chances of high listenership by the residents in this area, according to the researcher.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Creswell and Creswell (2017) define a limitation as a factor that can affect a study, and the researcher has no control over it. One limitation of this study is the intensive resources it demanded of the researcher, especially in terms of time and effort to complete. The researcher attempted to overcome this by establishing a rapport with the respondents during data collection. The researcher also ensured proper data gathering.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter inspects the existing literature for this study by examining the studies that support this research or oppose it. It also gives the Theoretical and Conceptual framework that supports this study. The chapter is organized into subheadings for better understanding.

2.1 Overview of Radio as a Community Media

King (2017) states that the World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC-French acronym) guide in section 1.3 defines community radio as ‘A non-profit broadcaster who, in accordance with the fundamental principles of AMARC, offers service to the community in which it is located or which it serves while promoting community expression and participation’. The former president of AMARC, Buckley, explains that community radio can be defined by different contexts and according to the environments they serve, but they all have a similar mission and that is to serve the needs of the community.

Shariq and Zia (2013) agree that community radio has varied definitions. From their study done in India, a radio that covers an aerial distance of 10 kilometers and operates in FM, as invented by Edwin Howard Armstrong in 1933, is just enough to be termed a ‘community radio’. From their description, community radio is for a targeted community and a medium of the people, for the people and by the people. It is not only mandated to produce, organize, and administer programs but also to develop and shape its content for effectiveness.

Gordon (2012) notes that community radio stations can also be utilized in awareness campaigns to influence people's opinions, norms, and policies through a public discussion. Through works of advocacy, the media can also serve as a tool for indirectly influencing decision-makers by

putting pressure on a topic they are made aware of through the public. The choice of radio campaigns helps in reaching a wider audience than any other medium and the content is made accessible to those isolated by location, conflict, illiteracy, or poverty. It also plays a significant role in increasing participation and opinion sharing, improving and diversifying knowledge and skills in health and cultural needs, which also gives another reason for utilizing community radios as a tool for social interaction.

Adebumiti (2016) explains that there are two aspects of community radio. One is geographical as the community uses a common language and symbols within a specific locality, and the second looks at the interests of the community that the radio is addressing, such as music, adult education, and the local languages used. Community broadcasting, which has been improved by the advent of new media, currently leads its focus on media pluralism, diversity of content and representation of different groups and various interests of its community through community journalism.

Everett et al. (2020) say that this has led to convergence of news because of the atmosphere created for audience participation by the community radio stations in the rural and semi-urban communities for development, where people still have limited access to other forms of mass media messages. Community journalism is practiced for the best understanding of the community by the news organizations and the journalists in the newsrooms. It helps news managers to hear and understand the priorities, concerns, and perspectives of those within the community they are working with, and enables journalists, citizens, and public officials to join in a conversation that strengthens the value of the content and source diversity as broadcast by the radio for the community.

New media technologies have transformed the features of radio by reorganizing its institutional structures and practices. Its various strategies of utilization and engagement are now based on

its accessibility on multiple digital platforms. From the study, it has been found that new media technologies are providing a path for community radios to connect with and influence trans-local communities and those in the diaspora, which extends beyond their normal geographic and community of interest. This will henceforth lead to a new terminology to define community radio in the advent of new media in terms of reach to their audiences and engagement in programming with the new configurations (Chiumbu, 2014). This study helped in defining MMUST FM as a community radio, as utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.2 Communication Strategies for COVID-19

2.2.1 Approaches for Effective COVID-19 Communication

According to Beaunoyer et al. (2020), there are 3 strategies for message construction in response to COVID-19 that could be applied to community radios. First, there needs to be quality control for detecting fake news and blocking the sources that may lead to spreading messages that may cause unnecessary anxiety among the community members. The second strategy is to make sure that the messages can be well understood, and this can be achieved through simplifying the contents of the message, repetition of the messages over and over, so that the audience can get it often. The messages that are aired often should be the ones that call for action. The third strategy is to use a language that is more acceptable to the audience, which can be achieved by limiting the use of a directive tone, discouraging stigmatization, and encouraging the audience to share the information with other community members.

Lubinga & Molebatsi (2021) explain that to target the individuals with these messages, there also needs to be increased physical access to the radio set and signal connectivity to reduce the inequalities in the COVID-19 context. This can be achieved by mapping the inconsistency in information reach among vulnerable populations and areas, either in terms of signal reach through technology or socioeconomic status that limits their ability to purchase the set.

During pandemics, as in this study, in areas where these are limited, public funding can assist those in low-income areas to purchase a radio set, or donations through charity could also help in such cases. In Kenya, for example, the neighbors could access the media set from their neighbors, or the people would share what they had listened to with those who had no access to the media set or devices (Field, 2023).

Shariq and Zia (2013), explain that there are six approaches to the effective dissemination of messages by community radios during pandemics. They are available for participation through their program design and content, accessibility by providing a means of participatory communication, being affordable even to the poorest members of the community, acceptability by the community members by taking care of their needs and interests, accountability in the way they give feedback, address complaints, concerns and response to suggestion, and lastly is allowing or catalyzing social, economic, cultural and spiritual development. To do well, the Community radio stations should be able to withstand the technological and policy challenges too. The study looked at how accessibility affected audience reach to the listeners of the radio station being studied.

Napakol et al. (2022) state that innovations in information systems and utilizing strategies that promote effective health communication at every stage of a pandemic should be adopted to improve awareness of the pandemic, remove negativity, and enhance preventive measures to mitigate the virus. For this, the features of health information sources, their structure, style, and content should be looked at keenly by the professionals and constructed in a way that they encourage public participation by focusing on the audience's needs and preferences. From the study done on Sina Weibo, a microblogging site, it was realized that features such as structure, style and content of both the information and the site had effects on how they were retweeted. Information from the authorities also had more retweets together with messages that had

hashtags, pictures or videos attached to them; than the ones without. Those with hyperlinks and sentiments had more retweets too than the ones without. On content, messages communicating adversities, a frame of action, reassurance and efficacy were highly retweeted as compared to the messages with unclear situations. This was also studied at MMUST FM in the way it constructed its messages, content and strategies to resonate with their audience for a wider reach and assured participation.

Sanga et al. (2013) employed a participatory research approach with a triangulation design in Tanzania. According to the research, small farmers play a significant role in the packaging and presentation of messages on certain community radios. This helps in harmoniously integrating Indigenous knowledge from farmers and combining it with knowledge from researchers to enhance the livelihoods of farmers in the community where the radio station is located. Before, community radio programs that were presented without full participation of the farmers from the initial stage to the final stage of the program had the farmers shy away from the promising innovations, practices and initiatives as presented in the community radio programs. As looked at in the study, how the engagement of the community members gave the listeners of MMUST FM a picture of what was happening around them.

Tella (2017) says that community radio remains a viable and most proximate medium for dialogue and engagement within communities; however, its management has not been given much attention by scholars because of its position in the stream of traditional and new media. Away from its financing, the social and institutional sustainment should be given keen attention for the relevance of the radio stations and proper management. In their study of management of community radio stations in South Africa and whether they were working to fulfill their mandate, it was found that there was no management plan they followed but carved their programs in reflection of their peculiar circumstances, which does not suit the mandate of community radio stations.

Chaudhary (2020) states that this as well needs to be looked into by the promoters of community radios in Kenya for the stations' management to adopt the sense of programs for the community and by the community in cases of pandemics where the health programs call for social change to help curb the pandemics by full involvement and engagement of the community members but not from the management's carved circumstances. Involving and engaging the community members in every stage of a community radio's program on a pandemic can lead to achieving its purpose in helping to end the pandemic in the anticipated time for the continued development of the community.

Bosch (2014) states that community engagement has been improved by the adoption of new media technologies by community radios, such as the internet and mobile phones, for use on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The sites are currently being utilized in news production and organization through social networks, rather than for political or communal social relations. A study conducted in South Africa, utilizing participant observation and qualitative interviews, has demonstrated that technologies have impacted the routines of community radio journalists, as they now rely on the internet as their primary source of news. This has, in succession, led to the access and participation of their audiences when they are online through the online social sites. MMUST FM, also has social media sites and this study looked at how they were used during the COVID-19 period, in communicating with their audiences.

De Buck et al. (2016) explain that some factors must be considered for the effectiveness of a program in community radio. These are the strategies that must be ensured to be well-structured for use in the programs. This can be achieved by ensuring the direct involvement of the relevant parties through their participation in the programs, either through interviews, phone-in programs, letters, or recordings made at external events, among other methods. Another strategy is to use dramas or comedy programs and these help in the repetition of the educational

messages. This study looked at the parties involved in the programming of the messages regarding COVID-19 pandemic at MMUST FM

De Buck et al. (2016) continue to say that building on oral traditions and motivating people can also be made effective by radio spots with traditional songs, like the use of a traditional song with a sanitation message, for example, the UNICEF's Saniya project in Burkina Faso. Infomercials can also be of use since they carry dramatized messages about an issue and run for at most 2 minutes. Interviews can also be conducted on a specific issue and community participation can be facilitated by suggesting a member of the public to be interviewed. Interviews can take many forms, including pre-recorded and live interviews. Other strategies include using break bumper messages for seconds that promote behavior change. For example, 'Have you gone for the vaccine?' Lastly, sound bites could also be used as a strategy for the effectiveness of a program. This involves the use of memorable phrases that stay with the audience, as they convey a single key message about the community concern.

2.2.2 Risk Communication as a Strategy for COVID-19 Communication

According to Schiavo (2013), health communication is a field of multiple disciplines coordinated to exchange health-related information and processes in order to engage, empower and influence populations for sustainable health behaviors and policies for a better health outcome in the future. The process is typically long-term and focuses on the needs and preferences of individuals and communities. The mass media, such as radio, are used to bring the health issue into the public domain, raise awareness of its origin and risks, and campaign for solutions that relevant individuals and communities can take action on.

On health education, Okinyi (2019) states that a community develops when its people are healthy. The media is responsible for this by providing information to its people on health issues and the sector's concerns. This could be achieved by hosting doctors to explain various

health issues, offering general talks on common illnesses, or specific ones with their causes, signs and symptoms, treatments, and preventive measures to the community that fits them. The importance these radios give to health by slotting a program means that it is essential to its audience for development. The findings of this research describe how the community radio stations are built up to effectively address community issues of concern, such as the COVID-19

When planning a radio campaign, the first step is to define your audience, second is to set your objectives as clearly as possible, the third is to define your channels and vehicles for communication, either by raising awareness, changing attitudes, modeling specific skills or by change of public opinion, fourth is to identify the effective messages, fifth is implementing your campaign. Lastly, it is evaluating the campaign (Gordon, 2012).

Kijana (2012) gives a study on how radio broadcast space can be utilized to educate the public. He examines how the radio education program has helped reduce the stigma of albinism in Tanzania. This was done through drama and interviews that addressed the discrimination against people with albinism. After the broadcast, it was observed that there was reduced stigma among the community members towards people with albinism. This contributed to the well-being of the people with albinism in the community they interacted in, and the respondents were optimistic about the education while utilizing the radio station since they got to contact someone with albinism.

The content aired through the programs should match their target audience, as well as the format and the languages used, whether local or vernacular. This is to ensure that the program attracts listeners as planned and makes it more appealing to the target population. Timing is also a factor when designing a program to meet the needs of an audience. This helps in making sure that the target audience has the time to listen to the program being aired (Dominic &

Kabah, 2017). This study looks at how MMUST FM structured its programs and messages to reach the target audience as expected.

According to Reinhardt et al. (2022), their study to explore the effect of message framing and distraction of radios' response among adults through a public service announcement (PSA) for the motivation to take the influenza and pneumococci vaccines, found out that the gain-framed radio PSAs are a suitable method for awareness creation among the listeners for a vaccination campaign and its messages and this is best when the listeners are tuned in and concentrated. The results show that this is best at the early stages of the mitigation process, backed up by more detailed materials like brochures to promote behavior change towards a pandemic.

Schiavo (2013) states that since health communication is a field with complex issues, the media cannot address all issues and relay all messages within a specified time as scheduled. It also cannot give replacements for inadequacies in infrastructure and the incapacity of the health care workers, nor compensate for the inadequacies of medical solutions to the health problems. The media can only voice out for change and prepare a receptive environment ready for the new developments to improve the health outcomes. For relevance and effectiveness, the media also need to work interdependently with the public health, healthcare, marketing, community development, and private sectors.

According to Delmon (2021), in Cameroon, local languages were used in conjunction with community radios during the COVID-19 pandemic surge to reach people at the grassroots level and protect them from the pandemic's threat. This also helps in developing new words within the dialects, within their respective contexts, and, in turn, helps improve the lexical dynamics of the languages used. The formulation and adoption of policies for the language used by community radios also affect their relevance.

In Nigeria, it is suggested that community radio stations should have a policy in place that requires all community radio stations to use local dialects to broadcast their programs, especially to rural dwellers when the station is closer to them. Though there are many challenges encountered by the community radio stations that are communication or message related, cases of illiteracy among the listeners, use of English language by the electronic media, use of multiple languages, lack of feedback from the audience, ownership and management problems, lack of qualified staff or producers, urban-centered coverage and lack of enough community-based radio stations. This, as explained, could be sorted by the use of local dialects to reach the local dwellers in the most efficient way (Asemah et al., 2013). This study looked at the languages utilized by MUST FM to broadcast messages about the COVID-19 pandemic and the reason why the languages were used.

According to McBurnie (2020), creating awareness among the public can be achieved through repurposing established radio and audio series, such as interactive radios, for educational instruction in targeted communities during pandemics. They can broadcast on health and safeguarding messages to out-of-school children, who are also a potential source of information for the non-educated family members, as seen during the Ebola pandemic.

2.2.3 Communication Factors for COVID-19 Communication

Wilson et al. (2021) opine that there needs to be trust between the medical researchers, potential participants, and the wider public during a health emergency, such as in pandemics. This is achieved by developing a two-way communication method to facilitate treatment and vaccination, thereby gaining public acceptability through media such as community radios. A lack of trust has consequences among people who have no confidence in the research used to create interventions for the pandemic, which may accelerate its spread. In America, their first goal during a pandemic is to work on establishing trust with the people, as seen during the

COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic atmosphere is usually stressful, time-pressed, and fearful, and the researchers need to be trustworthy as much as they ask or need to be trusted. Trust needs to be built even before the crisis by their attitudes, values and practices in their work systems.

Mezghanni (2020), says that open dialogues and democratic processes are also encouraged by the community radio stations. They provide an independent platform for individual interaction and group discussions on the talks and strategies. They make it their responsibility to drive people to be heard and hear themselves speak through the broadcasts, as a democratic nation directs. The community radio stations also achieve this function in portraying what really happens at the grassroots level within their communities through their programs, for example, during the general elections in Kenya. This study seeks to find whether such strategies were utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic or whether there were new strategies developed by MMUST FM.

Wilson et al. (2021) further state that building trust is not one process but a process that involves dialogue, time, transparency, and a two-way communication process. Mutual trust is built by 'good participatory practice' between the medical researchers and those who are likely to be affected by it. In 1980, while the HIV research was being done, community engagement was also done, which made the whole process a joint one, hence building trust. Good participatory practice helps in improving pandemic research and this could be done through community radios to have the engagement of the communities. This was also done for the trial of Monoclonal antibody in the USA for COVID-19, the RECOVERY trial in the UK for COVID-19 therapies, and during the Ebola Trials by PREVAIL in 2014 in Liberia.

Khan et al. (2022) explain the communication process for community participation in pandemic intervention. First, there needs to be an established map of the communication channels for the

community members to receive and act on information. Second, it involves establishing a two-way communication channel for both formal and informal communications, such as mass media, to reach the entire population or a targeted audience, while taking into account their cultural adaptation to the messages. Third is to use the media established to maintain dialogue and engage the community and their feedback should guide and address arising problems. The analysis of any data collected in the process should be used to gauge the attitudes, knowledge, or rumors within the community. Lastly, the outcomes should be communicated through the media for access and implementation of the findings. This also makes other researchers and the public aware of the finances, human resources, and infrastructure put in place for any new study, as well as for further and future improvements.

Maintaining participatory communication through media like community radios that meet people at the grassroots level can help in identifying rumors, giving correct information, conducting media campaigns, and other outreach efforts (Wilson et al., 2021). This study will help in realizing whether the community radio was effective in handling misinformation and disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hyland-Wood et al. (2021) confirm that an effective communication strategy is a two-way process that involves clear messages, delivered via appropriate platforms, tailored for diverse audiences, and shared by trusted people. How intervention is received, perceived and acted on through information provided helps to reduce the risks as early or prolong the pandemic. It all depends on developing and maintaining public trust by engaging diverse community groups. Public health communication is central in addressing a pandemic, and it is a two-way process that involves policymakers, health practitioners, researchers, and the community. In addition to that, effective communication is not only about messaging but also the exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions. This needs to be adopted by community radios as their strategy for effectiveness by not only doing their broadcasts but

also making sure that the opinions, information, and feedback from the community are captured in the process while addressing situations in a pandemic.

According to El-Jardali (2020), effective communication during a pandemic, such as COVID-19, requires proper coordination among policymakers, health professionals, and the community. There are also communication strategies that must be developed and delivered by the media, such as utilizing community radios to increase relevance and communicate effectively with their community, fostering transparent and civic engagement that builds trust. The strategies are summarized in ten ways, continues (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). First, the community radio stations should engage in clear communication about the pandemic. This means that their information should be relevant, consistent, and regularly communicated to the community, allowing them to have confidence in it, while focusing on concrete actions at specific times, for example, 'quarantine will go on for the next 1 month'. People find the messages relevant when they affect their lives and require little effort to process, which need cognitive processing. Thompson (2013) says that this can be achieved by using declarative statements for information, for example, 'COVID-19 can cause death', and imperative statements for directives, for example, 'put on your masks and practice social distancing while in public places'.

Second, the community radio stations should strive for maximum credibility by engaging policy, medical and public-health experts for key messages. Those engaged should have relevant training, expertise and trust within their networks. The professionals, scientists, and medical organizations are responsible for communicating the policies and directions with appropriate evidence and guidance, especially in cases where trust in the government is low or challenged by popular opinion (Funk & Kennedy, 2019). Health experts, however, need to protect their credibility and ensure they are not perceived as political pawns or seen as

government spokespersons to maintain the trust already gained (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021). This explains how politics can affect effective communication in a pandemic.

Third, the community radio stations need to communicate with empathy to the people during a pandemic. This is after listening to their needs and concerns and it is meant to be with them emotionally, recognizing their concerns and seeking ways to alleviate their hardships (Pfattheicher et al., 2020). Here, there is a need to communicate the beliefs and respect for the cooperation among the community members and praise the groups on the front line for maintaining positive behavior. Fourth, the community radio stations need to be frank, open and honest for the community members to understand the rationale and basis on which decisions are made about their safety in the pandemic. This is not meant to scare the community, but to raise their appropriate concerns. The communicator should avoid ‘sugar-coating’ to give the relevant information as early as possible to build proper expectations so that the community groups do not seek information from other sources where there could be rumors or misinformation and conspiracy theories (Kovic & Fuchslin, 2018).

Fifth, the community radio stations need to help the community recognize that uncertainty is inevitable. It is essential to prepare people to reduce anxiety and unpredictability, as illusions of certainty erode trust (Sandman & Lanard, 2020). According to recent reviews, technical uncertainties related to error and probability have positive effects, whereas community-based uncertainties have adverse effects (Gustafson & Rice, 2020). Sixth, the community radio stations need to account for the levels of health literacy and numeracy within their audience. Health literacy enables community members to apply the health information they have to understand and make informed decisions.

Seven, during pandemics, the community radio stations should empower people to act. The information given through the stations on behavior change needs to be accompanied by action.

This is by guiding the community on how to act and they in turn do as requested. Message framing helps here, like ‘we are getting on top of everything’ to mean positivity. Calling for action should also be accompanied by an appeal for public solidarity and confidence, and harness the power of togetherness. It helps people look beyond their differences and the collective response has been important in fighting pandemics like COVID-19 (Levy, 2020).

Eight, effective pandemic communication should be one that appeals to the social norms. Since people tend to look after one another in groups, fostering solidarity and aligning messages with social norms helps them take responsibility for those around them. Promoting this can be achieved through descriptive norms (everyone can do it) and injunctive norms (it is the right thing to do), which aim to encourage desirable and changed behaviors. However, Lupton (2015) notes that this can lead to marginalization for those who do not identify with a group’s norms, underscoring the need for diverse messaging targeted at different groups within a community.

Nine, the community radio stations need to consider diverse community needs, as people may not be affected in the same way during a pandemic, and therefore, communication and intervention processes should be tailored accordingly. This means making information in the most accessible way, for example, to those in the high migrant communities in Australia during the spread of Coronavirus in Melbourne, Victoria (Dalzell, 2020). Language barriers experienced within the groups can be translated. The multicultural and vulnerable communities can be best engaged through their leaders (Everett et al., 2020).

Ten, the community radio stations should be proactive in combating misinformation. This can be achieved by being transparent with information and giving facts with current information and it helps in solving situations of emerging misinformation and conspiracy theories (Pickles et al., 2020). As soon as a piece of misinformation spreads, it is important to look deep into its

source, scrutinize and address it. Misinformation can be addressed by asking people to verify their information sources, especially online through social media (Ecker et al., 2020). The community radio stations can also do traditional fact-checking and debunking approaches and encourage trust in government and health authorities.

Armstrong (2014) says that in April 1955, the Salk vaccine was declared safe and effective for Americans in the fight against paralytic polio. Researchers say that eighteen months later, more than half of the vulnerable populations had not gone for their vaccinations. This prompted the need for research to determine the reason for these unexpected uptake numbers, and it was found that people had knowledge about the vaccine and were not resistant to it. What they needed was positive influences to drive them to the health providers' offices for inoculation and there were gaps in the specific knowledge that would contribute to positivity towards the vaccines. This highlighted the need for social scientists to assist public health workers in reaching and influencing the 'non-cooperative' members of society, encouraging them to receive the vaccine. The positivity could be driven by health promotion messages for the vaccine through available community media, influencing their decisions and correcting misinformation about the vaccine they had, for example, through the use of local community radio stations. In this study, the researcher seeks to find how much MMUST FM influenced its listeners to go for the COVID-19 vaccine during the pandemic.

Olson et al. (2018) say that the studies conducted on the occurrence of norovirus in rural Guatemalan households found that there was high knowledge about the virus, with high vaccine positivity and acceptability. Findings indicate that most relied on the information from the MoH's public health and the Radio. During the study, however, vaccine hesitancy was observed among a small group, and the reasons were fear of vaccine side effects, rumors regarding the vaccine, and a lack of awareness among these individuals. This study also recommends that the MoH and community-level educators offer an approach that can lessen

vaccine hesitancy in the community. This could be better achieved by intensifying the campaigns for the vaccine through community radio for awareness amongst people deeper in the communities.

2.3 Factors affecting Listener Attention and Participation Regarding COVID 19 Information

2.3.1 COVID-19 Infodemics and Mental Health as addressed by Community Radio Stations

Ayedee & Manocha (2020) state that the lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic led to communication through community radio stations being taken more seriously than before in countries like India. The stations had a duty to verify information with their sources and share fact-checked content that is more personalized for their listeners. This is because there were rising cases of misinformation and fake news that spread so fast among the community members, especially among illiterate groups and those who had little or no access to accurate information that had been verified from its sources. It is at this time that issues on domestic violence and mental health were on the rise and the community radio stations took this chance to highlight it in their broadcasts during the nationwide lockdown in India.

Laskar & Bhattacharyya (2021) explain that this saw the community radio stations play a very central role in verifying the fake news by engaging the community in their programs either by personalized storytelling, engaging those who were at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19 from the community to authenticate the information that was with the people and using folk and traditional media to help in disseminating accurate information. As the virus spread across countries like Kenya and deep into the villages, issues of mental health and fake news continued to be on the rise. The media had to step in to highlight these issues so that they could be

addressed within the communities, and the one that could handle it best was community radio, since it is closer to the people in its agenda.

Coleman (2020) states that the technical expertise, passion, and commitment by the community radio stations towards their communities, seen across the UK as the COVID-19 virus spread across the world, were very essential in information gathering as a measure of response to the pandemic. Community radio stations are well-positioned to provide essential welfare updates and specific health information efficiently, as a response to the issues that may have led to a crisis during the pandemic due to misinformation and fake news. Bringing up issues for discussion that had never been addressed before in their programs, alongside the usual entertainment and information, helped in addressing the emerging matters in a timely manner, such as those related to mental health.

However, El-Jardali (2020) notes that certain aspects of community radios have not been taken seriously, thereby making their efforts to address issues in their communities appear taken for granted. Their success in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and the issues surrounding it should be a reason enough to examine these aspects, thereby providing the stations with the support they need. This is particularly important since community radios, which can penetrate deeper into villages, are able to transmit signals where other media cannot reach. If taken seriously, a lot can be achieved within the communities, such as response towards domestic violence, as seen during the pandemic.

The community radio stations transmit information in a small radius but within a community, hence it helps those isolated from the state-owned and commercial radios to express their own concerns, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their audiences were able to discuss issues that really affected them within their groups, such as mental health, gender issues, and the issues of the COVID-19 virus itself, including the fake news, disinformation, and

misinformation that may have reached them. The stations, in turn, helped with fact-checking to obtain the most accurate information, thereby fostering a well-informed community. Issues on income generation and self or group improvement were also discussed so that the lockdown would not be a burden to the community members since it is such financial, psychological, and emotional issues that build up mental disorders whenever they are not well addressed (Coleman, 2020).

Vivian (2022), states that in a study conducted on media literacy and fake news to evaluate the role of radio in combating misinformation and conspiracy theories during the COVID-19 era, issues such as the strategies, circumstances, information sources, modalities and perceptions on fake news around the pandemic were discussed. It was found out that it is at such times of health crisis that people are lured to fake news because they are attracted to the content of social media and the talks of social media influencers. According to the reports, this happened because people had a lot of free time during lockdown, as they were away from their busy schedules. Some were also unemployed, which is why news from mainstream media, the number of reported cases, and social media trends made people anxious to know more about what was happening around them. This made people fall prey to fake news and misinformation so easily. The community radio stations helped in the process since they reported news that was verified from the established organizations, such as the WHO, and had interviews with the health professionals for the benefit of the community members. They had information gathered on the scientific facts and how to work around the issues that were on the rise during the pandemic, such as mental health disorders and domestic violence. This study addressed how such cases were handled at the station during the pandemic.

Beaunoyer et al. (2020) state that there is a need for people to engage through the media to mutually share their personal information and problems and avoid topics that are off the COVID-19 pandemic so that people can feel that they are not alone during the crisis. An online

community could also be created using the digital platforms, so that the information discussed on the radio and that needs more discussions or clarifications could be shared online. Those who are digitally literate could help the other community members understand the science and technological issues around the pandemic, as explained, so as to reduce anxiety. The health professionals and community leaders could also be invited to the radio programs to explain the situations and cases at the grassroots levels and reassure the members of the public of the conditions in the future, so as to reduce the spread of unverified information. A phone-support line could also be given during the programs to help all the groups within a community to find support at very pressing times of the COVID-19 pandemic, not only the elderly, for issues that could deteriorate the people's mental health to be discussed at a more personal level are referrals done so that not a member is lost in loneliness, psychologically or emotionally leading to disorders.

Beaunoyer et al. (2020) continue to suggest that information can also be shared through community radios in unconventional spaces where individuals can find support, such as verified websites and useful Applications for games and mentally challenging activities to reduce idleness. They could also be referred to ways on how to connect with their close ones through social sites, hence maintaining the social bonds and healthy living conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3.2 Considerations for Listenership and Participation for Behaviour Change

In a study done on Simli Radio found in Northern Ghana 2017, to realize its contribution to community development problems among 12 communities in the region, it was realized that the listening public needs to give regular feedback for example through phone-ins as it is essential in noting the listeners' tastes and preferences of various listener segments such as for the men, women, the youth, and the aged. It can also be best achieved by avoiding topics on

religion and politics. This can help in effecting so many broadcasted topics such as in education, public health, governance, culture promotion, agriculture business development and rural development. Participation in the community media is established within the communities where people are economically deprived and socially excluded from participating in national affairs (Dominic & Kabah, 2017).

MMUST FM, as a community radio station, could utilize community reference groups to gather information on the needs and preferences of each group through their representatives. This helps in appropriate messaging, framing and tones used in passing the messages. The groups include youths, young children and families, older adults, individuals with certain conditions, and people with disabilities, as studied in this research.

Veinberg (2015) recommends that, from the studies done, there is a need for a bridge to bridge the gap between awareness and action, especially among young adults within a community. This is as seen, for example, in the Australian government, where the younger generations were not adequately engaged, leading to communication failures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bedson (2020), states that to document the gap between structured and actual community engagement activities during pandemics, a study was done between December 2014 to September 2015 in Sierra Leone. The study aimed to analyze the Community Led Ebola Action (CLEA) and Social Mobilization Action Consortium (SMAC) during the 2014-2016 Ebola epidemic. Forty-two local radio stations were used together with 6,000 religious leaders and 2,466 community mobilizers, and it was realized that over time, there were positive behavior outcomes among the engaged communities, as there were safe burials and people reported for medical care within 24 hours of showing symptoms. The CLEA program gives a demonstration on how large-scale, coordinated community engagement interventions can be used in other pandemics, such as COVID-19, or in others in the future.

Wang et al. (2013) conducted research in Hong Kong to determine the social determinants of health information seeking, including demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, chronic disease, and behaviors among the participants. A survey was conducted by telephone in 2009 to determine the frequency of information seeking from television, radio, magazines/newspapers, and the internet over one month, and participants were selected using probability sampling. 4553 people participated and data was recorded was from 85.1% who used the sources. 66.2% used newspapers/ magazines, 61.4% used TV, 35.6% used radio, and 33.2% used the internet. From that study, it was realized that the male, those with lower education attainment, the ones with low household income, the ever-smoking and the ones who were less active physically did not involve with frequent health information seeking. Secondly, those who had chronic diseases frequently sought health information from television. Lastly, the young were more likely to seek health information from the internet as compared to the older people who were more likely to obtain the health information from radio. However, more resources are needed to improve health communication in the disadvantaged groups, especially those with socioeconomic inequalities and those in behavioral clusters.

De Maio Nascimento (2020) explains how, in Petrolina, Brazil, a study was conducted through telephone interviews among the elderly between 60 and 81 years of the U3A group during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was to determine which media they preferred for receiving information about the disease and their reasons for relying on that particular medium while in isolation. From the study, the media that were mainly used are radio and television. WhatsApp was also used, but not as reliably as radio and TV. There were reasons why they highly relied on the radio. In another study by Ferreira et al. (2022) on the impact of misinformation on the COVID-19 pandemic, findings revealed the importance of receiving COVID-19 health information from a trustworthy source. This was explained by the fact that if favored over scientific guidelines, misinformation generated by gossip, stigma, and

conspiracy theories has serious consequences for public health. In this study, the researcher seeks to determine whether MMUST FM was a trustworthy source in disseminating information about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Third, De Maio Nascimento (2020) continues to say that the group relied on the radio because it is a verified and timely source of information. They say radio gives news that was factual and timely and information about the disease that they aired was one that concerned them. Helena disliked WhatsApp and suggested that it was best for young people with less serious issues to share with their friends.

As studied in this research too, on the disadvantages of the media channels and whether there is a mix-up of issues at a time when the main broadcasts should be about the pandemic. As seen, previous scholars have noted that some involved politics and saddening financial situations, which make the audience anxious about the future. This made audiences rely on the radio, which focused on issues that were more important to add to their knowledge and reduce their anxiety and attitudes developed during such times. They also rely on the radio to avoid viewing sad situations on TV and other media, which may make them anxious and depressed as well (De Maio Nascimento, 2020).

According to Wang et al. (2021), there are also coping strategies for the current media that the elderly have a problem adopting. An example is those who have technophobia are afraid to use WhatsApp or the internet to get information about the pandemic. They leave it to the younger groups to use them and remain tuned on to the radio and maybe television for those who have it to get informed on the pandemic. According to the study, WhatsApp is good with the younger generation and is only relied on by the elderly whenever there are videos to be watched and learn about a specific item use during the pandemic and for the visuals on what they don't really recognize but imagine, like how to wear and wash the mask. Other channels are also

important if they need to refer to the information over and over again, where there is no repetition on the radio. Some diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease and Dementia, can cause this need for repetition since they have a problem retaining knowledge, hygiene procedures and respecting isolation and social distance measures as put in place during the time of the pandemic.

A study done on media multitasking among the young (13-16 years) and the old (50-65 years) discovered that the young combined music with online activities while the old combined radio, emails and newspapers. This change happens in their lifespans as well as through the generations. This can be used by community radios to give their messages through music to the youth while giving it as news to the older people in order to address the pandemic issues to all ages found in their audiences (Voorveld & Van der Goot, 2013).

Orben (2020) states that, in a study published by Mary Preston in 1941 on 'Children's reactions to Movie Horrors and Radio Crime', it was noticed that most children between the ages of 6 and 16 years are addicted to radio and movie crime dramas, no matter how dangerous the after-effects are. This tendency was also supported by the increase in the number of radios in the household and it encouraged the listening of radio for the children for between 1 -3 hours a day. The radio listenership among children is currently being overtaken by emerging technologies, such as online gaming and social media. Today, many parents would really welcome the comeback of radio dramas in place of phones and chatting with friends on social media. The accelerated technological revolution has been an issue of concern to cause different reactions that needs to be worked on since it is causing modern technological panics terming it 'Sisyphean cycle of technology panics' This can be used by the community radios to create radio dramas to convey the health information during pandemics and make the messages more attractive to listen to by using the technological advancements available than the usual and traditional ways used before for the children audiences.

From the studies, effective health communication about a pandemic to a target audience should be well constructed to suit the audience while observing their ages, listening time, and in what form they would like to receive the messages, for the process to be effective.

Semujju (2016) states that communities are currently adopting the use of Community Audio Towers (CATs), which are a medium of communication that are community-based and have strongly fixed speakers on a steel, bamboo or a dry pole with amplifiers and a microphone attached to it. The medium is used to communicate daily events in a village of about 5 kilometers radius. A study that was done in Uganda shows that individuals in the two communities where CATs are used highly depend on them than the mainstream media. This is because they are involved in the information gathering, processing and dissemination. Though the problem with this medium was discovered to be the noise, licensing and regulation and weather conditions that interrupt the sound waves, its content processing is quite effective for a community and could be borrowed by community radios to fulfill their mandate.

2.4 Relevance of Messages and Programming for COVID-19 Communication

Ogbodo et al. (2020) state that among the large populations in sub-Saharan Africa, radio remains a modest means of communication for change and development. A study conducted to understand the contributions of the rising number of community radios to community development indicates that development in communities can also be achieved by giving community members a voice during their programming. The listener clubs or groups created through these programs provide an environment conducive to interaction, which helps address their social and psychological needs and fosters good relationships within the communities. These benefits also increase their interest in participating in the programs aired on community radios, as they feel a sense of belonging. This is evident in the programming at Simli and PAD radios in Ghana (Dominic and Kabah, 2017). This approach can also be used during pandemics,

where listeners are grouped according to their residences to help maintain neighbourhood watch activities as they participate in community radio programs.

Everett et al. (2020) continue to state that community radios do create a cordial relationship between them and the community members through their programs. This is not only by their broadcasts but also through the strategic partnerships that they have with the government, NGOs, the wards and constituencies, which they involve either directly or indirectly in their programs. This is seen during the COVID-19 pandemic as stakeholders worked together. People were attached to a particular media station since they felt that they were being real with their news stories by either involving the relevant authorities in their programs or giving accurate information as quoted by trusted government officials, as featured in a station's health program.

Wabwire (2013) also notes that there are several functions that community radio plays in its area. He explains how effective community radios can be as a tool for promoting social change and development. People in a community have different perceptions and opinions; therefore, the space in radio offers a platform for the community to have an internal discussion to analyze their problems; once it is seen as necessary for the benefit of the community, by the owners of the radio station. It then provides them with a solution on how to create change and development from their various ideas.

Chemwaina (2014), explains that community radios have contributed to the development of several areas of the economy through the information they pass to their community and allow for their participation. Examples are farming and agriculture innovations, democracy, political awareness, economic empowerment, and health education. This supports the effectiveness of Community radios in airing diverse opinions and voices, thereby facilitating discussions on

various topics. This is by airing issues objectively from all sides without being biased or taking sides.

Midoes (2016) states that by making its principal focus the content about the community it serves, community radio stations are thus effective as a medium for reflecting on and promoting the identity, culture, and character of that particular community through their programs. Culture encompasses a community's past and future, its values and priorities, and how it has evolved over time. These can be expressed through music, language, poetry, and other forms of artistic expression. This study looks at the various roles MMUST FM played as a Community Radio station during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Parahmana et al. (2021), the convergence of new media and community radio provided a solution for areas where teaching and learning could not be conducted virtually over the internet due to limited connectivity in Indonesia. It came after the Indonesian government gave a policy for virtual learning to be done at home but did not consider the students who came from areas with limited connectivity and failed to give an option for them during the Covid-19 pandemic. It resulted in the people adopting the community-based blended learning which is a tested and trusted model for teaching and learning in remote areas for situations where people are required to remain isolated such as during pandemics. Theoretically, it involves community radio, blended learning, transformative education and critical pedagogy for students in the remote areas. This shows how the advent of new media has helped the community radios fulfil their mandate in community development after adopting its use, as we see in the education sector in Indonesia.

Ahsan and Khatun (2020) explain that the use of local languages and dialects used by a community could also be adopted as a strategy for the relevance of broadcasts in community radios during pandemics. In Bangladesh, mixed-method research was done in the cyclone

prone regions of the coast to analyze the role of community radio in disaster preparedness in such areas. It was realized that the radios adopted the use of local dialects on a local basis to broadcast their messages and this helped them in being comprehensive, clear and reliable with the information they were giving hence a chance for an early preparation for the cyclones.

Castillo- Chavez (2015) states that, the warning messages delivered by the community radios have helped the listeners gain knowledge and awareness on the hazard and this has significantly helped them incur lower economic loss at the time of the cyclones than the non-listeners. The use of a language that resonates with the audience could also be adopted by community radios in various regions to make their broadcasts more effective, particularly in preparation for and mitigation of future pandemics.

Midoes (2016) states that community radio has been widely utilized in developing countries for educational and learning programs, supporting a diverse range of subject areas, with most of them being effective among their target audience. Countries that have experienced this are Thailand, which has utilized community radio to teach mathematics to school children and curriculum to their teachers. In India, it has been used for rural development, in Swaziland for public health, in Mali and Colombia for literacy training, in Nigeria for agricultural management courses, in Kenya to support correspondence courses, in Nicaragua for health education, the Philippines for nutritional education, in Sri Lanka and South Korea for family planning and health and lastly in the Dominion Republic and Paraguay for Primary School instruction. This has been done with various instructional design contexts, sometimes done to encourage and permit listener reaction and comment. Some programs give a chance for the audience to ask questions and give feedback. From the above perspective, it should be noted that there is no single best format for designing an educational program and that the widespread of community radio and its availability underscores its academic potential and importance.

Dominic & Kabah (2017) explain that community radios have helped in capacity building for the community members by giving the marginalized groups a chance to share their knowledge and experiences, and participate in the discourses and any level of decision-making. This has contributed to cultural development and helped them strengthen their communities as part of a national or global family. An example is a discussion on women and health on Simli Radio found in the Northern parts of Ghana where community forums are conducted and recorded cases which are quite emotional are played on radio for the listeners to take lessons. Health personnel and nurses are then brought into the station to educate the women on their health around maternal mortality, which has helped them live like the rest of the women. The radio programs are planned in a way that they are made flexible and can be clearly understood for the development of any group of listeners.

Everett et al. (2020) continue to explain that many lives have been saved through the education they offer and this helps them take responsibility for healthy behaviour into their own hands. Many have also experienced psychological, emotional, economic, and social satisfaction, which has in turn helped improve their lives. They are socially satisfied through the interactions they have on the platform and end their exchanges. From the listener groups created, some have formed relationships off radio and that have helped them access credit facilities and institutions which have in turn improved their economic status.

The interactivity on radio stations during the COVID-19 pandemic may have helped people form groups through radio, which in turn benefited them in one way or another and improved their livelihoods. Through these groups, community members gain ideas on how to handle certain underlying conditions that exacerbate the present situation. For example, those with chronic illnesses can share their experiences and lessons learned, helping others who suffer from the same conditions to pick up valuable insights. MMUST FM is a media station that

communicates and gets feedback from its listeners. The study, therefore, seeks to find out how the station utilized two-way communication during the pandemic.

Okinyi (2019) poses the challenges hindering the effectiveness of community radios, such as the licensing problem, saying that just like the commercial radios, licensing fees and donor funding have become scarce and inadequate, hence a problem in maintaining the frequency. This undermines the effectiveness of such media channels in maintaining consistent communication to help address an issue, such as pandemics. Another issue of concern is that the ability of a society to do away with the non-agents of development and adopt new ideas in their lives makes it easy for change to take place through the communication of ideas; therefore, the cultural background of a community matters for change to take place.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study on the COVID-19 Communication Strategies Employed by 103.9 MMUST FM was explained using the Framing Theory of Communication and the Social Cognitive Theory. A theory helps a researcher to make observations, understand and explain human interactions and the factors that influence human behaviour (Kivunja, 2018).

2.5.1 Framing Theory

According to Goffman (1974), Erving Goffman invented the framing theory in 1974. The theory states that public opinion often depends on how the media frames its issues and therefore describes the practice of delivering news and messages within a known context. It is related to the Agenda Setting Theory only in that it focuses on specific issues rather than a general topic at large. Its basis relies on the focus it gives to defining a particular event and suggests that how something is presented to an audience influences their reaction to the information given (D' Angelo, 2019).

Ogbodo et al. (2020) state that how a message is communicated has a significant role to play in how the public interprets it, and people tend to pay attention to what is not said too. However, framing enables the media to achieve its purpose of relaying information and giving the public an idea of what is happening at the same time.

People interpret what is new to their world through the frameworks and this theory applies to this research since the levels of awareness and influence towards the COVID-19 pandemic issues among the people of Kakamega county depended on the MMUST FM's frameworks and how they constructed the health promotion messages on COVID-19 to their listeners.

Reinhardt et al. (2022) give an example of an appropriate communication tool as a strategy for vaccination, which is radio public service announcements, which can be constructed as a campaign frame where there are high levels of listenership to the announcements. They are more effective at the early stages of the vaccination process. If followed up by other materials that provide a deeper understanding of the announcements, this approach can be effective in creating behaviour change for mitigating a pandemic, such as COVID-19.

Ogbodo et al. (2020) continue to explain that frames that communicate fear and human-interest issues were the most dominant in the media stations for relevance during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a strategy that helped people interpret what was already being discussed among them about the health risks and safety issues surrounding the pandemic. They continue to explain that the frames needed to be self-sufficient and coherent, as they lacked these qualities. This is because the media stations were in a haste to get the news to their audiences, sometimes without observing how this was going to affect their reaction and this could cause more panic and fear to the public as compared to what had been communicated earlier.

Chamegere (2021) explains that for relevance, the media paid attention to certain aspects of their news coverage on the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as what they played in order to avoid

conspiracies and misinformation. The frames, as presented by 103.9 MMUST FM, were studied to determine how they influenced the audience's perception, reaction and understanding of the messages during the COVID-19 pandemic. This theory, therefore, guided the study of the communication strategies as used by the radio station and the factors that affected the listenership of its audience during the pandemic, which are the first two objectives of this research.

Guenther et al. (2024) state that framing helps the media to create messages that align with an audience's perceptions and beliefs, making them easily understood. This influences the feedback and can be best utilized to guide crisis communication, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, as seen in this study.

2.5.2 Social Cognitive Theory

This theory, developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, explains the factors that influence human behaviour. The theory describes how health behaviour change is affected by factors such as self-awareness and expectations, among other social constructs; therefore, humans are motivated to act from their thoughts (Bandura, 2001).

Hagger and Hamilton (2022) explain that the preventive behaviour change towards the COVID-19 pandemic depended on the Social Cognitive Theory to manage future outbreaks or variants. The social change determinants, such as moral norms and anticipated regrets, were some of the factors that affected the COVID-19 intervention programs.

The judgments and expectations based on behavioural information determine the decisions people make and act accordingly. Therefore, in this study, the residents' behaviour change towards the COVID-19 pandemic depended on the media communication for the predictable outcomes if the regulations communicated were adhered to or not. As MMUST FM communicated on the pandemic, some factors affected the uptake of the COVID-19

information such as the cultural stereotypes and beliefs and the social policies. This made the radio station construct its messages in a manner that would be understood and adhered to by the listeners without much thought.

Mathieu et al. (2021) state that despite the broad reach to the audiences through the media and other government and public health agencies advocating for COVID-19 preventive behaviours, there have been different observations on the behaviour change among the people due to various factors. This made the control and uptake of vaccines vary in the areas. It was a bit difficult to control the pandemic in the high-risk areas when the COVID-19 spread was at its peak.

From the research, it is seen that Kakamega County was a high-risk area and the information given on the preventive measures needed to be strictly followed. The factors that the researcher looked into were found to have affected the behaviour change of the residents, hence a fear of the fast spread of the virus in the County. MMUST FM, therefore, played a vital role in helping communicate about the virus while considering these factors, hence the relevance of this theory in the study.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the communication strategies employed by MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic and the factors influencing listenership and participation. The media station uses the strategies to communicate messages promptly to the audiences while considering other factors such as the cultural beliefs and practices, and the demographic composition of its audience to bring out clear messages for an impact and behaviour change.

While airing this information to their listeners, some issues have to be keenly looked at to avoid any challenges in the process. These include the media policies and the protocols that need to be followed for the success of the media station in its purpose, as illustrated in Fig. 2.1 below:

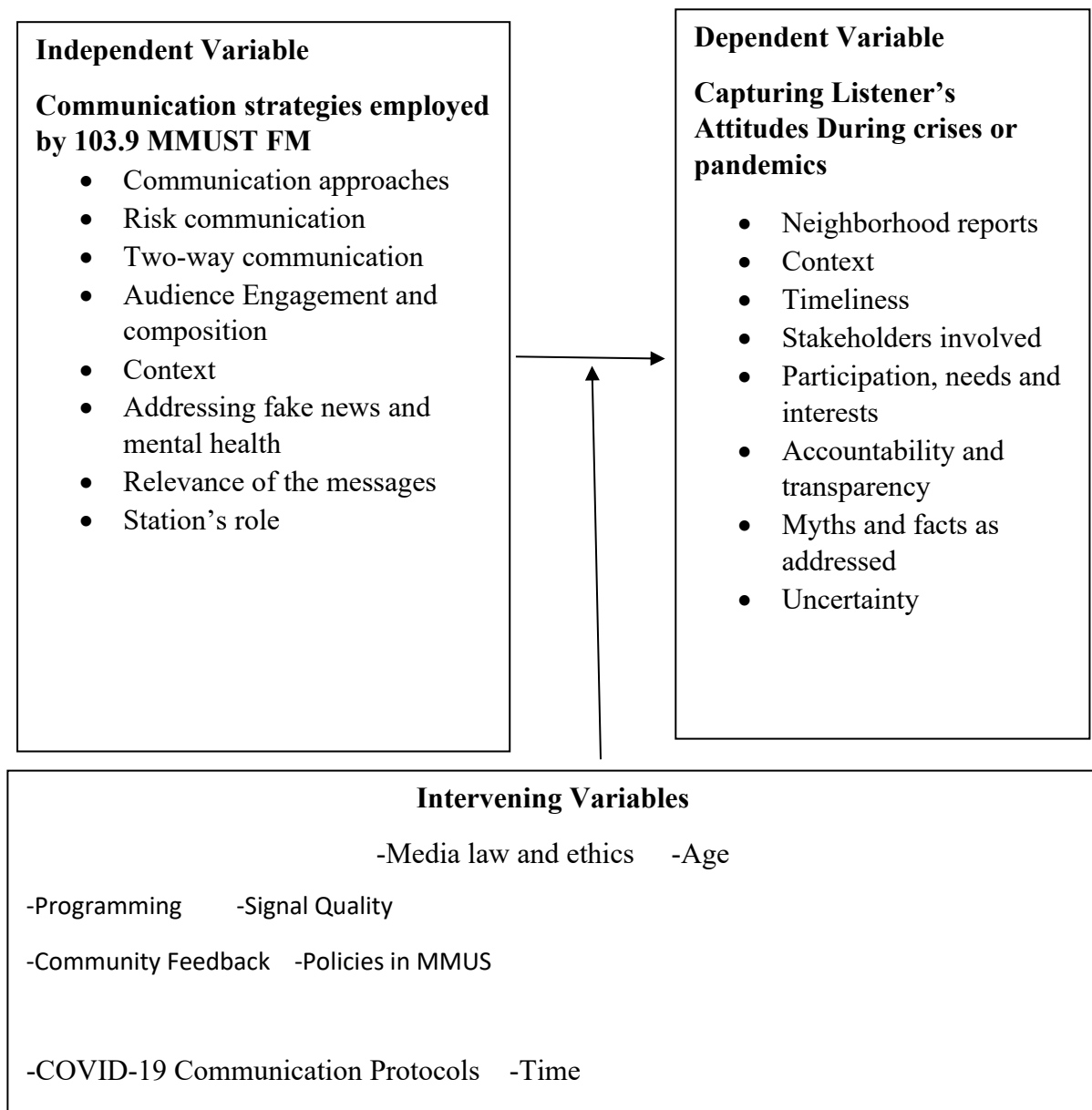


Fig.2.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

The chapter presents a comprehensive approach and procedure for conducting the study, including a description of the study area, study design, data collection, and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-method approach where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. This was used to provide accurate and comprehensive findings for the study, presenting both numerical data and a detailed description of the study. A survey was undertaken to collect quantitative data using questionnaires from the residents of Lurambi Sub-County, while qualitative data was collected using in-depth interview schedules administered to selected producers of the 103.9 MMUST FM producers and COVID-19 health experts whom the Radio station interviewed during the pandemic.

3.2 Study Area

This study was conducted in Lurambi Sub-County, found in Kakamega County. The sub-county hosts Kakamega town, the headquarters of Kakamega County. It is 52 km north of Kisumu City and 30 km north of the equator (Open Institute, n.d). According to the 2019 Census conducted by the Government of Kenya, the sub-county has a population of 188,212 people (KNBS, 2019). Kakamega is among the most populous counties in Kenya and a cosmopolitan area, making it suitable for study due to its diverse population, which comprises people from different cultures and backgrounds. The large population necessitated the need for proper containment of the COVID-19 virus. The town is considered the heart and capital of western Kenya with an elevation of about 1,535 meters (Atamba, 2019).

The wards of Lurambi sub-county are: Butsotso East, Butsotso South, Butsotso Central, Mahiakalo, Sieywe and Shirere. Kakamega formerly hosted the regional headquarters known as western province with its local inhabitants mostly of the Luhya tribe. It has an age distribution of 0-14 years (46.6%), 15-64 years (49.7%) and 65+ years (3.6%) (Oruta & Wangara, 2021).

It is a cosmopolitan area with people from diverse languages and cultures, making it suitable for this study. The study was done in this area because it is the sub-county that hosts MMUST University, where MMUST FM is found and is very populous as compared to other areas in the region; therefore, there is a probability of good listening to MMUST FM by residents of this sub-county and the population posed a high risk of spreading the virus.

3.3 Study Population

As Mertler (2021) defined, the study population consists of the more extensive group of residents of the community about whom the study is concerned, or the researcher would like to generalize their findings. It is the total number of objects from which information is desired. This research had a study population of 188, 212 residents of Kakamega town, 4 MMUST FM members of staff who are also the producers of the station and 2 COVID-19 health experts who were guests in the MMUST FM's COVID-19 program. This is because the MMUST FM radio signal is strongest in Lurambi Sub-County, and it has the highest population as compared to the neighboring towns; therefore, the probability of listenership to this particular station amongst the people living here is assured. The researcher considered the findings valuable and applicable in public health communication at the time of existence of the radio station because of the role it played during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4 Sampling Size and Techniques

According to Ellison et al. (2012), sampling is the process of obtaining information from a part of the population or the entire population. This answers the question 'who will be the respondents?'.

From an analysis of Salehi & Dadgar (2016), for this study's sample size, the researcher used the formula developed by Krejcie & Morgan in 1970, which is:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P * (1-P)}{(ME^2 * (N-1)) + (X^2 * P * (1-P))}$$

Where :

n = sample size

X² = Chi – square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N = Population Size

P = population proportion (.50 in this table)

ME = desired Margin of Error (expressed as a proportion)

Salehi and Dadgar (2016) continue to explain that, with reference to this formula, 'The Research Advisor's Table' will be used by the researcher to determine the actual number of subjects that will be used as the sample size for this study.

Population Size	Sample Size					
	Sample Table				Current Article Risk-Based Formula	
	95% Confidence level		99% Confidence level		Risk Probability	
	5% Error	1% Error	5% Error	1% Error	0.99	0.75
75	63	74	67	75	3	2
300	169	291	207	295	8	6
800	260	739	363	763	20	16
2,500	333	1,984	524	2,173	60	47
25,000	378	6,939	646	9,972	593	462
100,000	383	8,762	662	14,227	2,370	1,848
250,000	384	9,248	662	15,555	6,185	4,618
500,000	384	9,423	663	16,055	12,369	9,235
2,500,000	384	9,423	663	16,478	59,216	46,171

Figure 3.1: The Research Advisor’s Table

Source: (Salehi & Dadgar, 2016)

According to the table, for a population of 188,212, as in this study involving the residents of Kakamega town, the sample size should be 384. Due to the limited audience, the researcher used 30% of the sample for the study, with a margin of error (degree of accuracy) of 0.05 and a confidence level of 71.66%, resulting in a sample size of 115, which was used to generalize the findings. Creswell (2014) states that a 30% of the population can be used to generalize a study.

The reduced margin error and confidence level were compensated in the field, as the researcher added more questions to the questionnaire and spent a prolonged time in the field collecting data. This was to increase the validity of the data (Metler, 2021). Mohanasundaram & Harsha (2024) state that for general surveys, a commonly recommended sample size ranges from 100 to 200 respondents to ensure sufficient statistical power and effectiveness.

For this study, the researcher applied probability sampling techniques. For the residents of Kakamega town, the COVID-19 health experts and the MMUST FM producers, purposive sampling was used to select them to be subjected to the data collection tools. Mertler (2021) describes this type of sampling as one in which respondents are selected for a specific purpose and the researcher has a criterion for selection, giving it another name, 'judgement sampling'. There is a list of active fans of the radio station from Lurambi Sub-County that will be made available to the researcher for the study by the station's management, hence the use of purposive sampling. The size that was subjected to the survey tools here, therefore, was 115 residents of Lurambi sub-county for quantitative data. 2 COVID-19 health experts who were hosted in the program on COVID-19 and 2 producers of the total MMUST FM producers were picked for qualitative data, which made the sample size a total of 119 people.

3.5 Research Instruments

The research instruments that were used in this study were questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the residents of Lurambi Sub-County. Qualitative data was collected using in-depth interview schedules, which were administered to selected producers of the 103.9 MMUST FM and COVID-19 health experts, interviewed by the Radio station during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.5.1 Questionnaires for the residents of Lurambi Sub-County

According to Mertler (2021), questionnaires are the most popular data collection method. They consist of several questions, printed or typed in a definite order. Respondents provided answers to both the open and closed-ended questions in the spaces provided. The questionnaire included a section that helped determine the biographical details of the respondents, such as their age, gender, level of education, and ward of residence. This was followed by three sets of questions

that were aligned to the three objectives of the study. It was given to the residents of Lurambi Sub-County to write answers by themselves with guidance where necessary and quantitative data was obtained.

3.5.2 Interview Schedule for the MMUST FM producers and COVID-19 health experts

In-depth interviews were designed for 2 MMUST FM producers and 2 COVID-19 health experts who were guests on the COVID-19 programs to collect qualitative data. According to Mertler (2021), an interview schedule is a method where a researcher meets the respondent personally and collects information from them. The responses are for the questions offered, which had been prepared before by the researcher.

For the success of the interview, the researcher asked general, open-ended questions while listening actively and recording the answers given by the interviewees in audio for transcription. The researcher also had good temperaments and personality, maintaining a relaxed environment for a yielding conversation.

Furthermore, the interviewees had the information they were being asked to provide, and they were motivated to answer the questions and offer in-depth information as needed. This was achieved by gaining control over the interview by eliminating bias and requesting clarifications on any unclear answers. The researcher ensured that the interviewees thoroughly understood the questions as they were asked. This was made possible using the interview guides that were given as part of the preparation process by the researcher.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher developed a proposal in 2 months. After a departmental defense presentation at the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and a school defense at the School of Arts and Social Sciences, a permit for research was granted by the University's Directorate of

Postgraduate Studies, signifying approval for the research. The researcher then sought permission from the National Council of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), MMUST FM producers, the COVID-19 health experts and respondents from Lurambi Sub-County to continue with the study. A field study was then carried out in 1 month and both qualitative and quantitative data were collected.

The researcher planned meetings with the 115 residents as per the sample, where they answered the questions on the questionnaires while being guided where necessary. The researcher then picked them immediately for analysis of the quantitative data provided. An appointment was also made with the 2 MMUST FM producers and the 2 COVID-19 health experts for an interview, and qualitative data was obtained for analysis. The interviews were conducted while observing the qualities of a good interviewer and the researcher took responsibility to prepare the interviewees too for the sessions. After the data collection had been completed, analysis of the data was done.

3.7 Instrument validity and reliability

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the data analysis actually represent the phenomena under study (Ellison et al.,2012). It is concerned with the accuracy or truthfulness of a measurement. To enhance the content validity of the quantitative data collected, first, the researcher had a peer debriefing from a published researcher from the Journalism department and an external audit from another published researcher, given as a supervisor from the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies, to help review, critique and add on to the processes of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The researcher then had a prolonged and diligent participation in the study site to increase the validity of the data and findings (Mertler, 2021). By this, the researcher spent more time in the field to interview, engage, interact and observe the participants to know and develop trust with them and study their systems and patterns.

According to Ellison et al. (2012), reliability measures the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results of data after repeated trials. An Internal Consistency Reliability test was conducted to assess reliability of this study using the Cronbach's Alpha which has a formula:

$$\alpha = \frac{\text{Number of items } N\bar{c}}{\text{Average variance } \bar{v} + \text{Average inter-item covariance among the items } (N-1)\bar{c}}$$

This was used to test how consistent the respondents were with their answers, with Cronbach's Alpha ranging from 0.0 to 1.0, and the researcher intended to have more questions on the questionnaire to increase the chances of reliability. This was calculated using the SPSS software (Heo et al., 2015). In this study, the coefficients greater than 0.7 were considered suitable for statistical analysis. The Cronbach coefficient was 0.813, translating to 81.3%. This indicates a high coefficient value; thus, the tools were reliable.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Data

To enhance the validity of the qualitative data, the researcher achieved trustworthiness with the participants by ensuring credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability of the data collected during the research process.

Wood et al. (2020) describe **Credibility** as the level of confidence that a researcher has in the data collected and analyzed. It represents the original data as presented by the participants in the survey. Credibility involves triangulation for verification with other sources, member checking for accuracy, prolonged engagement with the participants to gain trust with the participants and collect in-depth data. The researcher in this study ensured the credibility of the

data by taking quality time to gather data and referring to other sources. The quality time taken also enabled the researcher do a check of the responses given to confirm their accuracy.

Dependability of the qualitative data refers to how the data is clearly documented and every step of the data collection and analysis. It gives the consistency of the findings in the data collected and reflects a procedural process of the study (Korstjens & Mose, 2018). In this study, the researcher has detailed the processes followed for data collection and analysis, giving references where needed for confirmation of the steps.

Confirmability ensures that the raw data from respondents is collected without bias; therefore, the research findings accurately reflect the actual experiences of the respondents. If the data is to be given back to the respondents repeatedly, then the results would be the same, together with their clear codes. It gives a trail audit of the data (Ahmed, 2024). In this study, the researcher ensured the confirmability of the data by spending a prolonged time with the respondents to ensure accuracy.

Transferability refers to how a study can be used to define situations in a different context or location (Drisko, 2024). In this study, the findings can be used to define situations or describe participants in different locations, especially in matters of public health communication. This is especially in the areas with a high population hence posing a high risk for contagion (Grossi-Soyster & LaBeaud, 2013).

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques and Interpretation

Data analysis was based on the research objectives. The study generated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were coded, organised to be processed using the latest version of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 27, and then analysed. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data

derived from the closed-ended questions by calculating mean scores, frequencies and percentages, which were then presented in tables, charts and graphs. Qualitative data derived from open-ended questions were thematically presented in narrative form and tables.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) state that these are the standard measures for observation when conducting research. The researcher had consent from the respondents and ensured that they participated voluntarily. Confidentiality was also observed and anonymous reporting was maintained while presenting the data to do away with claims of illegality during the research period. Additionally, research permits were obtained from the University's Directorate of Postgraduate Studies (DPS) and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) to uphold the integrity of the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

In this chapter, the researcher presents the results, interprets them and discusses the findings of this study. The details of the primary data analysis and description of the sample characteristics have also been given. The data is organized from 4.1 to 4.5.1 according to the specific objectives of this study

4.1 Response Rate and Characteristics of Respondents

The study targeted a sample of 115 respondents who are residents of Lurambi sub-county. All respondents participated in the survey by completing all parts of the questionnaire, providing quantitative data for analysis, and ensuring a 100% response rate for the study. Only 2 MMUST FM producers and 2 COVID-19 health experts were interviewed for qualitative data and analysis.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) state that a 70% response rate is enough sample for a general study. This enabled the researcher to generalize the study's findings from the 119 responses to the entire population.

4.2 Demographic Information

Table 4.1 Age of MMUST FM listeners

What is your age?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-27 years	73	63.5	63.5	63.5
	28-37 years	27	23.5	23.5	87.0
	38-47 years	10	8.7	8.7	95.7
	above 47 years	5	4.3	4.3	100.0

	Total	115	100.0	100.0	
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Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Table 4.1 on the demographic information of the respondents shows that 73 (64%) of the respondents were in the age bracket of 18-27 years, 27(23%) were at the age of 28-37 years, 10(9%) of the respondents were between the ages 38-47 years while 5(4%) were above 47 years. This clearly indicates that though different age groups were involved in the study, most of the listeners of MMUST radio station are youths between the ages of 18-27 years while older people don't really subscribe to the radio station. 103.9 MMUT FM is a campus-based community radio, therefore, most listeners are students who prefer the content presented to be in the form of music and talk with fewer less advertisements.

This explains that such radio stations have to keep their broadcasts entertaining for this age group in order to be efficient and effective in achieving the program's purpose. Meyer (2004) in a study states, that Radio Shimla (RSFM) found at the University of Free State (UFS) in South Africa, they have a policy to give music more space of 75% compared to 24% of talks on air with a Top 40 format to increase and maintain the young audience or youth tuned to the station which are mainly students. The music has to be updated, fresh and trendy, with the hits played day in and day out. Research also needs to be conducted among the youth, either through focus groups or telephone surveys, to determine what they really want and at what specific time.

Ojwang (2017) states that presenters must speak the language of the youth and address issues that are important in the market. This is because the youth get information from social media, and for the radios to maintain their audience, they have to keep them up to date. The jargon and colloquial languages are applied to keep the programs informal, fun, modern and entertaining. However, governments have made it a policy that educational and factual

programs have to be included on such radios. Therefore, frequent, 7–10 minute programs on such serious topics can be aired with the interviewees being young, with much knowledge and highly skilled on the topic being discussed for the youth listening to the station to attract and maintain their listenership.

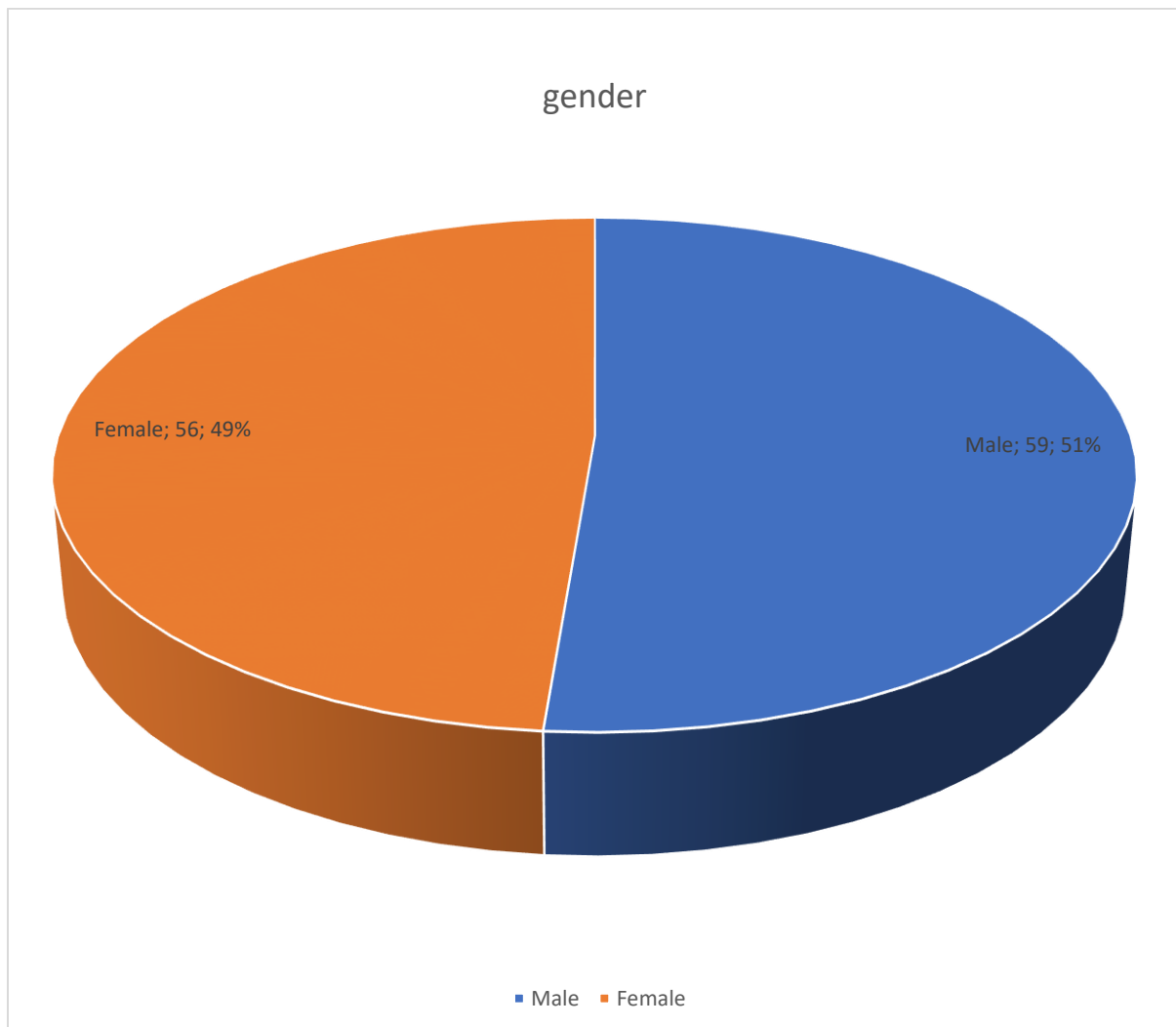


Fig 4.1 Gender of Respondents

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on the gender of the respondents in Fig 4.1 show that 59(51%) of the respondents were of the male gender, while 56 (49%) were female. Thus, it is clear that the study was not biased on the basis of gender, hence the findings of the study are rational

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary level	10	8.7	8.7	8.7
	Secondary level	11	9.6	9.6	18.3
	Diploma	14	12.2	12.2	30.4
	Bachelors	75	65.2	65.2	95.7
	Post-graduate	5	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on the education level of the respondents in Fig 4.2 show that 75(65.23%) of the respondents had a bachelor’s degree, 14(12.17%) had a diploma, 11(9.56%) had secondary education, 10(11.5%) had primary education, while 5(4.35%) had attained post-graduate. This indicates that the respondents who took part in the study were educated and were in a position to read, understand and answer the questions that were asked correctly, improving the accuracy of the findings.

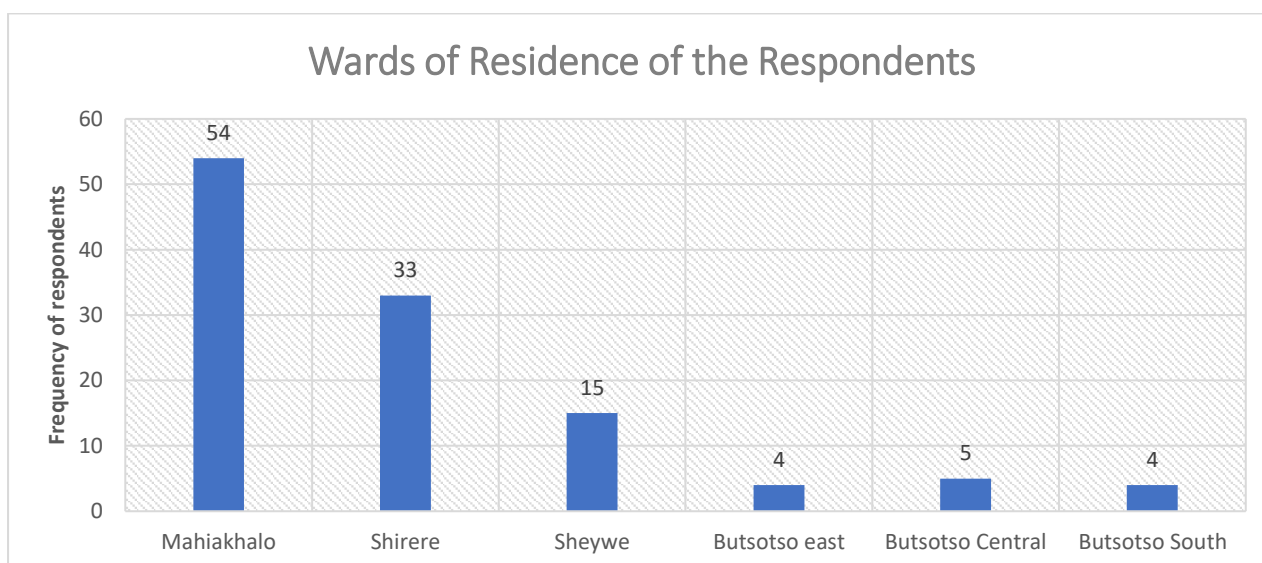


Fig 4.2 Wards of residence of the respondents

Source: Field Data, 2023

From the findings in Fig 4.4 show respondents per ward of Lurambi Sub County. Mahiakhalo ward constituted 54(46.95%), Shirere constituted 33 (28.7%), Sheywe ward constituted 15 (13.04%), Butso East constituted 4 (3.47%), Butso Central constituted 5 (4.35%) and Butso South ward constituted 4 (3.47%) of the respondents.

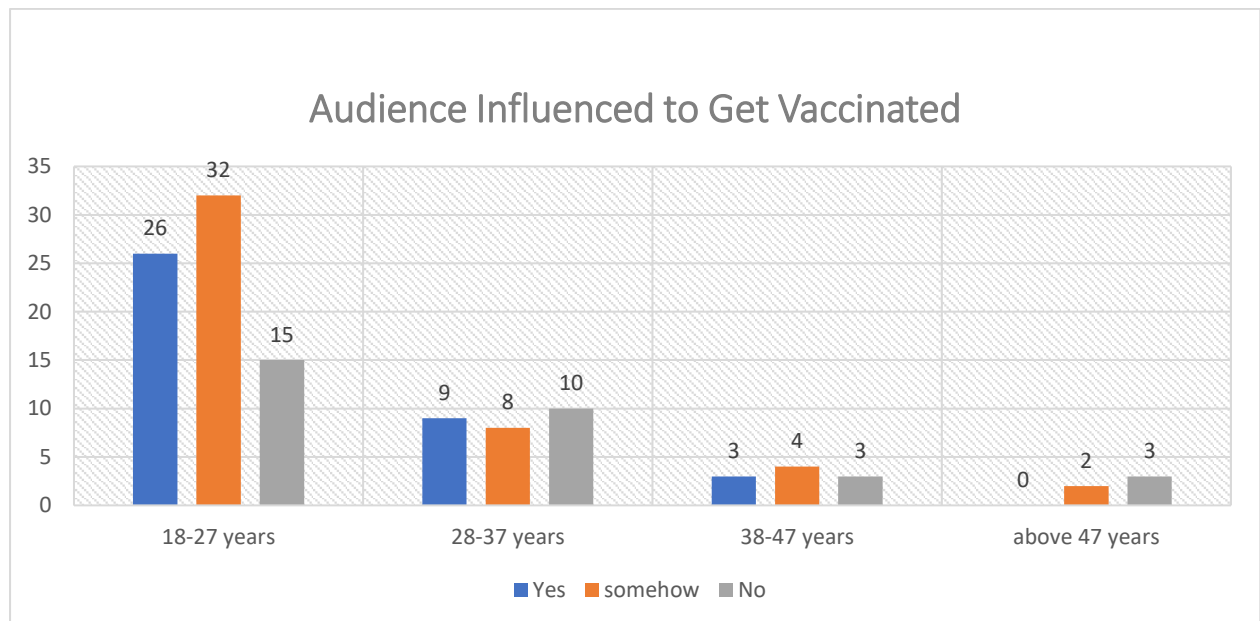


Fig 4.3 Audience Influenced to get vaccinated.

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on how the respondents were influenced by the messages to get vaccinated in Fig 4.8 show that most of the respondents, more so of the age group 18-27 years and 28-37 years, said that the radio station played a significant role in making their decision to be vaccinated. Those who said MMUST FM influenced their decision to get vaccinated were 38 (33.04%). Additionally, a significant number were persuaded by the radio station's messages to get vaccinated.

Wilson et al. (2021), state that two-way communication through media such as MMUST FM is required for public treatment and vaccination. The media station builds trust between the medical researchers and the public, hence driving the desire to go for the vaccines.

Table 4.3 Education levels of respondents per ward

		Primary	Secondary	Diploma	Bachelors	Post-graduate
Which ward do you reside	Mahiakhalo	4	3	7	39	1
	Shirere	3	1	3	23	3
	Sheywe	0	4	2	9	0
	Butsotso east	0	1	0	3	0
	Butsotso Central	2	0	2	0	1
	Butsotso South	1	2	0	1	0

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig. 4 .5 show the educational level of the respondents in each ward. Generally, the people who were given the questionnaires were educated and were in a position to read, understand and answer correctly the questions that were asked. Looking at the graph, a good number of the populace from Lurambi constituency are graduates and Mahiakhalo takes the lead with the highest number of graduates, diplomas, secondary education and primary, leading with 54(52.17%), Shirere 33(2.70%), Sheywe 15(13.04%), Butsotso Central 5(4.34%), Butsotso South had the lowest number of respondents and also a smaller number of graduates at 1.33%. This is because most respondents are affiliated with Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST), which is the parent institution that owns MMUST FM, either as staff, producers, students, or stakeholders.

4.3 Communication Strategies Adopted by MMUST FM for COVID-19 Pandemic

Communication (Objective 1)

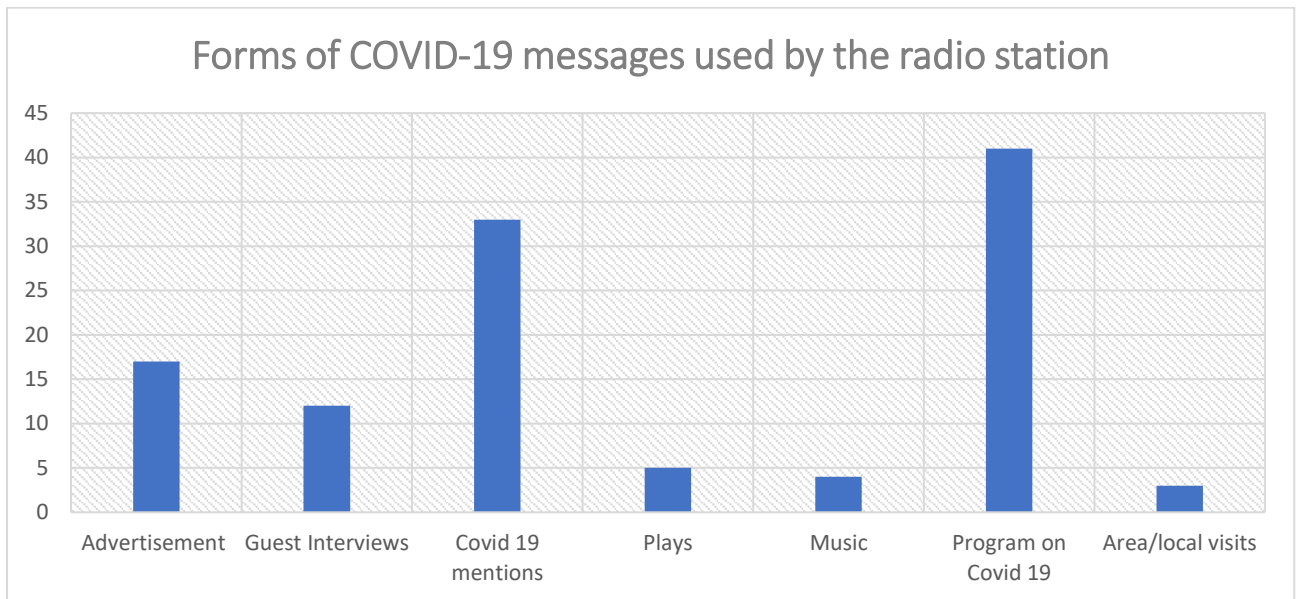


Fig 4.4 Forms of COVID-19 messages used by 103.9MMUST FM

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on the forms of the radio messages in Fig 4.4 reveal that 41(35.7%) of respondents said program on Covid-19 was the best in promoting COVID-19 awareness at MMUST Fm, 33(26.7%) said Covid 19 mentions, 17(14.8%) said advertisements, 12(10.4%) said guest interviews, 5(4.3%) said plays/drama, 4(3.5%) said music, while 3 % said area/local visits by MMUST which is MMUST FM's parent institution. This shows that the majority of respondents agreed that the program on COVID-19 was the most effective approach for COVID-19 messaging to MMUST FM listeners.

Mukwevho et al. (2022) findings in their study at Univen FM conform to this study in that promotion of the COVID-19 messages could effectively be done to create awareness through advertisements, announcements, news bulletins and the breakfast shows or programs where guests could be invited to talk about the pandemic. This made the listeners learn how to protect

themselves against the virus leading to behaviour change and further into eradicating the pandemic.

Table 4.4 Effect of the COVID-19 messages on behaviour change

	Did the messages affect your behavior		Total	
	Yes	No		
Which ward do you reside	Mahiakhalo	43	17	60
	Shirere	26	8	34
	Sheywe	14	1	15
	Butsotso east	3	1	4
	Butsotso Central	0	1	1
	Butsotso South	1	0	1
Total		87	28	115

Source: Field Data, 2023

From the table 4.4 above on whether the messages affected the respondents' behaviour, its clear that the 'fear' messages that were aired through MMUST FM informed the decisions that were made by the respondents following the covid-19 virus. 87(75.65%) changed their behaviour reacting to the messages they heard from the radio station with just 24.35% didn't make their decisions following the messages.

Dominic and Kabah (2017) explain how message construction can affect behaviour change by stating that listener groupings can give an audience a sense of belonging, hence creating an environment in which they can interact amongst themselves to address their needs, like during the COVID-19 pandemic. The programs can also help the groups have a neighbourly watch hence collaboration for social change in a community.

One of the producers of MMUST FM expressed that:

'After the COVID-19 program had ended, some of the listeners still asked if we could have another episode. This is because the messages we gave had an impact and gave them solutions to the pandemic This shows how much the station's messages had an effect

on them hence they wanted to get more on how to protect themselves from it.

Veinberg (2015) affirms the findings of this study by stating that there is a gap between creating awareness and action among the youth in a community and this may be due to a lack of engagement in the communication channel, leading to its failure, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.5 Opinions about the radio station’s messages on COVID-19 being honest

	Do you feel the messages were frank and honest		Total
	Yes	No	
Which ward do you reside			
Mahiakhalo	52	8	60
Shirere	28	6	34
Sheywe	14	1	15
Butsotso east	4	0	4
Butsotso Central	1	0	1
Butsotso South	1	0	1
Total	100	15	115

Source: Field Data, 2023

From the above table 4.5 on their opinion on honesty of the MMUST FM COVID-19 messages, 100(86.95%) of respondents agreed that the messages from MMUST radio were frank and honest while 15(13.05%) didn't find the messages to be frank and honest. Per ward, 52(52%) residents of Mahiakhalo, 28(28%) from Shirere, 14 (14%) from Sheywe, 4(4%) from Butsotso and a 1(1%) from Butsotso Central and Butsotso South wards. Generally, most people believed the messages from MMUST were honest and frank.

One of the COVID-19 health experts who was a guest in one of the COVID-19 programs informed the researcher that he gave clinical facts for specific illnesses so as the remain factual and honest with the audiences. He specifically used English for the names that could be

distorted if translated, then explained what they meant in Kiswahili for the audience to understand better, to avoid sugar-coating of the COVID-19 reality.

Table 4.6 Opinions about the radio station’s messages on COVID-19 being consistent

	Were the messages consistent		Total	
	Yes	No		
Which ward do you reside				
	Mahiakhalo	41	19	60
	Shirere	24	10	34
	Sheywe	14	1	15
	Butsotso east	3	1	4
	Butsotso Central	1	0	1
	Butsotso South	1	0	1
Total		84	31	115

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in table 4.6, the consistency of MMUST radio in delivering the messages on covid-19 was appreciated by 84(73.04%) of the respondents while 31(26.96%) doubted the presentation of the covid-19 message and the consistency. This percentage of MMUST radio listeners are not to be assumed, the station should dig deeper and find out why some listeners thought their messages were inconsistent. The results from the table also show that there was no active participation from Butsotso South ward and this might be due to the previous statistics that showed low education hence the people in that ward might have been fond of the indigenous languages which MMUST FM did not use.

According to the interview with the MMUST FM producer, it was revealed that the station maintained its consistency in communicating about the COVID-19 pandemic by having the programs on COVID-19 every week on Wednesdays for 14 weeks and repeated sharing of the programs. For relevance, the station made sure that they had the COVID-19 programs right in

the middle of the pandemic, which was a perfect timing because the virus had become a worldwide menace (Field, 2023).

Anyonje et al. (2022) confirm this study by stating that community-based media gave consistent and up-to-date messages on COVID-19, hence it remained the most trusted medium in the communities. It happened especially in the rural areas of Busia and Vihiga counties in Western Kenya.

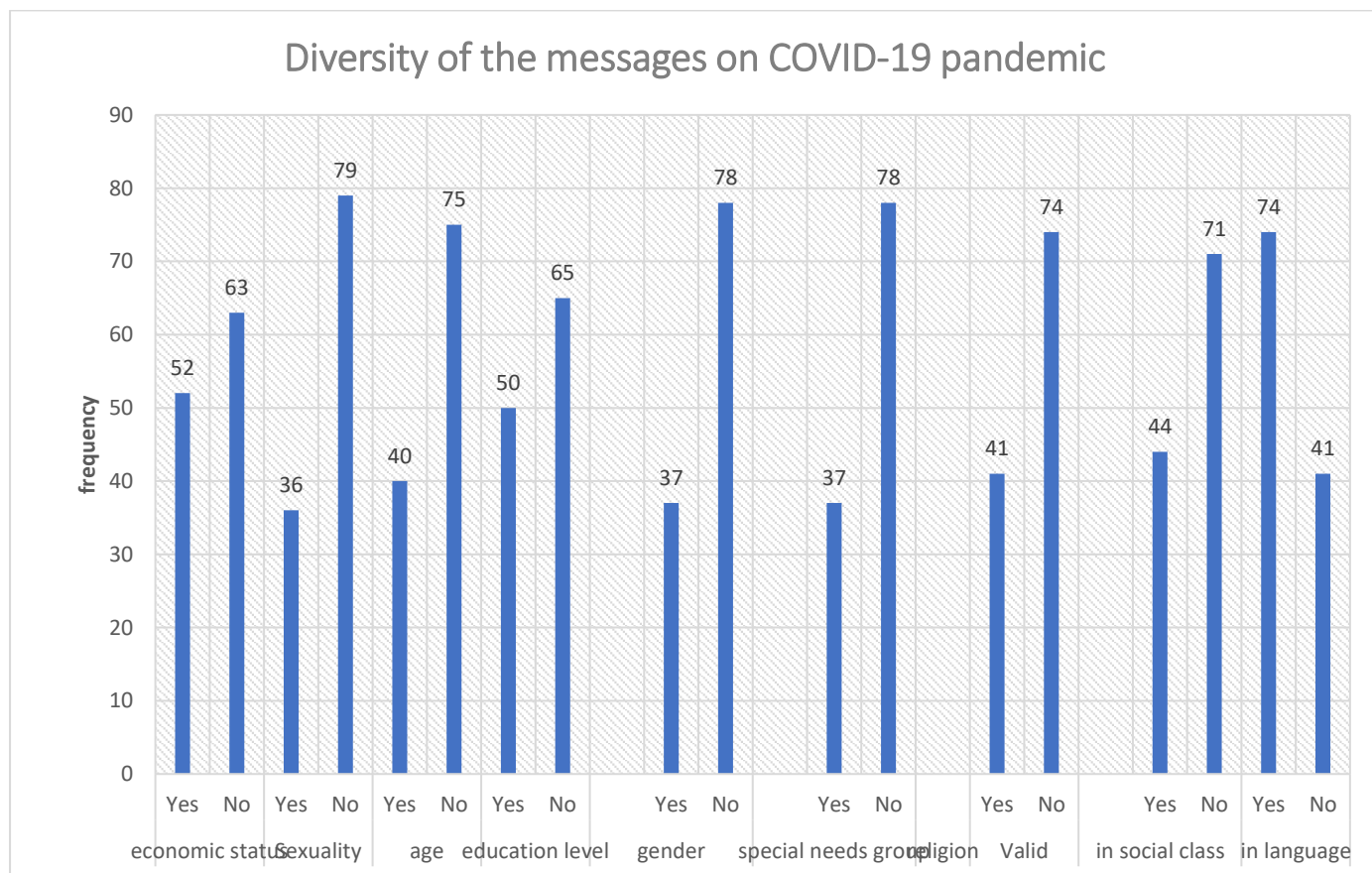


Fig 4.5 Diversity of the messages

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on the diversity of the messages in Fig 4.5 show that 52(45.2%) of the respondents said the messages aired on MMUST radio were diverse in terms of economic status. In comparison, 63(54.8%) disagreed, 36(31.3%) agreed with the diversity of the messages in

terms of sexuality, while 79(68.9%) disagreed, 40(34,8%) agreed with the diversity of the messages in terms of age. In comparison, 75(65.2%) disagreed, 50(43.5%) agreed that the messages were diverse in terms of educational level. In comparison, 65(56.5%) disagreed, 37(32.2%) agreed with the diversity of the messages in terms of gender, while 78(67.8%) disagreed, 37(32.2%) agreed that the messages were diverse in terms of special needs. In comparison, 78(67.8%) disagreed, 41(35.7%) agreed that the messages were diverse in terms of religion, while 74(64.3%) disagreed; most of the respondents agreed that the messages were diverse in terms of language. The analysis above shows that in the case of another wave of COVID-19, the radio station has to implement other measures to ensure that the areas highlighted in terms of diversity are reviewed and measures are taken to improve.

An interview with a COVID-19 health expert on fitness revealed that there was diversity in the language used, as technical names, which could not be translated, were provided in English, while discussions were partly conducted in Kiswahili. This was done for the audience to understand the experts' explanations on the issues being discussed on COVID-19 during the airing of the programs.

One of the Producers interviewed for this study stated that:

‘There were so many other experts invited to talk and were even involved in the scripting of the programs about the COVID-19 pandemic for diversity like the medical expert, communication expert, COVID-19 policies expert, academic expert, an expert in economics, an immunology expert, COVID-19 response and management expert, a chaplain and the MMUST VC. They also talked about how the pandemic affected their fields of profession, together with the people and other factors involved. They covered a variety of issues and, therefore, the listeners were able to give varied opinions and ask different questions depending on their concern from the rest, hence getting informed with expert responses from the varied field hence diversity in all angles’.

The producer continues to explain that:

‘For diversity, the station tailored its programs to reach people of different educational levels since Lurambi sub-county is more of a cosmopolitan area.

The station also ensured that it reached people with varied behavioral characteristics through the experts. A chronological understanding of the varied topics discussed on the COVID-19 pandemic was emphasized on by the station to the general issues so that everything that came up with the arrival of the virus within the communities was addressed. For the language used, the station made sure that there was value for humanity in each communication language used and empathy with both male and female sounds for diversity’.

Every topic around the pandemic was well covered, however, the challenge here as stated by the expert interviewee, was seen where the station only invited experts from the parent institution but did not get COVID-19 experts from other organizations or institutions away from the University for example lawyers or state officials who could give more versed opinions and represent nationwide or even global voices through the station. This could have boosted the station’s level of effectiveness and helped the listeners in knowing ‘exactly how to solve an issue’ in a variety of ways outside their community for example those who were on the move or those who had family away from Lurambi sub-county. The other challenge, as stated by the producer interviewed, was the limited area of coverage, as the program was anticipated to reach a large group of people, even further away into other sub-counties in the Western region (Field, 2023).

4.4 Factors Affecting Audience Listenership and Participation in the MMUST FM COVID-19 Communication (Objective 2)

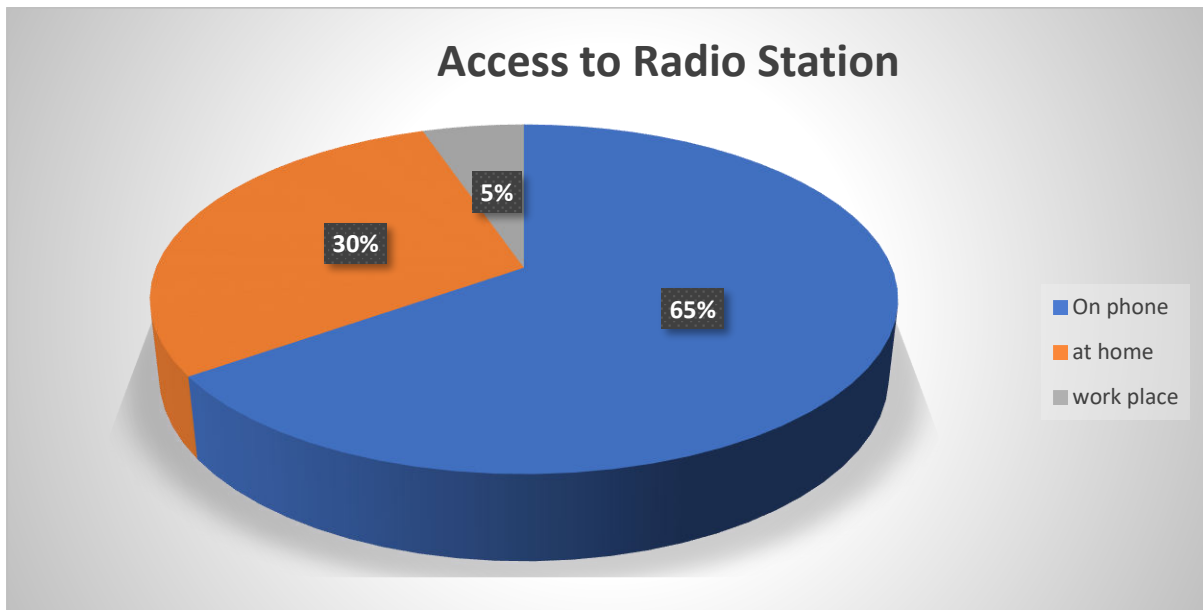


Fig 4.6 Listener’s access to the radio station

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.6 about the listeners’ access to the station shows that 75(65%) of respondents said they accessed MMUST FM by phone, 34(30%) said at home and 6(5%) said at the workplace. This implies that the majority of respondents accessed MMUST Fm through phone. This can also be attributed to the fact that the majority do not have radios or are always on the move, thus find phones more portable.

This finding builds on the study by Laskar and Bhattacharyya (2021), who stated that most community radio stations played a significant role in the dissemination of information regarding COVID-19 compared to commercial and state-owned radio stations. From the above perspective, it can be deduced that community radio stations are more accessible and easily trusted by the masses compared to commercial and state

Beaunoyer et al. (2020) also note that to reach the target audiences with the messages that the community radios are broadcasting, there should be physical access to the radio set with good signals to increase the consistency in information reach about the issue at hand to all community members. From the above perspective, it can be deduced that the availability of an appropriate radio set is essential to facilitate signage and efficiency of coverage areas by these radio stations.

This further builds on to the study by Shariq and Zia (2013) which states that one of the approaches to effective dissemination of messages by the community radios is to make sure that there is accessibility and affordability to the radio programs and by this, the community members must purchase a device through which they can reach the radio signals and that is either by radio or phone. From the above perspective, it can be deduced that the availability of radio devices within a community plays a significant role in determining the accessibility of community radio stations within that geographical space.

A producer interviewed confirms that:

‘103.9 MMUST FM is a community and learning radio station; therefore, it has a limited coverage area. This affected our anticipated audience reach and attention level during the COVID-19 pandemic, as compared to the content that we had programmed for a larger audience. This was one of the challenges that we had experienced’.

Table 4.7 Respondents’ number of years of listening to MMUST FM

	How long have been listening to MMUST FM			Total
	a year or less	2-4 Years	5-7 years	
What is your age				
18-27 years	33	37	3	73
28-37 years	6	18	3	27
38-47 years	4	5	1	10
above 47 years	0	3	2	5
Total	43	63	9	115

Source: Field Data, 2023

On how many years the respondents have been listening to MMUST FM; in Table 4.7, the study shows that across the age groups, many have been listening to MMUST radio for 4 years and below with a 54.78% that have been listening for 2-4 years and 37.39% that constitutes those that have been listening to the radio station for a year or less. Thus, 92.17% have been tuning in to MMUST radio for 4 Years or less. The general tune-in of listeners aged 38 years and above is low, constituting 13.04%. This narrows down into reflecting the number of years of study per student and how it affected their listening to the communication medium discussing the matters that affected their student life at the time of their study at MMUST. Those who listened to the MMUST FM for a longer period of time could have their livelihood around the University for as long as stated in these findings.

A producer interviewed stated that they made the programs entertaining and interactive for their audience, who mainly were the youth of Lurambi Sub-County. The producers also engaged experts for talks during the programs and had a theme music tailored for COVID-19. The producer adds that the programmes were made short since the programmes which are aired for a longer time aren’t usually effective since they may lose their attention in the process.

These helped them in gaining and retaining their listeners especially the youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

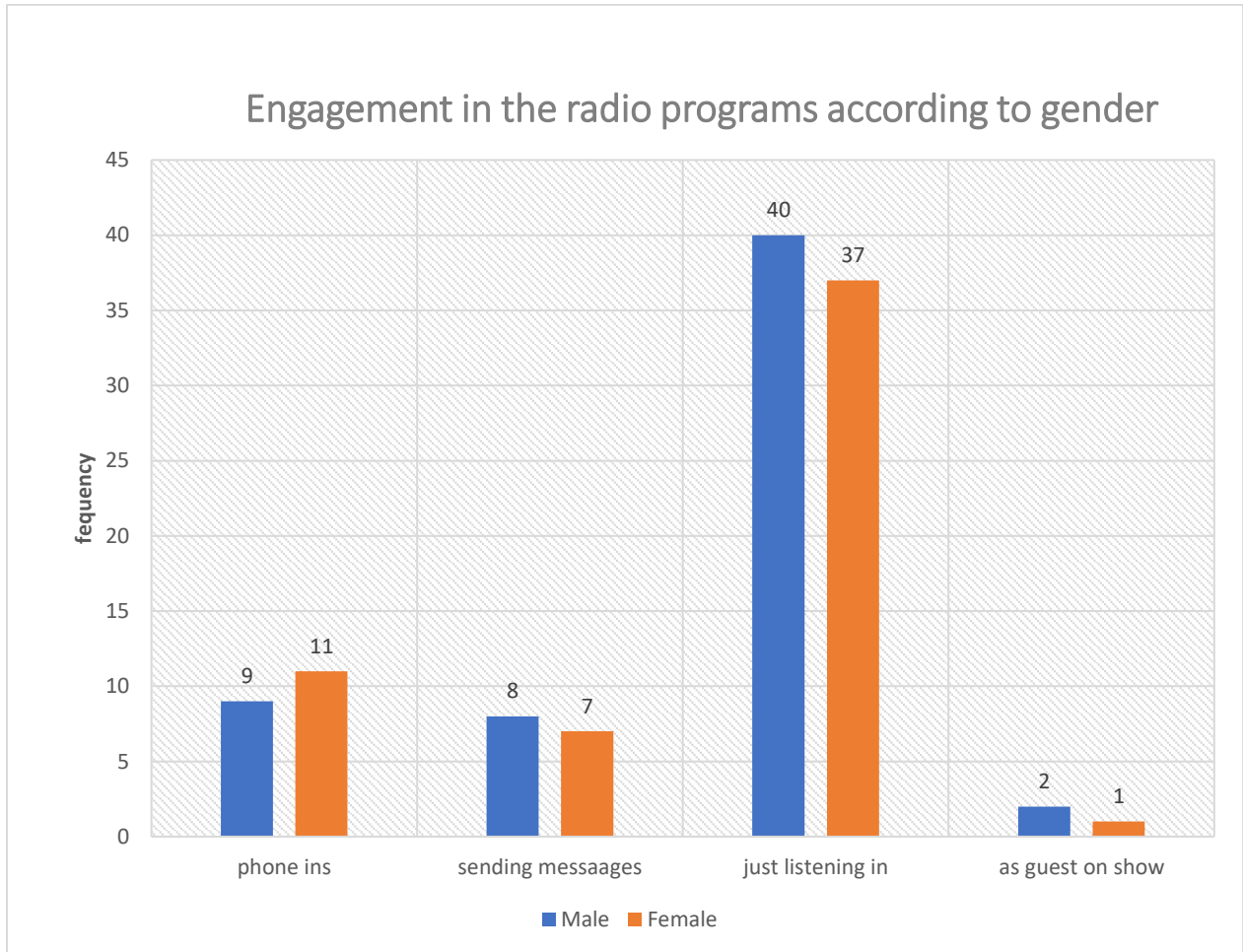


Fig 4.7 Engagement in the radio programs according to gender

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.7 shows the gender of the listeners and how they were engaged in the radio station during the pandemic. The study shows that 55% of females gender engaged by placing calls to the station during the pandemic while 45% of males gender engaged in the radio station. The general participation of listeners as guests on the shows is very low with just

2.6% of both genders. A total of 66.95% of listeners engaged in the radio station by just listening while 13.04% engaged in the station by sending messages during shows.

This finding is contrary to a study by Kamala (2021) on Assessment of Women’s Participation in Community Radio in Iringa Municipality which found that in terms of gender, women listened less and did not participate in radio programs as much as the male.

The finding builds on a earlier one by Mitchell (2014) which noted that all factors held at constant, 60% of radio listeners are females while the remaining 40% are males. These trajectories are accounted for by the fact that most males consider listening to radio as a form of entrainment and tend to be engaged more in economic activities. They enjoy more to watch sports and socializing rather than listening to the radio.

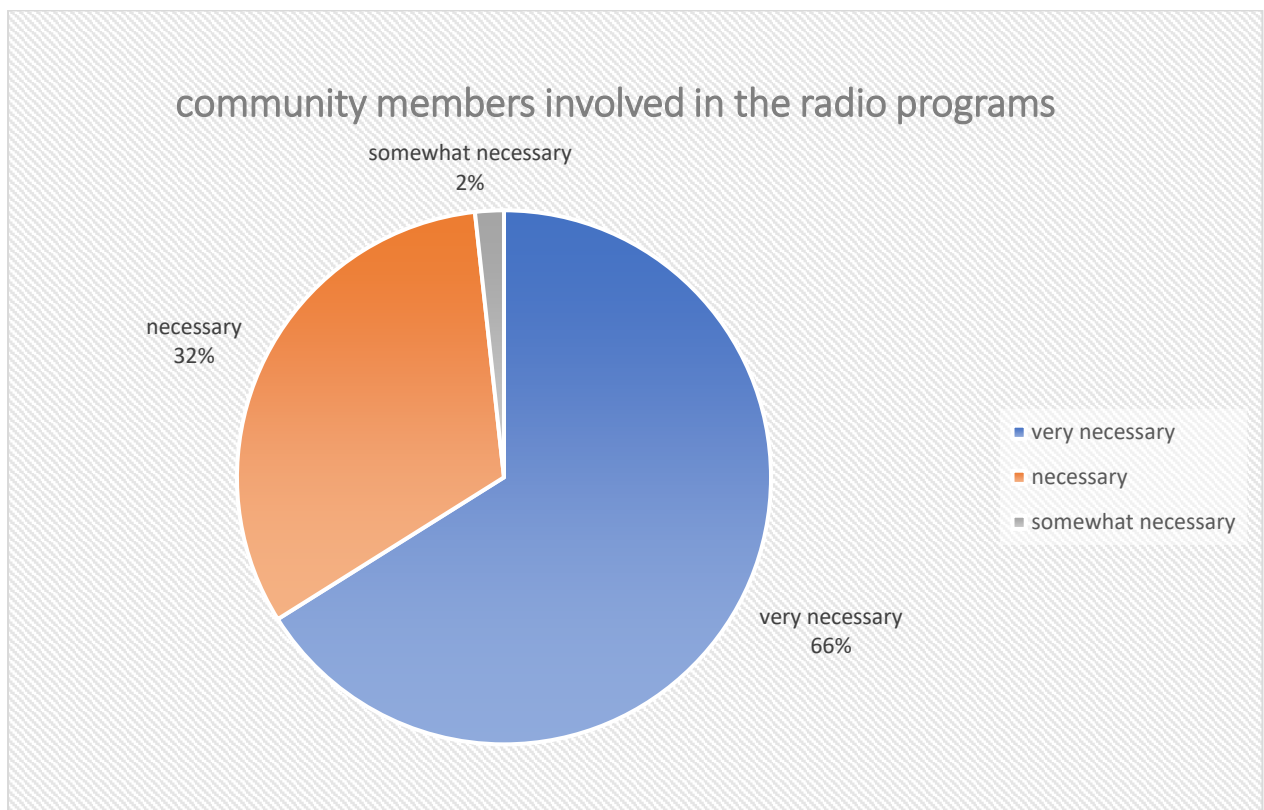


Fig 4.8 Community members involved in the radio programs

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on the respondents' opinion on the involvement of the community members in the COVID-19 programs in Fig 4.8, it shows that 66% of the respondents agreed that it was very necessary to engage the community during the pandemic, 32% said necessary while 2% said somewhat necessary thus, most of the respondents saw it was wise to involve the community actively in passing on the messages during the pandemic.

Schiavo (2013) states that utilizing community members to disseminate messages of health interventions mostly in underserved communities is becoming quite essential. This leaves everyone with the responsibility of creating a better world in health for future generations. A network of community members and some of the community experts can also be engaged in the designing, implementation, and evaluating of the community health communication programs and this makes the community push towards a specific objective since everyone is engaged and feels accountable in achieving a solution to a health problem and in this case, ending the COVID-19 pandemic.

The community members who engaged themselves at MMUST Fm during the COVID-19 pandemic also agreed that the information they got from the station helped them share with their neighbours on the pandemic, making them feel responsible for their future (Field, 2023).

4.4.1 Two-Way Communication, Fake News and Mental Health in COVID-19 Communication

During an interview, one producer said that to resolve cases of misinformation and fake news within its audience, MMUST FM planned for interactive sessions with listeners by giving them a chance to call or send SMSs during the COVID-19 discussions since the regulations on social distancing and isolation made it limited for the station to grant them a chance for live participation. This two-way communication at MMUST FM gave the listeners, MMUST FM and the COVID-19 experts a chance to clear the air on fake news and misinformation that may

have been with the people in the communities for example through social media. The station also used research by medical experts on COVID-19, information from the Ministry of Health and other experts to give the right information to the listeners.

Listeners were asked questions about their thoughts from the other information sources, a chronological sequence to explain an issue arising was then done by referring to the health experts and the Ministry of Health and this helped in demystifying misinformation and fake news about the COVID-19 pandemic by MMUST FM.

The producer, however, states that:

‘There are too many issues that the listeners in the communities have to deal with that affect their attention and thus disrupt their health response, sometimes forcing them to live with fake news or misinformation.

The fake news, misinformation and disinformation created a feeling of anxiety, unrest or having an unpredictable future among the listeners.

The station came in by creating a session on COVID-19 and mental health, and inviting a mental health expert to explain more about how to live a healthy lifestyle and boost mental health through sports in

In order to live right and fight the pandemic’.

As Laskar and Bhattacharyya (2021) confirms that programs about COVID-19 fake news, misinformation and mental health were made effective by the participation of the listeners in a two-way communication as planned by a community radio.

health professionals in the radio programs

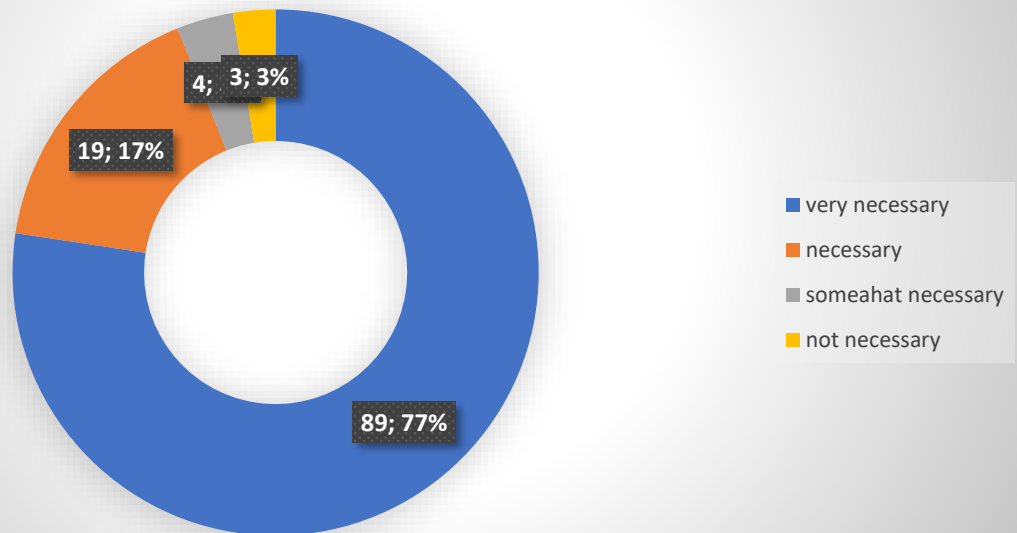


Fig 4.9 Involvement of health professionals in the radio programs

Source: Field Data, 2023

On the involvement of the health professionals, the findings in Fig 4.9 show that 89(77%) of the respondents said, it was very necessary to engage the health professionals in the programs, 19(17%) said necessary, 4(3%) said somewhat necessary while 3(3%) said unnecessary thus, most of the respondents agreed that it was necessary to engage the health professionals in the programs. Lilleker et al. (2021) confirm that it is necessary to involve the health professionals in pandemic programs

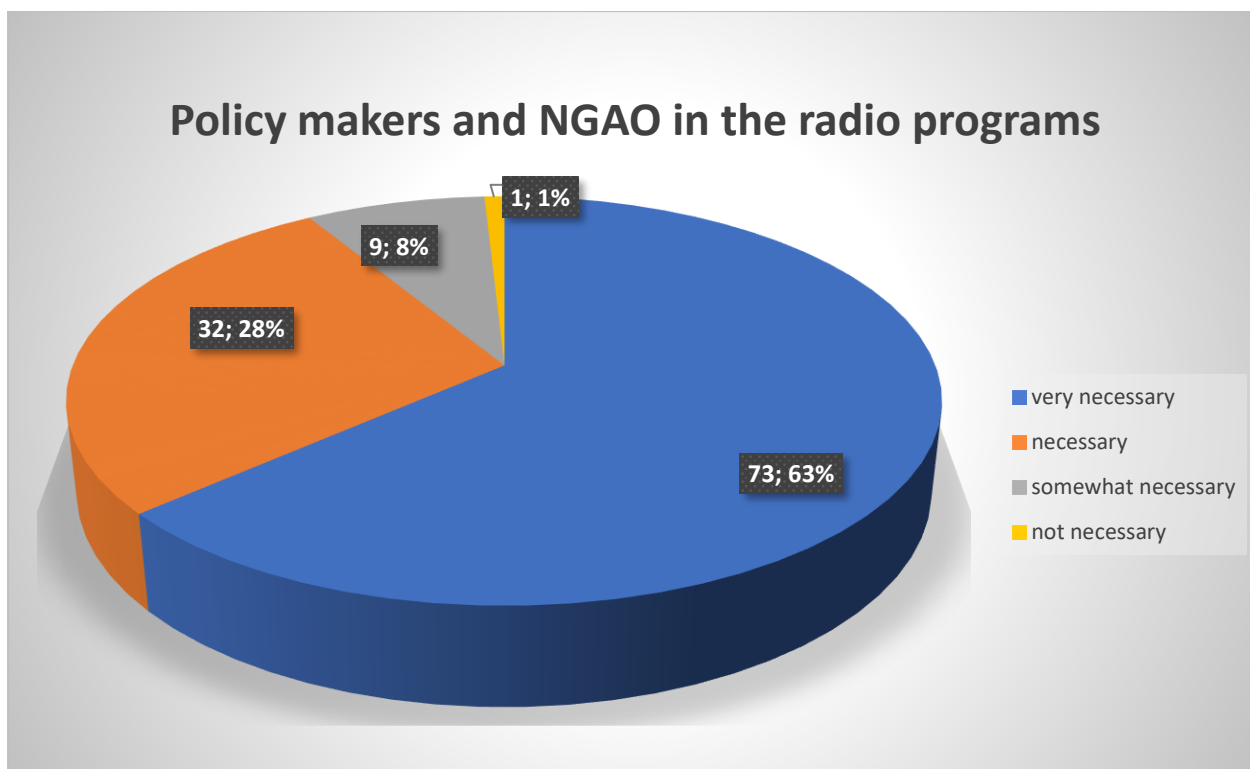


Fig 4.10 Involvement of Policy makers and NGAO in the radio programs

Source: Field Data, 2023

On the involvement of Policy makers and NGAO, the findings in Fig 4.10 shows that 73(63%) of the respondents agreed that it was very necessary to engage policymakers in the programs, 32(28%) said necessary, 9(8%) said somewhat necessary while 1(1%) said unnecessary thus, most of the respondents agreed that it was very necessary to involve the policymakers and NGAO.

These findings conform to the study by Lilleker et al. (2021), conducted in Australia, who argue that there is much information that is shared whenever there is a pandemic such as Covid-19. They further argue that this information is very much available to any person who seeks it from any media and government agencies. They further state that during this period, the government plays a significant role as a unifying factor, giving confidence to its citizens on why they should rely on the response strategies used by the state to end the pandemic. The

study also stated that a conflict is created when the information given about the pandemic is not polished and contradictive since this creates more anxiety and reduces levels of assurance among citizens.

This, therefore, should be observed by government representatives, such as the NGAO, so that information provided by authority A aligns with information from authority B, thereby fostering public trust in their involvement in pandemic issues in public spaces, including community radios. It should be practiced by officials who are pro-government and those in the opposition too. This is quite important since it helps in battling misinformation, conspiracy theories and reduces the spreading fear or anxiety among the masses. A senior government authority should be appointed to be the face of crisis management and the main informant in a country during a pandemic, like in the case of Hungary, where the Prime Minister, Victor Orbán, used his Facebook as a platform where the citizens could get the accurate and most recent government communication about the COVID-19 pandemic (Lilleker et al., 2021). The researcher saw this being practiced in Kenya where the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, gave daily press briefings on COVID-19 at 4 pm. This could be aired live on media outlets to clear the air on the pandemic and brief the public on any new developments which the citizens really appreciated.

From the above findings, it can be deduced that most respondents in this study also agreed on the importance of these policymakers being involved in the station's programming on Covid-19, for the reason that they knew the demographic components of their communities, hence, they knew how to address their publics on matters affecting them. These are such as the information people in a particular area needed to be keen on like social distancing, isolation or even which areas had people who haven't been vaccinated. This helped in giving emphasis to such people for behaviour change and contributed towards ending the pandemic.

From the above findings, it can be deduced that the government authorities and policy makers should create a unified front towards ending a pandemic or create more anxiety and uncertainty amongst its citizens when using such public communication spaces depending on what they decide with the government of the day to feed its public during a pandemic. The public depends on their surety.

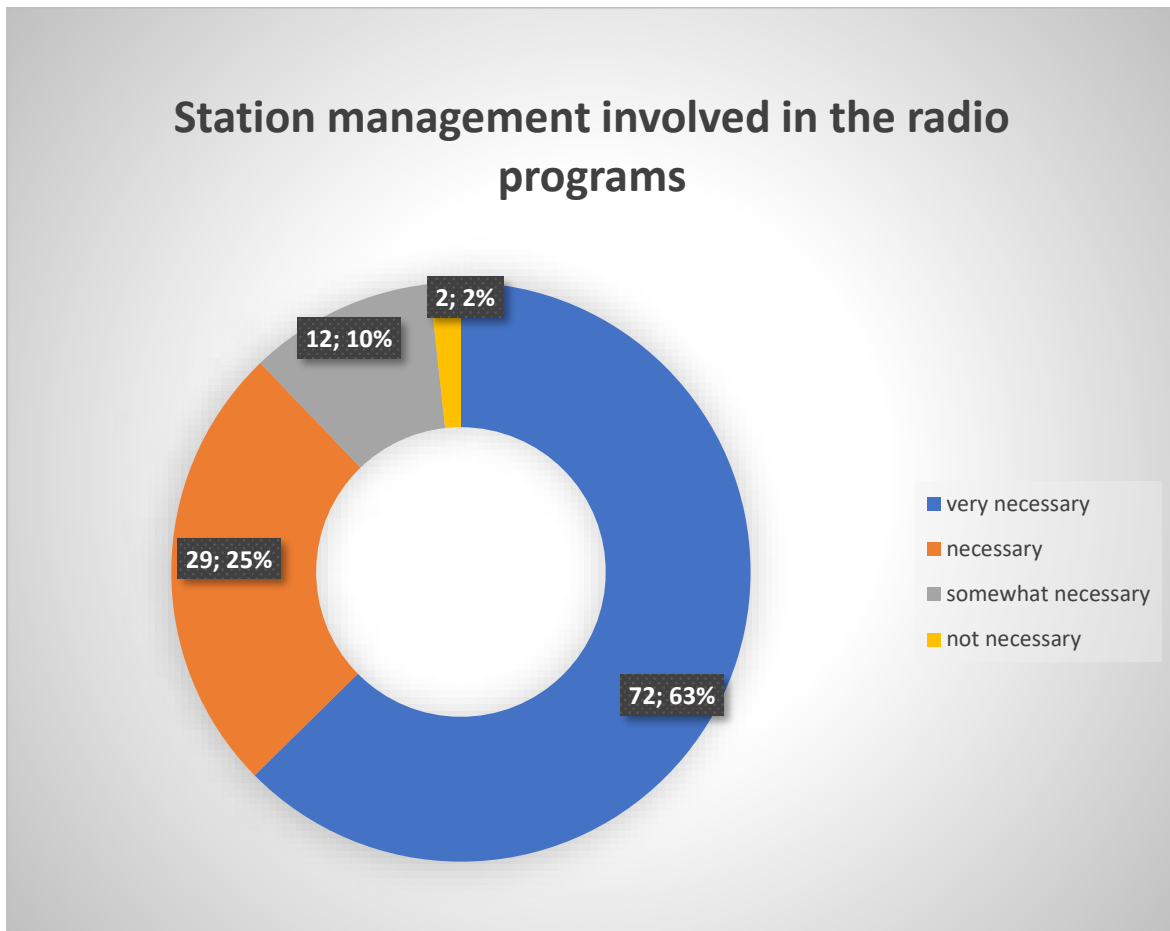


Fig 4.11 Involvement of the station's management in the radio programs

Source: Field Data, 2023

On the involvement of the station's management, the findings in Fig 4.11 shows that 72(63%) of the respondents said that it was very necessary to engage station management in the programs, 29(25%) said necessary, 12(10%) said somewhat necessary while 2(2%) said not necessary thus, most of he respondents agreed.

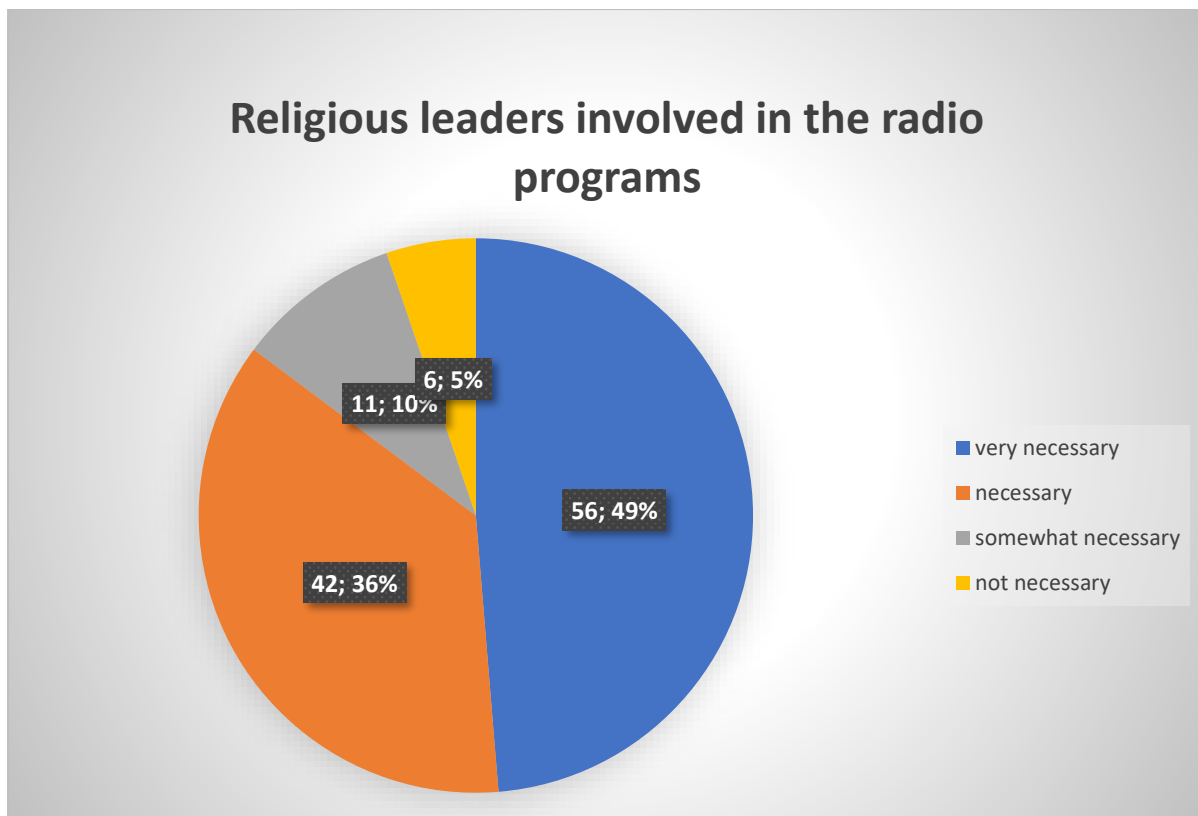


Fig 4.12 Involvement of the religious leaders in the radio programs

Source: Field Data, 2023

Asked on the involvement of the religious leaders, the findings in Fig 4.12 show that 56(49%) of the respondents agreed that it was very necessary involving religious leaders in the program, 42(36%) said necessary, 11(10%) said somewhat necessary.

Mukwevho et al. (2022) conform to these findings by stating that, away from COVID-19 awareness, there was a need to address other key issues such as the rise of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), like domestic violence, and the rise in psychological and socio-economic challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. This could be best achieved by having outreach to the wider community in the low-literacy and multi-lingual environments through radio programs by hosting the religious leaders, peacekeepers, community leaders and other members of the community to share information and their stories.

The community radios could best address such issues by partnering with other humanitarian organizations and reaching out to the women and children to make such campaigns most effective. In this case, the station management could be involved to give updates about the university and online learning, among other factors that affect the life of the students, the staff and other stakeholders of the institution.

4.5 Relevance of MMUST FM in COVID-19 Pandemic Communication (Objective 3)

Table 4.8 Respondents' age and knowledge on MMUST FM

	You know MMUST FM as			Total
	commercial radio station	community radio station	state-owned station	
What is your age				
18-27 years	20	48	5	73
28-37 years	7	20	0	27
38-47 years	0	10	0	10
above 47 years	2	3	0	5
Total	29	81	5	115

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in table 4.8 on the respondents' knowledge on MMUST FM show that most listeners of MMUST FM know the station as a community radio station. The findings show that most of listeners of the radio station are within the age group of 18-27 years followed by age group 28-37 years. People who are above 47 years are rare listeners to the radio station. Though a high number of listeners know the station as a community station there is also a good number that believed that the station is a commercial radio station.

These findings affirm a study by Chaudhry (2020) which states that FM stations especially campus-based are for the main purpose of entertaining the young listeners. In Pakistan, they are used for highlighting different political, social and economic issues that are affecting communities through creating awareness, providing information and educating communities

which include both the student and community masses. The same was replicated by MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic.

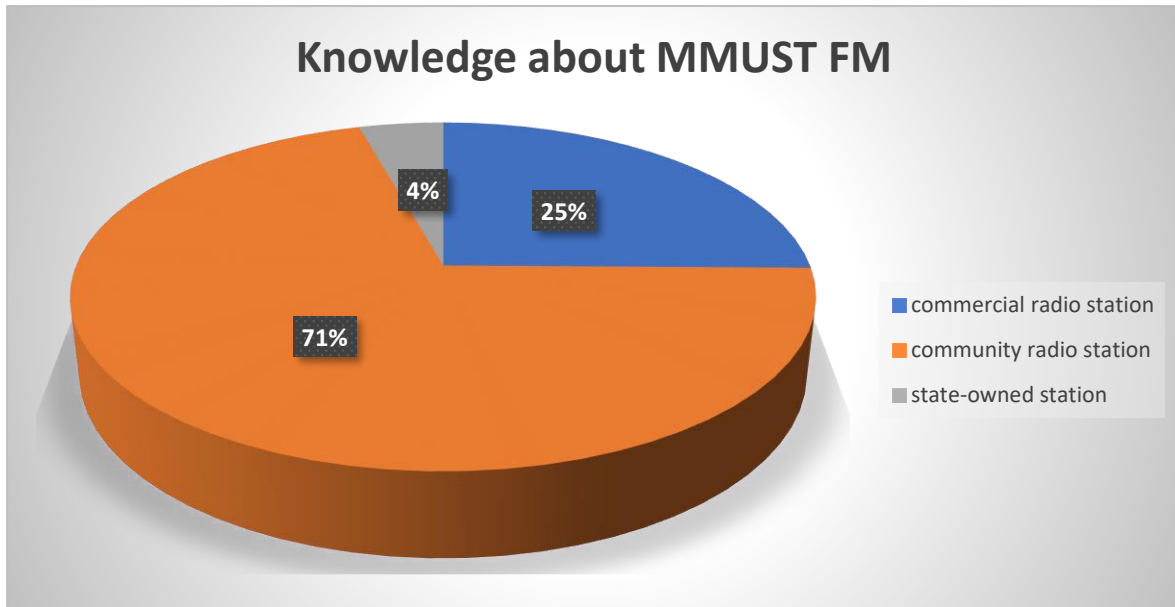


Fig 4.13 Respondent's opinion on MMUST FM

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings on the respondents' knowledge about MMUST FM in Fig 4.13 show that 81(71%) of respondents agreed that MMUST FM is a community radio, 29(25%) said its commercial radio while 5(4%) said its state-owned station. This implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that MMUST Fm is a community station thus serving the interest of community members.

The COVID-19 expert interviewed for this study stated that:

‘We kept the audiences very engaged during the programs so as to fulfil our mandate as a community radio during the pandemic.

By this, they made sure that the programs are for the people and by the people’.

Odengo (2018) confirms that, there are 4 different types of community radio stations. The ones which serve a geographical area, campus-based radio stations that are active on university and college campuses, the religious-based radio stations and the radios that target a particular cultural or ethnic community. Their main functions include: informing a community about their problems generating solidarity within a community, developing a communication network within a community, and creating a critical conscience within a community. This, therefore, explains MMUST FM as community radio and justifies its essential role played during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.5.1 Theories Underpinning COVID-19 Communication at MMUST FM

These were also applied for effective COVID-19 Communication to the community at MMUST FM in order to make this an academic touch. The COVID-19 expert interviewed stated that there was a theory he specifically based himself on while addressing the listeners at MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the ‘Health Belief Theory’ for health promotion and he used this to explain the implications of not following instructions.

The station’s producers also utilized the Social-Responsibility theory to make the listeners affiliated to MMUST as University and those who were listening to the station from Lurambi sub county believe that they had a role to play in ending the pandemic, therefore, it was collective responsibility through behaviour change rather than thinking that it was a neighbour’s, the states or a particular entity’s responsibility.

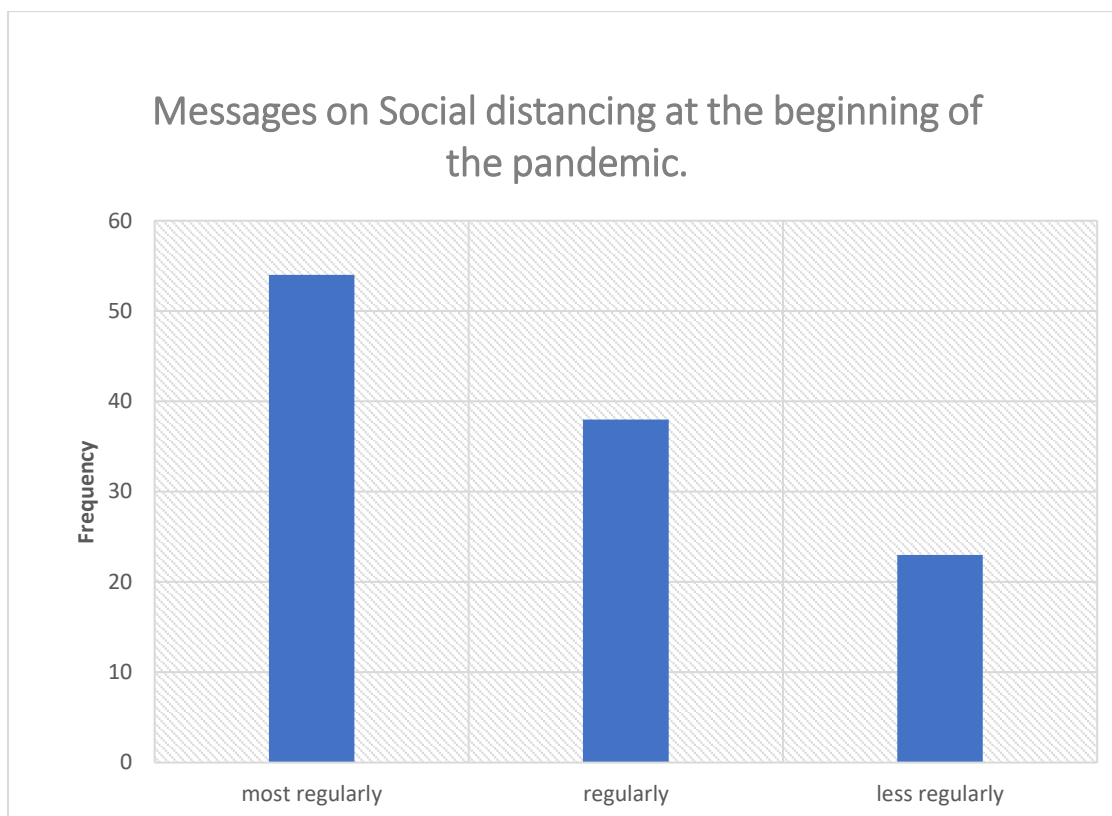


Fig 4.14 Messages on social distancing at the beginning of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.14 showing how regular the messages on social distancing were indicate that 54 (47%) of respondents agreed that social distancing was most regular at the beginning of the pandemic, 38 (33%) said regular while 23 (20%) said less regular. This implies that the majority of the respondents agreed that social distancing was most regular, thus most people practiced social distancing at the beginning of the pandemic.

Lilleker et al. (2021) affirm this study by explaining that, at the beginning of the pandemic, the opposition in Australia criticized the government for being sluggish in educating its citizens on the COVID-19 preventive measures, especially on social distancing and hygiene. This made the government of Australia launch a campaign on social media and radio podcasts on how to get information from the Health Department's webpage on social distancing with a distance of 1.5 metres away from each other, practice regular washing of hands after every 20 minutes

with water and soap, avoid touching their faces and staying indoors if they are sick. A COVIDSafe tracing app was also invented. A call-to-action statement was formulated which was ‘Stay COVID Free, Do the 3’. This emphasized on social distancing, washing of hands and using the COVIDSafe tracing app.

Such public health measures, if observed as early as the pandemic is detected, can help reduce its aftermath since people will know how to prevent the spread of the virus hence containing it early enough. The information should also be spread consistently and regularly through the available and most effective mainstream media spaces such as the community radios for adherence since they are regulations people are not used to and there’s urgent need for them to be incorporated in their daily activities hence the need for the listeners to be consistently and regularly reminded.

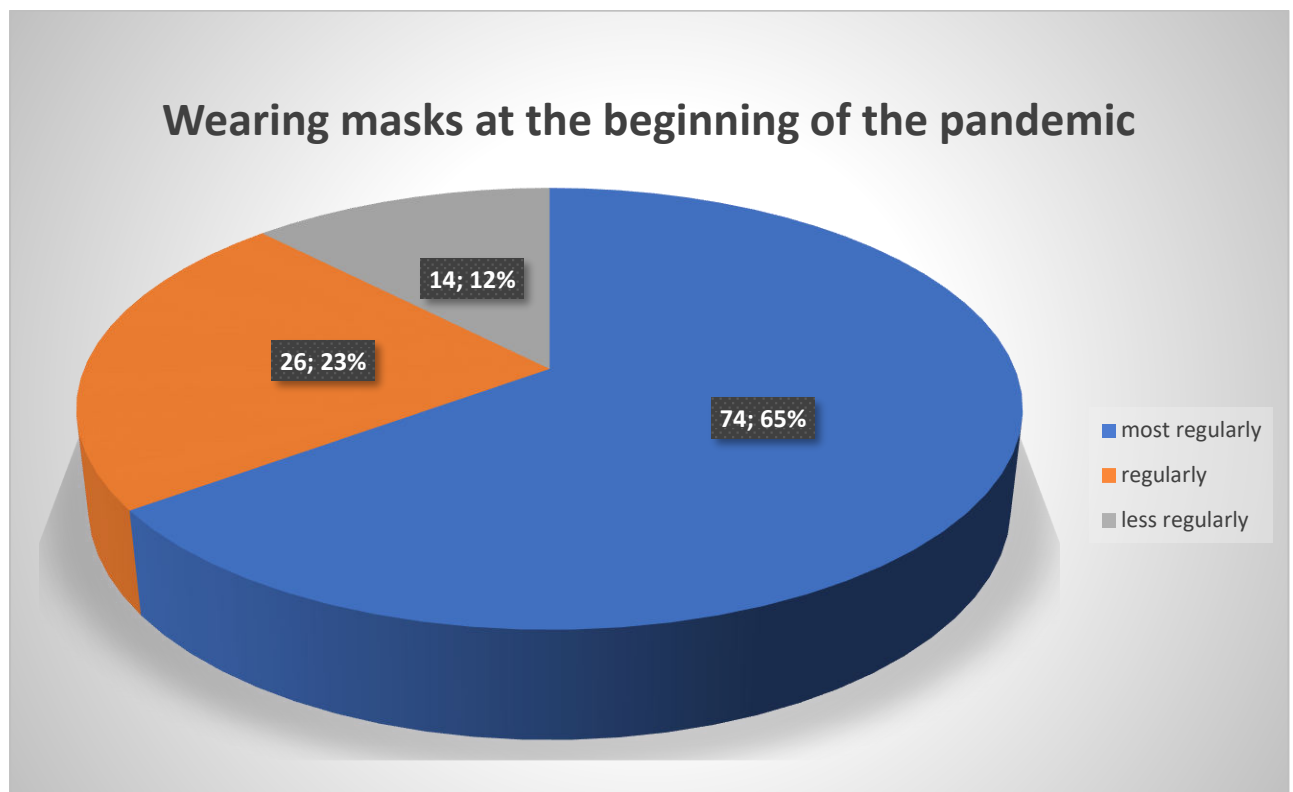


Fig 4.15 Messages on wearing masks at the beginning of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.15 show that 74 (65%) of the respondents agreed that information on wearing masks was most regular at the beginning of the pandemic, 26 (23%) said regular, while 14 (12%) said less regular thus, most of the respondents agreed that wearing masks was adhered to at the beginning of the pandemic.

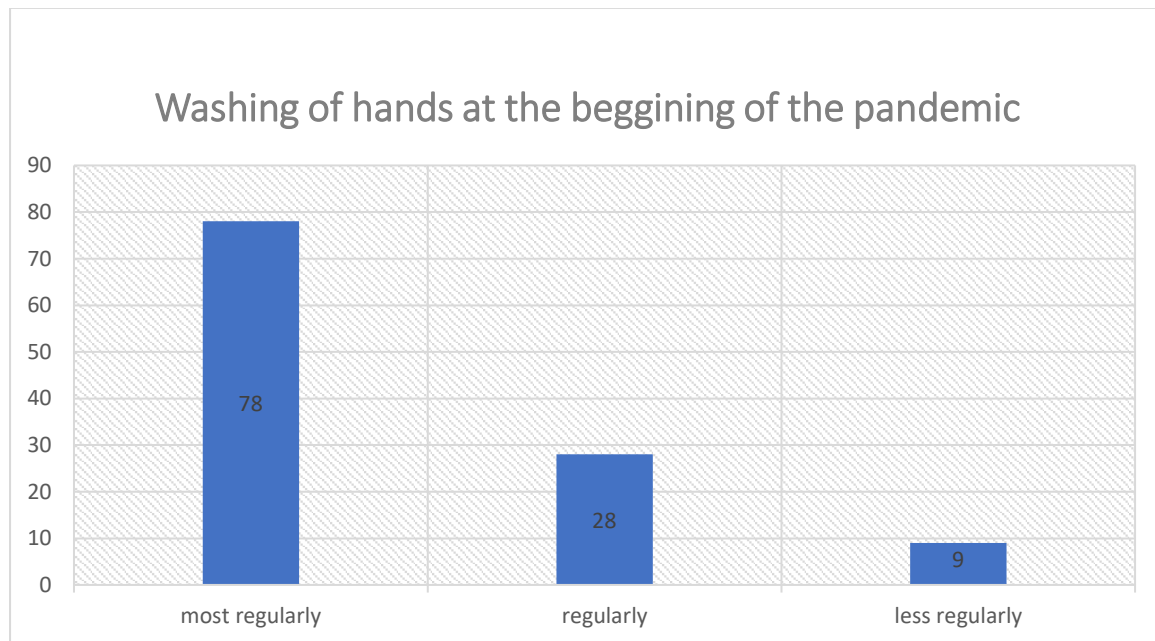


Fig 4.16 Messages on washing hands at the beginning of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.16 show that 78 (68%) of the respondents agreed that washing hands was most regularly at the beginning of the pandemic, 28 (24%) said regularly while 9 (8%) said less regularly thus most of the respondents agreed that washing hands was adhered to at the beginning of the pandemic.

United Nations (UN), in their Malawian COVID-19 situation update on 22nd May 2020 stated that information on the washing of hands were done by showing people how-to in the market places and townships, within the communities, by use of mobile vans and they also utilized the space given by the community radios. The information was spearheaded by some organisations such as UNICEF, the Red Cross Society and other hand-wash partners. Facilities that could

aid this were also provided in the dense areas such as in the markets and information was made known through these available channels on how to use them (WHO & UNDP, 2022).

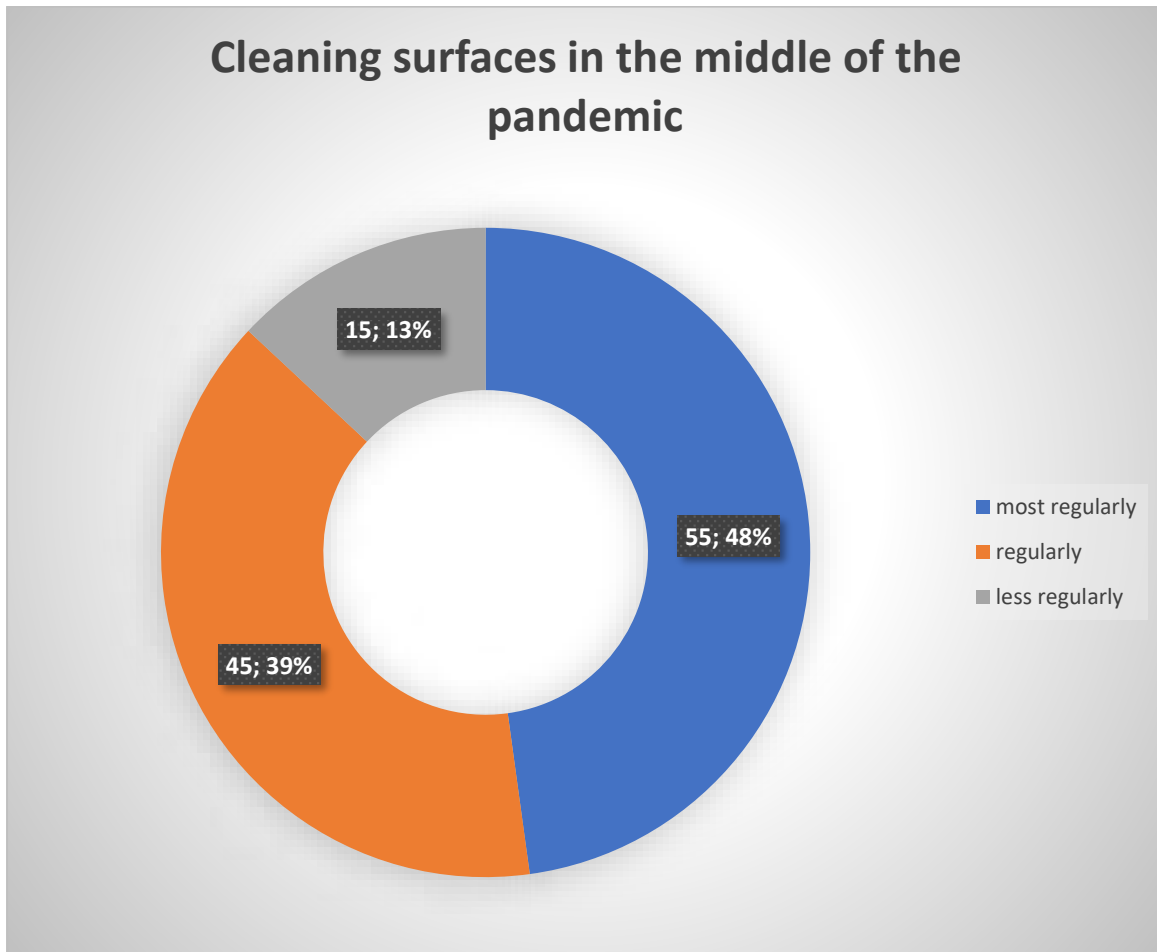


Fig 4.17 Messages on cleaning surfaces in the middle of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.17 show that 55 (48%) of the respondents agreed that clearing surfaces was most regular in the middle of the pandemic, 45 (39%) said regularly while 15 (13%) said less regular thus, most of the respondents agreed that clearing surfaces and cleaning was adhered to in the middle of the pandemic.

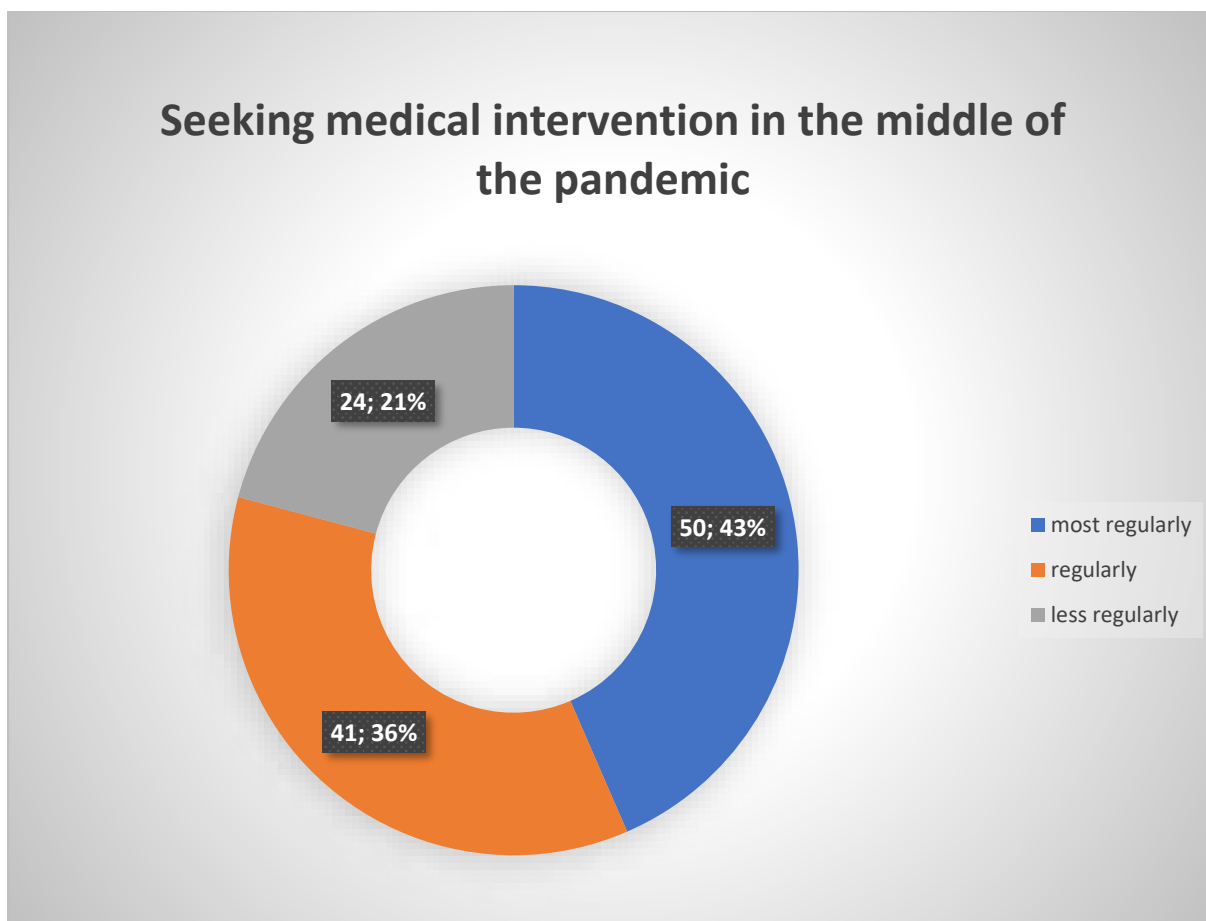


Fig 4.18 Messages on seeking medical intervention in the middle of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.18 show how regular the messages on seeking medical intervention were. It indicates that: 50 (43%) of the respondents agreed that messages on seeking medical intervention were broadcasted more regularly in the middle of the pandemic, 41(36%) said regularly. In comparison, 24 (21%) said less regularly thus, most of the respondents agreed that many sought medical interventions in the middle of the pandemic from the information they got from MMUST FM.

A producer interviewed also confirmed that:

‘Prof. Change, a medical expert, was also invited to emphasize the need of seeking necessary medical attention, especially in extreme cases so that the

virus could not infect the other community members’.

Mukwevho et al. (2022) conform to this study by stating that, UNESCO describes the best vaccine for COVID-19 as ‘having credible news sources’ and in this case the sources were the medical health experts. Radio could, therefore, help in fighting the pandemic since they could accurately inform the public about where to seek the medical expert’s voice about the pandemic from such as the CDC, health-based NGOs and the Ministry of health. For example, their verified social pages and where to find them physically for adverse cases since there was need for social distancing/isolation.

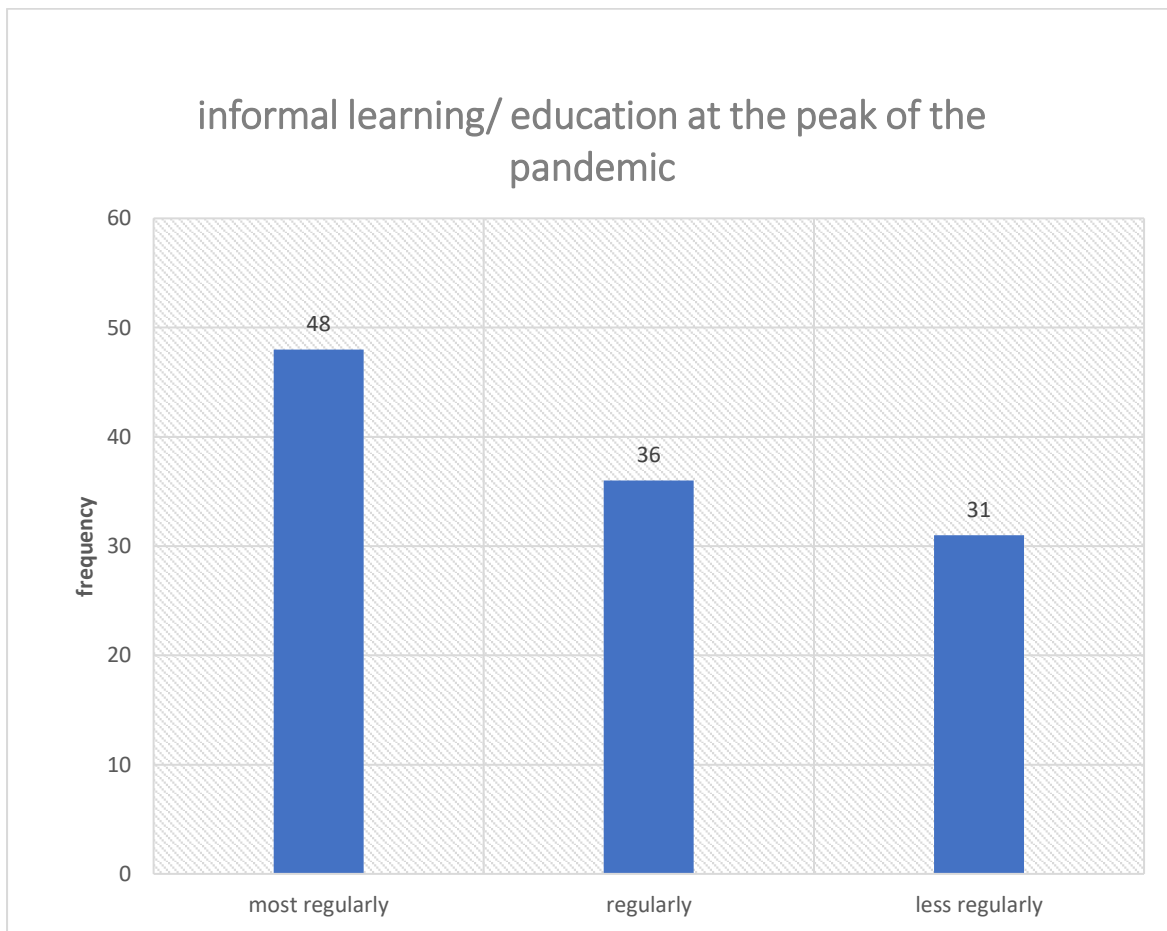


Fig 4.19 Informal learning/education during COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

When asked on how regular the informal learning/education was at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings in Fig 4.19 show that 48(41.7%) of the respondents agreed that COVID-19 education was most regular in the middle of the pandemic, 36(31.3%) said regularly while 31(27%) said less regularly, thus most of the respondents agreed that people embarked in COVID-19 education in the middle of the pandemic. This shows that generally, MMUST FM performed its educational role in educating the listeners on the new developments of the pandemic as necessary since it gave them information updates most regularly. According to Chaudhary (2020), community radios broadcasts informal learning for social transformation is done by involving participation from the community members, as in the case of MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic. This should not be mixed-up with an educational radio that broadcasts basic or advanced education.

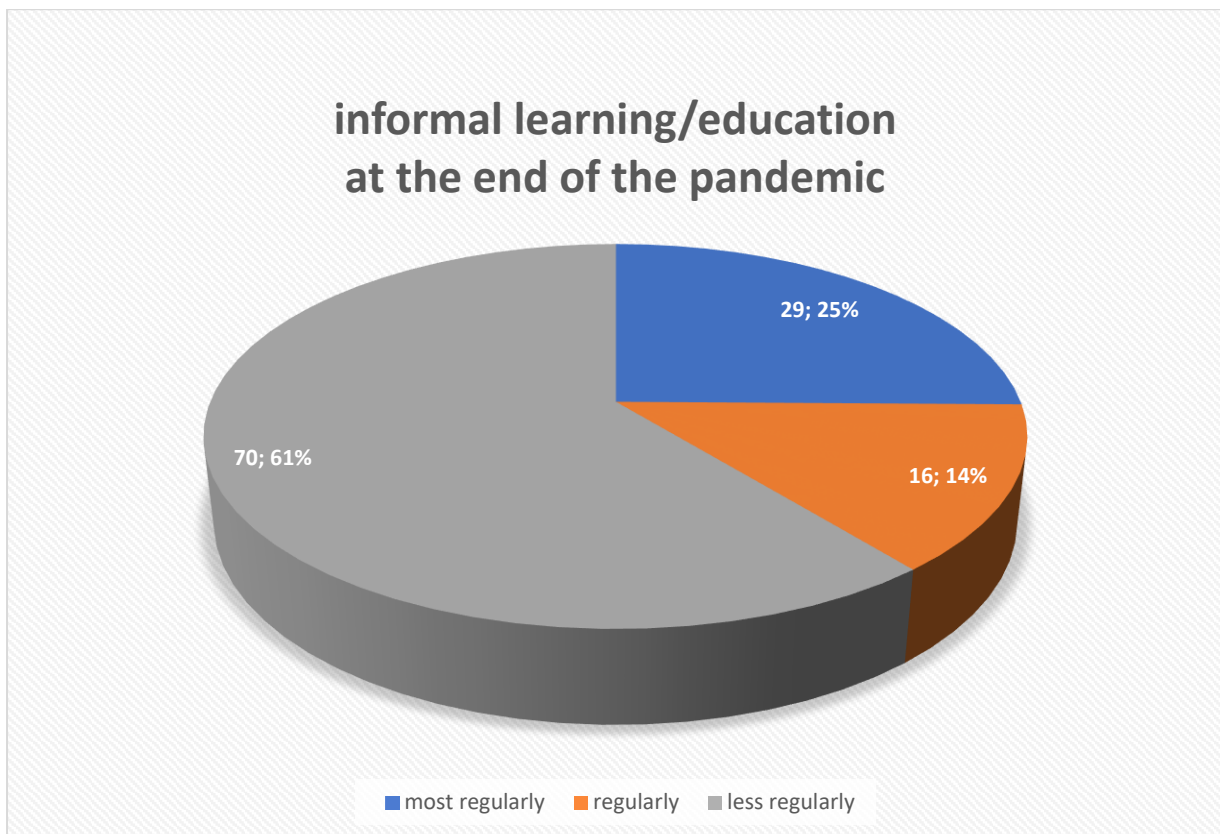


Fig 4.20 Informal learning/education at the end of the COVID-19 pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.20 show that towards the end of the pandemic 70(61%) of the respondents said informal learning about the pandemic was less regular, 16(14%) said it was regularly while 29(25%) said that it was done most regularly towards the end of the pandemic thus, the study shows that towards the end of the pandemic most people didn't listen to much informal learning about the pandemic. This may have been due to the fact that people had got used to the messages and had learnt on the different preventive measures against the pandemic.

The listeners, therefore, had already learnt on the important topics covered surrounding COVID-19 through the debates, interviews, documentaries, news features, Question and Answer sessions and by the exclusive music played in the programs. This, therefore had a positive influence on the listeners' positive behaviour change which contributed in ending the pandemic (Chaudhary, 2020). This saw a success in MMUST FM's operations in Lurambi Sub-County by playing its educational role to its masses.

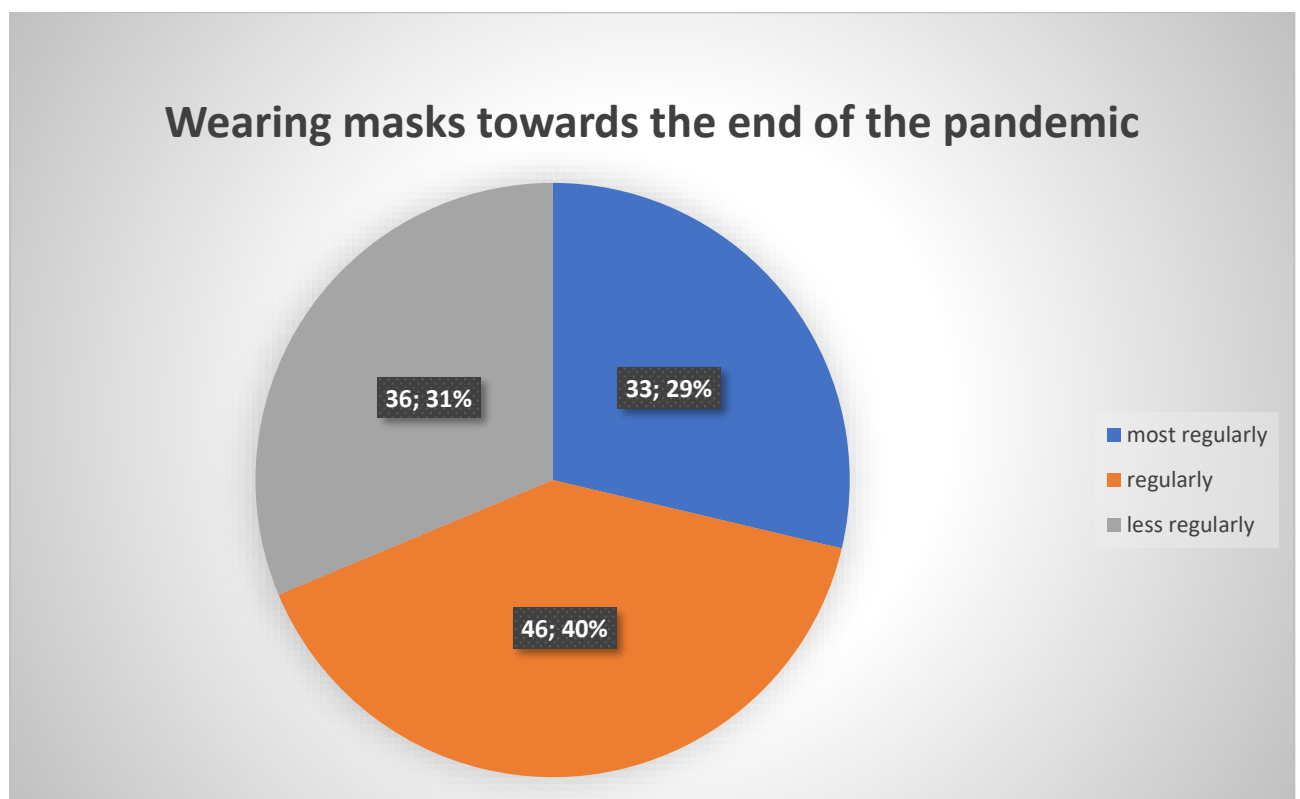


Fig 4.21 Messages on wearing masks towards the end of the pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in Fig 4.21 shows that 36(31%) of the respondents said that the messages on wearing masks was aired less regularly towards the end of the pandemic, 46(40%) said regularly while 33(29%) said most regular thus, it's clear that towards the end of the pandemic most people relaxed in adhering to wearing masks. According to Kim and Shin (2016), affirms this study by stating that community radios helped in bridging the gap between those who could not access information to COVID-19 digitally and those who could afford it. This helped in giving the listeners to the community radios messages that were essential to fight COVID-19 such as wearing of masks, social distancing and washing their hands using soap and water.

Table 4.9 Messages on getting booster shots towards the end of the pandemic

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
most regularly	16	13.9	13.9	13.9
regularly	12	10.4	10.4	24.3
less regularly	87	75.7	75.7	100.0
Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Data, 2023

The findings in table 4.9 show that 70(61%) of the respondents said the messages about getting vaccines were very regular towards the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, 27(23%) said the messages were regular, while 18(16%) of the respondents said they were less regular. The findings in the table 4.9 show that 87(75.7%) of the respondents said that messages on getting booster shots were very regular, 12(10.4%) said regular while 16(13.9%) said less regular towards the end of the pandemic

This clearly indicates that MMUST FM created awareness and encouraged people to go for vaccination and booster shots towards the end of the pandemic. The station wanted the

members of its community protected from another wave of the dangerous virus since the gravies effects of the virus had been felt at the begging of the pandemic where there was no vaccine produced yet. Osur et al. (2022) confirms these findings by stating that radio was one of the most relied on medium that helped in the contextual influence on the COVID-19 vaccine uptake especially among the male gender. The females were a bit reluctant with fear of how much it would affect them.

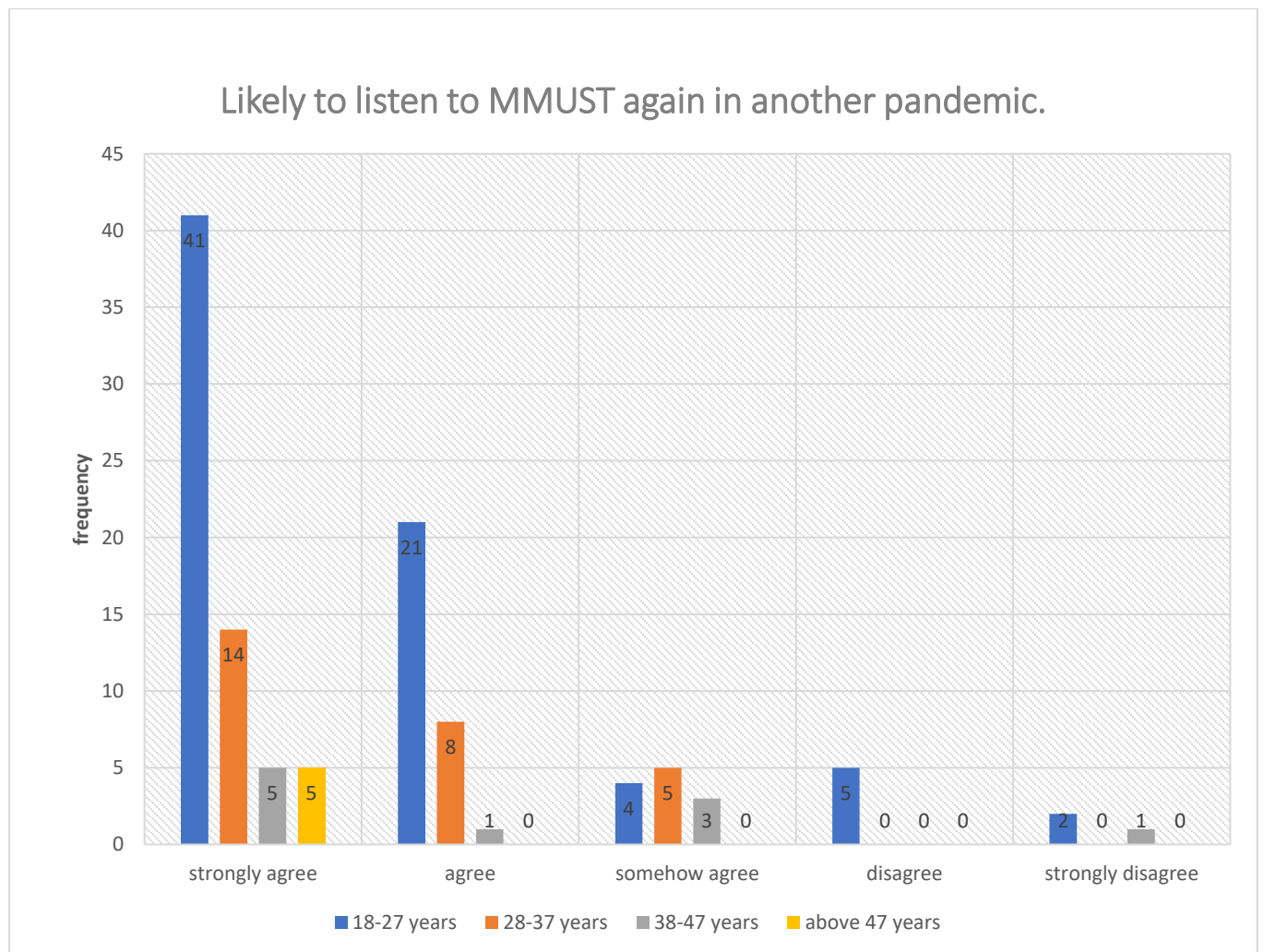


Fig 4.22 Respondents likelihood of listening to MMUST FM again in another pandemic

Source: Field Data, 2023

When the respondents were asked whether they would listen to MMUST FM again, the findings in Fig 4.22 show that a good number of youths between the ages of 18 and 37 strongly

agree that in case of another wave of COVID-19, they'll likely listen to MMUST radio for information. The number of those who disagree with listening to MMUST radio in case of another wave of COVID-19 is not so high. Looking at the fact that there are people who strongly disagree listening to the station in case of another wave shows that there are still things to be done to improve the dissemination of pandemic communication by the station.

One of the MMUST FM producers explained the steps they took to maintain their audience's attention during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said that:

'The station involved experts, sought resources from its parent institution (MMUST) to support their inadequacy in achieving the goal, had a clear program and interview guide not deviating from the issues about the pandemic and lastly, they had trusted leaders participating in the programs for reassurance, such as the MMUST VC Prof. Shibairo. These could be emulated by other radio stations in any occurrence of future pandemics'.

Anyonje et al. (2022) state that community radio stations have contributed to the popularity of radio within communities in the regions of Western Kenya, and this study supports this since MMUST FM is one of them. The study also shows that the Radio was tuned into mostly for information on the COVID-19 pandemic since the radio registered the highest numbers. Those who don't prefer using social media and any other media, which in this study represent those who disagree and strongly disagree with listening to MMUST FM if another wave of COVID-19 occurs, because they prefer other media, such as television or newspapers, among others. The challenge posed by Anyonje et al. (2022) is that social media provided a global picture of the pandemic, which may be the reason it has penetrated communities to the point where they prefer it over traditional media. Therefore, the community radios, and in this case, MMUST FM, should focus on how to give a broader perspective of information during pandemics so as to gain more audience. The social media and TV also have a space for graphics, which gave a

clear picture of what was happening, and since some preferred seeing to hearing or both, they didn't like listening to the radio.

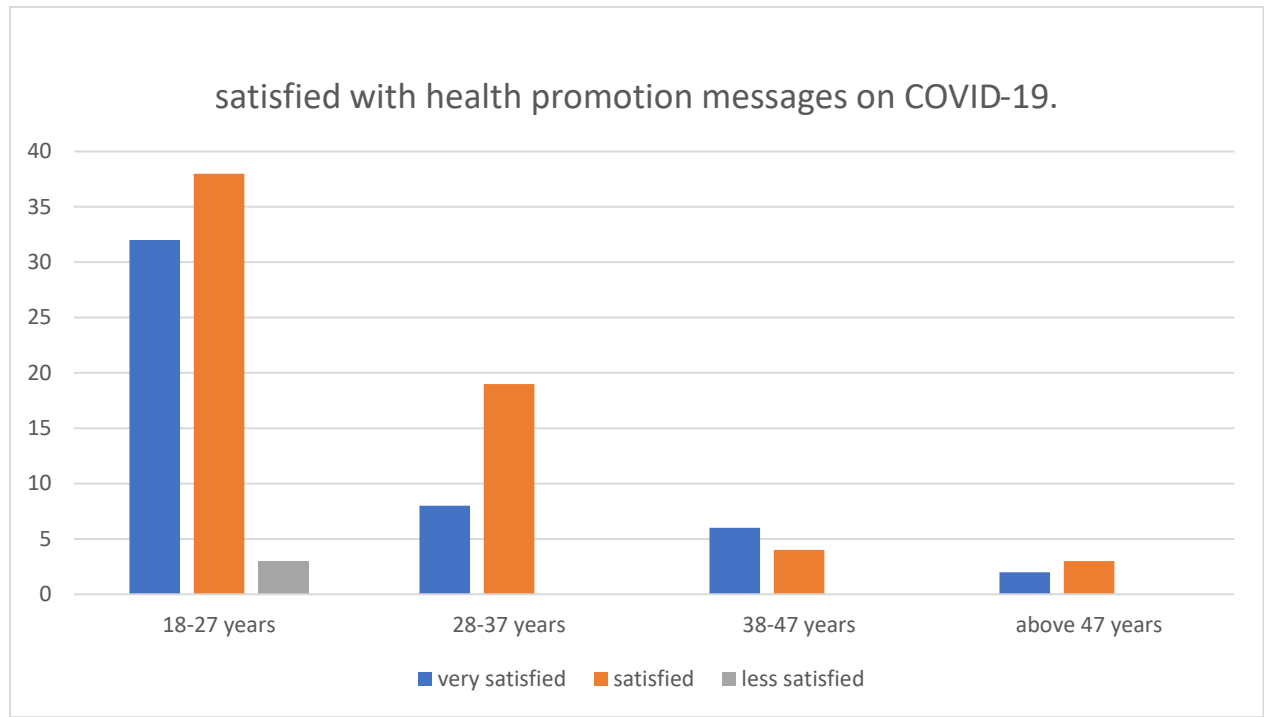


Fig 4.23 Respondent's satisfaction with MMUST FM broadcasts on COVID-19 messages

Source: Field Data, 2023

When asked if they were satisfied with MMUST FM's messaging and programming, the findings in Fig 4.23 show that listeners of MMUST radio were satisfied with the promotion messages about COVID-19 across all the age groups that participated in the research. Thus, we can conclude that the radio station has been accepted within the communities that listen to it to deliver messages in times when messages are needed for the benefit of the community. From the analysis, it also shows that some youths were not satisfied with the promotional messages, yet they are the majority of the listeners, and this shows that there is something to be done.

A producer interviewed said that:

'Even after we finished airing the COVID-19 program, we still had people calling in to give request if we could with the program for a much longer time.'

This was not possible but it shows how much the goal was achieved.

Some gave feedback through messages on how the messages were very helpful to them in getting through the pandemic’.

WHO (2018) states that community radio stations are much appreciated because they make people feel that the issues affecting them directly are being discussed among them as a community, and they can contribute to the discussions, such as on talk shows and live-ins. However, a majority of the community members confirm that they are never engaged in the programming of the community radio stations. Their contribution in the process of creating a programme that suits them is little, hence they remain receivers of what has already been programmed for them. This may have been the case for MMUST FM, whereby those who were not satisfied with its messages or programmes during the COVID-19 period felt so because they were not engaged in the programming processes, hence the station missed the details of what could have really satisfied them. The station mainly worked with what they thought was best for their community. If this had been done, it could have also created a sense of belonging to the listeners by feeling that their insights have been incorporated into the programmes and messaging on COVID-19.

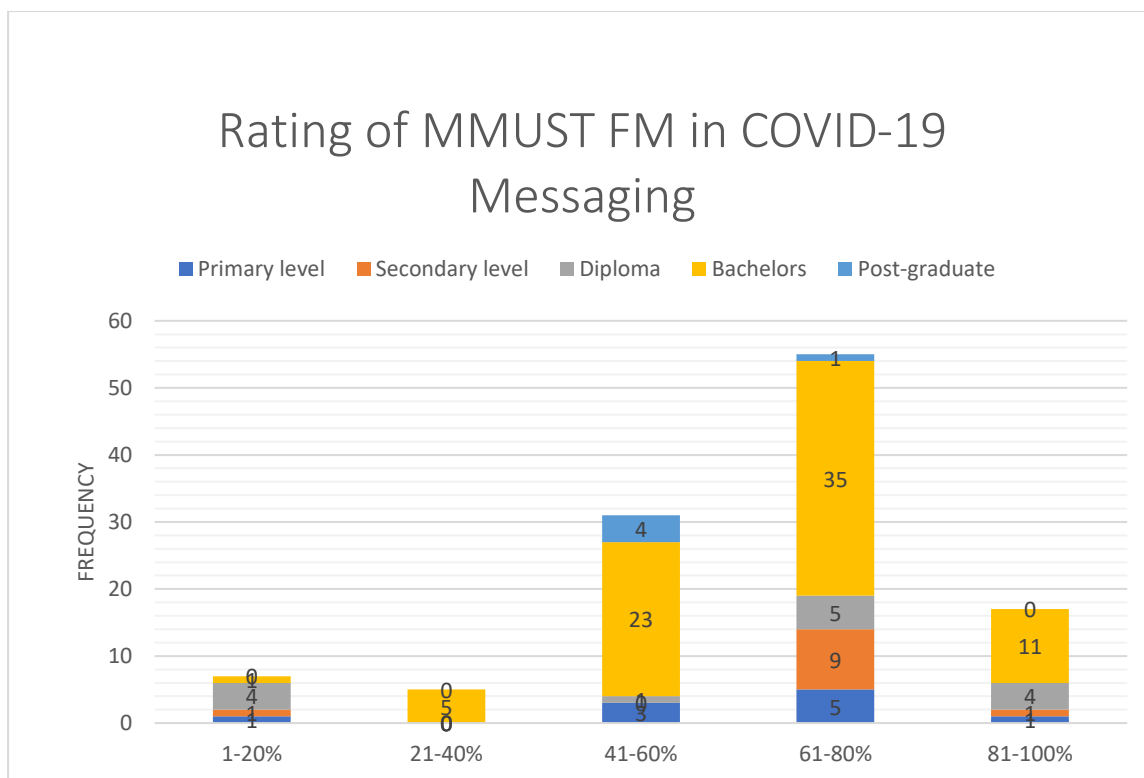


Fig 4.24 Rating of MMUST FM in COVID-19 messaging

Source: Field Data, 2023

The question on the rating of the radio station, as in the findings in Fig 4.24, clearly indicates that, MMUST FM being a university radio station, the messages were mostly heard well and satisfactorily by the listeners whose educational levels were above primary level, but mostly by undergraduates. Those who rated MMUST radio to have delivered messages on COVID-19 effectively and thus rated it between 61%-80%. Across all levels of education, a good number of respondents rated the station to be above average in the message delivery. The radio station was also rated to be very good in delivering messages by so many listeners who have an educational level of diploma and bachelors. The only challenge reported was the attention that was sometimes captured by the mainstream media by their wider coverage of events and cases around the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the producer interviewed gladly appreciated the fact that MMUST as the parent institution also recognized the well doing of MMUST FM stating that:

‘MMUST management published a newsletter and research booklet entitled ‘Community Initiatives in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic’ and created YouTube links of the all the COVID-19 program videos aired at the time and shared with their staff and other stakeholders, giving attention to the addresses made by the COVID-19 expert guests to the MMUST FM program on COVID-19’.

Those featured in the publications were the MMUST VC Prof. Shibairo, the Academic registrar Prof. Sakwa, COVID-19 research leader at MMUST Prof, Bukhala, MMUST Chaplain REV Dr Otuya, emergency and response expert Dr. Sum, immunology expert Dr. Were, education and online learning expert Dr. Nguka, economic and development expert Dr. Ojera, Communication expert Prof. Kabaji, fitness expert Mr. Kweyu, medical expert Prof. Change and an expert researcher on COVID-19 response policies Dr. Ochanda who gave varied expert information that was used as reference by other experts. The programs helped the listeners in Lurambi sub-county in their response and management of the pandemic. MMUST FM also had great responses and contributions through SMS from their listeners during the programs and since it was a 14 series programme, some listeners wanted it to go on for longer(MMUST, 2022).

This shows the relevance of the programs by MMUST FM during the pandemic hence the station’s success in achieving its goal during the pandemic. It was however a suggestion by one of the experts that guests who are not affiliated to MMUST at the time of the research should have also been invited to talk to the listeners for a greater voice and audience.

According to Schiavo (2013), there are several stakeholders that make up a community which are the individuals, groups of similar interests on a subject such as its leaders, the members, the special groups and even its policy makers. He continues to explain that, despite the new health measures, scientific discoveries and improved technology for better health and social ties within our communities, a collective voice of these stakeholders has never been more evident more so within a disadvantaged community that continues to build up inequality.

MMUST FM, therefore being a radio within Lurambi sub-county, performed well by involving its stakeholders such as the community members, the station management which are officials at MMUST University, the religious leaders, the policymakers, and health experts in its contribution to the fight against COVID-19 that was a menace in all communities around the world.

Most respondents confirmed the relevance of MMUST FM in COVID-19 messaging, especially by those who are educated with bachelors and diplomas since the station uses English and Kiswahili languages which they understood well during message delivery. The others may have been disadvantaged to give MMUST FM a low performance because the station did not broadcast its messages in vernacular language which they may have been more comfortable listening to. They might have, therefore, tuned to the vernacular stations instead. Lastly, Sheen et al. (2020) agree that, information from such sources that are non-governmental can be used to enhance the credibility of the official government sources since people believe them. Therefore, the Kenyan government should give attention to the development of community radio stations for their unwavering support to strengthen public trust in them through the messages they broadcast during pandemics.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter gives a summary of the findings and conclusions of this research on the COVID-19 Communication Strategies Employed By 103.9 MMUST FM. The study was guided by the following objectives: to examine the communication strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to disseminate COVID-19 information, to establish the factors that affected listener attention and participation to 103.9 MMUST FM COVID-19 communication and lastly, to determine the relevance of 103.9 MMUST FM messages and programming for COVID-19 pandemic communication. The findings and conclusion are, therefore, given according to the objectives of this study.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was done on the basis that community radios had a communication role to play during the COVID-19 pandemic. Literature on both community radio and strategies for communicating about the COVID-19 pandemic was reviewed and a theoretical framework was constructed to explain the concept on the communication strategies as used by the community radios during the COVID-19 pandemic. A conceptual framework was also developed to show the relationship in the objectives. This led the researcher into using primary tools for data collection.

5.1.1 Communication Strategies employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to disseminate COVID-19 information (Objective 1)

The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative analysis show that there were communication strategies employed by MMST FM for communicating about the COVID-19

pandemic to reach their target audience in Lurambi Sub-County. These are such as slotting a COVID-19 program to discuss issues around the pandemic, being frank, honest, consistent and empathetic with their messaging and lastly, ensuring diversity in their content and language while broadcasting the COVID-19 information.

5.1.2 Factors that Affected Listener Attention and Participation to 103.9 MMUST FM COVID-19 Pandemic Communication (Objective 2)

Both the qualitative and quantitative statistics show that there are factors that affected the attention and participation of listeners in Lurambi sub-county to MMST FM's communication about the COVID-19 pandemic. They include how the listeners accessed the station, either on the phone or through the radio set and the duration of time they are available to stay tuned to the station. Gender and how their roles affected their listenership to radio and participation while the programs were live on air and who were hosted by the station to give them reassurance and trust in the station's messages, the pandemic, as compared to the other stations, were the other factors. Lastly, the language used was also a factor since Lurambi sub-county is a cosmopolitan area.

5.1.3 Relevance of MMUST FM Programming for COVID-19 Pandemic Communication (Objective 3)

Both the quantitative and qualitative statistics clearly demonstrate that the programs and messages aired on MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic were highly effective in promoting behavior change among listeners in Lurambi sub-county, ultimately contributing to the pandemic's resolution. This is because the listeners understood the role the station was playing in serving them as a community to help them survive the pandemic. It made them pay keen attention to their messages. The trusted professionals and leaders who hosted the program made it effective, as it gave listeners reassurance about surviving the pandemic. The language used was the main disadvantage expressed since some like listening to the stations that air in

vernacular language, especially the elderly. This left the youth with the most chances of tuning in to the program since they like listening to the stations that air in Kiswahili and English languages, and in this case, MMUST FM.

5.2 Conclusion

Following the findings of this research, the conclusions made were:

Generally, there was a significant role played by the MMUST FM as a community radio during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a communication space, it was utilized in the spreading of the COVID-19 messages in a well-calculated way in order to reach its targeted audience. The study focused on MMUST FM's functioning as a communication space in the dissemination of COVID-19 messages for behavioral change.

In line with the first objective, the findings show that the strategies adopted to communicate about the COVID-19 pandemic were very necessary in order for the station to maximise its reach to its targeted residents of Lurambi sub-county. For the second objective, the findings show the factors that affected the listener's attention and participation to the station's COVID-19 messages during the pandemic. Lastly, the findings show that MMUST FM was very effective in the delivery of its messages about the pandemic which significantly contributed to behavior change among the residents of Lurambi sub-county who listened to the station's programs and messages. All these findings are exclusively expressed in chapter four.

5.3 Recommendations

Reasoning based on the findings of this research, the following were the recommendations:

1. From the study, it can be seen that a lockdown was implemented during the pandemic, which led to both male and female genders listening to the radio for information. Therefore, community radio stations should market their role to various audiences for maximized listenership, especially during pandemics. This is because whenever there

is a broadcast about a serious issue affecting a particular community during family time, for example, in the evenings or early mornings, families tend to discuss and share the topic aired about their community. This will help families within communities become more informed and aware of serious topics, such as surviving the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to the station's broadcast on personal phones reduces the chances of people sharing or discussing what they listen to and they may be logged onto other apps to concentrate.

The community radios should, in turn, be equipped with the latest technology to maximize their operation in the communication space. This should be done while observing what is necessary in the local and international media markets, since serious topics such as pandemics need to be broadcasted to a larger community. This will help in signal reach and quick feedback reception between the radio station and its listeners. It will also help in retaining and gaining more audience compared to other radio stations that compete with community radios like MMUST FM.

2. The government, in its legislation, should see that there are more campus-based community radio stations such as MMUST FM for the student population in the country, or support the available ones in getting a wider coverage for educational purposes on serious topics such as a pandemic. The language used would be Kiswahili and English, since it is mostly the youth who listen to the stations. This helps in maximizing the relevance of strategic broadcasts for the youth. The radios through the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) should then ensure that they do not provide information that causes distortion or anxiety by using clear language when discussing topics related to youth and their health, especially during a pandemic such as COVID-19. Apart from their livelihood as students, the programs aired can help educate them on societal matters and on development topics that can help build them as individuals

and the country at large. This age group is very vibrant and can steer a developmental campaign faster and more efficiently than the older or younger. The feedback they give through this radio can also be used in building areas that have deficits.

3. For a larger audience, MMUST FM should shift to a Digital Radio Station since most of its listeners are youth between the ages of 18 and 27 years who have their phones and can listen to the station online at their convenience. The community radios should also be equipped with the latest technology to maximize their operation in the communication space. Further, the radios should also have linkages with those who have fewer experts but with broader coverage. Radio stations should strive to be integrated into mainstream media or international radio stations for broader coverage. There are programs on these radios that need the attention of all generations which can be integrated into the mainstream media such as the 'COVID-19 program with the Experts' at MMUST FM. It can even be a way of marketing the community radios to make them known to their relevant audience, who might be reluctant to discover their existence in their area. For programs that require visualization of the topic discussed, the radio can be integrated with a television station, allowing listeners to see the reality of the topics being discussed when they are shown on television. Private institutions should also have a way to support community radios in community development by participating in programs, especially during crises in the communities, to share a collaborative responsibility.

Furthermore, apart from its parent institution (MMUST), 103.9 MMUST FM should have partnered with other humanitarian institutions to reach a more localised audience, especially during the time of isolation, when learning institutions were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They should have addressed more women and children in

their programs for greater relevance, for example, by using indigenous languages in the Luhya region, where MMUST FM is based.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

From the findings of this study, the following suggestions were made for further research:

1. Studies in the future should look at the reason why more females are responding more to radio programs on family health than their male counterparts, who are listening more than participating in the programs.
2. Studies in the future can explore how the new media complement the community radio stations to address the COVID-19 pandemic within the communities. An example is the use of the digital space and memes.

5.5 New Knowledge Emanating from the Study

From the findings in this study, the researcher found out that the availability of radio set in homes for the families to listen to the stations together is more beneficial than an individual listening to the radio alone or on the phone. This is because when an event or program is being aired that concerns the society, then the family can discuss or argue about it and even share it with their neighbors afterwards. What a family member feels about what is broadcasted tends to influence the rest and this sets an agenda on how that community will handle their situations (Field, 2023)

The investment into this strategy to make information accessible in homes can make the communities more aware of the matters affecting their socio-economics or health. Listening to radio on phone through the apps is useful but for less engaging programs such as the entertainment programs. The programs that are more engaging and demand a community's ear, need a gathered hearing such as during meal times in families.

From the study, the researcher also found out that the youths, who give the highest percentage of listenership to 103.9 MMUST FM, listen to radio on their smart phones. The study therefore discovered that there is a need for the station to have its operations available in the digital space to increase its audience coverage and listenership.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Questionnaire for the residents of Lurambi Sub-County

Introduction

My name is Beryl Teresa Adhiambo, a master's student in the department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

I am conducting a study on **'Communication Strategies Employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to Capture Listeners' Attention Regarding COVID-19'** as a requirement for graduation and to add on to the existing knowledge in this field of study. You are hereby requested to fill out this questionnaire to collect information on MMUST FM and its communication strategies employed during the COVID-19 pandemic with specific reference to Lurambi Sub-County. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential; for this study.

Your responses will contribute to the results of this study, and therefore will be used by the media, health industries and policy makers in mitigating future pandemics. From this study, we will also have findings that will contribute to existing knowledge and the recommendations would help improve the human nature and its environs.

If you have any questions, kindly reach out on 0727601488.

Feel appreciated and be blessed!

Beryl Adhiambo.

Bio-Data

i) What is your age?

ii) What is your gender? Male Female

iii) Which is your level of education?

i) Primary school

ii) Secondary school

iii) Diploma

iv) Bachelors

v) Post-graduate

If other, from the above, please state.....

iv) Which ward are you from?

.....

v) Have you been vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus, was the decision influenced by MMUST FM?

Yes

Section A: Communication Strategies Adopted by MMUST FM for Pandemic Communication

1. i) In which forms do you remember the radio messages in during the COVID-19 pandemic period?

Advertisements Guest Interviews COVID-19 Mentions s

Min Program on COVID-19 Area/local Visits

Any other form you remember that is not mentioned above?.....

2. Classify the strategy in (i) above that was best when used by the radio station for communicating about the COVID-19 pandemic, from the most regular to the least regular

i).....

ii).....

iii).....

iv).....

v).....

vi).....

vii).....

3. i) Which form (s) did you consider more credible while listening to the COVID-19 messages? For example, music, guest interviews, adverts, COVID-19 mentions etc.....

ii) Explain why for your answer in 3 (i) above

4. i) What strategy do you think MMUST FM could have adopted for more credibility and effectiveness of the communication regarding the COVID-19 pandemic?

ii) Give your reasons for your answer in i) above

5. i) Did the messages affect your behavior or making informed decisions in any way, in terms of your health literacy in the course of the Covid 19 Pandemic

Yes No

ii)How?.....

7. i)Were the messages at MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic diverse in terms of: Language Social Class Religion Special needs group

Gender Education Levels Age

Sexuality Economic statuses Religion

Explain how

ii) Was the language used simple and relatable? Yes No

If No, give reasons.....

8. i) Do you feel the messages on COVID-19 were:

a) Frank, open and honest? Yes No

b) Observed the right tone and consistency in their COVID-19 messaging? Yes No

ii) Did you encounter any cases of fake news and misinformation with the radio station during the COVID-19 pandemic? Yes No

If yes, how did you handle the situation?.....

9. i) As you listened to MMUST FM, were you

a) more anxious and unpredictable about the future

b) Calm and trusted the station's messages for the future

ii) If you answer is a), how did you handle the anxiety?

10. Is there any other information in terms of the communication strategies used by MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic that you feel the researcher should know?

.....

.....

.....

Section B- Factors Affecting Audience Listenership and Participation to MMUST FM during the pandemic

1. Where do you often find access to the radio set that you listen to?

i) On my phone

ii) At home

iii) In the work place

If any other place, kindly state.....

2. For how long have you been listening to MMUST FM?

i) A year or less

ii) 2-4 years

iii) 5-7 years

iv) 7-10 years

v) More than 10 years

3. How much time do you listen to MMUST FM radio in a day?

Less than 1 hour 1-3 hours 3-6 hours 6-9 hours 9-12 hours

12-24 hours

4. i) Which program (s) did you like listening to at MMUST FM station and at what time during the COVID-19 period?

Program name (s) and/or host.....

Time the program (s) is aired.....

ii) What are the specific reasons why you liked listening to the program (s)?

.....

.....

.....

5. i) How did you engage yourself in this media during the pandemic period?

Phone-i sending messages just list g in As a gu on a show

Any other way.....

ii) What factors made you prioritize listening and participating to MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic leaving other media?

.....

.....

.....

6. a) How necessary do you think engaging the following people in programming at MMUST FM was during the delivery of public health messages during a pandemic is ?

(a)Very necessary (b) Necessary (c)Somewhat necessary (d) Not necessary (tick where appropriate)

i) Community Members (a) (b) (c) (d)
Reason.....
.....

ii) Health professionals (a) (b) (c) (d)
Reason.....
.....

iii) Policy makers and National Government Administration Officers (NGAO)
(a) (b) (c) (d)
Reason.....
.....

iv) The station Management
(a) (b) (c) (d)
Reason.....
.....

iv) Other related professionals such as religious leaders and community experts
(a) (b) (c) (d)
Reason.....
.....

b) How much do you think the publics were engaged by the station in the delivery of the health promotion messages on COVID-19 ?

(a)Very engaged (b)engaged (c)Less engaged (d) Not engaged

i) Community members (a) (b) (c) (d)
Reasons.....
.....

ii) Health professionals (a) (b) (c) (d)
Reasons.....
.....

iii) Policy makers and National Government Administration Officers (NGAO)
(a) (b) (c) (d)
Reasons.....
.....

iv) Other related professionals such as religious leaders and community experts
(a) (b) (c) (d)
Reason.....
.....

6. How did the messages and programs broadcasted by MMUST FM contribute to your mental health and general well-being in the course of the COVID- 19?

.....
.....

7. a) Did your participation and listening help you discover and discard any rumors, information and fake news in your community in regards to the COVID-19?

Yes No

b) If your answer is yes in 7 (a) above, kindly explain how

.....
.....
.....

8. Is there any other information with regards to audience listenership and participation at MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic that you feel the researcher needs to know?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C- Relevance of MMUST FM in pandemic communication

- 1. You know MMUST FM as a
Commercial radio station
Community radio station
State-owned radio station

b) Reason?.....
.....

2. While listening to the program (s) at MMUST FM, how regularly did you come across any health promotion messages on COVID-19 during the pandemic period?

	Most regularly	Regularly	Less regularly	Rarely	
a) Beginning Of the pandemic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Middle of the Pandemic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Towards the end Of the pandemic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. a) What COVID-19 health promotion messages did you mostly pay attention to from MMUST FM?

- i) Washing hands
- ii) Wearing masks
- iii) Cleaning surfaces
- iv) Social Distancing
- v) Seeking medical intervention

Any other.....

b)Reason for your answer in a)
above.....

4. How often did you find yourself adhering to these COVID-19 health promotion messages from MMUST fm?

i) At the beginning of the pandemic

	Most Regularly	Regularly	Less Regularly
Washing hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wearing masks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearing surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Distancing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking medical intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting vaccine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting a booster shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there any other that you feel the researcher has left out.....

ii) In the middle of the pandemic

	Most Regularly	Regularly	Less Regularly
Washing hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wearing masks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearing surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Distancing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking medical intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting vaccine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting a booster shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there any other that you feel the researcher has left out.....

iii) At the end of the pandemic

	Most Regularly	Regularly	Less Regularly
Washing hands	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wearing masks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clearing surfaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Distancing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seeking medical intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting vaccine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting a booster shot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there any other that you feel the researcher has left out.....

5. Did you find yourself sharing the health promotion messages about COVID-19 from MMUST FM with other community members?

Yes No

Explain the reason for your answer in 5 (a) above

6. In a scale of 1 to 5, if another deadly wave of COVID-19 occurs: (Where 1 means 'I strongly agree' whereas 5 means 'I strongly disagree')

I will likely want to hear the health promotion messages again from MMUST FM

1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5

7. How satisfied were you with the COVID-19 Health Promotion Messages from MMUST FM without complimenting it with another media?

Very satisfied satisfied less satisfied not satisfied at all

Reason.....
.....

8. a) Is there any other radio station or media that you relied on for more information on Covid 19?

Yes No

b) If your answer is yes in 8 (a), name the other radio station or media.....

9. In your opinion what do you think can be done better by MMUST FM to help in the communication about future pandemics?

.....
.....

10. Have you been vaccinated? Yes No

11. Did the COVID-19 messages from MMUST FM play a major role in you going for the vaccine?

Yes Some No

If yes, explain your answer
.....
.....

If No, explain your answer.....
.....

12. Did you find yourself sharing the MMUST FM's COVID-19 vaccine messages with members of your community?

If yes, how was the experience:

- Informed them of what they did not know
- Contradicted the information they had before
- Came in agreement with information from their own sources
- Encouraged them to take the vaccine
- Encouraged them to listen to the station too
- Had little or no impact on them at all

13. As you listened to MMUST FM's messages during the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think your questions on COVID-19 have been answered satisfactorily or not?

Y they have been answered satisfactorily

N still have some unanswered questions

If no, which one (s)

i).....

.....

ii).....

.....

14. In percentage of 0 to 100% rate how you think MMUST FM performed as a communication medium in the delivery of health promotion messages during the COVID-19 pandemic period?.....

.....

15. Would you encourage the Kenyan government to give focus on the community radio stations as a tool in the ending of future pandemics? Yes No

Give reason (s) for your answer above.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

16. Did you use any other media apart from MMUST FM to get informed about the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, which one (s) and what advantage does it have over MMUST FM?

.....

.....

.....

18. Is there any other information that you feel might be useful to this research, yet the researcher has left out?

.....

.....

.....

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.....

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Appendix II:

Interview Schedule for the MMUST FM Producers.

Introduction

My name is Beryl Teresa Adhiambo, a master's student in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

I am conducting a study on '**Communication Strategies Employed by 103.9 MMUST FM to Capture Listeners' Attention Regarding COVID-19**' as it is a requirement for graduation and to add on to the existing knowledge in this field of study.

You are hereby requested to accord us a chance for an interview to particularly collect data and your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential; for this study.

Your responses will contribute to the results of this study, therefore, will be used by the media and health industries and policy makers in mitigating the future pandemics. From this study, we will also have findings that will contribute to existing knowledge and the recommendations would help improve the human nature and its environs.

If you have any questions, kindly reach out on 0727601488.

Feel appreciated and be blessed!

Beryl Adhiambo.

Interview Schedule for the MMUST FM Producers

Section A: Strategies Adopted for the COVID-19 pandemic communication by MMUST FM

1. What aspects of production and broadcasting did you consider as a community radio to make sure that your programs and messages are for the people and by the people?
2. From your research on other stations while doing the planning of the pandemic communication, how different were your communication strategies to the other radio stations or the strategies used before? Were there any health experts involved?
3. How has the signal transmission of your radio station affected the production, listener attention and participation to the COVID-19 programs and messages you have broadcasted?
4. What do you think you could have done better as compared to the other stations around for strategic pandemic communication? Or what do you think other radio stations can borrow from you in terms of communicating about the COVID-19 pandemic? Or what do you think you could have done together as community radios at the time of the pandemic to better the situations
5. Are there any other strategies that you wished to explore but could not because of some challenge? What was the challenge and how can it be addressed or in any occurrence of another pandemic in the future?
6. How did you empower people to act and account for health literacy for making informed decisions among your audience?
7. How did you ensure that your messages were:
 - i) Frank, open and avoided sugar-coating?
 - ii) Relevant, consistent and regular?
8. Is there any other information on strategic communication towards COVID-19 response through radio that you would wish the researcher to know?

Section B: Factors affecting listenership and participation to COVID-19 programs at MMUST FM

1. What are the factors that affected the attention and participation of your listeners to the COVID-19 information for example their level of education and socioeconomic status?
2. MMUST is an institution on its own, which manages the running of the radio station, what partnerships did you have with the institutions management to ensure good production and listenership to the pandemic messages?
3. Have you had the audience questioning on the accuracy of your data on COVID-19 and how did you handle the situation?

4. Pandemics come when people are unprepared and may cause mental disorders, anxiety, fear and panic among the audiences. Through listenership and participations, how did you capture this during the pandemic communication? How did you help them meet their needs and lessen their anxiety for an unpredictable future?
5. Who are some of the personnel you engaged in the COVID-19 programs that you think increased the participation of the audience at MMUST FM during the pandemic?
6. Which segment or group in the community do you think was more engaged on in the COVID-19 programs at MMUST FM and why? What did you consider the effective form of delivery of the COVID-19 pandemic messages to the listeners with reference to their age?
7. How did you ensure a two-way communication process by making your COVID-19 feedback channels available and accessible through your program design and content?
8. Do you have any social media accounts and how did you ensure accountability for how feedback is given while addressing the complaints and concerns from the audience?
9. Is there any other information about listenership and participation to the COVID-19 messages at MMUST FM that you'd wish the researcher to know of?

Section C: Relevance of MMUST FM's Programming in COVID-19 pandemic communication

1. Is there any academic theory or concept that you related to the production and communication about the COVID-19 pandemic at MMUST FM?
2. Which are the sources of factual information about the COVID-19 pandemic that you relied on for accurate information in this era of fake news and misinformation?
3. Based on your own perspective, how much impact do you think MMUST FM had on the mitigation process of the COVID-19 pandemic in Kakamega town? How did you realize that your communication about the pandemic was a success/ effective? Give reasons.
4. Is there any regulatory body that you consulted with that was concerned with pandemic communication? How much did it contribute to the success of the communication process?
5. Have you received any recognition or critics for the work done in pandemic communication as a media station? If any, which one and how has it affected your current broadcasts?
6. How do you feel about the government's involvement of Community Radio stations in helping with pandemic communication? What policies would you like to be put in place and how best would you like the government to utilize the stations for relevance during pandemics?

7. Were there any approaches from the private sector or health professionals seeking help from this communication space to communicate to their publics about the COVID-19 pandemic? Or it was a one-way effort?
8. How did your messages and programs during the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - i) catalyze development?
 - ii) withstand the policies put in place?
 - iii) withstand the technological challenges?
 - iv) Consider diverse audiences e.g languages and observed the social norms
 - v) Was from trusted sources?
 - vi) utilize sound and tone for relevance
9. How concerned are you that people tend to believe information from unverified sources such as on social media that may tend to be untrue? What strategy did you use to handle cases on fake news and misinformation and ensured that it did no lead to their mental distress and anxiety?
10. Is there any other information on the relevance of MMUST FM's COVID-19 and messages that you would wish the researcher to know?

Appendix III:

Interview Schedule for the COVID-19 Experts.

Introduction

My name is Beryl Teresa Adhiambo, a master's student in the department of Journalism and Mass Communication at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

I am conducting a study on '**Evaluating the Communication Strategies Used by MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic**' as it is a requirement for graduation and to add on to the existing knowledge in this field of study.

You are hereby requested to accord us a chance for an interview to particularly collect data and your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential; for this study.

Your responses will contribute to the results of this study, therefore, will be used by the media and health industries and policy makers in mitigating the future pandemics. From this study, we will also have findings that will contribute to existing knowledge and the recommendations would help improve the human nature and its environs.

If you have any questions, kindly reach out on 0727601488.

Feel appreciated and be blessed!

Beryl Adhiambo.

Interview Schedule for the COVID 19-Experts.

Section A: Strategies Adopted for the COVID-19 pandemic communication by MMUST

FM

1. Do you know MMUST FM as a State-owned, Commercial or Community Radio? Give reasons.
2. Apart from the COVI-19 pandemic, which other serious public health communications have you ever been engaged in?
3. What new messaging strategy did you adopt for your audience at MMUST FM as compared to other media when you were a guest in the COVI-19 programme?
4. How did you:
 - i) Maintain relevance, repetition, consistency and call for mass action in your messaging?
 - ii) Keep frank ness, openness and avoided-sugar coating in your message delivery?
5. What were the signs of unpredictability, anxiousness and uncertainty did you realize with your audience and how did you handle the situation?
6. What were the mental health issues arising at this time and how did you help out for calmness?
7. How did you handle diversity in terms of language, needs and social norms in your messaging during the pandemic?
8. Are there any theories of pandemic communication that you used to design your content for maximum engagement of your audience at MMUST FM or it was just personalized structuring?
9. Is there anything that stood out and any advice you'd give to the station on strategic pandemic communication when addressing any other future pandemics?

Section B: Factors affecting listenership and participation to COVID-19 programs at MMUST FM

1. What are the factors you felt affected your listeners' attention and participation at MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic and how do you feel they can be addressed?
2. By what percentage do you think the residents of Lurambi sub-county were engaged in the programming at MMUST FM during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Which other professionals do you think would have never been excluded in the programs by MMUST FM to capture the attention and influence participation and mass action during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Section C: Relevance of MMUST FM's programming in COVID-19 pandemic communication

1. Was a two-way communication with your audience at MMUST FM available during and after the program and how did you handle your audience's complaints and concerns? Can you account for the feedback and responses after the COVID-19 program?
2. How did you ensure your messages:
 - i) catalyzed development, social action and change?
 - ii) withstood policies and technological challenges?
 - iii) addressed misinformation, fake news and social media influence?
3. Of all the communication platforms you used to address issues on COVID-19, can you consider MMUST FM the best of them all? Any reasons?

Appendix IV:

Map of Lurambi Sub -County

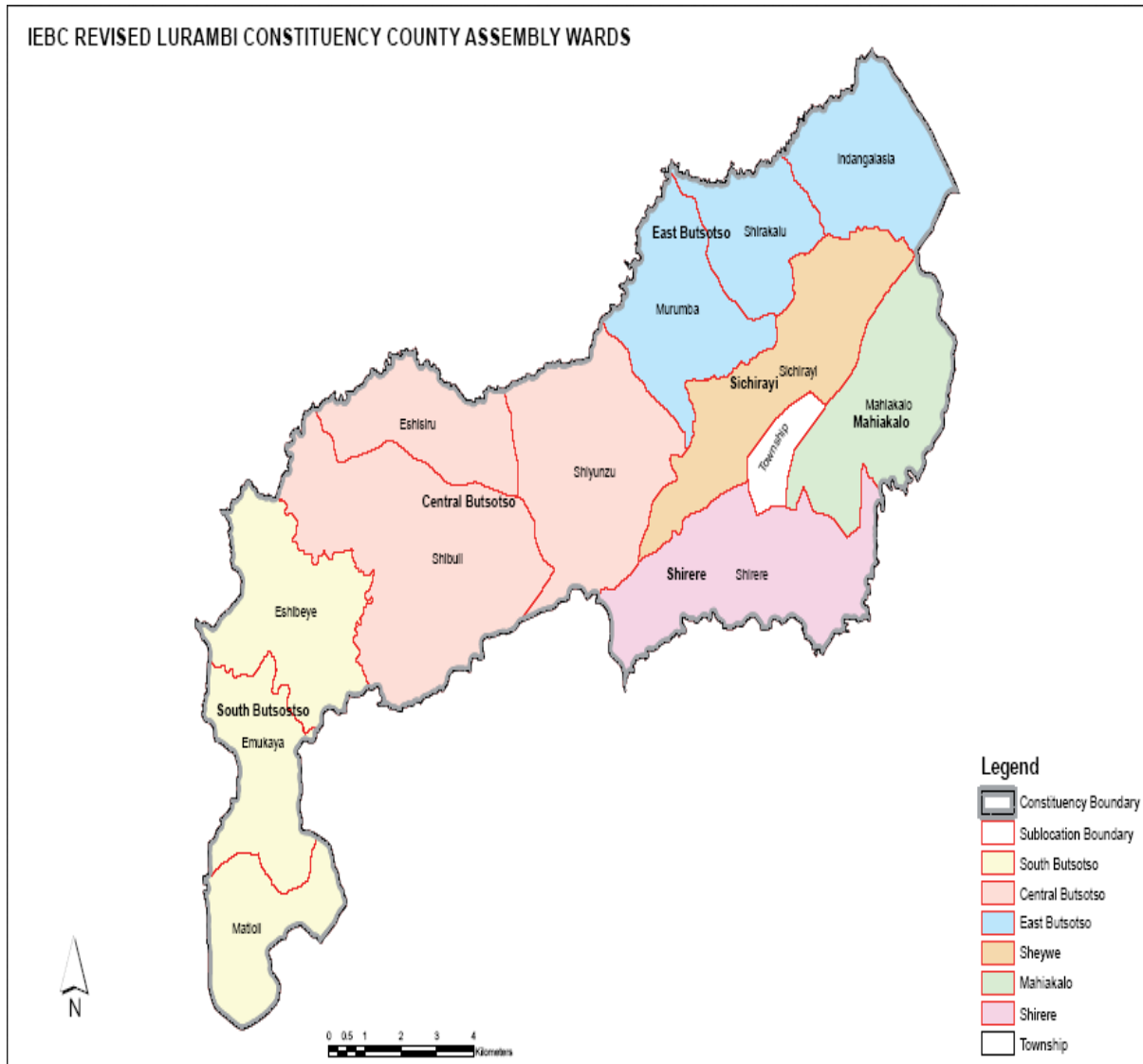


Figure 1.1: Lurambi Sub- County Map as the study area of the research

Source: (Oruta and Wangara, 2021)



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

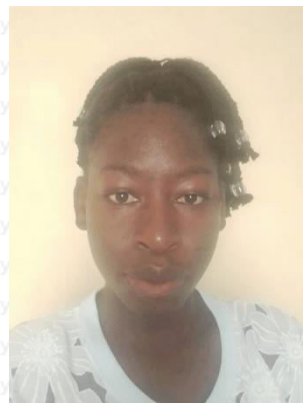


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Ref No: **489864**
25/April/2023

Date of Issue:

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms. Beryl Teresa Adhiambo of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kakamega on the topic: Evaluating the communication strategies used by MMUST FM during the Covid-19 Pandemic for the period ending : 25/April/2024.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/23/25386**

489864

Applicant Identification Number

Director General

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