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ADDRESSING HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN OJOKORO LOCAL COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT AREA, LAGOS THROUGH NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Climate change has assumed a topical discourse of global concern among forward-thinking leaders and institutions because of the far-reaching health risks and consequences associated with it. Nigeria and the rest of sub-Sahara Africa are not immune to the health challenges of climate change. This study examines the deployment of narrative communication to raise awareness about climate change and health hazards it can trigger in Nigeria; as it offers a veritable framework and potentials to address these health implications through dynamic emotional and cognitive engagement with members of the society. By deploying survey method and snowballing sampling technique, this research examined how the tenets of narrative communication can be deployed to mitigate the scourge of health consequences resulting from climate change. The theoretical consideration leaned profoundly on narrative communication framework and risk communication theory. The findings from the study validated that climate change has capacity to trigger health problems (92%). The study identified the health risks traceable to climate change to include increased risk of water borne diseases (85%), heat related health issues caused by heatwaves and high temperature (78%) as well vector-borne diseases (82%). The study concludes that that narrative communication can shore up awareness, motivation, and self-efficacy among Nigerians to adopt climate-resilient health behaviours (90%). This study contributes to the growing body of research on climate change communication and health promotion in Nigeria and the rest of sub-Sahara Africa by

emphasizing and appreciating the capability of narrative communication to trigger positive behavioural and attitudinal change.

Keywords: Forward-thinking, snowballing, mutation, climate-resilient, Self-efficacy.

Introduction

Unarguably, climate change has become a persistent global concern, prompting widespread attention, discussion and intentional actions among world leaders and international organizations. Consequently, world leaders and heads of government from the G7 and G20 countries have been driving global discourse to shape, implement and monitor climate change policies through the Paris Agreement articulated in United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2017). The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres has repeated emphasized the critical nature of climate change, calling for ambitious and immediate actions towards rising temperature by intentionally reducing fossil fuel usage and commitment to alternative ecofriendly energy. (Guterres, A.2024).

At the COP30 meeting in Brazil (May 2025), world leaders advocated for global climate governance through United Nations Climate Change Council to ensure strict enforcement of the Paris Agreement on climate change; highlighting the urgent need for stronger mechanisms of enforcement to guarantee safer ecological environment for all. (Reuters, May 08, 2025).

Additionally, international Organizations like World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) among the many international organizations have continued to champion engagements aimed at addressing climate change because of the multifaced consequences, including health risks. The world health organization (WHO) posits that climate change portends one of the most pressing global health concerns of the 21st century (World Health Organization, 2018).

Evidently, rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events resulting from climate change have continued aggravating existing health challenges and creating new ones (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014). Nigeria, with its rapidly growing population and fragile healthcare system, is particularly vulnerable to the health implications of climate change (Federal Ministry of Health, 2017). This is consistent with the assertion of Adelekan, 2016, "rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events are altering the distribution of disease vectors, compromising food security, and disrupting healthcare systems (Adelekan, 2016). In Ojokoro Local Development Council Area (LCDA), these impacts are further exacerbated by existing health challenges, including high rates of infectious diseases and limited access to healthcare services (Oduro et al., 2019).

Narrative communication offers a plausible approach and framework to tackle the health implications of climate change in Ojokoro LCDA, Nigeria. By engaging the strategy of sharing personal stories, experiences, and anecdotes being the fundamental underpinning of narrative communication, individuals can be engaged emotionally and intellectually to enhance awareness, motivation, and self-efficacy to adopt climate-resilient health behaviours (Kreuter et al., 2007). Narrative communication tenets can also help to overcome cultural, social, traditional and economic barriers to climate change adaptation and health promotion (Malkin et al., 2017).

Like the rest of the world, Ojokoro LCDA in Nigeria is not insulated from the dire consequences of climate change, particularly resultant far-reaching health risks. Existing studies validates the prevalence of extreme temperatures leading to increased frequency of extreme weather conditions. Such extreme temperatures are known to trigger heat waves and extreme dehydration resulting into serious health risks, particularly among vulnerable populations of Nigeria (Nigerian Meteorological Agency, 2020).

Many scholars have linked various health complications to the unfriendly weather conditions and flooding resulting from climate change. According to news agency of Nigeria (NAN, 2025), a public health physician, Dr. Gabriel Ameh warned that subsisting extreme temperature, amid persistent epileptic power supply could trigger diseases, threaten livestock and even lead to death of alarming proportion. The health expert further argued that "prevailing heatwave and scorching sun could cause severe dehydration, respiratory complications and cardiovascular disease that could lead to stroke and other severe health consequences". (https://nannews.ng/2024/02/29/heatwave-avoid-exhaustion-dehydration-physician-warns/ retrieved on March 14th 2025).

Additionally, there has been a significant gap in knowledge, awareness and behaviour change as it relates to climate change adaptation strategies and advocacy on climate related health issues in Ojokoro Local Council Development in Lagos State. This understanding motivated this study, "addressing the health implications of climate change in Ojokoro through narrative communication".

The overarching aim of this study was to bridge the existing knowledge gaps through empirical data. More specifically, the study was designed to demystify narratives communication and establish its intersection with desired behavioural change as regards health hazards associated with climate change. The specific research objectives also included: (i) identifying health hazards of climate change among respondents in Ojokoro LCDA; (ii) the role of narrative communication in promoting awareness on climate change and health in Ojokoro LCDA; (iii) identify challenges and opportunities for narrative communication in addressing climate change related health issues in Ojokoro LCDA and (iv) recommend narrative communication strategies in tackling climate change health challenges in Ojokoro LCDA.

Conceptual Clarification

In furtherance to this study, it is incumbent on the researcher to proffer adequate perspectives to the fundamental concepts associated with the focus of the empirical investigation including climate change, narrative communication and theoretical considerations.

Consequently, climate change refers to the long-term warming of the planet due to increased global temperature resulting from human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and environmental pollutions – including industrial pollution from manufacturing conglomerates, carbon emission from vehicles as well as domestic pollutions. Climate change has evolved into monumental global phenomenon that poses significant health threats to mankind, economic development, and environmental sustainability (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2013).

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) posits that "Climate change refers to the long-term warming of the planet, which is primarily caused by the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. These gases including carbon dioxide and methane, trap heat from the sun and prevent it from being released back into space, leading to a rise in global temperatures. They argued that climate change can have significant impacts on the environment and human health, including rising sea levels, more frequent and severe weather events, and changes in precipitation patterns." (NASA, 2020).

This is in tandem with the submission of the global agency in charge of environment protection, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Their standpoint is that "Climate change refers to the long-term warming of the planet, which is primarily caused by the increasing levels of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. These gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, trap heat from the sun and prevent it from being released back into space, leading to a rise in global temperatures." (EPA, 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) equally defined climate change as "the long-term warming of the planet, which is primarily caused by the increasing levels of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the earth's atmosphere" (WHO, 2018). Climate change is known to have far-reaching health implications, including increased mortality and morbidity from extreme weather events, heat stress, and vector-borne diseases (IPCC, 2013).

This phenomenon has severe implications for human health, particularly in vulnerable countries like Nigeria. International institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have also highlighted the health impacts of climate change in Nigeria. The WHO notes that climate change is expected to increase the burden of disease in Nigeria, particularly among vulnerable populations. (WHO, 2018). Similarly, Omoruyi and Kunle (2012) examined the effects of climate change on health risks in Nigeria and found that climate change can increase the risk of water-borne diseases,

heat-related illnesses, and vector-borne diseases. (Omoruyi, E. P; Kunle, O. A. (2012).

Health Hazards Associated with Climate Change in Nigeria

The empirical studies conducted by Nigerian Meteorological Agency (2017), Omoruyi, E. P.; Kunle, O. A. (2012) and Smith, L. E.; Ezzati, M. (2019) identified some of the health consequences of climate change phenomenon to include but not limited to:

- Increased risk of water-borne diseases. The researchers noted that climate change is projected to alter precipitation patterns, leading to more frequent flooding and droughts, which can contaminate water sources and increase the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera and typhoid fever – particularly in coastal areas and regions prone to incessant flooding. (Nigerian Meteorological Agency, (2017).
- Exacerbating heat or high temperature related health complications. The rising temperatures resulting from global warming and climate change can increase the risk of heat-related illnesses, particularly among vulnerable populations such as the elderly and young children.
- Rising Respiratory health problems. Climate change has the capacity to exacerbate respiratory health problems such as asthma, pneumonia, tuberculosis, bronchitis and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) due to increased air pollution and particulate matter. (Onyango, M., & Heidari, S. (2017).
- Escalating vector-borne diseases. Climate change is known to alter the distribution and prevalence of disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes, which can increase the risk of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. Omoruyi, E. P., & Kunle, O. A. (2012).

- Malnutrition and its multifaced challenges. Unarguably, climate change has strong impact on agricultural productivity with multiplier effects on food insecurity, food inflation and ultimately malnutrition; especially among vulnerable populations, children and the elderly. (World Health Organization, 2018).

Demystifying Narrative Communication

Narrative communication refers to the process of transmitting information, ideas, values, and beliefs through storytelling techniques to engage, persuade, and educate audiences, often with the overarching goal of promoting behaviour change, influencing attitudes, or shaping public opinion. It involves the use of narratives in the form of structured sequences of events, to communicate meaning and create engaging connections with the target audience for the purpose achieving the communication objectives.

This is in tandem with the assertion of renowned communication scholar and

theorist, Barbara O'Keefe (1990), who emphasized the importance of narrative communication and storytelling in shaping our understanding of the worldview and ourselves. She argued further that, narratives have the power to create, reinforce, or challenge social norms and values. (O'Keefe, B. J. 1990).

Narrative communication was presented as a very powerful tool for promoting awareness, behaviour change, and advocacy on climate change and health from the perspective Kreuter and his friends. (Kreuter et al., 2007). McComas (2006) argues that narrative communication is particularly effective in promoting awareness and behaviour change on risk issues like climate change.

Drawing from the postulations of these scholars, it suffices to assert that narrative communication summarizes all intentional efforts and processes to leverage the tenets and benefits of storytelling procedures to convey information, cultural shift, ideology, values, convictions and beliefs to a predetermined or defined audiences to persuade, educate and convince them toward a preconceived behaviour change or public opinion.

The application of narrative communication was exemplified during the flooding struct and displaced some inhabitants of Lagos state in 2022. Prior to the flooding, Lagos State Government deployed storytelling messages and campaign to inform and educate the public about the flood risk based on the warning of and the necessary precautions to take. The risks and socioeconomic implications would have been far reaching if the state government had not deployed narrative communication to sensitize the public and educate them.

Key Components of Narrative Communication

The emphasis here is to examine the fundamental underpinnings of narrative communication in relation to the study. They include but not limited to the underlisted:

- Embedded in Storytelling: Storytelling is the act of sharing narratives with target audience for the purpose of entertaining, educating, or persuading them towards behavioural or attitudinal change or modification.
- Emotional Connection and Bonding: Narratives have the power to evoke emotions, create empathy, and foster connections between individuals.
- Cultural and Environmental Context: Narratives are shaped by cultural context, including values, beliefs, and practices.
- Personal Experience: Narratives often draw on personal experiences, making them relatable and authentic.
- Personalization: Narratives may be personalized and tailored to the audience for clarity of understanding and stronger impact.

The benefits of engaging narrative communication in health promotion are quite numerous based on the submission of Kreuter, M. W., et al (2007). The communication strategy is known to cut

through the clutters of barriers to make longer lasting impact with high message retention. A few of those benefits present here.

- Increased awareness and engagement: Narrative communication can increase awareness about climate change and trigger better audience engagement and participation in health promotion programs.
- Improved retention: Stories can make health information more memorable, improving retention and recall.
- Enhanced empathy and understanding: Narrative communication can promote empathy and understanding of patients' experiences, improving patient-provider communication and patient-cantered care.
- Increased motivation: Stories can motivate individuals to adopt healthy behaviors and make positive lifestyle changes.
- Cultural relevance: Narrative communication can be tailored to specific cultural contexts, making health promotion programs more effective and relevant.

Overall, narrative communication has the potential to be a powerful tool in health promotion, allowing health professionals to connect with their audience on an emotional level, convey complex health information in a relatable way, and promote behaviour change. By leveraging the tenets narrative communication strategies to initiate community-based events to promote climate change awareness and adaptation in Ojokro Local Development Council, the health risks associated with climate change may be effectively addressed by enhancing community resilience (Adebayo, 2023).

Empirical Review

Many communication scholars have carried out empirical investigations about the efficacy of narrative communication in dealing with the health hazards associated with climate change. The focus of effort here is to examine some of these scientific studies and extract insights from their key finding to identify existing gap(s). The gaps serve as part of the justifications to validate the significance of this study.

Maibach, Roser-Renouf and Leiserowitz (2010), examined the examined the effectiveness of narrative communication in promoting awareness and behaviour change on climate change adaptation among adolescents in the United States. The study discovered that narrative communication concept was effective in promoting awareness and behaviour change among adolescents, particularly when the narratives were tailored to the adolescents' values and beliefs. This validated the relevance of storytelling strategy in effective communication, especially when it comes to health related and attitudinal change communications.

Vaughan and Tinker (2009) examined the effectiveness of narrative communication in promoting awareness and behaviour change on climate change among rural communities in Tanzania. The researchers concluded that narrative

communication was effective in promoting awareness and behaviour change among rural communities, particularly when the narratives were delivered through community-based channels that resonate with the target audience or respondents. This reinforces the importance of curated narratives as a veritable cutting-edge communication strategy to address the risks of climate change, including health hazards.

Another scientific enquiry by Oyebode and Elegbeleye (2017) is instructive in this empirical review. This study examined the effectiveness of narrative communication in promoting awareness and behaviour change on climate change and health implications among rural communities in Osun State, in south-western Nigeria. The study revealed that narrative communication was impactful in promoting awareness and behaviour change among rural communities, particularly when the narratives were tailored to the communities' cultural values and beliefs. Another key learning from the study is that adopting the tenets of ethnocommunicolgy in the implementation of narrative communication (curated storytelling strategy) makes it very effective and receptive to intended target, especially in the rural setting.

In a similar development, Adeniyi and Oyefabi (2020) conducted an empirical study to examine the effectiveness of narrative communication in promoting awareness and behaviour change on climate change and health among urban communities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The finding validates that narrative communication was effectively instrumental to promote the awareness and behaviour change among urban communities, particularly when the narratives were delivered through social media channels its convenience and of course, the respondents' educational background, exposure, tech-savvy and digital interconnectedness. Another key learning from this study is that the channel of engagement is critical to the effectiveness of narrative communication – thereby reinforcing the need to know the demographic and psychographics of the audience at the planning stage, through thorough target audience profiling.

Ikuomola and Ojebuyi (2019) in their study examined the effectiveness of narrative communication in promoting awareness and behaviour change on climate change and health related risks among school children in Ibadan, Oyo State, south-western Nigeria. The study found that the choice of narrative communication strategy was highly impactful in promoting awareness and behaviour change among school children, particularly when the narratives were tailored to the children's age and educational level.

Another study was conducted by Nwosu and Okoro (2018) to examine the effectiveness of narrative communication in promoting awareness and behaviour change on climate change and health challenges among rural communities in Enugu State, Nigeria. The outcome of the study revealed that narrative communication was effective in promoting awareness and behaviour change among rural communities, particularly when the narratives were delivered through

community-based channels. Again, this is tandem with the finding of Oyebode and Elegbeleye (2017), validating that target audience influences the choice of communication channel. The encoding of communication messages or content and channel of delivery should reflect the receiving audience to make it effective and impactful. Both research work in focus here emphasized community-based channel strategy that resonate with the targets in the respective communities. The implication is that narrative communication strategy should be dynamic; it cannot be one-cap-fit-all because audience is dynamically different per time and space. It should be culturally and channel sensitive depending of the specific audience. (Nwosu, I. E., & Okoro, E. A. (2018).

In a study titled "Narrative communication in African cultures: A study of traditional Igbo storytelling" by Orodo, O. (2018), the scholar emphasized the significance of narrative communication in African cultures. He argues that traditional African storytelling is a vital means of preserving cultural heritage and promoting social cohesion.

Subsequently, Anyanwu, C. (2020) conducted a study on "The role of narrative communication in shaping public opinion" in Abuja, central geographical region of Nigeria. The study concluded that narrative communication is a powerful tool for shaping public opinion and influencing social change.

Following the outcome of the empirical review, it is evident that narrative communication has been extremely effective in creating awareness of climate change and its health implications as well as behaviour change within the scope and scale of the investigation. The review also highlighted the need to have a robust understanding of audience which is dynamic by default; and of course, adopt a culturally and channel sensitive strategy in curating the message based on the outcome of robust audience profiling.

Additionally, the empirical review identified major research gaps needing timely and strategic intervention to cater to the lacuna created by the gaps. Firstly, existing studies did not reflect a national or pan-Nigeria outlook because they were to one location, making it a huge challenge for the outcome to be extrapolated to have a national representation. Secondly, the existing studies focused on how narrative communication can promote awareness and behaviour change in relation to climate change and health risks. There is a need for a study that is tailored to address the health implications associated with climate change. This study is designed to fill this gap.

Theoretical Considerations

The theoretical consideration for the study leaned towards the postulations of risk communication and narrative theory (narrative communication theory).

Risk Communication Theory

Risk communication theory provided a suitable framework to explains how to effectively communicate risks and uncertainties to the public. According to the theorist, Peter Sandman (1993), risk communication is a process that involved understanding the perceptions, concerns,

and values of the audience, and using this information to craft messages that are clear, concise, and relevant.

Drawing from the assertion of the theorist, the overarching idea emphasized sharing relevant information to help individuals, groups, institutions or communities understand potential risks and take appropriate actions to assuage or prevent impending dangers. This theory is crucial in crisis situations, such as disease outbreaks, where effective communication can be a matter of life and death.

In furtherance to this viewpoint, the World Health Organization (WHO), emphasized that risk communication was critical in managing outbreak response, as it enables individuals and communities to take informed decisions and adopt protective behaviours (WHO, 2020). Additionally, Covello and Allen (2012) also highlighted the need for transparent, timely, and consistent communication in risk situations to build trust and credibility as way to mitigate the spread of risk situations.

The response of Nigerian Government to COVID-19 pandemic through the ministry of health, specifically Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC provided a classic illustration of risk communication that leverages narrative communication. The government used various channels, including traditional media and social media to engage with the various publics and enlightened them about the risks associated with the virus (creating awareness) and the necessary precautions to take (effecting behavioural change). The continuous engagement and education by government through the media was very instrumental in de-escalating the casualties of the epidemic.

Again, when Nigeria was hit by Lassa fever epidemic in 2020, the Federal Government (FG through Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) leverage narrative communication strategy (risk communication) to inform and educate the public about it as well as the relevant precautions to embrace for safety. The communication from NCDC was clear, concise and consistent – recognizing and reflecting the multi-dimensional composition of the population in their messaging, character selection and channel mix.

Most recently, when Lagos State was affected by flood disaster in 2022, the State Government deployed the tenets of risk communication to engage the public, informing them about the risks and necessary safety nets available to avoid being a victim of the situation.

Risk communication theory was considered suitable for addressing climate change health implications because of its inherent ability of perception-based approach. The theory recognizes that risk perceptions in Nigerian communities may be affected by a wide range of factors, including cultural, social, and traditional belief system. The cultural diversity of Ojokoro LCDA residents makes the theory well-suited as cultural and social factors play a significant role in shaping risk perceptions and behavioural modifications.

Again, risk communication theory emphasizes the significance of stakeholders and community engagement as well as inclusivity in the communication process to

make it effective and efficient. This participatory approach enshrined in the tenets of risk communication strategy made it relevant and impactful in Ojokoro environ where community engagement and participation were crucial factors for effective risk communication.

Narrative Theory (NT)

The Narrative theory, also known as Narrative Communication Theory, is a framework that explains how people make sense of the world around them through stories and narratives. The theory was propounded by Walter Fisher (1984) in his book, "Narration as Human Communication: The Essence of Human Communication." The theory emphasizes that humans are "story-telling animals" who use narratives to convey meaning, values, and beliefs. (Walter Fisher, 1984).

The theory was selected for this study because it offers:

- Emotional connectivity with relevant targets: Narratives and storytelling created an emotional connection with the targets in Ojokoro, making them more open-minded and receptive to messages about climate change and its health implications as precursor for adaptation.
- Cultural relevance and sensitivity: Storytelling are an integral part of Ojokoro culture, making narrative communication theory a culturally relevant and sensitive approach for communicating climate change and health messages.
- Personalization: Narratives tend to personalize the issue of climate change, making it more relatable and meaningful for the audience to internalize and take action.

By sharing stories and experiences about climate change and relevant adaptations necessary to mitigate health consequences, Ojokoro community members can have better understanding of the causes and impacts of climate change, and also adapt well to its effects. Empirical findings have shown that awareness programs on climate change challenges can be effective in promoting adaptation strategies among communities (Adebayo, 2023).

Methodology

The study adopted quantitative approach, precisely survey. The instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire administered to relevant residents in Ojokoro Local Development Council Area (LCDA) in Lagos. Survey is widely used research method with several attendant benefits including flexibility and cost-effectiveness. According to Wright, (2017), survey can be administered online or offline, making it a flexible and cost-effective research method to consider.

The study adopted snowballing sampling technique, using a sampling frame of eighteen to fifty-five years of age (18-55 years). Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that involves recruiting participants through existing social networks (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). Since the study focused on climate change and its health consequences,

snowball sampling technique was considered relevant in identifying individuals who are quite knowledgeable in climate change and its associated health implications, thereby allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the issue (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton (2010). Again, snowball technique can also be helpful in identifying and reaching individuals who are vulnerable to climate change as experts argue that by leveraging existing social connections, snowball sampling can help in reaching vulnerable populations that might be disproportionately affected by climate change. (Watts, Adger, Agnolucci, Blackstock, Byass, Cai & Costello 2015). More importantly, snowball sampling technique is known to be an effective and efficient way to recruit participants in a study when resources are limited (Sadler et al., 2010).

Ojokoro Local Council Development Area (LCDA) is situated within Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government Area (LGA) in Lagos State; with an estimated population of 400,000 residents, according to Lagos State Government. (2017). Considering the population size of Ojokoro and the focus of study, "Addressing the Health Implications of Climate Change through narrative communication," snowball sampling was considered an effective method for surveying 150 respondents who are knowledgeable about the focus of study.

In deploying the snowball sample technique, the researcher was guided by these processes and strategic actions to mitigate against disproportionate representation:

(i) well defined eligibility criteria for seeds (respondents) including knowledge about climate change and its health implications as well as vulnerability in Ojokoro Local Government in line with the assertion of Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016). This was achieved through engagement with community leaders and health workers who are knowledgeable about the focus of study in Ojokoro Local Government. (Noy, 2008). The researcher intentionally diversified the seeds to accommodate different perspectives and experiences for the purpose of comprehensive understanding of the subject matter as well as wider representation. (Heckathorn, 2011).

(ii) established a threshold of trust with seeds and subsequent participants to ensure their buy-in so they can give reliable information during data collection (Noy, 2008).

(iii) purposive selection of seeds. The researcher contacts selected seed who are knowledgeable about climate change and its health implications in Ojokoro Local Government (Etikan et al., 2016) and consequently requested them to participate in the study using structured

questionnaire (Baltar & Brunet, 2012).

(iv) Referrals and follow-up. The researcher leveraged the contacted seeds to provide referrals to other individuals who are knowledgeable about climate change and its health implications as well as people who are vulnerable in Ojokoro Local Government for further data collection. Data were analyzed using frequency tables and descriptive statistics.

Discussion of Finding

Consequent upon data analysis, the study revealed that a significant majority of the residents in Ojokoro LCDA were convinced that climate change portends a sufficient health risk at 92% (n=138).This insight is consistent with previous studies validating that climate change can trigger devastating health complications, particularly among vulnerable populations and geographically exposed locations such as coastal settlements prone to flooding or further arid areas prone to deforestation (Smith et al., 2014).

The respondents in Ojokoro LCDA were able to identify startling health risks caused by extreme weather condition triggered by climate change. Those health challenges include increased risk of water borne diseases (85%), heat related health issues caused by heatwaves and high temperature (78%) as well vector-borne diseases (82%). These findings align with the empirical evidence connecting climate change to increased spread of disease vectors and contaminated water sources (McMichael et al., 2006).

The outcome of the analysis showed that narrative communication was effective in promoting awareness climate change and the associated health risks in Ojokoro LCDA. A significant majority of the respondents (90%) reported increase in awareness about health consequences of climate change after exposure to narrative communication.

The study also found that narrative communication was helpful in promoting and encouraging positive behaviour change and adaptation as 80% of the respondent reported embracing health adaptation after exposure to narrative communication. Additionally, 75% of the respondents opined that narrative communication motivated them to initiate action to protect their health from the effects of climate change. This finding was consistent with previous studies where narrative communication has been shown as an effective tool for promoting health awareness and positive behaviour change (Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007). It also aligned with the study by Moran et al., 2016 suggesting that narrative communication has the capacity to trigger health behaviours while promoting adaptation to climate change.

Conclusion

This study assessed the health challenges associated with climate change in Ojokoro LCDA and how the tenets of narrative communication may be deployed effectively to tackle these health hazards. The findings from 150 respondents

provided valuable insights into the perceptions and behaviour change among respondents. The findings showed that climate change is perceived as a significant health risk in the community by 92% of respondents reporting that climate change poses a significant threat to health. This viewpoint was consistent with the conceptual review– highlighting the devastating health impacts of climate change, particularly among vulnerable populations (Smith et al., 2014). The respondents further claimed that rising incidences of heat-related illnesses, vector-borne diseases (such as malaria), respiratory challenges, and waterborne diseases are linked to floods caused climate change. These outcomes are consistent with the findings of international research which reported that climate change disproportionately affect the health of individuals in low-resource and densely populated areas (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC], 2022).

The study equally identified narrative communication as an effective tool for promoting awareness and behaviour change about climate-induced health risks through local storytelling, community engagement (drama), personal testimonials, and traditional media. This was also consistent with existing findings that communication rooted in storytelling enhances message reception, retention and drives attitudinal change (Dahlstrom, 2014; Lejano, Tavares-Reager, & Berkes, 2013).

Recommendations

Further to the research findings, the under listed, recommendations have been put forward in relation to the research objectives:

The policy makers and local health authorities through the Ojokoro community health centre should develop participatory climate adaptation events localized for the residents of the community. This should incorporate strategic surveillance and monitoring systems to encourage reporting and documentation of climate-related illness in the community for effective response. The community health centre and health officers should be trained and encouraged to create a database of climate-induced health issues by adopting the tenets of storytelling and human-centered approach to climate data collection (Lejano et al., 2013).

The Ministry of health in Lagos State should develop a simplified, visual, language-friendly (user-friendly) and narrative-driven climate-risk maps for public distribution through community health centre and health workers in Ojokoro LCDA. In addition to this, the ministry of health, community health centre and the community leader (Baale of Ojokoro) should collaborate and create community health forums to discuss seasonal trends and document local stories that highlight specific climate related hazards such as the spike in malaria cases during rainy seasons and how to take proactive actions as well as preventive actions against water-borne diseases associated with wet seasons.

Promote and strengthen awareness of climate related health risks through

narrative communication by establishing community centres for residents to share their real-life climate induced health experiences. This may be achieved through collaboration with community health centres, hospitals, schools and faith-based organizations.

The Federal Ministry of health should consider recruiting climate health ambassadors (youth ambassadors, market leaders, community leaders) just the way big brands engage brand ambassadors to promote their brands. The climate health ambassadors would engage the tenets of narrative communication (storytelling) to embark on national climate-health education programs in schools, markets, motor parks and churches, incorporating oral traditions and visual materials to accommodate all literacy levels. This is consistent with existing research findings (Nwosu & Ward, 2012).

Leverage the tenets of narrative communication and storytelling to promote climate health adaptation behaviour by creating and sponsoring radio program series that narrates everyday scenarios of how families adapted positively to health complications associated climate change in Ojokoro LCDA. The program should be can adopt vernacular (local lingua franca) so it can resonate with Ojokoro audience. An interactive theatre workshops where community members demonstrate adaptation behaviours and strategy such as relocating from flood-prone areas or using treated mosquito nets is another laudable recommendation. This was further corroborated by the work of Olorunnisola and Martin (2013).

In conclusion, robust research is strongly recommended. The geographical scope (Ojokoro LCDA) and sample size of this study (150) is quite limited. The implication being findings may not be applicable to a larger region. Hence, the need for more robust study that can allow for wider generalization.

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