

INFLUENCE OF INDEPENDENT TELEVISION, BENIN CITY PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs) ON HEALTH BEHAVIOUR CHANGE ON EDO STATE RESIDENTS

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of Independent Television (ITV), Benin City public service announcements (PSAs) on health behaviour change among residents of Edo State. The study was guided by three objectives: to determine the level of exposure of Edo State residents to ITV health-related PSAs, ascertain the level of credibility residents attach to the PSAs, and evaluate the extent to which the PSAs influence health-related behavioural responses. The study adopted the survey research design. The population comprised 548,500 adult residents drawn from Etsako West, Oredo, and Esan South-East Local Government Areas of Edo State. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 384 respondents was determined. A multistage sampling technique was employed in selecting respondents, while data were collected through a structured questionnaire. Of the 384 copies of questionnaire distributed, 365 were successfully retrieved and analysed, representing a response rate of 95.1%. The instrument was validated by experts in Mass Communication, and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.86 confirmed its reliability. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics comprising frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings revealed that Edo State residents are highly exposed to ITV health-related public service announcements and generally pay attention to the messages. The study also found that residents perceive the health PSAs as credible, reliable, and trustworthy sources of information. Furthermore, the findings showed that the PSAs positively influence health behaviour by increasing awareness of disease prevention, encouraging healthier lifestyles, and motivating residents to adopt recommended health practices. The

study concludes that Independent Television public service announcements are effective tools for promoting health awareness and positive behavioural change among residents of Edo State. The study recommends increased frequency of health PSAs, sustained collaboration with health professionals, and the development of more audience-centred health campaigns to enhance long-term behavioural outcomes.

Keywords: Behavioural Change, Edo State Residents, Health Communication, Public Service Announcements, Television Exposure.

Introduction

In contemporary Nigeria, communication has increasingly become the central instrument through which governments, civil society organisations, and development partners attempt to shape social attitudes, correct misconceptions, and influence behaviour across diverse communities. Public Service Announcements (PSAs), which are short, persuasive messages disseminated via broadcast media, have remained an essential component of this communication framework. They are strategically designed to raise awareness, inform, educate, and ultimately motivate citizens to act in socially and health-beneficial ways (Omoye, 2020).

The increasing reliance on broadcast media for public enlightenment can be attributed to its omnipresence and accessibility. Radio, in particular, remains the most pervasive medium across Nigeria, penetrating both urban and rural communities with minimal technological barriers (Asemah, 2010, 2011). Also, television, though less accessible in rural areas due to electricity and cost constraints, continues to hold persuasive appeal through its visual and emotional power (Kamaru, 2021). In semi-urban communities where literacy levels vary and traditional authority structures still coexist with modern governance systems, radio and television serve as critical intermediaries between government policies and community consciousness. As Ojeifo (2023) observes, Edo residents rely heavily on the media not only for entertainment and news but also for health advisories, public warnings,

and moral guidance.

The concept of behaviour change, as used in communication and public health research, exceeds mere awareness. It implies a sustained shift in attitudes, beliefs, and practices consistent with socially or personally beneficial norms. Yet, as Aghedo & Omoruyi (2021) emphasise, awareness does not automatically translate into behavioural action. Many Nigerians are fully aware of the dangers of improper waste disposal, risky sexual practices, or disregard for traffic regulations, yet such knowledge often fails to produce corresponding behavioural adjustment. The gap between message exposure and behavioural compliance highlights the complex interplay of cultural, psychological, and socioeconomic factors that mediate communication outcomes.

Furthermore, the evolution of mass communication theory emphasises that persuasion is most effective when the message resonates with the audience's lived experiences (Asemah, 2012a, 2012b). Theories such as the Health Belief Model, the Theory of Reasoned Action, and the Diffusion of Innovations all suggest that behavioural adoption depends on perceived susceptibility, perceived benefits, cues to action, and the credibility of the source. Akinlolu & Edewor (2021) argue that Nigerian PSA designers often underestimate the importance of local cultural adaptation and audience segmentation, resulting in messages that appear generic and detached from everyday realities. For instance, a PSA advocating consistent handwashing might overlook the fact that some households lack regular access to clean water, thereby creating cognitive dissonance between what is preached and what is practicable. In this sense, message design without contextual insight risks alienating the very people it seeks to influence.

However, even when broadcast PSAs successfully attract attention and foster short-term behavioural intentions, sustaining these changes often proves difficult. Uche & Obarisiagbon (2024) describe this phenomenon as “behavioural relapse,” where individuals revert to previous habits once

campaign intensity declines. This challenge is particularly evident in health campaigns on sanitation and malaria prevention, where initial enthusiasm frequently wanes without continuous reinforcement. One underlying reason for this inconsistency lies in what Ede & Aluko (2025) term the “participatory deficit” of PSA design, that is, the limited involvement of community members in message formulation. Against this backdrop, the case of Edo State offers an opportunity to examine how broadcast PSAs interact with audience psychology, cultural context, and environmental limitations.

Statement of the Problem

Broadcast public service announcements (PSAs) have long been utilised by government agencies and non-governmental organisations in Nigeria to promote positive health and social behaviours through radio and television. Despite the widespread dissemination of messages on issues such as environmental sanitation, HIV prevention, vaccination, road safety, and civic responsibility, there appears to be a persistent gap between public awareness and actual behavioural compliance. Although many individuals are exposed to these messages and can recall them, unhealthy practices such as improper waste disposal, poor participation in health screening programmes, disregard for traffic regulations, and other socially undesirable behaviours remain prevalent. Scholars have argued that exposure to persuasive communication does not necessarily translate into behavioural change, particularly when messages fail to align with the social, cultural, and psychological realities of the target audience. In Edo State, broadcast media regularly air PSAs addressing health and social concerns, yet the continued occurrence of preventable illnesses, domestic accidents, and civic irresponsibility raises concerns about their effectiveness. Furthermore, while previous studies have examined the influence of PSAs at national and regional levels, limited attention has been given to how residents of Edo State specifically receive, interpret, and respond to such messages. Most

existing studies have focused on major urban centres, leaving a significant contextual gap regarding community-level responses in Edo State. Consequently, the problem motivating this study is the lack of sufficient empirical evidence on the extent to which broadcast PSAs influence awareness, attitudes, and behavioural practices among residents of Edo State. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of broadcast public service announcements in promoting behavioural change among the state's residents.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Determine the level of exposure of Edo State residents to Independent Television, Benin City public service announcements on health-related issues.
2. Determine the level of credibility Edo State residents attach to Independent Television, Benin City public service announcements on health-related issues.
3. Evaluate the extent to which Independent Television, Benin City public service announcements influence behavioural responses related to health among residents of Edo State.

Conceptual Review

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) are structured messages disseminated through mass communication channels to inform, educate, and persuade the public toward socially desirable attitudes and behaviours. According to Kgosimore (2021), They are deliberate form of persuasive communication designed not for commercial gain but for collective welfare. Unlike advertising, which aims to stimulate consumption, PSAs promote consciousness on issues such as health, safety, and civic responsibility. Kgosimore observes that the power of PSAs lies in their moral appeal; they invoke empathy, responsibility, and a sense of shared humanity. Through

emotionally resonant narratives and concise messages, PSAs condense complex social issues into digestible formats that provoke reflection and action. This communicative form, therefore, represents the ethical dimension of mass media, a medium where information serves as a catalyst for civic enlightenment and behavioural reform.

In another perspective, Ncube (2022) defines PSAs as a form of social marketing that integrates persuasive rhetoric with public communication objectives to influence voluntary behavioural change. He asserts that PSAs operate within the psychological framework of persuasion theory, where message framing, repetition, and emotional tone determine the audience's response. Ncube explains that effective PSAs employ creative techniques such as storytelling, humour, fear appeals, or celebrity endorsement to ensure message retention and recall. Their brevity makes them suitable for broadcast environments, where attention spans are limited. He further argues that the success of PSAs depends not only on their content but also on their contextual timing, for instance, airing a health PSA during an epidemic or a civic one during elections maximises salience. Therefore, PSAs exemplify the strategic fusion of communication science and social psychology, aimed at guiding audiences toward self-improvement and community well-being.

Health Behaviour

Health behaviour refers to the actions, decisions, and habits individuals adopt that influence their physical, mental, and social wellbeing. According to Mtembu (2020), health behaviour encompasses both preventive and risk-oriented practices, including diet, hygiene, exercise, and substance use. He asserts that these behaviours are not random acts but patterned responses shaped by social norms, personal beliefs, and environmental constraints. Mtembu explains that individuals often act based on perceived vulnerability, benefits, and barriers, cognitive factors that determine whether one adopts or resists health-promoting actions. Hence,

understanding health behaviour requires not only biological insight but also psychological and sociological interpretation. It is through this interdisciplinary lens that scholars and practitioners can design interventions that resonate with people's lived realities rather than abstract health ideals.

In another perspective, Zulu (2021) defines health behaviour as a dynamic process of adaptation through which individuals negotiate the relationship between health knowledge and everyday practice. He argues that possessing information about healthy living does not automatically translate into behavioural change, as factors such as motivation, social influence, and habit formation play decisive roles. Zulu notes that the gap between awareness and action often arises from cognitive dissonance, a psychological tension between what one knows and what one does. For example, an individual may understand the dangers of smoking yet continue due to addiction or social acceptance. Therefore, Zulu contends that sustainable health behaviour emerges when interventions align with intrinsic motivation and supportive social contexts. Health communication, in this regard, must move beyond information dissemination to fostering internal commitment and environmental reinforcement.

Opinion Review

Broadcast Media Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and Health Communication

Public Service Announcements (PSAs) occupy a distinctive place within the broadcast communication landscape, serving as targeted interventions designed to educate, persuade, and mobilise audiences towards desirable social and health outcomes. According to Ndlovu (2020), PSAs are brief, carefully crafted messages disseminated through broadcast media with the aim of promoting public welfare. They operate at the intersection of media advocacy and public health education, translating policy objectives into accessible narratives that resonate with everyday audiences. Ndlovu argues that the effectiveness of PSAs lies not in their length but in their ability

to distil complex issues into concise, emotionally compelling appeals. When broadcast across radio and television, PSAs function as catalysts for awareness creation, often reaching large segments of the population who might otherwise lack exposure to formal health education. Thus, PSAs serve as an indispensable communication tool in shaping public understanding of health priorities and encouraging proactive health-seeking behaviour.

In a similar perspective, Tlou & Maseko (2021) assert that PSAs play a dual communicative role, both informational and motivational. They not only deliver factual knowledge about disease prevention, hygiene, or nutrition but also seek to influence attitudes, beliefs, and practices associated with health. These authors contend that effective PSAs operate through emotional persuasion, narrative storytelling, and social appeal rather than pure instruction. For instance, messages urging handwashing or vaccination become more impactful when framed through relatable characters or everyday scenarios. Tlou & Maseko maintain that PSAs humanise public health issues, transforming abstract statistics into stories of personal responsibility and community protection. By appealing to empathy and shared social values, PSAs make health communication not just instructive but participatory, encouraging viewers and listeners to view behaviour change as both a personal and collective duty.

Furthermore, Khumalo (2022) argues that PSAs are not merely channels of information dissemination but instruments of social influence embedded within the cultural fabric of society. He explains that people interpret broadcast messages through their social experiences, linguistic codes, and moral frameworks. Therefore, for PSAs to achieve their communicative intent, they must align with the audience's cultural realities. When messages ignore local contexts, they risk appearing foreign or irrelevant, undermining their persuasive potential. Khumalo's ethnographic study revealed that PSAs framed in culturally resonant language, using familiar idioms, proverbs, or humour, elicited stronger engagement and

recall among rural listeners. This underscores the importance of cultural adaptation in health communication. PSAs, when culturally embedded, act as social conversations rather than mere announcements, thereby stimulating reflection, dialogue, and, ultimately, behavioural transformation.

Role of Broadcast Media in Shaping Health Awareness and Public Perception

Broadcast media has long stood as one of the most influential pillars in the communication landscape, particularly in the area of public health promotion. Through radio and television, complex health concepts are translated into simple, relatable messages that resonate with ordinary people, transcending barriers of literacy, geography, and socioeconomic class. According to Akpan & Tella (2022), the power of broadcast media lies in its immediacy, ubiquity, and credibility, which enable it to shape public discourse and set the agenda on pressing health issues. When a health message is aired repeatedly across multiple programmes, it becomes internalised by the audience, gradually shaping their understanding of disease prevention, nutrition, sanitation, and general wellness. Over time, this repetitive exposure creates an environment where public health awareness becomes embedded in daily conversations. Broadcast media, therefore, not only informs but also constructs health consciousness by positioning certain topics, such as immunisation, maternal health, or hygiene, as matters of shared social responsibility rather than private concern.

Moreover, the persuasive strength of broadcast media rests on its dual capacity to educate and emotionally engage audiences. As Oloyede & Yusuf (2021) observe, messages delivered through storytelling, drama, or testimonial formats tend to evoke empathy and prompt reflection far more effectively than abstract facts or statistics. For instance, a radio drama illustrating the struggles of a family coping with malaria may convey the urgency of mosquito net use better than a medical lecture could. This

emotional resonance transforms health communication into lived experience, allowing individuals to see themselves in the narratives presented. Such storytelling techniques are not accidental; they draw upon decades of communication theory, particularly the principles of narrative persuasion, which suggest that identification with characters leads to reduced resistance and greater likelihood of behavioural adoption. Thus, the emotional dimension of broadcast media complements its informational function, ensuring that messages not only reach the audience but also move them toward action.

Additionally, broadcast media operates as a bridge between public health institutions and the general population, translating policy directives into digestible formats that encourage understanding and compliance. Health agencies rely on radio and television to disseminate guidelines during epidemics, vaccination drives, or environmental health campaigns. In these contexts, the credibility of the medium becomes a crucial determinant of public response. Audiences tend to perceive messages broadcast through established media channels as authoritative and trustworthy, especially when they feature experts, government representatives, or community figures. According to Nnadi & Bello (2023), the symbolic authority of broadcasters, combined with the structured flow of information, creates a framework of legitimacy that alternative media sources often lack. Consequently, broadcast media not only delivers messages but also legitimises them, reinforcing the perceived authenticity of public health interventions.

Challenges in the Design and Implementation of Health PSAs

Despite their immense potential to influence public attitudes and behaviours, the effectiveness of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) in promoting health-related change is often constrained by a range of structural, cultural, and communicative challenges. One of the foremost obstacles lies in the limited financial and institutional support available for PSA production and dissemination. Unlike commercial advertisements backed by substantial

corporate funding, PSAs are typically sponsored by government agencies or non-profit organisations operating under constrained budgets. As highlighted by Adetunji & Musa (2022), this financial limitation affects every stage of the communication process, from message conceptualisation and production quality to airtime purchase and audience research. Poorly funded PSAs often suffer from low production value, lack of professional scripting, and irregular scheduling, reducing their persuasive power. Moreover, when PSAs are aired infrequently or during non-peak hours, their exposure diminishes, weakening message recall and behavioural influence. This problem is further compounded by the high cost of broadcast airtime, which commercial stations may prioritise for revenue-generating advertisements rather than socially beneficial campaigns.

In addition to financial constraints, message design weaknesses present another major challenge. Effective PSAs must balance creativity, clarity, and emotional appeal within a very short duration, usually thirty to sixty seconds. However, as Okpara & Nnaji (2023) argue, many PSAs fail to achieve this equilibrium, resulting in messages that are either too abstract or overly didactic. When health information is communicated through technical jargon or bureaucratic tone, it alienates ordinary audiences, particularly those with limited education. Conversely, oversimplified messages may trivialise serious health concerns or omit essential details necessary for behavioural change. The tension between simplicity and accuracy thus creates a persistent dilemma for PSA designers. Furthermore, many campaigns lack cultural adaptation, borrowing Western-style formats and imagery that may not resonate with local audiences. The failure to use indigenous languages, local idioms, or relatable social settings often renders messages impersonal and ineffective, limiting their cultural penetration.

Another significant obstacle is audience segmentation and targeting. Effective health communication requires understanding that audiences are not homogeneous but differ in age, gender, education, belief systems, and

media habits. Unfortunately, many PSAs adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, addressing “the public” as a single, undifferentiated entity. According to Adebayo & Nwankwo (2021), such generalisation results in communication mismatches where messages intended for adults are consumed by children, or urban-oriented campaigns are broadcast to predominantly rural populations. In such cases, the intended audience fails to identify with the message, leading to minimal behavioural impact. Strategic audience analysis, through surveys, focus groups, and pilot testing, remains underutilised in PSA design, especially in developing societies where campaign planning is often rushed or politically driven. Consequently, PSAs risk becoming tokenistic gestures rather than instruments of meaningful social transformation.

Empirical Review

This section of the study presents the findings derived from the systematic collection and analysis of data related to the current study. This section seeks to provide concrete, evidence-based insights into how these PSAs are received and perceived by the target audience. It reviews other peoples works related to current study.

Gibson (2022) undertook a study titled *Public Health Messaging through Broadcast Media: A Behavioural Perspective*, with the objective of evaluating how message credibility and source trust influence behavioural outcomes. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the study employed a cross-sectional design across three urban cities in Ghana. Findings indicated that PSAs presented by credible health professionals significantly shaped positive attitudes toward health compliance, while those delivered by politicians were met with scepticism. Gibson concluded that message source authenticity and consistent communication are key determinants of behavioural intention. The study recommended a collaboration between health experts and professional broadcasters to strengthen PSA effectiveness. This study relates to the current research in its analysis of

message credibility and health behaviour but differs in its regional and institutional focus, as the current study investigates local broadcast stations in Edo state and examines resident-level behavioural responses to diverse health topics.

Eze (2023) conducted a study titled *Effectiveness of Radio and Television Campaigns on Immunisation Compliance among Rural Mothers in Delta State*. The objective was to assess whether consistent broadcast messages improved immunisation uptake. Anchored on the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the study used a descriptive survey of 350 mothers and found that awareness and adoption levels were strongly correlated with message repetition and peer endorsement. Eze concluded that broadcast PSAs accelerate information diffusion but require interpersonal reinforcement for behavioural consolidation. The study recommended community radio partnerships and participatory programming. It shares conceptual ground with the present study in its focus on broadcast PSA influence on health practices but differs in scope and audience, as Eze focused on maternal health, while the current research investigates the general health behaviour of a heterogeneous audience in Edo state.

Benson (2023) explored *Televised Public Health Announcements and Audience Reaction to Anti-Smoking Campaigns in Nigeria* with the primary aim of understanding how message framing affects cessation intent. Drawing on Cognitive Dissonance Theory, the study adopted an experimental design in which 300 participants were exposed to varying PSA formats. Findings revealed that fear-based and testimonial-driven PSAs generated the highest discomfort among smokers, prompting reconsideration of smoking habits. However, overly graphic visuals sometimes led to avoidance rather than reflection. Benson concluded that moderate emotional framing achieves better persuasion outcomes. He recommended periodic message variation to avoid desensitisation. The study relates to the present research as both evaluate behavioural responses to

PSAs, though Benson focused on a specific addiction-based behaviour, while the current study addresses broader community health behaviours influenced by regular broadcast messages.

Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), formulated by Albert Bandura in 1986, evolved from his earlier work on Social Learning Theory in the 1960s (Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017). Bandura proposed that learning occurs not merely through direct experience or reinforcement but through observation, imitation, and modelling within social contexts. As Hallberg (2021) explains, SCT introduced a paradigm shift in psychology by emphasising the reciprocal interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and behaviour, a concept Bandura termed *reciprocal determinism*. Unlike purely behaviourist models, which viewed individuals as passive recipients of stimuli, SCT positions them as active agents capable of self-reflection, self-regulation, and purposive action. The theory thus provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how people acquire and maintain behavioural patterns through both external observation and internal motivation.

Central to SCT are several key constructs: observational learning, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and reciprocal determinism. Observational learning refers to the process of acquiring new behaviours by watching others, particularly those perceived as credible, competent, or relatable role models. Self-efficacy, one of the theory's most influential concepts, denotes an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific behaviour successfully. Outcome expectations refer to beliefs about the anticipated results of a behaviour, while reciprocal determinism captures the ongoing interaction between behaviour, cognition, and environment (Asemah, 2012). According to Price (2022), these constructs highlight that behaviour change is not simply a reaction to media messages but a dynamic

process of interpretation, imitation, and reinforcement shaped by both social influence and personal agency.

Applied to the current study, the Social Cognitive Theory provides a robust framework for understanding how residents of Edo State, learn and adopt health behaviours from broadcast PSAs. The theory helps explain how observational learning occurs when residents see or hear relatable individuals modelling preventive actions on local radio and television stations.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design. The survey method was considered appropriate because it enabled the collection of quantitative data from a large number of respondents (Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2024) and provides a systematic means of assessing their exposure to health-related PSAs as well as the extent to which such messages influence their health practices. The population of the study comprised 548,500 adult residents (18 years and above) drawn from three Local Government Areas selected from the three senatorial zones of Edo State: Etsako West, Oredo, and Esan South-East. Using Cochran's formula for large populations, a sample size of 384 respondents was determined. A multistage sampling technique was employed, involving the selection of communities, households, and eligible respondents to ensure that all segments of the population were adequately represented.

Out of the 384 copies of questionnaire distributed, 365 copies of questionnaire were retrieved and nineteen copies were lost. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to obtain information on respondents' exposure to broadcast PSAs and their health-related behaviours. The questionnaire contained mainly closed-ended items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. To ensure the quality of the instrument, it was subjected to validity checks by experts in Mass Communication and pilot-tested

among residents of communities outside the study area. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.86, indicating a high level of internal consistency. The copies of questionnaire were administered through direct face-to-face contact with respondents by the researcher and trained field assistants. Data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Level of Exposure of Edo State Residents to Independent Television Public Service Announcements on Health-Related Issues

Statement	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Decision
I regularly watch Independent Television, Benin City.	138 (37.8%)	126 (34.5%)	42 (11.5%)	36 (9.9%)	23 (6.3%)	365	3.88	Accepted
I frequently come across health-related public service announcements on ITV.	145 (39.7%)	132 (36.2%)	38 (10.4%)	31 (8.5%)	19 (5.2%)	365	3.97	Accepted
I pay attention to health-related public service announcements aired on ITV.	129 (35.3%)	137 (37.5%)	44 (12.1%)	33 (9.0%)	22 (6.0%)	365	3.87	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 1 indicate that respondents are highly exposed to Independent Television's public service announcements on health-related issues. Most respondents agreed that they regularly watch ITV, frequently encounter health-related PSAs, and pay attention to such messages whenever they are aired. The mean scores above the criterion mean suggest a high level of exposure among residents of Edo State.

Table 2: Level of Credibility Edo State Residents Attach to Independent Television Public Service Announcements on Health-Related Issues

Statement	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Decision
I consider health-related PSAs on ITV to be reliable sources of information.	132 (36.2%)	124 (34.0%)	46 (12.6%)	38 (10.4%)	25 (6.8%)	365	3.82	Accepted
The information provided in ITV health PSAs is accurate and trustworthy.	126 (34.5%)	129 (35.3%)	49 (13.4%)	37 (10.1%)	24 (6.6%)	365	3.81	Accepted
I trust health advice provided through ITV public service announcements.	118 (32.3%)	136 (37.3%)	51 (14.0%)	39 (10.7%)	21 (5.8%)	365	3.79	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The results in Table 2 show that respondents generally perceive Independent Television's health-related public service announcements as credible. A majority agreed that the information disseminated through the station is reliable, accurate, and trustworthy. The mean scores indicate that residents attach a relatively high level of credibility to health messages aired on ITV, suggesting confidence in the station as a source of health information.

Table 3: Influence of Independent Television Public Service Announcements on Health Behaviour among Edo State Residents

Statement	SA (5)	A (4)	N (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	Decision
Health-related PSAs on ITV have influenced me to adopt healthier behaviours.	136 (37.3%)	128 (35.1%)	42 (11.5%)	37 (10.1%)	22 (6.0%)	365	3.89	Accepted
I have acted on health advice received through ITV public service announcements.	129 (35.3%)	133 (36.4%)	47 (12.9%)	34 (9.3%)	22 (6.0%)	365	3.86	Accepted
ITV health PSAs have increased my awareness of disease prevention and healthy living.	148 (40.5%)	125 (34.2%)	39 (10.7%)	31 (8.5%)	22 (6.0%)	365	3.95	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings in Table 3 reveal that Independent Television public service announcements have a positive influence on the health behaviour of Edo State residents. Respondents agreed that the messages have encouraged healthier practices, increased awareness of disease prevention, and motivated them to act on health-related advice. The high mean scores suggest that the station's public service announcements contribute significantly to behavioural responses related to health.

Discussion of Findings

The first finding of the study revealed that Edo State residents are highly exposed to Independent Television, Benin City public service announcements on health-related issues. Respondents indicated that they

regularly watch the station, frequently encounter health-related messages, and pay attention to the information disseminated through these announcements. This finding supports the position of communication scholars like Asemah (2018) that repeated exposure to media messages enhances audience awareness and increases the likelihood of message retention. The finding is consistent with the study of Nwosu (2024), who found that sustained exposure to broadcast health campaigns significantly increased public engagement and participation in health-related programmes among residents of Edo State. Similarly, Nyang (2024) observed that regular exposure to health messages through broadcast media enhances public awareness of health issues and encourages greater community involvement in health campaigns. The implication is that Independent Television has succeeded in creating substantial awareness of health-related issues through its public service announcements.

The second finding showed that residents attach a high level of credibility to health-related public service announcements aired on Independent Television. Respondents generally perceived the information provided through the station as reliable, accurate, and trustworthy. This finding suggests that source credibility remains an important factor in the effectiveness of public health communication. The finding corroborates Parker (2023), who argued that audience acceptance of public health messages depends largely on how credible and trustworthy the source is perceived to be. According to Parker, messages delivered by reputable media organisations are more likely to be positively interpreted and accepted by audiences. The result also aligns with Nwosu and Chukwu (2022), who found that audiences are more likely to respond favourably to health public service announcements when they perceive the information source as credible and dependable. This indicates that the credibility enjoyed by Independent Television enhances the effectiveness of its health communication efforts.

Another finding revealed that Independent Television public service announcements positively influence health-related behavioural responses among residents of Edo State. Respondents reported that exposure to the messages increased their awareness of disease prevention, encouraged healthier lifestyles, and motivated them to adopt recommended health practices. This finding is in agreement with Nwosu and Chukwu (2022) and Asemah & Nwammuo (2017), whose study established a positive relationship between exposure to health public service announcements and behavioural change among Nigerian audiences. The finding also supports Patterson (2021), who explained that persuasive communication can reinforce desirable behaviours when messages are repeatedly presented and linked to socially beneficial outcomes. Furthermore, Nyang (2024) found that community-oriented health broadcasts contribute significantly to positive health practices, particularly when messages address issues that are directly relevant to audience needs. These findings suggest that Independent Television's public service announcements function as effective instruments for promoting health awareness and encouraging behavioural change among residents of Edo State.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that Independent Television, Benin City public service announcements play a significant role in promoting health awareness and influencing positive health behaviour among residents of Edo State. The findings show that residents are highly exposed to health-related PSAs, regard the messages as credible, and are influenced by them to adopt healthier practices. Although the influence may vary among individuals, the overall evidence indicates that public service announcements remain effective tools for health communication and behavioural change. It is recommended that:

1. Independent Television should increase the frequency and consistency of health-related public service announcements to sustain audience exposure and reinforce positive health practices.

2. The station should continue to ensure the credibility of its health messages by collaborating with medical experts, public health agencies, and relevant professionals in the development of PSA content.
3. Independent Television should design more audience-centred and action-oriented health campaigns that provide practical guidance capable of motivating long-term behavioural change among residents of Edo State.

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