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## **Factors influencing Behavioural Change Communication Messages among Select Market Women in Benin Metropolis**

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11077692>

### **Abstract**

The researchers examined audience perception of the use of communication in facilitating behaviour change among market women in select markets in Benin metropolis. The objectives were to find out the extent of women's exposure to behaviour change messages in select markets across Benin metropolis; examine the behaviour change messages women in select markets are exposed to and identify factors influencing the effectiveness of behaviour change communication among women in select markets across Benin metropolis. The study was anchored on the social cognitive theory. Interview was the research design while interview guide was the research instrument. Thirty women were purposively interviewed, ten each from Oba, Uselu and Oliha markets in Benin City. Findings showed that behaviour change communication plays a significant role in facilitating behaviour change among market women in select markets in Benin metropolis. The respondents reported varying levels of exposure to behaviour change messages, with different channels and approaches utilised across the markets. The effectiveness of the communication strategies was influenced by factors such as message relevance, frequency, consistency and the credibility of the information sources. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended, among other things that behavioural change pioneers should develop behaviour change messages that address the specific needs, challenges and cultural context of market women in each market.

**Keywords:** Behavioural Change Communication, Market Women, Audience Perception, Benin Metropolis.

### **Introduction**

The effective use of communication strategies has garnered widespread recognition as an essential tool for facilitating behaviour change among diverse target audiences. Communication, as elucidated by Asemah & Nwaoboli (2022), encompasses the intricate process of transmitting, receiving and interpreting messages to establish shared meaning. It encompasses a broad spectrum of channels, including interpersonal communication, mass media platforms and community-based approaches (Olorunnisola, 2016). The success of communication initiatives in achieving behaviour change hinges upon several key factors, including the adept delivery of messages, active engagement of the target audience and the creation of compelling and pertinent content (Asemah & Edegoh, 2013; Okoro & Ezeah, 2015).

Behavioural change refers to the modification of individuals' attitudes, beliefs and actions, resulting in the adoption of new behaviours or the cessation of existing ones

(Nwaoboli, Adedokun & Asemah, 2023; Asemah & Okpanachi, 2014). It entails a transformative shift in habits, practices and decision-making processes. Within the context of this study, behaviour change among market women encompasses various facets, such as the improvement of hygiene practices, enhanced financial management skills, the adoption of sustainable business practices, or increased utilisation of available health services (Adeoye & Adeoye, 2018).

The relationship between communication and behaviour change is inherently intertwined. Effective communication strategies possess the capacity to inform, educate and motivate individuals, thereby eliciting the desired modifications in behaviour. Through the utilisation of targeted messaging, tailored interventions and interactive platforms, communication serves as a catalyst for behaviour change, empowering individuals to make informed decisions and embrace positive practices (Oluwadare & Olagunju, 2017).

Market women occupy a pivotal role within the socio-economic fabric of cities such as Benin Metropolis. Their economic activities significantly contribute to the local economy, while their behaviours and practices exert direct influence over diverse aspects of their lives, ranging from personal health and well-being to financial management and sustainability considerations. Recognising the potential for behaviour change interventions to enhance the overall well-being and livelihoods of market women, it becomes imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions and attitudes towards communication strategies specifically aimed at facilitating behaviour change (Agholor & Isah, 2019). Such insights can inform the design and implementation of effective communication interventions that resonate with the unique needs and socio-cultural context of market women.

In Benin city, different markets exist including Oba, New Benin, Ekiosa, Uselu, Santana, Ekiadolor markets to mention but a few. By delving into market women's perspectives and attitudes towards communication strategies, this researcher seeks to shed light on their receptiveness and preferences regarding behaviour change interventions. Ultimately, by harnessing the power of communication to facilitate behaviour change among market women, this research endeavours to empower them, enhance their well-being and contribute to their socio-economic advancement within the Benin Metropolis.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of effective communication in promoting behaviour change in diverse contexts. For instance, Smith, Anderson & Thompson (2017) found that targeted communication campaigns played a significant role in reducing smoking prevalence among adolescents. Similarly, Johnson & McKenzie (2018) demonstrated the positive impact of communication interventions in promoting contraceptive use among women in rural communities. These studies underscore the potential of communication strategies to influence behaviour change positively.

However, limited research has specifically explored the audience perception of the use of communication in facilitating behaviour change among market women in

Benin Metropolis. Understanding their perspectives, preferences and challenges regarding communication interventions is crucial for designing effective strategies that resonate with their needs and motivations. This study seeks to fill this gap in the literature by answering the question: what are the factors influencing behavioural change communication messages among select market women in Benin metropolis?

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Find out the extent of women's exposure to behaviour change messages in select markets across Benin metropolis.
2. Examine the behaviour change messages women in select markets in Benin metropolis are exposed to.
3. Identify factors influencing the effectiveness of behaviour change communication among women in select markets across Benin metropolis.

### **Conceptual Review of Behaviour Change Communication**

Behaviour change communication, as defined by Olorunnisola (2015), is a strategic approach that utilises communication techniques to promote positive and sustainable changes in individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. It involves targeted messaging and interactive platforms to inform, educate and motivate individuals towards adopting desired behaviours. This approach has been widely used in Nigeria to address various health and social issues, such as HIV/AIDS prevention and reproductive health promotion.

In line with this, Adeoye & Adeoye (2018) further elaborate that behaviour change communication is the systematic application of communication strategies to facilitate the adoption of new behaviours or the cessation of existing ones. It involves designing and delivering messages that are tailored to specific target audiences, taking into account their cultural, social and economic contexts. This approach has been utilised in Nigeria to address behaviour change in areas such as environmental sustainability and rural women's development.

Moreover, Okoro & Ezeah (2016) emphasise that behaviour change communication is a multi-dimensional process that utilises various communication channels to promote behavioural modifications among individuals and communities. It encompasses interpersonal communication, mass media campaigns and community engagement to create awareness, provide information and motivate behaviour change. In Nigeria, this approach has been employed in initiatives targeting agricultural practices, hygiene behaviour and financial literacy.

Additionally, Oluwadare & Olagunju (2017) highlight that behaviour change communication is an interactive and participatory process that involves dialogue, negotiation and persuasion to facilitate behaviour change. It emphasises the importance of two-way communication, active engagement and the involvement of key stakeholders in the behaviour change process. In Nigeria, this approach has been utilised in

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programmes addressing issues such as maternal and child health, nutrition and gender equality.

Furthermore, Agholor & Isah (2019) define behaviour change communication as a strategic communication approach that aims to influence individuals' attitudes, beliefs and behaviours through the use of persuasive messages, social marketing techniques and community mobilisation. It recognises the importance of understanding the socio-cultural context and tailoring communication interventions accordingly.

### **Overview of Select Markets in Benin City**

Benin City, the capital of Edo State in Nigeria, is renowned for its vibrant marketplaces, which play a crucial role in the economic activity and cultural vibrancy of the city (Nwaoboli, 2021). Among the notable markets in Benin City is Oba Market, one of the largest and busiest markets in the city. Oba Market offers a wide range of goods, including food items, clothing, household items and traditional artifacts. It serves as a hub for both local residents and visitors, providing a bustling and diverse shopping experience. Another prominent market in Benin City is New Benin Market, located in the heart of the city. This market is known for its diverse offerings, ranging from fabrics and electronics to cosmetics and agricultural products. It attracts a significant number of traders and buyers, contributing to the vibrant commercial atmosphere of the city.

Ekiosa Market, on the other hand, specialises in food products. It is renowned for its extensive array of fresh fruits, vegetables, grains and spices. Both wholesale and retail customers flock to Ekiosa Market to fulfill their food shopping needs. The market serves as a crucial source of sustenance for the local residents and surrounding communities. Uselu Market is another vibrant market in Benin City, focusing primarily on agricultural produce. It is a popular destination for purchasing fresh farm produce such as fruits, vegetables, tubers and grains. The market acts as a vital supply source for residents and traders, ensuring a steady flow of essential food items. Santana Market is a well-known market in Benin City, specifically catering to traders dealing in fabrics and textiles. It is a go-to destination for purchasing various types of fabrics, including traditional African prints. Santana Market is a bustling hub of textile trade, where both local and visiting buyers can find an extensive selection of fabrics. Situated in the Ovia North-East Local Government Area of Benin City, Ekiadolor Market serves as a major trading hub for agricultural products, livestock and general merchandise. It is a bustling marketplace where traders and buyers engage in various transactions, contributing to the local economy. Another market is Oliha, a vibrant marketplace that primarily specialises in the sale of livestock, including goats, ram, sheep and poultry. It serves as a significant trading center for livestock farmers and provides a platform for buyers to acquire animals for various purposes. There is also the Agbado market, located in Oredo Local Government Area. It is a bustling marketplace for cooking utensils and interior decoration.

### **Communication Channels and Strategies for Behaviour Change**

One communication channel that has been utilised is interpersonal communication. This approach involves face-to-face interactions between trained facilitators and market

women, allowing for personalised and tailored messages (Asemah, Anum & Ogwo, 2012). According to Oyekanmi & Adebayo (2014), interpersonal communication has been effective in addressing specific concerns and providing individualised guidance to market women, thus increasing their receptiveness to behaviour change messages. Through interpersonal communication, facilitators can establish trust, empathy and rapport with the market women, leading to more meaningful and impactful conversations.

Another important communication channel is mass media, including radio, television and print media. Mass media campaigns have been employed to disseminate behaviour change messages to a wide audience. Oshiname & Iyoha (2015) highlight the effectiveness of radio programmes in reaching market women, as radio remains a popular and accessible medium in Nigeria. These campaigns often incorporate engaging and culturally relevant content, including dramas, jingles and testimonials, to capture the attention and interest of market women.

Community engagement strategies have also proven effective in behaviour change communication among market women. This approach involves working closely with community leaders, market associations and opinion influencers to mobilise and educate the target audience. A study by Osagie, Egbemeh & Ohiokha (2016) emphasises the importance of engaging community leaders and market associations as trusted sources of information and agents of change. Through community engagement, behaviour change messages can be integrated into existing social networks, cultural events and community gatherings, enhancing their acceptability and relevance.

Social marketing is another strategy that has been utilised to promote behaviour change among market women. Social marketing involves the application of marketing principles and techniques to influence target audiences' behaviours for social good. According to Usman, Zainab & Adamu (2012), social marketing campaigns have been effective in addressing issues such as hygiene practices, nutrition and family planning among market women. These campaigns employ persuasive messaging, branding and incentives to encourage the adoption of desired behaviours.

In recent years, digital communication channels, such as mobile phones and social media platforms, have gained prominence in behaviour change communication. Studies by Oyeyinka & Adebayo (2018) highlight the potential of mobile phone-based interventions in reaching market women with behaviour change messages. Mobile phones can be utilised for text messaging, voice calls and multimedia content delivery, providing convenient and personalised communication channels. Social media platforms, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, also offer opportunities for creating online communities and facilitating peer support and information sharing among market women.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in implementing Behaviour Change Communication Initiatives**

Implementing behaviour change communication initiatives presents both challenges and opportunities; one challenge is the presence of language barriers, particularly in multicultural societies. Nwankwo & Onwe (2017) emphasise the importance of considering linguistic diversity when designing communication interventions. The use of

multiple languages or translation services may be necessary to ensure effective message delivery and comprehension among diverse target audiences. Additionally, cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions should be taken into account to enhance the relevance and appropriateness of communication efforts.

Another challenge is low literacy rates among certain populations. According to Adewale & Oresanya (2013), limited literacy skills can hinder the understanding and adoption of behaviour change messages. Printed materials or written instructions may not be accessible to individuals with low literacy levels. Alternative communication methods, such as visual aids, oral storytelling, or audio-visual materials, should be considered to accommodate different literacy levels and enhance message retention and comprehension.

Access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) poses both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, limited access to ICTs, such as smartphones or the internet, may hinder the reach and effectiveness of behaviour change communication initiatives. Adepoju & Ogunnaike (2018) highlight the digital divide as a barrier to accessing health information among underserved populations. On the other hand, the increasing penetration of mobile phones and social media platforms offers opportunities for reaching larger audiences. Mobile-based interventions and social media campaigns can be leveraged to disseminate behaviour change messages widely and engage with target populations (Asemah, Nwaoboli & Belli, 2022; Nwaoboli, 2022, Nwaoboli, Ogunyemi & Ezegwu, 2023)

Cultural norms and beliefs can also pose challenges to behaviour change communication. A study by Ajayi & Akintayo (2012) highlights the influence of cultural practices and traditional beliefs on health-related behaviours. Resistance to change or adherence to long-standing cultural practices may impede behaviour change efforts. Sensitivity to cultural norms, values and customs is important to design and deliver messages that align with the target population's beliefs and promote behaviour change without alienating or disrespecting their cultural identity.

Opportunities arise from community engagement and participation. Engaging community leaders and local influencers can enhance the acceptability and effectiveness of behaviour change communication initiatives. Oyekanmi & Akinbode (2016) discuss the significance of collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders in implementing successful behaviour change programmes. Involving community members in the planning, design and delivery of interventions fosters ownership, trust and sustainability.

### **Empirical Review**

Oyekanmi & Adebayo (2014) carried out a study to explore the influence of interpersonal communication on behaviour change among women in Benin Metropolis. The objective of their study was to understand how interpersonal communication contributes to behaviour change processes. Social marketing theory was used for the study. The researchers used qualitative approach to gather data specifically interviews. The findings of their study highlighted the significant role of interpersonal communication in

facilitating behaviour change among women, emphasising the importance of social support, information sharing and motivation through personal interactions.

Oshiname & Iyoha (2015) investigated the effectiveness of radio campaigns in promoting behaviour change among market women in Benin Metropolis. They employed the social cognitive theory as the theoretical framework to analyse the influence of radio campaigns on behaviour change. The research design involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. They administered surveys to gather quantitative data on behaviour change outcomes, while qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews. The instrument used for data collection included a structured survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview guides. The findings indicated that radio campaigns were effective in promoting behaviour change among market women, highlighting the role of mass media in disseminating information and influencing attitudes and behaviours.

Osagie, Egbemeh & Ohiokha (2016) focused on community engagement strategies for behaviour change among market women in Benin Metropolis. The study aimed to explore the effectiveness of community engagement approaches in fostering behaviour change among this population. The theoretical framework used in the study was the Social Norms Theory, which helped analyse the impact of community-based interventions on behaviour change. The research design employed a mixed methods approach. They conducted surveys to gather quantitative data on behaviour change outcomes and utilised focus group discussions to gather qualitative insights. The instrument used for data collection included a structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured focus group discussion guide. The findings of the study highlighted the importance of community involvement and participation in driving behaviour change among market women. The study emphasised the role of social support, collective action and shared norms in shaping behaviours.

Usman, Zainab & Adamu (2012) examined the effectiveness of social marketing interventions for behaviour change among women in South-South Nigeria. The researchers employed the Health Belief Model as the theoretical framework to analyse the impact of marketing interventions on behaviour change. They administered surveys to gather quantitative data on behaviour change outcomes and conducted in-depth interviews to collect qualitative insights. The instrument used for data collection included a structured survey questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The findings of the study indicated that social marketing interventions were effective in promoting behaviour change among women. The study recommended the use of social marketing techniques tailored to the specific needs and cultural context of the target population, as well as the importance of sustained efforts and continuous evaluation to ensure long-term behaviour change.

While the current study utilises a survey questionnaire as the main research instrument and applies the social cognitive theory to examine audience perception, the previous studies employed various research designs and instruments based on their specific objectives. However, all studies acknowledge the importance of communication

and community engagement in facilitating behaviour change among women in market settings, albeit through different approaches and theoretical frameworks.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by psychologist Albert Bandura, explores the reciprocal interaction between individuals, their environment and their behaviour. SCT emphasises that individuals learn through observation, modelling and cognitive processes and it posits that behaviour change is influenced by personal, environmental and behavioural factors (Bandura, 1986).

One of the key tenets of SCT is observational learning. Bandura explains that individuals can acquire new behaviours and skills by observing others and the consequences of their actions. This process, known as modelling or vicarious learning, plays a significant role in behaviour change. Another central concept within SCT is self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their own ability to successfully perform a behaviour or task. Bandura highlights that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with greater motivation and persistence in behaviour change efforts. It suggests that individuals are more likely to engage in behaviour change if they have confidence in their capabilities.

SCT also emphasises the notion of reciprocal determinism, which asserts that behaviour is influenced by the interplay between personal factors, environmental factors and behavioural factors. Bandura (1986) argues that these factors continuously interact and shape one another, highlighting the dynamic nature of behaviour change processes. While the Social Cognitive Theory has contributed valuable insights, it is not without criticism. Some scholars argue that SCT can be reductionistic, focusing excessively on individual cognitive processes and neglecting broader social and structural influences on behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Additionally, critics contend that SCT may not adequately consider emotions and affect in behaviour change, as emotions can significantly impact motivation, decision-making and behaviour (Bandura, 2012).

Applying the Social Cognitive Theory to the study on audience perception of the use of communication in facilitating behaviour change among market women in selected markets in Benin Metropolis provides a comprehensive framework to understand the factors influencing behaviour change. By examining personal factors such as knowledge, attitudes and self-efficacy, the study can assess how these factors shape the market women's perception of behaviour change communication initiatives.

### **Methodology**

The research design for this study was interview as it allows for dynamic and interactive conversations, enabling researcher to probe further and gain rich qualitative data from the market women who may not be literate enough to fill questionnaire. The instrument used in this study is an interview guide because it allowed for structured and standardised questioning while also providing flexibility to explore emerging themes during the interviews. The study focuses on three select markets in Benin Metropolis: Oba Market,

Uselu Market and Oliha Market. These markets were chosen based on several factors. Firstly, they are among the largest and busiest markets in the metropolis, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of market women. Secondly, the selection of markets aimed to capture different geographical locations within Benin Metropolis to account for potential variations in audience perceptions based on location.

According to the village heads of the select markets, their estimated populations are Oba Market (2500), Uselu Market (2000) and Oliha Market (2000) thus, making the study's population 6500. Ten market women were each purposively interviewed in the three select markets thus, making the total sampled respondents, thirty. Data collection involved conducting face-to-face interviews with market women in the selected markets. The interviews were conducted in a private and comfortable setting within the market premises to ensure confidentiality and minimise distractions. The researchers approached potential participants and explained the purpose of the study, emphasising voluntary participation and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the interview commenced. The interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate data capture. The data collected through interviews were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns, themes and categories within the data. The transcripts were coded systematically and codes were grouped into meaningful categories. The researcher then analysed the categories to derive key findings related to the audience's perception of the use of communication in facilitating behaviour change among market women.

## **Data Presentation and Analysis**

### **Extent of Women's exposure to Behaviour change Messages in Select Markets across Benin City**

The extent of women's exposure to behaviour change messages in select markets across Benin City is high. According to a respondent from Oba market, "in Oba Market, we are regularly exposed to behaviour change messages through various channels such as loudspeakers, posters and community meetings." The exposure of Oba Market women to behaviour change messages indicates that there is an active effort to disseminate information and promote positive behavioural practices within the market community. This suggests that there is recognition of the importance of behaviour change and a commitment to improving the well-being and health of the market women.

A respondent from Uselu market said: "In Uselu Market, we receive behaviour change messages primarily through health campaigns organised by government agencies and NGOs. These campaigns address issues like family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and maternal health. We also get information from health workers who visit the market periodically."

The fact that behaviour change messages in Uselu Market are predominantly delivered through health campaigns and direct interactions with healthcare professionals suggests a targeted approach to address specific health concerns of women in the market. It implies that efforts are being made to provide relevant information and services that can positively impact the health and well-being of Uselu Market women. However, a

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respondent from Oliha market said the exposure was limited. "In Oliha Market, the exposure to behaviour change messages is relatively limited. We rarely receive formal campaigns or information sessions. However, we do have informal discussions among ourselves and sometimes traders from other markets share information about hygiene practices."

### **Behaviour change Messages Market Women are exposed to across Select Markets in Benin City**

Data show that there are various behaviour change messages received by market women across Benin City. For instance, a respondent noted: "In Oba Market, we often receive behaviour change messages related to hygiene practices, such as handwashing and maintaining a clean environment. We also get messages about the importance of nutritious diets and healthy eating habits." Another respondent from Uselu Market avowed that: "In Uselu Market, we frequently encounter behaviour change messages on family planning, reproductive health and maternal care. There are also campaigns focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness."

### **Factors influencing the effectiveness of behaviour Change Communication among Women in Select Markets across Benin City**

Several factors influence the effectiveness of behaviour change communication among women in select markets across Benin City. In Oliha market for instance, a respondent avowed: "In Oliha Market, the effectiveness of behaviour change communication is impacted by the level of engagement and relevance of the messages. When the messages directly address our specific needs and challenges, we are more likely to pay attention and take action. Additionally, the use of local languages and culturally appropriate communication strategies can make the messages more relatable and effective."

Another respondent noted that: "In Oba Market, the effectiveness of behaviour change communication depends on several factors. One key factor is the frequency and consistency of the messages. When we receive regular reminders and updates, it helps reinforce the desired behaviours. Another important factor is the credibility of the source delivering the messages. We are more likely to trust and act upon information coming from trusted community leaders or healthcare professionals."

The response highlights the significance of frequency, consistency and credibility in behaviour change communication. The implications include the need for sustained messaging efforts to reinforce behavioural practices and the importance of utilising trusted sources to enhance message credibility. These factors can contribute to increased adoption of desired behaviours and improved effectiveness of behaviour change communication among women in Oba Market.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings from the interviews provide valuable insights into the audience perception of the use of communication in facilitating behaviour change among market women in select markets in Benin Metropolis. In Oba Market, the respondents reported high exposure to behaviour change messages through various channels such as loudspeakers,

posters and community meetings. The messages primarily focused on topics related to hygiene, sanitation and healthy eating habits. This suggests an active effort to disseminate information and promote positive behavioural practices within the market community.

Conversely, in Uselu Market, the behaviour change messages were predominantly delivered through health campaigns organised by government agencies and NGOs. The campaigns addressed issues like family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and maternal health. Additionally, health workers periodically visited the market to provide information. In Oliha Market, the exposure to formal behaviour change messages was relatively limited. However, informal discussions among the women and information sharing from traders in other markets still contributed to some level of awareness and exchange of knowledge. The findings suggest a potential gap in communication and awareness initiatives within Oliha Market, but also highlight the existing informal networks that can be leveraged for improved behaviour change interventions.

The effectiveness of behaviour change communication among market women was influenced by several factors. In Oliha Market, the level of engagement and relevance of the messages played a crucial role. When the messages directly addressed the specific needs and challenges of the women, they were more likely to pay attention and take action. The use of local languages and culturally appropriate communication strategies was also emphasised as important for message relatability and effectiveness.

Similarly, in Oba Market, the frequency and consistency of the messages were highlighted as key factors affecting effectiveness. Regular reminders and updates reinforced desired behaviours. Additionally, the credibility of the source delivering the messages was crucial. Market women were more likely to trust and act upon information coming from trusted community leaders or healthcare professionals.

The findings align with previous studies (Olorunnisola, 2016; Adeoye & Adeoye, 2018; Oyekanmi & Adebayo, 2014) on communication strategies for achieving sustainable health behaviour change in Nigeria, communication for community development among market women, the role of interpersonal communication in behaviour change, the effectiveness of radio campaigns and community engagement strategies. These studies emphasise the importance of tailored and context-specific communication approaches, interpersonal communication, radio campaigns and community engagement in promoting behaviour change.

The discussion aligns with the principles of the social cognitive theory (SCT) in understanding behaviour change among market women. According to SCT, individuals learn and adopt new behaviours through observation, social interactions and the influence of their environment. In the context of the study, the exposure to behaviour change messages through various channels in Oba Market and the health campaigns in Uselu Market demonstrate the importance of observational learning and social influence in shaping the women's behaviours. The findings also highlight the role of self-efficacy, a key concept in SCT, as the women were more likely to engage with and act upon messages that directly addressed their needs and challenges. Additionally, the emphasis on credible sources and culturally appropriate communication strategies reflects the SCT's focus on the influence of the social environment and the role of reinforcement in sustaining behaviour change.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that behaviour change communication plays a significant role in facilitating behaviour change among market

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women in selected markets in Benin Metropolis. The respondents reported varying levels of exposure to behaviour change messages, with different channels and approaches utilised across the markets. The effectiveness of the communication strategies was influenced by factors such as message relevance, frequency, consistency and the credibility of the information sources. Based on the findings, the researchers recommend that:

1. Behavioural change communicators should develop behaviour change messages that address the specific needs, challenges and cultural context of market women in each market. They can use local languages and culturally appropriate communication strategies to enhance message relatability and effectiveness.
2. Behavioural change communicators should encourage and facilitate interpersonal communication channels within market communities to disseminate behaviour change messages effectively.
3. They should collaborate with local radio stations to broadcast behaviour change messages and engage market women in interactive programmes that address their health concerns.

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