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Study Status
Results

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Randomized Evaluation

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1,200 individuals in 30 villages in Tanzania’s Tanga region

Research Implemented by IPA
Yes
A Radio Drama's Effects on HIV Attitudes and Policy Priorities: A Field Experiment in Tanzania

Donald P. Green, PhD, Dylan W. Groves, MA, and Constance Manda, MA

Abstract

A growing body of evidence suggests that entertainment education influences knowledge about HIV, stigma toward those with HIV, and openness to disclosing one's HIV status. The present study shows that, in addition to these effects, mass media interventions that influence audiences' policy positions, such as their demand for local access to HIV/AIDS medical care. A randomized (2 hour) version of a popular Swahili radio drama was presented to rural Tanzanians as part of a quasi-experimental design, classified at the village level. A random sample comprising 1,200 participants were interviewed at baseline and invited to attend a presentation of the radio drama, and 83% answered baseline respondents were reinterviewed 1 week later with a response rate of 95%. In addition to increasing audiences' knowledge and support for access to HIV/AIDS medical care, the radio drama generated stable and statistically significant effects on audience's perception for hypothetical candidates promising improved HIV/AIDS treatment.

Keywords

audience, entertainment education, HIV/AIDS, media

Alongside body of research investigating the effects of media and entertainment education, "audience" has been defined as "the extent to which an individual or group of individuals is engaged in behaviors that are influenced by their exposure to a media program, and the change in their beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, or knowledge as a result of that exposure."

In the study, we present evidence from a field experiment in Tanzania's southern region. Thyaga Region, designed to test the effects of an entertainment education campaign to address HIV/AIDS. The radio drama Kihapangana was developed by the Tanzania Media Organization (TMO) to engage audiences in discussions about HIV/AIDS prevention, reduce stigma toward HIV-positive individuals, and increase audiences' willingness to disclose their HIV status. We conducted a cluster randomized trial testing the effects of exposure to a randomized version of Kihapangana in 20 villages in Thyaga Region. We defined clusters at the village level, and participants were interviewed at baseline and post-intervention. The intervention group received the radio drama, whereas the control group did not. Our findings demonstrate the powerful influence that entertainment education has on audiences' knowledge and behavior in response to government action in terms of public health. When interviewed, respondents showed higher levels of awareness and engagement in HIV/AIDS prevention activities, and the relative importance of accessing HIV/AIDS-related care among government priorities.

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A Radio Drama’s Effects on Attitudes Toward Early and Forced Marriage: Results From a Field Experiment in Rural Tanzania

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Abstract

Early and forced marriage (EFM) is an increasing focus of international organizations and local non-governmental organizations. This study assesses the extent to which attitudes and norms related to EFM can be changed by locally tailored media campaigns. A one-hour radio drama set in rural Tanzania was presented to Tanzanian villagers as part of a quasi-experimental design randomized at the village level. A random sample of 1,200 villagers was interviewed as baseline and invited to attend a presentation of the radio drama. 83% of whom attended 95% of baseline respondents were re-interviewed two weeks later and 93% 15 months after that. The radio drama produced stable and statistically significant effects on attitudes and perceived norms concerning forced marriage, which was the focus of the radio drama, as well as more general attitudes about gender equality. Fifteen months later, treatment effects diminished, but we continue to see evidence of EFM-related attitude change.

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The Impact of a Radio Program on Challenging Early and Forced Marriage Norms in Tanzania

Researchers evaluated the impact of a radio drama in Tanzania on attitudes toward early and forced marriage. Exposure to the program substantially increased the proportion of listeners who rejected early and forced marriage three weeks later. After 15 months, the effects were smaller but remained positive.

Between 2018 and 2030, approximately 150 million girls under the age of 18 will be subjected to marriage globally. This practice can restrict the autonomy of women and girls, increase the likelihood that they are subject to intimate partner violence, and limit their economic and social empowerment. In Tanzania, 36 percent of women enter into marriage before the age of 18, and 30 percent report having limited or no decision-making power when choosing their life partners. In the northeastern Tanga region, more than 40 percent of rural citizens accept early and forced marriage in at least some circumstances.

Evidence suggests that mass media campaigns can effectively change community perceptions and behaviors regarding gender-based violence. For instance, a study conducted in rural Uganda demonstrated that screening videos encouraging viewers to speak out against violence against women led to a decrease in reported rates of such incidents in the villages where the videos were shown. The rapid expansion of radio coverage in Tanzania has dramatically increased the reach of radio programs that address social issues, including gender relations. Radio may therefore serve as a valuable platform to foster positive changes in attitudes and behaviors related to early and forced marriage and promote gender equality.

Researchers partnered with IPA and the community-based non-governmental organization UZIKWASA to evaluate the impact of a radio program on changing attitudes toward early and forced marriage and gender relations. The radio program, Tamapendo, was a drama written, acted, and produced in Tanga that focuses on locally recognizable Islamic teachings about a girl’s right to resist early forced marriage. In 15 randomly selected villages, 40 villagers were invited to a community event to listen to Tamapendo. In 15 other randomly selected villages, 40 villagers were invited to a community event to listen to an unrelated radio drama about HIV and served as the comparison group. Select villagers were asked about their views on early and forced marriage and gender equality before the screenings, 3 weeks after the screenings, and again 15 months later.
Tamapendo had a significant positive impact on listeners’ beliefs about early and forced marriage. Three weeks after the screenings, listeners were 9.3 percentage points more likely to reject a girl’s forced marriage (from 82 percent to 91.3 percent) and 4.8 percentage points more likely to reject a girl’s early forced marriage (from 94 percent to 98.8 percent). 15 months later, the effects of Tamapendo weakened — dropping to a 2.5 percentage point difference in listeners rejecting forced marriage relative to the comparison group — but remained significant.

Sources


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