

La Programación Radial: un recurso Resiliente en situación de Pandemia

Radio Programming: a resilient resource in a Pandemic situation

Roilber Peña- Galano; Yanet Simón- Benzant; Víctor Blet- Rodríguez

Universidad de Guantánamo. Cuba.

Correo (s) electrónico (s)

roilberpg@cug.co.cu

ysimon@cug.co.cu

victorbr@cug.co.cu

ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0576-8890>

<http://orcid.org/0000-00020-1909-7151>

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2448-7277>

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Resumen

La radio, a lo largo de la historia, se destaca en situaciones de crisis generadas por desastres naturales, guerras o emergencias sanitarias para mantener informadas y entretenidas a los radioescuchas por el poder de ser accesible en cualquier región; incluso en el periodo de confinamiento por la COVID- 19 vuelve a demostrar ser un medio de referencia. En el artículo se expone las principales iniciativas que la radiodifusión llevó a cabo en el periodo de aislamiento. Se utilizaron métodos teórico y empíricos para abordar las regularidades en el tema. Los principales resultados se describen a partir del incremento del consumo de las iniciativas en la emisora Radio Bahía del municipio de Caimanera en la provincia de Guantánamo de programas con temas: sociales, ambientales, culturales, políticos y económicos, que ayudaron a enriquecer la vida de sus radioescuchas y atenuar los efectos psicológicos del aislamiento por la pandemia.

Palabras clave: Radio; Programación; Pandemia; COVID-19; Familia; Radioescuchas, Resiliente

Abstract

Radio, throughout history, stands out in crisis situations generated by natural disasters, wars or health emergencies to keep listeners informed and entertained by the power of being accessible in any region; inclusive in the period of confinement due to COVID-19 once again proves to be a means of reference. The article presents the main initiatives that broadcasting carried out in the period of isolation. Theoretical and empirical methods were used to address regularities in the subject. The main results are described from the increase in the consumption of the initiatives in the Radio Bahía station of the municipality of Caimanera in the province of Guantánamo of programs with social, environmental, cultural, political and economic themes, which helped enrich the lives of its listeners and mitigate the psychological effects of isolation due to the pandemic

Keywords: Radio; Programming; Pandemic; COVID-19; Family; Radio listeners, Resilient

Introducción

The historical study shows that, since its birth, radio is considered very close because it reaches large audiences, it is inclusive and exploits creativity and imposes magic in transmissions. It is a means of sound transmission exclusively; it is directed to the sense of hearing. In a broadcast that sounds can be classified into: a music, spoken word and sound effect which generate, from the harmonic and artistic mix, emotional impact and awaken the imagination of listeners.

It is recognized that the radio is a permanent means of communication, it can interact twenty-four hours a day during the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, it can accompany us through different devices, it is characterized by its speed; it is the most immediate to cover information, it is agile to tell everything possible.

The radio as a means of communication plays a leading role in the affective and emotional impact of the population in times of crisis, because of its special characteristics of cordiality helps the dissemination of educational, cultural and social issues in a context of geographic isolation allowing reaching the most remote regions and various population groups.

Due to the importance of the medium, professionals express high responsibility and preparation to manage and communicate information, entertain and educate in times of disasters and epidemics, it

allows early warnings so that communities are prepared in advance to the dangers that may occur, it also plays a key role in the explanation through the word of what happens in the world geography,

According to Rodero and Blanco, (2020); citing Spence et al, (2009).

There are different natural disasters such as: typhoons, hurricanes, sunamis or earthquakes; especially in vulnerable areas, the radio has been able to react quickly to respond to difficult situations, providing updated information to help the population with protective measures and decisions that can save lives. Also in political crises, such as coups d'état, attacks, or health crises such as pandemics, radio has played an important role. (p.42)

It is important to recognize that in the critical period experienced by the planet due to the health crisis caused by COVID-19, which led the population to a mandatory confinement, with questions and answers that generated a lot of uncertainty, subscribed to the walls of the home and interaction with the family, the media played an important role and the radio again stands out as essential to keep the population informed and entertained, hence its therapeutic effect.

The radio is considered as one of those with more interaction, access, the most credible, also, the closest to the people, the one that generated more time of distraction and company in the families in that time of confinement. A great number of initiatives were made available to radio listeners which, due to their characteristics, quickly served to offer answers to the anguish generated by the difficult moments experienced by society, all this allows identifying the factors that contributed to radio playing a leading role in crisis or emergency situations: internal; it emerges from the very characteristics of radio as a medium and external, it is the positive perception or the psychological impact it generates in listeners.

These factors make implicit that one reason has to do with the medium as such and the other refers to the audience. What is exposed is the result of review and critical analysis of different spaces or radio programs conceived for the time of pandemic, renewing them with the intention of including in each of them sections of intervention where the listener will deploy his creativity and entertainment.

The intention of the article is to expose the role of the radio in pandemic situation and to describe the main alternatives developed during the sanitary crisis by COVID-19 in the radio station Radio Bahía in the municipality of Caimanera in the province of Guantánamo.

Development

Characteristics of radio as a means of communication

Radio is a totally universal medium, simple from a technical point of view and more accessible to the population in general, which is what makes it stand out in crisis situations.

First of all, it is the most universal medium because it was the first mass communication medium and is still today the most used in the world, the one that reaches the largest number of people. It has a high penetration rate of around 95% in all segments of the population UNESCO (2012).

In Cuba, the signal of this medium reaches more than 95% of the population, accessing areas of difficult access. This is essential in places where Internet access is still limited, as for example in Africa. In this continent 80% of the population has a radio, which makes it the main source of information for millions of people, especially in rural areas (UNESCO, (2012); Hudson, Hudson, It is recognized that radio is a medium with ample possibilities to understand short messages, information, programs of any kind, news; among others, without requiring a high cultural or economic level to be able to listen to all that it is able to give. Therefore, it plays a very relevant role from a social, political, educational and cultural point of view. Through radio broadcasting we reach the most remote areas or communities and the most vulnerable people: illiterate, disabled, blind or poor, professionals with a high level, children, adolescents and young people of any gender, without any discrimination.

Radio is the most accessible medium. The radio medium can be consumed at any time of the day and night and anywhere Savage and Spence, (2014); "Radio as a means of communication reacts quickly to any event that is happening and at the same time citizens can be informed in the shortest possible time, with a single instrument, a transistor" (p.53). Radio is a means of information that is easy to listen to, that does not demand exclusive attention and that can be used for different activities at the same time; it accompanies everyone who listens to it on a daily basis and no matter what happens, adapting easily to situations that demand immediate consumption of information.

When analyzing the role of the radio, its educational function should be highlighted by allowing information on different health issues or addressing psychological problems once traumatic events occur because it helps to minimize their effects, such as the perceptible earthquake of 2010, where many people took their radio for a more thorough investigation, many initiatives of solidarity and meeting among friends. An important moment to recognize how effective the radio has been in recent years was when the national quarantine was decreed, the broadcasters understood that this crisis would

really be an opportunity to recover ground and reformulate the traditional recipe of this Cuban medium. It was a call for adaptation that required solving new problems and questions: how to create participatory programs within everyone's reach, how to keep listeners in expectation of the programming strip, and what prevention campaigns to broadcast to avoid the spread of the virus?

Radio, in its role of educating citizens, transmitting cultural and artistic manifestations, building public opinion and narrating the history of a Cuba that is facing enormous challenges and new opportunities, cannot lose sight of this new relationship with the audience. When the confinement ends, it must maintain that vocation of public service, it must continue with its function of forming citizens, of generating critical thinking and, above all, sensitive to the problems and needs of the people and on the new platforms and networks, which is now the new scenario of the media in the new normality.

In times of pandemic, the context could not be more paradoxical; without the recovery of the radio's protagonism, think that the resources to finance it are scarcer. This reality is faced with stoicism by a sector of mass communication that in recent years has been trying to reinvent itself and has succeeded in doing so by tuning in to the increasingly demanding tastes and styles of audiences. Radio, a mass media par excellence, in the current times of isolation promises to consolidate its ties with audiences that at some point were ephemeral and that at present are links that are gaining validity and highlight the social work of this sound media.

Once the confinement is over, the relationship between audiences will return to a past in which listeners could only listen or participation will move towards a greater number of voices being part of the life of the medium. Listening more to audiences seems to be one of the lessons that the coronavirus leaves this mass media of massive influence that penetrates to the intimacy of every human being.

Effects of coronavirus on radio programming

The pandemic arrived and changed the habits and customs of humanity as a whole, and the radio as a means of communication became part of the new family environment, served as a refuge and psychological support, as well as entertainment for many people. This situation made the elderly and children the most vulnerable people in the COVID-19 crisis, and thus the ones most in need of radio. However, this isolation has in turn provided an opportunity for younger people to learn about radio as a means of information Espinosa (2020); UNESCO, (2020).

As a result of this new scenario by COVID-19, radio stations played a leading role, because many people were looking for a relationship of closeness with the medium, based at all times on timely dialogue, where they could maintain a permanent conversation, a form of escape and relief, achieving

through this a moment of fun and distraction. The radio responded to this need, on the one hand, by informing about the day to day and the crisis with informative spaces and with contents aimed at analyzing or explaining the events and, on the other hand, seeking to sensitize and persuade the population to know how to act during the crisis and face the situation in a positive way García, Bearable (2020)

According to Rus and Zamor, (2020):

Listeners look to the medium to receive the most complete information on current affairs, but also conceive it as a source of distraction in difficult times. As with other media and faced with the risk of contagion, the radio manages to adapt to the new situation and modify its way of doing things differently, establishing new ways to avoid exposing the health of its workers and their families. (p.46)

The change motivated by the effectiveness of the radio was observed in that most of the people worked from home, and only the personnel necessary for the production process attended the radio stations. The radio station Radio Bahía in the municipality of Caimanera in the province of Guantánamo, sample of the research, it was verified that only two work teams attended in person; one in the morning session and the other in the afternoon, each one with their artistic responsibilities contributing with novel and attractive ideas for the receivers. An element that had a direct impact on the radio is the level of creativity during this time, participation sections in all the spaces, which attracted listeners and led to greater intervention and interaction.

Radio participation: at the time of COVID-19

The confinement by COVID-19, imposed on the radio to reinvent its programming with programs to generate the incorporation of listeners who considered this medium as an option for leisure, full enjoyment and participatory fun. Radio Bahia changed its programming style to keep listeners informed and recreate through innovative participatory spaces. Hence the responsibility of the production team to listen and meet the demands of the audience and their need for cultural enrichment, preparation and linkage with other sectors of society (psychologists, sociologists, doctors, writers, among others).

For Cadalzo (2010), "a participation program should not be limited only to the concept of pleasing requests and greetings; it should address that and more, but never absolutize the concept to that single category of spaces" "Cuban Radio deploys efforts and resources to raise its quality and excellence every day, and it is up to the writers, scriptwriters and producers the main task so that such resources

are always on the best way". Among the categories of participation are opinion spaces, attention to letters, telephone calls and e-mails expressing concern, doubts or worries about any phenomenon or situation of any kind. Delving into the concerns, tastes and preferences of our target audience can be an indispensable tool in the redesign of programming (p.46).

Radio Bahia in COVID-19 time: a challenge to participation

The municipality of Caimanera has a radio station called Radio Bahia, inaugurated on December 19, 1996. Its mission is to satisfy the informative, educational, cultural and recreational needs of its people, with programming that transmits political, ideological and ethical values of our society.

To achieve this purpose, it was initially designed a programming of 4 and a half hours, with 16 programs directed to the youth, children and family population; covering informative, recreational, educational, divulgative, cultural and orientation functions. In March 2000, programming was expanded to 8 hours a day, with 27 programs covering all radio functions. In November 2000, as part of the demand of our people, the station went on the air with 12 hours of transmission with 32 programs, which continues to this day.

What happened with the arrival of COVID-19 in our radio station, why was it necessary to change the programming of Radio Bahia, what programming was feasible to keep our listeners informed and entertained, was the programming that was taken into account in time of pandemic the most successful from the point of view of participation for our listeners? Many are the questions that were taken into account to ensure that the programming in times of pandemic was the most attractive to our listeners.

The programming was divided into two work sessions, in the morning two programs were aired, one from 8: am with 2 minutes in the morning that opens the radio plant and until about 10am with the theme: Together, an informative magazine aimed at keeping the population informed about the pandemic in the world, Cuba and Caimanera; from 10: am until about two in the afternoon the participatory program: I want to see you again, dedicated to poems and songs, questions of interest to listeners and a time of musical complacency.

In the afternoon from 2: pm until about 4pm the participatory program: I embrace you from afar, participatory sections of interest to listeners were used the first: The three from the neighborhood, whose main purpose was for a listener to communicate with the space and give a musical gift to three neighbors in their neighborhood, could not leave their demarcation, in this section was put into practice good human relations.

The second participatory offer is: Help me to be heard, whose main intention was that three listeners called the space and each of them had to request a singer and then 5 people who were not in competition had to help one of the three members and the one who had more votes was given three musical themes, this section was liked by the listeners, as they had to choose their favorite singer to be the winner, in this section most of the participants did not know each other and it was the opportunity they had through the media to begin to know each other.

The craziest question, was the third offer of the afternoon, which has as main objective the knowledge of different topics of the field, social, cultural, economic and political of Cuba or the world, it was also the right time to fight from the game the pandemic COVID-19, in this section humanism is put into practice among listeners, selfless help and responsibility; it is necessary to explain that only between 5 and 8 questions were made, this section was aired at this first time twice; the first at 2: 45 in the afternoon and the second at 3 : 45 pm, here could participate as many listeners as they wanted and the winner was the participant who answered the most correct questions.

In the program there is an element that is necessary to take into account and it is that the listener who answered the fewest questions correctly, the winner had the opportunity to give him a number of his liking, and humanism was a distinctive element in this section. From 2: pm and until 4: pm, were the sections that went on the air without failing to include: Your musical request, here they had the possibility to choose the musical number of their preference.

Example of the questions section

1.- Who is known as the mastermind of the Assault on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Barracks in Bayamo?

Answer. José Martí

2. - Poet from Guantanamo whose second surname is Barreiro?

Answer: Regino Eladio Boti y Barreiro

3. - Who is known as the poet of the son?

Answer: Nicolás Guillen. Nicolás Guillen

4. - Who is the Cuban national poet?

Answer. Nicolás Guillén

5. - Say if it is true or false what I am saying right now about Nancy Morejón....

-- Poet, playwright, essayist and translator.

Answer. Nancy Morejón was born in Havana on August 7, 1944. She is an outstanding Cuban poetess, playwright, essayist and translator.

6. - Who is known as the elder storyteller?

Answer: Onelio Jorge Cardoso

From 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., Radio Bahia's newscast was broadcast on Radio Bahia, where the general public was kept informed through different journalistic genres and the collaboration of other specialists knowledgeable about the topics that should be covered in this type of program. From five o'clock until five thirty minutes past five, the link with the provincial radio station CMKS was conceived as it was established to listen to the Provincial Radio News.

From five thirty minutes past five in the afternoon until eight o'clock in the evening began the participatory program: Reasons for life, whose main objective was to recreate the audience with the participation sections, among which we can find, The lucky clock, in this the listeners had to answer in ten seconds the order that was asked of them, here originality, creativity, speed and good diction is shown, it was a section accepted by the listeners for the level of ingenuity that they had to perform.

Example of the section: the Lucky Clock

In the Lucky Clock, whoever is quick wins.... You have 10 seconds to answer the order I give you, if you exceed that time, you lose. Today you must say 10 women's names that begin with the letter M. Remember the answers in just 10 seconds to be a winner.

Another of our sections is: Musical Collage, a novel offer where through several musical themes that are aired the listener must answer several questions, among which we can find the following: which singer was in place 2, 4 and 7 of the collage, title of the musical number 5, name of the performer you heard in the last musical, how many foreign artists and how many Cuban artists were in the collage? It is necessary to point out that the musical themes were played only once and its main objective was that the listeners managed to memorize the themes, it was very well accepted and as it was liked by the audience it was analyzed by the Programming Council to include it in the usual program of participation in normal To mix time.

Numerical trilogy is another of the sections, here the listeners have to guess three numbers that are in a range, that is to say, between 1 and 7, the announcer tries to help through a question to the participants, generally the correct answer coincides with a historical date, an event, the birth of a personality, etc. It

is a section that attracts listeners and helps them to use logical thinking and analysis. The air time is until the listener guesses the competing numbers; it is aired up to 5 times.

Example of the section: number trilogy

Today we want you to guess the numerical trilogy, the numbers are between 1 and 7, between 7 and 1, remember if you are able to guess the numerical trilogy you will be able to open the chest, who opens the chest? On this date a Cuban politician, patriot and journalist were born.

Answer. 7 2 1 Juan Gualberto Gómez Ferrer was born on July 12, 1854. He was a patriot politician, journalist and leader of the Cuban Afro-Americans, who stood out in the struggle for the Independence of Cuba and during the republican period between 1901 and 1933.

In an audience study carried out in programming time by COVID 19, it was corroborated that making radio in totally different times allows the listener to build a social network, express his ideas, say what he wants, feel the program as his own project, achieve an abstract thought, and memorize necessary elements to be able to win.

On the other hand, it was corroborated that the consumption of the medium increased notably due to the greater demand for information, the radio station was tuned in and listened to between four and six hours a day, the time of greatest listening was in the afternoon session, naturalness and spontaneity were projected at all times, teamwork, full enjoyment, interests were generated, work was done transversally with all the capacities of the people, empowerment and autonomy were put into practice.

Conclusions

In crisis situations, radio is an outstanding means of communication, because it plays a leading role in keeping the diversity of society informed on various topics and entertained to mitigate the psychological effects of the crisis. During the difficult period of compulsory isolation generated by the coronavirus pandemic, radio has historically proven to be the means of communication that people interact with the most. The radio station Radio Bahia in the municipality of Caimanera adapted the programming, which led to a greater audience, since the proposed spaces generated recreation, knowledge, motivation, interest, networks of friends, solidarity, and changes in listening habits, all of which had a positive impact on the psychology of the listeners.

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