



Uses and Gratifications of Radio Programmes among Anambra Youths

Leo O. N. **Edegoh** PhD, Department of Mass Communication, Anambra State University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, Nigeria

Aniebo C. **Samson**, Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Uduot Archibong **Iwok**, Department of Communication Arts, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

Abstract:

The paper was a survey of 210 youths drawn from Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi (all in Anambra State). The rationale behind the study was to find out the type of radio programme that interests youths most. The objectives of the study, among others, were to ascertain how often youths in Anambra State listen to radio programmes, and to determine the gratifications they derive from such radio programmes. Pegged on the Uses and Gratification theory of the mass media, the study adopted the questionnaire as data gathering instrument and utilised the percentage method and table of frequencies in data analysis. Findings of the study indicated that majority of the youths in Anambra State listened to radio programmes, that the programmes that interest them most were music, news and sports programmes, and that the gratifications they derived from radio programmes were many and varied. The study recommended the use of radio for dissemination of messages/campaigns intended for youths in Anambra State.

Keywords: Uses and Gratifications, Radio, Programmes, Youths, Anambra State.

Introduction and Justification for the Study

Radio has capacity to break illiteracy barriers, penetrate into the remote areas of our rural communities with clear signals to inform, educate and entertain its audience (Edegoh, Asemah and Nwammuo, 2013). The indispensability of radio for achieving development in society has never been in doubt. Radio as a medium of communication is utilised to air development issues to listeners in the form of various programmes and individuals are exposed to happenings in

and around their society, through listening to these programmes (Asemah, Anum and Edegoh, 2013). This explains why Nwabueze (2007, p. 65), cited in Edegoh, Asemah and Nwammuo (2013) avers that radio is believed to be the most effective, popular and credible medium for reaching a large and heterogeneous audience. Radio programmes inform, entertain and educate the audience on several issues in the society. For example, issues bordering on business, politics, education, current affairs, etc., are aired to create awareness.



Edegoh, Asemah and Nwammuo (2013) assert that radio is an agent of social mobilisation capable of galvanising citizens to take certain goals based on their awareness of their rights and responsibility to the society. For example, radio was found to be very useful in the Roll Back Malaria Campaign of the Federal Government of Nigeria and other similar campaigns.

Anambra State has a fair share of radio stations - federal, state and private ones. These include Radio Nigeria; Anambra Broadcasting Radio, Awka and Onitsha; Minaj Radio, Obosi; Odenigbo FM, Obosi; Radio Sapientia, Onitsha; Blaze FM Radio, Oraifite; Rhythm FM, Awka; Brilla FM, Onitsha; Purity FM, Awka; Madonna Radio, Okija (owned by Madonna University); and Unizik FM Radio, Awka (owned by the Nnamdi Azikiwe University). These stations air programmes to educate, inform and entertain the audience in Anambra State. The programmes of these radio stations are accessed by residents in Anambra State. Minaj Radio and Odenigbo FM Radio are situated in Obosi (Idemili North LGA), Radio Sapientia and Brilla FM Radios are stationed in Onitsha, Blaze is sited in Oraifite, Purity FM transmits programmes from Mgbakwu (Awka), Madonna Radio is at Okija, Anambra Broadcasting Radio, Rhythm FM Radio and Unizik Radio transmit signals from Awka while Radio Nigeria programmes reach the study area from Enugu and Abuja. Through these radio channels the residents of Anambra State access diverse programmes designed for their listening pleasure and other needs.

It is therefore clear that residents of Anambra State, especially youths, are provided with diverse programmes made

available by many radio stations. It remains to ascertain how the youths make use of these radios and the programmes they offer. Thus, the key questions that triggered off this study were: what are the uses to which youths in Anambra State put the many radio programmes they are exposed to? what gratifications do they derive from them?

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were put forward to guide the conduct of the study. They include to:

- i. Ascertain how often youths in Anambra State listen to radio programme.
- ii. Find out the type of radio programme that interests them most.
- iii. Determine the gratifications they derive from listening to radio programmes.

Research Questions

Pursuant to the study's objectives, the following questions were posed for investigation:

- i. How often do youths in Anambra State listen to radio programme?
- ii. What are the types of radio programmes that interest youths in Anambra State?
- iii. What gratifications do they derive from listening to radio programmes?

Theoretical Framework

Social Philosopher, Abraham Kaplan (1961) cited in Edegoh, Asemah and Ude-Akpeh (2013) opines that a theory is a way of making sense out of a disturbing situation, and Daramola (2013) defines communication theory as a



set of ideas which provides an explanation for communication phenomena. Theories are important in any academic endeavour and this importance is premised on the fact that theories lend themselves to various texts and analysis such that the phenomenon central to the research get explained, clarified and even predicted as the case may be (Asemah 2010; Edegoh and Asemah, 2013). Therefore, for better understanding of the study the Uses and Gratification theory has been chosen to provide the needed framework.

The Uses and Gratification theory falls within the media effects tradition and its bottom line is that media do not do things to people; rather, people do things with the media. The specific objective of Uses and Gratification theory is to explain how individuals use mass communication to gratify their needs (Burgeon, Hunsaker and Dawson, 1994, cited in Udende and Azeez, 2010, p.34). The theory explains the positive effect of individual media use. Baran and Davis (2001) rightly observe that audience members actively seek out the mass media to satisfy their needs. These needs include learning, passing time, companionship, escape from tension, excitement and relaxation. Thus, the major assumption of the uses and gratifications theory, propounded in 1974 by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2008, p. 71; Edegoh, Nwanolue and Eze, 2013) is that people are not just passive receivers of mass media messages but actively influence the message effects. This is because people selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain media messages on the basis of their needs, beliefs, etc. Thus, Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008, p. 71) rightly assert that

there are as many reasons for using the mass media as there are media users.

The relevance of the theory to the study at hand is located within the framework that recipients of media offerings actively influence the effect process: they selectively choose, attend to, perceive and retain media messages.

Review of Literature

Radio is a very potent communication medium with unique attribute which make it capable of reaching a wide range of audience simultaneously availing mankind the best means of information dissemination and reception (Acholonu, 2009, p. 61). Radio is seen as the most effective, spontaneous means of communication and an electronic information carrier.

Owuamalam (2007, p.2) posits that radio is:

An electronic device which transmits sound signals into the air, at particular frequencies. The radio receiver translates the signals to comprehensive aural message as intended and provided by the source. It is the fidelity of the radio receiver that ensures clarity in reception and eliminates entropy (noise) which impedes meaning.

The broadcast audio medium of radio is believed to be the most effective, popular and credible medium for reaching a large and heterogeneous audience (Nwabueze, 2007, p.65). Articulating views on the many benefits of radio as a medium of communication particularly in the rural areas, Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013, p.24) assert that radio can be used to mobilise the people at the grassroot level for



community development and national consciousness. According to the authors, no serious mass oriented development, especially in rural communities in Africa ever succeeds without the active involvement of the people within the traditional system.

Radio programme serves as a source of cultural, political, health and other educational and enlightenment programmes for the masses, leading them towards self-actualisation and national development. This probably informs the submission of Okam (1981) cited in Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013, p. 25) that much of the failure that attends government mass-oriented programmes are traceable to the fact that policy makers at the national level fail to utilise this powerful and credible medium.

The potentials of radio can be harnessed to create entertainment through arts and cultural festivals, musicals and dramatic performance, by local singing groups, masquerades and other music and drama groups. Radio is a medium of communication and through it individuals share the world around them and beyond their immediate environment. Thus, it is essential to provide through radio a kind of general education necessary for people to make sound decision about any prevailing social issue in their environment. This is so because as Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013) correctly observe "social objective of using radio to mobilise people in Nigeria entails the area of education, information and entertainment."

Radio is a powerful electronic medium that is utilised in bringing political, economic and social news to any community or group of communities

faster than other media. In his contribution on the role of radio, Nwuneli, cited in Asemah (2011) says it has brought stimulus into the house, brings about competitions within families, thereby grooming people who will contribute positively to the process of development. Salama (1978), cited in Asemah, Anum and Edegoh (2013) notes that radio serves as an opinion leader in its news commentary and editorial. In programmes like drama, radio mirrors the society, presenting issues relevant to society in action which creates easy understanding and learning. Radio informs and educates the listeners in its discussion and documentary programmes. It also entertains in its light programmes like musicals, sports, comedy and dances. It seeks to improve the society in its special occupational programmes geared towards agriculture, business and other related areas.

In essence, radio can be employed to pass across vital information about latest techniques in agriculture, trends in agricultural extension services, etc., to the generality of urban and rural dwellers. The radio is a popular and ubiquitous medium of mass communication and the most pervasive in every part of the world (Okoro, 1998, p. 71). The writer discusses the advantages of radio as follows:

- i. Pervasiveness: The radio is not only highly intrusive but also possesses the power to shatter walls of privacy the moment it is on. It possesses a universal attribute which enables it to cut across the barriers of illiteracy and poverty.
- ii. Immediacy: The radio has the capacity to relate the events to the audience as it is happening. Okoro



- (1998) avers that the radio relays signals to the home at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. The radio can also transport the audience to the scene of event while still at home.
- iii. Economy: Radio is economical medium in terms of buying radio sets and in terms of programme production, airing and set maintenance.
 - iv. Flexibility: Replacement of message at the last minute with minimum cost and convenience is easy in radio programming. Also radio is flexible in providing specialised programming for varied audience-types.
 - v. Presence: The human warmth and power of the voice associated with the radio create unseen, near realistic physical presence.

Radio can be employed to pass vital information about the right attitude, behaviour, knowledge, technique and skills, which are expected from the members of the public. Radio has been found to be one of the most effective media for transforming a hither-to, under-developed society to a developed polity. Ojebode (2003) agrees with this line of thinking when he states that with few years of its emergence, the radio has metamorphosed from being an object of private concern, to a political and development instrument in the hands of government and NGOs. The information dispersing and the enlightenment role of the radio is the commonest of its functions. Asemah (2011) avers that the dissemination function of the radio covers information to people's alertness to health, agriculture, education, economy, politics, etc. Radio stations in Anambra State often relay special programmes intended to promote

development. Thus, government at all levels – local, state and national utilize radio (and television) to mobilize support for its programmes. In recent time, the government of Anambra State led by Mr. Peter Obi has been using the radio as well as other media of information in the state to ferret information on security consciousness and alertness to the citizens.

Radio, no doubt, is the most effective, spontaneous means of mass communication and an electronic information carrier. Edegoh (2015) has brilliantly opined that the radio with its ubiquitous presence, warmth, portability, power adaptability and most importantly, the capacity to break barriers of illiteracy and language, has the potency to penetrate into remote villages with clear signals. Corroborating this view, Konkwo (2010, p.174) observes:

The relative prominence of the radio as the most effective medium of mass communication with ruralites has been attributed to a number of factors, namely: (a) its capacity to transcend the functional barriers of illiteracy, illiteracy being a contentious issue in developing societies, including Nigeria with an estimated illiteracy rate of 60%; (b) in such a society radio has become a medium for all and sundry enjoying tremendous popularity among the populace; (c) being relatively cheap and available, radio has become the medium of choice for all farmers, market women, artisans, fishermen, cooks, etc., since it is portable and practical; (d) its quality makes it suitable for use while engaging in or performing other tasks, such as driving, writing, eating, etc. In view of these qualities or characteristics,



communication experts and development organisations have, over the past 50 years, recommended radio as the most appropriate medium through which the rural people globally, can be reached, sensitised and mobilised to embrace rural development in all its ramifications.

This position that the radio can be used to achieve significant development (especially in the rural areas) is as universal as scholarship. The UNESCO reporters on Indian rural forum, cited in Asemah (2011, p.344) note thus:

In the developing countries, the greater part of the people live on the land, they are frequently isolated by illiteracy and lack of transport. Effective communication with rural people and their active participation in the life of their country is essential for developing societies. Thus, radio broadcasts, when skillfully used, have proven to be the most effective medium of communication with the population.

One of the commonest, everyday functions of radio is information dispersing and enlightenment of listeners. Radio performs this function by providing adequate, relevant and timely information to alert people about their health, about agriculture, education, security, economy, politics, etc. Radio broadcasts in Nigeria, contain rich contents designed to provide basic information on political issues in the country to the listening pleasure of most people (including rural people) in order to make them able to take informed political decisions.

Asemah (2011), citing Tafida (1986) notes that broadcasting (radio) is so powerful; it brings political economic and social news to any community or any group of communities. Wigwe (1988) argues that radio broadcasting has credible role to play in disseminating information to the masses at the grassroots level for development purposes. In his own contribution, Adaba (1987), cited in Asemah (2011), contends that there is an essential communication role for radio broadcasting at the local level. He further notes that “within an overall national system, there is a clear need for radio broadcast to be used to motivate, and mobilise the people at the grassroots, so that they can participate actively in the development of their own society” (Adaba, 1987, cited in Asemah, Anum and Edegoh, 2013, p.27).

Methodology

As noted by Matseketsa and Mapolisa (2013), cited in Edegoh, Ezeh and Samson (2015, p. 65) “Research methodology refers to the ways in which a researcher retrieves data from the selected sampling frame, methods for collecting data, instruments to be used and how the data is scrutinised and presented”. Leedy and Ormrod (2010), cited in Edegoh et al (2015, p.65) refer to it as “the framework for extracting meaning from the data collected.” This study adopted the survey research method.

The survey research method is most appropriate for gathering and measuring data relating to demographics, attitude, opinion and perception (Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharefo and Okpanachi, 2012, cited in Edegoh, Asemah and Okpanachi, 2013). The



entire youths in Anambra State within the age range of 15 to 35 years formed the population of the study. Two hundred and ten (210) respondents drawn from Awka, Onitsha and Nnewi (in equal proportion of 70 respondents for each town) formed the sample size of the study.

Purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the participants to ensure that those selected were within the required age category and that they listen to radio programmes. The

questionnaire was used for data gathering because of its capacity to facilitate the collection of large amount of data within the shortest possible time. The questionnaire used in the study had two sections – section A was designed to obtain data on the demographic variables of the participants while section B sought data to answer the research questions. The percentage method and frequency tables were used in data analysis.

Data Presentation

Table 1: Return rate of questionnaire

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Returned and found usable	200	95
Not usable	3	2
Not returned	7	3
Total	210	100

Table 1 shows the return rate of questionnaire which is 95% (n = 200) while the mortality rate is 5% (n = 10). The return rate is higher than the mortality rate. The mortality rate of 5% does not affect the study because it is insignificant compared to the return rate of 95%. Thus, the copies were considered adequate to represent the population. The presentation and analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire was based on the two hundred (200) copies that were returned and found usable. The table on respondents' demography reveals that most of the respondents were aged 21-25 years (50%, n = 100). Others include 21% of the respondents (n = 42) whose age bracket was 15-20, 20% of the respondents (n = 40) fall within 26-30 years and 9% (n = 18) respondents were aged 31 years and over.

Data on educational level of respondents show that most of them had secondary and tertiary education (51% or

102 and 47% or 94) respectively. Two percent of the respondents (n = 4) had primary education. On marital status of respondents, 95% (n = 190) were single while 5% (n = 10) were married.

Occupational distribution reveals that students and traders were the majority (40% or n = 80 and 42% or n = 84 respectively). However, 13% of the respondents (n=26) were civil servants while 5% (n=10) were apprentices.

Research Question One

How often do youths in Anambra State listen to radio Programme?



Table 2: Respondents' demographic characteristics

Response/Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15-20	42	21
21-25	100	50
26-30	40	20
31 years and above	18	9
Total	200	100
Educational level		
Primary education	4	2
Secondary education	102	51
Tertiary education	94	47
Total	200	100
Marital Status		
Single	190	95
Married	10	5
Total	200	100
Occupation		
Students	80	40
Traders	84	42
Civil servants	26	13
Apprentice	10	5
Total	200	100

Table 3: Information on how often the respondents listen to radio programme

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	142	71
Weekly	38	19
Rarely	16	8
Don't know	4	2
Total	200	100

Table 3 shows how often the respondents listen to radio programme. One hundred and forty-two respondents (71%) listened to radio programmes on daily basis, 38 respondents (19%) listened to radio on weekly basis while 16



respondents (8%) did so once in a while (rarely). However, four respondents (or 2%) returned the "Don't know" verdict. The import of data on table three is that majority of the respondents listen to radio programmes regularly.

Research Question Two: What are the types of radio programmes that interest youths in Anambra State?

Table 4: Type of radio programmes that interest respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Educational programme	20	10
Music/entertainment programme	60	30
News/current affairs programme	50	25
Religious programme	10	5
Sports programme	60	30
Total	200	100

Table 4 reveals the type of programmes that interests youths in Anambra State. Music/entertainment programme and sports programme were the most favourite among the youths studied (30% or n = 60 for each of the items). News and current affairs programme followed with 25% (n = 50). Educational and religious programmes got 10% (n = 20) and 5% (n = 10)

respectively. The implication of data on table four is that respondents' interest in radio programmes falls heavily on music/entertainment programme, and sports programme (in the main) as well as news and current affairs programme.

Research Question Three: What gratifications do respondents derive from listening to radio programmes?

Table 5: Gratifications respondents derive from listening to radio programmes.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Educational gratification	18	9
Entertainment gratification	60	30
News/current affairs gratification	52	26
Religious gratification	12	6
Sports issues gratification	58	29
Total	200	100



Table 5 captures the gratifications that respondents derive by listening to radio programmes. Eighteen respondents (9%) listened to radio for educational gratification, 60 of the respondents (30%) hooked on to the radio for entertainment gratification while 52 of them (26%) tuned on to the radio to gratify news and current issues in the society. Other gratifications which respondents derive from radio programmes were religious gratification (12 respondents or 6%) and sports issues (58 respondents or 29%). Data on Table 5 shows that the major reasons why respondents listen to radio programmes are for entertainment, sports and news/current affairs.

Discussion

Findings of the study show that most of the respondents were aged 15-30 years (15-20 years 42 or 21%, 21-25 years 100 or 50% and 26-30 years 40 or 20%); had mainly secondary and tertiary education (51% or $n = 102$ and 47% or $n = 94$ respectively); were mostly single (95% or $n = 190$); and were mainly students, traders and civil servants (40%, $n = 80$; 42%, $n = 84$; and 13%, $n = 26$, respectively).

Findings of the study also reveal that very many respondents listened to radio programmes and they did so regularly (often). This finding is in line with the researchers' expectation as radio is not only cheap and affordable but also utilises battery. Also, the miniaturisation of radio makes it possible for small transistor radio sets to be available. Furthermore, accessing radio programmes has been made easy by the availability of handsets, (cell phones/smart phones) with in-built radio

transmission technology. These are in addition to the fact that radio is portable and can be moved to anywhere the listener so chooses while listening to radio programme(s). That so many people listen to radio also means that the medium could be utilised for development purposes (Edegoh, Asemah and Nwammuo, 2013; Asemah, Anum and Edegoh 2013).

Findings of the study further show that the type of radio programmes that were the favourite among youths in Anambra State include music/entertainment programme and sports programme (in the main) as well as news/current affairs programme. This finding is contrary to the expectation of the researchers who thought that educational programme should have been of high interest to youths. The finding points to the fact that majority of youths use radio as a medium of entertainment. Many youths listen to sports news through radio particularly Minaj Radio sports news (generally) and football news (in particular). Radio stations present news bulletin and current affairs programme on regular basis and this makes listeners to hook on to radio for the most current information in their chosen fields of endeavour.

Finding of the study reveals that radio listeners have a number of needs they gratify by listening to radio programmes. The most important of these needs include entertainment, sports and news/current affairs. The entertainment needs of youths are adequately taken care of by the audio medium of radio because of its characteristic feature which necessarily includes portability and affordability. Also, youths often resort to radio for up



to date information in sports world particularly news about money-spinning European club football. Other sports news which youths utilise the radio to gratify include results and fixtures of our local league matches, results of the on-going world cup qualifier in different continents of the world, especially in the African continent, performance of Nigerian football stars in Europe, etc. Also, youths use radio to gratify needs relating to news and current affairs. This is because radio stations present breaking news on various issues in their regular news bulletin and other current affairs programmes.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study was conducted to evaluate the uses and gratifications of radio programmes as they affect youths in Anambra State. The rationale behind the study was to find out the type of radio programme that interests youths most. Findings of the study indicated, among others, that the programmes that interest youths in Anambra state include music/entertainment programme and sports programme (in the main) as well as news/current affairs programme. Based on the findings of the study, we conclude that youths in Anambra State are mainly interested in radio programmes bordering on music/entertainment, sports, news/current affairs, education and religion.

Based on the findings and the inevitable conclusion, we recommended the utilisation of radio for dissemination of information intended for youths in Anambra State.

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