

PROLIFERATION OF MEDIA HOUSES AND THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL CONTENTS AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the proliferation of media houses and the promotion of local contents towards ethical moral reorientation and employment generation in Akwalbom State, Nigeria. The study is a survey that employed 200 respondents, drawing sample from radio listeners residing in Uyo metropolis and the radio practitioners. Six private radio stations located in Uyo, Abak and Uruan namely, Comfort FM, Inspiration FM, Atlantic FM, Tan-Sio FM, Planet FM and Redemption FM, respectively, were selected for the study. The instrument of interview schedule was used in data collection on a sample of 132 listeners (80 men, 52 women) and 68 practitioners in media houses. Secondary data source was obtained through library, journals, textbooks, articles and Internet. The data collected were presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages. Two theoretical frameworks; i.e. the Social and Economic Development Theory and Cultural Capital Theory were adopted for the study. It was observed that media houses (radio and television) in Akwalbom State, promotes local contents such as languages, culture and values, generates employment opportunities to young school leavers, educates and sensitize the audience. It was recommended that media practitioners should ensure continuous training of presenters in ethics for proper assimilation of information to encourage wider patronage of programmes by the listeners in the State. Furthermore, the proliferation of media houses and the promotion of local content, it is believed will create more employment opportunities for media practitioners in the industry if encourage.

Keywords: Local Contents, Employment generation, Proliferation, Media Industry/Houses.

Background to the Study

The proliferation of media houses and the promotion of local content is a significant driver of ethical behaviour and employment generation by the media industry. By promoting local content, media houses advances the pursuit of ethical orientation of citizens, as well as create demand for skilled workers who can create and produce quality content and further impact on the behaviour of community members. This, further create opportunities for jobs, such as journalism, producers, script writers, directors, and other skilled workers in the media industry

(Ahuja 2017). By promoting local content, media houses helps to develop and promote the local economy by creating a market for local products and services and also impacts on the security of the area. However, Udoh and Madueke, (2018), had identified some challenges that need to be addressed. Such problems include lack of funding for local content and of infrastructure for effective running and operation of the media sector. Iwu (2006) opined that proliferation of mass media houses refers to the widespread distribution and accessibility of various forms of

media, such as television, radio, newspapers and the internet. This phenomenon has led to an increase in the dissemination of information and entertainment on a global scale to impacting on the society and culture in significant ways. In Nigeria, the public broadcast media system was originally designed to be in the forefront of promoting ethical human development, democracy, peaceful coexistence, transparency, rule of law and serving as mediators of the public sphere (Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalism 1998). According to Ihechu (2013), broadcasting is primarily a medium for prompt delivery of information through carefully designed and selected programmes covering news, information, and music among others.

However, issues facing broadcasting in Nigeria such as media ownership and control, poor programming, news commercialization and regulatory inconsistency policies have threatened its role as a critical agent of socialization, employment generation and national communication policy which advocates national integration and development within the ambits of fairness and equitability. Thus, this

Statement of the Problem

All over the world, there has been a proliferation of media houses, with no corresponding balance in the promotion of local content, in recent years. In Nigeria, this has paved way to the lack of opportunities for local content creators and working in diverse media outfits. The problem is exacerbated as most media houses are obliged to advertisers and investors who prefer universally appealed mass-produced programmes content. The situation resulted in lack of jobs opportunities for local content creators, as well as lack of accurate representation of local cultures and value reorientations.

According to Dominick (2005), the Nigeria's media system owes their audience the duty of promoting the diverse cultures represented in the country as well as creating

paper reviewed the state of media houses in promoting local contents such as language, culture, values, morals, beliefs and the enhancement of employment generation in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

The present state of indigenous cultures in Akwa Ibom State, is rather worrisome, in spite of proliferation of media houses in Uyo metropolis, which meant to promote these cultures, consistently focused on western media programmes, whose content influences a great deal of indigenous cultural values and local content programmes. However, in as much as proliferation of media houses proven worthwhile by promoting indigenous and local content programmes as well as enhancing employment opportunities, previous studies have not assessed the overall impact in their review, specifically in Akwa Ibom State.

Therefore, it is against this background that an idea is conceived in the study to investigate proliferation of media houses to ascertain the extent to which it significant touch on unemployment situation in Akwa Ibom State.

employment opportunities. Though this, according to Hornby (2000), is a daunting and complex task, but, nevertheless, is rewarding, as media houses have made significant impacts in this regards. Unfortunately, disagreements over the content of media messages certainly exist with an alarming unemployment rate in the country. Driven by accusations of messages especially on violent, sexual, and compulsive behaviours on young people have consistently been linked to media consumption, and thus, raise important questions about the effects of media on culture.

It is in the light of this, that the research investigates the cultural impact of local content programmes and employment generation by media houses on host communities in Uyo Capital City, Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives to the Study

- i. To examine the challenges and opportunities associated with promoting local content.
- ii. To explore the ways in which local contents can be promoted through programmes.
- iii. To find out how proliferation of media houses can generate employment opportunities for content creators.
- iv. To develop policy recommendations for promoting local content and employment generation in the media industry.

Conceptual Review

Local Content

Like radio broadcasters, television channels also advertise and execute local content programmes (Akpan and Effiong, 2021). In some cases, TV channels broadcasters spend, on average, one-and-a-half person a day in a week and one-and-a-half ensuring compliance with the quotas of local programmes; which are always very popular with viewers and listeners. The most watched programmes on all television stations tend to be of local content (Ogundimu, 2008).

However, local programmes are considerably more expensive than international programmes, meaning that the quotas have a direct impact on broadcasters' bottom lines, as well as attracting significant audiences. Local content on television on the other hand, helps to strengthen the domestic television production sector with a considerable investment in the local industry.

Television has become an integral part of Nigerian society, since it was first introduced in 1959 and had, since 1960s played a significant role in shaping Nigerian culture and promoting indigenous languages. Akpan and Effiong (2021) noted further, that television and radio as medium of communication have the power to reach a broad audience to promote cultural values, norms, and practices. In Nigeria, the promotion of indigenous languages and culture on television has been an essential tool for

national unity and cultural preservation. Yusuf (2015) rightly observed that "television has become an essential tool for the promotion of indigenous languages, as it has the potential to influence and shape public perception of language and culture." One way television promotes indigenous language and culture is through the production and broadcast of cultural programmes in local languages. For example, the popular Yoruba language soap opera "Ireti" produced by Wale Adenuga Productions has been on air since 2005 and has gained a vast audience across Nigeria and beyond. The programme is not only entertaining, but also educative as it showcases the Yoruba culture, traditions, and values.

Similarly, the Hausa language programme "DadinKowa" produced by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) has become a favorite among Hausa speakers and has been praised for its ability to promote the Hausa language and culture (Njoku, 2018). Additionally, the popular "EfeMbire" and "Esaiban" has projected the Ibibio and Efik culture on the television and radio stations. In addition to cultural programmes, television and radio have also been used to promote indigenous music, dance, and drama.

For instance, the popular music talent show "Project Fame" produced by Ultima Limited has become a platform for young Nigerian singers to showcase their talents while promoting Nigerian music and culture. Similarly, the dance competition show "Maltina Dance All," produced by Nigerian Breweries Plc, has been praised for its ability to promote Nigerian dance and talent culture (Ogbonna, 2017).

Furthermore, Okoli (2019) stressed that television has also played a significant role in the preservation of indigenous languages. Many Nigerians, particularly the younger generation, are losing touch with their native languages due to the influence of the English language and the western culture, (Ekpo, Nkanta and Effiong, 2023). Television programs in local languages provide an avenue for the preservation of these languages, as well as the promotion of language

diversity (Ekpo, Enang and Effiong, 2023). As stated by Yusuf (2015), “programmes on indigenous languages on media platforms cannot only help preserve them, but promote their use, foster national unity, peace and development”.

Media Industry and Employment Generation in Nigeria

Entertainment and media industry in Nigeria is a major player in the country’s economy. As a country, with a staggering population of over 220 million people, according to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (2024), Nigeria, can boast of a large market for entertainment industry, ranging from music, film, television, radio, publishing, online internet media etc, has been recognized as the hub of entertainment and media in Africa due to the abundant talent and creativity present in the country (Akinfeleye 2005; Udoh, 2021). The entertainment industry, according to Premium Times Nigeria, (2022), has contributed immensely to the growth of the economy, with the movie industry alone generating over \$600 million annually, and at the same time, creating employment for more than one million people. The media industry has not only plays crucial role in shaping public opinion and facilitating information dissemination, it also provides employment opportunities for millions of people, generates revenue to the government, and to some extent, as observed by Effiong, Udoyen and Udoh, (2021) promotes the country’s culture and tourism. In recent years, the industry has faced some challenges, including piracy and copyright infringement. However, though efforts have been made to tackle these issues, challenges within the industry still remains especially in the area of professionalism (Forman 2010).

However, the entertainment and media industry in Nigeria is a vital sector of the economy, with enormous potential for growth and development (Udoka, Basse and Okorie, 2019). As the country continues to make strides in technology and infrastructure, the industry is

poised for even greater success in the future. The entertainment industry in Nigeria witnessed major growth in the 1980s and 1990s which saw the rise of successful musicians such as King Sunny Ade, Ebenezer Obey, Onyeka Onwenu, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Christiana Essien Igbokwe and various others. The Nigerian movie industry also known as “Nollywood,” also started to gain prominence in the 1990s, with the release of the movie “*Living in Bondage*,” of which the success marked a turning point in the Nigerian movie industry, as it demonstrated the potential of a new wave of moviemakers who could create thought-provoking and entertaining stories with limited resources (Falarin 2008).

Moreso, Nigerian music industry has experienced significant growth in recent years. With the rise of *Afrobeats* and *Afropop* genres, country’s music industry is one of the most creative and diverse in Africa, with artists producing music in various languages, including English, Yoruba, Igbo, and *Pidgin English* with music as an essential part of culture, the industry playing vital role in exporting Nigerian music to the international market. Some successful music companies include Mavin Records, Davido Music Worldwide, and Chocolate City. Okanna (2003), opined that the numerous radio stations in the country (federal, state and private stations) helps to transmit local contents. For instance, these radio stations in Akwalbom State: ‘*Tangsi*’, ‘*Inspiration*’, *Comfort*, *Planet*, *Redemption*, *Excel* are cases in point. These stations established “*phone-in-programmes*” which in most cases use local dialects in transmission and has significantly boast the employment generation effort in the country. In furtherance, this creates a viable and sustainable environment for skills development amongst the teeming youths in our contemporary society, (Effiong, Ekanem and Ottong, 2023).

Media Industry and the impacts of Technology in Nigeria

The emergence of new technology, according to Ajah and Okorie (2016), has had a significant impact on the Nigerian entertainment and media industry, as it has in many parts of the world. With the advent of the internet and the proliferation of mobile devices, the industry has had to adapt and evolve to keep pace with changing consumer habits. The music industry, for instance, has seen a shift from physical CDs to digital streaming, which has allowed artists to distribute their music globally and reach a wider audience. Similarly, *Nollywood* has witnessed tremendous growth due to the introduction of online streaming services, which have made it easier for consumers to access content. In addition, social media platforms such as 'instagram', 'Facebook', 'tiktok' etc, have provided a fertile ground for the promotion of entertainment across the world.

In the words of Paschal and Okugo (2013), many Nigerian artists, producers and actors have leveraged social media to grow their fans base and showcase their talents. In essence, the Nigerian entertainment and media industry has come a long way since the 1960s and has emerged across the country. With its impressive growth over the years and the impact of technology, as rightly noted by Dominick, (2005), the industry has positioned itself as a leading player in the global entertainment and media scene. As technology continues to evolve, it's clear that the industry will have to keep pace to ensuring its continued growth and success.

Media Industry, Local Content Promotion and Job Creation

In line with section 8 subsection 1 of the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) Act No. 23 of 2022, which empowered the Council to ensure the preservation of Nigerian local content and use of indigenous skills as an important element in advertising, advertisement and marketing communication, the Federal Government says had promised to enforce 70% local content in radio and television programmes in Nigeria. ARCON commenced implementation of

the policy to ensure a minimum of 75 percent cumulative local content of all advertising, advertisement and marketing communication materials with effect from January 1, 2023. The NBC Act and the BC regulate the broadcasting of programmes and the minimum local and foreign programme content.

Under the BC, foreign content is permissible provided it conveys intrinsic relevance to the education, information and entertainment of the Nigerian citizenry. The BC stipulates that a broadcaster shall ensure that the selection of foreign programmes reflects the development needs of the Nigerian nation and ensure respect for the Nigerian cultural sensibilities.

In addition, with the exception of special religious and sports programmes or events of national importance, Nigerian broadcasters shall not relay foreign broadcasts live on terrestrial platforms. In terms of characterizing how a broadcasting programme may qualify as local content, the Addendum to the 6th Edition of the BC (the Addendum) issued by the NBC in 2020 provides that:

- i. the producer of the programme must be Nigerian, residing in Nigeria;
- ii. the directors of the programme are Nigerian; or
- iii. the authors of the programme are Nigerian.

The broadcaster is required by the BC to ensure that all productions targeted at the Nigerian market must meet a minimum of 60 per cent local content requirement. The local content requirement applies to all categories of programming including but not limited to fiction, series, serials, films, documentaries, arts and educational programmes, news, sports events, games, advertising, teleshopping or teletext services.

Lastly, a broadcaster is required by the local content rules to source its local content from independent producers where it is not a direct production of the broadcaster. Failure to comply with the local content rules is a *Class B* breach under the BC and will attract sanctions. With evolving technological trends and changes in consumer behaviour, the publishing and media

industry stands at a pivotal juncture and, full of opportunities to expand the employment market. Leaders from major media houses are gearing up to navigate these changes, focusing on harnessing these technological advancements to create more engaging, relevant, and personalized content for their audiences. The industry is also witnessing a growing demand for audio books and *e-books*, indicating a shift towards more accessible and

Media Industries and Local Content Promotion Strategies in Nigeria

To overcome these challenges and increase the industry's contribution to the country's GDP, the strategic actions of the Federal government can take the following ways:

a. Investment in Arts and Entertainment:

The Federal government should invest in infrastructure and training to encourage the expansion of the entertainment industry. This includes building and maintaining cutting-edge studios and production facilities, as well as executing training programmes aimed at improving the skills and knowledge of experts in the field. According to (Willie 2020), skill acquisition is a panacea to employment generation.

b. Access to Funding:

Allow for easier access to funding for both new and existing participant players in the entertainment industry. This can be achieved through government grants, partnerships with financial institutions, and the creation of investment incentives.

c. Awareness and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Protection:

Nigerians intending to navigate the entertainment industry must be educated on intellectual property to maximize their opportunities and avoid copyright infringement and unauthorized use of their content. The government must strengthen intellectual property regulations to prevent copyright infringements and piracy. A safe intellectual

property environment will encourage both local and foreign investment while also protecting the rights of content creators.

diverse formats of content delivery. These trends present a unique opportunity for the industry to innovate, expand its reach, and enhance its revenue streams in the digital era. According to (Willie, Kingdom and Udom, 2023) good governance and effective government policy in the media industry will enhance job creation in the sector.

property environment will encourage both local and foreign investment while also protecting the rights of content creators.

d. Establish a collaborative Industry Task Force:

Establishing an industrial task force comprising industrial experts, government representatives, and stakeholders are key strategies in local content promotion (Aniekan and Udom (2023); Aniekan and Udom (2024). This strategy will evaluate the current state of the sector and develop a strategic plan, working together to define and implement industry standards, guidelines, and best practices, Abaikpa, Thomas, Udoh and Udom (2023). This coordinated effort will strive to establish an organized and standard framework for operations as well as ensuring a comprehensive approach to industry development. The Nigerian government supports the entertainment industry through tax incentives and infrastructure development Abaikpa, Thomas, Udoh and Udom (2023). Incentives the tax will encourage investment in local content, while infrastructure development attracts international production companies.

With a growing population and a huge demand for entertainment and media content, there is huge potential for growth in this market. Companies that invest in talent development and infrastructure will be well positioned to take advantage of this growth Abaikpa, Thomas and Daniel (2002). Furthermore, with government support, the industry is set to continue to grow and create new opportunities for talent and

audiences alike, Abaikpa, Thomas and Daniel (2002); Willie, Mboho and Udom (2023).

Theoretical Framework

Social and Economic Development Theory (SED):

Social and Economic Development Theory (SED): is a theoretical framework developed by sociologists and economists in the 1970s and 1980s, including theorists, such as AmartyaSen, Oscar Lewis, and Albert Hirschman to appraise the social and economic situation considered as local content. The framework was shaped by critiques of the Modernization and Dependency Theories which focuses on the interdependencies between social and economic development. This theory posits that development in any society requires the integration of social and economic factors, which are interdependent. According to the theory, media houses that promote local content can contribute to economic growth and job creation by creating a demand for locally produced goods and services, and by fostering social cohesion at the community level to engage

Methodology

This study adopted a survey design with a total of two hundred (200) respondents purposively selected across six (6) private radio stations for study. Other techniques adopted include snowball

the local people. This theoretical framework can help explain the potential impact of media proliferation on local content promotion and employment generation.

Cultural Capital Theory:

Cultural Capital Theory: This theory was developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in the 1960s. The theory suggests that cultural identity and expression are key factors in social and economic development. According to Effiong (2019), Nigeria is multi-tribal in nature, with each tribe rooted in peculiar cultural norms and expectations of the people. To this end, media houses that promote local content can create a sense of cultural pride, foster social cohesion, and promote the development of cultural industries. This theory suggests that media proliferation can create a platform for local artists, writers, and musicians to showcase their talents, fostering the growth of local industries and creating employment opportunities and the development of the area.

and simple random sampling techniques. Primary data were obtained through interviews and analyses using simple percentages while secondary data were generated from extent literature

ANALYSISRESPONDENTS: LOCAL CONTENT AND ETHICAL REORIENTATION

A	Listeners	138	Yes	No	Undecided	PD	Remark
	Male	80	√	X	Nil		All except two female respondents agreed to the fact that the promotion of local content will enhance ethical reorientation among members of the society. That is, the use of local languages will promote consciousness, cohesiveness and instill moral discipline to the society.
	Female	52	48	4	Nil		
B	Practitioner	68					
	Male	33	√	Nil	Nil		
	Female	35	√	Nil	Nil		
	Total	200				98%	

Source: Researches field work 2024

PD = Percentage Difference

RESPONDENTS: PROLIFERATION OF MEDIA HOUSES AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION

A	Listeners	132	Yes	No	Undecided	PD	Remark
	Male	80	√	X	Nil		All but 5 of the respondents agreed to the fact that establishment of media houses will help create employment to young school in the area. 95 respondents observed that unemployment has been reduced with more media houses in the area.
	Female	52	47	x	5		
B	Practitioner	68					
	Male	33	√				
	Female	35	√				
	Total	200				97.5%	

Source: Researches Field Work 2024

PD = Percentage Difference

Respondents: Proliferation of Media Houses and Employment Generation.

Analysis of findings

From the analysis of data, it was observed that media houses i.e, radio and television can help to enhance multiculturalism by exposing viewers/listeners to diverse cultures and languages. This it is believed will help to foster respect, understanding, and appreciation for different cultures, which can further lead to a more harmonious and inclusive society. The findings further reveals media houses can also be an effective educational tool, especially for children who may not have had access to formal education and teaching on indigenous language in schools. This aligns with a similar research, conducted by Akpan and Effiong (2021), which shown that broadcasting educational programmes in indigenous languages, help to promote and socialize citizen with proper norms literacy and learning their communities. Media houses can also contribute to the economic development of these communities values. For example, by promoting traditional handicrafts, tourism and other economic opportunities as well as engaging people informal employment. Media houses also play a significant role in enhancing national economy and identity by showcasing the rich cultural heritage of a country, as highlighted in a similar research, such as Effiong, Udoyen and Udoh (2021). This can help to strengthen a

sense of national pride and identity, especially in countries with diverse populations and culture like Nigeria.

Conclusions

Indigenous languages and cultures are often under threat due to various factors, such as urbanization, globalization and assimilation. Media houses can be an effective tool to preserve and promote these languages and cultures (local content) by providing a platform for their expression and visibility with instant family values. The industry’s reached, as well as enhances its revenue streams in the digital economy and employment opportunities to teeming youths in Akwalbom State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

Having discovered that the promotion of local content, media houses have had positive social and cultural impact on individuals and societies, at large. The study therefore recommended that; media practitioners should ensure that continuous training of radio and television presenters in ethics should be ensured and local contents be promoted for proper assimilation of information to encourage wider patronage of programmes by the listeners in the State. By promoting local content, media houses can help to preserve and promote local cultures and

traditions as well set moral standard and create employment opportunities which can strengthen social cohesion and identity.

Additionally, by giving a platform for local voices and perspectives, media houses can help to create a more informed and empowered citizenry. However, it is important to ensure that the promotion of local content does not come at the expense of diversity and representation inclusive of all voices and perspectives, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background. Radio has really served as one of the communication channels in Nigeria that has encouraged target communities to participate in programme activities and replicate skills acquired.

Private Radio should be authorized to play its role well by encouraging its listening communities in Akwalbom State to keep faith and support to the stations. The Radio has had social, economic, political and cultural impact in the State, and have largely been used as a tool for integrated rural development as well as operated within its mandate as a community radio with a social responsibility of providing community news bulletins, current affairs, sporting, culture and health programmes, educating and sensitize the public on sensitive programmes.

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