

RADIO LISTENING PREFERENCES OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND EXTENSION UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the listening preferences of agricultural undergraduates to radio programmes in Rivers State. Purposive and multi-stage random sampling techniques were used to select a total of 48 agricultural undergraduates in the University of Port Harcourt. Twelve radio stations operating in the state were involved in the study. Data were collected with structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency count and percentage. Results from the study show that majority (93.7%) of the respondents listened to radio programmes, 79.1% listen to favourite radio programmes, while 85.4% listened to radio through mobile phones. About seventy nine percent of the respondents listened daily to radio programmes. Sixty nine percent of the respondents conveniently listened to radio at their houses. Major factors that influenced choice of favourite radio programme listening by respondents were: Programme being very informative and entertaining ($\bar{x}=3.29$), provisions made for questioning, interactions and answers ($\bar{x}=3.16$), time of the programme being convenient ($\bar{x}=3.10$), duration of the programme being proper ($\bar{x}=3.01$). The major constraints in listening to Radio Programmes were: poor electricity supply to power radio set ($\bar{x}=2.84$), tussle for audience by radio communication media ($\bar{x}=2.77$), etc. The study recommends that radio stations should make power supply steady to enable for effective dissemination of agricultural information in the study area.

Keywords: Radio, listening, preferences, agricultural, undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

The early men relied on echo, sounds, sighs, beating of the gong, whistling, markings on the bark of trees, folk tales, and songs as

means of informing members of meetings and resolutions (Olaitain and Agusiobo, 1981). As the world advanced in science and technology, there seemed to be a

growing need to articulate a convenient means of information dissemination that will ensure uniformity and promptness in information dispersal. This burden could have led to the discovery and manufacture of the Radio. The quest for public awareness and enlightenment plunge, stimulated government, corporate organizations and even individuals to establish radio stations across the country; and help in sponsoring radio programmes that would contain desired information to be extended (Al-hassan, Andani and Abdul-Malik, 2011). This was because where there is only one national radio station, it might be difficult to design programmes that meet particular local or listeners' need. Moreover, it may not be possible to cater for the variations in agricultural practices and recommendations in different areas. Listeners would be left with little or no choice to make as to which radio programme to listen to, why and when to listen to such radio programmes. However, the growth of regional and local radio stations, and corresponding varied radio programmes such as agriculture, sports, climate and weather, news, music, religion, political, educational, in recent years does make it seem possible for locally relevant information to be broadcast, thus prompting the diverse listening preferences of radio programmes (Riff, Lacy and Fico, 2014). For example, a music fanatic would pay deaf ears to sports programmes on radio and

prefer to listen to his favourite music programme even if it means tuning to another radio station and at worst, tune off the gadget at the expiration of preferred programme. The same goes for rural farmers and students on their preferred radio programmes.

Radio programmes are very effective in generating interest and providing needed information for agricultural production (FAO, 2004). In radio programming, there are various programmes being aired, based on educational, music, current affairs, agriculture, sports, climate and weather, news, religion, political etc. The audience is always the target, and their attention paramount for the existence of the radio station, thus prompting the diverse listening preferences of radio programmes (Alabi, 2014). Ability to air programmes on radio requires adequate planning and evaluation. It also requires knowing the audience to which such broadcast will be made. The audience is an element of broadcasting therefore they must be considered in the planning of a programme. Radio programmes listening preferences in the context of this work refers to the differing choices among individuals to a set of activities, action and information broadcast on radio. These choices are predetermined by factors synonymous with the individual. It is further strengthened by variation in the socio-economic status of the individual.

Thus, individuals could have similar preferences of listening to a radio programme. It is also possible that those choices are predetermined by different factors creditable to each individual. No wonder it was easy for most northern hackers to return to their states to cast their votes during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. This was possible after a clarion call through radio broadcast.

There are numerous radio stations operating in Rivers State of Nigeria, and each broadcast several radio programmes for listening pleasure. These programmes are categorized and broadcast at certain times of the day or on certain days of the week, or for peculiar period of time and for the dissemination of specific information to a target audience. However, only few studies have evaluated radio listening preferences of agricultural undergraduates, and the problems affecting these students' listening preferences. Agricultural information broadcast on radio should be to increase agricultural awareness and improve agricultural output. This goal is yet to be fully achieved as agricultural productivity is still at subsistence level; struggling to match the ever-growing population.

In the face of challenging environmental and economic realities, dissemination of agricultural policies and programmes constitutes efforts to improve agricultural

and food production. Thus, the study sought to:

1. assess the listening preferences of students to radio programmes;
2. ascertain the most preferred radio station for listening by the undergraduates;
3. identify the most preferred radio programme for listening by the undergraduates;
4. ascertain the factors that determine students' preference of a particular radio programme; and
5. assess the constraints in listening to radio programmes by the undergraduates.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), Rivers state, Nigeria. UNIPORT is located at Choba in Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State (Fig.1&Fig.2). Rivers State has a landmass of about 11,077km² (NPC, 2006) and is located on latitude 5° 'N and longitude 7° 'E of the Greenwich Meridian (Emodi, Agwu and Momodu, 2018). All students of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Port Harcourt constituted the population for the study. Purposive and multi stage simple random sampling techniques were used in the selection of sample for the study. First, one Department (Agricultural Economics and Extension (AEE)) was selected from five Departments (Agricultural Economics

and Extension (AEE), Forestry and Wildlife Management (FWL), Crop and Soil Science (CSS), Animal Science (ANS) and Fisheries (FSH)) in the Faculty of Agriculture. Department of AEE has the highest number of students in the Faculty of Agriculture. In the second stage, all 48 registered five hundred Level (500 Level) students of Department of AEE were selected for the study. This is to allow for fair representation, since the students are few in number. The twelve radio stations operating in the State (Table 1) were involved in the study. A total of 48 copies of structured questionnaire were distributed, but only 45 copies were

retrieved and used for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean values were used for the analysis. To ascertain the factors that determine students' preference of a particular radio programme, a four-point rating scale as Very Serious Factors=4, Serious Factors =3, Less Serious Factors =2 and No Factors =1. The cut off-point was 2.50. To assess the constraints in listening to radio programmes by the undergraduates, a four-point rating scale as Very Serious Constraints=4, Serious Constraints=3, Less Serious Constraints=2 and No Constraints=1 was used. The cut off-point was 2.50.

Table 1: Twelve Radio Stations in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

| Radio station (FM*) | Radio Frequency (MHz) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cool FM | 95.9 |
| Garden City FM | 89.9 |
| Family Love FM | 97.7 |
| Nigeria Info FM | 92.3 |
| Radio PH | 91.7 |
| Radio Rivers FM | 99.1 |
| Raypower FM | 106.5 |
| Rhythm FM | 93.7 |
| Treasure FM | 98.5 |
| Today FM | 95.1 |
| Wazobia FM | 94.1 |
| Unique Uniport FM | 88.5 |

**FM = Frequency Modulation; ** MHz = Mega Hertz; ⁺PH = Port Harcourt*

Source: Field survey (2015)

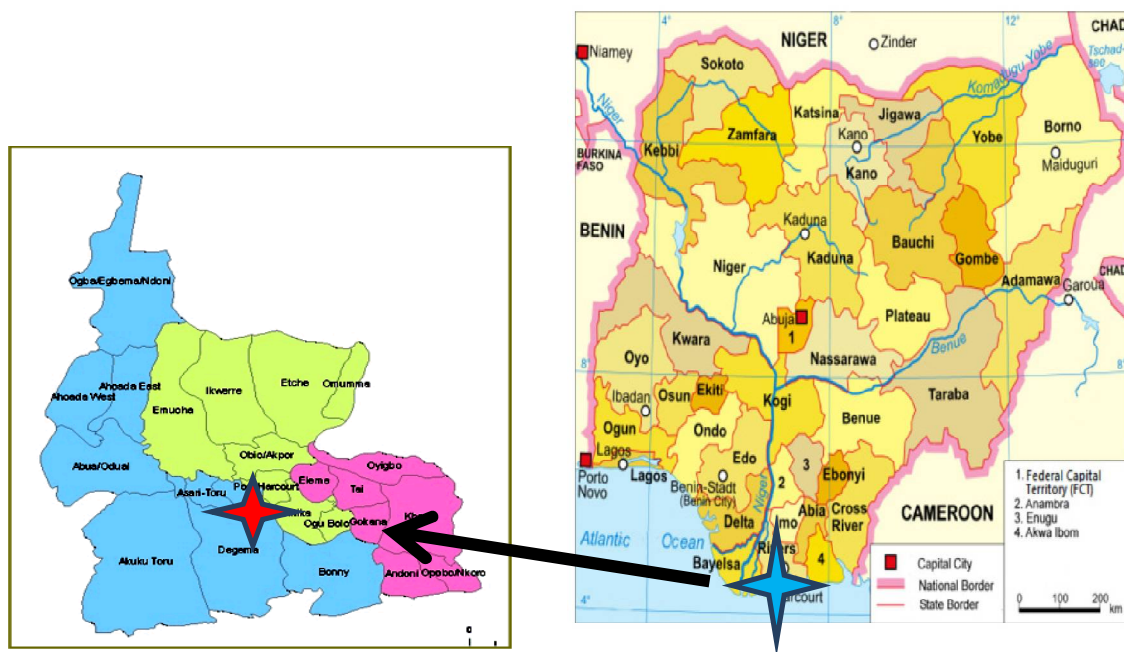


Fig1: Map of Rivers State showing the study area. Fig 2: Map of Nigeria

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Convenience in listening to radio

Access and listenership to Radio

Table 2 shows that greater proportion (87.5%) of the respondents had access to radio, (83.3%) of the students own a radio set. The result also shows that greater proportion (93.7%) of the students listened to radio programmes, (79.1%) of them listened to favourite radio programmes. This implies that the programmes might be of common interest and not basically related to the students' field of study. According to Grise (1974), radio has been used for informative purposes and it is used use in developing countries for solving educational problems which is not strange.

Source of listening to Radio programme

Data in Table 2 show that majority (85.4%) of the respondents listened to radio through mobile phones, 18.7% of them listened to radio programmes through transistor radio set, while only 10.4% listened to radio through media (CD) players. Results also show that majority (79.2%) of the students listened daily to radio programmes. This cannot be unconnected with the fact that most students have mobile smart phone, which has become part of their dress code.

Time preferred for listening to radio programmes

The results in Table 2 indicates that 39.6% of the respondents listened to programmes in the nights, 31.2% of the students listen to radio in the mornings, while only 8.3% of them listened to radio programmes in the afternoon. The respondents listened to radio

during their convenient time which are morning and night periods when they are likely relaxing at home.

Best place of listening to radio

Majority (68.8%) of the students conveniently listened to radio at their house,

25.0% of the undergraduates preferred listening to radio anywhere convenient while 10.4% and 6.3% preferred listening to radio in their office/work place and school, respectively.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of students based on convenience in listening to radio

| Convenience in listening to radio | Frequency (n = 45) | | Percentage (%) | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Access and Listenership to Radio | | | | |
| Access to radio | 42 | 6 | 87.5 | 12.5 |
| Own a radio set | 40 | 8 | 83.3 | 16.7 |
| Preferred listening to some radio stations | | | | |
| Listen to radio programme | 45 | 3 | 93.7 | 6.3 |
| Listen to Favourite radio programmes | 38 | 10 | 79.1 | 20.8 |
| Source of Listening to Radio | | | | |
| Transistor radio | 9 | 39 | 18.7 | 81.3 |
| Mobile phones | 41 | 7 | 85.4 | 14.6 |
| Media player | 5 | 43 | 10.4 | 89.6 |
| Frequency of listening to radio programmes | | | | |
| Daily | 38 | 10 | 79.2 | 20.8 |
| Once a week | 17 | 31 | 14.5 | 64.5 |
| Once in two weeks | 10 | 38 | 30.8 | 79.2 |
| Over a month | 6 | 42 | 12.5 | 87.5 |
| Time of the day preferred for listening to radio programmes | | | | |
| Morning | 15 | 38 | 31.2 | 79.1 |
| Afternoon | 4 | 44 | 8.3 | 91.7 |
| Evening | 13 | 35 | 27.0 | 72.9 |
| Night | 19 | 29 | 39.6 | 60.4 |
| Best place of listening to radio | | | | |
| House | 33 | 15 | 68.8 | 31.2 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|----|----|------|------|
| School | 3 | 45 | 6.3 | 93.7 |
| Office /work place | 5 | 43 | 10.4 | 89.6 |
| Anywhere convenient | 12 | 36 | 25.0 | 75.0 |

Source: Field survey (2015)

Listening Preferences to Radio Stations by students

Data in Table 3 show that about 62.5% of the students listened to Wazobia FM (94.1MHz), 41.7% of them listened to Cool FM, 33.3% listened to Nigeria Info FM, 22.9% listened to Love FM, while (20.8%) of the students, least preferred radio station were Radio PH (88.5MHz) and Today FM (95.1MHz), respectively. Majority of the respondents (62.5%) preferred Wazobia FM. This cannot be unconnected with vernacular and pidgin English of the radio station in the study area. Adebayo and Yaya, (2013) mentioned that since WAZOBIA was establishment in 2012, its listeners are addicted to its programmes to the daily tuning of the station. It seems WAZOBIA

FM tune of broadcasting is more appealing to the student than programmes on their field of study agriculture. This implies that there is need to evaluate the students' English language proficiency. Nigeria Info FM (92.3MHz) was among the preferred stations by the students. The radio station features on local and international news, such as talk shows, sports and educational quiz (Radio Nigeria Online, 2017). The study further revealed that the students though listened to Unique FM (82.5MHz) transmitted by the University of Port Harcourt, but never preferred it. This implies that the students did not prefer Unique FM (82.5MHz) because they needed listening to other stations without academics undertone.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of students based on their Listening Preferences to Radio Station

| Radio Station | Radio Freq. (MHz) | Frequency (n=45) | Percentages (%) |
|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Love FM | 97.7 | 11 | 22.9 |
| WazobiaFM | 94.1 | 30 | 62.5 |
| Treasure FM | 98.5 | 10 | 20.8 |
| Radio Rivers FM | 99.1 | 2 | 4.2 |
| Radio Ph | 88.5 | 1 | 2.1 |
| Nigeria Info FM | 92.3 | 16 | 33.3 |
| Cool FM | 95.9 | 20 | 41.7 |
| RaypowerFM | 106.5 | 8 | 16.7 |
| Today FM | 95.1 | 1 | 20.8 |
| Rhythm FM | 93.7 | 6 | 12.5 |
| Unique FM | 82.5 | 2 | 4.2 |

Source: Field Survey (2015).

* Multiple responses

Listening Preferences of Agricultural Economics and Extension Undergraduates to Radio Programmes

The results in Table 4 indicate that 31.2% of the students had listening preference to political radio programmes. This implies that students are interested in political issues around them. About 16.7% of the students preferred listening to academic programmes, 12.5% preferred listening to weather and environmental reports, while 10.4% of them preferred listening to sports programmes. The findings show that political programmes were the most preferred by the students. The least

preferred (4.1%, 2.08% and 2.0%) were: drama & talk shows, Sex & Dating, and music & entertainment programmes, respectively.

Table 4 also shows that about 41.7% of the students spent 20-30 minutes time listening to their favourite radio programme, 12.5% of them spent 30-45 mins and 45 mins-60 minutes, while 16.7% of the students supported 60 minutes and above time listening to preferred radio programme and the least 2.1% of the respondents supported 5-10 minutes time listening to their favourite programme.

Table 4: Preferences of Agricultural Economics and Extension undergraduates to radio programmes in Rivers State

| Variables | Frequency(n = 45) | Percentage(%) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| RadioProgramme | | |
| Sports | 5 | 10.4 |
| Politics | 15 | 31.2 |
| Agriculture | 5 | 10.4 |
| Sex and Dating | 1 | 2.0 |
| Music and Entertainment | 1 | 2.0 |
| Weather and Environmental Reports | 6 | 12.5 |
| Academics and Socials | 8 | 16.7 |
| Religious Programmes | 4 | 8.3 |
| Business Programmes | 1 | 2.0 |
| Drama and Talk Shows | 2 | 4.1 |
| Duration of listening Time | | |
| 5-10mins | 1 | 2.0 |
| 10-15mins | 5 | 10.4 |
| 15-20mins | 4 | 8.3 |
| 20-30mins | 20 | 41.7 |
| 30-45mins | 6 | 12.5 |
| 45-60mins | 6 | 12.5 |
| 60mins and above | 6 | 12.5 |

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Perceived factors that Influence students choice of listening to favourite radio programme

Entries in Table 5 show that seven out of the fifteen items influenced respondents' choice of listening to favourite radio programmes. They include: convenience in time of the programme(\bar{x} =3.10), duration of the

programme(\bar{x} =3.01),programmebeing related to students' field of study and passion(\bar{x} =2.62),Program being very informative and entertaining (\bar{x} =3.29),programme being topical and discusses current societal issues (\bar{x} =3.08), provisions are made in the programme for questioning, interactions and answers (\bar{x}

=3.16), Programme impact almost every aspect of human life (\bar{x} =2.69). The findings also show that the following had less influence on choice of listening to radio programme. They were: Programme in gender-related/sensitive (\bar{x} =2.07), programme broadcast on less busy days (\bar{x} =2.28), Invited guests speakers attract

interest of the audience to the programme(\bar{x} =2.50), awareness of radioprogramme is through family members and friends (\bar{x} =2.24), Choice of favourite radio programme due to field of study(\bar{x} =2.26), while least factor in choice of favourite radio programme was being a friend to programme presenter (\bar{x} =1.54).

Table 5: Mean distribution of factors that influence students' choice of listening to favourite radio programme

| Factors | Mean (\bar{x}) |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Time of the programme is convenient | 3.10 |
| Duration of the programme being proper | 3.01 |
| Programmerelated to field of study and passion | 2.62 |
| Gender-related/sensitiveProgramme | 2.07 |
| Programmesrelatedto age range/group | 1.88 |
| Programmebroadcast on less busy days | 2.28 |
| Very informative/entertaining programme | 3.29 |
| Programmebeing topical/ discusses current societal issues | 3.08 |
| Programme on marital issues | 1.73 |
| Being Friends to Programme presenter | 1.54 |
| Guests speakers attract audience | 2.50 |
| Provisions made for questioning, interactions and answers | 3.16 |
| Interested through family members/friends | 2.24 |
| Choice due to field of study | 2.26 |
| Programme featured on health issues | 2.69 |

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Constraints facedin Listening to Radio Programmes

Table 6 reveals that seven of the nine items were constraints faced by undergraduates in

listening to radio programme. They include: Poor supply of electricity to power radio set (\bar{x} =2.84), Lack of access to and ownership of radio (\bar{x} =2.68), Broadcast of

programmes falls within work hours (\bar{x} =2.56), Broadcast of programmes falls during work days (\bar{x} =2.58), Tussle for audience by radio communication media (\bar{x} =2.77), difficulty in remembering name of transmitting stations and radio frequency

(\bar{x} =2.51). The following were of fewer constraints: difficulty in tuning to a radio station (\bar{x} =2.42), phobia for radio listening (\bar{x} =2.03), and lack of interest in listening to radio (\bar{x} =2.38),

Table 6:Mean distribution of constraints in listening to radio programmes by Undergraduates.

| Factors | Mean (\bar{x}) |
|---|-----------------------|
| Poor electricity supply to power radio set | 2.84 |
| Lack of access to and ownership of radio | 2.68 |
| Lack of interest in listening to radio | 2.38 |
| Difficulty tuning to a radio station | 2.42 |
| Phobia for radio listening | 2.03 |
| Broadcast of programmes falls within work hours | 2.56 |
| Broadcast of programmes falls during work days | 2.58 |
| Tussle for audience by radio communication media | 2.77 |
| Difficulty in remembering name of transmitting stations and radio frequency | 2.51 |

Source: Field Survey (2015)

CONCLUSION

Agricultural undergraduates' students had access to radio, and they listened to their favourite radio programmes. The students listened to radio through their mobile phones at their convenience. Time spent listening to preferred radio programme affected radio listening among the students. Nevertheless, students had listening preference to political radio programmes. Constraints to listening to radio programmes include poor electricity

power supply for radio transmission, broadcast of programmes falling within work hours, and tussle for audience by radio communication media. The study recommends that radio stations should make power supply steady to enable for effective dissemination of agricultural information in the study areas. This will enable the undergraduates put into use the knowledge acquired from the programme to rural dwellers in their field of study.

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