

# Private Radio Stations Fare Better: Audience Perception of Adherence to Social Responsibilities by Public and Private Radio Stations in Oyo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Media Ownership factor in Nigeria, as the case in many countries, plays a significant role in determining the extent to which the audience perceive media organizations as being socially responsible especially as they service the democratic system. Existing studies have focused on the role of ownership generally in the media industry in Nigeria. However, such studies have given little attention to how public and private radio stations have fared in their social responsibilities to the public. Therefore, with the specific focus on Oyo State, which is one of the states with the highest concentration of radio stations in Nigeria, this study was designed to comparatively examine how public and private radio stations in the State fare in the performance of their expected social responsibilities. This study adopted the Social Responsibility Theory and combined Content Analysis and Survey as research methods. Content analysis revealed that the programme contents of the selected radio stations fairly meet up with the social responsibilities expected of the mass media as there are more of non-sponsored programmes than sponsored programmes in the stations? programme schedules

**Index terms**— public service functions, social responsibility, private and public radio stations in Nigeria, Nigerian broadcast industry

## 1 I. Background and Rationale

Our contemporary world is so mass media oriented that we learn almost everything we know today through the various media of mass communication. The mass media performs important roles to service the modern democratic systems of both developing and developed countries of the world (Olayiwola, 2013). There is no doubt that the mass media serve as a potent instrument of social change and economic development when they are made to be truly socially responsible. Ojebuyi and Kolawole (2016) support this significance as they argue that the media, apart from being independent and free, should see itself as an agent of public service by reflecting, through its contents, social relevance, conscience and reality of the society in general.

While highlighting the social responsibilities of the media, especially in developing countries like Nigeria, Owens-Ibie (1994) explained that the media are expected not only to serve the public interest, but also to be accountable to the audience, the government; their proprietors, and themselves. If the media neglect any of these cardinal roles, accountability and social responsibility suffer significantly. This submission underlines the diverse responsibilities and interests that the media are to ensure and professionally carry out in a balanced manner. In addition, the media is saddled with great responsibilities regardless of the normative context. However, contemporary media seem to be declining in their social responsibilities due to diverse factors.

Radio has been described as a unique mass medium given its "unparalleled capacity to reach the mass audience at a relatively cheaper cost and within a short time" (Ojebuyi, 2012: 41). Among other attributes, Radio possesses the power of spontaneity (Ojebode, 2002). These attributes have endeared Radio to the

## 2 II. LITERATURE REVIEW A) EVOLUTION OF RADIO BROADCASTING IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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masses, politicians, and government officials and the medium has been deployed as a potent tool to service the economic, social, political and democratic systems generally in both the developed and less-developed countries of the world. Consequently, communication scholars (e.g., Mohapatra, Sundaresan & Jena, 2014; Larsen, 2014; Tambini & Damian 2015; Rozukalne, 2016; and Just, Büchi & Latzer, 2017), though diverse in their perspectives of exploration of radio broadcasting, have explained and established the role of radio in the modern democracy as well as the challenges that portend danger to the effectiveness and perpetuity of broadcast journalism profession, across the world. These challenges range from digitization of radio broadcasting particularly in the developing countries (Ramsey, 2010; Anderson, 2012; Endong, 2015), legitimization of the public service broadcasting in this 21st century (Larsen, 2014; Mohapatra, Sundaresan & Jena, 2014; ??ambin & Damian, 2015), socio-political and economic considerations (Olayiwola, 2013; Udomisor, 2013; Ojebuyi, 2015), inadequacy of training for broadcast journalists (Okumbe, Peel, Adagala, Kowuor and Obonyo, 2017), and the inability of regulatory bodies to ensure conformity to ethical and professional standards of the profession .

Furthermore, while some scholars (e.g., ??belema, 2003; Nwokedi, 2016; Essien, 2016) Public and private radio stations, as spelled out by the social responsibility theory, must be socially responsible regardless of their ownership patterns (Folarin, 2006). Meanwhile, the popular scholarly opinion is that public radio stations are expected to be more socially responsible than their private counterparts because they are entitled to a subvention from the government, while the privately-owned media are essentially profit-oriented, which informs their pursuit of securing a large percent of listenership to stay afloat in the business. However, some scholars ?? ) have conducted comparative studies on how private and public Television stations and print media in some European countries and the United States of America have fared in the discharge of their public service functions. The scholars also found out that the public or government-owned media tend to provide more original, critical, in-depth, and multiperspectival coverage of public issues than their private counterparts. However, despite the recent surge in the numbers of private radio stations in Nigeria, media studies scholars have not adequately provided empirical evidence as to how these radio stations, compared to the public radio stations, have fared in their social responsibilities to serve the economic, socio-cultural and political systems of the country. Therefore, this study is a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the area of media studies as it examines the Nigerian broadcast media (especially radio stations) responsibilities. In essence, this study is a comparative examination of the performance of social responsibilities of public and private radio stations in Nigeria, with the specific focus on Oyo state, which is one of the states with the highest concentration of private radio stations in Nigeria. Two research questions guided this study: (1) To what extent do programme contents of public and private radio stations in Oyo State meet up with the social responsibilities expected of the mass media? (2) How does the public perceive the public and private radio stations in Oyo State in terms of their expected social responsibilities?

## 2 II. Literature Review a) Evolution of Radio Broadcasting in Oyo State, Nigeria

Broadcasting in Nigeria began in 1932 when the British Colonial authorities introduced radio broadcasting (Chioma, 2014). According to Udomisor (2013) cited by Chioma (2014), the introduction of radio broadcasting in Nigeria was an experiment of the empire service of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). One of its many tasks was to relay the overseas service of the BBC through wired systems with loudspeakers, a service which was then referred to as the Radio Diffusion System (RDS) and later became the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) in April 1951. The NBS paved the way for full broadcasting services in the country which began in 1939 when Nigeria established the first indigenous radio station in Ibadan, Western Nigeria. Radio stations in other regions of northern and eastern Nigeria were commissioned much later from 1945 -1949 in the following cities: Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, Jos, Zaria, Calabar, and Port-Harcourt (Chioma, 2014).

Soon after, broadcasting became a concurrent legislative matter in Nigeria through the enactment of The NBS Act in 1956. By 1957, the RDS also underwent a name change and became the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). The essence of this change was to provide a nationally representative and domestic service. This change in the operational structure of national broadcasting marked the end of colonial ownership which gave rise to federal and regional government ownership of broadcasting stations. Nigeria enacted the NBC Act in 1961 to give the Federal Minister of Information power to offer general and broadcast media across the world. Empirical studies in terms of the performance of expected social appointment to the Board. By 1962, the federal government inaugurated the Voice of Nigeria (VON) NBC's external service and subsequently appointed the first Nigerian Director-General. As a result of restructuring in 1978, the NBC became the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN).

Today, the FRCN has its Headquarters in Abuja with National Stations in Enugu, Ibadan, Kaduna, and Gwagwalada FCT including a Lagos Operations Office. These National Stations and Lagos Operations Office control all FM/MW/SW stations spread across the country reaching more than 100 million listeners; broadcasting in 15 languages, catering to the diverse broadcast needs of a multi-ethnic Nigerian; uplifting the people and uniting the nation (Radio Nigeria Online, 2017).

Meanwhile, the radio arm of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) was founded in 1976 (about forty-two years ago) with the vision of upholding professionalism and thereby making BCOS the hub of modern

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day broadcasting in Nigeria. The mission of the broadcasting corporation is to serve as an agent for societal reformatory, rejuvenation of the State's core values and culture for re-branding the whole of Oyo state. (BCOS, 2017).

Subsequently, Oyo State has witnessed a boom in the radio broadcast industry as it boasts of twenty-five (25) radio stations with the public and private ownership patterns. The capital city of Oyo state, Ibadan, which is also the domain of this study, houses twenty (20) radio stations (out of the 25 radio stations in the state) comprising four (4) public radio stations and sixteen (16) private radio stations.

### 3 b) Peculiarities of Public and Private Radio Stations

The ownership of media organization can be either private, or government, and the rivalry between private and government-owned media for audience trust manifests daily across most of the African countries (Moehler and Singh, 2011). In Nigeria, broadcasting was an exclusive central government preserve until the deregulation of the sector in 1992, which birthed private broadcasting firms and facilitated healthy competition in the industry which has enhanced the cause of broadcasting in the country (Ariye, 2010). Ronoh (2013) describes public radio as a broadcaster whose sole aim is providing information and education to the public. He states further that as much as these stations are not entirely profit driven, government controls how they sell airtime to advertisers, and prioritizes their editorial philosophy. Mohapatra et al. (2014) clearly explicates the essence of public radio when they submit that it is mainly for public service as it speaks to everyone as a citizen. They further state that public broadcasting is a meeting place where all citizens are welcome and considered equals. It gives information and education for all regardless of their social or economic status. Commercial or private, on the other hand, according to Ronoh (2013), is owned by a wide range of entities including individuals, holding companies and institutions. The primary goal of commercial radio stations is to deliver to the audiences while maximizing profits for the owners or the shareholders. The commercial stations generate most of their revenue from advertising, and hence they are likely to be more targeted in terms of audience definition. Meanwhile, Ronoh (2013) aptly captures the dynamics of commercial radio stations when he states that "commercial broadcasters view their audience as 'commodities' which they, in turn, sell to their advertisers (pp. 23).

Furthermore, Rozukalne (2016) explains that public media represents both an imagined unity of the population living in a single nation-state and the pluralism of the audience. The attention and additional funding for the media directed at minorities are usually associated with the responsibility for the public service media reaching all parts of the society. More so, government ownership of broadcast media is more widespread but private-public competition has become the norm for radio as well. Out of forty-seven sub-Saharan countries, thirty-nine have both public and private radio stations; there are only eight countries where government radio is the only choice available. While private media operate under various restrictions and with far fewer resources, most African countries now have a diversity of news sources (Moehler & Singh, 2011).

Freedman (2008) cited by ??amian (2015) states that on the one hand, in those media systems with significant public service elements, there may be a need to re-state the case for public media in a postbroadcasting world, with many claiming that its justification no longer holds in a world of unbridled consumer choice. On the other hand, with commercial media competing directly with free public media, it may be that publicly-funded media, rather than commercial media, are best placed to thrive in harsh economic times.

While explicating the concept of neoliberalism in media ownership and its grave consequence on the performance of social responsibilities expected of mass media, Ojebuyi and Kolawole (2016) reveal that even the few government-owned media organizations in Nigeria that hitherto enjoyed adequate funding from the government have been fully commercialised and mandated to be self-sustaining. They state further that "the implication of this is that these public media stations would have to compete with numerous private media organizations in the country and may sacrifice their public services for profit making in order to survive. In other words, this phenomenon of survival in a profitdriven atmosphere is likely to affect the functions and social responsibilities of the Nigerian press to the extent that those events that have commercial values, rather than events that concern the public, may attract the attention of the press." (p. 36). This revelation underlines, probably, the rationale for the increasing underperformance of radio stations in the fulfillment of their expected public service functions.

In the Nigerian context, a Nigerian study by Ariye (2010) has established a very competitive industry environment with indicators suggesting that the private stations are giving the public stations a good competition for their money in terms of acceptability through quality programming leading to increased patronage and attraction of adverts. The study also discovers that private radio stations have greatly enhanced the socio-cultural, economic and political outlook of the Nigeria nation. Meanwhile, Ronoh (2013) posits that private or commercial radio stations treat their audience as commodities they intend to sell to sponsors. This position contradicts the argument of Ariye (2010) that private radio stations has significantly enhanced the cause of broadcasting in the Nigeria nation.

## 4 c) Discourses on challenges to the functionality of radio broadcasting

In many Western European countries, public service broadcasting was set up as a new medium of radio with its organizational form founded during the first decades of the 20th century. Today, although it remains a national project, public service broadcasting is directly affected by supranational forces often linked to competition policy concerns and a long line of statutory and non-statutory regulatory instruments on several levels (Moe, 2010). The societal control of public service broadcasting, according to Moe (2010), is harder to comprehend today.

Radio broadcasting in Nigeria takes place in a context that is not conducive for meaningful engagements of development issues: the environment is neoliberal which predisposes stations to jettison development programmes and hanker after fiscally profitable ones (Ojebode and Adegbola, 2007). They state further that most radio stations are located in urban areas and so they are removed from the rural areas where the majority live, and this is in tandem with the claim of Ajibade and Alabi (2017) that radio broadcasting in Nigeria has concentrated largely on the urban centers. . The physical separation is reflected in the content as well. Also, the management style is authoritarian in most stations, the philosophy is progovernment, and the equipment is in a terrible state (Ojebode and Adegbola, 2007). Larsen (2014) citing Carlsson (2013) observes that due to the processes of economic and cultural globalization, and the digitalization of the broadcast media, broadcasters are facing serious challenges to their legitimacy as publicly funded media institutions.

Pate and Dauda (undated) posit that the media industry is pluralistic with a dominant government controlled in the broadcast media environment and a heavily commercialized print media sector.

Similarly, Oberiri (2016) argues in contradiction to the position of Pate and Dauda (undated) that the Nigerian media, be it broadcast or print, have lost their credibility as they have slowly negated the social responsibility of journalism to an income generated journalism practice. In the same vein, Jibo and Okoosi-Simbine (2003) in consonance with Oberiri (2016) note that the decadence in the Nigerian media has been the concern of international organizations as well. Akpan (2001:17) as cited by Oberiri (2016) raises his observation about the Nigerian media when he posits that "journalism practice has been reduced by a good number of its practitioners to something akin to black-mail journalism. Indeed, investigative journalism to a large extent has been thrown out of the window or dethroned to the detriment of a healthy, responsible and reliable media practice". In his conclusion, he avers that even though the point has been made against the unprofessional media practices of the Southern press (then), the impression should not be formed that the situation elsewhere is much better. The Nigeria media generally appears casual in treating allegations of corruption. It important to note that many other scholars, through their various studies, have established the 'irresponsibility' of the Nigerian media (Edoga-Ugwuaju, 1984; Nwosu, 1987; Ruijter, 1989)

## 5 III. Theoretical Orientation

The Social Responsibility Theory provided the framework for this study. We considered this theory to be appropriate because it advocates media responsibility and ethical adherence cum professionalism and highlights some obligations of the media to society (Owens-Ibie, 1994 and Ojebuyi and Kolawole, 2016). The absolute freedom and the abuse of freedom by the press under Libertarian Press gave birth to the Social Responsibility Theory of the press. To check the excesses of the libertarian press, social responsibility press emerged as theoretical orientation, and it implies freedom-cum-responsibility. The social responsibility of the press is hinged on the fact that the press will be free, but it must also serve every stratum and stake holder in the society. Social Responsibility theory of the press owes its origin to the Hutchins Commission set up in 1947 in the United States of America.

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Worthy of note, Ojebuyi et al. (2016) profoundly capture the essence of Social Responsibility as a theoretical orientation when they posit that "it advocates a press system that de-emphasizes uncontrolled freedom, excessive profit making, and control of the media by the social elite." (p.39). With Social Responsibility, the media/press are expected to maintain a high ethical standard, by being selfregulating within the framework of laws of the land. They must be informative, objective, truthful, accurate, and balanced in their reportage. They must protect the rights of the individuals by acting as a watchdog over the leadership (especially government). The press is to preserve financial autonomy and independence, so as not to become dependent on any special interests and concentrate its reportage on a particular person, political party, group or society (Folarin, 2006). This theory is relevant to this study as it helps situate the study within the ambit of the expected responsibilities of the mass media and how they are supposed to carry out these responsibilities in a way that shows that they are socially responsible.

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## 8 IV. Method and Materials

The primary focus of this study was to examine the public perception about the effective discharge of the public service functions of radio stations in Oyo State, Nigeria, and analyze the programme contents of public and private radio Stations in the State with a view to establishing the degree to which the stations have been socially responsible. Four radio stations in Ibadan metropolis-Fresh FM (105.9), Splash FM (105.5), Oluyole FM (98.5) and Amuludun FM (99.1), were purposively selected because of their relevant characteristics such as ownership pattern and time of establishment. Two radio stations each fall under the ownership pattern of the public (Oluyole FM (98.5) and Amuludun FM (99.1)) and the private (Fresh FM (105.9), Splash FM (105.5)) ownerships. This selection pattern was to ensure equal representation in terms of ownership. Survey and Content Analysis were adopted as research methods because the researchers intended to get public perception of the expected social responsibilities of public and private radio stations. We also analyzed the quarterly programme contents of the selected radio stations to establish the extent to which the programme contents of public and private radio stations meet up with the social responsibilities expected of the mass media.

Therefore, 320 radio listeners were selected across the 11 local government areas in Ibadan metropolis through stratified and available sampling techniques. Also, quarterly programme belts of the selected four radio stations in Ibadan metropolis (just one quarter each for the radio stations) were accessed and analyzed. This covered three months (June to August 2017) to make a total of 12 weeks programme schedules for each of the selected radio stations. A 21-item questionnaire and a 9-item content category coding sheet were used as instruments for data collection. The coding sheet contained the content analytical categories which were used to sort the contents of the selected programme schedules. The main categories are sponsored programmes (those with any part of their cost of production and transmission met by an organization or person other than the selected radio stations, and which likely to serve the interest of the sponsor rather than that of the general public), and non-sponsored programmes (those programmes independently packaged and produced by the selected radio stations themselves as part of their social responsibilities). The followings are the subcategories under each of the main categories: Political programme, Religious programme, Health programme, Entertainment programme, Sport programme, Educative programme, Empowerment programme, Advertisements in programme and Music.

## 9 V. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

A pilot test was conducted among radio listeners in Ibadan metropolis before the actual study in order to confirm the suitability of the questionnaire for the study. We conducted a pilot study with thirty (30) people as sample size and the result of the pilot study showed that a greater proportion of respondents (n=20; 66.7%) found it difficult to understand some items of the questionnaire while a lesser proportion (n=10; 33.3%) showed adequate understanding of the content of the questionnaire. This helped us to reconstruct some items of the questionnaire for easy comprehension by the respondents. In addition, the result of the pilot test was instructive for us to interpret some questions to the respondents so as to elicit the needed responses.

Furthermore, to ensure reliability and validity in respect of the coding sheet containing the content categories, we took three major steps, as suggested by Wimmer and Dominick (2000). First, we carefully constructed and clearly defined boundaries of the categories with maximum details in order to make them exhaustive and mutually exclusive. Two, we selected and trained coders. We gave a copy of the coding sheet to each of the coders to study closely. Three, the researcher conducted a pilot study and measured intercoder reliability on the categories. The reliability index of the decisions of the independent coders was tested for inter-coder reliability using the Holsti's (1969) method as described by Wimmer and Dominick (2000: 150-154). The procedure for the inter-coder reliability is summarised as follows: 
$$V = \frac{2M}{2M + N_1 + N_2}$$
 Where M is the number of coding decisions agreed upon by all the coders, N<sub>1</sub> is the total number of decisions made by the first coder; N<sub>2</sub> is the total number of decisions by the second coder. Holsti's original formula is 
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Therefore, we used the following calculations to determine the inter-coder reliability for the categories: 
$$V = \frac{2M}{2M + N_1 + N_2} = \frac{2(16)}{2(16) + 20 + 20} = \frac{32}{52} = 0.615$$

As shown in the calculations above, the two coders on 32 items (M) out of the subsample of 40 items they independently judged. The index was 0.8. This index was judged high enough. Therefore, the instrument was considered reliable enough to generate valid results. = 0.8

We present the findings in tables, while we did the presentation, interpretation, and discussion of findings in line with the two research questions that we constructed to guide this study.

## 10 RQ 1: To what extent do programme contents of public and private radio stations in Oyo State meet up with the social responsibilities expected of the mass media?

We constructed this research question to determine the extent to which the programme contents of select public and private radio stations in Ibadan metropolis meet up with the expected social responsibilities of the mass media. The research question was answered using data gathered through the questionnaire and content-analyzed programme schedules of the selected radio stations. 1, show that 273 (86.7%) respondents believed that radio

## 12 RQ 2: HOW DO THE PUBLIC PERCEIVE THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RADIO STATIONS IN OYO STATE IN TERMS OF THEIR EXPECTED SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES?

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stations in Ibadan metropolis could be rated as satisfactory in the discharge of their public service functions, while only 4.7% thought otherwise. Also, a large proportion of the respondents (n=283; 89.9%) agreed that the programme contents of radio stations in Ibadan are public-oriented, while only 3.0% disagreed with the statement.

Responses to the statement that "Private radio stations in Ibadan focus more on profit-making than its expected public service functions" show that 105 (33.4%) of the respondents agreed that private radio stations are more profit-oriented than being socially responsible, while a higher number of the respondents (n=129; 40.9%) believed that private radio stations are socially responsible in spite of their commercial pursuit. Also, 245 (77.8%) of the respondents agreed that public and private radio stations in Ibadan through their programmes have maintained their public service functions regardless of the myriad of distracting interests, while 18 (2.9%) of the respondents disagreed with this position.

Furthermore, findings in Table 1 show that 47.3% of the respondents thought that entertainment programme is the major focus of radio stations in Ibadan metropolis, while a lesser percentage of the respondents (37.2%) disagreed with the statement. Similarly, 44.1% of the respondents stated that they were more informed and educated than entertained through radio programmes in Ibadan metropolis. However, 40.6% of the respondents said that they were more entertained than informed and educated through radio programming in Ibadan metropolis. 2 presents the detailed analysis of the number of times the selected private and public radio stations in Ibadan metropolis aired sponsored and nonsponsored programmes in a week which represents the quarter programme belts that were content-analyzed for each of the radio stations. The table shows the grouping of the radio stations along the ownership divide: The private radio stations (Splash FM and Fresh FM) are grouped and public radio stations (Amuludun FM and Oluyole FM) are under the same category. Meanwhile, on the one hand, the findings in Table 2 show that private radio stations in Ibadan aired eleven sponsored programmes in a week while they broadcast nonsponsored programmes 243 times. On the other hand, the public radio stations in Ibadan aired 132 sponsored programmes in a week, while they aired a total of 220 non-sponsored programmes with in the same period. It is evident from the findings that public radio stations give more room for sponsored programmes in their programme schedules than their private counterparts.

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Volume XIX Issue V Version I 3 presents the cumulative number of times that the four selected private and public radio stations in Ibadan metropolis aired sponsored and nonsponsored programmes in their quarterly programme belts that were analyzed. The findings in the table show that the selected radio stations all together aired sponsored programmes in 143 times, while they aired non-sponsored programmes in 463 times. Thus, we can make an inference that radio stations in Ibadan metropolis give more programme space to nonsponsored programmes than sponsored programmes. This pattern suggests that the radio stations appear to be socially responsible given the programmes they broadcast.

## 12 RQ 2: How do the public perceive the public and private radio stations in Oyo State in terms of their expected social responsibilities?

This research question was set to examine the perception of the public about the performances of public and private radio stations in Ibadan metropolis in terms of meeting up with the social responsibilities expected of them. This research question was answered using the data gathered through the questionnaire. 4 shows that 78.4% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the programme contents of the selected radio stations in Ibadan metropolis as against the lesser number of the respondents (n=29; 9.2%), who disagreed with the statement. Also, findings as presented in Table 4 show that a higher number of the respondents (n=204; 64.8%) indicated that they preferred private radio stations to public radio stations in terms of informative and educative programmes when compared with only 15.3% of the respondents who preferred public radio stations to their private counterparts. Meanwhile, it is also evident from Table 4 that 111 (35.3%) of the respondents believed that the struggle for survival and ownership interference could reduce public-oriented programme contents on private radio stations, while 32.1% of the respondents disagreed with this position. Hence, it can be deduced that despite the perceived likelihood of commercial interest and ownership influence, a large proportion of respondents showed preference for private radio stations in terms of informative and educative programmes. In addition to the above, a large proportion of the respondents (n=151; 47.9%) agreed with the statement that music playing takes more time on the radio stations' programme schedules, while 96 respondents (30.5%) disagreed with this. Furthermore, in order to ascertain the dependability and credibility of the radio stations regarding socio-political information, we constructed a statement that: "The radio stations in Ibadan cannot be depended on for authentic socio-political information that can aid public awareness of the recent development in their society". Responses to the statement show that 175 (55.6%) of the respondents agreed that radio stations in Ibadan are dependable and credible while 84 (26.7%) respondents thought that the radio stations in Ibadan are not dependable and credible. Similarly, a large proportion (n=169; 53.7%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that "public and private radio stations in Ibadan give little space to public service programmes", while 77 (24.4%) of the respondents agreed with the statement.

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Table 5 presents the respondents' rating of public and private radio stations in Ibadan metropolis in terms of the fulfillment of their expected social responsibilities. Findings show that 60.3% of the respondents agreed that public and private radio stations in Ibadan metropolis could not be rated equally in performing their expected social responsibilities, while 35.2% of the respondents supported the sameness in the rating of public and private radio stations in terms of performing their expected social responsibilities. This finding implies that there are divergent opinions among the audience on the level of social responsibility of public and private radio stations as presented in Table 5. Findings in Table 6 below provides insight into the reasons a large proportion of the respondents believed that public and private radio stations should not be rated equally in terms of being socially responsible. ( A )

enhance fulfillment of their public service functions, while 45.2% of them preferred public radio stations to private radio stations in terms of programming that fulfill social responsibility. In addition, it is evident as presented in Table 6 that only four respondents that provided answer believed that private radio stations in Ibadan were more socially responsible than their public counterparts. Two reasons for this are quality of presentation and welfare of their staff, which were perceived to be better than those of the public radio stations. In the same vein, the majority of the respondents (n=82; 94.3%) stated that private radio stations are far more credible and dependable than their counterparts compared to just only 5.7% of the respondents who held a contrary view. With respect to the reasons for perceived difference in the level of social responsibility of private and public radio stations as presented in Table 6, it is evident that the respondents believed that private radio stations are generally more socially responsible than their public counterparts because of better programmes, quality of presentation, enhanced staff welfare, and better audience participation and feedback.

## 13 VI. Discussion

From the findings presented in Tables 1 -6, it is established, through audience perception, that both public and private radio stations in Oyo State, to some extent, fare well in the discharge of their public service functions through public-oriented programmes. Besides, private radio stations were perceived to be more dependable for socio-political information that can aid public awareness of the current developments in society. Findings in this study have established that the programme contents of radio stations in Oyo State, to an extent, meet up with the social responsibilities expected of the mass media as there are more nonsponsored programmes than sponsored programmes in their programme schedules. It is naturally expected that the higher the proportion of sponsored programmes in the programme schedules of a radio station, the lesser the level of discharging social responsibilities of such a radio station. The reason for this phenomenon is too much dependence on commercial news would prime the radio stations to be perpetually loyal to the advertisers while they compromise their social services to the general mass audience. This trend tends to give credence to the position of Ronoh (2013) that the sponsors of agricultural programmes on Kass FM (Kenya) greatly influenced the programmes they sponsored. Findings in this study also showed that despite respondents' skepticism while rating the social responsibilities of public radio stations compared to those of the private radio stations, which were rated better, public and private radio stations have been able to maintain their public service functions regardless of the multiplicity of distracting interests. This fact is established in the result of the content analysis of the programme contents of the radio stations which showed that public and private radio stations aired more nonsponsored programmes than sponsored programmes every week in the three months' programme belts that we content-analysed. The finding aligns with Ronoh's (2013) position that successful radio programmes must manage to balance the triangle of content, listenership, and advertisers and sponsors.

Furthermore, it is established in the study that entertainment programmes are accorded more programme space than other programme genres across the radio stations in Ibadan metropolis. This finding confirms the finding of Ramsey (2010) that while the BBC remains a reliable provider of serious political content, necessary for deliberation and opinion formation; it has also been complicit in a more general slide towards replacing news with 'infotainment'. However, in spite of the position of the public that entertainment is the major focus of radio stations in Ibadan metropolis, they still maintained that they are more informed and educated than entertained through the programmes of the radio stations in Ibadan. This counter intuitive position may be due to that fact the first role of the mass media is to give the people what they want not what you think they want and not what you want them to want. This finding is in support of Opubor's (1985) assertion that the main goal of the media is "factfinding" and "fact-giving."

Critically, we submit that the public may not understand the intricacies of having entertainment dominating the programming of radio stations and at the same time claim to be more informed and educated than being entertained. It is nearly impossible to have serious informative and educative contents packaged in predominantly entertainment programmes. Therefore, the inconsistency in the sense of judgement of the media audience about the fulfillment of the expected social responsibilities of mass media may be due to their lack of understanding of the implications for a media outfit to unevenly prioritize its conventional functions to the public. Arguably, another perceived reason responsible for the public's endorsement of the performance of the public service functions by radio stations may be because the audience tends to see and enjoy entertainment programmes as a means of temporary escape from the stress of their society. They (public), therefore, concluded that despite the preponderance of entertainment in the programming of radio stations in Ibadan metropolis, they were still more informed and educated. This finding does not seem to compellingly validate the position of scholars

## 14 VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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(Ojebode and Adegbola, 2007; Moehler & Singh, 2011; Ojebuyi, 2015) that there is a need of radio stations that will be true to the performance of its public service functions to the public. This observation is in alignment with the fact that it is a real risk if the media transformation is delayed as the audience can begin to subscribe to foreign media content to meet their information need (Rozukalne, 2016). And for radio stations to be socially responsible, the public also has a key role in ensuring the task (Tambini and Damian, 2015).

Comparatively, the findings established that the media audience prefers private radio stations to their public counterparts in terms of better informative and educative programmes. Though the media audience have the right to their opinion on the perceived performance of the public service functions of both public and private broadcast organisations, this, however, does not invalidate the argument of Ronoh (2013) that the foremost goal of commercial radio stations is to package good programming for the audiences while maximizing profits for the owners or the shareholders. Also, in the words of Ojebuyi (2015), the few government-owned media organizations in Nigeria that used to enjoy adequate funding from the government have been fully commercialized and mandated to be self-sustaining. Consequently these public media stations, to survive, would have to compete with numerous private media organizations in their territories of reach and they may have to substantially sacrifice their public services for profit making.

Indeed, some public broadcasting organizations, according to Benson and Powers (2011), are better funded and operated in Europe as compared to some climes.

Meanwhile, the seeming edge private journalists/radio stations have over their public counterparts in the degree of performance of their expected social responsibilities as established by the findings through audience perception, could be as a result of the fact that private radio station tactically used their audience-friendly programming to secure listenership for profit-making. Whereas the public counterparts are complacent because they know there would always be subvention from the government as asserted by scholars (Ojebode and Adegbola, 2007 and Ronoh, 2013) that public radio stations are funded by the government and so sponsorship should not be a key determinant in their programming and general operations. The situation, therefore, does not invalidate the submission of Ronoh (2013), who, when capturing the dynamics of commercial radio stations, states that "commercial broadcasters view their audience as 'commodities' which they, in turn, sell to their advertisers (pp. 23). But the findings disprove the fact that public radio is expected to exclusively provide information and education to the public, as described by Ronoh (2013). Therefore, it is evident from the findings that both public and private radio stations are complicit in the compromise of their expected social responsibilities to the public and society at large. This laxity in the performance of the expected social responsibility by journalists and media outfits in Oyo State, Nigeria is evident in the words of Ojebuyi (2015) "that radio broadcasting has been plagued with a myriad of organizational forces and interests" (p.76). Profoundly, the researchers discovered that public radio stations need good patronage of sponsors to survive and that is responsible for the prominence given to sponsorship in their programming. They care less about listenership as the government does not solely bear the burden of their finances any longer (Ojebuyi, 2015). We are quick to note that private stations only deploy the strategy of public-oriented programmes to get listenership for their economic pursuit (which the stations seem to conceal in their programme schedules) whereas the public radio stations, which also rely on subvention from the government, tend to be truthful enough about their economic stance. As Benson and Powers (2011) contend, profit-making is a common ground for both private and public radio stations and that their deployment of suitable programming is just a way of actualizing that end.

## 14 VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, we set out to examine the degree to which public and private radio stations in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo state fulfill their statutory functions to the public. We contextualised these objectives in the programming and public perception of public radio stations as compared to private radio stations. Findings reveal that the radio stations in Oyo state had fared well, to an extent, in the fulfillment of their expected social responsibilities but the degree of this fulfillment varies across the ownership patterns of private and public due to some reasons which are disparities in programme presentation, staff welfare, level of credibility and interactivity (feedback mechanism). We expect that the condition of service would have implications for the overall quality of programmes that radio stations present. We premise our assertion on the fact that a well-remunerated presenter naturally would perform better than a poorly-remunerated presenter, who is not encouraged to maximally deliver for his/her media organization.

Also, the study reveals that radio stations in Ibadan, Oyo state give more space to entertainment and music than other programme genres. Though amusement is one of the tenets of the social responsibility theory, which we cannot jettison in broadcasting, the broadcast media must be mindful of dwelling so much on it as it can serve as a critical bane to being socially responsible later. If the stakeholders take care of this situation, the radio stations in Ibadan metropolis, Oyo state would improve on their performance of expected social responsibilities. It is at this moment recommended that the programme Volume XIX Issue V Version I 11 ( A )

directors of radio stations in Ibadan metropolis, and by extension in Nigeria, should ensure their programming is all-encompassing in terms of giving the same premium to all the programme genres. Besides, owners of the radio stations should give adequate priority to the welfare of their employees. Anything short of these would lead to poor performance by staff and eventual abdication of the stations' social responsibility.



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**1**

presents respondents' perception of radio stations' fulfillment of expected social responsibilities through programming.

Figure 1: Table 1

**1**

Figure 2: Table 1 :

Year 2019  
7  
( A )  
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Figure 3:

**2**

Table

Figure 4: Table 2 :

4

Statements	SA	A	U	D
I am satisfied with the programme contents of radio stations in Ibadan metropolis.	84 (26.7%)	163 (51.7%)	36 (11.4%)	2 (0.6%)
I prefer private radio stations to public radio stations in terms of informative and educational programmes.	125 (39.7%)	79 (25.1%)	63 (20%)	4 (1.2%)
Private radio stations' struggle for survival gives no room for public-entered programme contents in their programming.	27 (8.6%)	84 (26.7%)	97 (30.8%)	9 (2.9%)
Music takes more time on radio stations' programme schedule in Ibadan metropolis.	58 (18.4%)	93 (29.5%)	65 (20.6%)	7 (2.2%)
The radio stations in Ibadan cannot be depended on for authentic socio-political information that can aid public awareness of the recent development in their society.	28 (8.9%)	56 (17.8%)	54 (17.1%)	1 (0.3%)
Public and private radio stations in Ibadan give little programme space to public service programmes.	23 (7.3%)	54 (17.1%)	66 (21%)	1 (0.3%)

[Note: \*\*SA= Strongly Agree, S= Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD=Strongly Disagree\*\*]

Figure 5: Table 4 :

3

Figure 6: Table 3 :

5

Options	Frequency	Percentage
YES	111	35.2%
NO	190	60.3%
MISSING	14	4.5%
TOTAL	315	100

Figure 7: Table 5 :

6

S/N	Areas of Differences	Private Radio Stations	Public Radio Stations	Total
1	Programmes	23 (54.8 %)	19 (45.2 %)	42 (30.9%)
2	Quality of Presentation/Presenters' welfare	4 (100.0 %)	0	4 (2.9%)
3	Credibility	82 (94.3.0%)	5 (5.7 %)	87 (64.0)
4	Interactivity/Feedback	3 (100.0%)	0	3 (2.2%)
	Total	112(82.4 %)	24(17.6 %)	136 (100.0%)

Figure 8: Table 6 :

6

9  
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Figure 9: Table 6



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