



OBIO/AKPOR MALE LISTENERS' REACTION TO RADIO GENDER ADVOCACY OF TREASURE FM, PORT HARCOURT

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ABSTRACT

Gender advocacy has in many cases been looked at from the female gender perspective. This study is a contrary where attempt is to find out the extent of listenership of Obio/Akpor males to Gender Advocacy programmes of Treasure FM, how they react, as well as identify critical issues raised in the programmes which elicited their reactions. The survey research design was used for the study. The population of the study was 316,610 with a sample size of 399 adult male listeners determined using Taro Yamane. These were drawn through multi-stage technique which selected two communities in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. Findings reveal that Gender Advocacy of Treasure FM was perceived by male listeners as helping in educating the audience on the rights and empowerment of women. It also found out that males reacted positively to the programmes. It was recommended that the producers should create programmes such that it can also appeal to both sexes in listenership as male listeners enjoy the programmes and are fair to the female gender.

Keywords: Gender, Advocacy, Reaction, Treasure FM, Listenership.

Introduction

The essence of communication is not just to inform people of something, but to create a space for message sharing which people have need for (Clement, 2012). Since communication involves the exchange of thoughts, feelings etc. for effective communication to take place, meaning must correspond with recipient's meaning.

Advocacy simply means speaking in support of an idea, especially an idea that ensures the promotion of the rights of the marginalised people (Geyer, 2006). According to Woodroffe et al (2011), gender advocacy is advocacy which promotes women's right and gender equality. In this situation, men and women are treated equally. Gender advocacy is borne out of the social, educational, and cultural discrimination of women in society which restricts women from reaching their full potentials, thereby, denying them equality, security and fundamental freedom (Amadi, 2018).

According to Best (1997), radio is the most popular medium of mass communication in Africa and at least, one set is found in every household, irrespective of how remote it is. Moemeka (1981) notes that the mass media particularly, the radio is the most important medium for creating awareness. Onozare (2016) corroborates the foregoing that radio is a useful medium in creating awareness. Radio is also said to be the most suitable medium for advocacy. This is because of the low levels of literacy, distribution problems of newspapers and the cost of television. Radio programmes can be broadcast in any language including vernacular, Male listeners react differently to radio gender advocacy programmes. Men and boys learn conventional gender roles from family, friends, and are influenced by their upbringing, experience, and social environment. These determine how male listeners view manhood as regard gender advocacy programmes. The gender advocacy programmes of radio advocate for equal rights, end to poverty bedeviling the females, insecurity and gender-based violence against them, which is prevalent in the society today.

Programmes of Gender Advocacy of Treasure FM

- i. **Feminine Fancy:** This gender advocacy programme of Treasure FM, Port Harcourt is broadcast in English language on Fridays at 11:30am. The programme seeks to enlighten women and girls on the importance of girl-child education, the negative effects of child marriage, child abuse, and child neglect. The programme tends to enlighten women and girls to the fact that marriage below the age of 18 may expose them to risks as the reproductive organs within the age may not be well mature for reproduction. In some cases, such girls suffer severe health conditions and have very small chances of conceiving a healthy baby. The programme advocates that girls be empowered with skills no matter how unintelligent they may appear to be.
- ii. **For Women Dem:** This is another gender advocacy programme of Treasure FM, Port Harcourt usually broadcast in pidgin language every Wednesday from 2:15pm to 2:30 pm. The programme advocates women's rights in the society. For instance, when a woman is divorced, she has a right to inherit some of the property of her husband. The programme also seeks to educate the listeners on the need for eligibility of the girl-child to inherit family property in a society where males are given first place when it comes to property inheritance. Women are also encouraged through the programme to learn skills and start businesses to meet the needs of the family.

Statement of the problem

Gender advocacy is easily associated with females; that is mobilising women to share in the line of thought of empowering them, but oftentimes, a very important aspect is neglected which involves the reaction of their male counterparts. This is because in most cases, the males are regarded as chauvinists and the beneficiaries of unfair treatment of women and major agents of domestic violence.

There is therefore, the need to find out the reactions of the male counterparts. To this end, gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM among adult male listeners in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State formed the thrust of this study since the radio station addresses issues of gender.

Research questions

1. To what extent is the listenership of gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM by adult males in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State?
2. What is the reaction of adult male listeners in Obio/Akpor, Rivers State to gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM, Port Harcourt?
3. What are the critical issues raised in the gender advocacy programmes that elicited the reactions of Obio/Akpor adult male listeners?
4. What are the factors that could lead to Obio/Akpor adult male listeners' disposition towards the programmes?

Theoretical framework

Individual differences theory

This theory which was propounded by Melvin DeFleur and Everette Dennis in 1970, states that every individual emerges from different environment and that the different makeups predispose the individual to react to situations differently. People do not react the same way to media messages. In applying this theory, it could be argued that male listeners of gender advocacy programmes on radio would react differently to the message of the programmes.

Selective Exposure, Perception, and Retention theory

This theory was propounded by Joseph Klapper in 1960. The proponent of the theory submits that the mass media do not directly influence but rather reinforce people's predisposition. Klapper outlines three basic concepts which are selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention.

Selective Exposure: This explains that people choose what to listen to and decide which stories to get exposed to. Selective exposure is dependent on the psychology of the individual; what they want to get from the media, and their beliefs. Here, audience expose themselves to media messages which are in accordance with their established convictions.

Selective Perception: Here, the audience are likely to remember only news or information favourable to them than news or information regarded as unfavourable. Listeners interpret media messages in different ways depending on factors such as age, value and family among other factors.

Selective Retention: For the selective retention, listeners selectively retain and keep away some information that they feel is irrelevant. There is thin line of difference between selective perception and selective retention. Hasan (2014) notes that “selective retention ...occurs when a person who has been exposed to a communication of a few minutes before, presents a distorted or incomplete report of its contents, it is difficult to determine whether the content of (media exposure) was selectively perceived in the first place, whether it was correctively perceived but not retained, or whether the two processes complemented one another” (p.166).

The tenet of selectivity theory is that people choose what to listen to, or what stories to get exposed to. Also, audience are likely to remember only news or information favourable to them. The relevance of selectivity theory to the study is that, one can infer that a male listener of gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM is likely to interpret or react to the messages of the programme according to his attitude and existing beliefs. One may also decide to retain the message and even make changes if one feels the message is relevant.

Empirical review

Dunu (2015) carried out a research to establish the extent to which emerging campus community radio stations in Nigeria advance female voices and highlight women issues. Dunu found out that the programme content of these stations were tailored towards entertainment and are male-oriented in nature. The number of males working in these stations were proportionately higher than that of females. It was also found out that women do not occupy positions of authority in these stations.

Dunu’s study differs from the current research. This is because while Dunu sought to establish the extent of female participation in campus community radio, the current research seeks to find out the reaction of male listeners towards radio’s gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM. Onozare (2016) embarked on a study to find out the role of a radio programme, *A Cece Su of KSMC* to determine if the messages from the programme have been useful for creating awareness on girl-child education and related developmental issues in Kaduna State. It was found out that the target audience listens to the programme, *A Cece Su* to an appreciable degree. The work differs from the current study, as Onozare sought to establish if the Hausa radio programme “*A Cece Su*” has been able to significantly improve awareness of girl-child education or not, while the current research seeks to find out the reaction of male listeners to gender advocacy programmes.

Research methodology

The study adopted the survey research design using the questionnaire as instrument. The population of the study is projected at 316,610 which was drawn from the 2006 census figure by the National Population Commission for males from 18 and above in Obio/Akpor local government area. Using the Taro Yamane statistical formula, the sample size for the study was 399 respondents.

The multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques were used for this study. The first stage of the multi-stage sampling was the systematic selection of three wards from the seventeen wards in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The second stage is the selection of two communities from the wards. This was followed by the third stage which was the selection of male respondents from households in the communities. Purposive sampling was adopted to select male respondents from 18 years and above on whom the instrument was administered.

The data were analysed in simple percentages using tables, mean deviation, and modified Four-point Likert Scale. The scope of the study covers adult male listeners of the gender advocacy

programmes on Treasure FM radio station. The study was restricted to Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

Results and discussion

Presentation and analysis of data

Objective One: The extent of Listenership of Gender Advocacy Programmes of Treasure FM by Male Adults in Obio/Akpor LGA, Rivers State

Table 4.1: Regularity of Listenership to Gender Advocacy Programmes of Treasure FM

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Regular	301	75.4
Irregular	98	24.6
TOTAL	399	100

Source: Field study, 2019

From the table above, the respondents who listened regularly to gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM were more than those who were not regular in tuning to the advocacy programmes.

Table 4.2: Reactions of Obio/Akpor male listeners to Gender Advocacy Programmes

S/No	Items	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X	Remark
1	Treasure FM's gender advocacy programmes are useful	199	183	9	8	399	3.43	Accepted
2	Producers of gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM are biased	29	27	29	15	399	2.08	Rejected
3	Men need advocacy too	240	99	31	29	399	3.37	Accepted
TOTAL MEAN							8.88	
GRAND MEAN							2.96	Accepted

The table above reveals that most male respondents reacted positively to gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM. Most male listeners agree that men need advocacy too, and most male listeners rejected the statement that the producers of the programmes are biased.

Objective Three: Critical Issues raised in the programme that elicited the reactions

Table 4.3: Critical issues raised in the programmes that elicited the reactions

S/No	Critical Issues	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X	Remark
1	A girl is eligible to inherit the property of her family	320	50	20	9	399	3.7	Accepted
2	A woman should be given part of her husband's property after divorce	299	70	15	15	399	3.6	Accepted

3	More women live in abject poverty than men	150	50	150	49	399	2.8	Accepted
TOTAL MEAN							10.05	
GRAND MEAN							3.26	Accepted

Male respondents agree that a girl-child has a right to the property of her father, a woman deserves part of her husband's property after a divorce, as well as more women live in abject poverty.

Objective Four: Factors that could influence male listeners' disposition to the programmes

Table 4.4: Analysis of responses on factors that could likely lead to male listeners' disposition

S/No	Factors	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	X	Remark
1	Men are superior to women	82	15	284	18	399	2.40	Rejected
2	My culture relegates women to the background	75	17	248	59	399	2.14	Rejected
3	I understand the programme better when broadcast in vernacular	90	15	209	75	399	2.25	Rejected
TOTAL MEAN							6.79	
GRAND MEAN							2.26	Rejected

Table 4.4 shows that male listeners are well disposed towards gender advocacy programmes whether it is broadcast in English or vernacular. Male respondents rejected the statement that men are superior to women. Although, a lesser number of male listeners feel men are superior to women because the man has the responsibility of providing for the family and freeing the woman while protecting her from danger.

Discussion of findings

Research Question One: To what extent are male listeners aware of Gender Advocacy Programmes of Treasure FM?

From the results in Table 4.1, it is found out that male listeners regularly listened to Gender Advocacy Programmes of Treasure FM. This can be attested to the compatibility, and portability of radio and the fact that radio is not limited to time and space (Ntiense, 2014). This reinforces the theory of selective exposure that espouses that listeners or audience choose what to listen to and decide which programs or stories to get exposed to.

Research Question Two: What is the reaction of male listeners to the Gender Advocacy Programmes?

With average mean of 3.43, male listeners agreed that the programmes are helpful. Male listeners rejected the statement that the producers of these programmes are biased, with an average mean of 2.08. From the written responses, male listeners agreed that men need advocacy too on gender issues.

Unlike Dunu's (2015) study which found out that programme content of campus community radio in Nigeria were male dominated, this study established the fact that even though the gender advocacy programmes were made for women, males were interested in listening to them.

Research Question Three: What are the critical issues raised in the programmes that elicited the reactions?

In Table 4.3, items 1, 2, and 3 with mean scores of 3.7, 3.6, and 2.8 indicate that male listeners agreed that critical issues discussed in the programmes elicited their reactions. In written responses, they agreed that the girl-child is equal with a boy-child and a woman should be given part of her husband's property if they are divorced. This is in line with article 16 of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human's Rights (1948) which states that "Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution."

Research Question Four: What are the factors that could lead to male listeners' disposition towards the programmes?

The responses in Table 4.4, indicate that most of the male respondents acquired tertiary education, which makes them favourably disposed to the programmes broadcast in both English and vernacular (pidgin language). Even respondents who acquired only non-formal education were disposed to the programmes, especially "For Women Dem" which was usually aired in pidgin language. From Table 4.4, items 1, 2, and 3 indicate negative responses with mean scores of 2.40, 2.14, and 2.25, respectively. More male respondents rejected that their culture relegates women to the background, that men are superior to women. In written responses, male listeners are indifferent as to whether it is broadcast in English or vernacular. This is because most male respondents are learned.

Conclusion

Male listeners of Gender Advocacy Programmes of Treasure FM in Obio/Akpor reacted positively to the programmes. These programmes have been successful in educating male listeners on critical issues pertaining to women. It is worthy of note that the producers of these programmes are not biased in rendering these issues on radio. This is in tandem with the individual differences theory which opines that when issues are reported in the media, individuals react differently to these issues, even when they are exposed to the same message.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers make the following recommendations.

1. Radio programmes such as "Feminine Fancy" and "For Women Dem" should get more airtime as the present 15-minutes broadcast of each programme is seen as inadequate by respondents.
2. The producers of gender advocacy programmes of Treasure FM should create programmes that appeal to both sexes.
3. The media should develop comprehensive contents on sex education to increase the understanding of both genders on the devastating effects of violence perpetrated on women and girls.

4. Non-governmental organisations and the Government should support producers by funding the programmes to reach more listeners and enhance their sustainability.

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