
An Evaluation of Radio Audience Satisfaction with Programming on *Inspiration 92.3 FM, Lagos*

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ABSTRACT

The sustenance of a broadcast station depends largely among other things, on the level of satisfaction the audiences who seek to gratify diverse needs derive. A number of broadcast management principles equate feedback received from the audiences to be a manifestation of satisfaction with the station, whereas this is by no means a sufficient yardstick as feedback is often received from a fraction of the audience not necessarily in the majority. The study sought to investigate the listening pattern of Inspiration 92.3 FM listeners in Maryland, Lagos, and their level of satisfaction. 250 respondents were surveyed from Maryland Lagos. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) was used to analyze data which is presented in descriptive statistical tool of pie chart. The findings revealed that majority (96%) of the listeners are satisfied with the programming of Inspiration 92.3 FM which gratifies their needs and that the station's on-air-personalities and house style (family-oriented) are the major attraction. The study recommends that the management of Inspiration 92.3FM engage in periodic audience satisfactory based research across the federation in states within its broadcast scope.

Keywords: Broadcast Audience, Audience Satisfaction, Listeners, Programming, Inspiration 92.3 FM

INTRODUCTION

Broadcast audiences are individuals for which radio and television programs/messages are planned, produced and delivered. They are the reason for the existence and sustenance of every broadcast organization across the globe. The Nigerian Broadcasting Commission (2010) stipulates in its National Broadcasting Code that programming standard for broadcast stations in Nigeria should be designed to meet audience expectations, in this case radio listeners who are considered to be at the heart of everything a radio station does.

The importance of radio listeners to the sustained existence of every radio station cannot be over emphasized because of the peculiar feature of the medium. Radio messages are delivered through speech which appeals to the imagination of the audience who often engage in other forms of activities even as they listen-in. According to Crisell (1994 p.10), "it is largely upon the listener's ability to imagine matters of fact that radio's distinctive and much-vaunted sense of personal companionship seems to depend". Therefore, it is through the voice of the on-air personnel that radio listeners create an imagination.

Following the deregulation of the Nigerian broadcast industry in 1992, numerous radio stations hit the Nigerian airwaves, providing broadcast audiences a variety of options. Okpanachi (2008) opines that a major area of benefit in the deregulation of the industry was that it fostered better quality in radio programming through private ownership of stations. In 2008, *Inspiration 92.3 FM* began broadcast in Lagos as the first family-oriented radio station. Its unique niche differentiated it from all other existing stations in Lagos which were largely entertainment, and sport driven. According to a 2011 survey, *Inspiration 92.3 FM* was rated as the number one of the top 5 radio stations in Lagos based on listenership. The station has since continued to gain popularity. Some of its most popular programs include: *Trafic Jam, Breakfast Jamz, Love Jamz, Midday Café, Praise Jam, Night Inspiration, and Entertainment News.*

Audience feedback has become a yardstick by which a lot of broadcast station management evaluates the success of its programming, and popularity among its audience. It is by no means a sufficient

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means through which audience satisfaction can be measured as feedback is often received from a fraction which might not necessarily capture the majority of the audiences. This study sought to determine radio audience satisfaction from the listener's assessment, using *Inspiration 92.3 FM* Lagos as case study. The essence of this research is to find out: the listening pattern of listeners in Maryland, Lagos, the factors that influence their listening pattern, as well as the level of satisfaction they derive from the programming of *Inspiration 92.3 FM*.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions were raised in this study:

1. What is the listening pattern of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* listeners in Maryland Lagos?
2. What factors influence the listening pattern of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* listeners in Maryland Lagos?
3. How do *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland Lagos perceive the level of program satisfaction on the station?

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Uses and Gratifications theory of mass communication which postulates that media audiences have needs they seek to gratify as they interact with the media. According to LittleJohn and Foss (2008), the theory focuses on the consumers of media messages rather than the message itself. In other words, broadcast audiences are largely responsible for choosing the media to meet specified needs they have. These needs range from; self-awareness, surveillance, social integration, entertainment needs and so on all of which result from the immediate psychological and social, and physical needs of the audience which often varies.

In pursuit of gratification, media audiences select a particular medium rather than particular content (Crisell, 1994). This implies that media audiences are only interested in contents that will gratify their needs. It therefore becomes the responsibility of the media to ensure that such messages exist; design its programming with gratifying specific needs of a targeted audience(s) in consideration. For instance, in order to meet the needs of broadcast audience, *Inspiration 92.3FM* is expected to broadcast programs guaranteed to be of interest to its diverse groups of target audience.

The uses and gratification theory is relevant to this study in that the numerous needs of diverse segregation of listeners on *Inspiration 92.3FM* must be met in order for them (audience) to have a satisfactory experience with the station.

Literature Review

The radio is popularly described as a “blind” broadcast medium because its messages consist of speech, so delivered to appeal to imagination of its target audiences. Crisell (1994 p.10) opine that “it is largely upon the listener's ability to imagine matters of fact that radio's distinctive and much-vaunted sense of personal companionship seems to depend”. Hence, it is through the voice of the on-air personnel that radio listeners create an imagination.

The portability as well as mobility of the radio is considered to be some major area of strength when compared especially with television broadcast medium. Listeners are afforded the opportunity and ease of tuning-in on their favorite programs outside the confines of their homes. The result of a 2008 Ofcom research in the United Kingdom, revealed that the portability of the radio has maintained audiences with the amount of listening done outdoors or at work up from 13% in 2007 to 16% for the first quarter of 2008. A great measure of the increase is attributed to technology such as: podcasts and mobile phones with radio facilities which make it easy for the listener to tune-in while ‘on-the-move’ (Fleming, 2010).

Also, Aina (2003), posits that the cost of purchasing a radio set makes it a very useful channel of communication with both literate (educated) and illiterate (uneducated) individuals. This is particularly true of the developing nations such as Nigeria with a high level of poverty.

Radio Broadcasting in Nigeria

Radio broadcasting in Nigerian began in 1932 through the efforts of the British Colonial authorities who established the first radio broadcast service (Radio Diffusion System) in affiliation with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). 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) which later became the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) in April 1951. This relay system of the BBC was replicated in mainly English speaking countries across the globe and succeeded in taking BBC news and programs to many parts of the world (Udomisor, 2013 p.1).

The establishment of the RDS in affiliation with BBC was designed to enhance economic, cultural, and political relationship between Britain and its colonies (Ihechu and Okugo, 2013). In actual fact, the objective for the establishment of radio broadcasting in Nigeria at the time was seen to be geared towards propagating the British way of life. Onabajo (2002 p.9) enlists some specific objectives for which radio broadcasting was established in Nigeria to be:

- i. Develop links between Great Britain and English speaking people, throughout the world;
- ii. Propagate the British way of life, particularly in the empire and;
- iii. Keep British citizens outside Britain informed about happenings back home.

Therefore, every aspect of programming at the time was intentionally planned for the realization of these objectives.

The “Radio Diffusion System” (RDS) which later became the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) in April 1951. However, prior to that time, other radio stations had been established by regional governments of the Northern and Eastern regions between 1945-1949 in cities of: Kano, Kaduna, Enugu, Abeokuta, Ijebu-ode, Jos, Zaria, Calabar and Port-Harcourt. According to Okpanachi (2008), the NBS was renamed in 1956 to be the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) under the NBC Act No. 39 of 1956. It was not until April 22, 1977 that *Radio Nigeria 2* was commissioned as the first Frequency Modulation (FM) radio station in Nigeria. A decade later, when the NBC was reorganized, the regional owned stations were over to State Governments, and NBC was left with only Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu & Kaduna, which became Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN).

The Nigerian broadcast industry was in monopoly by the government at the state and federal levels until 1992 when the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida deregulated the industry allowing for private ownership, and established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to regulate broadcasting in its entirety. As at 1999, there were 82 AM radio stations and 35 FM stations in Nigeria. With the deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria, FRCN ceased to benefit from the monopoly of radio broadcasting; giving room for quality programming through private ownership. Presently, there are over 100 radio stations in Nigeria (Okpanachi, 2008).

Broadcast Audience

Every broadcast organization exists with the objective of disseminating information in form of entertainment, information, and education to a group of targeted individuals referred to as broadcast audience. Broadcast audiences are at the heart of the development and sustenance of broadcasting. Therefore, it is imperative that broadcast stations understand and appropriately segment their target audience so as to target programs to the right audience, and as such gratify their needs. Onabajo (2002), posits that the more a station knows about the demographic and psychographic information of its target audiences, the better chance they have at meeting their needs.

Radio broadcast audience are referred to as listeners. Every radio station needs its listeners who are the heart of all its operations. Radio listening is a solitary activity. When people are alone, they use radio as a substitute for human company. Studies on radio listenership have reinforced the edge of the radio over the television broadcast media. In, 2007, The Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB) of the UK conducted a radio listenership survey. The findings revealed that 88% of radio listeners in the UK between the ages of 15 – 24 years, tune-in to the radio every week, and 72% of them expressed that listening to the radio has become a part of their daily routine. Out of the 72%, 37% said the radio “was like a friend to them” while 46% said they “trusted the medium”. This suggests a significant level of satisfaction which these listeners derived from the radio (Fleming 2010 p.20).

In another study, Ray-Udejah (2012), sought to evaluate the radio program preference of tertiary students sampled from three universities in Anambra State of eastern Nigeria (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anambra State University, and Madonna University). The findings of the study revealed

that 68.9% of the students derive maximum satisfaction from educational based radio programs of relevance to their academics. The finding of this study lend credence to the uses and gratification theory which postulates that audience seek to gratify needs in their media interaction. Hence, as seen in this study, satisfaction is derived when the desired need(s) is met.

Ajaebu, Akintayo, and Akinjiyan (2015), examined the radio listening habits of university students of the Redeemers University in Nigeria. One of the objectives of the study was to determine the level of satisfaction these students derive from listening to the radio. The findings revealed that only 18.8% of the students felt satisfied after listening to the radio, rather majority

(55.8%) of them experienced other feelings such as: happiness, motivated, related, and confidence, while 25.4% did not experience any emotions. The findings in this study show that radio listeners experience other forms of positive emotions that might not necessarily translate to satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the survey quantitative research design. 250 questionnaires were purposively distributed among listeners of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* in Maryland Lagos, Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique was dimmed suitable for the study because the target respondents were specified; individuals who are listeners of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* in Maryland Lagos. A 100% response rate was recorded as the research instrument was retrieved from the each respondent immediately after it was filled.

The data from the responses to the questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), while the result has been presented and discussed aided by descriptive statistical tool of pie chart.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Demographic Data

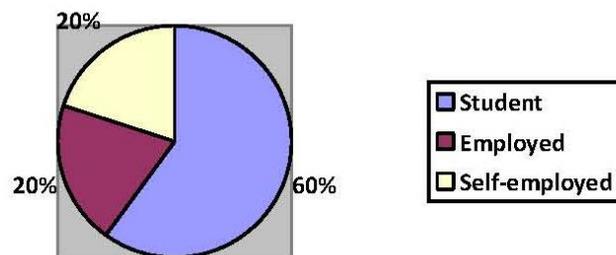


Figure1. Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Analysis

Figure 1 illustrates the demographic distribution of the occupation of respondents who participated in this study. The findings reveal that 150 (60%) of the respondents are students, while 50 (20%) are employed, and 50 (20%) are self-employed adults. This indicates the popularity of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* among students who constitute the majority (60%) of its listenership in Maryland, Lagos.

Also, the 40% cumulative percentage of employed and self-employed listeners also shows that *Inspiration 92.3 FM* audience base in Maryland, Lagos cuts cross different strata of audiences.

Research Question 1: What is the listening pattern of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* listeners in Maryland Lagos?

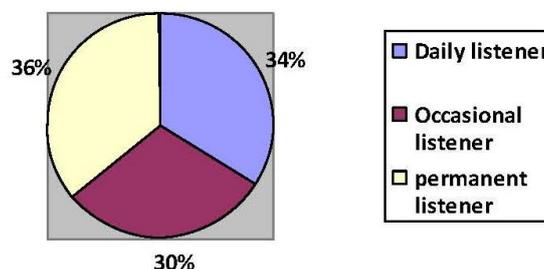


Figure2. Distribution of Respondents Listening Pattern

Analysis

Figure 2 presents the frequency at which respondents listen to *Inspiration 92.3 FM*. 85 (34%) respondents declared themselves to be daily listeners, 75 (30%) respondents as occasional listeners, and 90 (36%) respondents are permanent listeners. This reveals that majority (70%) of the respondents can be categorized as active listeners of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* because they tune-in on a daily bases, and have their radio sets permanently tuned to the station, while 30% of the respondents are occasional listeners of the station who only tune-in when the need arises.

This result further lends credence to the UK-based study on radio listenership by The Radio Advertising Bureau (RAB) which found that majority (72%) of radio listeners considered themselves to be active listeners; listening to the radio as a daily routine (Fleming 2010). It can also be deduced that radio listeners irrespective of their geographical location experience certain levels of similarities in their listening pattern.

Research Question2: What factors influence the listening pattern of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* listeners in Maryland Lagos?

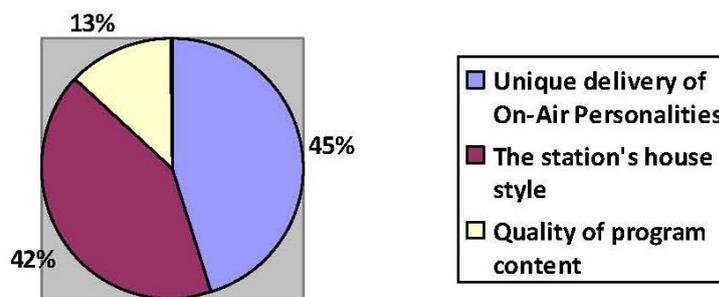


Figure3. Distribution of Respondents by the Factors that Influence their Listening Pattern

Analysis

Drawing from the Uses and Gratification theory, audience members have reasons and needs that make them choose a particular media channel. This study finds out the factors that determine the frequency with which respondents listen to *Inspiration 92.3 FM*, as seen in figure 3. 105 (42%) respondents listen-in because of the unique delivery of the On-Air personalities on *Inspiration 92.3 FM*, 113 (45%) respondents because of the stations house style, and 32 (13%) respondents listening pattern is based on the quality of program content.

Therefore, the findings present the unique delivery of the On-Air personalities on *Inspiration 92.3 FM* as the major determining factor responsible for the listening pattern of a majority (45%) of the respondents. Also, the unique house style of the station which is its family-oriented programming as encapsulated in its slogan – *Nigeria's No 1 family radio station* is seen to be a determining factor for 42%. This shows that the major points of attraction for most (87%) respondents are the On-Air personalities and the house style of the station. According to the respondents, the speech pattern and personal engagement ability of on-air personalities are the unique points of *Inspiration 92.3 FM*.

Research Question 3: How do *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland Lagos perceive the level of program satisfaction on the station?

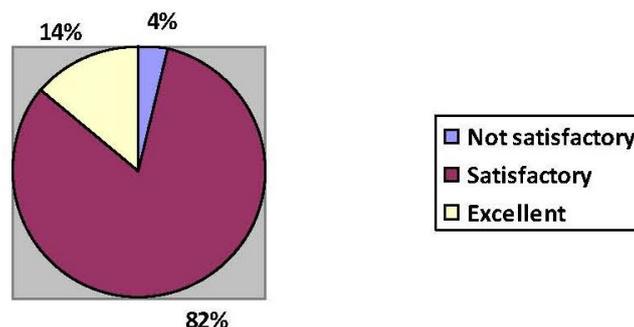


Figure4. Respondents rating of programming on *Inspiration 92.3 FM*

Analysis

Obono and Madu (2010), had emphasized that programming is a key instrument for attracting audience and determining the viability of a station. And so research question three sought to find out respondents' rating of programming on *Inspiration 92.3FM*. From Figure 4, it can be seen that 10 (4%) respondents perceive the programming on *Inspiration 92.3FM* to be not satisfactory, 205 (82%) respondents are satisfied, and 35 (14%) respondents are of the opinion that programming on the station is nothing short of excellent.

It can clearly be seen that *Inspiration 92.3 FM* successfully gratifies the needs of its audiences as a vast majority (96%) of the listeners are pleased with programming on *Inspiration 92.3FM*, as 82% are satisfied and 14% rate programming as excellent. The respondents' satisfaction with the station's programming could stem from the fact that the family-oriented house style reverberates in its programming. And so there are programmes conspicuously geared towards building every member of the family - children, young adults and adults. Programmes like 'Early Morning Blessings' (the whole family), 'Sharing Life Issues' (adults), Tea break with Titi (children), Breakfast Jam (young adult and adult. Others include: 'Nite Time', 'Sassy Saturday', 'Thank God Its Sunday'.

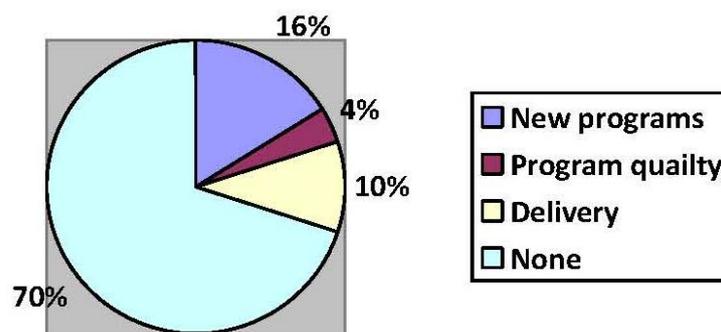


Figure5. Suggested need for improvement

Analysis

Figure 5 presents areas in which respondents suggest an improvement in order to enhance the programming of *Inspiration 92.3 FM*. 40 (16%) respondents suggest that new programs be introduced, 10 (4%) respondents seek an improvement in program quality, 25 (10%) respondents suggest an improvement in delivery of programs by On-Air personnel's, while 175 (70%) respondents are of the opinion that programming on *Inspiration 92.3 FM* is just fine.

Although majority (70%) of the respondents are satisfied with the level of programming and as such do not have a need for further improvement nor made suggestion(s) as to what should be improved upon, 30% which is a significant number of the respondents suggest: introduction of new programs, improvement of program quality, and delivery all of which if harnessed will only boost the level of satisfaction they derive from the station.

Major Findings

1. Despite the fact that *Inspiration 92.3FM* is a family oriented radio station, majority (60%) of its listeners in Maryland, Lagos are students.
2. Majority (70%) of *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland, Lagos are active listeners who tune-in daily, and have their radio sets permanently tuned to the station.
3. 30% of *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland, Lagos tune-in occasionally.
4. The major factors that influence the listening pattern of the listeners are: the unique delivery of the On-Air Personalities at *Inspiration 92.3FM*, and the house style of the station at 45% and 42%.
5. Only 13% of *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland, Lagos are influenced by the quality of programming.
6. Majority (96%) of *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland, Lagos assess the programming of the station as satisfactory and excellent. This shows that the station has successfully met the needs of its audiences.

- Majority (70%) of *Inspiration 92.3FM* listeners in Maryland, Lagos are so pleased with its programming that they have no suggestions for the stations management. However, 30% of the respondents suggest an improvement through: introduction of new programs, improvement of program quality, and delivery.

CONCLUSION

Radio is a powerful medium of mass communication with its unique appeal. Its personalized nature makes it stand out in broadcasting. Radio serves as destination for information, entertainment and association. It develops a strong sense of community among its listeners. In Lagos state (the focus of this study) there are over 15 stations, all jostling for audience attention and loyalty. As such, stations have to adopt strategies that will make them stand out and ultimately cultivate loyal listeners. *Inspiration 92.3FM* unique strategy of being a family-oriented station seems to be working for it as indicated by the satisfaction of its audience as expressed by 96% of the sampled audience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is therefore recommended that the management of *Inspiration 92.3FM* engage in periodic audience satisfactory based research across the federation in states within its broadcast scope. Also, the suggested areas of improvement (introduction of new programs, program quality, and delivery) should be considered.

Also, creativity and versatility is also another strategy that radio stations need to take into consideration in their programming. Presenters who are warm, engaging and can connect on a personal level with the audience help in building loyal listeners and in winning new listeners.

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