



## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAMMES OF SELECT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE STATIONS IN OWERRI

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### ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify the listenership level, knowledge level and perception of Owerri North residents towards the public service programmes of both public and private radio stations. This study was anchored on agenda setting theory and framing theory. The researchers adopted survey research design which covers residents of Owerri North who listen to the selected public and private radio stations. The selected public radio station was Orient FM and Heartland FM, while the private radio stations were Ozisa FM, Boss FM, Hot FM and Zanders FM. The researchers used a population of 287,512 and a sample size of 384 arrived at using the Australian on-line sample size calculator. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted by the researchers to select the exact respondents used in this study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. Findings revealed that Owerri North residents listen to public radio stations at a moderate level, and to private radio stations at a very high level. Owerri North residents perceive private radio station programmes to be more interesting than that of public radio stations. Also, finding revealed that Owerri North residents prefer listening to private radio station programmes, but do not do same with public radio stations. It was concluded that Owerri North residents prefer listening to private radio station different public service programmes. The researchers recommended that public radio stations should upgrade their pattern of songs played on air to the current and trendy songs their listeners can vibe with. They should as well work on upgrading their pattern and timing of sports programme presentations this will go a long way in attracting to them more sports fans.

**Keywords:** Comparative; Public Service Programmes; Public radio station; Private radio Stations

### Introduction

Media is a powerful tool used for audience information, education, persuasion and entertainment. It is as well used to set agenda or frame issues that are important in the society, allowing the masses to make conscious decision and take action towards what they were communicated about (Ojebuyi & Ogunkunke, 2019). 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 political, social and economic 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 & Ogunkunke, 2019). 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.

Radio possesses the power of spontaneity (Ojebuyi & Ogunkunke, 2019). These attributes have endeared radio to the 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; Rozukalne, 2016; 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 (Endong, 2015), legitimization of the public service broadcasting in this 21st century (Larsen, 2014; Mohapatra et al., 2014), socio-political and economic considerations (Ojebuyi, 2015), inadequacy of training for broadcast journalists (Okumbe et al., 2017), and the inability of regulatory bodies to ensure conformity to ethical and professional standards of the profession (Okumbe et al., 2017).

Public and private media stations comes with so many advantages and disadvantages which are both visible and hidden to the public's eye. In the case of Owerri is not a different scenario (Ojebuyi & Ogunkunke, 2019). 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 (Olayiwola, 2013; Udeze & Uzuegbunam, 2013; Udomisor, 2013; Ojebuyi & Kolawole, 2016) have asserted that both the public and private media are now first of all business enterprises, and this rife phenomenon tends to undermine their expected social responsibilities.

In Imo state, we have just two television stations, which are known by the government, as a public broadcast station. These are IBC Orient TV and NTA, Owerri. There are no private TV stations in Imo state. The government as well has two radio stations, namely: Orient FM 94.5 and Heartland FM 100.1. Whereas there are many private owned radio stations in Imo state, and more may spring off as the day goes. These government broadcast stations programme mode of presentation and content will invariably differ from that of the private radio stations. These accrue to them their respective fan listeners (Nielsen et al, 2016). These differences are what the researchers in this study plan to compare. The researchers sought to compare public service programmes of select public and private radio stations in Imo state, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problems**

Programmes are the very content used to spicing up the broadcast media stations. Every broadcast station within every locality in the states in Nigeria are known, viewed and listened to because of how they have distinguished themselves with the unique programmes they air. In Imo State there are many radio stations, leaving Imolites to be exposed to listening to varying programmes that best fits their personal, social, educational and emotional need.

There is a big difference among private owned radio station programmes. There is however a big difference in public radio station programme house style and that of the private radio station programmes house style and pattern of presentation. It is believed that the various audiences choosing to expose themselves and acclimatize themselves with either public service programmes of public and private radio stations, know what have compelled them to patronize them.

It is believed that some residents would definitely prefer listening to private radio station public service programmes more than public radio station programmes. It is as well believed that some persons who do listen to public radio station programmes prefer particular programmes these public broadcast stations air. The programme content and quality of private and public radio stations makes a huge difference to their respective listeners.

The manner of programme presentation and on-air carriage of radio stations is believed to make most residents to listen to them. As for currency and timing of these programmes aired by public and private radio stations, this distinguishes it and affects its viewership. All these are problems the researcher sought to find out. The researchers sought to compare Owerri North residents' listenership of public radio stations alongside that of private radio stations.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the listenership level of Owerri North residents to Public and Private Radio stations programmes?
2. What is the knowledge level of Owerri North residents towards Public and Private Radio station programmes?
3. What are the perceptions of Owerri North residents on the type and quality of programmes public and private radio station air?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Radio as a Concept**

Radio is an audio device of passing messages to a large audience. Radio involves the process by which messages are sent through electrical waves. In other words, the sound could be sent and received through these waves (Apuke, 2017). Apuke, further stated that radio involves the process by which messages are sent through electrical waves (2017).

Radio can also be seen as a medium used for sending and receiving messages through the air using electronic waves. It is also about the activity of broadcasting programmes for people to listen to the programmes being broadcasted. Through radio, people send spoken words, music, and other communication signals through the air to any part of the world. Radio broadcasts feature music, news, discussion, interviews, description of sports events and advertising (Nkwam-Uwaoma et al., 2021).

#### **An Overview on Public Service Broadcasting (PSB)**

Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is a media model dedicated to serving the public interest, often contrasted with commercial broadcasting which prioritizes profit. PSB aims to provide programming that informs, educates, and entertains while being free from commercial or political influence. It's a cornerstone of democratic societies, ensuring citizens have access to unbiased information and diverse cultural content (OfCom 2023).

Globally, PSB varies in form and function but generally shares common characteristics. It's typically funded by the public, through mechanisms like license fees or taxes, ensuring its accountability to the audience rather than advertisers or shareholders. According to Public Media Alliance, this funding model supports the creation of content that might not be commercially viable but has high cultural or educational value (2024).

In terms of content, PSB offers a mix of news, current affairs, educational programs, drama, music, and children's shows. It strives to cater to all demographics, often with a mandate to reflect the nation's diversity and promote social cohesion. PSB institutions are expected to maintain high standards of journalism and production, contributing to the cultural and informational wealth of a society.

The digital age has brought new challenges and opportunities for PSB. With the proliferation of online content and streaming services, PSBs must adapt to changing consumption patterns while staying true to their core values (OfCom, 2023).

They now operate across multiple platforms, including television, radio, and online, to reach their audiences. Despite the pressures of a rapidly evolving media landscape, PSB remains a vital institution. It's seen as a guardian of the public sphere, providing a space for democratic discourse and debate. PSBs are also champions of local content, supporting domestic production and talent, which is particularly important in smaller or less-populated countries.

Public service broadcasting is a very essential element of modern democracies, offering a diverse range of high-quality, non-commercial content. It plays a critical role in informing the public, supporting

national culture, and fostering an informed citizenry. As media consumption continues to evolve, PSB institutions must innovate to remain relevant and continue serving the public good (OfCom, 2023 Public Media Alliance, 2024).

### **Public Service Programmes**

Public service programmes on broadcast stations play a crucial role in serving the collective needs of society. These programmes are designed to educate, inform, and entertain the public while prioritizing societal interests over commercial ones (UK Essays, 2018).

One of the core principles of public service broadcasting is to provide content that is beneficial to the public, even if it may not necessarily align with what the audience thinks they want. This approach helps ensure that the content is enriching and contributes positively to the public discourse (Newton, 2016).

For instance, the final episode of David Attenborough's "Blue Planet II" exemplifies the educational aspect of public service programmes. It not only entertained viewers but also informed them about the environmental impact of human actions on marine life, highlighting the decline of albatrosses due to plastic pollution (UK Essays, 2018).

Moreover, public service broadcasting has been found to have a broader social impact. Research indicates that countries with strong public service broadcasting systems have populations that are better informed about government and politics, exhibit higher levels of social trust, and are more engaged in democratic processes (Newton, 2016).

While these programmes often face commercial pressures, they strive to maintain their integrity by balancing quality content with the need to generate revenue through advertising. This balance is essential to avoid political intervention and ensure institutional independence (Goyanes, 2021).

Public service programmes on broadcast stations are a vital part of the media landscape, contributing to an informed, educated, and engaged public, which is fundamental to a healthy democracy. They stand as a testament to the importance of media that serves the public interest first and foremost.

### **Empirical Review**

A study conducted by Ojebuyi and Ogunkunle (2019) entitled *Private Radio Stations Fare Better: Audience Perception of Adherence to Social Responsibilities by Public and Private Radio Stations in Oyo State, Nigeria* using both Content Analysis and Survey 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. Similarly, Wada (2020) conducted a study using survey of employees of two private radio stations revealing that programme quality in comparison to government owned media was rated very high by the respondents, while ownership influence in programming decisions was a major hindrance, so also financing problems.

Furthermore, Ekwok (2018) did a study on the *Effects of Public Service Broadcasting on Rural Development: A Study of the Impact of Selected Programmes of Cross River Radio, Ikom and Four other Rural Areas*. Findings showed that about 68.4 percent of the rural dwellers listen to Cross River Radio Ikom.

However, of this percentage, only 38.6 percent listeners agreed that they know any rural development-related programmes on Cross River Radio Ikom, while a higher percentage, about 61.4 said they did not know of any. Ironically, 42 percent listeners said their programme of interest has helped their community to develop in one form or the other.

However, only about 37.8 percent listeners admitted that they had ever discussed the benefits of the programme they listened to on the Cross River Radio Ikom with other members of their communities. On the very crucial questions of whether the Cross River Radio Ikom was doing enough to educate the rural

communities on rural development, only 25.6 percent said “Yes”, 49.6 percent said “No”, while 24.8 percent respondents were not sure of any specific answer of “Yes” or “No”. But there was a remarkable percentage improvement on the question as to whether there is any relationship between the Cross River Radio Ikom programmes and the attitudes or tendencies of listeners in rural communities.

Also, a study by Geve (2015) entitled *Comparative Analysis of Public and Private Broadcast Media Surveillance of the Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria*. Through a content analysis design and systematic sampling procedure, two each of public and private broadcast media in Nigeria were sampled.

Results suggest that public broadcast had higher frequency (60%) of coverage of Boko Haram issues than the private (40%) ones. The same percentages are applicable to prominence given to the insurgency by both media groups. Results further revealed that public broadcast media contributed more (65%) in the fight against the insurgency in Nigeria than their private counterpart.

The researcher recommends among others, the enactment of an act of parliament mandating all broadcast media in Nigeria to dedicate at least 55% of their programming in the surveillance of the Boko Haram insurgency with a view to effectively managing the precarious situation in Nigeria.

Nweze et al., (2019) did a study entitled *Comparative Analyses of Management of Government and Private Media in South East Nigeria* which analyzed the management of government and private media in South East Nigeria, using Unity FM Abakaliki Ebonyi State and Dream FM Enugu, Enugu State as focal point. The study was anchored on the gatekeeping theory of the mass media.

The survey method of research was adopted with an interview guide containing 8 open ended questions for 12 respondents from both media houses. Findings revealed that there are in-house policies that guide their day to activities in the media stations. The major theme in the policy of the government owned media is to relay the government activities to the people and present the government to the people in good light.

Findings also indicate that the owners personally employ and educate the editors on the policies and follow them up to ensure that they edit reports and programmes content in line with the in-house policies of the management. The study further indicates that the privately owned media has the main objective of profit-making. In the both cases, gatekeeping affect the quality of their programme content. Professional bodies such as the Nigerian Union of journalists (NUJ), should ensure that journalists working in both public and privately managed media strictly adhere to the Code of ethics of their profession.

A study conducted by Baya and Mberia (2014) entitled *the impact of television viewing in influencing adolescents’ sexual behaviour* examined the impact of television viewing in shaping adolescents’ sexual behaviour. The paper sought to investigate TV influence on the sexual behaviour of adolescents by addressing the following three fundamental concerns; how television influences sexual behaviour of adolescents; the extent to which TV viewing may determine the sexual behaviour of adolescents; and the potential dangers associated with exposure to sexual content on TV.

The paper found that adolescents often seek sexual information from television content rather than their parents or other adults by being attracted to programs with sexual content. The paper concluded by focusing on the urgent need to address television influence on adolescents’ sexual behaviour by providing them with critical interpretation and communication skills in multimedia environments.

Similarly, Onyebuchi et al., (2023) did a study which focuses on examining the influence of radio health sensitisation programme on HIV stigmatisation among residents of Owerri metropolis. The agenda setting and social learning theories served as the theoretical underpinning for the study. Survey research design was used. A sample size of 384 was derived using the Wimmer and Dominick online sample size calculator from the population of 555,500.

The multi-stage cluster random sampling, involving purposive sampling techniques served as the sampling techniques with questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The techniques required Owerri metropolis being divided into three manageable clusters. Findings of the study showed that radio

health sensitisation programme on HIV stigmatisation has broadened the knowledge of the respondents on HIV stigmatisation to a high extent at a grand mean of 3.5(N=305).

Also, at a grand mean of 3.4 (N=305), radio health sensitisation programme on HIV stigmatisation has influenced the behaviour of the respondents towards HIV stigmatised victims as it has induced positive behavioural changes in them. It was concluded that if there are myriads of media programmes specifically designed for mitigating HIV stigmatisation and scheduled at friendly airtimes across different media organisations, it will lead to an increased media exposure as the media constitute an effective strategy for combating HIV/AIDS-related stigma.

A study by Asodike and Udoh (2014) which evaluated the effects of private and government owned broadcast media on Nigerian public opinion. The study focused on the effects of two broadcast media on the listening/viewing audience in Onitsha Anambra State, Nigeria. This was done through probing of the effects of broadcasting using the news and programmes of private broadcast media, accounts of events, expressing of divergent views, credibility and acceptance of the media and message broadcast by both media were also tested.

The results of findings among other things showed that private broadcast media positively influenced public opinion and as well encouraged the expression of divergent views. Newton (2016) did a study which focuses on the impact of public service and commercial broadcasting on politics and society.

It provided an accessible overview of the growing research literature on the impact of public service and commercial broadcasting and highlights its main implications for policy discussions about the future of public service broadcasting in Western societies. It shows that the populations of countries with public service broad and narrowcasting are better informed about government and politics, are more trusting of other people, have more positive civic attitudes, have greater confidence in democratic institutions and are more likely to engage in democratic politics.

Moreover, levels of social trust are higher in countries which have a significant public service element in their media systems, even among individuals who do not habitually watch public TV channels. The article ends with a brief discussion of the implications of this research for the future of public broadcasting in the Western world.

Nsereka (2016) did a comparative study of NTA and AIT that focuses on challenges of public and private television stations in Nigeria. The study adopted the survey research method and the purposive sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 180 subjects from the population of the study. Findings from the analysis of the data generated through the questionnaire, showed that harsh economic terrain; increased news commercialization; and impediment to the process of driving national development, were among the problems facing television broadcasting in Nigeria.

It was also found that the private television stations are worse affected by these challenges than public ones. Concluding that driving innovation, change and development requires the right environment for broadcasting, it was recommended that television owners and journalists be committed to enthrone professionalism and ethical standards and that there should be provision of funding and subventions for the media, especially as Nigeria approaches the full implementation of the digitization policy.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Agenda Setting Theory**

The agenda setting theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donal Shaw in the 1972 (Wanta & Alkazemi, 2017). The theory describes how programmes are been used by radio stations in Owerri to raise significance of events, topics and to entertain their respective desires and views. Radio stations through their programme raise issues for the mass audience consumption and deliberation, shape information output in such a manner that certain issues are raised in significance to the public at the expense of some other events; and influence the public to be aware of the issues, and eventually form an opinion on them.

## Methodology

The research design adopted for this work is the survey method which involves sampling of opinion of different people using questionnaire in order to get information on what is being studied. The area of study is Owerri North, Imo State. The select radio stations used in this study include two (2) public radio stations and four (4) private radio stations.

The public radio stations are Orient FM (94.5) and Heartland FM (100.5 Owerri) whereas the two (2) private radio stations are: Ozisa FM (96.1) and Hot FM (99.5). The choice of these select public and private radio stations is because they are very popular and frequently listened to by Imolites. The population of this study is residents of Owerri North.

According to Macrotrend population figures, the 2024 projected population of Owerri North residents is 287, 512. A sample size of 384 was arrived at through the use of Australian Sample Size Calculator. Multistage sampling technique was adopted for this study. The researchers adopted questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. The researchers adopted test-retest technique to affirm the reliability of the instrument. The data gathered were analysed using Likert scale data analysis.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

The researchers distributed and retrieved 384 copies of questionnaire to the respondents in Owerri North. In essence, this means that 100% of the instruments were used for the analysis.

**Research Question One:** What is the listenership level of Owerri North residents to Public and private Radio stations programmes?

**Table 1: Respondents Responses on their Listenership Level to Public and Private Radio Stations Programmes (N – 384)**

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
I have access to a radio set	384	-	-	-	4.0	Accepted
I listen to public radio stations like Orient FM and Heartland FM	299	85	-	-	3.8	Accepted
I listen to private radio stations like Oziza 96.1 FM, Boss 98.1 FM and Zanders 105.7 FM	384	-	-	-	4.0	Accepted
I listen to public and private radio stations programmes regularly	187	153	30	14	3.3	Accepted
<b>Mean</b>					<b>3.7</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Variable Keys:** SA (Strongly Agree) = 4; A (Agree) = 3; D (Disagree) = 2 and SD (Strongly Disagree) = 1

**Decision Rule:** If the average mean score is lower than 2.5 (1-2.4), the researcher decides that respondents have low listenership level towards public and private radio stations programmes. But if the average mean score is higher than 2.4 (2.5-5.0), the researcher decides that respondents have high listenership level towards public and private radio stations programmes.

Data from table 1 revealed that with a mean of 3.7, respondents have high listenership level towards public and private radio stations programmes. This implies that residents of Owerri North listen to public and private radio stations regularly.

**Research Question Two:** What is the knowledge level of Owerri North residents towards public and private radio stations public service programmes?

**Table 2: Respondents Responses on Their Knowledge Level towards Public and Private Radio Stations Public Service Programmes (N – 384)**

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
I am aware of public service programmes aired on public radio stations	124	155	75	30	2.97	Accepted
I am aware of public service programmes aired on private radio stations	134	173	62	15	3.11	Accepted
I listen to public radio stations public service programmes regularly	189	94	30	42	2.97	Accepted
I listen to private radio stations public service programmes regularly	207	82	65	30	3.21	Accepted
I am knowledgeable regarding public radio stations public service programmes	173	111	55	12	2.99	Accepted
I am knowledgeable regarding private radio stations public service programmes	189	103	68	24	3.19	Accepted
<b>Mean</b>					<b>3.1</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 2 indicated that with a mean of 3.1, respondents are highly knowledgeable towards public and private radio stations public service programmes. This means that residents of Owerri North have high knowledge regarding public service programmes aired by public and private radio stations.

**Research Question Three:** The perceptions of Owerri North residents on the kind and quality of programmes public and private radio station air

**Table 3: Respondents Responses on their Perception Regarding the Type and Quality of Programmes Aired by Public Radio Stations (N – 384)**

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Public radio stations broadcast quality programmes	77	122	101	84	2.5	Accepted
The stage carriage and quality of public radio stations programmes are exceptional	55	63	144	122	2.1	Rejected
Discussion in public radio stations programmes are very interesting as it covers every aspect	73	81	131	99	2.3	Rejected
Public radio stations have more capable anchors, presenters and programme producers	28	153	103	100	2.3	Rejected
Public radio stations understand what kind of programmes interest their audience more and how to engage their audience well	41	60	148	135	2.0	Rejected



Public radio stations know how to sequence and prioritize their programmes from early in the morning till late at night when they close	55	142	95	92	2.4	Rejected
<b>Mean</b>					<b>2.3</b>	<b>Rejected</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Variable Keys:** SA (Strongly Agree) = 4; A(Agree) = 3; D (Disagree) = 2 and SD(Strongly Disagree) = 1

**Decision Rule:** If the average mean score is lower than 2.5 (1-2.4), the researcher decides that respondents have negative perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by public radio stations. But if the average mean score is higher than 2.4 (2.5-5.0), the researcher decides that respondents have positive perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by public radio stations

Table 3 revealed that respondents have negative perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by public radio stations. This implies that residents of Owerri North have negative perception in regards to the type and quality of programmes aired by public radio stations.

**Table 4: Respondents responses on their perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by private radio stations (N – 384)**

Options	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
Private radio stations broadcast quality programmes	115	122	69	78	2.7	Accepted
The stage carriage and quality of private radio stations programmes are exceptional	136	104	43	101	2.7	Accepted
Discussion in private radio stations programmes are very interesting as it covers every aspect	157	109	41	77	2.9	Accepted
Private radio stations have more capable anchors, presenters and programme producers	92	126	79	87	2.6	Accepted
Private radio stations understand what kind of programmes interest their audience more and how to engage their audience well	112	113	55	104	2.6	Accepted
Private radio stations know how to sequence and prioritize their programmes from early in the morning till late at night when they close	103	125	75	81	2.7	Accepted
<b>Mean</b>					<b>2.7</b>	<b>Accepted</b>

**Source:** Field Survey, 2025

**Variable Keys:** SA (Strongly Agree) = 4; A(Agree) = 3; D (Disagree) = 2 and SD(Strongly Disagree) = 1

**Decision Rule:** If the average mean score is lower than 2.5 (1-2.4), the researcher decides that respondents have negative perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by private radio stations. But if the average mean score is higher than 2.4 (2.5-5.0), the researcher decides that respondents have positive perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by private radio stations

Table 4 revealed that respondents have positive perception regarding the type and quality of programmes aired by private radio stations. This implies that residents of Owerri North have positive perception in regards to the type and quality of programmes aired by private radio stations.

## Discussion of Findings

Finding revealed that Owerri North residents have access to a radio set and listen to both public and private radio stations programmes. Regarding when they listen to these radio station programmes, it was revealed that they listen to these programmes anytime of the day. Owerri North resident's listenership level to public and private radio stations programmes was shown to be very high.

In comparing between public radio station programme listenership with that of private radio station, it was revealed that Owerri North residents listen more to private radio stations than that of public radio stations, this was shown to be at a very high level. Gever (2015) adds that the broadcast media is used to set agenda for its listeners and viewers about important topics and happenings. This increases the willingness of listeners to tune in to the various broadcast media news programmes.

Finding showed that Owerri North residents are aware of public service programmes aired on public and private radio stations. Programmes like their news, discussion/phone-in, sports, drama, musical and all kinds of programmes. Owerri North residents are highly knowledgeable towards public service programmes aired by public and private radio stations.

In comparing between public radio station public service programme knowledge level with that of private radio station among residents of Owerri North, it was revealed that Owerri North residents are highly knowledgeable regarding private radio stations different programmes than that of public radio stations.

Baya and Mberia (2014) and Onyebuchi et al., (2023) study argues that the knowledge and exposure of people to broadcast programmes affects their behaviour towards life and other people. The agenda setting theory supports this study finding.

The perception of Owerri North residents towards public service programmes of public radio stations showed that they think that public radio station programmes are very good and okay and they know how to sequence and prioritize their programmes from early in the morning till late at night that they close for the day.

However, the residents think that these public radio stations do not air exceptional quality and stage captivating programmes; their discussion programmes are not that interesting; do not have more capable anchors, presenters and programme producers; do not understand what kind of programmes interest their audience more and how to engage their audience well.

The perception of Owerri North residents towards public service programmes of private radio stations showed that Owerri North residents believe that private radio stations air very good and okay programmes with good quality and exceptional stage carriage in their programmes; that their discussion programmes are very interesting and covers every aspect of societal issues; that they have more capable anchors, presenters and programme producers; that they understand what kind of programmes interest their audience more and how to engage their audiences well using their various programmes; that they know how to sequence and prioritize their programmes from early in the morning till late at night when they close for the days programme.

Regarding comparing Owerri North residents' perception between public radio station programmes with that of private radio stations, we see that the resident believe that private radio station programmes are of good quality and with exceptional stage carriage while covering all aspects of societal issues in their discussion, phone-in and news programmes. These residents on the other hand perceive that public radio stations programmes are good, and with good quality but that they do not have exceptional stage carriage and do not cover all aspects of societal issues. In the mind of residents, private radio stations are doing a better work than public radio stations.

Ekwok (2018) concurs and found that there is a relationship between the people's perception to the programmes they listen to and their attitude tendencies. Newton (2016) study found a contrary view. He found that the level of social trust is higher in countries which have a significant public service element in their media systems, even among individuals who do not habitually watch public TV channels.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

We conclude that Owerri North residents prefer listening to private radio station different public service programmes, as their programmes are engaging and presented with good content and quality. The researchers made the following recommendations that:

1. Owerri North residents should loosen up a bit to public radio station programmes because these radio station staff are more qualified and understand what they need.
2. Owerri North residents should get to expose themselves more to public radio station programmes, so as to increase their knowledge about the exciting programmes aired for them by these radio stations
3. Public radio station staff and journalists should try and upgrade their pattern of anchoring and presenting on air, and should get used to the digital intricacies they need to know, so that they can perfectly come up with nicer and more welcoming disposition when presenting or anchoring any of their programmes any day.

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