

INFLUENCE OF SOBI F.M'S APERO MEKUNU ON FORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION AMONG LISTENERS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

This study seeks to assess the influence of Apero Mekunu; a programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M, on the formation of opinion among residents in Ilorin metropolis. The study examined the Concept of Broadcasting, Radio Broadcasting, Radio Programmes, Overview of Sobi 101.9 F.M vis-a-vis its Apero Mekunu programme. The study is hinged on the Agenda-Setting and two-Step Flow theories as justification. The survey method of research was employed as a design, while 400 copies of questionnaire were administered to audience of Sobi F.M in Ilorin metropolis. Findings showed Apero Mekunu commands wide listenership base; reaching about 7 million audiences in various destination. Also, it was discovered that the time allotted for the programme is relatively small compared to issues under discussion. Based on these findings, it was recommended that the programme should be periodically reviewed so that it will continue to sustain its listenership base, while the time allotted should also be increased.

Keywords: Audience, Opinion, Listeners, Apero Mekunu, Programmes

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INTRODUCTION

The mass media wield an enormous power in shaping and reshaping of events. They persuade, crusade, set agenda, act as watchdog of the society, educates, inform and mobilizes people to agitate for their rights or reject government actions or policies (Uwaoma & Onu, 2017). Also, Adeyanju (2013) opines that the mass media entertain and act as status conferrer. The broadcast media (radio) is an aggressive medium for exercising the watchdog setting and functions of the mass media, radio as a medium of broadcasting pass to all fabrics of the society: culture, politics, education, music and sports due to immediacy of their news, thereby touching the lives of the young, adult, the aged, the poor, the rich, educated and illiterate cutting across all ethnic and religious groups affecting their

norms, belief systems, dressing patterns, attitude and social behavior (Familusi & Owoeye, 2014; Oriola & Ogbemi, 2016; and Basse, 2018)

Radio broadcast stations affect the public by helping them to form opinion and at the same time help them to change it. They do this by helping to give the audience what to think about, especially on those pictures created by human beings in their heads (Basse, 2018). According to Adeyanju (2013), radio as a medium of broadcasting helps to create these pictures through various programme contents aired. However, people's opinion formation depends on the use individual want to put to radio messages or programmes. This use is conversely determined by perceptions, judgment, social and educational background among other things (Nwankwo, Ojo & Apeh, 2015). There is no doubt

that how radio programmes influence public opinion depends on whether the audiences have confidence, trustworthiness and interest in such station. Uwaoma and Onu (2017) notes that the confidence reposed in radio programmes is a function of how credible the radio station itself is, as well as how it is dedicated to truth and facts. Any station which presents distorted information will tend to lose credibility. The result is that the listening audience will look elsewhere.

There is no gainsaying that opinions are products of an individual's personality, social characteristics, and interests. These opinions, especially those on issues of national importance and societal concern are also shaped by radio programmes which empower them on what to discuss about (Oriola & Ogbemi, 2016). An opinion as posits by Nwankwo, Ojo and Apeh (2015) is normally the outcome of a process that takes place in the human mind, and only human beings are equipped by nature with the means, which is the mind, by which opinions can be formed. Thus, Obo, Eteng and Coker (2014) sees public opinion as the totality of the political orientations, beliefs, values, and attitudes expressed by members of a group about current issues, actors, and events in their environment, as initiated and anchored by the mass media.

Also, Bassey (2018) emphasizes that the term "opinion" refers to a belief which reflects the attitudes and personality of people on a matter of great national importance. That is, public opinion is not the opinion of the whole population; it is a view of the capable segment of the population. It includes those who are intelligent enough to dissect the various issues as discussed on media platforms about public issues, and who are enlightened enough to think rationally and then express their views in a detached manner (Johari, 2015, p. 596). However, Asodike and Udoh (2014) opines that, in Nigeria of today, private broadcast stations in their news and programmes do not tell the people the whole truth about events happening around them. They are biased in favour of their owners, helping them to propagate their interests and purpose of establishment, just like it is said that "he who pays the piper dictates the tune. By doing this, Oriola and Ogbemi (2016) notes that public opinion is seriously wounded as the public are confused on issues. The motives behind news and programmes are understood by some, while others are fooled; believing everything that is put forth to them. Because of this problem, the credibility and

acceptance of radio stations news and programmes are questioned. In spite of this, radio programmes still affect public opinion (Nwankwo, et al., 2015).

Thus, Apero Mekunu, a one hour weekly programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M is tailored towards the downtrodden in the society, and how they have been coping with the harsh economic conditions of the country and how it can be improved upon. Therefore, the programme is basically tailored towards generating public opinion on economic and societal issues, and how these opinions can be aggregated to form a position needed to bring societal change and force government to reconsider some of its actions and policies. Although, studies have been conducted on public opinion formation (Oriola & Ogbemi, 2016; Bassey, 2018; Nwankwo, Ojo & Apeh, 2015; & Obo, Eteng & Coker, 2014). However, some of these studies could not identify any programme that generates public opinion specifically. Majority of the above studies either focused on broadcast stations, and they majorly used survey methods, a gap that this current study will fill, by looking at a specific programme "Apero Mekunu", using both survey and in-depth interview (mixed method).

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this study is to examine the influence of Sobi 101.9 F.M's Apero Mekunu on the opinion formation of listeners in Ilorin metropolis. This study is also set to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the frequency of listeners exposure to Sobi 101.9 F.M's "Apero Mekunu" programme.
2. To find out the extent to which Sobi 101.9 F.M's "Apero Mekunu" programme influenced listeners' opinion formation on societal issues.
3. To determine the various benefits derived from audience listenership to "Apero Mekunu" programme.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Radio Defined

Radio has been defined by various scholars in different ways. Oyekanmi (2006, p. 4) sees radio as "an electronic device that uses electromagnetic wave for the transmission of messages, information, communication and it possesses some attributes which place it upon the television broadcasting". Similarly, Onabajo (1992, cited in Adekoya, Akintayo, and Adegoke, 2016, p. 121)

averred that, "Radio is a vehicle for projecting personality through which it attracts and hold an audience". In the same vein, Akpede, Christine, and Chidinma (2018, p.10) asserts that "radio can be defined as a medium used for sending and receiving messages through the air using electronic waves".

No doubt that radio is an efficiency instrument for getting a message to a large number of people at the same time. It can give people a voice and offer a forum for dialogue between communities and government. "Radio takes up this responsibility and ensures vulnerable groups in society are included and represented in their programming, it is also about the activity of broadcasting programmes for people to listen to" (Idebi, 2008, p. 1). It can also be defined as the broadcasting of programmes for the public to listen to. It is equally the system of sending sound over a distance by transmitting electrical signals (BBC English Dictionary, 2002, p. 946).

More so, Adekoya et al opines that radio stations through their programmes educate, sensitize and inform the local audiences about issues that affect their lives: health, education, water, human rights, among others. This way, it serves as genuine tool for local development. Radio stations through their programme contents transmit information to a large and heterogeneous audience. Thus; the programmes being transmitted are always in the interest of the audience.

Concept of Public Opinion

Defining public opinion is a difficult task as it is a concept surrounded by a large amount of confusion and controversy. As Key Jr. (Anderson, 1997, p.147 cited in Obo, Eteng & Coker, 2014) has reasoned, "to speak with precision of public opinion is a task not unlike coming to grips with the Holy Ghost". In the words of Agi (2006, p.223) " much confusion surrounds the concept of public opinion and while both the supporters and the opponents of a policy may agree that public opinion should prevail, it is probable that they have little awareness of the complexity of the phenomenon". The confusion lies, mainly, in the implication that there is a public and that it has an opinion. The above assertion is reinforced by the view that public opinion can be seen as a congeries of all sorts of discrepant notions, beliefs, fancies, prejudices, and aspirations. It is confused, incoherent, amorphous, varying from day to day and week to week. But in the midst of this diversity and confusion every question as it rises into importance is subjected to a process

of consolidation and clarification until there emerge and take definite shape certain views, or set of disconnected views, each held and advocated in common by bodies of citizens (Bryce, 1981, cited in Obo, Eteng & Coker, 2014, p.571).

According to Isamuko (2013, p. 3), "public opinion may simply be taken to mean any collection of opinions on specific political issues held or expressed by individuals and groups outside the government, and in this sense, public opinion may be synonymous with mass opinion, with the collective opinion of the voting public, or with any collection of individual opinions". According to him, it may be informed, mature and rational, but it may also be uninformed, prejudiced, or emotional. Also, Obo et al. (2014) sees public opinion as the commonly held attitudes by the individuals or groups of individuals regarding specific issues, policy outputs, and political personalities in politics or governing process. They opined that, it connotes the totality of private or individual opinions on political phenomena or policy outputs of the government, and it usually reflects people's thinking or feelings on political subjects of local, state, national and international interest.

In the views of Akindele, Obiyan, and Owwoeye (2000, p. 82), "there is no doubt that opinions are products of an individual's personality, social characteristics, and interests. But opinions are also shaped by institutional, political, and governmental forces that make it more likely that citizens will hold some beliefs and less likely they will hold others". An opinion is normally the outcome of a process that takes place in the human mind, and only human beings are equipped by nature with the means, which is the mind, by which opinions can be formed. Thus, Ayeni-Akeke (2008) avers that public opinion is the totality of the political orientations, beliefs, values, and attitudes expressed by members of a group about current issues, actors, and events in their political environment. Also, Lowi, Ginsberg, and Shepsle, (2004, p. 367) quoting Anderson (1997) emphasized that public opinion can be defined operationally as those public perspectives or viewpoints on policy issues that public officials consider or take into account in making decisions, and they may be expressed in many ways-letters to the editor and to public officials, meetings, public demonstrations, editorials, election results, legislators meeting with constituents, plebiscites, and radio talk shows.

It has also been opined that while the term "public" means the people in a normative sense and

its only intelligent part in an empirical sense, the term "opinion" refers to a belief which reflects their attitudes and personality on a matter of great national importance. That is, public opinion is not the opinion of the whole population; it is a view of the capable segment of the population. It includes those who are intelligent enough to know about public issues and who are enlightened enough to think rationally and then express their views in a detached manner (Johari, 2005, p. 596). And in the words of Agi (2006, p. 225), "by public opinion, we mean the end products of a process of public discussion leading to the formation of one or more widely shared opinions as to the advisability or desirability of a public policy or mode of action by government". However, Isamuko (2013) stressed that regardless of how public opinion is defined, it is generally agreed that at least four factors are involved in public opinion:

- i. There must be an issue
- ii. There must be a significant number of individuals who express opinions on the issue
- iii. There must be some kind of consensus among at least some of these opinions; and
- iv. This consensus must directly or indirectly exert influence.

Overview of "Apero Mekunu" Programme

'Apero Mekunu' is a public debate and deliberation programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M that discusses issues affecting the downtrodden and poorest of the poor in the society, as well as how government policies and actions affect them. The programme is a current affairs programme which last for about 1-hour, and aired every Tuesday night on Sobi 101.9 F.M. There are various segments it is divided into, there is a segment that allows the presenter and guest invitee to discuss issues, while there is a segment that allows audience to phone-in and make contributions. Also, another segment takes care of reading of letters and text messages from those that could not listen to the programme due to one reason or another. According to the information made available on the website of the radio station, Apero Mekunu is one of the flagship programmes of the station since its inception in December, 2020. The programme has also witnessed remodeling, in order to accommodate the interest and yearnings of the audience.

Empirical Review

Utor, (2011) assessed the impact of mass

media on the voting pattern of electorates during the election. The study was to ascertain the reason for voters' apathy and lack of full participation by the electorates. Survey research method was used, and findings showed that voters in Nigeria have low levels of political knowledge and information, as well as the perceived fear of malpractices by electoral officials, it was recommended from the findings that radio as a mass medium should be used heavily for disseminating political campaign messages, awareness and reorientation of the electorates.

In the same vein, Kolawole (2015) studied the influence of opinion leaders on the voting decision of rural voters; with evidence from Ayetoro, Ogun-State of Nigeria. The study aimed to find out how opinion leaders in the rural populace influence their people in the society, the mixed method of research was employed by the researcher. The researcher found that the respondents did not search for information on who to vote, as most of them voted on the advice or instruction of their leaders. It was further found that community and religious leaders are often times believed more than other sources of political information. However, it was recommended that political parties and their candidates should carry along leaders of various groups among the rural populace in their political campaigns, so that they can help in influencing the electorates in voting for them.

Similarly, Familusi (2014) carried out a study titled: "assessment of radio as development tool". The study was conducted to assess the power of radio in the developmental process, and how radio can further aids in spreading messages and awareness amidst developmental challenges. The methods used to obtain data for analysis in the study were documentary survey and intensive interview. Findings showed that radio is the most important instrument and tool for communication development. It ranked as the most popular means of disseminating information, regardless of the continent, as illiteracy is no barrier to radio messages since such messages can be passed in the audience' own language. The research recommended among others that radio programmes and messages should be localized into the language of the host environment, and that developmental issues affecting the immediate environment should be prioritize during programmes.

Theoretical Framework

The study is explained based on the core assumptions of the Agenda-Setting and Two-Step Flow Theories.

Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1973. The theory among others rests on the core assumptions that;

- i. The mass media sets agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain issues.
- ii. The media also tells the audience not so much on what to think as what to think about. It holds that most of the picture we think or worried about, most of the issues we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media.
- iii. The mass media do not reflect social reality because news is filtered, chosen and shaped by newsroom staff, few media agenda which were chosen by professional gatekeepers lead people to perceive given issues as important, (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso 2012).
- iv. The media make us to think about certain issues, they make us to think or feel that certain issues are more important than others in our society.

Among major criticisms of the theory as posits by Davis (2012) cited in Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017), media users may not be as ideal as the theory assumes. People may not be well-informed, deeply engaged in public affairs, thoughtful and skeptical; instead, they may pay only casual attention to public affairs and remain ignorant of the details. The critics further opine that news media cannot create or conceal problems; they may only alter the awareness, priorities and salience people attach to a set of problems. Also, Caesar (2010) cited in Asemah et al (2017) maintains that the news media do not create or set agenda for the public to follow, rather the real world events set agenda for people to follow. Thus, research on the agenda setting concept is largely inconclusive because it does not establish a casual relationship between public salience and media coverage.

The relevance of this theory to the study under review makes us to understand 'Apero Mekunu' programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M in the sense that persistent airing of the programme has successfully turned most of the issues being discussed from media agenda to public agenda,

therefore raising these issues to the level of public discussions and acceptance. The frequent dissemination of issues of societal concern through 'Apero Mekunu' programme has made the programme too important to be ignored, and issues discussed on it as a subject of public opinion, deliberations and agenda. This in tandem with Baran and Davis (2012), which posits that the media prioritizes issues by setting agenda, while such priorities become public agenda.

Two-Step Flow Theory

On the other hand, the two-step flow of mediated information dissemination which is one of the subset of the communication step-flow theories was introduced by Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz in 1940. The theory according to Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2009) was premised on the following basic assumptions:

- i. Mass media do not operate in a vacuum, but have an input into a very complex web of social relationships and compete with other sources of ideas, knowledge and power.
- ii. Information from the media flow in two stages; from the media to the opinion leaders, and from opinion leaders to other members of the society.
- iii. Opinion leaders who pay close attention to the mass media add their own thoughts and interpretations to messages before passing them on to their eventual end audiences.
- iv. Mass media audiences are affected both by the actual information that is distributed as news as well as influencers' interpretation of the news.
- v. Information move through two basic stages; first, from the media to relatively well-informed individuals, who frequently attend to media. Second, from those persons through inter-personal communication or channels to individuals who have less direct exposure to the media and who depend upon others for their information.
- vi. The mass media affect its audiences indirectly and immediately, as well as indirectly from the opinion. That is; ideas flow from mass media to opinion leaders before being disseminated to a wider population.
- vii. Opinion leaders intervene between the "media's direct message and the audience's reaction to that message". Thus, they tend to

have great effect on those they are most similar to, based on personality, interests, demographics, or socio-economic factors.

- viii. These leaders tend to influence others to change their attitudes and behaviors more quickly than conventional media, because the audience is able to better identify or relate with them than an article in a newspaper or a news programme.

However, critics of the two-step flow theory were of the belief that the theory does not give power to the media, but few elites who are well-informed on issues discussed in the media. Evatt (1992) criticized the step-flow theories for placing much power in the hand of opinion leaders, thus giving the media little power to influence the audience through it programmes. Similarly, Asemah et al (2017) was of the view that two-step flow theory places audience willingness to know and be informed in the hands of the minority few known as 'opinion leaders', thereby negating the power of the media to influence and inform the audience.

The relevance of this theory to the study being review enables us to understand the 'Apero Mekunu' programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M as members of the public who are less privileged in terms of media exposure needs to depend on opinion leaders to decipher the information for them. Also, the programme gave opportunity to opinion leaders to review some of the issues being discussed, and from there it flows to the audience. Thus, the programme will firstly be reviewed and deciphered by informed leaders who actively transferred the core objectives of the programmes to the public through stages. In line with this, Anaeto et al (2009) buttresses that ideas flow from mass media to opinion leaders before being disseminated to a wider population, as they do intervene between the media's direct message and the audience's reaction to such message.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Data for this study were obtained through survey which is rooted in the quantitative research paradigm. Survey was preferred to other methodologies because it is the most appropriate technique to ask questions from a predefined group of people, especially listeners of Apero Mekunu programme who are residents of Ilorin metropolis. Moreover, this method is appropriate to examine their views on the programme, how it has influenced their opinion formation and benefits derived from

listenership. This enabled the researcher to ask close-ended questions which allowed the respondents to comprehensively answer various questions that were structured on the questionnaire. Thus, the population for this study was deduced from the NBS (2017) projected population figure for the 4 LGAs that Ilorin metropolis is made up of (Asa, Ilorin East, Ilorin South and Ilorin West) which is 1,256,324.

Ilorin metropolis was selected due to its proximity to the radio station that hosts the Apero Mekunu, as well as the ability of residents to get clear signals from Diamond 88.7 F.M (the host radio for the programme). Furthermore, 400 respondents were randomly selected based on the Taro Yarmane formula, as the study sample through cluster sampling technique which sees to the division of Ilorin metropolis into clusters. The questionnaire was designed and administered to the respondents through physical means.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study adopted a survey research method, while a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 400 respondents selected as sample for the study, of which the entire copies were correctly filled and found suitable for further analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Data on respondents' Gender, Age, Marital Status, Educational Status and Occupation were obtained. Results are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Respondents Demography

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	126	31.5%
Female	274	68.5%
Total	400	100%
Age		
18 and below	28	7.0%
19-29	111	27.8%
30-40	214	53.5%
41-50	23	5.8%
51 & Above	2	6.0%
Total	400	100%
Marital Status		
Single	64	16.0%
Married	286	71.5%
Divorced	23	5.8%
Widower	27	6.8%
Total	400	100%
Educational Status		
SSCE	59	14.8%
ND/NCE	264	66.0%
HND/B.Sc.	62	15.5%
M.Sc.	15	3.8%
Total	400	100%

Occupation		
Paid employment	153	38.3%
Self-employed	218	54.5%
Unemployed	29	7.3%
Total	400	100%

Table 1 above indicates that many of the respondents (68.5%) were female, only 31.5% of them were males. Therefore, majority of the respondents are female. Also, majority of the respondents (71.5%) are married, other marital status have lesser percentage. On the age category; majority of the respondents (53.5%) falls in the age bracket 30-40 are, while other age categories have lesser percentages. The educational status of the respondents showed that 66.0% of them have ND or NCE, as the occupation reflects that the majority of the respondents (54.5%) are self-employed. Therefore, substantial numbers of the respondents are female, married, aged 30 to 40, possess ND/NCE, and are self-employed.

Audience Listenership to Apero Mekunu Programme

Table 2: Responses on audience listenership of Apero Mekunu

Items	Level of Agreement (%)					Total
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
Programme listenership	2.0	1.3	3.5	86.8	6.5	100%
Choice of language	79.3	2.0	4.0	8.8	6.0	100%
Keeping current and up-to-date	4.0	1.8	3.8	84.0	6.5	100%
Listen at leisure time	61.3	5.5	3.3	23.5	6.5	100%
Programme is irrelevant	71.0	8.5	3.8	13.8	3.0	100%
Programme addresses pertinent issues	8.0	2.8	3.5	35.8	50.0	100%

The table above discussed audience listenership to Apero Mekunu programme, 86.8% of the respondents agreed that they listen to the programme; 79.3% strongly disagree that the only listen to the programme because of the choice of language used; 84.3% agreed that the programme keeps them current and updates; 61.3% strongly disagree that it is only in the leisure time they listen to the programme; 71.0% strongly disagree that the programme is not relevant; while 50.0% strongly agreed that the programme addresses pertinent issues in the society. Therefore, it could be deduced that Apero Mekunu programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M commands listenership from the audience, and the audience derives pleasure in listening to the programme because it helps to keep them informed, updated and as well; addresses issues of importance in the society.

Listeners Satisfaction of Apero Mekunu Programme

Table 3: Responses on listeners' satisfaction of Apero Mekunu

Items	Level of Agreement (%)					Total
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
Helps in personal integration	2.0	1.0	4.8	88.3	4.0	100%
Means of venting opinion	2.3	2.8	4.8	85.3	5.0	100%
Periodic review of programme	2.3	1.5	5.5	84.8	6.0	100%
Wrong time schedule	35.0	54.3	6.0	3.5	1.3	100%
Programme contents dissatisfaction	35.8	56.0	4.5	2.8	1.0	100%
Increase in programme Duration	1.5	3.3	6.3	85.0	4.0	100%

Table 3 above discussed listeners satisfaction of Apero Mekunu programme, 88.3% of the respondents agreed that the programme helps in integrating their views with of others; 85.3% agreed that the programme serves as a means of venting their opinion on critical issues in the society; 84.8% agreed that the programme should be periodically reviewed; 54.3% disagree that the time scheduled for the programme is wrong; 56.0% disagree that the programme contents are dissatisfying; while 85.0% agreed that the programme duration should be increased. Therefore, the responses indicated that the audience are quite satisfied with the contents of Apero Mekunu programme on Sobi 101.9 F.M, as the programme allows them to air their views on critical issues in the society. The audience however emphasized on the need to increase the duration of the programme, so that more time will be given for proper discussion.

Influence of Apero Mekunu Programme on Listeners Opinion Formation

Table 4: Responses on influence of Apero Mekunu on listeners' opinion formation

Items	Level of Agreement (%)					Total
	SD	D	N	A	SA	
Addresses important issues	2.0	1.5	4.0	86.3	6.3	100%
Programme is ideal in having a better society	1.5	3.0	4.8	84.5	6.3	100%
It aids listeners opinion in having a better society	1.3	1.5	5.5	85.3	6.5	100%
Avenue for listeners to contribute	2.0	2.3	5.0	84.5	6.3	100%
Programme lacks influence on listeners	36.3	4.5	5.3	52.5	1.5	100%
Programme not influential as people thinks	34.8	51.8	6.5	4.8	2.3	100%

The above table discussed influence of Apero Mekunu programme on listeners opinion formation, 86.3% of the respondents agreed that the programme addresses pertinent issues in the society; 84.5% agreed that the programme is ideal in the clamour for a better society; 85.3% agreed that the programme aids them to make informed opinion towards having a better society; 84.5% agreed that the programme is an avenue for contributing towards burning issues in the society;

52.5% agreed that whatever agreed on the programme do not influence listeners; while 51.8% disagreed that the programme is not influential. Thus, it could be deduced that the programme has successfully addressed burning issues in the society and also serve as a platform for listeners to make informed opinion. On the other hand, the respondents were of the view that the programme does not in any way influence their personal opinion on any issues discussed.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the frequency of listenership to Sobi F.M's "Apero Mekunu" programme?

Table 2 answered this research question, as 86.8% of the respondents agreed that they listen to the programme; 79.3% strongly disagree that the only listen to the programme because of the choice of language used; 84.3% agreed that the programme keeps them current and updates; 61.3% strongly disagree that it is only in the leisure time they listen to the programme; 71.0% strongly disagree that the programme is not relevant; while 50.0% strongly agreed that the programme addresses pertinent issues in the society. Thus, the respondents who are majorly audience of Apero Mekunu on Sobi 101.9 F.M maintained that the programme propels listenership and they derives pleasure in listening to the programme because it helps to keep them informed, updated and as well; addresses issues of importance in the society.

Research Question 2: To what extent do Sobi F.M's "Apero Mekunu" programme influenced listeners' opinion formation on societal issues?

Table 4 answered this question, as 86.3% of the respondents agreed that the programme addresses pertinent issues in the society; 84.5% agreed that the programme is ideal in the clamour for a better society; 85.3% agreed that the programme aids them to make informed opinion towards having a better society; 84.5% agreed that the programme is an avenue for contributing towards burning issues in the society; 52.5% agreed that whatever agreed on the programme do not influence listeners; while 51.8% disagreed that the programme is not influential. Thus, it could be deduced that the programme has successfully addressed burning issues in the society and also serve as a platform for listeners to make informed opinion.

Research Question 3: What are the benefits derived from audience listenership to the programme?

As shown in table 4, the programme has generated much traffic due to its content which is both educative and enlightening and as well assisted audience to make informed opinion and choices on critical issues as they affect the society. Also, the listenership base showed the programme reaches about 7million audience in various state and its serves as a platform to shape public opinion about the current situation in the society. Therefore, the audience derives numerous benefits from listening to Apero Mekunu.

Discussion of Findings

Having analysed the various responses to the research questions, the following are the key findings:

- i. The programme (Apero Mekunu) commands wide listenership base, reaching about 7 million audiences in various states. Therefore, this finding is in tandem with the findings of Familusi (2014) which attested to the power of radio and it programmes in the developmental process. As radio is ranked the most popular means of disseminating information, regardless of the continent.
- ii. Audience derives pleasure in listening to the programme because it helps to keep them informed; updated and as well; addresses issues of importance in the society. Thus, this finding supported the views of Owolabi (2019) which apposite that the mass audience are compelled to listen to programmes that are of importance to them; especially those that addresses their fears and concerns.
- iii. The programme addresses burning issues in the society, and also as a platform to shape public opinion from the masses as regards the current situation. This finding is in line with that of Oriola and Ogbemi (2016) which averred that the mass media through programmes can be used to shape the shape public opinion and consequently public action.
- iv. The outcome of any issue(s) discussed on the programme does not in any way overshadow the audience personal views. This finding agreed with the position of Oriola and Ogbemi (2016) which emphasizes that "media audiences are active players in

the process of construction of public opinion. As they consciously select the media to use and the content to attend to”.

Conclusion

Having examined the responses from the respondents, reviewed some literature on the research topic, and analyzed some responses from the selected respondents, it is safe to conclude that radio through its programme content is a powerful tool for reaching the mass audience. However, people's opinion formation depends on the use of individual wants to put to radio messages or programmes. This use is conversely determined by perceptions, judgment, social and educational background among other things. There is no doubt that how radio programmes influence public opinion depends on whether the audiences have confidence, trustworthiness and interest in such stations. Any station which presents distorted information will tend to lose credibility. The result is that the listening audience will look elsewhere. Though, radio is seen as an organ of mass communication with a popular appeal, its impact is increasingly being felt among the people now than ever before.

However, more still needs to be done in the areas of radio programmes. Amidst the current number of radio stations in the country, owners and promoters of radio stations should look beyond the commercial gains, rather, look at how the medium can best be used to address issues in the society. This is the hallmark of development.

Recommendations

After critical examination and review of the literature, the following are therefore recommended:

1. The programme (Apero Mekunu) should be periodically reviewed, so that it would continue to sustain the listenership base.
2. Audience research on the programme should be conducted. This will give room for participation in the programme.
3. The programme presenter should allow for popular opinion to prevail, on any issue(s) discussed on the programme.
4. The time allotted for the programme should be increased, so as to allow for deeper and lengthy discussion of issues

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