The Impacts of Community Radio Stations on National Development; a Case Study of Bo City

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Abstract

This study examined the Impacts of Community Radio Stations on National Development, using Bo city as a case study. Findings were generated in line with the general aim which is to investigate the impacts of community radio stations on national development, as well as the following specific objectives:

- Conceptualization of community radio stations as tool for national development
- Functions of community radio stations on development policies
- Influence of community radio stations on public opinions and information dissemination
- Roles played by community radio stations during COVID-19 pandemic
- Recommendations on how to mitigate the problems associated with community radio stations

The findings affirmed that majority were aware of the concept of community radio stations, and they believed that the stations performed functions such as informing, educating and entertaining the public. Additionally, majority of the respondents were of the view that community radio stations affect public opinions greatly, by influencing their political decisions and their choices towards certain products through advertisement. Thus, it was also revealed that community radio stations played key roles in fighting COV ID-19 pandemic, by reporting or updating the public about COVID-19 cases, providing the opportunity for medical practitioners to discuss issues around the pandemic, and showing pictures and graphics relating to the preventive measures of the pandemic respectively. It was also recommended that the government and other stakeholders should support community radio stations with adequate resources in order to enable them function effectively.The main purpose of community radio is to provide marginalized communities with access to a voice through the broadcasting channel of radio so they can express their concerns, interests and needs, promote and protect their cultures, traditions and heritages and determine their own development. For a community radio station to serve its purpose, members of a community need to be allowed access to participate in the day-to- day activities of a community radio station and have access to relevant information to better their circumstances. In order to obtain access to these resources, certain operational frameworks must be established and maintained.

Keywords: Community Radio Stations; National Development; case study.

1. Introduction

The provision of information and skills have gained popularity in the quest to empower communities with community radio stations as unique and effective tool. [15] Reported that the growth of community radio stations reflects both the improvements in information technology and the shifting of development paradigm towards a more participatory style of information and knowledge transfer. On that basis therefore, [14,16] identified community radio as an avenue for participatory communication and as a tool relevant in both economic and social development. With respect to the foregoing, this work chiefly focuses on key areas of interest ranging from the impact community radio stations have on national development and the challenges surrounding its operations when disseminating messages to wider audience. This chapter therefore captures the background of the study, problem statement, justification/rationale, aim and specific objectives, hypothesis and scope of the study. Community Radio Stations across the world have played fundamental roles in information dissemination, despite the challenges and difficulties the mass media encounters in its operations, community radio stations have proven to be very instrumental in information sharing worldwide. Radio broadcasting in the United States has been used since early 1920s to distribute news and entertainment to a national audience. By 1931, majority of U.S. households owned at least one radio receiver [6,17]. In the United States, radio stations have tremendously helped in information dissemination and in the process of bridging the gap between the government and the people [18]. During his presidency, Frankly D. Roosevelt delivered a speech to his American people. He had the intension to use community radio as a political tool so he quickly adopted the unprecedented action that his administration was taking to deal with the economic fallout which made him extremely popular in his days as president. The radio was used to explain the reason behind the unprecedented action he took relating to the economic fallout which left many people in limbo, but later got clarification through community radio stations. It was the first electronic "mass medium" technology, and its introduction, along with the subsequent development of sound films,

ended the print monopoly of mass media in the United State of America. During the Golden Age of Radio, it had a major cultural and financial impact on the country [6, 17]. However, the rise of television broadcasting in the 1950s relegated radio to a secondary status, as much of its programming and audience shifted to the new sight joined with sound service. Originally the term radio only included transmissions freely received over-the-air, such as the AM and FM bands, now commonly called terrestrial radio [6,17].Radio has evolved dramatically since the first broadcasts in the 1920s. As a media industry it was dominated by the BBC until the 1960s when private radio stations became popular with young people. This popularity would pave the way for commercial radio to establish itself and allow the industry to develop. Community broadcasting is Australia's third media sector, formally represented by the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA). In January 2012, there were 359 licensed community radio stations remote indigenous services [19].A 2002 report found that 20,000 Australians (or 0.1 percent of the population) were involved as volunteers in the community radio sector on a regular basis, and volunteers account for more than $145 million in unpaid work each year [20]. The role of community broadcasting in Australia, according to CBAA, is to provide a diverse range of services meeting community needs in ways unmet by other sectors. Community broadcasting is sustained by the principles of access and participation, volunteerism, diversity, independence and locality [7,21]Community radios in Argentina have been recognized as the most massive media in Argentina after TV, according to the National Survey on Cultural Consumption, which was carried out by Argentina's system of cultural information (SINCA). According to the survey which was carried out in 2017, radio has been one of the most affected traditional medium having lost 17% of its share, when compared to the result of the previous survey conducted in 2013. However, its penetration is still high (70%). The traditional radio receiver continues to be the most popular device (60%), followed by the car stereo receiver (24%) and the cell phone 22% (23,1).Broadcasting is very important in Africa because plethora of Africans get their information, education and entertainment chiefly from radio and television. Because of this vital role of broadcasting in developing countries, radio and television medium have become the most controlled for both technical and political reasons (18,5). Owned by the people, managed by the people and is not for profit. It broadcasts in the local language of the people that all will understand. Its program contents will cater mainly for the needs and interests of the people. Community radio will therefore, serve as change agent in rural areas, promoting the socioeconomic status of the people. In 2003, advocacy for the establishment of community radio in Nigeria became visible and loud -The Panos Institute of West Africa (PIWA) (24, 6,7).Articles by World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) in conjunction with the Institute for Media and Society (IMS-Nigeria), launched an initiative on community radio in Nigeria. According to (25,4), the steering committee which articulated an action plan put Nigerians in the forefront of the campaign. Awareness was created about community radio stations across the country. Workshops were held to generate interest in community radio. Several meetings took place to map out strategies to demand for policy, legislative and regulatory restructuring with regard to community broadcasting. In 2004, the federal government on its part, set up a working group to review the outdated National Mass Communication Policy of 1990. In 2005, the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition (NCRC) was formed by stakeholders. It consists of about 200 organizations with members located in all the geographical zones of the country. It has a common bond of social and grassroots development. The federal government went further in 2006 by setting up a committee headed by renowned communication scholar, late Professor Alfred Opubor, to develop a policy framework for the establishment of community radio stations for the country. The committee succeeded in putting together a draft policy which was submitted to the Federal

Government for necessary action. The stakeholders are still waiting for the Federal Government to legislate on community radio on the guidelines for its licensing and operations (8).

 In Tanzania, community radio stations play an important role in the information ecosystem, as they are quite integral in formal media dissemination for a community. In rural areas, a CRS may be the only source the average home may have about the region, country, or outside world. Tanzania has about 123 radio broader caster (25) only six of them broadcast nationally, 17 are regional and 69 are licensed to broadcast in district. Those radio stations have played significant roles to developing Tanzania, taking into consideration information dissemination. Egypt has the most extensive and powerful radio broadcasting system in the Arab region. Radio broadcasting started in the early 1920s, but did not officially begin until May 1934. The system is under direct control of the government and operates under the mobilization type of broadcasting. Radio stations in Egypt have contributed immensely to ensuring people understand their culture and social activities which are disseminated through broadcasting Reference [5,21,4].In 1934, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service (SLBS) was formed in Freetown making it the earliest English Language radio broadcast service in West Africa. Television broadcast started in 1963 as a cooperation between the SLBS and commercial interests. Coverage was extended to other parts of the country for effective information dissemination system [15,10]. Results of a 2007 British Broadcasting corporation (BBC) survey indicated it was important to listeners that radio stations are accurate and trustworthy and by far the most trusted media in Sierra Leone. The results showed that the news and music programs were the most popular and that the radio source of information most people used to know about events that happen in the country including national elections [22, 6].Mass media in Sierra Leone began when the first modern printing press in Africa arrived at the start of the 19th century. In the 1860s, the country became a journalist hub for Africa with professional travelling to the country from across the continent. At the end of the 19th century the industry went into decline and when radio was introduced in the 1930s this became the primary communication media. Print media is not widely read in Sierra Leone, especially outside Freetown, partially due to the low levels of literacy in the country. In 2008, there were 15 daily newspapers in addition to those published weekly. Among newspaper readership young people are likely to read newspapers weekly and older people daily. Majority of newspapers are privately run and are often critical of the government (22).Bo District Southern Province is the second capital city of Sierra Leone. The important of radio stations in this part of the country cannot be underestimated in any form, because radio stations have played significant impacts in the social, cultural, political and the economic development of this city and the country at large. Despite the fact that radio stations do encounter lots of difficulties, progress has been made in the aspect of information dissemination. Some of the main radio stations in Bo city are, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation (SLBC), Kiss 104, Radio New Song, Classic Radio, All Out Radio and many more have helped tremendously to develop this nation. People do promote their businesses through the above named radio stations and further promote entertainment which is one of the aspects upon which economic development is anchored. On that basis therefore, in disseminating information radio owners do encounter plethora of challenges ranging from ineffective electricity supply, political interference into their activities, unprofessional misconducts put on by some journalists etc. During the 1991 civil war which Sierra Leone tasted, Kiss 104 was very active to ensuring that people got proper education with respect to emerging issues. It was within this period that Mr. Junkier Kromah established Kiss 104 to help educate people in relation to issues affecting their communities, promote entertainment and cultural amusement right across the country.It was hypothesized that

there was a relationship between community radio stations and national development. Therefore, specific hypotheses were as follows:

➢ The higher the rate of community radio stations, the higher the rate of national development.
➢ The lower the rate of community radio stations, the lesser the rate of national development.

2. Material and Methods

For this study, a total of 80 respondents were selected from the target population to form the sample size. These 80 respondents that were made up the sample size is a population, whose responses were used to generalize the result of this study. This sample size moreover, was solicited from key institutions that are of interest to this study which include, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation; Radio Bo Kiss 104FM; Classic Media Empire; and Radio New Song.   In order to achieve this study's objectives, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique which is a key component of Non-Probability sampling technique to select the sample frame. It is purposive because, the participants were selected based on their informed perspective, knowledge, and expertise on the research topic.
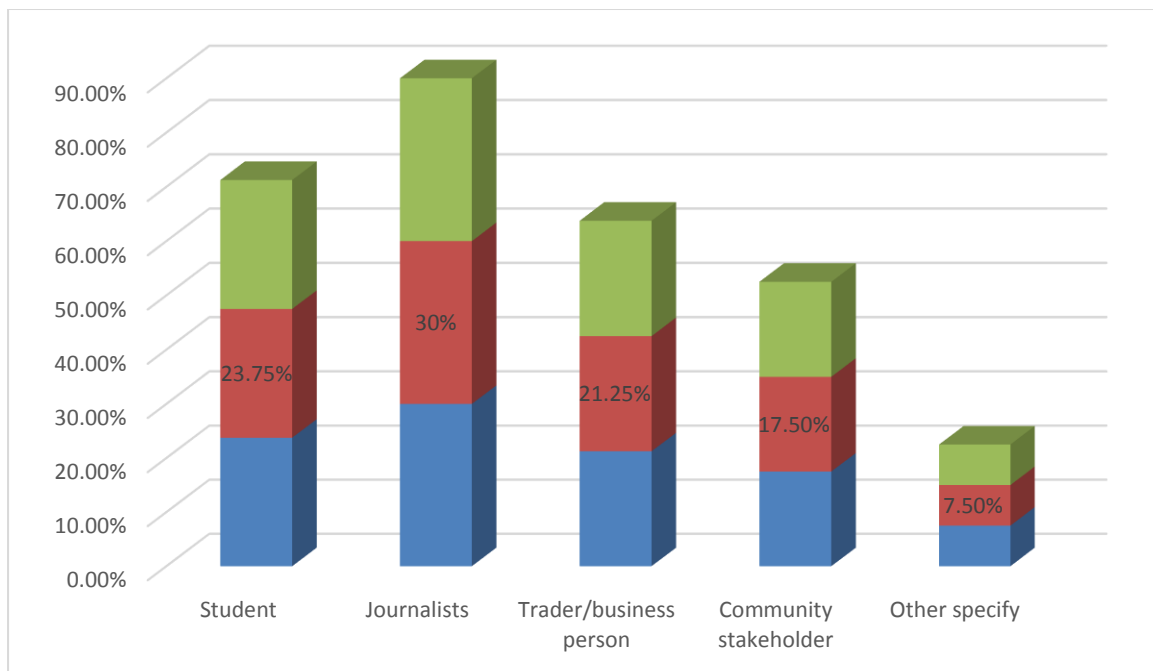
3. Result of the Research

Figure 1: Occupation of Respondents

The figure above clearly presents the occupation of respondents, in which 19(23.75%) of the respondents were students, 24(30%) were journalists, 17(21.25%) were traders/business persons, 14(17.50%) were community stakeholders, and 06(7.50%) of the respondents ticked otherwise (teachers and bankers) respectively. The findings clearly indicates that most of the respondents were students and journalists.

3.1 Conceptualizing Community Radio Stations as Tools for National Development

➢ Respondents' awareness on the number of radio stations in their communities

➢ Awareness if community radio stations currently provide services

➢ Extent at which the radio stations provide services

➢ Effectiveness of community radio stations

➢ Respondents' knowledge about the meaning of community radio stations

➢ The roles of community radio stations

➢ The relationship between community radio stations and national development

➢ Contributions of community radio stations to national development

To better understand the roles of community radio stations on national development, it is but necessary to conceptualize the variable of community radio stations, and how it is essential towards national development. In this regard, this study examined respondents' knowledge regarding community radio stations as a tool for national development, and findings on this variable are presented in table 3 below.

Table 1: Awareness regarding the number of community radio stations and their operations

Response	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
One	05	6.25%
Two	10	12.5%
Three	20	25%
Four and above	45	56.25%
TOTAL=	**80**	**100%**

Table1 above shows that 05(6.25%) of the respondents were certain that only one community radio is existing in their locality, 10(12.5%) believed there are two, 20(25%) were certain that there are three community radio stations, and 45(56.25%) believed it was four and more. This actually shows that most of the respondents were certain that the study area has four and above community radio stations operating in the study area. Additionally, it was also revealed through focused group discussions and interviews that these radio stations are currently providing services for the people and that they do so to a very great extent. In interview in which respondents were asked about the effectiveness of the operations of the community radio stations, it was revealed that most of them provide their services effectively amidst the numerous challenges. Further, when asked about what they know about community radio stations, most responded that they are owned and controlled by the community people, do not operate to generate income, and operates within the society respectively.
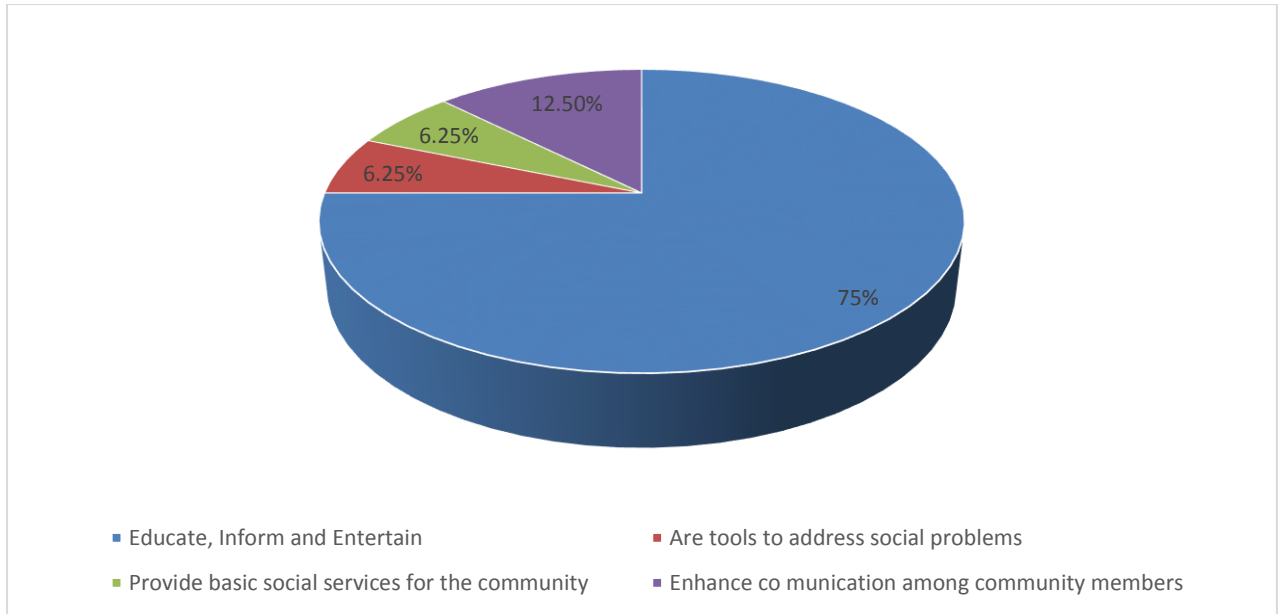
Figure 2: Roles of community radio stations

The figure above shows that 60(75%) of the respondents interviewed maintained that community radio stations educate, inform and entertain, whereas 5(6.25%) believed that the radio stations are tools to address social problems in the community, 5(6.25%) maintained that they provide basic social services for the community, and 10(12.50%) of the respondents said that community radio stations enhance communication among community members respectively. From the findings provided above, it is clear that most of the respondents believed that the radio stations educate, inform and entertain community members.

Table 2: Radio stations & National Development

Relationship	AF	Relative Frequency (%)
Community radio stations influence dev. Policies	40	50%
Radio stations are used to participate in govt. issues	10	12.5%
Radio stations hold politicians accountable	20	25%
Radio stations complements the efforts of govt.	10	12.5%
TOTAL=	**80**	**100%**

In responding to the question relating to the relationship between community radio stations and national development, 40(50%) of the respondents maintained that community radio stations influence developmental policies, 10(12.5%) established that community radio stations often participate in government issues such as political, economic, social and cultural discussions within the community, 20(25%) recognized that community radio stations often hold politicians accountable in terms of maladministration, corruption and violations of the rule of law.

Additionally, in responding to the question regarding the contributions of community radio stations to national

development, most of the respondents 60(75%) maintained that community radio stations enhance public participation, and 20(25%) established that community radio stations educate the public on government policies
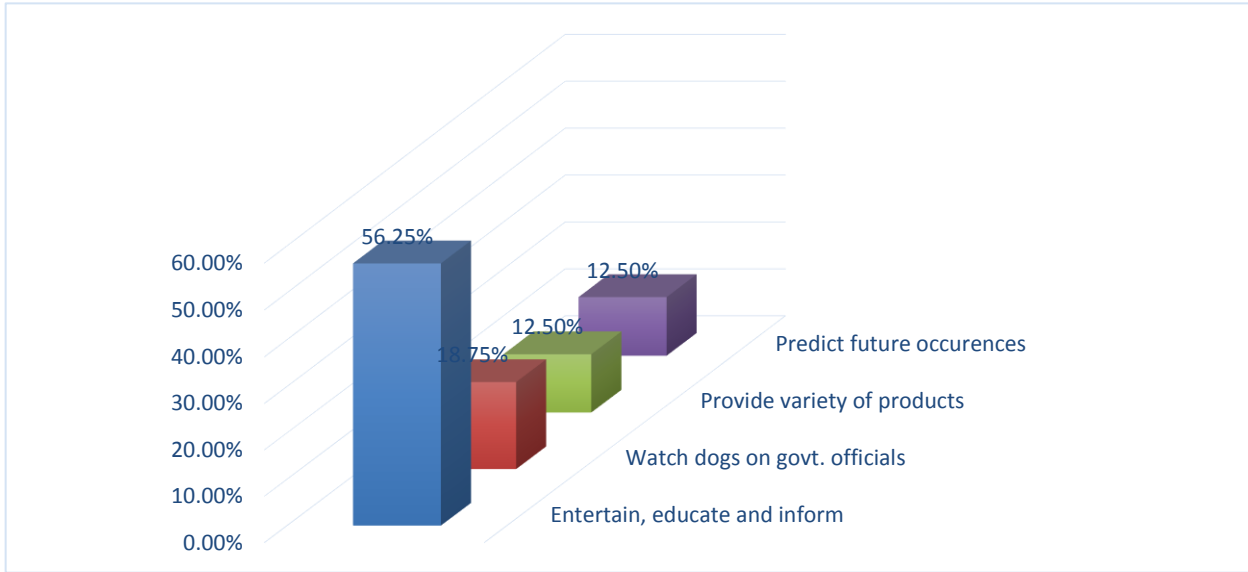

Figure 3: Functions of community radio stations

and activities. The table below presents the findings regarding the contributions of community radio stations to national development..

The figure above shows that 45(56.25%) of the respondents maintained that community radio stations entertain, educates, and inform community members, 15(18.75%) established that community radio stations serve as watch dogs for government officials in the execution of their duties, 10(12.5%) said they analyze present situations and predict future occurrences, and 10(12.5%) were of the view that community radio stations provide variety of products for public consumption. This indicates however that majority of the respondents maintain that community radio stations educate, entertain and inform community members respectively.

In various discussions, interviews and observations, respondents maintained that the community radio stations provide these services or execute their functions to a very large extent.

In responding to the questing regarding the effectiveness of the services provided by the community radio stations, majority were of the view that the services are provided very effectively, amid the limited challenges or barriers such as political influence, inadequate resources and infrastructure. Further, these functions are said to be influencing government policies in many instances such as providing the platform for public discussions regarding policy formulation, educating the public on the nature of bills and policies formulated by the government, and holding government officials accountable by reporting instances of corruption and abuse of power respectively.

Table 3: Influence of community radio stations on public opinions and information dissemination

Influence	AF	Relative Frequency (%)
Shaping political decisions	20	25%
Making people develop interests for products	30	37.5%
Setting the agenda for public discussions	20	25%
Ensure that the voices of the vulnerable are heard	10	12.5%
TOTAL=	**80**	**100?**

Respondents were asked to respond to the question regarding the influence of community radio stations on public opinions and information dissemination, for which 20(25%) of the respondents maintained that community radio stations shape political decisions by allowing politicians to campaign through the media, 30(37.5%) established that community radios enhance people to develop interests for certain products, 20(25%) were of the view that community radios set the agenda for public discussions, and 10(12.5%) maintained that the stations ensure that the voices of the vulnerable are heard. Additionally, in responding to the question regarding how the stations have influence information dissemination, majority maintained that the stations has bridged the distance between people and making sure that information reaches a large number of people

Table 4: Factors influencing information dissemination and public opinion

Factors	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Political supports	20	25%
Technological innovations	25	31.25%
Trained and competent workers	25	31.25%
Adequate fund and material resources	05	6.25%
Effecti4e media infrastructure	05	6.25%
TOTAL=	**80**	**100%**

The above table shows that 20(25%) of the respondents maintained that information dissemination by community radio stations is influenced by political supports, 25(31.25%) were of the view that they are influenced by technological innovations, 25(31.25%) believed that trained and competent workers can influence information dissemination, 5(6.25%) maintained that adequate fund and material resources are great influential factors, and 5(6.25%) believed it is effective media infrastructure. It is however clear that trained and competent workers as well as adequate funds and material resources are the most influential factors of information dissemination and public opinion.

Additionally, it was revealed during interviews that the presence of these factors can greatly determine the free flow of information and thus affect public opinion respectively. They are influential to a very great extent, but the factors are largely challenged by certain barriers, thereby rendering some community radio stations ineffective in their operations.

3.2 Roles Played By Community Radio Stations during Covid-19 Pandemic

A research was conducted to understand the roles played by community radio stations during covid-19, findings are analyzed and presented under the following headings:

- ➤ Whether community radio stations compliment the effort of government in the fight against Covid-19
- ➤ The extent at which they complement government effort in the fight against Covid-19
- ➤ The roles played by community radio stations in the fight against Covid-19
- ➤ Whether the roles are executed effectively and efficiently
- ➤ The extent at which they execute those roles
- ➤ Challenges encounter by community radio stations in executing their roles
- ➤ Roles suggested by respondents which can be performed by community radio stations in the fight against Covid-19
- ➤ The rate at which community radio stations provide updates on Covid-19
- ➤ Whether community radio stations sensitize the public about the pandemic
- ➤ The changes induced by community radio stations in the fight against the pandemic
- ➤ Whether community radio stations are associated with delivering fake or misleading news
- ➤ Fake news often reported by community radio stations regarding the pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many social institutions contributed immensely towards its eradication, and the media is no exception. Community radio station as an electronic media, played major role in updating the public with information regarding the pandemic.

Table 5: Roles played in the fight against COVID-19

Roles played	AF	RF
Educating the public on COVID-19 prevention measures	38	47.5%
Provide recreational programs to make life comfortable during lockdowns	12	15%
Adopt and enforce strict adherence to COVID-19 measures	20	25%
Increase public knowledge about the pandemic	10	12.5%
Solicit funds from COVID-19 from international community	-	-
TOTAL=	**80**	**100%**

The findings showcase that 38(47.5%) of the respondents strongly believed that community radio stations engage in educating the public on COVID-19 prevention measures, 12(15%) maintained that the stations provided recreational programs to make lives comfortable during lockdowns, 12(25%) established that the stations adopt and enforce strict adherence to the COVID-19 preventive measures, and 10(12.5%) opined that community radio stations increase public knowledge about the pandemic.

The findings however indicate that majority of the respondent were of the view that the community radio stations educate or sensitize the public about COVID-19 preventive measures.

When asked about other influential roles of the community radio stations towards the COVID-19 pandemic, it was revealed during focused group discussions and interviews that the stations should initiate COVID-19 hour to enhance public participation, fund COVID-19 projects and develop programs for discussions about COVID-19 respectively.
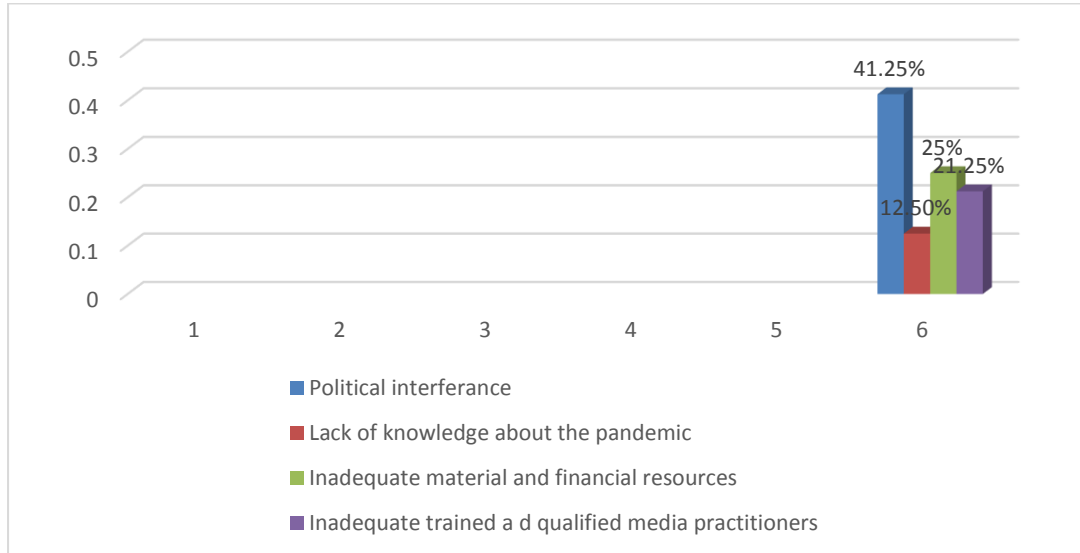

Figure 4: Challenges faced in the fight against COVID-19

Additionally, in determining the effectiveness of the community radio stations, 33 (41.25%) of the respondents were of the view that, political interference among various community radios is the main challenge make it ineffective for community radios to inform, educate and entertain the public to a greater extent, 20 (25.0%) of the respondents interviewed responded that, inadequate materials and financial resources is the challenge faced by community radio in professionally doing their job as required, 17 (21.25%) stated that, the inadequate trained and qualified media practitioners is the challenge faced by community radios; which is making it difficult for effective education around the pandemic and 10 (12.50%) opined that it is the lack of knowledge about the pandemic among community radios is the challenge restraining them from properly informing and educating the public on the pandemic.

Table 6: How often COVID-19 updates are presented by the community radio stations

Response	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Daily	70	87.5%
Weekly	05	6.25%
Monthly	-	-
Rarely	05	6.25%
Intermittently	-	-
TOTAL=	**80**	**100%**

Findings regarding how often COVID-19 updates are presented by the community radio stations are clearly

showed in the above table, in which 70(87.5%) were of the view that the community radio stations presents the updates on a daily basis, 5(6.25%) maintained that the updates are reported on a weekly basis, and 5(6.25%) established that the COVID-19 updates are rarely presented by the community radio stations. This indicates that most of the respondents were of the view that the updates were presented on a daily basis respectively.

Additionally, through interviews, it was revealed that the community radio stations sensitize the public about the pandemic through media discussions among medical practitioners and showing videos and charts which convey information about the preventive measures.
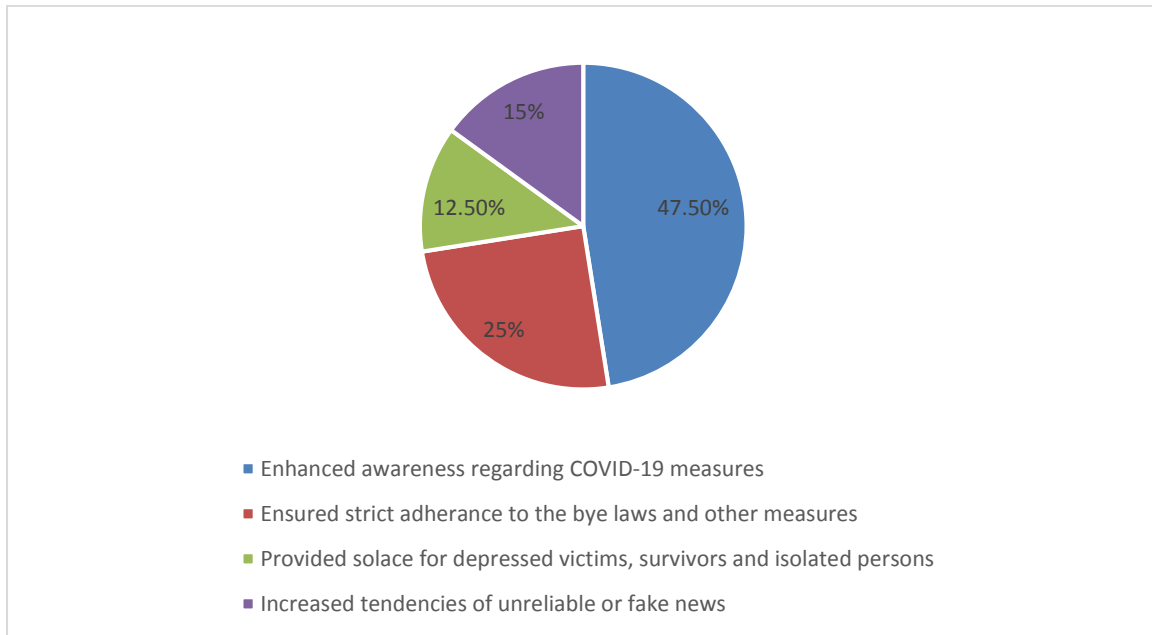

Figure 5: Effects of the roles played by the community radio stations in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic

When asked what has these roles contributed to the community, 38(47.5%) were of the view that the community radio stations have increased awareness regarding the pandemic to a very great extent, 20(25%) of the respondents established that the stations have ensured strict adherence to the bye-laws and other measure to a great extent, 10(12.5%) maintained that the stations have provided solace for the victims, survivors and isolated persons to some extent, and 12(15%) established that the stations have increased the tendencies of fake news respectively.

3.4 Awareness on how fake news are been reported by community radio stations with regards the pandemic

In answering the question regarding the report of fake news, majority 40(50%) of the respondents interviewed were of the view that most radio stations are faced with the fake news: COVID-19 is not real to a very great extent, 20(25%) maintained that the fake news is that China is perceived to have intentionally diffused the pandemic for economic gain to a great extent, and 20(25%) believed that the pandemic is a money making business to a very great extent. This indicate however, that most of the respondents (50%) were of the view that certain radio stations and members of the public do engage in reporting that the pandemic is not real to a very great extent.

3.5 Recommendations on How to Mitigate the Problems Associated With Community Radio Stations

This study solicited recommendations from respondents regarding the problems associated with community radio stations. Findings on these variables are provided below:

3.6 Common Problems faced by community radio stations

Community radio stations have numerous problems which often disrupt their effective functioning as a media institution. These problem are sometimes very crucial to take note of, since they are fundamental barriers to their efficiency and effectiveness. In this regard, this study examined the common problems faced by community radio stations as well as the persons responsible for such problems.

It was however revealed that 20(25%) of the respondents believed that community radio stations face inadequate financial challenge, which often disrupt their operations. In an observation and through interviews conducted, it was revealed that the radio stations cannot purchase some standard radio instruments to enhance effective transmission. This tendency has limited their coverage and communication or transmission system in the community. Secondly, 30(37.5%) were of the opinion that the community radio stations recruit untrained and unqualified media practitioners to facilitate their programs, thereby subjecting the stations to unprofessionalism, inefficiency and ineffective media content and services provided, simply because of the intellectual incapability of their practitioners.

Additionally, 10(12.5%) posited that community radio stations have a challenge of limited media infrastructure to enhance their operations. Whereas 5(6.25%) suggested that lack of strict adherence to IMC code of ethics is a challenge, the same percentage recommended reporting fake or misleading news as a challenge faced by community radio stations, and 10(12.5%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the activities and programs of community radio stations are largely influenced and controlled by politicians. The table below project the above analysis regarding the common problems faced by community radio stations

Table7: Common Problems faced by Community Radio Stations

Problems	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Inadequate Financial resources	20	25%
Untrained and unqualified media practitioners	30	37.5%
Inadequate media infrastructure	10	12.5%
Lack of strict adherence to IMC code of ethics	05	6.25%
Yellow journalism	-	-
Reporting misleading or fake news	05	6.25%
Political interference, control and influence	10	12.5%
TOTAL	**80**	**100%**

3.7 Personnel Responsible for the Problems faced by Community Radio Stations

From the findings generated, it was revealed that 20(25%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the politicians are responsible for the above problems faced by the community radio stations, 30(37.5%) believed that the journalists themselves are responsible, 5(6.25%) suggested that the independent media commission is responsible for the above challenges, the same percentages also recommended local community chiefs, whereas 10(12.5%) were of the opinion that the problems are caused by radio station managers, and 20(25%) blamed the community people for such problems. This however indicates how journalists are mostly responsible for the numerous problems face by community radio stations in the community respectively. The figure below presents findings on this variable.
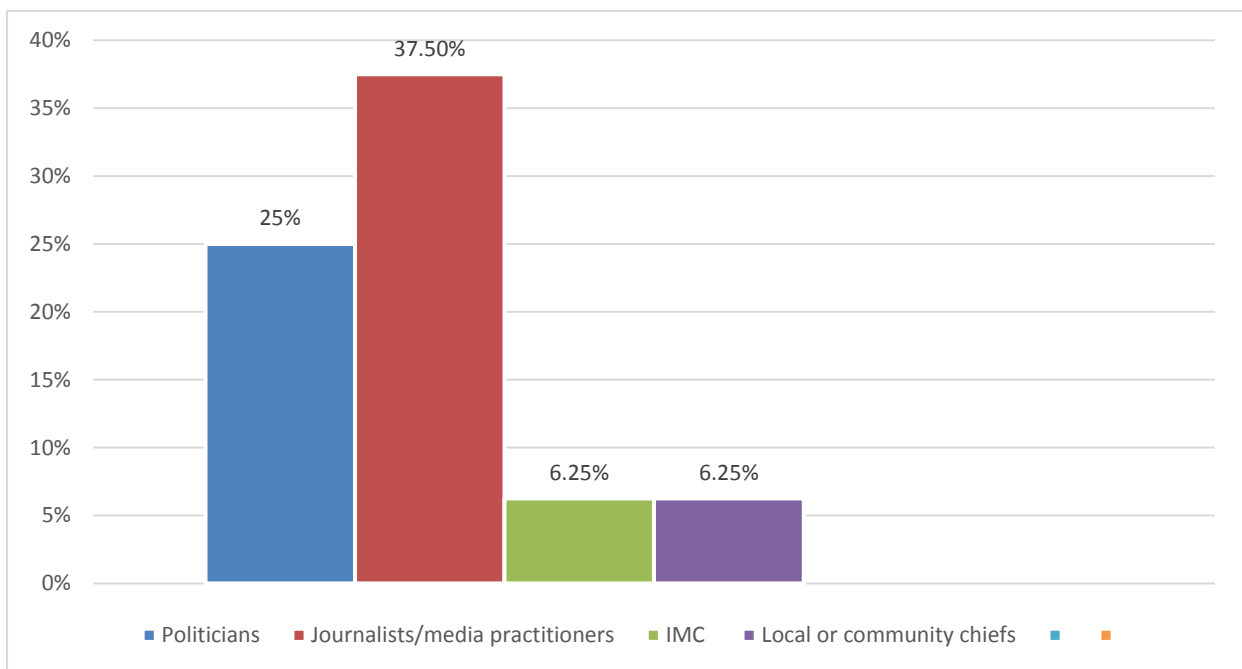

Figure 6: Personnel responsible for the problems faced by community radio stations

3.8 Strategies to Minimize the Problems faced by Community Radio Stations

In underscoring the strategies to minimize the above problems faced by community radio stations, it was revealed that most of the respondents were certain to a great extent that the problems can be minimized, and they strongly believed that the following strategies can minimized the problems faced by community radio stations respectively: According to findings, it was revealed that 25(31.5%) of the respondents recommended that community radio stations must be depoliticized, 10(12.5%) suggested that IMC should ensure strict adherence to the code of ethics, 20(25%) were of the opinion that the stations must be supported with adequate material and financial resources, 20(25%) were suggested the recruitment of trained and qualified media practitioners, and 5(6.25%) of the respondents recommended that fake news must be adequately verified. The table below provide information with regards this variable.

Figure 7: Recommendations to Enhance the Effective contributions of the Community Radio Stations

It was revealed as stated in the above table that 30(37.5%) of the respondents recommended that government should provide adequate resources to community radio stations, 20(25%) suggested that journalists must uphold the IMC code of ethics in their operations, and the same percentage proposed that the radio stations must provide adequate material and financial resources, and 10(12.5%) recruit trained and qualified media practitioners.

4. Discussions: (Significance of the results in relation of doing the work)

Conceptualization of Community Radio Stations as Tools for National Development.

This aspect of the study presents brief analysis of how respondents conceptualized community radio station as a tool for national development. It presents variables on the number of radio stations, their current services, their effectiveness and efficiency, the relationship that exist between community radio stations and national development, and the contributions of community radio stations in the development process of society. Data collected on the above variables revealed that:

- Most of the respondents 45(56.25%) were certain that the study area has four and above community radio stations operating on a daily basis. Additionally, it was also revealed through focused group discussions and interviews that these radio stations are currently providing services for the people and that they do so to a very great extent. Thus, it was revealed that most of them provide their services effectively amid the numerous challenges. Further, when asked about what they know about community radio stations, most believed that they are owned and controlled by the community people, do not operate to generate income, and operates within the society respectively.

- From the findings provided, it is clear that most of the respondents 60(75%) believed that the radio stations educate, inform and entertain community members. Radio stations educate members on various subject matters, inform community members on current events and happenings, and provide recreational opportunities to members of the community respectively.

- Additionally, in responding to the question regarding the contributions of community radio stations to national development, most of the respondents 60(75%) maintained that community radio stations enhance public participation and influence development policies.

Functions of Community Radio Stations on Development Policies.

This section of the study presents brief analysis on the roles or functions played by community radio stations towards development policies. It summarized variables such as the roles of community radio stations, their effectiveness and barriers preventing the efficiency of the various community radio stations in the community. Findings on these variables revealed that:

- 45(56.25%) of the respondents maintained that community radio stations educates, inform and entertain community members and 15(18.75%) established that community radio stations serve as watch dogs for government officials in the execution of their duties. This clearly indicates that most of the respondents supported the view that community radio stations educate, inform and entertain community members, and in some situations, serve as watch dogs for government officials.
- It is further revealed that respondents maintained that the community radio stations provide these services or execute their functions to a very large extent. Majority of the respondents were of the view that the services are provided very effectively, amid the limited challenges or barriers such as political influence, inadequate resources and infrastructure. Further, these functions are said to be influencing government policies in many instances such as providing the platform for public discussions regarding policy formulation, educating the public on the nature of bills and policies formulated by the government, and holding government officials accountable by reporting instances of corruption and abuse of power respectively.
- From the data collected as well, it is revealed that some respondents were of the view that community radio stations cannot effectively perform the function of watch dogs on government, due to political influence and control. The execution of other functions are said to be disturbed by challenges such as poor infrastructure, inadequate fund, resources of both material and human in a form of trained and quailed journalists or media practitioners.

Influence of Community Radio Stations on Public Opinion and Information Dissemination.

This section of the study present a brief synopsis of the numerous influence of community radio stations on public opinions, perceptions and largely the dissemination of information. Findings on these variables revealed that:

- Most of the respondents 30(37.5%) established that community radios enhance people to develop interests for certain products, and 20(25%) were of the view that community radios set the agenda for public discussions. Thus, majority maintained that the stations has bridged the distance between people and making sure that information reaches a large number of people.

- This study revealed that 20(25%) of the respondents maintained that information dissemination by

community radio stations is influenced by political supports, 25(31.25%) were of the view that they are influenced by technological innovations, 25(31.25%) believed that trained and competent workers can influence information dissemination through media engagements and educative programs and activities.

▪ It is further revealed during interviews that the presence of these factors can greatly determine the free flow of information and thus affect public opinion respectively. They are influential to a very great extent, but the factors are largely challenged by certain barriers, thereby rending some community radio stations ineffective in their operations.

Roles Played by Community Radio Stations during COVID-19 Pandemic.

This section provide a succinct summary on the roles played by community radio stations during the COVID-19 pandemic. It takes into consideration variables such as the roles of community radio stations in the fight against the pandemic, the effectives of the roles, ways or methods in communicating COVID-19 news, the effects of the roles of community radio stations on the pandemic. However, findings collected on the variables revealed that:

▪ Most 38(47.5%) of the respondents strongly believed that community radio stations engage in educating the public on COVID-19 prevention measures. Most of the respondents were of the view that the various community radios are effective only in informing, educating and entertaining the public to a greater extent, amidst the challenges such as political interference, lack of knowledge, inadequate resources and qualified media practitioners and failure on IMC to regulate the behaviors of media practitioners.

▪ Majority of the respondents 70(87.5%) were of the view that the community radio stations presents the updates on COVID-19 on a daily basis.

▪ It was revealed that the community radio stations sensitize the public about the pandemic through media discussions among medical practitioners and showing videos and charts which convey information about the preventive measures, and majority of the respondent 38(47.5%) were of the view that the community radio stations have increased awareness regarding the pandemic to a very great extent, 20(25%) of the respondents established that the stations have ensured strict adherence to the bye-laws and other measure to a great extent.

▪ Majority 40(50%) of the respondents interviewed were of the view that most radio stations are faced with the fake news: COVID-19 is not real to a very great extent, 20(25%) maintained that the fake news is that China is perceived to have intentionally diffused the pandemic for economic gain to a great extent, and 20(25%) believed that the pandemic is a money making business to a very great extent. This indicate however, that most of the respondents (50%) were of the view that certain radio stations and members of the public do engage in reporting that the pandemic is not real to a very great extent.

5. Recommendations on how to Mitigate the Problems Associated with Community Radio Stations

This study solicited recommendations from respondents regarding the problems associated with community radio stations. This section presents brief analysis on the problems faced by the radio stations, and findings on the variables revealed that:

- Majority of the respondents 30(37.5%) were of the opinion that the community radio stations recruit untrained and unqualified media practitioners to facilitate their programs, thereby subjecting the stations to unprofessionalism, inefficiency and ineffective media content and services provided, simply because of the intellectual incapability of their practitioners. Additionally, 20(25%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the politicians are responsible for the above problems faced by the community radio stations, 30(37.5%) believed that the journalists themselves are responsible.

- It is indicated that journalists are mostly responsible for the numerous problems face by community radio stations in the community respectively.

The table below presents findings on this variable. And, the study revealed that 25(31.5%) of the respondents recommended that community radio stations must be depoliticized, 10(12.5%) suggested that IMC should ensure strict adherence to the code of ethics, 20(25%) were of the opinion that the stations must be supported with adequate material and financial resources, 20(25%) were suggested the recruitment of trained and qualified media practitioners, and 5(6.25%) of the respondents recommended that fake news must be adequately verified.

- 30(37.5%) of the respondents recommended that government should provide adequate resources to community radio stations, 20(25%) suggested that journalists must uphold the IMC code of ethics in their operations, and the same percentage proposed that the radio stations must provide adequate material and financial resources respectively.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the impacts of community radio stations on national development, with special preferences to the specific objectives of the study. This aspect presents a conclusive statement, in line with the specific objectives of the study.

- On the variable of **conceptualizing the role of community radio stations on national development**, it is thus concluded that Bo City has more than three community radio stations, which currently provides services effectively to a great extent, amidst the numerous challenges they are faced with. Additionally, though their operations are often disturbed by challenges such as poor infrastructure and inadequate fund and human resources, their functions have influenced development processes to a very large extent.

- On the variable of **providing the functions of community radio stations on development policies,** it is concluded that community radio stations perform numerous roles, most of which are crucial towards national development, thereby influencing government policies in many instances such as providing the platform for public discussions regarding policy formulation, educating the public on the nature of bills and policies formulated by the government, and holding government officials accountable by reporting instances of corruption and abuse of power respectively.

- On the variable of **influence of community radio stations on public opinions and information dissemination**, it is concluded and established that community radios enhance people to develop interests for certain products, set the agenda for public discussions. Thus, it is concluded that the stations have

bridged the distance between people and making sure that information reaches a large number of people. It is also maintained that information dissemination by community radio stations is influenced by political supports, technological innovations, trained and competent workers can influence information dissemination through media engagements and educative programs and activities.

- On the variable of **the roles played by community radio stations in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic**, it is concluded that community radio stations engage in educating the public on COVID-19 prevention measures, and various community radios are effective only in informing, educating and entertaining the public to a greater extent, amidst the challenges such as political interference, lack of knowledge, inadequate resources and qualified media practitioners and failure on IMC to regulate the behaviors of media practitioners. Additionally, it is also concluded that community radio stations present the updates on COVID-19 on a daily basis, and they sensitize the public about the pandemic through media discussions among medical practitioners and showing videos and charts which convey information about the preventive measures to a very large extent. Furthermore, it is concluded that most radio stations are faced with the fake news such as COVID-19 is not real and that China is perceived to have intentionally diffused the pandemic for economic gain to a great extent.

- On the variable of **recommending strategies to minimize the problems associated with community radio stations**, it is concluded that the reasons for the problems faced by the stations is because community radio stations recruit untrained and unqualified media practitioners to facilitate their programs, thereby subjecting the stations to unprofessionalism, inefficiency and ineffective media content and services provided, simply because of the intellectual incapability of their practitioners. It is however recommended that community radio stations must be depoliticized, that IMC should ensure strict adherence to the code of ethics, that adequate material and financial resources should be provided to community radio stations, that there should be massive recruitment of trained and qualified media practitioners, and that news must be adequately verified in order to weed out fake or misleading news. It is thus recommended that government should provide adequate resources to community radio stations and journalists must uphold the IMC code of ethics in their operations respectively

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