IMSU Journal of Communication Studies
Volume 10, Issue 2, 2026
ISSN: 2682-6321, E-ISSN: 2705-2240
www.imsujcs.com

EXPLORATION OF THE MOTIVATIONS FOR PROLIFERATION OF RADIO STATION IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
This paper investigates radio proliferation in Oyo state, Nigeria. Anchored on the Democratic Participant Media Theory, the research examines how political, economic, socio-cultural, religious and technological factors shaped radio ownership and expansion. A qualitative research approach was adopted using in-depth interview as the data collection instrument. Data were collected through a snowball sampling technique involving 9 radio station owners/ administrators or managers across major geopolitical zones in the state. Thematic analysis with aid of NVivo software version 15 was employed to analyse the data. Findings revealed six dominant themes: motivation, competition, ownership influence, technological impact, operational challenges and future sustainability. Political ambition and economic interest emerged as the strongest drivers reinforced by status conferral and religious objectives while technological advancements significantly lowered entry barriers and expanded audience reach. The study concludes that although radio proliferation enhances media plurality and participatory communication, it also intensifies market saturation and ethical vulnerabilities. The paper recommends stronger regulatory oversight, content specialization, sustainable business models and renewed professional standards.

Keywords: Radio, Proliferation; Oyo state, Media ownership; Broadcasting, Nigeria

Introduction
Broadcasting started in Nigeria with the radio diffusion service in 1930s by relaying the British Empire broadcasting services with the establishment of a relay station in Victoria Island, Lagos which disseminated at interval broadcast messages to major towns and cities in Nigeria via the wired wireless otherwise known as Rediffusion (Onabajo, 2021; Rauf, et al, 2013). The evolution came as part of experiment by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), where Lagos was chosen, as one of the centres (colonies) around the world, to receive and retransmit British Empire service signals from Daventry, England, available to only subscribers through loud speakers (Ibbi &Furomfate, 2021).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23775605

From the initial stage of broadcasting in Nigeria, the country enjoys a media system that placed ownership and controls in the hand of government. According to Ajoke and Anshase (2024), media system locates how media functions, it focuses attention on how dynamics such as power, ownership and policy affect their operations in a setting. After the initial iron fist control of the media in Nigeria, the country came under the policy of deregulation of the broadcast industry, otherwise called liberalisation by Oketunmbi (2006 & 2007) through Decree No38 of 1992 under the regime of former President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, which eclipsed the 50 years of sole government domination of the electronic sector in Nigeria (Ajoke &Anshase, 2024; Onyebuchi et al., 2023; Anyanwu, et al, 2015; Igyuve&Odeba, 2019).

Ibbi and Furomfate (2021), reason that the boom in the number of radio stations in the country could be seen as an offshoot of the deregulation of the industry, which makes more stations available to the people, presumably providing wider access to the media.
The expansion, according to Babangida (2025) allowed licensing of private radio and television broadcasting, leading to creation of Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) saddled with the responsibility to license new outlets in line with government-approved criteria. Babangida (2025) notes that in quick succession many Nigerians jumped into the opportunity with private radio and television stations established to compete with existing government dominated stations. The plurality of ownership that blossomed, expanding the frontiers of journalism in the country in the face of battle for survival. Oladimeji et al. (2022) notes that deregulation or liberalization of broadcast media ignited the atmosphere of serious competition and rivalry among media houses, with poaching and adoption of other strategies to either pushed other to brink and remain afloat.

Oyo state, that prides itself as the first owner of the foremost television station in Africa in 1959, (Western Nigerian Television WNTV) is one of the few leading states in Nigeria that have experienced radio boom. According to the data obtained from Unpublished NBC weekly Monitoring report, Feb, 2025, Ibadan Zonal Office, Oyo state has a total of 57 radio stations as at February, 2025, ten (10) of them are off air, despite, this represents a spike in the number of radio stations in the state. Though next to Lagos state but far ahead of other big cities like Kano which boasts of slightly over 30 radio stations and Ogun state (Bukar, 2022).

According to Agboluaje (2024), media firmament of Ibadan, the state capital changed only in 2007 when the first private radio station- Splash Fm made its debut. Furthermore, Moree (2024) notes that by the turn of 2019, Oyo state, according to NBC's records, had barely 20 radio stations. However, the frontiers of radio broadcast had grown geometrically in the state, extending even to the countryside within five years. Investigating factors that responsible for increase in the number of radio stations in the state is therefore the focus of this study.

Statement of the Problem

Although several studies have acknowledged the rapid proliferation of radio stations in Nigeria. From the relatively moderate number of radio stations of twenty-five (25) in 2019, both the public and private ownership combined, with only twenty (20) domiciled in Ibadan, the state has witnessed a boom (Ojebuyi & Ogunkunle, 2019). There remains a paucity of empirical investigations into the underlying motivations driving this expansion. Existing literature largely describes the phenomenon without systematically exploring why media entrepreneurs continue to establish new stations in Oyo state, despite evident market saturation, limited profitability, cacophony of competing voices, repetition or duplication of contents, with the attendant drop in professionalism as well as intense competition (Agboluaje, 2024; Oke, 2023& Ige, n.d,). This absence of evidence-based inquiry leaves a significant gap in understanding the socio-economic, political, and institutional forces shaping radio growth in Oyo state.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23775605

Moreover, the majority of existing research has focused on the aspects of ownership patterns, audience engagement and content diversity with little or no consideration being given to the experiences and perception of radio administrators and managers (Agboluaje, 2024; Moore, 2024), who are the major players in the decision making and operational sustainability, offering distinctive understandings on the factors that contribute to the radio establishment and survival, these gaps continue to exist in the academic discourse.

Also present is a local knowledge deficit, with the majority of the media studies in Nigeria focusing on national trends, without giving any consideration as to the reasons why Oyo State specifically has disproportionate density of radio stations in comparison with many of the Southwestern states and the country, in general. Similarly, the consequence of such proliferation on professionalism, originality of content and the quality of the broadcast has not been well-investigated. Such gaps will enhance the academic knowledge of the dynamics that influence the radio in Nigeria and shape more sustainable media policies and cultures in Oyo State and beyond. This study therefore interrogated the radio administrators or managers on their perceived determinants or motivations for the astronomical increase in the number of radio stations in the state.

Objectives

Among the specific objectives this study includes the following:

1. To examine the perspectives of radio stations owners, administrators and managers on the motivation for establishing radio stations in Oyo state, Nigeria.
2. To compare the motivations for private and public radio ownership in Oyo state, Nigeria
3. To assess the influence of technological advancements on the proliferation and operation of radio stations in Oyo state, Nigeria

Literature Review

Evolution of radio broadcasting in Nigeria

Radio broadcasting, no doubt is a common and popular medium of mass communication in Nigeria and other developing nations; either for socio-cultural reasons or for advancing political communication due to its cost-effective, accessible, language adaptability and ability to reach diverse location, including rural and urban societies (Adegbokun, 2021). Radio, being a medium based on the principle of transmitting audio content to remote audiences by using electromagnetic waves performs major functions of spreading information, education, politics and cultural propagation among other core responsibilities (Oso & Pate, 2019).

Radio broadcasting in Nigeria was introduced in the 1930s during the colonial rule, through the concept of radio rediffusion. The wired loudspeakers used by the colonial government during this period relayed British Empire programmes to the Nigerian urban centres especially Lagos (Alao and Olayinka, 2017). This form of early broadcasting was mostly used to spread colonial propaganda to sustain administrative control of the colonial authority.

Radio broadcasting later metamorphosed into the Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS) in 1955 which was reformed in 1957 as the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). Radio broadcasting grew after independence but remained centralized in governmental organizations, which is associated with an institutionalized ideology that the airwaves are the tools of national integration and development (Oso, 2016).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23775605

Meanwhile, by 1992, through Decree 38, government monopoly on broadcasting in Nigeria was quashed, permitting individuals, organizations, and religious institutions to own and operate broadcasting stations (Uche, 2021). Accordingly, Adeyemi and Salihu (2023) note that Nigeria's media ownership encompasses various ownership categories; the state-owned medium, private/commercial model of operation, community medium, and the religious medium. Each type influences content, editorial independence, political positioning, and audience targeting. Academic scholars have also pointed out that the ownership structure of radio stations primarily determines both their ideological leanings and agenda-setting functions (Alao & Olayinka, 2017).

Radio Proliferation and Motivations

Radio offers an exceptional feature that distinguishes it from all form of mass communication; this is due to low-cost, wide availability, ability to connect people. It applies to both the literate and illiterate audiences alike who reside in urban and rural areas (Oduntan, 2021). The apparent ease of use of radio has allowed it to proliferate across the Nigeria. Bassey (2023) reasons that in the last five years, the rate at which radio station establishments are proliferating has been astronomical and unprecedented.

Radio is increasingly becoming popular in Nigeria due to enabling legal framework dated back to broadcast deregulation in 1992, which has seen the growth of radio stations broadcasting in Nigeria rise to more than 30 government-run stations to over 600 licensed stations as of 2024 (NBC, 2024). Adeosun and Oyero (2022) argued a number of reasons for proliferation of radio stations, the first one is political motivation. Radio has become the instrument of political branding, mobilization, and agenda-setting by politicians, most especially those in a regional and state level. The second reason is commercial motivation. Low operation cost, large advertising revenues, brand sponsorship and alliance, the radio business model has been an invitation to entrepreneurs to invest in radio stations, particularly those in urban centres(Olayiwola, 2020). The entertainment industry has grown and, with the ever-increasing population of Nigeria, radio has become an important part of the creative economy.

Another motivation is religious, radio stations are also created by many churches and Islam-oriented organizations to further evangelizing, teaching about morality, and spreading doctrines (Folarin, 2021). This has been favorable towards the growth of faith-based stations.

Other motivations include socio-cultural relevance. The most culturally entrenched media in Nigeria is radio, as there is local-language programming, talk shows, music, and religious programming that forms the identity of communities and social unity (Ojebode, 2018). This cultural relatability continues to keep the demand to have more stations that are geared towards having niche audiences.

In Oyo state, Josh (2025) notes that the city of Ibadan is an honored place in the Nigerian broadcasting history as the birthplace of the first television station in Africa (WNTV, 1959) and one of the first radio centers in the west Africa. Media culture, which has existed in the region all along, makes it appealing to the new owners of stations. Ibadan is a historical media capital and one that has educational institutions, creative centres and media workers offering source labour and educated audience (Akinreti, 2022). Radio stations in Oyo State are flourishing on the basis of Yoruba dialects, urban lingo, culturally appealing programmes, and programmes that resonate with the rural as well as the urban population (Adekunle, 2023). This marketability of the culture contributes to the demand of more local stations.
Equally, Oyo State is a political stronghold, thus, politicians invest on radio to build up narratives in the masses especially during elections, this is similar to the development that led to the establishment of first African Television station in 1959, located in Ibadan when Chief Obafemi Awolowo the then Premier of the Western Region was denied access to use a colonial powered sole radio channel to defend himself

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against Governor-General McPherson's accusations on NBS radio in 1953 (Josh, 2025). Hence, thickness of political players-party systems, old institutions and opinion leaders form incentives on political communication based on radio. According to Silveira, (2023), there has been reduction in the barrier to establish radio station due to advancement in technological and regulatory liberation. The small investors have been able to create niche radio stations with the aid of modern technologies of transmitters, internet, online streaming and community broadcasting licenses.

Therefore, the incentives in Oyo State consist of combination of historical heritage, political interests, business opportunities, cultural relevance and economic affordability in the form of technology.

Media Ownership in Nigeria

Although, access to radio services in Nigeria comes from various sources, such as analogue, digital, satellite, internet-based radio, podcast and several others. However, the majority of the radio stations in Nigeria are legally registered as either public radio broadcast, commercial radio, community radio, faith-based and campus radio. Thus, radio stations in Nigeria are operated by different philosophies, structure of governance, and content control based on their establishing philosophy. In Nigeria, which has all-periodically owned public radio stations, these radio stations are well-known to be run with directives of public service broadcasting, national integration, cultural maintenance and developmental communication (Oso and Pate, 2019). This kind of radio covers more widely, multilingual programmes, and consistency with national interests. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that public stations are subject to political interferences, bureaucratic inefficiency and inability to exercise editorial independence, according to critics (Alawode&Omojola, 2021).

On the contrary, private radio is interested in profit making, commercial content and interaction with the audience. They are more innovative, competitive, entertainment-driven and audience-driven. Urban markets are controlled by private stations which are agile, modern in their programming approaches and high digital presence (Ajiboye, 2020). Religious ownership comprises the third category of ownership that incorporates the content of public-interest with faith-based messages. These stations help to address moral and spiritual gaps; however, they occasionally create questions regarding the indoctrination and intolerance (Folarin, 2021). Therefore, the ownership models play a key role in the motivations, practices and editorial orientation in the growing radio ecology in Oyo State.

Theoretical Framework

Democratic Participant Media Theory (DPMT)

This study is anchored on the premise of Democratic Participant Media Theory (DPMT) which was developed by Denis McQuail in 1987 (Asemah, Nwammuo, and Nkwam-Uwaona, 2017). The DPMT prioritizes citizen-centric, localism, participation and community-based communication. The theory opposes the large-scale centralized, commercialized or state dominated media systems and holds that common people have the right to create, distribute and receive media content that reflects their social realities in their immediate social context.

DPMT is an appropriate theory for this study as radio stations in Oyo State have been rapidly developing, reflects the increased need in the participatory communication space where citizens can engage in the dialogue and express their concerns and receive the information that is adjusted to their cultural and socio-political realities.

There are several new stations which are community based or are privately motivated and thus fit the focus of pluralism and diversified media ownership by McQuail using the lens of DPMT. The theory also explains why local radio is becoming more popular with audiences as they offer the local language-

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based programmes, discuss local issues and use interactional formats like phone-ins, social media, live-streaming among others.

Thus, the radio boom in Oyo State can be seen as the expression of democratic media participation that enhances the communication rights of citizens and reinforces the local democratic involvement.

Method

Snowball sampling technique was employed by the researchers to select nine (9) General manager/ or administrators of radio stations across three out of the five geo-political zones that made up the state. The zones include Ibadan, Ogbomoso and Oke-ogun. Only Oyo zone was omitted, because Ibarapa zone with three local government does not have a radio station yet. Each of covered zones has both private and government owned radio stations operating in their area. In- depth Interview was used as the method to gather qualitative data from the Key Informants who are the respondents. The key informants were managers from privately and publicly owned radio stations and they displayed deep knowledge of the issue.

Each of them has been in their respective stations for minimum of 5 years, they understood the philosophy, mission and vision statements of their respective radio, as well as the editorial philosophy of their place of work. To commence gathering of data, a radio manger was contacted in Ibadan, the fellow provided contacts of few of his colleagues, who after being contacted and interviewed also helped in the same manner**.** In all, 9 Key Informants were interviewed. This figure is considered acceptable by scholars in qualitative research (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Interview guide was used as data collection instrument, before each session of the interviews, each interviewee was adequately briefed with their consent sought, each of them were informed that they were at liberty to decline answer on any question and/or may decide to discontinue the interview without any explanation. The data collected from in-depth interview were recorded, transcribed verbatim and were thematically analysed with the aid of NVivo version 15 (QSR, 2020). This analytical process involved coding and themes detection where 6 majors emerged thus helping in understanding the research questions and objectives of the study.

Data Analysis and Findings

Profile of Informants

The informants consisted of radio station owners, station managers, directors, and administrative heads drawn from private, public, and political-owned stations operating across Ibadan, Ogbomoso and Oke-Ogun (Splash FM, Brave FM, Parrot FM, Solution FM, ZeapFM, Pensioner FM, AsabariFM, Success FM and Fresh FM) respectively which forms three out of five major geopolitical regions in the State, thus having maximum representation of the region. The profile of informants revealed a gender-sided consisting of eight (8) males and one (1) female; aged between 32 and 63 years. Each participant possessed a minimum of five years of professional experience, with several having over two decades in broadcast media. The minimum qualification of the informant was Higher National Diploma (HND), many were holders of first degree and two of them were PhD holder. Of the represented stations, one was state owned; the rest were privately owned including the state first private radio station. Findings to the study are presented below based on its themes.

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RO1: To examine the perspectives of radio stations owners/ administrators and or managers on the motivation for establishing radio stations in Oyo state, Nigeria.

There was large spectrum of issues thrown up by the data gathered on the motivations for the surge in the number of radios in Oyo state, where close to 60 radio stations are currently operating. The data thrown up many sub-themes, driven by multiple interconnected motivations ranging from personal interest, audience interest, community development, media divide, religion interest, political motive, status conferral and economy interest among others.

Political reasons emerged as a one of the strongest sub-themes that motivated emergence of many radio stations, as several stations were established by political actors seeking influence, grassroots reach, or public legitimacy. Some of the informants attested to this fact:

> … political rivalry and dominance must have responsible for proliferation" (**Participant 3)**

> …it is political. If you look at the numbers of radio stations as a case study, at least if I'm not mistaken, we have like ten {10} or more who are owned by politicians and majorly because of their ambitions. That's why I said politics actually contributed to that (**Informant 8)**

> …politicians are using the radio to reach out people and those who are coming on board also leverage on radio (**informant 2)**

> Most of our politicians have seized the opportunity of proximity to secure licenses. They know why. Even though they pretend to entertain, educate inform. There still so much to it than meet the eyes (**Informant 4)**

Another sub-theme that emerged is economic gain. Many informants recognized radio as an investment avenue, despite the challenges. Economic motivations include advertising potential, business diversification, and community markets. A number of the informants have this to say:

> …the rationale behind the establishment of Our Radio station takes its roots from the logo: The entrepreneur Radio which is designed to promote and encourage the people especially at the grassroots… (**Participant 4**)

> Economic gains to few owners of radio stations and to the large extent, status conferral plays major role (**informant 4)**

> Many of the proprietors of these stations cannot deny the economic considerations in the factors that motivated them to establish the radio stations (**informant 5)**

Closely linked to economic influence is another sub-theme of status conferral which emerged as a complementary motivational factor. Several informants explained that owning a radio station provides significant social prestige, even when the financial burden outweighs the economic benefits. Some informant highlighted this dynamic as one of the core motivations for the influx of radio stations in Oyo state:

> The radio station is adding so many other benefits. Yes, he is into oil and gas. But anytime he is attending one event or the other, he is called by the name of his radio station. He is well known by the name of the station. So, a kind of status conferral (**informant 7)**

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> the owner of a radio station has fast become a status symbol, a glaring Nigerian factor **(informant 4)**
>
> professionalism, economic gain and status conferral are all parts of the reason why we have a number of radio stations. Of course, some might debate it, but that is just the truth (**informant 6)**

And finally, religious factor also emerged as another sub- theme motivating entrepreneurs towards establishing radio stations. Some informant attributed the radio proliferation to faith-based effort in the form of religion propagation. Some informants explain thus:

> Some of the stations are owned by politicians and religious people especially among the Christians, we have stations owned by pastors for evangelism (**informant 2)**
>
> Yes, religious factor, because we have many pastors who are in the business now. At least, like Ada mi mogo, Ire ni Ibadan, Melody …, they are owned by Known pastors. … where they can proclaim the words of Jesus Christ … they have another radio station in Lagos state and another one in Abeokuta (**informant 4)**

RO2: To compare the motivations for private and public radio ownership in Oyo state, Nigeria

Ownership influence is one of the oldest challenging issues in media landscape, today it plays more crucial influence in radio operations and management in Oyo state. The popular cliché of "he who pays the piper dictate the tunes" align very much with ownership structure of both the private and government radios. Two major sub- themes emerged from the role ownership plays in the establishment, operation and management of radio stations. Going by the submissions of the informants, the two sub-themes are government media influence the editorial policies than the private own, but private mount economy pressure on the managers.

Sub-theme one: government influence on the editorial policies of its own media

Some of the informants disclosed that:

> "If the state government says they want to do anything, you will have to oblige them because they are the ones paying your salary. In private radio stations, is even worst. Because the MD or Chairman wants to be all in all, you must dance to their whim and caprices if you want to remain on the job." (**Informant 1)**
>
> "…because there's this problem of government owned station; radio or TV stations, there are some things they cannot do. They are always in support of government in power." (**Informant 8)**
>
> In term of funding, nothing is coming. You fend for yourself. Content wisely, you align your programming in line with government tune. An attempt to do otherwise, you may be sanctioned **(Informant 3)**

Some informants note that unlike private radio, government provides support to its owned station, which comes in the inform of subventions, apart from payment of salary. This poses serious threats and again influences the editorial independence. Some informants set this straight:

> Government matter is "*Oga ta; Oga ko ta, Owo Alaaru o pe*. (whether you make money or not, your salary will be paid in a government radio station). They live on subvention but private ownership must work seriously to maintain the staff and the equipment (**Informant 9)**

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Sub- sub theme two:private mount economy pressure on the managers

Without doubt, these economic and editorial pressures have eroded professional standards to a considerable extent, pushing the integrity of the mass media to one of its lowest points. In the struggle to remain afloat, survive, and stay competitive, some radio stations have adopted questionable practices that further undermine ethical journalism and weaken public trust in the industry. Informants state this way:

> "But professionalism is fading away despite all efforts put in place by Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria, and recently Society of Nigeria Broadcasters to regulate the profession, nothing concrete has come out, it boils down to the ownership. You may want to enforce certain codes of ethics but if your board or chairman thinks otherwise, there is nothing u can do." **(Informant 1)**

> "When I got here, my chairman was emphasizing that you must make money so that we can pay salary, then I was like problem has finally come. When I was in Radio Nigeria, it does not concern me whether we make money or not, salary must be paid by government at all cost." **(Informant 7)**

> in private radio stations… a number of them are seen owing up to three- or four- months' salary…In fact, many private radio stations are not even allowing their staff to go on annual leave and if they do, there is not like leave bonus. **(informant 1)**

RO3: To assess the influence of technological advancements on the proliferation and operation of radio stations in Oyo state, Nigeria.

This objective tries to assess whether technology plays any role in the proliferation of radio, particularly its transformative role in radio broadcasting in Nigeria, by offering ease entrance, flexibility and automation. Three the sub-themes that emerged from majority of the informants are expanded reach, technology as positive enhancement and the need for content specialization.

Sub-theme One:expanded reach through technology. Informants note that technological advancements-digital technology has expanded reach, boosted visibility and attracted new audiences. Some of the informants attested to this fact:

> … Streaming has helped a lot; this is against the back drop of age long narrative that radio is a blind's man platform. But today, radio has become a visual platform and this is helping a lot (**Informant 1)**

> Digital transmission, streaming and social media are welcome developments redefining broadcasting and making the job easier. Bridging the gaps between audio and visual. **(Informant 4)**

> …the way they were operating, everything was like analog, transmitting terrestrial. But as time goes on, particularly with the arrival of social media you can listen to us through internet, through website and any other means… (**Informant 6)**

Sub-theme Two:technology as positive development. New technology in radio broadcasting suggests that modern state of the art equipment came as positive development rather than negative, making the running radio station easier. Many of the informants throw their weight behind efficiency and effectiveness rather than otherwise:

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> Oh yes, unlike during the analogue era, digitization has made day to day running of radio easier, such that reports can be made anywhere via social media and transmit live as the news breaks (**Informant 2)**
>
> The development has made things easier. From News gathering to Reporting to programmes presentation and interviews just the click of a button would save hours and minutes (**Informant 4**)
>
> …Technology has advanced the frontiers of radio broadcasting today. We can cover beyond our immediate community as we also serve the Nigerians living in the diaspora **(Informant)**

Sub- theme three: future of radio broadcasting. Two sub-sub themes emerged from various shade of opinions advanced by key informants on what future challenges holds for radio broadcasting in Oyo state.

Sub-sub-theme one:

Radio station to fold up in future. Many informants forecast death of many radio stations in future because of the difficult operating environment, this was echoed by almost all the informants

> …some radio stations will fade away. Because of lack of revenue and professionalism to run them. Its already becoming monotonous, most radio stations are copying one another **(Informant 1)**
>
> … Ibadan alone, we have between 40- 45 radio stations, and about 60 in the whole state, … some are going down, in the last three years now about five radio stations have gone moribund in Ibadan and those that are not moribund are operating far below capacity. **(Informant 7)**
>
> The point I want to bring out is that so many radio stations will still fold up because there is no money in radio broadcasting. … **(Informant 6)**

Sub- sub- theme two:

Innovation and strategic adaptation: Informants highlighted content specialization such as health focused programming as a means of strengthening relevance and audience loyalty. Some of the informants emphasized this way:

> …I think it is time now for radio to go for special identification content wise, such that radio stations will go into content specialization. For example, we can have a radio station that will specialize on health issue alone. Your news and programme from morning to evening should be health- focused alone. **(Informant 3)**
>
> The issue of this Artificial Intelligence (AI) can also be adopted to reduce workforce as coping strategy, maybe you just have three or four people in the newsroom. You don't need the former bogus newsroom staff any longer, so phone and AI will do a lot of wonders. (**Informant 7)**

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Discussion of Findings

The study examined three research objectives, thus, discussing the finding of this study would be based on the responses from the informants regarding the research objectives.

The motivation for radio proliferation in Oyo state is shaped by multi-dimensional factors including political ambition, economic interest, status conferral, religious propagation and community development. Our findings resonate with the position of Adeosun and Oyero (2022), who recognised politics as one of the motivations. It also sits well with what (Olayiwola, 2020) found when the scholar highlighted economic gain as motivation, and finally, this study confirmed the earlier position of (Folarin, 2021) who established that religious reason is among the motivations for proliferation of radio station in the country. Similarly, findings of this study largely align with the assumptions of the Democratic Participant Media Theory, which emphasizes decentralization, pluralism, community access, and citizen driven communication. The motivations identified among radio station owners and managers in Oyo State reflect a media environment shaped by political participation, economic survival, community representation, and symbolic capital. The proliferation of radio stations demonstrates a shift away from centralized broadcasting towards locally embedded platforms that address grassroots information needs, cultural expression, and political visibility.

However, the study also reveals a tension between the participatory ideals of DPMT and the structural realities of ownership and commercialization. Political ownership and economic pressures significantly influence editorial autonomy, often subordinating professionalism to ownership interests.

On the deference between private and government own radio station, findings show a known trend with government owned radio struggling with pressure of regulation and censorship, while economic struggle and survival battle stand tall as the major bottleneck before private radio stations. In the struggle, many of them are owing salaries running into months, the attempt to remain afloat continues to tamper professionalism. The finding here is in agreement with what Alawode and Omojola (2021) had found in their study, with public owned media struggling with political interferences of government, particularly, their lack of editorial independence. It also aligns with earlier stand of Ajiboye (2020), who concurred that private radio stations are profit-making driven, thus prompting them to strive to dominate the market with content that can attract audience.

The results of this research can also be related to the Democratic Participant Media Theory. Despite the fact that an increase in the number of radio stations contributes to media plurality, the theory assumes that media outlets should promote community involvement, independence, and democratic communication. However, the results reveal that government ownership and private ownership influence the prevalence of political and economic interests in radio stations' editorial policies. Also, these factors reduce the stations' ability to produce independent media content, which limits the ability of journalists and managers to act in the public and social interests.Thus, the overall impact of ownership on radio station operations weakens the Democratic Participant Media Theory.

The data from the study also show that technological advancements has expanded reach, boosted visibility and attracted new audiences in radio broadcasting in the state, notwithstanding the fact that the future of radio looks challenging due to serious competition and survival battle, which may lead to death of many more radio stations. The unpublished NBC weekly Monitoring report of February, 2025, Ibadan Zonal Office, confirmed this trend.

Therefore, innovation and strategic adaptation in form ofcontent specialization and adoption of artificial intelligence will play more roles in the uncertain future of radio broadcasting in the state.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23775605

As far as the Democratic Participant Media Theory is concerned, the role of new technologies in radio stations' operations was found to be consistent with the theory's assumptions. The growth of various technological tools used in running radio stations is a significant force that makes it possible to deliver radio content and encourage citizens' democratic involvement.

Nevertheless, the results indicate that technological advancement has led to increased competition and economic precariousness, restricting democratic communication, and therefore, if the radio stations leverage on these new technologies, it will result in the confluence of technology and Democratic Participant Media Theory.

Although digitisation, streaming, and artificial intelligence have improved accessibility, speed, and interaction, technological advancement has created competition, ethical issues, and economic precariousness.

The results demonstrate the increase in the number of radio stations in Oyo State and indicate their relationship with the Democratic Participant Media Theory as well as factors that could impede the democratic predictions of the theory. The results suggest that although there has been an increase in the number of radio station owners, the radio stations face political and commercial hegemony that limit their role as democratic communication media. Therefore, the study concludes that although the radio stations in Oyo State have recorded democratic prosperity, they face institutional precariousness, and therefore institutional reinforcement should be paramount to ensure their prosperity and democratic functionality.

Conclusion

This study provides a detailed understanding of the motivation, ownership structure, technological forces and sustainability issues that shape radio broadcasting in Oyo State, Nigeria. It is established based on empirical evidence that radio proliferation is driven by a complex nexus of political ambition, economic self-interest, status conferral, religious dispersion and community engagement. Although, the advancement in technology has increased the broadcast coverage, operational efficiency and audience engagement; it also brings about competitiveness, ethical weaknesses and financial strains in an already flooded media landscape. In as much as the trend of radio can be said to be in line with the theoretical principles of the Democratic Participatory Media Theory in regard to enhanced decentralization and grassroots communication, there are the structural and economic factors that undermine these principles constantly.

Recommendations

Below are some of the recommendations based on the research findings:

1. This paper recommends that the regulatory agency in broadcasting sector should attached strong professional credential to future approval of a radio station.
2. Again, ethical compliance in the running of broadcasting organizations, through sound regulatory structures and renewed professionalism should be promoted and upheld by the NBC.
3. Sustainability of radio in the state of Oyo should embrace strategic innovation, differentiation of content (content specialization) prudent incorporation of the emerging technologies.
4. Radio station owners and managers should develop other income streams, including digital advertising, sponsored content, partnerships, and community-based funding, to reduce reliance on traditional advertising and ensure financial stability. This addresses the economic challenges raised by several private radio stations.
5. Broadcasters should provide continuous training and re-skilling opportunities to increase the professional capacity of workers, especially journalists, presenters, and technicians, and enhance

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23775605

their proficiency in adopting new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, digital broadcasting, and streaming.

6. Radio stations can strengthen their audience base by conducting regular surveys and engaging with their audiences to better understand their needs and preferences, producing relevant content, and building trust and loyalty among listeners.

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