

AN EXPLORATION OF BROADCAST MEDIA REGULATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an exploration of broadcast regulation in Nigeria with a focus on how broadcasting is regulated in the country including the activities of the National Broadcasting Commission concerning its broadcast regulatory role. The main approach adopted for the study was document research while the survey was used as a supporting method that enabled administering a questionnaire to selected persons in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. Findings from the review and survey indicated that broadcasting in Nigeria was regulated to the extent the audience receives the appropriate messages. This has been done to a significant extent by the regulatory authority of the country. As a regulatory body, particularly for broadcasting, the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria has continued to ensure that broadcast contents are properly regulated in line with international best practices and that defaulters are met with sanctions in line with the provisions of the broadcasting codes.

Keywords: Broadcast, regulation, Nigeria, National Broadcasting Commission, media.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In every society, media regulation is inevitable. This is premised on the need to maintain law and order and ultimately prevent anarchy which may be orchestrated by media reports. In ensuring effective media regulations, media laws and policies are formulated by relevant authorities. This regulation is inclusive of broadcasting. In some climes, broadcasting codes or operational guidelines are put forward for responsible broadcasting in such societies.

Salomon (2008) noted that laws on media, freedom of speech, and expression have made government regulation controversial within the broadcast sector throughout the world. The significance of freedom of expression has been reflected by its widespread protection in international law at global and regional levels. This right is reflected in Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights. The key principle of ensuring freedom of speech should be embodied in any system of broadcasting regulation, but this is not an unencumbered right. The European Convention on Human Rights makes it clear that everyone has the right, "to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers." However, these freedoms may be subject to such conditions and restrictions as are prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society.

Scholars (including Udoakah et al., 2014; DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989) argued that it is through the mass media that views in the society are made known, government policies and activities are publicized, and opposing views are heard. Again, the mass media serve as the conduit for the various forms of interaction among different strata of society. Such interactions are normally controlled by many variables, such as legal, ethical, political, socio-cultural, technological, and economic factors. The interaction is necessary so that certain unacceptable and disruptive behaviors are not exhibited in the society. Given the foregoing, mass media contents are packaged in a way that helps the media to perform their roles effectively as the media are a major force that stimulates national, international, socio-economic, and global understanding. Due to their strategic position in society, the operations of the mass media are affected by many developments in the law. The central themes of some of these developments included the laws relating to the establishment, ownership, operation, and control of the mass media, including broadcast media.

Salomon (2008) further asserted that it is generally agreed, as the best international practice, that the establishment of an independent broadcasting regulator is an important element in the preservation of broadcasting as part of the democratic process. To be independent, the broadcasting regulatory authority must be able to function free from any interference or pressure from political or economic

forces. An independent regulatory authority should have its duties and responsibilities set out in the law, and its decisions should be subject to appeal in a court of law. To achieve the status of an independent regulator, the process of appointment should be transparent and set out in the statute. In many societies, it can be a major challenge for politicians in government to agree to a process that will deliver a regulatory authority consisting of independent individuals; there is no “right” method. Each country must consider how best to appoint men and women who are representative of the broad spectrum of society, who are qualified to take the range of complex decisions incumbent upon a broadcasting regulator, and who have the strength of character to resist political and financial pressures.

Njoku (2018) noted that due to its centrality as a source of news and information, and therefore its ability to influence the opinions of the public, broadcasting is often the target of illegitimate control. In many countries, the State-funded broadcaster operates as a mouthpiece of government rather than presenting diverse sources of information of public interest, while private broadcasting is either prohibited or its independence is curtailed through a variety of mechanisms which among others include the introduction of laws and policies that jeopardize media independence. An effective broadcasting system that serves the public interest cannot survive without official regulation. The electromagnetic spectrum is a limited resource, and while new technologies are beginning to increase the number of channels that can be carried, demand for the spectrum still outstrips supply. According to O’Callaghan (2021), the collection of all electromagnetic radiation in the universe is referred to as the electromagnetic spectrum. This is a type of energy that pervades the cosmos in the form of electric and magnetic waves, allowing for the transfer of energy and information. Njoku (2018) averred that since states are required under international law to guarantee their citizens’ freedom of expression “through any medium”, the available spectrum must be rationed in a way that maximizes the ability of different voices in society to speak and be heard over radio and television (Article 19).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Global Insight on Broadcast Regulation

Albany (2012) noted that broadcasting is pervasive and persuasive; therefore, the goals of broadcasting regulations, among others, are to:

- protect and promote local social, cultural, moral, and religious values
- protect citizens, especially minors, from harmful or offensive material
- ensure that the public receives accurate and impartial news
- ensure that people are treated fairly, and privacy is respected

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- ensure that broadcasting is not used to incite terrorism, violence, hatred, or disorder, or to promote crime
 - protect the public from improper advertising as well as provide a transparent and consistent framework for business investment

These goals as presented by Albany are, no doubt, critical to effective broadcasting all over the world. In different parts of the world, according to Greene (2017), radio and television broadcasting were subjected from the beginning to high levels of restriction, sometimes involving public control approaching a condition of censorship. The general concept of social responsibility and public interest lies at the core of the broadcasting model, although there are several variants that can take weaker forms (as in the USA) or stronger ones (as in Europe). The main difference is between systems that are within public ownership and control and those that operate commercially but are subject to licensing conditions and public scrutiny. The main reasons for the high regulation of broadcasting can be expressed in terms of the following main aims, which are: to ensure universal availability to the general population of the country broadcast services; to allocate frequencies and broadcasting concessions in an equitable and orderly manner, and supervise conformity to the rules laid down; to ensure a wide range of services and access opportunities according to the needs of society - meaning diversity in social, political, cultural and local/regional terms; to promote the high quality of content provided as far as possible according to locally decided values and standards, with particular reference to information, education, advertising, culture, taste, and decency; lastly to look after the basic interests of the state in matters of security and good order, as locally interpreted.

Ezeigbo (2004) contended that broadcasting, with its sensitive nature and wider coverage area, is a very powerful organ of mass communication. It is also dependent on airwaves, the electromagnetic spectrum, which belongs to the public. Therefore, governments all over the world have shown diverse interests in broadcasting because of the existence of its vital ingredient – the airwaves (electromagnetic spectrum) which is a natural resource. There is a universal acceptance that the airwaves formed within the air space above the territorial boundaries of any nation is the property of that country. Therefore, often government and other designated agencies are charged with regulating the airwaves to ensure that they benefit the nation as a whole, now and in the future.

Githige et. al (2014) citing Hanes (2000) argued that broadcasting is a powerful means of communication in the world, and, being aware of this, governments have over the years sought ways in which they could regulate what information is transmitted through the airwaves. Most of the time, restricting what information goes on air is a means of protecting citizens, especially minors, from harmful content. This is because various studies on the effects of mass media have shown that children often imitate behavior that is portrayed on television.

Historically, the legal justification for the regulation of television has relied on the fact that television uses a scarce public resource: the spectrum. The spectrum which broadcasters use is allocated to each country by an agency of the United Nations, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the individual countries then divide that spectrum into separate channels and assign it to the broadcasters. There is only so much spectrum available for each country and therefore it is a scarce resource and potentially quite valuable. For example, in the UK, all the television spectrum already has been allocated and the regulator, OFCOM, is introducing spectrum pricing, which will mean that every broadcaster will have to pay for the spectrum they use, based on commercial market value. It is very unusual for a country to have no method of controlling the use of the television spectrum: even war-torn countries like Iraq and Afghanistan license their broadcast spectrum and have regulators in place to do the licensing (Salomon, 2008).

The broadcasting model covers two main types of systems. One is the public service variant, the other consists of privately owned and financed systems. The distinction is not always absolute, since some commercial broadcasters may also have public service duties as a licensing condition. Public service broadcasting is expected to serve the needs of significant social institutions (for instance, concerning politics, education, and the judicial system). It is also directly or indirectly expected to serve or respect the main party-political groups. In some countries, the political interest is served by imposing political neutrality (as in Britain) or “fairness” (as in the United States), while in others political party influence is more or less openly and proportionately allowed (as in Italy, France, and Germany) (Greene, 2017).

May (2016) argued that commercial broadcasting systems, in contrast, are free to choose their own objectives, in the sense of whichever consumer audience or advertising market they want to serve. They are primarily accountable to owners, investors, and clients. Regulation in this case is essentially restrictive and proscriptive and is designed to establish the ground rules and set limits within which the systems operate. These ground rules mainly concern the following matters: permitted amount and content of advertising; control of other means of finance (e.g., sponsorship); content potentially harmful to the young or offending some value or group (e.g., in matters of racism, or religious blasphemy); procedures for complaints and rights of reply.

Furthermore, Githige et. al (2014) noted that the watershed period was initiated in the Kenya Communications Amendment Act (2008) section 46 (I) where the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) was mandated to set a watershed period. It was defined in the Kenya Communications (Broadcasting) Regulations as the time between 5 am and 10 pm, during which a licensee would ensure that program content that featured adult scenes and/or language intended for adult audiences would not be aired. Hence, all programs broadcast during this period would have to be suitable for

family audiences, and the transition from family-oriented to more adult programs after the watershed period would be gradual. The KFCB classifies all programs aired by broadcasters into various categories. These include GE (General Exhibition), also referred to as “U”, meaning universal; this classification/rating means the program contains nothing inappropriate for viewers of all ages. PG (Parental Guidance), also referred to as “10”; this classification/rating means the program may contain scenes unsuitable for children under the age of ten years.

Scholars (such as Netto, 2002; Ramanathan, 2008; Weiss, 2012; cited in Keea et al., 2015) stated that Malaysia’s broadcast media is often deemed as strictly politically controlled and that the law in Malaysia allows monopoly of media ownership. In 2011, the Malaysian Prime Minister announced some major changes and the reformation of law to allow greater media freedom. The government portrayed itself as trying to move the media industry toward self-regulation. In terms of media regulation that is established in Malaysia at this point, the broadcasting industry abides by the Film Censorship Act 2000 and the Malaysia Communication and Multimedia Act (1998). The broadcasting industry has also drawn up a Content Code which is indicative of the industry’s effort toward self-regulation.

With the fast-paced development and reformation taking place, Keea et al. (2015) contended that some questions needed to be answered within the studies conducted on Malaysia’s media regulation. How exactly do the media regulators regulate the broadcasting industry? What are the dynamics of the relationship between the regulators and the broadcast industry? How do the regulators perceive the future of media regulation and self-regulation in Malaysia? In fact, the laws in Malaysia were designed in such a way that all Free-to-Air (FTA) television stations will be under the Ministry of Home Affairs while satellite television such as Astro will be under the regulation of Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission, which sparked some debates on the different regulation between FTA channels and satellite channels.

In Britain, after a series of radical changes in the policies, the Independent Television Commission, ITC, was established under the Broadcasting Act of 1990 to enhance free programming as it replaced the old Independent Broadcasting Authority. The act charged ITC to ensure that television services are of high quality and offer a wide range of programs calculated to appeal to a variety of tastes and interests. Then, the ITC was given the “power to scrutinize applicants’ program plans and only those judged to be of sufficient quality would be allowed to proceed to the license bidding stage. The continued emphasis on quality and diversity should be seen as evidence of a regulatory body determined to pursue public interest objectives. In the USA, the broadcasting regulation is rooted in the First Amendment of the American Constitution “that Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech or of the press”. The regulation in the US is handled by the Federal

Communications Commission, FCC, which is charged with the implementation of Fairness Doctrine. FCC gave licenses but did not make specific provisions (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013; Pember, 2004; Harvey, 1999).

In most countries of the world, the broadcast industry is regulated to conform to national objectives or the government in power. In Japan, public and privately owned broadcast stations exist side by side with some government supervision. In China, the media are entirely owned, controlled, and run by the State, while the United Kingdom (UK) has the Radio Commission Agency (RCA) and the Broadcast Standards Commission (BSA) which regulate radio and television, issue Licenses and maintain overall standards for the broadcast industry, under minimal supervision from the government (Ezeigbo, 2004). These countries ensure broadcasting is given the appropriate regulatory attention through the enforcement of relevant media laws and policies.

Lack of enforcement of the law has been shown to be a factor that affects compliance with various government regulations. Three aspects that promote the enforcement of government regulations are persuasion, deterrence, and incapacitation. Persuasion is accomplished by convincing the target group about the wisdom of compliance and explaining why compliance with a particular regulation is necessary. The probability of a penalty and its amount could have general deterrence effects. In the US, for instance, the president signed into law legislation increasing by tenfold the maximum fine for indecency on television and radio when indecency complaints to the FCC rose from hundreds per year to hundreds of thousands. This penalty was raised from a mere \$32,500 to \$325,000 per violation. The US President stated that a maximum fine of \$32,500 was meaningless and relatively painless for broadcasters when they violate decency standards (Health & Safety Executive, 2008; Baptist Press 2006; Netherlands' Ministry of Justice, 2004; OECD, 2000; OECD, 1998; OECD,1993; cited in Githige et al., 2014).

2.2 Broadcasting Regulation in Nigeria

Broadcast media policy in Nigeria has been a sensitive, unresolved, and unconcluded issue, not only because of the diversity of the Nigerian society but also because of the failure of the majority of Nigerians and their leaders to visualize the role of their mass media in the development of Nigeria. The inconsistency in formulating mass media policies in Nigeria is also revealed in the difference between the colonial African press, which was a tool for winning African independence, and the post-independence press, which was directed toward construction and national development. Mass media policies in Nigeria were not federally directed but were mainly in the hands of state governments until July 1975, when General Yakubu Gowons' administration was toppled (Udomisor, 2013). In 1975, the federal government took over the ownership of Nigeria's broadcast media. The broadcast media were taken over to prevent the proliferation of the networks at the

expense of the taxpayer's money, and to effectively participate in the Country's mass media to supplement its giant programs in educating the masses (Udomisor, 2013).

All along, the ownership, control, and operation of broadcasting in Nigeria were preserved exclusively for the various governments – federal, regional, and state. In 1992, the Deregulation of Broadcasting Decree No. 38 was promulgated by the administration of General Ibrahim Babangida. The expression of that presidential *ipse dixit* which established the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, also created a new pattern of ownership and control as well as injected competition into the broadcast industry. As a result of the revolution in the Nigerian broadcast industry, the number of broadcasting stations in Nigeria has, at the last count, risen to 394, from less than 30 before deregulation (National Broadcasting Code, 2009; Media Rights Agenda, 2001; cited in Ihechu & Okugo, 2013).

Similar to the point noted above and as a matter of policy that involved regulation, Udomisor (2013) asserted that the government promulgated a decree in 1992 which established a regulatory body, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), and opened the door to private participation in the ownership and operation of broadcasting stations. Udomisor (2013) further stated that in 1992, a new vista was opened in the annals of Nigerian broadcasting history. The Federal government under the then Commander in Chief, General Ibrahim Babangida deregulated the broadcast industry by granting licenses to private individuals and organizations to set up radio and television broadcasting stations. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) was founded to monitor and regulate broadcasting on a national basis. One goal of the organization is to open up the industry to the marketplace paradigm. Both foreign and domestic participation was sought. A total of nine mandates were itemized in the charter of the NBC. Additionally, the agency had the role of arbitrator between the industry and other areas of the government. Education is also a component of the organization's work. It was charged with ensuring the development of trained personnel through accredited curricula and programs that offer courses in mass communication and broadcasting. The final mandate was to guarantee the liberty and protection of the broadcasting industry under the constitution (Udomisor, 2013).

Regulation in Nigeria is fashioned to uphold what the lawmakers intended – supposed protection of the interest of the nation. For emphasis, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (1999, p.22-23) provided for the Right to freedom of expression and the press. Section 39-(1) provides: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold an opinion and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference." The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) went further in subsection two, to give conditions for ownership of broadcast outfits which include a required authorization by the government or its

agency. Further, subsection three states: “Nothing in this section shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society.” The provisions are explicit. First, freedom of expression is granted in subsection one, then subsection two gives the conditions for availing of this freedom, and finally, subsection three politely withdraws the freedom. The implication is that the government and its agencies (in this case, NBC) will grant licenses for broadcasting stations to anybody who satisfies their bidding. It also shows that acquiring the licenses does not give the stations the right to air their opinions or what they think will be in the interest of society. Rather, the provision is fashioned in such a way that the bidding of the ruling class will always be observed by the stations. That is the reason behind the provisions of subsection three. After all, who determines the reasonability and justifiability of other legal permutations? (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013).

As indicated earlier, broadcasting in Nigeria is currently regulated by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). The regulatory responsibilities of the Commission as stated in Hassan (2021) include: receiving, processing, and considering applications for the ownership of radio and television stations including cable TV services, direct satellite broadcast, etc.; regulating and controlling the broadcasting industry; receiving, considering and investigating complaints from individuals and bodies regarding content of a broadcast or conduct of a station; upholding the principles of equity and fairness in broadcasting; establishing and disseminating a national broadcasting code and setting standards with regards to contents and quality of broadcasting; regulating ethical standard and technical excellence; promoting Nigerian indigenous cultures, values and community life through broadcasting; determining and applying sanctions, including revocation of licenses of defaulting stations; ensuring quality manpower development in the broadcasting industry by accrediting curricula and programs for all tertiary institutions that offer Mass Communication in relation to broadcasting; and intervening and arbitrating in conflicts in the broadcasting industry.

In a bid to effectively regulate broadcasting in Nigeria, the Commission came up with a regulatory document referred to as the broadcasting codes. Broadcasting Codes set out principles of broadcast content to be observed by all broadcasters. The principles apply to all program content, including advertising content, regardless of who the author is. Broadcasters are responsible for all materials broadcast by them. Regulatory activity is expected never to interfere with editorial freedom (Albany, 2012).

Based on the stipulated functions of the NBC, the commission enacted the broadcasting code for Nigeria which is regularly upgraded to meet the broadcasting objectives. In 2016, the Commission released the 6th edition of the Nigerian Broadcasting Code and in on 11th June, 2020, the Commission amended the Code. In the Code, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) outlined the objectives of broadcasting in Nigeria, built around chapter II, of the 1999 constitution. The

objectives included social, cultural, economic, political, technological, professional objectives, and profit motives. Thus, the broadcasting code specified the overall regulation approaches (Owuamalam, 2006; Ihechi & Okugo, 2013).

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theory of deterrence was used in the analysis of this paper. Onwudiwe et. al (n.d.) cited in Githige et al. (2014) noted that the theory of deterrence is a rationalist theory that is traced to the early works of classical philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes (1588–1678), Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794), and Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). Hobbes argued that to achieve compliance, the punishment for a crime must be greater than the benefit that comes from committing the crime. Beccaria argued that since people are rationally self-interested, they will not commit crimes if the costs of committing crimes prevail over the benefits of engaging in undesirable acts. Bentham pointed out that nature had placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. He believed that morality is that which promotes “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”. The duty of the State in Bentham’s view was to promote the happiness of society, by punishing non-compliance and rewarding compliance. This theory of deterrence relies on three individual components: severity, certainty, and celerity. If punishment was severe, certain, and swift, a rational person would measure the gains and losses before engaging in a crime and would be deterred from violating the law if the loss was greater than the gain.

The broadcasters in state government-owned stations feel that they owe their allegiance to the governments in power, rather than to the public, which has the right to all shades of opinion on the playing field. Also, the attitudes of even chief executives of broadcast stations confronted with the issue of fairness and balance in news reporting leave much to be desired. Many operatives in the News and Current Affairs Departments of government-owned broadcasting stations have thrown the creed of the profession to the dogs as they scramble to be identified with the party in power. This implies that some broadcasters have deliberately practiced unethical broadcasting just to promote the selfish interests of those in positions of authority, and consequently get favored by them. It is horrifying to listen in on live relays of political rallies, with commentary staff actually pleading the case of the governor and the party and urging people to return the government to power (Saidu, 2003; Ezeigbo, 2004).

3. METHODOLOGY

This paper was mainly a systematic review of various related works to ascertain how broadcasting has been regulated in Nigeria so far. The implication is that secondary data was mainly used to support the arguments on the subject of discussion. Relevant scholarly works published in journals, books, proceedings of conferences, etc., were critically reviewed. The review helped to ascertain

and evaluate how broadcast media operations are regulated in Nigeria. A survey of media audience from various parts of the country was done just to support the document review. Five respondents from each of the six geopolitical zones of the country were purposively selected on the basis of their consistent exposure to broadcast media content. The implication is that 30 respondents were studied using the questionnaire.

4. RESULTS

As already stated, the focus of this paper was to explore broadcast media regulation in Nigeria. As clearly stated in the methodology, relevant documents were reviewed to address the intent of the paper, which is an exploration of broadcast media regulation in Nigeria, as discussed below. As a supporting method, the questionnaire was administered to purposively selected respondents.

4.1 Regulatory Activities of the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria

In 2006, African Independent Television, AIT, was closed down for three days and the state security services (SSS) were on hand to secure the closure. The station presented live coverage of the National Assembly's debate on tenure elongation engineered by President Olusegun Obasanjo's third term bid. The government may have thought that the live coverage helped to scuttle the arrangement, because, according to some analysts, the masses were looking at the faces of their representatives while the debate went on (Ihechu & Okugo, 2013).

In 2014, NBC issued a directive requiring all broadcasters to submit a written notice 48 hours before live transmissions of any political program. NBC claimed that the directive was meant to preserve national unity ahead of the 2015 elections by stemming "inciting, provocative, and highly divisive comments." The following month, NBC suspended the broadcast of a popular radio show on Splash FM after a promotional clip referred to a federal lawmaker as a criminal (Freedom House, 2016).

In its continued effort to ensure adequate compliance with the NBC code by broadcast stations, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) released a list of 13 broadcasting stations that were sanctioned for various breaches in contravention of the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code in the third quarter of 2017. The contraventions include breaches of the rules on hateful speech, vulgar lyrics, and unverifiable claims and all the erring stations were fined according to the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (NBC Press Release, 2017).

Similarly, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) sanctioned no fewer than 88 broadcast stations for breaching various provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2017. The stations, which included radio and television outfits, were fined over N11 million. The Head of Public Affairs at NBC, Mrs. Maimuna Jimada, disclosed that their offenses ranged from breaches of rules on vulgar lyrics and unverifiable claims to hate speeches, among others. Erring

stations were sanctioned in various categories according to the provisions of the code. A breakdown of the list showed that 19 stations were fined N2.1m in Abuja Zone, three stations were fined N400,000 in Benin Zone, 20 other stations were fined N2.225m in Enugu Zone. In the Kaduna Zone, about 12 stations were fined N1.35m, just as three stations got a fine of N1.05m in the Lagos Zone. Also, 12 stations were fined N1.3m in Ibadan Zone, one station was fined N100,000 at the Jos Zone, and three other stations were fined N300,000 in the Maiduguri Zone. While there were no breaches recorded in Sokoto Zone within the period under review, about 12 stations were fined N1.6m in the Uyo Zone (Njoku, 2018).

In January 2019, the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), African Independent Television (AIT), Channels TV, and Television Continental (TVC) were sanctioned for allowing hate speeches by politicians from both the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) to be aired on their networks. The Director General of NBC, Malam Is'haq Modibbo Kawu said that the four stations failed to shut out chieftains of both parties who willfully engaged in hate speeches during their political campaigns (Ifeonyemetalu, 2019).

4.2 Exploration of Empirical Studies on Audience Perception of Broadcasting in Nigeria

Abang (2021) conducted a study on audience perception of the regulatory effects of the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria on broadcasting in Rivers State. This was survey research carried out in Nigeria's Rivers State, to unravel the views of the audience regarding the kind of broadcast content they receive from the broadcast media in the state. A questionnaire was used as the data collection tool and was accordingly administered to the selected respondents. Findings showed that the audience views the messages from the broadcast media to be appropriate and satisfactory. This again reveals that the regulatory body has to ensure proper regulation of broadcast contents to the extent that the right messages are received by the audience.

A similar study by Okoli (2020) focused on audience assessment of broadcasting regulation in Nigeria. The study was aimed at ascertaining how the broadcast media audience in Abia State perceives the effect of broadcast regulation on the broadcast contents of broadcast stations in the State. A questionnaire was designed and administered to the selected respondents in order to gauge their views on the subject of investigation. Findings from the study showed a high level of satisfaction of the respondents regarding the extent to which broadcasting regulations have positively impacted the broadcast contents of broadcast stations in the State. This implies that the audience has continued to receive the right messages from the broadcast media based on the regulatory efforts of the regulatory commission in the country.

Chioma et al. (2015) conducted a study entitled "An Evaluation of Radio Audience Satisfaction with Programming on Inspiration 92.3 FM, Lagos." The study sought to investigate the listening pattern

of Inspiration 92.3 FM listeners in Maryland, Lagos, and their level of satisfaction. 250 respondents were surveyed from Maryland Lagos. The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) was used to analyze data which were presented using the descriptive statistical tool of the pie chart. The findings revealed that the majority (96%) of the listeners were satisfied with the programming of Inspiration 92.3 FM which gratifies their needs, and that the station's on-air-personalities and family-oriented style are a major attraction. The implication of the findings is that the audience were satisfied with the broadcasting contents of the radio stations which are productions of the regulatory framework of the National Broadcast Commission of Nigeria.

Nzeji (2014) also did a study entitled "Audience Perception of Africa Independent Television (AIT) coverage of political news Programs in Enugu metropolis." The aim of this study was to ascertain how the audience in the Enugu metropolis perceived the political news programs of Africa Independent Television (AIT). The data were gathered through questionnaires and were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentages, and tables. The survey revealed that African Independent Television (AIT) political news coverage is of good quality, with timely, precise, and detailed political news programs. Just like the findings of the first study, this finding also points to the fact that the audience is satisfied with the broadcasting in Nigeria as regulated by the relevant authority, which is the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria.

Ajaebu et al. (2015) examined the radio listening habits of university students at the Redeemers University in Nigeria. One of the objectives of the study was to determine the level of satisfaction these students derive from listening to the radio. The findings revealed that the majority of them expressed happiness, among other things. In another study, Udejah (2012) sought to evaluate the radio program preference of tertiary students sampled from three universities in Anambra State of South-Eastern Nigeria (Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anambra State University, and Madonna University). The findings of the study revealed that 68.9% of the students derive maximum satisfaction from educational-based radio programs of relevance to their academics. These programs are in compliance with the educational broadcasting regulation of the National Broadcasting code of Nigeria.

4.3 Survey Data Presentation

Table 4.1: Audience perception of the effect of broadcast regulation in Nigeria

What do you think is the effect of the regulation of broadcasting in Nigeria?	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid It has led to the reception of credible messages	24	80.0	80.0	80.0
It has not had any significant effect	4	13.3	13.3	93.3
I have not really formed an opinion yet	2	6.7	6.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1 above shows the responses of the respondents on the effect of broadcasting regulation in Nigeria. As presented, the data showed that 24 respondents indicated that regulation of broadcasting has led to their reception of credible messages from the broadcast stations; 4 respondents indicated that the regulation of broadcasting has not really had any significant effect on broadcasting in Nigeria; while 2 respondents stated that they were yet to form their opinions on the subject of investigation. What this implies is that the regulation of broadcasting in Nigeria has led to the reception of correct messages from the broadcast stations in Nigeria.

5. CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the critical review of relevant studies and other scholarly works as well as the survey that was carried out, broadcasting in Nigeria has been regulated to the extent that the audience received the appropriate messages. This has been done to a significant extent by the regulatory authority of the country. As a regulatory body, particularly for broadcasting, the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria has continued to ensure that broadcast contents are properly regulated in line with international best practices and defaulters have met with sanctions in line with the provisions of the broadcasting codes.

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