**THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING PRIVATELY OWNED MEDIA STATIONS IN A DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION IN NIGERIA**

**ABSTRACT**

This project work is mainly based on the theoretical and practical approach of the challenges confronting privately owned media stations in a democratic dispensation in Nigeria. In this work, the researcher tried to reevaluate two types of the media that is, government owned media like AIT Benin city station, with a view to recommending a more effective ownership. That is the type of ownership influence and challenges that is geared towards attaining professionalism in media operation particularly in Nigeria. Moreover, it is also done in a critically way in order to examined the challenges facing Nigeria media establishment like , Television, Newspaper, Magazine, Journals etc. The researcher narrowed down his research to television using AIT Benin as the case study.

Four research questions was set to guide the research work and 142 employees in AIT Benin city were sampled as respondents.

The research concluded that there is an undue regulation of AIT by the NBC.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background of the Study**

Media as a watchdog and the mirror of the nation perform crucial roles in the society and as well it is influence in I ts editorial policy. Kendal (2002,p.32), insist that mass is truly applicable to the medium of radio for it more than other media in reaching all groups of the population uniform’’ but before we proceed with this work, we will include not only the mechanical devices that transmit and sometimes, messages (TV cameras, radio microphones, printing press) but also the institution that use these machines to transmit messages. When we talk about the mass media of television, radio, newspaper, magazine, sound recoding and film, we will be referring to the people, the policies the organization and the technology that go into productions of mass communication (Dominick, 2007).

            Mass media are technology that is intended to reach a mass audience. It is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. The most common platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet (Ngoa, 2006). The general public typically relies on the mass media to provide information regarding political issues, social issues, entertainment, and news in pop culture.

Through mass media, news outlets have a major influence on the general public and a major impact on the public's opinion on certain topics. In many cases, the mass media is the only source that the general public relies on for news. For example, when Neil Armstrong landed on the moon in 1969, mass media made it possible for the public to witness this historical event.

Sponsorship of the media house, its control and recruitment of its principal staff have formed the influential factors consequent upon the editorial policy of the media house since the owner(s) of the media house usually does or do the afore-stated factors (Nordenstreng, 2005). The media ownership has therefore in some ways influenced the editorial policy and this has posed problems to journalism as a trade. In this case, the editorial writing has to function with the policy framework and editorial principles. Nothing runs the editor down as having the option of either doing it the way the policy dictates or he resigns or otherwise sacked.

Influence of media ownership on editorial policy have made many private owned media station to collapse in operations and have also made them to lose their readership grip (Nordenstreng, 2005). In the case of a Announcer Newspapers, as a privately owned Newspaper, if dies not have so many policies that usually affect its readership except that its front and back page stories are centered on Imo state. Often times, it faces the stiff competition of the national and other local newspapers. Again, people from other state would always see the purchase of the newspaper as a waste since it does not usually spread its tentacles.

According to Uche, (2009,p.56). The owners of the media in Nigeria are not only major capitalists in their own right but are also closely linked to the ruling circles around the globe. Further more, result Indicates that the current media ownership pattern in Nigeria negatively affects the ability of the media to perform without hindrance. This is exemplified by the situation where media practitioners working in both private and public media organizations make sure that their reports are not perceived as 'unfavorable' by the government of the day.

The reality is that public media which are financed with public funds and controlled by public officials do not criticize government actions or inactions because of fear of sanctions (Uche, 2009). Many media executives in the public media have been known to lose their jobs because they disagreed with government officials. Some private media outfits established by associates of public officials indirectly influence the running of private media out fits.

 “He who pays the piper calls the tune’’ is a common statement in the media. Ownership has being  a major challenge  in the editorial policies of media organisations. It is so bad in some media organisations that the ethics of journalism are exchanged with the opinions and decisions of the proprietors of the organisation. Dare (2000,p.22) while writing on the challenges of privately owned media stations  said, “ there is no doubt that owners in market based media have ultimate power over content and can ask for what they want to be included or left.” This is against the ethics of journalism.

 According to Dominick, (2007,p.12) “There are codes of good practise that govern how media controllers (editor and station managers) interact as laid out by regulatory bodies.” But how many media owners stick to these codes? In Nigeria, government has continuously used the state owned media to crush the voice of the opposition. Many governments have used these media to their advantage during presidential elections campaigns across the state, especially if the government in power is contesting. In such cases, the opposition would have to turn to God for a miracle. Melody in Meier, stated that “in addition to ownership concentration of the mass media industry, content provision, packaging and distribution have also become a standardised production and marketing process in which the messages communicated are contained and directed in both quantity and quality to meet the economic imperatives of media owners.” Giddens (2009,p.5) said, “The media have a double relation to democracy. On the one hand the emergence of a global information society is a powerful democratising force. Yet, television and the other media, tend to destroy the very public.” Within the context of supporting democratic transitions, the goal of media development generally should be to move the media from one that is directed or even overtly controlled by government or private interests to one that is more open and has a degree of editorial independence that serves the public interest.

 Omu, (2000,p.9) stated that “the earlier mass media of press and broadcasting were widely seen as beneficial (even necessary) from the conduct of democratic politics.” Considering the fact that those who have the resources to own media organisations will always have the upper hand in terms of prominence in the news, McQuail (2009,p;.76) said “the typical organisation and forms of mass communication limit access and discourage active participation and dialogue.” Government control of print and broadcast media in Nigeria leave little scope for discussing opinions and therefore, public debate.

According to Mtimbe (2011,p.69), “The Charter called for : the emergence of a new era in Africa - an Africa in which democracy, accountability, economic justice and development for transformation become internalised and the empowerment of the people, initiative and enterprise and the democratisation of the development process are the order of the day.” While in some countries, the antagonistic relationship between government and the media helps in shaping the democracies of these countries, it is not so in most African countries, where most governments see criticisms from the media, no matter how constructive they may sound as a direct attack on their administration. As a result of this perception, most of these administrations have devised means to curtail the excesses of the media which in most cases are against the fundamental human rights on freedom of expression. Journalists within these countries have been sent to jail, or detained without trial or even beaten up or humiliated by wives and families (direct and indirect) of these leaders. In fact, some media houses have even been forced to close down because of remarks made that sound unpalatable to the administration in power. Ocitti (2002,p.88) said, “to African leaders, however, the freedom the media was demanding was to be placed within their own power positions and a wider context of national unity.” Hence, governments in power spend money on media houses and those who do not have any invest heavily to have one on ground so that they would use such media as tools of propaganda and image making to cover for poor performance in office.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

  Influence of media ownership on editorial policy have made many broadcast stations to collapse in operations and have also made them to lose their readership grip. Sponsorship of the media house, its control and recruitment of its principal staff have formed the influential factors consequent upon the editorial policy of the media house since the owner(s) of the media house usually does or do the afore-stated factors. The media ownership has therefore in some ways influenced the editorial policy and this has posed problems to journalism as a trade. The problem necessitating this study is what are the challenges confronting privately owned media stations in a democratic dispensation.

**1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are stated as follows:

1. To examine the challenges facing private owned media stations in Nigeria

ii.  To find out how the ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination in Nigeria.

iii. To examine the achievement of private owned media in Nigeria

iv. To proffer solution to this challenges

**1.4 Research Questions**

i.  What are the challenges facing private owned media stations in Nigeria?

ii. To what extent does ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination?

iii. What are the achievements of private owned media in Nigeria?

iv. What are the solution to this challenges?

**1.5  Significance of Study**

This study would serve as guide to private media houses as the see the solution of some challenges confronting media houses. It would also be a reference material for research scholars who might want to research further on the concept under study. The study would also serve as reference point for policy makers who would be interested in knowing how editorials can assist in the process of policy making in government.

**1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study would attempt to explain the challenges confronting privately owned media stations in a democratic dispensation in Nigeria with reference to African Independent Television (AIT) Benin City.

**1.7 Limitation of the Study**

One of the major problems encountered by the researcher is the monetary problem. There was no sufficient money to make the purchasing of all necessary materials for the research work. There was also the problem of meeting some personalities to get information from them. Because of that, the researcher found it difficult to collect all the necessary information. Time on the other hand was a big limitation as the researcher has other lectures to attend alongside the project report.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**2.1 OVERVIEW OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP PATTERN WORLDWIDE**

The world media consolidation is a commonly used term amongst scholars involved in the study of the concentration of media in the hands of a small number of conglomerates or corporation. This school of thought holds the view that such consolidation is detrimental to evolving a vibrant media the world deserves. This ownership structure informed the states of monopoly of the media industry by a few privileged interests who compromise quality standards at the altar of advertiser/owners. Today's global media giants include, Disney, Nation Amusements, Time Warner, Viacom, Newscorp, Battlesmen P General Electric, Wiendi SA and Lagardere Group. These big conglomerates despite efforts by government control the air waves through licensing have continued unabated. In the United States - clear channel communications acquired many radm stations across the U.S and has acquired about 1,200 stations to date. Most of these stations are local reach and are therefore licensed by Federal Communicat Commission (FCC) to a specific airwave meant for a specific location (wikipedia).

# 2.2. THE MEDIA IN NIGERIA: A BRIEF HISTORY

The history of the Nigerian mass media began with the setting up of redistribution centres by the British colonial government to rebroadcast programmes of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) for the enjoyment of Her Majesty the Queen‟s employees in the West African coast. Additionally, newspaper publication began with the setting up of the „Iwe Iroyin‟ a vernacular newspaper by the Presbyterian mission in Abeokuta in 1859 by Reverend Henry Townsend. This was followed by newspapers like the Anglo African, Lagos Times, Gold Coast Colony Advertiser, Observer and Lagos Weekly Record etc. established by educated Africans like Robert Campbell, Richard Beale Blaize, John Payne Jackson etc.

Dimkpa (1997) confirms that the second key owners of the media were foreigners who immigrated to Nigeria during the colonial days. These foreigners were mostly Sierra Leoneans and Liberians who were earlier exposed to western education before Nigerians. This group of newspapers were then followed by newspapers like the West African Pilot, Daily Times and the Nigerian Tribune all published by Nigerians like Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo etc. By 1937 no fewer than 51 newspapers had been established in Nigeria signifying the emergence of the first indigenous industrial enterprise. Most of “these newspapers” Dare (2000) observed were founded by men in all sorts and conditions of distress, people who according to Obafemi Awolowo himself a member of the second generation of pioneers of the press were regarded as the “flotsam and jetsam” of the growing community of Nigeria‟s intelligentsia. In the 1950s and Television stations were established first in the western region of Nigeria which was quickly followed by the eastern region a few years after. Today the Nigerian media landscape is crowded with scores of newspapers, magazines, , Television and the new media.

According to Kawonise (2012) there are presently not less than thirty (30) newspapers published daily; the weekly magazines, the serious ones, that are about fifteen (15), while the soft sells are not less than fifty (50). Nigeria currently has more than 150 and television stations publicly and privately owned. Five (5) of the television stations are on the satellite and are thus watched beyond the shores of the country. Quite a number of the television and stations that broadcast on the terrestrial space are available online and could be accessed wherever there is broadband Internet access.

# 2.3 MEDIA OWNERSHIP PATTERNS

The ownership of the mass media namely; electronic, print and the new media in Nigeria has different historical origins. Presently however, the electronic and print media in Nigeria appear to have arrived at a similar pattern of ownership. A look at their existing ownership pattern will reveal that there is dual ownership i.e. public ownership or government ownership, as well as private ownership of both the print and electronic media. This ownership pattern therefore involves the ownership of the print and electronic media by private individuals and/or private institutions. There is also the emerging ownership of the electronic media by institutions known as community broadcasting. What is interesting however for some inexplicable reasons is that in some instances the ownership of some media outfits in Nigeria is shrouded in secrecy. Frankly speaking, media ownership in Nigeria is not diaphanous in most cases this is because most precise owners of some media organizations are not always known to the public and, in many cases, the professional journalists serving as directors of such media companies are seen as fronts for unknown investors. Under the National Broadcasting Commission Act, religious bodies and political parties are specifically precluded from owning broadcast media. Foreign ownership of broadcast media is also restricted, resulting in very little foreign investment in the Nigerian media.

# 2.4 PROBLEMS OF MEDIA CONTROL

At one time or another in the history of most countries, media and information control has been a source of problem for governments around the world. Generally, according to Omu (2000), the problem of media control is associated with owners' interests and punitive laws that make it difficult for the media to perform its statutory functions without let or hindrance. These laws most often include laws of libel, sedition, defamation, official secrets, and national security.

In Nigeria three types of government (colonial, civilian and military) had been in power at one time or the other in the country and all three types of government have implemented policies that restrained freedom of the press in Nigeria. To achieve control, media outfits have been deliberately denied advertising revenue, while journalists have been killed, maimed, harassed, detained, jailed, and repressive laws and decrees enacted to cow the media. Omu (2000), explained that while the few indigenous businesspersons who could advertise in the newspapers at the time gave their advertisements to Standard Newspaper or other newspapers that represented their nationalistic feelings. presently, unsurprisingly, one finds more government advertisements in pro-government newspapers than in any anti-government newspaper. Comparatively, the British colonial administration in Nigeria appears to have been the least repressive. However, it is said to be responsible for setting in motion many of the repressive press laws existing in Nigeria today. Omu (1978) explains that measures of government control include denying journalists access to places and persons for information, refusing to give government advertisements and dubious labeling of documents containing valuable information. All these measures have been used. Newspapers that were pro-government during the colonial rule, the Eagle, Lagos Critic and Record (for some years of its existence) received most government advertisements. These different measures and obnoxious media laws and decrees give government officials the opportunity and legal backing to prosecute, fine, detain and imprison journalists, as well as proscribe media houses. For instance, Decree No. 4 of 1984 criminalized press reports and proscribed written statements that exposed an officer of the military government to ridicule. Then, the Offensive Publications (Proscription) Decree 35 1993, made it possible for the government to clamp down on six media houses across the nation. Under the same Decree 35 1993 the Nigerian government in July 1993 closed down 17 newspapers and magazines and one broadcasting station in a single day (Ojo, 2001). Even government owned media were not spared. This kind of suppression also took place after the 22 April 1990 failed coup détat when over seven media houses were closed down.

The era of military dictatorships in Nigeria witnessed the worst forms of media emasculation in the history of the media in Nigeria. Joseph (1997) explains that the period of military dictatorships was marked by „arbitrary arrests and detentions, extrajudicial killings, corruption, excessive use of force, torture of detainees, harassment of journalists and democratic activists and arson attacks on media houses. At times family members of targeted journalists were also arrested, detained, brutalized and constantly harassed. In particular those journalists who refuse to acquiesce are disgraced and sacked with ignominy. According to Ekpu (1990) the Nigerian government pulls all the strings, and the functionaries who run the state-owned newspapers, magazines and broadcasting outlets must either behave like pliant, puppets or lose their places to others. Apart from government control of the media through laws, decrees and the courts, other means of control exist which obstruct freedom of expression. One of such other means of control is what (Uche, 1989) referred to as *“co-opting”*. The government uses certain preferential treatments to buy the most influential journalists in the country... appointing these influential critics in the media to top posts within the government. “Co-opting” of journalists ensures that they are reduced to being mere stooges of government officials. This tactics was riff during the many years of military dictatorship in Nigeria. It is not surprising therefore that the editor of the Guardian had to publish an article reassuring his readers that his proprietor's acceptance of a ministerial appointment in the government could not influence the objectivity of the newspaper in handling issues concerning government (Uche, 1989).

Furthermore, regulatory bodies set up by the government can be a source of media control. Where there are defects or loopholes in the decree that set up such regulatory bodies, these can be used for repressing freedom of expression. It is thought that government may intentionally leave loopholes in laws and decrees so as to exploit such in silencing any opposition. Media scholar believe that one pitfall in the decree that set up the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) is the power given to the commission to revoke the licenses of stations which do not operate in accordance with the code and in the public interest. The decree did not specify either how to seek redress or what the public interest is, as in the American Federal Communication Commission. Thus the decree allows the NBC to provide licenses in perpetuity only to withdraw them at whim.

In addition, Uche (1989) points out that the influence of government is seen in the unflinching support government media organizations give the government of the day. Government officials do not hesitate to remove anyone in charge who fails to offer unquestioned support. An “erring” official risks being sacked with “immediate effect” or faces other punishments for such “heinous” acts*.* He observed that within one year of the elected civilian government assuming office in 1990, no less than ten chief executive officers of state-owned broadcasting stations were sacked. Uche (1989) further argued that private media proprietors also exert significant control over their media organizations. Proprietors have been known to demand self-censorship by their editors. The proprietors expect those working in their media organizations to understand and protect their interests. Often a proprietor's economic and/or political interests are very influential in how they want their papers to relate to the government of the day. Media practitioners have never failed to denounce these controls, except for journalists who have been “co-opted”. There have been instances when the government has been taken to court. In 1975, a reporter was arrested, flogged and his hair and beard shaved on the orders of a military government who found his articles offensive. The reporter instituted a court action and, won and the government was asked to pay him damage (Uche, 1989).

**2.5 Agenda Setting Theory**

The power of the media to set society‟s agenda by focusing public attention on few key public issues is an immense and well-documented phenomenon. It was McCombs and Shaw that carried out the first systematic study of the agenda-setting hypothesis (see McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The agenda setting theory posits that what the media finds important will eventually be mirrored by what members of society will come to think are important. It facilitates the formation of public opinions and the distribution of pros and cons of a particular issue. Agenda-setting shifts the focus of attention away from immediate effects on attitudes and opinions to long term effects on cognitions(Protess and McCombs 1991). Lang and Lang (1959) agree that not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news, like lead story on page one, other front page display, large headlines, etc. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience as well as the opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story.

These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public‟s attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion is formed. The agenda setting theory fundamentally explores the relationship which the news media have on the perceived salience of key political issues. According to Ghorparde (1986), agenda setting is a relational concept that specifies a transfer of salience from agenda primers (media) to agenda adopters (consumers).

Agenda setting research has shown that there is a correlation between what the media deems important and salience in the public mind. The concept explains the ability of the media to tell us what to think about. Ngoa (2006) explained that agenda setting refers to media audiences‟ acceptance as important those issues, events and people because the media has made it so for people to think and talk about. McQuail & Windahl (1981) observed that the media, by simply paying attention to some issues while neglecting others, will effect on public opinion (adding that) the hypothesis would seem to have escaped the doubts which early empirical findings had on the powerful media effects view.

Although the influence of media agenda can be substantial, the media alone does not determine public agenda. Information and cues about object and attribute salience provided by the news media are far from being the only determinants of public agenda. The substantial influence of the media did not in any way nullify the basic assumption of democracy that the masses have sufficient wisdom to determine the course of their nation, their state, and their communities. McCombs (2005) claimed that people are quite able to determine the basic relevance to themselves and to the larger public the topics and attributes advanced by the news media. The media set the agenda only when citizens perceive their news stories as relevant. Folarin (1998) identified four elements involved in agenda-setting to include: the amount or frequency of reporting, the level of prominence given to the issue reported, the degree of conflict generated by the reports and the cumulative media-specific effect over time. Wood (1983) in his contribution observed that virtually all communication researchers and writers seem to agree that the media possess the power and prestige to determine for its audience what is important. The media does this in three distinct ways, establishing materialistic goals, status conferral and agenda-setting. Describing the concept of status conferral, Ngoa (2006) indicated that it is closely related to the concept of agenda setting and adds that status conferral refers to the media's ability to confer or bestow prestige as well as enhance the authority of individuals, groups, organizations and even issues by legitimizing their status in the public's eye. As agenda – setting on the other hand, refers generally, to the ability of the media to raise the importance of an issue in the public's mind. Dearing & Rogers (1992) refers to agenda setting as “an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain attention of the media professionals, the public and policy elites. Ngoa (2006) explained that the idea of people desiring media assistance to be able to order their priorities, especially in determining political reality had been in existence but without the name agenda setting. Consequently White (1973) describes the ability of the media to shape election campaigns as a primordial and sweeping political power unrestrained by any law.

The media sets the agenda of public discussion, and determines what people will think and talk about; an authority usually reserved for tyrants, parties and priests in other nations. Again, after the annulment of what most observers and participants saw as the most fair and free election ever held in Nigeria in 1993, the media went to town agitating for the de-annulment and revalidation of the elections. That particular media agenda appears to coincide with the agenda of majority of Nigerians. Ngoa (2006) argues that the agenda-setting theory of mass communication seems to have manifested in the unanimity among the media in Nigeria, with the agenda of pursuing from office the then military ruler, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida who nullified the collective will of Nigerians through the annulment of the election of Mr Abiola as President. Agenda-setting as a theory of mass communication has become rather sophisticated and (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) have also fine-tuned their hypothesis by postulating a “*need for orientation”* as a crucial factor in peoples willingness to let the mass media shape their thinking; yet McQuail (1987) insist that despite recent research on the theory, there is insufficient evidence to show causal connection between the public's ordering of priorities and the order of importance placed on issues by the media. He also notes that the doubts with agenda-setting as a theory stem from not only the strict methodological demands but also from theoretical ambiguities, and as such “agenda-setting theory remains within the status of a plausible but unproven idea. Accordingly, agenda-setting theory is still developing and expanding both in focus and in dimension. The latest development is a focus on a new level which McCombs and his associates referred to as “second level of agendasetting”. The “second-level-agenda-setting” model views an agenda as an abstract notion and that many other things other than issues could be items on the list. Severin & Tankard (2001) confirmed that opening up the agenda-setting concept to include the second level has expanded the theory to now include even effective attributes or attitudes. Lang & Lang (1983) also suggested that agenda setting as a concept expanded into the concept of “agenda building”; a collective process in which the media, public and the government influence each other in determining what issues to be considered important.

## 2.6 Critique of the Agenda-Setting Theory

The order in which media agenda occur referred to as “causal order of agenda-setting” is an important question in determining whether the media influence public agenda or that the public influence media agenda. McCombs & Shaw (1972) argued the whether the media influences public agenda, the result of their findings revealed a strong correlation between the media and public agendas though it could not show which was influencing the other. According to Severin & Tankard, (2001), there are certainly alternative models of this relationship, of which the main one will reverse the flow and state that underlying concerns of the public will shape both issues definition by political elites and those of the media, a process which is fundamental to political theory and to the logic of free media.

Infant et al. (1990) argued that the media‟s agenda-setting theory at least for the time being is left with the status of a plausible but unproven idea, because it is fraught with theoretical ambiguities and methodological inadequacies. The concept of inter-media agenda setting, calls to question who the real agenda setters are. In other words, whose agenda is the media agenda? Besides, one of the problems associated with agenda-setting is the monitoring of all media that an individual is exposed to and the actual determination of how the individual has been affected.

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**3.1 Research Design**

This study employed the survey method which involves drawing up a set of questions on various aspects of the subject of study of which selected members of the target population were requested to react. (Sob, -1 883). As Oineje (21306, p. 108) put it, Questionnaires is an important instrument for getting information from people about their perceptions and Opinions concerning a case. For instance, it is recommended for standardizing the questions and ensures that all respondents are asked the same questions and in the same day. This method is also useful not only for uniformity of responses but it also simplifies data analysis. If the questions which the interviewers ask are not written down a number of problems will arise during the interview and coding. It is difficult if not impossible to ask the respondents the same questions and in the same day. The questionnaire in this study delivered by hand; and it is known for high return rate as the questionnaire delivered to the respondents personally either in their homes or offices.

**3.2 Population of Study**

This study focused on journalists and the entire media management of AIT Benin state.

**3.3 Sampling Size and sample Technique**

This is necessitated by the obvious fact that the researcher cannot reach all the subjects of the entire population (AIT Benin) According to Sobowake (2002: p.67) Sampling is done in order that the Researcher may take some elements 49 subjects or respondents in his population to represent that population. To fully understand what we have just said let us look at what happens in the political arena as government is mandated to take decisions and actions for the entire country they are representatives of the entire masses as it is not possible for everybody to be in government at the same time. The sample size for this study comprises one hundred (142) respondents selected from each of the sub-sect of the population of study. The purposive sampling method as used to select respondents from the various' subset of the population. Comprising the journalists, entire staffs and management of AIT Benin.

**3.4 Method of data Collection**

Copies of questionnaires were administered to the sample population by hand. This was collated and analyzed.

## 3.5 Data Collection Method

The core method of data collection in this study is through administering questionnaire. In depth interviews was also conducted to get at particular issues, such as hidden feelings or attitudes and beliefs of which a Respondent may not be aware or that are only dimly in his or her consciousness. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that allows for person to person discussion (Obiajulu, 2007). Cluster and purposive sampling methods were used in this study because the data needed required an in-depth knowledge of the Nigerian media landscape.Consequently, 23 in-depth interviews were conducted.

A breakdown of those interviewed is as follows: 15 journalists, Eight (8) media executives or chief executive of media organizations.

## 3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Grounded theory and its qualitative data analyses technique was the method of data analysis employed in this study for the qualitative data generated through in-depth. The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database (such as an interview transcript and „discover‟ or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships.

The ability to perceive variables and relationships is termed „theoretical sensitivity‟ and is affected by a number of things including the reading of the literature and the use of techniques designed to enhance sensitivity. Open coding is the part of the analysis concerned with identifying, naming, categorizing and describing phenomena found in the text. Essentially, each line, sentence, paragraph etc. is read in search of the answer to the repeated question „what is this about? What is being referenced here? ‟ These labels refer to things in this case like media, media ownership, control, public media, news and information sources etc.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**4.1 Socio-demographic data of respondents**

The demographic data obtained in the study from the employees at is analysed using frequency and percentage. This is presented as follows.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Frequency | Per cent |
| Male | 98 | 69 |
| Female | 44 | 31 |
| Total | 142 | 100.0 |

Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents by their gender. Out of the total number of respondents being questioned, 69% were male while 31% were female. In the distribution male respondents outnumbered their female counterparts.

**Table 4.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age Range | Frequency | Percent |
| 24-28 | 32 | 22.5 |
| 29-33 | 65 | 45.8 |
| 34-38 | 45 | 31.7 |
| Total | 142 | 100.0 |

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of respondents by their age ranges. Of the total number of 142 respondents being questioned, 22.5% were between 24-28 years, while 45.8% were between 29-33 years and 31.7 were between 34-38 years.

This table shows that most of the respondents questioned were between the age of 29 to 33 years.

**4.2 ANSWERING RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**4.2.5 What are the challenges facing private owned media stations in Nigeria? N=142**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | F | % | RANK |
| Lack of funds | 124 | 87.3 | 2 |
| Low viewership | 116 | 81.7 | 3 |
| Ownership influence on broadcast content | 95 | 66.9 | 5 |
| Management incompetence | 93 | 65.5 | 6 |
| High competition with other stations | 102 | 71.8 | 4 |
| Undue regulation by the NBC | 128 | 90.1 | 1 |

Table 4.5 above indicates that the major challenge facing private media stations in Nigeria is undue regulation by Nigerian Broadcast Association (NBC), 128(90.1%), of the respondents agreed with this, respondents that indicated lack of funds made up 124 (87.3%) of the respondents, 116 (81.7%) of the respondents indicated that low viewership by the mass was a challenge to privately owned media, high competition with other stations; 102 (71.8%), influence of ownership on broadcast content is another challenge and was indicated by 95(66.9) of the respondents, and management incompetence; 93(65.5).

This shows that undue regulation by the NBC is major challenge facing priat owned media stations as stated in the table.4.5

**4.2.4 To what extent does ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| LEVEL | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
| A little extent | 24 | 16.9 |
| Some extent | 19 | 13.4 |
| A large extent | 74 | 52.1 |
| Moderately | 25 | 17.6 |
| Total | 142 | 100 |

Source: Research data (2020)

Table 4.4 above indicates the the extent which ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination. 74(52.1%); indicated that the ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination to a large extent, 25 (17.6%); indicated it did moderately, 24 (16.9%); indicated it did to a little extent 19 (13.4%); indicated that it did to some extent.

The table shows that ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination to a large extent.

**4.2.2 What are the achievements of private owned media in Nigeria N= 142**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Achievements** | **F** | **%** | **RANK** |
| Creating awareness for the masses. | 123 | 86.6 | 1 |
| Making profits | 95 | 66.9 | 2 |
| Gaining recognition as a voice for the masses | 47 | 33.1 | 3 |

From the table above, 123(86.6%) of the respondents indicated that creating awareness for the masses is a major achievement of private owned media in Nigeria, 95(66.9%) of the respondents indicated that they make profits, while 33.1% of the respondents indicated that they gain recognition as a voice for the masses.

This shows that, creating awareness for the masses and making profits were the two major achievements of private own media in Nigeria.

**4.2.3 What are the solution to this challenges? N=142**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Solutions** | **F** | **%** | **RANK** |
| Proper funding by ownership | 118 | 83.1 | 2 |
| Making the station independent of the owner(s) | 102 | 71.8 | 3 |
| Proper management of the station | 121 | 85.2 | 1 |
| Less involvement in politics | 98 | 69 | 4 |

From the table above, 121(85.2%) of the respondents indicated that proper management of the station is a major solution to the challenges, 118(83.1%) of the respondents indicated that proper funding of the station by ownership is solution to the challenges. 102 (71.8) indicated that making the station independent of the owner(s) is a solution to the challenge, while 98(69) indicated that less involvement in politics is a solution to the challenges they face.

This shows that, proper management of the station and proper funding of the stations are the major solutions to the challenges.

**4.3 Discussion of findings**

**Undue regulation of private media by NBC**

"Privately owned media houses owe government no apology but mind you the government of the day can still use their law and order their closure. You remember during Obasanjo era when they closed AIT because they aired something about air mishap when (there was) plane crash and recently Channels Television was closed down because it aired information about President Yardua‟s health condition. So, even the private media organs still trade with caution".

From the findings of the study, the major achievements of private media is the creation of awareness on issues ranging from politics to health, sports etc.

These awareness help to guide and inform the public on going about their daily activities.

From findings of the present study, it is clear that media ownership is crucial in determining the nature, extent and direction of performance of the media in Nigeria. This is because media ownership is often associated with media control as evidenced by the study data. The study data indicates that Respondents‟ perceive journalism in Nigeria to be shifting from mirroring the society to protecting the people in power as a result of the existing media ownership pattern.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 SUMMARY**

This work tried to examine the challenges confronting privately owned media stations in a democratic dispensation in Nigeria. It was discovered that media performance is a function of ownership. The potency of ownership has made media become propaganda machines and instruments to achieve either economic or political interests of the owner. Mass media should exist to inform, educate and enlighten the public on political, social, economic and cultural values. I However, government do not own mass media for take above purpose ". alone (Chukwu 1999). Government use mass media to promote its policies and programmes. Hence mass media acts as effective organ of government. All through the, history of broadcasting in Nigeria, the owners do use it as effective. organ of persuasion, and propaganda to foster the political aspiration of its owners and to gain public acceptance of their 'i, social philosophy, policies and programmes. Mass media hold enormous influence which could be utilized to enhance political aspirations, gain public acceptance and good image cieation. Media could also be profit oriented. Media owners through their house policy manipulate journalists by stating how the news should be reported and protect the interest of the media owners. Any journalist who fails to abide by the house policy is sanctioned by his employers (media owner). I This type of scenario puts a wedge on journalist practice in Nigeria.

**5.2 RECMMENDATION**

Both private and government-owned media should pursue credibility rather than project the interest of media owners. Media should be operated along the lines of social responsibility and public interest rather than any other consideration in their news gathering and presentation. Salaries and wages of journalist should be enhanced, not to be at the whim and caprice of the media owners. There should be efforts to strengthen and empower the NU? to cater for the welfare of its members. The present conditions of services of journalists makes them susceptible.

# 5.3 CONCLUSION

Different levels of government in Nigeria (that is state and federal governments) serving and retired high level public and private officials, politicians, as well as influential businessmen and women, own most of the media organizations in Nigeria. These same groups of people (the ruling elite) are the core “news makers” whose views and opinions populate most of the views, news, opinions and information disseminated in the media in Nigeria.

The concept of “news making” by “news makers” which largely revolves around this same group of people (the ruling elite) and the control they exert both directly and indirectly undermines the ability of the media to on its own perform its agenda setting function. Instead, the media functions to regurgitate the imposed agendas of its owners, their friends and associates. This therefore shows that current media ownership pattern and the level of media control in Nigeria actually hinder the media from independently setting society‟s agenda.

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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear respondent,

Below is a set of questions to aid the researcher's work on the challenges confronting privately owned media stations in a democratic dispensation in nigeria.

This is a partial requirement for the award of …………………………………..

I'm seeking for your cooperation to answering these questions to the best of your knowledge and sincerity. All information supplied will be used for the research work only. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

**PART A:**

1. Gender

Female ( ) Male ( )

1. Age

25-28 ( ) 29-32 ( ) 33-36

PART B

Tick the appropriate box

1. What are the achievements of private owned media in Nigeria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Creating awareness for the masses. |  |
| Making profits |  |
| Gaining recognition as a voice for the masses |  |

1. What are the solution to this challenges

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Proper funding by ownership |  |
| Making the station independent of the owner(s) |  |
| Proper management of the station |  |
| Less involvement in politics |  |

1. To what extent does ownership management and control affects and influence the traditional objectivity of news and information dissemination

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| LEVEL |  |
| A little extent |  |
| Some extent |  |
| A large extent |  |
| Moderately |  |
| Total |  |

1. What are the challenges facing private owned media stations in Nigeria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Variables |  |
| Lack of funds |  |
| Low viewership |  |
| Ownership influence on broadcast content |  |
| Management incompetence |  |
| High competition with other stations |  |
| Undue regulation by the NBC |  |