

Impact of Digital Broadcasting on Level of Interactivity and Engagement of Audience in Television Industry in Lagos State

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of digital broadcasting on audience interactivity and engagement in the television industry in Lagos State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The sample size of the study included 480 staff members from NTA (Lagos State = 240), and collected data using a questionnaire instrument. The questionnaire were derived from the purpose of the study, research questions, and some contents of the literature review. The questionnaire was titled "Assessment of the Impact of Digital Broadcasting on Interactivity and Engagement Questionnaire (AIDBIEQ). Experts at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma established the validity of the instruments. The reliability was also ascertained using Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency of the instrument, and that yielded a reliability index of 0.76. The data were analysed using the mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that digital broadcasting has had an impact on the level of interactivity of the television industry and audience in Lagos State. Digital broadcasting has significantly increased the level of audience engagement in Lagos State. This implies that with digital broadcasting, the television industry will increase its interactivity and audience engagement. The study also recorded some challenges facing the digitisation of broadcasting, among which are inadequate infrastructure, a poor network, and poor infrastructure. Based on these, the following recommendations were made: the government should also work towards strengthening the capacity of the media to provide accurate and reliable information, among others.*

Keywords: Broadcast Media Digitization, Nigerian Broadcasting Code, Media Interactivity

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INTRODUCTION

Digital technology, especially in television, will enable a broadcast station to transmit more channels at any given spectrum width. This implies that a broadcast station can transmit up to five high-quality channels in the same space as a single analogue channel. Today's technology is so distinct and relevant to the broadcast media because of what Gettinger in Nsereka (2015) calls "communications," which he describes as "the nexus of computers and communication, which include computer processing and distributing information; computers talking to each other and bouncing messages from earth to earth. Computers have produced stunning pictures and graphics under a decade since their introduction into the communication system with the aid of computers.

Broadcasters now use electronic computer graphics for program production and transmission. Computer graphics are used by advertisers to create exciting television commercials. It helps newsreaders download information from websites or the Internet and send

feedback. According to announcers, the computer "teaches how to compose, edit, record, play, transcribe, copy, transpose, extract, import, and publish in standard notation" (Onyewuanyi, Adamu, 2022).

Data, regardless of source or destination, is available for dedicated purposes in which it can undergo diverse levels of processing to yield the desired information for various levels of users. In the broadcast media environment, transmitters, satellite broadcast transponders, or cable distribution networks can carry such data, representing audio or video signals, for dissemination on traditional wireless media. This is known as digital broadcasting. Abdu, as cited in Adeyanju (2022), posits that the stage in the broadcasting chain where a broadcasting station converts analogue audio or video signals into digital data can vary depending on the chosen approach.

A broadcasting company can operate entirely digitally, ensuring complete transparency for listeners and viewers using analogue receivers. When the entire

production process, from acquisition through post-production to transmission control, is digital, we simply package the digital data into appropriate structures and send it to the digital transmitter. However, if broadcasting operations need to conduct internal operations in the analogue domain for reasons best known to them, the digitisation process can begin after master control.

In this scenario, we will subject the master control's analogue output to a digital-to-digital converter, transforming the analogue signals into digital data. The process of compression will then remove redundancies such as spatial, temporal, perceptual, and statistical in the digital data. As Adegbola (2001) notes, the conversion from analogue to digital broadcasting poses certain challenges. When Nigeria and some other African countries implemented the conversion from monochrome to colour television in the 1970s, the concept of reverse compatibility served as a bridge, enabling monochrome sets to receive programs from TV stations transmitting colour signals, and vice versa.

The conversion from analogue to digital broadcasting necessitates more fundamental changes, including radical alterations in the required hardware at both ends of the broadcast chain. This is because digital broadcasting systems require digital receivers, which places a demand on society's listeners and viewers to replace radio and television receivers. This will require a significant financial investment. Experts have suggested using set-top boxes to maintain some level of functionality in existing hardware in the analogue to digital coSet-top boxes, as their name suggests, are boxes that are placed on top of TV sets set top boxes.)

They serve as an interface between digital and analog hardware. You can use them as radio receivers, TV receivers, or both. As experts opined, conversion from analogue to digital broadcasting must be viewed as an important aspect of Nigeria's development priorities, and refusal or lack of capacity for conversion from analogue to digital broadcasting may be seen as a means of insulating Nigerians from the Western world.

The new technologies have provided a wealth of opportunities for creating new forms of expression and developing new services. For instance, the conventional forms of communication such as high-definition television and digital broadcasting, new formats for music and video recording, and interactive television, among others, have created a wealth of opportunities. This may be at variance with the realities of some African countries, where the new communication technologies have little or no effect on society and the economy. For instance, only urban areas and affluent and educated consumers have seen the penetration of new media, while computers are still not universally available and Internet connections are rare.

As Abdu (2001) notes, the advantages of the digital broadcast system are: It is less susceptible to interference. It can remove the effect of multi-path reception and double-mass signals in built-up areas. Because broadcast channels do not require the same

degree of spectral separation, transmission at adjacent frequencies is possible, making the use of the radio spectrum very efficient. Finally, it requires less than 1% of the transmission power of a normal analogue service. Digital technology now permits listeners to obtain traffic information and news while listening to a compact disc, cassette, or another radio station.

Digital interactive television now allows viewers to choose their camera angles for watching sporting events and to view highlights while the action is still ongoing. The new technologies allow viewers to access interactive commercial transactions and banking facilities through television in equal measure. Satellite and cable broadcasting technology in the radio and television industries now enables the simultaneous reception of multiple channels in different countries, often in non-local languages. It is now time for broadcast journalists to learn how to use various database management systems, as well as applications such as Photoshop and Illustrator.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the impact of information and communication technologies has influenced the numbers and structure of the workforce, as well as significantly changing working conditions and occupational patterns. They have also affected the status of workers, especially in recent years. The kinds of jobs found in film, broadcasting, and performing arts are no longer what they used to be before the advent of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The jobs require different skills and have changed the status of many workers. Increased consumption of media and entertainment products and services has been a global phenomenon, affecting some of the poorest countries while also being a hallmark of the post-industrial information-based economy in developed countries.

With the help of new communication technologies, the global information society has made broadcast stations worldwide interdependent, equally enhancing global integration and program liberalization. However, factors such as poverty, poor media and communication access, low education and skill levels, inadequate investment, and the universal concern for preserving local cultural diversity clearly limit the reach of new communication technologies.

Furthermore, the new communication technologies have enhanced the globalisation of the broadcast industries, accelerating the process of industrialisation of cultures due to their close linkage to technology. Disney, Time Warner, CNN, Fortune, Metro, Goldwin Mayer, and others dominate the film and broadcast media industries. These businesses are fiercely competitive, and they are becoming real power structures in their own right.

The Internet and other new communication technologies are significantly transforming the media scene, especially with the low cost of electronic production and distribution. For instance, one of the factors that hindered the development and expansion of the mass media industry in the past was the huge capital

costs of such items as printing plants, reproduction of recorded music or films, and the infrastructure for transmitting broadcast or recorded material to distributors and/or consumers, among others. However, the emergence of new media has reduced these costs.

In considering all the gains of digital broadcasting as highlighted above, one should not lose sight of other benefits as they relate to the media and society. In this way, the convergence of media will open up a promising avenue for advertisers. They will have many channels available to market their products and have a wider reach among consumers. This is consistent with Ekeh's (2009, p. 2) assertion that "the migration of television from the traditional television set to the mobile device will portend a whole new world of opportunity for advertisers wishing to reach customers and prospects, as well as to the entire advertising industry itself."

In addition to this, digital broadcasting will enhance the full propagation of local content, as emphasised by NBC. Additionally, the demand for community broadcasting will face fewer obstacles due to the implementation of a multiple channel approach.

A station's channels could be community-oriented.

Benefits of Digital Broadcasting

Digital broadcasting carries many benefits over the analogue system. The digital revolution presents broadcasters and broadcasters with vast opportunities to do so many interesting and valuable things they have always wanted to do but are constrained by technological, financial, and other resources. Among the dividends of broadcasting digitisation are: (a) efficient use of available spectrum, which will allow more channels to be carried across fewer airwaves, thus bringing more choice to the viewer.

Digitisation permits the broadcasting of four to six more television channels from only one in the current analogue system. This implies the liberation of a significant portion of the broadcast spectrum for alternative applications. (b) higher-quality audio (sound) and video (images), including the possible deployment of high-definition television (HDTV). (c) Digital television signals can carry extra information, such as electronic program guides that can provide additional program and schedule information. (d) Interactive programming (two-way data exchanges). (e) Mobile reception of video, internet, and multimedia data.

Other benefits of digital broadcast, as enumerated by Olagoke (2015), include:

High Level of Production: Digitisation would give a higher audio and video quality, including the possibility of deploying new technologies such as High Definition Television (HDTV). Also, digital television would bring about a high level of quality production and circulation of tools used by the media and their value to consumers

worldwide. According to Krishnan (2013) on "The Impacts of Broadcast Digitization," he stressed: "The effect of digital technologies has not only given a qualitative rise in producing and distributing tools that are used by the media.

Also, users have benefited, as they have become active agents in the communication route." In Nigeria, the transition to digital broadcasting would expand the capacity of communication channels and provide more scope for consumer choice, which would provide opportunities for consumers, both city dwellers and particularly those in rural areas, to explore the opportunities of quality and better signals and have channels up to 100 on their TV sets.

Challenges of Digital Broadcasting in Nigeria

Nigeria's digital broadcasting industry will undoubtedly encounter several challenges due to the country's limited technological advancement and the low income levels of its citizens. Some of these challenges include:

(i) Poor power supply

Insufficient electricity supply is a major issue in Nigeria. Most homes and industries in the country rely on petroleum and diesel generators for power. Virtually all the companies in Nigeria—banks, telecommunication companies, manufacturers, broadcast organisations, and so on—rely on standby generators to carry on their businesses, which affects the cost of production. Therefore, the epileptic power supply problem and the reliance on generators would result in high costs for program production and presentation, thereby posing a challenge to digital broadcasting in Nigeria.

(ii) Poverty

The poverty level in Nigeria is very high, and the unemployment rate is also high. Some individuals cannot afford three adequate meals in a day, not to mention buying electronic gadgets such as televisions and digital television decoders. Many homes may not be able to afford such decoders, which could pose a serious challenge to digital broadcasting in Nigeria. This is because poverty may prevent many homes from having access to television programs.

(iii) Financial Challenges and Manpower

The transition process from analogue to digital broadcasting requires huge financial investment in equipment and gadgets. To acquire these equipment and gadgets, there must be adequate finance. Broadcasting stations would have to acquire new digital equipment, ranging from production equipment to transmission

equipment. The flexibility and fragility of digital technology necessitate the need for additional professionals to manage technical issues during the transition process. Existing personnel who cannot cope with the demands of the new technology may also lose their jobs, which would affect the nation's unemployment rate.

Others include:

5. An antenna can only receive digital signals from the channels it can pick up, and the signal quality will also vary.
6. Analog television signals must coexist with digital television signals until they phase out.
7. Unless connected to an external digital tuner or an external converter box for a digital signal, an analog switch-off would render a non-digital television obsolete.

Nwaokoro and Afolabi (2016) studied digital media use and user engagement with online media content: a survey of Nigerian university students. The primary aim of the study was to investigate the correlation between digital media use and audience engagement among Nigerian university students. The study revealed that factors like age, gender, and educational level influenced the engagement with online content. It also revealed the widespread use of digital media among Nigerian university students, with 99% of the participants reporting regular internet usage.

NISER (2018) studied the impact of digital media on information access and political participation in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the impact of digital media on access to information, how digital media affects political participation, and if digital media impacts the quality of information available to the public. It found that digital media has increased political participation, with respondents reporting that they were more likely to engage in political discussions, seek information about political issues, and participate in protests or demonstrations since they started using digital media.

Ibietan and Egbune (2020) studied the transformative impact of digital broadcasting on the Nigerian media industry. The main purpose of Ibietan and Egbune's study was to understand the implications of digitisation for the Nigerian media industry, including the opportunities and challenges it presents. They discovered that there is a lack of regulation in the digital media sector, which has led to concerns about the quality and credibility of online content.

There is a need for more training and professional development opportunities for media staff because digital broadcasting has an impact on their training and competence. Nsereka (2016) investigated the challenges of public and private television stations in Nigeria: A comparative study of NTA and AIT. The study analysed the problems confronting public and private television stations in Nigeria, using the Nigerian Television Authority

(NTA) and Africa Independent Television (AIT) as test cases, but found that harsh economic terrain, increased news commercialisation, and impediments to the process of driving national development were among the problems facing television broadcasting in Nigeria.

Akinola-Badmus and Ojebuyi (2021) studied broadcast journalists perceptions of the challenges and benefits of digitalization in broadcasting in Oyo State, Nigeria, and reported that they were not adequately prepared for the digital transition. The broadcast journalists also agreed that the main things stopping people from switching to digital were a lack of skills and the high costs of making content and buying the digital technologies needed for digital broadcast. On the other hand, they said that the pros of digital broadcast were more jobs, more money, better content, faster bandwidths, and more viewers. Bracker and Verhovnik (2016) embarked on a study to unravel the challenges faced by the over 5,000 employees of Bavaria's Public Broadcasting Service.

The researchers discovered that the lack of networking (particularly cross-media), the absence of flexible workflow design possibilities, problems with the use of mobile devices in media production, and the insufficient integration of social media in research are challenges faced by employees in this era. None of these studies specifically examined the impact of digital broadcasting on the level of interactivity and audience engagement in the television industry in Lagos State. We set the following research objectives to fulfill the study's purpose:

Research Objectives

1. Determine the transformative impact of digitization of broadcasting on level of interactivity of NTA and audience in Lagos and Anambra states
2. Evaluate the transformative impact of digitization of broadcasting on the extent of audience engagement with NTA contents in Lagos and Anambra States
3. Determine the challenges and opportunities digitization of broadcasting present to NTA in Lagos and Anambra States

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the transformative impact of digitization of broadcasting on level of interactivity of NTA and audience in Lagos State?
2. What is the transformative impact of digitization of broadcasting on the extent of audience engagement with NTA contents in Lagos State?

3. What are the challenges and opportunities digitization of broadcasting present to NTA in Lagos State?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The sample size of the study was 480 staff of NTA (Lagos State = 240). The questionnaire instrument was used for data collection. The questions in the questionnaire were derived from the purpose of the study, research questions, and some contents of the literature review. Experts from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, established the validity of the instruments. Experts at Ambrose Alli University in Ekpoma established the validity

of the instruments. The reliability was also ascertained using Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency of the instrument, and that yielded a reliability index of 0.76. The data were analysed using the mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the transformative impact of digitization of broadcasting on level of interactivity of NTA and audience in Lagos State?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of Lagos State NTA staff on the level of interactivity between NTA and audience

S/N	Questionnaire items	LAGOS NTA		
		\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1.	The introduction of digital broadcasting has increased the interactivity between NTA and its audience	3.03	1.052	Agreed
2.	The introduction of digital broadcasting has made it easier for NTA to engage with its audience	3.08	1.137	Agreed
3.	The introduction of digital broadcasting has made it easier for NTA to respond to feedback from its audience	2.96	1.097	Agreed
4.	NTA programming has become more relevant to its audience since the introduction of digital broadcasting	2.86	1.113	Agreed
5.	NTA has become more responsive to audience feedback since the introduction of digital broadcasting	3.02	1.094	Agreed
	Cluster Mean score	2.99	1.099	Agreed
	Benchmark mean score	2.50		

Data in Table 1 show the mean scores and standard deviation of NTA staff on the impact of digital broadcasting on the level of interactivity of NTAs and audiences in Lagos State. Data from the table revealed that all the items from 1–5 are above 2.50. Since the mean scores were above the mean benchmark of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale, it implies that digital broadcasting has made an impact on the level of interactivity of NTAs and audiences in Lagos State.

Specifically, it implies that digital broadcasting in Lagos, NTA, has increased the interactivity between NTA and its audience, made it easier for NTA to engage with its audience, made it easier for NTA to respond to feedback from its audience, made NTA programming more relevant to its audience, and made NTA more

responsive to audience feedback. The table also revealed that in NTA Lagos State, the cluster standard deviation of items was 1.099. This also indicates that the respondents' responses, regarding the impact of digital broadcasting on the level of interactivity of the NTA and audience in Lagos State, were relatively close to the mean and in agreement with each other, thus lending validity to the mean.

Research Question Two

What is the impact of digitization of broadcasting on the extent of audience engagement with NTA contents in Lagos State?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of Lagos State NTA staff on the extent of audience engagement with NTA content

S/N	Questionnaire items	LAGOS NTA		Decision
		\bar{X}	SD	
6	Digital broadcasting has increased audience engagement with NTA's content	3.09	1.327	Agreed
7	Digital broadcasting has increased audience satisfaction with NTA's content	3.00	1.294	Agreed
8	Digital broadcasting has increased audience loyalty to NTA's content	2.97	1.288	Agreed
1	Digital broadcasting has increased audience awareness of NTA's content	3.01	1.268	Agreed
10	Digital broadcasting has made NTA's content more memorable for the audience	2.99	1.252	Agreed
	Cluster Mean score	3.01	1.286	Agreed
	Benchmark mean score	2.50		

Data in Table 2 show the mean scores and standard deviation of NTA staff on the impact of digital broadcasting on the extent of audience engagement with NTA's content in Lagos State. Data from the table revealed that all the items from 6 to 10 are above 2.50. Since the mean scores were above the mean benchmark of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale, it implies that digital broadcasting to a high extent has made an impact on the extent of audience engagement with NTA content in Lagos State.

Specifically, it implies that digital broadcasting in Lagos, NTA, has increased audience engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and awareness of NTA content. It also implies that digital broadcasting has made NTA

content more memorable for the audience. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items was 1.286 in Lagos State, NTA. This also indicates that the respondents' responses on the transformative impact of digital broadcasting on the extent of audience engagement with NTA content in Lagos and Anambra States were in close agreement with each other.

Research Question Three

What are the challenges and opportunities digitization of broadcasting present to NTA in Lagos State?

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviation of Lagos staff on the challenges facing digital broadcasting

S/N	Questionnaire items	LAGOS NTA		Decision
		\bar{X}	SD	
11	Lack of fund	2.88	1.269	Agreed
12	Poor internet connections	2.78	.961	Agreed
13	Poor policy implementation	3.24	.844	Agreed
14	Unavailable infrastructure	3.28	1.022	Agreed
15	Lack of skilled ICT personnel/manpower	2.93	1.373	Agreed
		3.02	1.094	Agreed
	Benchmark mean score	2.50		

Table 3 shows NTA staff's mean scores and standard deviations on the challenges facing digital broadcasting. According to the table data, all items from 11–15 are above 2.50 for NTA staff. Since the mean scores were above the mean benchmark of 2.50 on a 4-point rating scale, it implies that all these challenges are affecting digital broadcasting in NTA Lagos State.

Specifically, it implies that digital broadcasting in Lagos State is facing poor internet connections, poor infrastructure, and poor manpower. The table also revealed that the cluster standard deviation of items was 1.094 in Lagos State, NTA. This also indicates that the respondents' responses to the challenges facing digital broadcasting in Lagos State were not significantly

different from the mean or each other's opinions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that digital broadcasting has had an impact on the level of interactivity between NTAs and audiences in Lagos State. Specifically, the study found that digital broadcasting in Lagos, NTA, has increased the interactivity between NTA and its audience, made it easier for NTA to engage with its audience, made it easier for NTA to respond to feedback from its audience, made NTA programming more relevant to its audience, and made NTA more responsive to audience feedback. This validates the findings of NISER (2018), Aondover, Obot, Batta, Nda, and Ekeanyanwa (2022), Eleberi (2022), Oyeleye, and Aliyu (2023). NISER (2018) studied the impact of digital media on information access and political participation in Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the impact of digital media on access to information, how digital media affect political participation, and if digital media have an impact on the quality of information available to the public. The study also found that digital media increased political participation, with respondents reporting that they were more likely to engage in political discussions, seek information about political issues, and participate in protests or demonstrations since they started using digital media.

Further findings also revealed that digital broadcasting, to a high extent, has had an impact on the extent of audience engagement with NTA content in Lagos State. Specifically, it implies that digital broadcasting in Lagos, NTA, has increased audience engagement, satisfaction, loyalty, and awareness of NTA content. It also implies that digital broadcasting has made NTA content more memorable for the audience. This is in line with the findings of the Nwaokoro and Afolabi (2016) study on digital media use and user engagement with online media content: A survey of Nigerian university students. The study's findings revealed that digital media use was very common among Nigerian university students, with 99% of respondents reporting that they used the internet regularly. However, only 61% reported engaging with online media content, such as news or social media, on a daily basis. The study also discovered that factors such as age, gender, and level of education influenced engagement with online content. For example, older students and male students were more likely to engage with online media content than younger students and female students.

Further findings revealed that digital broadcasting faces numerous challenges. The study's findings highlighted the challenges associated with digitization in Nigeria's media industry. There is a growing demand for digital content in Nigeria, but there is a lack of capacity among media professionals to produce this content. Digitization has sparked the emergence of new media platforms and transformed the consumption of media

content. There is a lack of regulation in the digital media sector, which has led to concerns about the quality and credibility of online content. These results support what Nsereka (2016) found when he looked at the problems that public and private TV stations in Nigeria had. He used the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Africa Independent Television (AIT) as examples and found that some of the problems that TV stations in Nigeria had were tough economic conditions, more commercialisation of news, and problems with driving national development.

Akinola-Badmus and Ojebuyi's (2021) study of broadcast journalists' thoughts on the pros and cons of digitalising broadcasting in Oyo State, Nigeria, found that they weren't ready for the switch. They also said that the costs of creating content and buying the digital technologies needed for digital broadcast were the biggest problems. On the other hand, they said that the pros of digital broadcast were creating jobs, making more money, having better content, faster bandwidths, and more viewers.

Bracker and Verhovnik (2016), who embarked on a study to unravel the challenges faced by the over 5,000 employees of Bavaria's Public Broadcasting Service, found that the absence of networking (particularly cross-media), the absence of flexible workflow design possibilities, problems with the use of mobile devices in media production, and the insufficient integration of social media in research constitute challenges faced by the digital employees in the era. This finding therefore implies that there is a need for more training and professional development opportunities for media staff.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed that digital broadcasting has a high impact on the level of interactivity and audience engagement at the Nigerian Television Authority. The study also identified several obstacles that impede the success of digital broadcasting within the television industry in Lagos State. We made the following recommendations based on these findings:

- i. The government should provide support for digital broadcasting in Nigeria.
- ii. Global network companies should reduce the tariff and make the network readily available at all times. Further studies should focus on understanding the factors that influence digital media use and engagement among different groups of people.
- iii. There is a need to integrate digital media literacy into the curriculum to help students critically evaluate the information they encounter online.
- iv. We should develop policies to promote digital media literacy and responsible use of digital media.

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