

# THE INFLUENCE OF REGULATION ON BROADCASTING STANDARDS INNIGERIA.

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## *Abstract.*

*The paper examines the import of broadcast station inspection in the promotion of broadcasting standard in Nigeria. This is necessary if broadcasting is to achieve its role of agenda setting or any other roles in society. The paper describes and analyses the major findings from a field visit or physical audit and inspection of some selected broadcasting stations in Nigeria.*

*This writer embarked on a field audit or inspection of some broadcast stations across the country in the year 2010. The researcher notes that the broadcast industry is faced with a huge challenge of keeping to and maintaining standards as enunciated in the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, due largely to a huge explosion in the number of stations and the entry of new and albeit poorly trained personnel in the industry.*

*The paper notes that the broadcaster himself is sometime ignorant of the laws and regulations that stipulate standards of the industry, he is poorly equipped, trapped in bureaucracies and exhibits a lackadaisically attitude to the practice of the profession.*

*It is expected that the findings from this research will be useful to the regulator, scholars of mass communication and other interested stake holders in the broadcast industry in Nigeria.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

Broadcasters world wide are obliged to meet certain standards in their content and technical operations. Usually standards are set out in the broadcasting Act of a country or with secondary legislation arising from the Act in any country, or by any standards/Codes issued by the regulator. The broadcast regulator's job can be difficult because it is based on judgments and understanding of issues, it can however be made easier if the decisions are based on research such as this one. The regulator can also depend on academic researches and audience behavior studies to determine what is generally accepted.

There are several reasons for regulation, from cultural imperatives to the economic, political etc. A country's culture according to Salomon Eve(2009) will affect the way it deals with consumer protection issues, as standards are rarely universal but rather culturally subjective. Some regulations that are key and pertinent in some African climes may just be unnecessary and irrelevant in some other climes. Salomon believes that the main considerations for regulation will include the following- the quality of viewing and listening, protection of minors and fairness in advertising.

In 1992 Broadcasting in Nigeria became deregulated with the creation of the National Broadcasting Commission through its enabling Act 38 Of 1992..Act 38 of 1992 gives the National Broadcasting Commission of Nigeria the unique responsibility of regulating and controlling the Nigerian broadcasting industry. It also gives it the task of regulating ethical standards and technical excellence in public, private and commercial broadcasting stations in Nigeria. Also establishing and disseminating a National Broadcasting Code and setting standards with

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regards to the contents and quality of material for broadcast.

Section 0.3.3(p10 ) of the broadcasting code lists the objectives of broadcast regulation to include the following-

- A) That Nigeria broadcasting meets the best professional standards .
  - B) The frame work for the regulation of broadcasting meets local needs without compromising international standards.
  - C) Broadcasting in Nigeria provides the entire range of sound and vision services that cater to and reflect the diverse range of Nigerian cultures and communities through effective distribution of public commercial and community broadcasting services.
  - D) Broadcasting frequency bands, a scarce resource are efficiently utilized in line with international best standards in the planning, co-ordination, assignment, registration and monitoring of the broadcast spectrum
  - E) Universal access to broadcast technologies, content services are promoted
  - F) Providers of broadcasting services respect community standards in the provision of programme materials.
  - G) The mechanism for addressing complaints as well as feedback is established
  - H) The growth and development of human resource is encouraged.
  - I) The interest of the audience and the right of the consumers are protected
  - J) Fair and sustainable competition is the hall mark of the broadcast industry in Nigeria.
  - K) The broadcast industry is nurtured to grow through consistency in the application of the rules
  - L) Fairness and sustainable competition is the hall mark of the
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broadcast industry for the efficient delivery of the values of broadcasting and

M) Self regulation is employed within the framework of professional standards.

This survey is to examine the extent to which broadcast stations were able to meet these objectives.

### METHODOLOGY

This article is the outcome of a field research which was carried out between May and June 2010. Data and answers are generated from physical on the field inspection of facilities at the broadcast stations, also by inspection and analysis of programme log books. Also from oral face to face interview of managers of the broadcast stations.

The research observed the degrees of compliance of stations to maintaining standards in the area of Content, Technology, Rights Acquisition, Provision and allocation of programme ratios for Religion, Children, etc. The field survey covered 3 private/commercial stations, 3 federal stations and 3 state stations from three states of the federation. The selected stations are NTA Abuja, RHYTHM 93.7 Abuja and Aso Radio for the FCT. For Kogi State it is Radio Kogi(KSBC)NTA Lokoja and Grace FM Lokoja. For Niger State the selected stations are Niger State Radio(NSBC), NTA Minna and POWER FM.

### UNITS OF ANALYSIS.

The Programmes log books of all the stations were inspected and analysed to ascertain the following

1. Local content percentage of programmes against foreign content percentages.
2. Children programming percentage ratio.
3. Religious programme percentage ratio.

Also researcher inspected the following -

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4. Availability of research and Library unit
5. State of modern (digital) compliant equipment.

### Findings.

#### Local Content..

The Nigeria Broadcasting Code in section 3.12.1(p41) Stipulates that Local content is essential to a) promote and sustain Nigeria's diverse cultures, mores, folklores and community life.

- B) provide diversity in types of programming content for the wildest audience through the limitless variety in the cultural landscape of Nigeria .
- C) promote Nigerian content and encourage the promotion and projection of Nigerian life within and outside it's borders
- D) ensure that every terrestrial free to air station attains a local content minimum of 70 percent.
- E) establish a dynamic, creative and economically vibrant Nigeria broadcast industry.

Field study indicates the following<sup>1)</sup>-that the local content philosophy has caught up rather widely across the zone. In all stations there are obvious efforts for local content, as can be seen in the local content chart analysis of the stations below.-

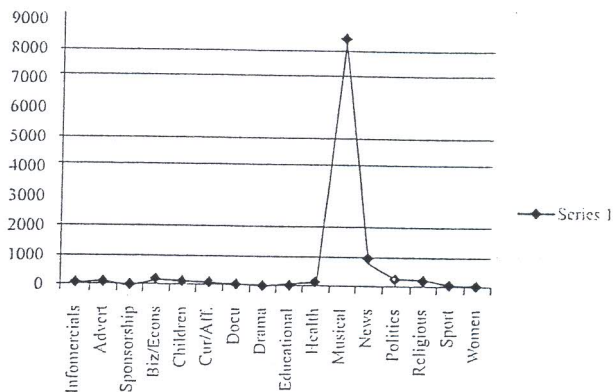
### FCT BROADCAST STATION ANALYSIS

#### 1. RHYTHM 94.7

##### *Content Analysis*

- 89.2% of Local Content programme out of weekly total.
- 7.6% News out of weekly total
- 3% Children out of weekly total.
- 3% Religious Programme out of weekly total.
- 24Hours Daily Broadcast

### Minutes per week



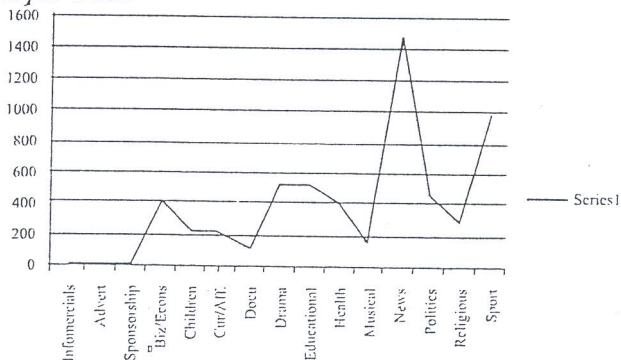
### Programme type

## 2. NTAABUJA

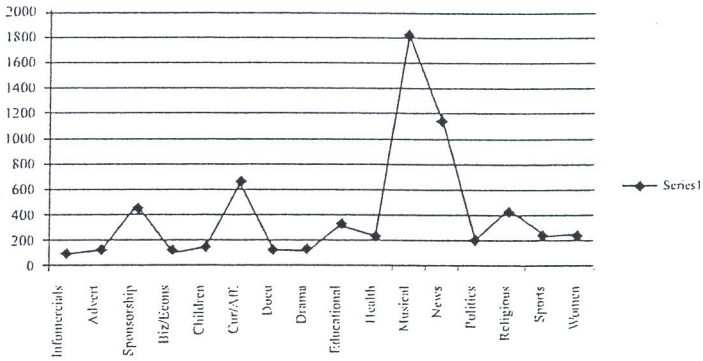
### Content Analysis

- 100% Local content programme out of weekly total.
- 15% News content out of weekly total.
- 2.4% Children's Content of weekly total.
- 3% Religious out of weekly total.
- Languages of broadcast- English, Igbo, Gbagi, Hausa, Yoruba for news Translations Only.
- 24 Hours of Daily Broadcast

### Minutes per week



Minutes per week



Programme type

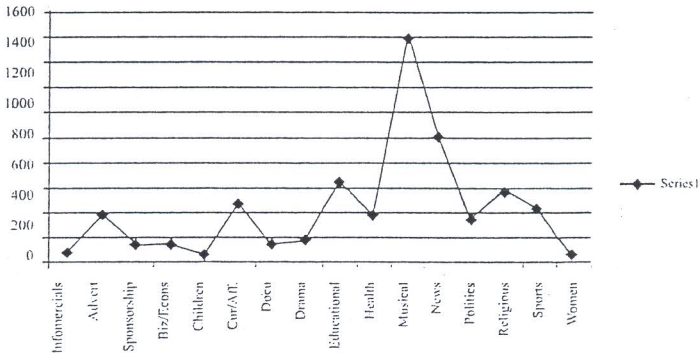
KOGI STATE

1.GRACE FM

Content analysis

- 95% local Content out of weekly total
- 8% News content out of weekly total
- 0% Children content out of weekly total.
- 3% Religious out of weekly total.
- 4 languages of broadcast- English, Igala, Ebira, Yoruba and Okun.
- 18hours of Daily Broadcast

Minutes per week

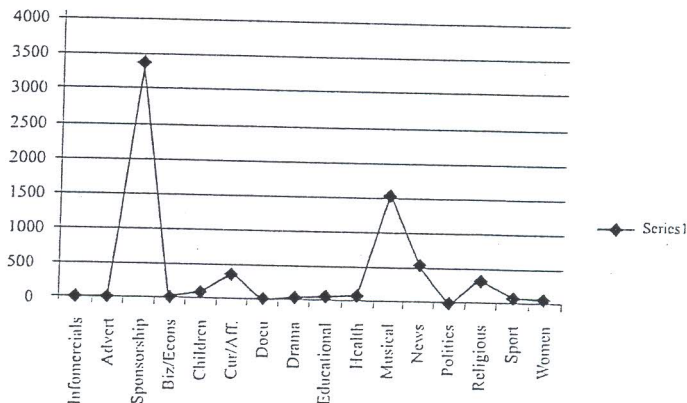


## *Programme type*

### *Content Analysis*

- 95% Local Content
- 5.3% News
- 0.9% Children's programme
- 3.3 Religious programmes
- 18 hours of Daily broadcast

### *Minutes per week*



## *Programme type*

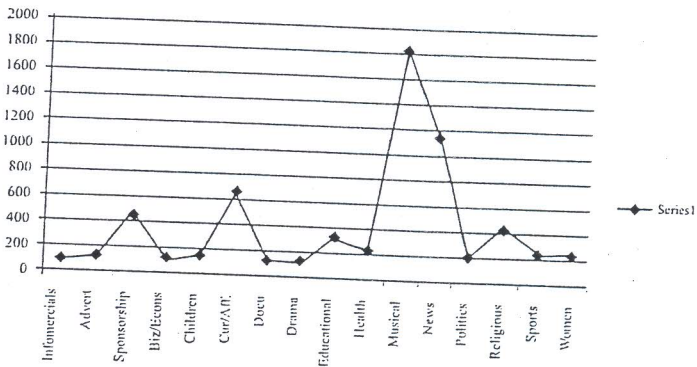
### 3. ASOFM

#### *Content Analysis*

- 96% Local Content of weekly total.
- 11.4% news content out of weekly
- 1.5% Children programme out of weekly total.
- 4.2% Religious out of weekly total.
- languages of Broadcast- English, Gbagi, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulfude & Hausa



Minutes per week



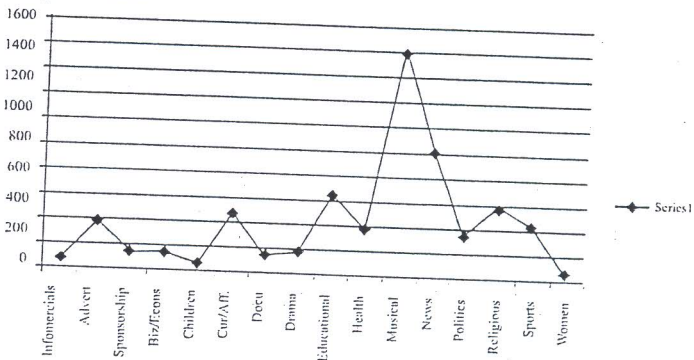
Programme type  
KOGI STATE

1. GRACE FM

Content analysis

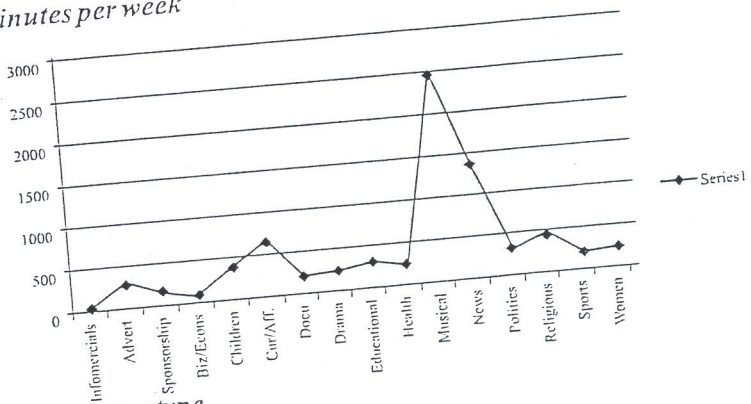
- 95% local Content out of weekly total
- 8% News content out of weekly total
- 0% Children content out of weekly total.
- 3% Religious out of weekly total.
- 4 languages of broadcast- English, Igala, Ebira, Yoruba and Okun.
- 18 hours of Daily Broadcast

Minutes per week



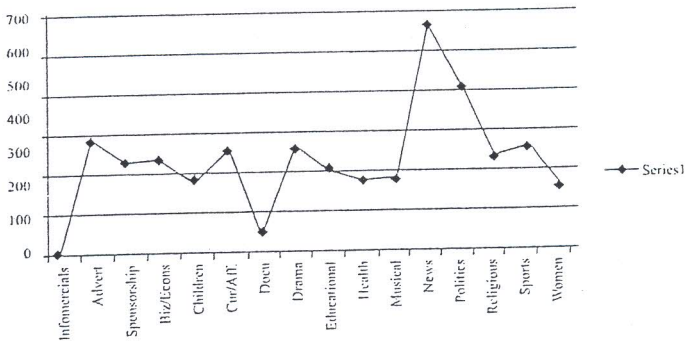
*Programme type***2. KOGI BROADCASTING SERVICE (RADIO KOGI FM)***Content analysis*

- 95% Local Content of weekly total
- 14% News content of weekly total
- 4% Children content of weekly total.
- 5% Religious content of weekly total.
- Language of Broadcast: English, Igala, Ebira, Okun and Yoruba.
- 18 hours of Daily Broadcast.

*Minutes per week**Programme type***3. NTALOKOJA***Content Analysis*

- 100% Local Content out of weekly total.
- 7% news content of weekly total.
- 2.1% children content of weekly total
- 3% religious content of weekly total.

Minutes per week



Programme type

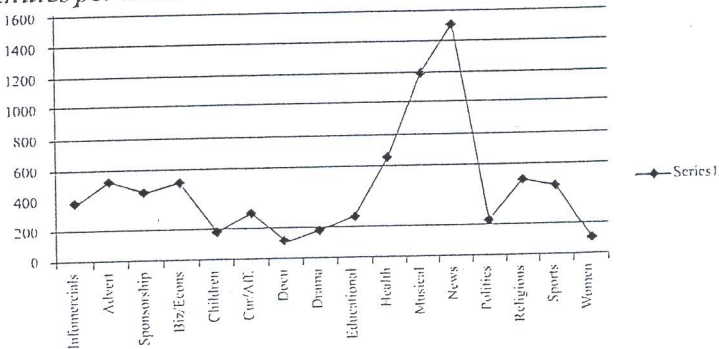
NIGER STATE

1. POWER FM (RADIO NIGERIA) BIDA

Content Analysis

- 97% local content of weekly total
- 15% news content of weekly total
- 2% Children content of weekly total.
- 5% Religious content of weekly total.

Minutes per week



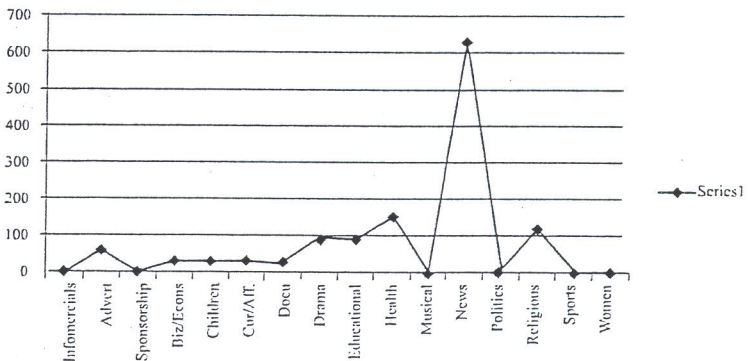
## Programme type

### 2.NTABIDA

#### Content Analysis.

- 100% local content of weekly total
- 6.3% news content of total weekly
- 0% Children programme content.
- 1.2% Religious content .
- 8 hours daily Broadcast.

#### Minutes per week



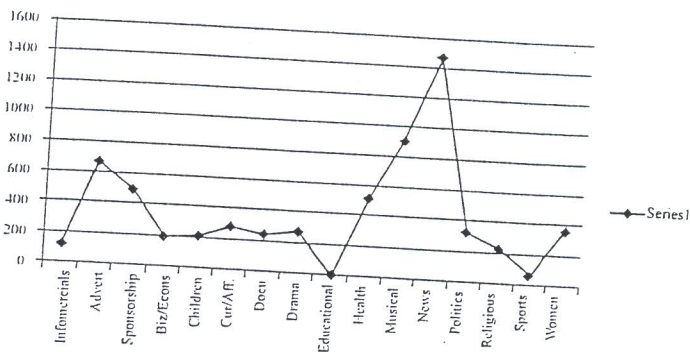
## Programme type

### 3.NBS FM MINNANIGER RADIO

#### Content Analysis

- 95% local content out of weekly total
- 15% News content out of weekly total.
- 2% Children content out of weekly total.
- 2.4% Religious content out of weekly total
- 4 languages of broadcast- English, Nupe, Hausa, Yoruba.
- 18 hours of daily Broadcast.

## Minutes per week



## Programme type

## DISCUSSION

From the findings above we can see that all the stations meet the statutory provisions of transmitting at least 70 % Nigerian local content. The chart indicates that NTA Abuja, NTA Lokoja and NTA Minna all transmit 100% local content.

On the ratio of programming for children the chart indicates the following-Rhythm Abuja-3%,NTA Abuja 2.4%,Aso FM 1.3%,GRACE FM-0%,KBCS-5%,NTA LOKOJA-2.1%,NTA BIDA-0%,NBS MINNA-2%.This is actually a breach of section 4.3.2(p45) of the Broadcasting Code states which provides that -

stations shall-devote at least 10 percent of total airtime to children programming and at times when children could reasonably be expected to be part of the audience.

On religious content Rhythm -3%,NTA Abuja, 3%, Aso FM 4.2%, Grace FM 3%, Kogi Broadcasting Service FM Lokoja 5%, NTA Lokoja 2.1%, NTA Bida 1.2%, NBS Minna 2%-It will appear then from this chart that all the stations under study are in compliance with section 4.4.1(g)(P47) of the Broadcasting Code which states that notwithstanding the above, religious broadcast shall not exceed 10 % of the total weekly

airtime of any station.

On the inspection of facilities, the following finds were made-

### **ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY.**

Rhythm FM Abuja-Station has already acquired modern digital studio equipment. The station is however operating on a temporary site with plans to move to its permanent location. Also, Aso FM station was actually operating on old analogue equipment. The transmitter appeared old and used, the transmitter power was also low. Kogi Broadcasting service was also operating on an analogue transmitter though the General manager of the station stated that there were plans to acquire digital equipment soon. In sharp contrast Grace FM was digital ready with digital studio equipment and production equipment. Niger State Broadcasting operated old and obsolete equipment with plan to acquire new and digital ready equipment soon. NTA Abuja had modern and digital ready equipment installed at its station. Same for NTA Minna but not so for NTA Bida which was operating on old analogue equipment..

In tune with the country's march to digitize the entire broadcasting landscape before the ITU slated date of 2012, it is apparent that the digitization train is catching on, as many stations are upgrading their facilities to digital compliant modes. Most private stations are already digitized but state government owned stations like Aso(owned by the FCT) and Radio Kogi owned by Kogi State government are yet to digitize their equipment..

### **LEGAL ISSUES**

Most stations displayed a crass ignorance of the law, relating to broadcasting in Nigeria. For instance all the NTA stations visited did not understand that it was in their interest to register their call signs/slogans and logo as recommend by 1.6.2(P.19) of the Code which states that

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before the commencement of operations, each station shall submit such a call sign, slogan identification or logo for approval and registration by the Commission'.

Research found out that almost all the stations did not register their call sign and logo. It is equally surprising that most of the stations did not have legal officers or advisers on the staff. Therefore they were generally negligent or ignorant of the need to acquire franchise and agreements for programmes that they acquire.

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.

It could be concluded that in Nigeria, Broadcast regulation and the enforcement of same could be a veritable instrument for standardizing the industry. It is also apparent that there a lot of challenges facing the broadcast industry in Nigeria. The enforcement of the rules and ethics by the regulatory body can indeed boost increased compliance with standards and grant the industry the required impetus for it to perform its functional role to society. There is also a serious need for the education of operators in the industry, it is apparent that operators are either ignorant of the standards or are just inclined to ignoring or breaching the standards. In any case the regulator must maintain the standards for the good of the industry.

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