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MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE AND UTILISATION OF CONTENTS BY TEACHERS IN AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study surveyed 438 secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria to ascertain their utilization of mass media contents. The study became necessary following assumptions that secondary school teachers may not have the financial resources to expose themselves regularly to the media and utilize their contents for self-improvement and enrichment of their teaching subjects. The principal tool of the study was the questionnaire which was administered to 438 respondents selected through a multi-stage cluster sampling procedure from a population of 8752 teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. The study revealed that while exposure to the mass media was high among the teachers surveyed, utilization of mass media contents for self-improvement and enrichment of teaching areas of interest was generally low. Most of the respondents did not see any link between the contents of the mass media they regularly expose themselves to and the relevance of such contents to their teaching subjects. Therefore the study recommends that the mass media contents producers should develop contents to meet the needs of teachers in their professional career. This finding is indeed significant because mass media use researchers usually agree that people who are higher in the education attainment ladder, more often, have high appetite for informational programmes, because they tend to use the contents for self-improvement and for conversational currency. This study shows that this may not be the case all the time with some audiences.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early days of the Uses and Gratification study, communication researchers have been interested in explaining how media audiences use media contents to meet their various needs. This desire arose from the knowledge that media audiences were active, who are well aware of their needs and consciously seek to fulfill those needs through selective exposure to the mass media and their contents. Okunna (1988) citing Rosengren (1985) almost two decades ago said:

...media audiences were not passive and it is they, who reach out to the media of their own choice... making up their own minds, guided by their own needs and directed by their own attitudes to reach out for articles and other media contents which interest them.

Research interest in this area, began with the study of morning radio broadcast to farmers. Bittner (1989) recall that Herzog for example, examined the reasons people listen to soap opera and reported three reasons which were: compensation, wish fulfillment and advice. Through compensation, the study by Herzog revealed that members of the public received approvals or recognition on what they do. She found that soap opera provided a sort of indirect approval for listeners to hear similar experiences others go through.

From this humble beginning, many other research studies have been conducted to explore the uses of the mass media by audiences. Emenyeonu (1998) classified these studies into two phases. The first phase of the Uses and Gratifications studies he called the functionalist route. The functionalist studies were those which aimed in most part in eliciting media functions through the use of open-ended questionnaire from respondents. The first phase was typified by works such as those of Herta Herzog (1944) Suchman (1942), Wolfe and Fiske (1949) and Berelson (1949). Others were the works of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), and Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961). While Herzog showed interest in the benefits people derive from listening to soap opera, Suchman (1942) investigated respondents' motives for developing interests in serious music programmes on radio. In their own study, Wolfe and Fiske (1949) investigated the motivations behind children's appetite for comics. The second phase of the Uses and Gratifications studies were those

which explored the psychological/social origin of needs. Studies which followed this route were those of Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974) and Palmgreen and Rayburn (1979) Essentially, the studies in this phase investigated the link between programme type or medium and their uses and between specific needs and the extent of gratifications obtained as well as the link between demographic and psychographic variables and the viewing or reading habits of audiences. Other studies sought to correlate gratifications sought with the gratifications obtained from media use. Studies which have followed this route include those of Palmgreen, Rayburn and Werner (1981), Mcleod, Bybee and Durall (1983) and Rayburn, Palmgreen and Acker (1984).

Interests in what media audiences do with contents have grown steadily over many years. Much attention these days is focused on the pattern of utilization of media contents by various audiences. Baran and Davis (1995, p.221) report that the Uses and Gratifications research these days, focuses on audience choice of contents and the motivations behind their content choice. In Nigeria, research interests appear to concentrate on the general exposure patterns without a corresponding attention on the utilization of contents. Several studies particularly, those of Nwuneli (1984) and Okoye (2003) have revealed that radio is a popular medium with Nigerians and that they use it principally for surveillance and companionship. With regard to content choice, there is a growing interest by young people in music and general entertainment than on news, editorials and discussion programmes (Okoye, 2003).

Research studies have also revealed that educated Nigerians tend to show more preference for news and discussion programmes which engage the intellect, while entertainment programmes are popular with the young and the uneducated. Teachers are among those classified as high in information seeking. Thus, they are expected to show more interest in contents such as news, editorials, documentaries, adventures, features and discussion programmes. DeFleur and Dennis (1994, p.418) state that education correlates closely with media exposure and information seeking. Therefore, teachers are among media audiences expected to be high in media exposure and perhaps, in the utilization of contents. Teachers can

utilized some of the media contents to enrich their teaching subjects and the experiences of their pupils and students (Aïex, 1999)

The Problem

Teachers are among those expected to show greater interest in the utilization of mass media contents because of the many roles they play in our society. Some of these roles include being information disseminators, advisers, mobilizers, educators and opinion leaders. These roles demand considerable knowledge of issues and events which regular media exposure can provide. However, no one is certain about the level of media exposure of our teachers and their level of utilization of the contents for self-improvement and enrichment of their professional career. There is however growing concern that the poor state of our economy, rising cost of media products, poor remuneration of teachers are factors which tend to weaken the ability of our teachers to expose themselves regularly to the mass media. The key question motivating this study therefore is: What is the level of exposure of teachers in Akwa Ibom State to the mass media and do they significantly utilize the contents in their professional career?

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the extent of media exposure of secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.
2. Determine the types of media and contents preferred by secondary school teachers in the state.
3. Determine the gratifications teachers derive from media exposure and content utilization.
4. Find out whether there is a relationship between media contents teachers prefer and their areas of teaching specialization.
5. Ascertain the extent of utilization of preferred contents by teachers in Akwa Ibom State.
6. Compare the level of media exposure and utilization of contents by male and female teachers in Akwa Ibom State.

Literature Review

Scholars in the field of media Uses and Gratifications have acknowledged that media use were goal-directed. This perhaps was the motivation why Herta Herzog (1944); Bernard Berelson (1949); Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld (1955) sought to find out the reasons behind audience use of the media and the gratifications that they derived from media exposure. Berelson (1949), for example, paid attention to the specific gratifications readers derived from newspapers. He identified information-seeking and interpretation of public affairs, practical aid to daily living, escape from the troubles of life (especially through the use of comics and human interest materials) and the release of general vicarious feelings derived from reading sensational stories, scandals and gossips. Also, Wang (1977) in her study of factors responsible for differential selection of newspaper contents by readers, reported information seeking, and guidance as the major motivational factors. This result had been mentioned earlier by Grunig (1969) who disclosed that information seeking was associated with problem solving, decision making and good management.

In the same vein, Okoye (2003) sought to know the gratifications listeners derived from radio listening. He identified information seeking, diversion and social interaction. Earlier, Sun (1998) had sought to find out whether Beijing residents look while reading newspapers. He wanted to find out whether Beijing residents seek societal-level information or individual-level information. He explained that societal-level information were those materials that deal generally with the direction of Chinese society and political system, While individual-level information were materials which provide information about personal affairs. He reported that societal-level information outweigh interest in information dealing with personal affairs. He explained that as a predominantly Confucian society, which emphasizes communal values than individual affairs, the choice of societal level information was not entirely surprising. These studies and many others have resulted in the classification of possible needs which motivate media exposure and content utilization. Thus, the major needs which scholars have identified include: Information and knowledge acquisition, maintaining personal identity and companionship,

entertainment, the need for guidance and emotional release, the desire for social integration and acceptance and social utility.

Several other need typologies have emerged over the years to explain the motivations behind media exposure and content choice. For example, Jeffers (1975) classified audience behavior according to (a) media seeking goal (b) content seeking goal and (c) non-seeking goal. With regards to media seeking goal, Jeffers says this refers to a situation where people are attracted to the media for the media's own sake without regard to content or any other reason. The content seeking goal refers to a situation where media audiences shop for specific contents. While the non-seeking goal refers to a situation where audiences make no deliberate attempts toward media consumption, relying instead on what is suggested to them by their friends, relations and associates. The non-seeking goal behavior is an indication of social relations activity. Following Jeffers typology, Rubin and Pearse (1987), in a study of "Audience Activity of Television News Gratification," introduced two basic media use patterns namely: ritualized non-serious uses and instrumental serious uses. The former typifies media use out of habit for such purposes as relaxation, time-filling and time-passing. This pattern of media use behavior was found to be common among children and socially apathetic individuals. The latter refers to a deliberate use of the media to meet desired needs such as entertainment, advice, or information seeking.

Media Exposure

Mass media exposure is a conscious activity which indicates that audiences' use of the media is goal-directed. Exposure can be direct and indirect, for example, buying and reading a sports newspaper instead of a general interest newspaper or tuning to and viewing a news channel instead of a sports channel. On the other hand, indirect exposure may occur through people who relay contents of a newspaper they have read to others. Explaining this process further Okunna (1999, p.102) says "the audience can also have indirect exposure to mass communication, that is, receive mass media messages indirectly or second hand through people who have direct exposure to the mass media" This process she

explains is prevalent among media audiences who have limited access to the contents of the media due to financial or educational constraints. She emphasized that most of those who engaged in relaying contents to others are predominantly opinion leaders.

Factors Influencing Mass Media Exposure

Uses and Gratifications researchers have isolated several factors which influence selective media exposure. Emenyeonu (1998) reports that these factors have been classified into demographic and psychographic. The key demographic factors include gender, age, education, occupation, income and social status, while the psychographic factors are interests, nature of the medium, contents and habit. A third factor classified as environmental has been identified which includes such variables as availability of the medium and contents of choice, preferred content, time knowledge of the usage of the medium, the nature of individual audience member's environment, scheduling patterns of some media contents and general usage patterns. Chaffe and Choe (1981) had earlier classified these factors as (1) traditional – structural factors (2) self-imposed factors and (3) environmental factors. They explain that the traditional-structural factors arose from the individual audience members' location within the social structure and which were generally beyond his/her control. These are age, gender, income, education, and occupation. The self-impose factors were those which reside in the individual personality and which relate to his/her interests or apathy in the services provided by the mass media, while the environmental factors were factors outside the individual's personality and demographics.

Education

Communication scholars such as Schramm and Porter (1982), Akpan (1987), DeFluer and Dennis (1994) have all affirm that education correlates highly with information seeking. DeFluer and Dennis for example admit that "no variable shows a closer relationship with media exposure than education. Simply put, "the farther down the education ladder one goes, the less people know about the news." In the same vein, Akpan (1987) believes that those who are educated tend to prefer contents which require serious

intellectual participation, while those who are less educated tend to prefer mostly entertainment contents where serious intellectual participation is not required. The choice of serious contents therefore increases with education.

Gender

Gender certainly is a factor which motivates differential media exposure and content preference. For example, women tend generally to watch television than men when they are not working and tend to rely on the broadcast media for news during periods of crisis. Men on the other hand, are more likely to read a newspaper on weekdays than women. (Davison, Boylan and Yu, 1982). However, DeFleur and Dennis (1994) believe more research needs to be done to ascertain the level of correlation between gender and education. But Okunna (1988, p.174) agrees with the position that women show more preference for entertainment contents. She says "over the years, it has been shown that different patterns of media use exist between men and women. For instance, when men and women expose themselves to the same mass medium say newspaper, it is likely that women would choose the entertainment contents of the paper before straight news, while the reverse is the case for men." This she states tends to suggest that women are more escapist in their media consumption habits.

Occupation

The type of job one does has been identified as a motivating factor in mass media exposure and content preference. DeFleur and Dennis (1994) report that the type of job one does may give some people opportunity to expose themselves sufficiently to the mass media, while other jobs may not. People who work in the airline industry, shipping and the military may not have sufficient opportunity to expose themselves regularly to the media. Though, the availability of on-line versions of news provided through new communication platforms is reducing the problem for people in such jobs. In many other instances, occupation can provide opportunity for more media exposure.

Age

Age tends to predict mass media exposure and perhaps content preference. The very young for example tends to be heavy viewers of television. This however decreases with age. Younger adults tend to watch less because they spend more social time with their peers while older adults prefer to read newspapers and magazines. Movie going on the other hand, tends to be high with younger adults who desire to profit from the companionship with friends that the movie environment offers (DeFluer and Dennis, 1994)

Income

Income is a serious determinant of media exposure. Those who are likely to expose themselves regularly to the mass media are those with the means to do so. Low income Okunna (1988) admits tends to discourage direct media exposure and encourages indirect exposure. This is because poor people tend generally to pay less attention to the media. Egbochukwu (1996) says poor income is responsible for the rising free readership among newspaper audiences. This is worsened by the availability of on-line versions of newspapers on smart phones and other platforms. The capacity of the audience member to expose himself or herself to more media platforms is a factor of income.

Media Availability

Media audiences have been known to expose themselves more to one medium than others. Sometimes this is not as a matter of choice but due to the availability of a particular medium. Newspapers, for example, are not widely distributed in many of our rural and semi-urban areas because of poor road network and illiteracy, while access to television appears unreachable for many rural dwellers because of lack of stable electricity. This scenario gives advantage to radio which is portable and comparatively less expensive to operate. Thus radio listenership in these areas is predominant among our people.

Nature of the Media

Media audiences have preferences for particular medium over others. Davison, Boylan and Yu (1982) report that newspaper and magazine readership correlates highly with people who are well educated because such people believe newspapers and magazines contain more detail information in their coverage of issues than television and radio. Women on the other hand, tend to stay with radio and television in their news consumption because these media present events live and break the news early than the print media. Moreover, television, for example, demonstrates events and gives some semblance of interactivity with the audience as is the case with phone-ins and reality programmes. Many other studies have also revealed that radio plays the role of companionship with the aged and those who are lonely. In Nigeria radio not only connects the herdsmen with the rest of the world but serves as a companion.

Time

Time is certainly a factor in media exposure. The time available to media audiences tends to determine exposure for some people. People who have very busy jobs tend to limit their media exposure. Davison, Boylan and Yu (1982, p. 167) reveal that investigations in England and Belgium have shown that the time when television news is presented plays a large part in determining who will watch it. Many people apparently tune in to news programmes if they are aired at a convenient time. Otherwise, they watch something else.

Time have been known to favour women who are not working because they spend more time at home watching television or listening to the radio. Also, people who work longer hours spend less time watching television or listening to radio or read newspapers than those who work for shorter hours. Radio programmes that are targeted for farmers for example are scheduled for evening hours when listeners tend to be available at home.

Habit

DeFleur and Dennis (1994) point out that habit is a factor in media exposure. Some people favour a particular medium or

content as a matter of habit. The authors said "the medium or content that one habitually tends to for exposure to the news is a critical factor" These days some people habitually depend on the print media for news while also relying on the electronic media for entertainment. People who like to watch television during dinner for instance, will probably turn on the set regardless of what programmes are scheduled. In the same vein, people who are accustomed to reading newspapers on the way to work are likely to look at some of the news stories even if there are none that interest them. We all allow the habits we have developed in media use to determine in part, what contents we expose ourselves to.

Interpersonal Contacts

Interpersonal contacts particularly with significant others, sometimes influence our choices of media and contents. Interpersonal contacts afford us the opportunity to be current about issues and events in society, which can motivate us to expose ourselves more to the mass media. Thus, the group we belong to sometimes shapes the sort of medium we choose to expose ourselves and the contents. Also, our exposure to our preferred medium and content can benefit our membership of a group by making us functionally relevant in the group. However, Interpersonal contacts compete with the mass media as sources of gratification of audience needs. For example we can obtain relaxation by going to the beach rather than read a favorite newsmagazine at home.

Methodology

The study adopted survey as its research technique. Survey was adjudged to be a suitable technique because it is a design which studies people, or objects, their attitudes, preferences, belief systems, critical opinions and behavioural manifestations. Also, it allows for the testing of many variables. The study surveyed 438 teachers in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State from a population of 8,752 teachers. To get these respondents, the multi-stage cluster sampling procedure was adopted. This sampling procedure according to Babbie (2011) involves initial sampling of groups of elements (clusters) followed by the selection of elements within each of the clusters using either stratified or simple random

sampling procedures. The key research instrument was a 30-item questionnaire. The questionnaire items were largely structured in the closed-ended format with the dichotomous response items in the majority. The self-administration procedure was used to distribute the questionnaire in order to elicit a strong response rate. The data gathered were analyzed using frequency tables and simple percentages.

Data Presentation

Table 1

Distribution of respondents according to demographic variables

Demographic variables	Gender Variables	No of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	238	57
	Female	182	43
	Total	420	100
Age	Age Variables		
	18-25	29	7
	26-35	174	41
	36-45	133	32
	46 and Above	84	20
	Total	420	100
Marital Status	Marital Status Variables		
	Single	102	24
	Married	252	60
	Widow/Widower	45	11
	Separated	11	3
	Divorce	10	2
	Total	420	100
Education	Education Variables		
	PhD	-	-
	M.Sc./MA/M.Ed.	73	17
	HND/BA/B.Sc./B.Ed.	276	66
	NCE	71	17
	Total	420	100

The data in table one shows that 57 percent of the respondents were male teachers while 43 percent were female teachers. With regard to their age, 41 percent were between the age brackets of 26-35 years, while 32 percent were within the age

bracket 36-45 years. Majority of the respondents were married (60 %) while 24 percent were single. Also, majority of the respondents were holders of either the HND/BA/BSc. /B.Ed. certificates in education which qualifies them to teach in various secondary schools. Holders of lower qualifications were not considered since the minimum qualification for teaching in any Nigerian school is Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE).

Table 2

Distribution of respondents by media ownership and frequency of exposure

Owner ship/Exposure to the various Media	Response Variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Radio	yes	391	93
	No	29	7
Frequency of Listening	One day per week	20	5
	Two days per week	25	6
	3-4 days per week	92	24
	Everyday	254	65
	Total	391	100
Television	Yes	373	89
	No	47	11
Viewing Frequency	One day per week	41	11
	Two days per week	41	11
	3-4 days per week	190	51
	Every day	101	27
	Total	373	100
Newspapers	Yes	298	71
	No	122	29
Reading Frequency	Every day	73	24
	Twice a week	87	29
	Once a week	105	35
	Thrice a week	33	12
Reading Frequency of Newspapers	Total	298	100
Magazine	Yes	100	24
	No	230	72

Reading Frequency	Every week	25	25
	Every Month	5	35
	Once in two to three Months	40	40
	Total	100	100
Cinema	Yes	54	13
	No	366	87
Frequency of Cinema Attendance	Always	09	17
	Sometimes	45	83
	Total	54	100

Table two shows that among the media that respondents exposed themselves to radio had the highest exposure rate with 93 percent followed by television (89%) and newspapers (71%). Cinema attendance had the lowest exposure (13%) followed by magazines (24%). The data for cinema is not entirely surprising, since there is hardly any functional cinema house in any town in Akwa Ibom State. The fall in Magazine readership could be attributed to the increasing cover price of magazines in the country. With regards to frequency of exposure, most respondents listen to radio everyday (65%), followed by those who listen for three to four days (24%). Frequency of exposure to television attracted respondents who watch between three to four days (51%) followed by those who watch every day (27%). As for newspapers, 35 percent of the respondents say they read a newspaper once a week followed by those who read twice a week. Those who read every day accounted for 24 percent of the respondents. Exposure to magazines attracted 24 percent of the respondents who read one magazine in two to three months (40%). Those who read magazines every month accounted for 35 percent of the respondents. Cinema attendance accounted for 13 percent of the respondents whereas, 87 percent of the respondents said they do not attend cinema houses. Out of those who attend cinema halls, 83 percent said they do so sometimes. Generally the data in table 2 reveals that respondents exposed themselves more to radio, followed by television and then newspapers. The respondents in this study had

more exposure to the broadcast media than the print media. This development could be due to the increasing prices of print media products and the generally acknowledged poor distribution of newspapers and magazines in Nigeria.

Table 3

Ranking of preferred media channels by respondents

Media Channels	Ranking Positions		
	1 st Position	2 nd Position	3 rd Position
Radio	311 (74%)	69 (16%)	20 (5%)
Television/Cable	42 (10%)	94 (22%)	64 (%)
Newspapers	32 (8%)	152 (37%)	108 (26%)
Magazines	11 (3%)	39 (10%)	135 (32%)
Cinema	-	6 (1%)	-
Friends/Relations	23 (5%)	51 (12%)	49 (12%)
Internet	1 (0.2%)	09 (2%)	3 (1%)
No ranking	-	-	40 (9%)

Table 3 reveals that radio was indeed popular with the respondents because it attracted first position among all the preferred media attracting 74 percent rating, while 10 percent of the respondents rank television/cable in the first position. Newspapers were ranked first position by 8 percent of the respondents, while friends /relations and the internet were ranked in the first position by 5 and 0.2 percent of the respondents. Radio was ranked second position by 16 percent of the respondents, television/cable was ranked second by 22 percent of the respondents. Table 3 also shows that newspapers and magazines which did not receive significant ranking at the first position received 26 and 32 percent respectively in the ranking for third position. This shows a decline in their exposure.

Table 4

Distribution of preferred contents by respondents

Media Contents	1 st Position		2 nd Position		3 rd Position	
News	315	75%	57	14%	13	3%
Sports	22	5.2%	99	24%	39	9%
Music/General Entertainment	10	2.3%	68	16%	128	30%
Drama/Movies	16	4%	25	6%	25	6%
Discussion/Features	10	2.3%	71	17%	40	10%
Documentaries	5	1.2%	24	6%	63	15%
Religious Programmes	41	9.8%	44	10%	80	19%
No Ranking	1	0.2%	32	7%	32	8%

Table 4 shows that 75 percent of the respondents placed news in the first position, 14 percent in the second and 3 percent in third position. Religious programmes were placed in the first position by 9.8 percent of the respondents. Also, 24 percent of the respondents ranked sport in the second position followed by music and general entertainment which was ranked third by 30 percent of the respondents. Generally, news, religious programmes and sports attracted first positions in content ranking by respondents. News is a part of the surveillance function which tends to be popular with the respondents.

Table 5

Distribution of responses on the gratifications received by respondents

Gratification Variables	1 st Position		2 nd Position		3 rd Position	
Information	262	62%	52	12%	24	6%
Entertainment/pleasure	37	9%	89	24%	92	22%
Education/Knowledge	74	18%	164	39%	97	23%
Relaxation	10	2.3%	20	5%	13	3%
Escape/Diversion	5	1%	5	1%	5	1%
Companionship	2	0.4%	4	1%	3	1%
Moral Upliftment	20	5%	40	10%	78	18%
Conversational Currency	11	2.3%	12	3%	63	15%
To Obtain Guidance	-	-	-	-	-	-
To Follow Events	-	-	-	-	3	1%
No Ranking	-	-	-	7%	36	9%

Table 5 shows that 62 percent of the respondents ranked information as their most preferred gratification followed by education/knowledge (18%) and entertainment/pleasure (9%). Education and knowledge however was ranked highest in the second position (39%), followed by entertainment/pleasure (24%) and then information (12%). Again, education and knowledge was ranked highest in the third position with 23 percent followed by entertainment /pleasure. Moral upliftment received 18 percent in the third position. Overall, respondents want news for the purpose of getting information about their surroundings. This findings agrees with earlier works done by Nwuneli (1984), and Okoye (2003). Escape/diversion, companionship, relaxation, conversational currency, guidance and event following receive lower ranking positions.

Table 6

Distribution of responses on the usefulness of preferred contents to respondents teaching areas

Content Areas	1 st Position		2 nd Position		3 rd Position	
News	293	70%	47	11%	27	6%
Sports	12	3%	65	15%	35	8%
Music/General Entertainment	10	2%	84	20%	44	10%
Drama/Movies	17	4%	19	5%	57	14%
Discussion/Features	45	11%	103	25%	57	14%
Documentaries	18	4%	49	12%	89	21%
Religious Programmes	25	6%	20	5%	74	18%
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-
No Ranking	-	-	33	7%	37	8%

Table 6 reveals the content areas relevant to the respondents teaching areas. As expected, news was ranked in the first position by 70 percent of the respondents. News was followed by discussion /features which respondents found useful in their preferred medium (11%). In the second position, discussion/features was ranked first followed by music and general entertainment, while in the third position, documentaries and religious programmes attracted 21 and 18 percent ranking by the respondents respectively. Overall, the

respondents adjudged news to be the most relevant content to their teaching areas.

Table 7

Distribution of responses According to utilization of contents in teaching areas

Response Options	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	140	33
No	280	67
Total	420	100
Frequency of Utilization of contents		
Always	55	39
Sometimes	85	61
Total	140	100

Table 7 shows that out of the 420 respondents selected for the study, 67 percent said they do not utilize their preferred media contents in their teaching areas whereas 33 percent said they do. With regard to frequency of utilization, 61 percent said they sometimes do while 39 percent said they do not. This shows clearly that whereas exposure tends to be high among the respondents, utilization of contents in preferred teaching areas was significantly low, despite the fact that 70 percent of the respondents mentioned news as the dominant content which they find relevant to their teaching areas.

Table 8

Gender and Mass media Exposure

Gender	Mass Media Exposure pattern									
	Radio		Television		N/papers		Magazine		Cinema	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Male	216 51%	17 4%	201 48%	20 5%	177 42%	42 10%	80 80%	100 31%	33 8%	202 48%
Female	175 42%	12 3%	172 41%	27 6%	121 29%	80 19%	20 20%	220 69%	21 5%	164 39%

Table 8 shows that among the gender groups studied, exposure was high and slowly declines with other medium. For example, male respondents showed a higher exposure to radio

(51%) than their female counterparts (42%). Both gender groups showed higher exposure to television and newspapers as well. Generally, exposure to magazines and cinema was low compared with other media.

Table 9

Mass media Exposure and Content Utilization

Mass Media	Content Utilization			Percentage
	Yes	No	Total	
Radio	70	130	200	47.62
Television	40	83	123	29.29
Newspapers	15	48	63	15
Magazines	10	10	20	4.76
Cinema	05	09	14	3.33
Total	140(33%)	280(67%)	420	100

Table nine shows that there was a significant underutilization of preferred contents by teachers Overall, 33 percent of the respondents mentioned that they utilize their preferred contents while 67 percent do not.

Findings/Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that the secondary school teachers used in the study had a high exposure to the mass media. Specifically, 93 percent of the respondents owned or had regular access to radio, 65 percent listen to radio every day while 24 percent listen to radio three to four times in a day. Eighty nine percent of the respondents had access to television, 71 percent exposed themselves to newspapers while 24 percent read magazines. Similarly, 87 percent of the respondents attend public cinema houses. The findings of this study accord with that of Aliede (2002) and Okoye (2003). Okoye (2003) had revealed that radio was still popular with Nigerians who used it for surveillance and correlation activities. This study has established that teachers had a higher preference for radio. Seventy four percent of teachers sampled placed radio in the first position as against newspapers and magazines which were placed second and third respectively.

The study has also revealed that the major content teachers exposed themselves to was news. For instance, news was placed

first by 75 percent of the respondents. This was followed by sports and music /general entertainment. The Uses and Gratification theory hypothesizes that people who are higher in the education attainment ladder will necessarily prefer news and other informational programmes to entertainment programmes. This position had been supported by the works of Katz, Gurevitch and Blumler (1974), Boylan, Davison and Yu (1982), Rahman (1998), Sun (1998) and Okoye (2003). Studies on Uses and Gratifications which examine content preferences by audiences of the media have reached similar conclusions. Most of the respondents admitted that they preferred news content, to know what is going on around them. This is why 62 percent of the teachers sampled placed information first, followed by education/knowledge and entertainment/pleasure in the second and third positions respectively. From this result one can say that most teachers shop for news to gratify their information and education needs from the mass media. Okoye (2003) had reached a similar conclusion when he found out from his study that 67 percent of the residents in two low density areas of Lagos derived information as their major gratification when using radio. Out of this number, 51 percent sought information from foreign radio as against 49 percent who relied on local radio. Local radio was however used to gratify their entertainment needs.

With regards to utilization of contents, this study reveals a low utilization by teachers in terms of relevance to their teaching areas. Despite this, 70 percent of the respondents mentioned news as the most relevant content to their teaching areas while 25 percent mentioned discussion/features. With regard to gender and media exposure, the study shows that 51 percent of male teachers and 2 percent of female teachers exposed themselves to radio. Also, slightly more male teachers (48%) exposed themselves to television as against 41 percent by female teachers. Newspapers were read by 42 percent of the respondents as against 29 percent of female teachers. There was a significant difference between male and female teachers with regards to magazine exposure. Whereas 80 percent of the male respondents exposed themselves to magazines, 20 percent of female teachers did. For the cinema, 48 percent of male teachers attend public cinema houses as against 39 percent of female teachers. A similar picture emerged with regard to utilization.

Thus, it could be argued that overall, female teachers generally had less media exposure and content utilization than their male counterparts.

Conclusion

This study has affirmed that there is a high exposure to the mass media among secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State. Majority of the teachers sampled exposed themselves predominantly to radio and prefer mostly news contents for the purpose of gratifying their information, education/knowledge needs. Teachers also found discussion /features and documentaries useful in gratifying their needs. However, they did not show a high utilization of preferred contents which suggest that they do not benefit maximally from exposure to their preferred contents and tend not to use the contents to enrich their teaching subjects and the experiences of their students/pupils. Despite this, it is no longer a matter of speculation that secondary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State have a high exposure to the media and would shop for news contents to gratify their information needs. This study has confirmed the theoretical position that people who are higher in the education attainment ladder would necessarily seek news and information contents and that they would do so to gratify their information needs. It has also confirmed that radio remains popular with most teachers who were assumed to have more preference for the print media.

Recommendation

The study recommends that more useful contents which teachers may find useful be made available by content producers in our media stations. This will assist them in enriching their teaching areas and the experiences of their students. In other words more educational contents should be made available.

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