

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

An Assessment of Audience Participation in Community Radio Programing, Production and Content Delivery: The Case of Togotane FM in Kenya

Isabel Zattu Ziz

Senior Media Technician, Department of English Literature,
Journalism and Mass Communication, Kibabii University, Kenya

Dr. Millicent Otieno

Lecturer, Department of Communication, Journalism and Media Studies,
Rongo University, Kenya

Dr. James Abila

Lecturer, Department of Information Science and Informatics,
Rongo University, Kenya

Abstract:

This study was underpinned by the democratic participant theory, which avers that audience participation in radio programing, production and content delivery plays a key role in awareness creation. The study applied the theory to investigate the level of audience participation in a community radio in Kenya, Togotane FM. Togotane FM is broadcasts among the Kuria community, who are one of the few groups that still practice female genital mutilation in Kenya. Data were collected from 399 main respondents and 51 key informants who included Togotane FM staff and community resource persons. The study found that the level of community participation in programing, production and content delivery is very low, and the community only participates in giving feedback during live shows, or after the shows. Based on this, the study recommends greater audience participation.

Keywords: Community radio programming, audience participation, audience segmentation

1. Introduction

This study applied the democratic participant theory (McQuail, 1987), to investigate the role of audience participation in awareness creation, with specific reference to female genital mutilation (FGM). According to the theory, local media thrives on local information and social action at the community level. The theory further avers that for local media to be an effective tool for realizing transformation at the community level, it must be aligned to a horizontal interaction approach between the media and the audience, instead of a top to bottom approach. It encourages community participation in media production, this is reflected in the involvement of the community in deciding the kind of programmes that should be broadcast and at what time, as well as community participation in planning of the entire broadcasting structure. The theory posits that the community should be involved in the actual production of the broadcast messages. This theory supports active involvement of the audience not only listening to broadcast messages but participating through calls or as part of a radio listener group that discusses topics raised during broadcast.

In view of the aforementioned, the democratic participant theory is the most effective approach in creating awareness for social transformation, especially in regard to retrogressive practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM). FGM may be defined as any procedure that involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, as well as injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons (Abdulcadir, Sophie, Elise, Pallitto, Petignat & Say, 2017). There are four general forms of FGM: 1) Clitoridectomy, which is the excision of the prepuce (covering of the clitoris) and the clitoris; 2) Partial Excision, which involves the excision of the prepuce, clitoris and often the labia minora; 3) Complete Excision and Infibulation, where all external genitalia are removed and subsequently stitched together with the vulva, leaving only a small opening at the base of the vagina; and 4) all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization.

FGM was first discovered in Egyptian mummies dating back to around 200 BC and is believed to have been practiced in all continents of the world (Andro and Lesclingand 2016). The practice is found in Europe, Australia and North America among immigrant communities (Ross, et al. 2016). It is also common in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and in some countries in Africa (Andro and Lesclingand 2016). According to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), more than 200 million girls and women have been subjected to the practice. In many instances, the procedure has been completed before the girls had reached the age of five (UNFPA-UNICEF 2015).

FGM has been found to have several negative consequences such as chronic pain, keloid formation, reproductive tract and sexually transmitted infections, poor quality of sexual life, birth-related complications, psychological disorders,

unintended labia fusion, psychological trauma and even death caused by excessive haemorrhage or infections (Klein, et al. 2018). In view of all the consequences highlighted above, FGM has been identified as a human rights violation in several international legal instruments. Among these are the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the European Convention on Human Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. As a result of the aforementioned legal framework, FGM has been outlawed in all countries, including Kenya. Furthermore, in Kenya, these instruments have been domesticated into the Constitution of Kenya, Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011), the Sexual Offences Act (2006) and Children's Act (2010, revised 2012).

Nevertheless, FGM continues to be practised in many countries in Africa and Asia as a deeply rooted socio cultural and religious requirement for girls and women. It is also found in Europe, the US and Canada among immigrant communities that usually fly their daughters back home to Africa and Asia to be circumcised (WHO 2020). According to WHO (2018), FGM is so deeply embedded in communities that practice it, that many women and their families fear their daughters will not be marriageable if they have not undergone this practice. It is thought to be the only way to preserve family honour, a girl's virginity and her marriageability. In such communities, FGM is believed to help eliminate diseases, protect against infertility and even prevent birth-related complications (WHO, 2008).

Kenya is one of the countries where several communities practise FGM. Some of these communities include the Kikuyu, Kamba, Turkana, Mijikenda, Somali, Kisii, Meru, Maasai, Taita, Taveta, Kalenjin, Embu and Kuria (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2014, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2014). Nonetheless, Kenya is one of the countries that have outlawed FGM, through the Prohibition of FGM Act (2011), which prohibits FGM on women of any age, and criminalizes aiding, abetting or counselling a person who performs FGM (Republic of Kenya 2011). It also criminalizes procurement of FGM; allowing the use of one's premises for performing FGM; failing to report cases of FGM; and the use of abusive or derogatory language against someone who has not undergone FGM. In addition, the Prohibition of FGM Act (2011) contains an extraterritoriality clause, banning any resident or citizen of Kenya from performing FGM outside the country.

Violation of the law carries a penalty of imprisonment for up to seven years or a fine of KES 500,000.

Despite these tough legal measures, FGM continues to persist in Kenya. Indeed, the criminalization of FGM has only driven the practice underground, compounding the efforts to eliminate it. The practice of FGM is still rampant among the Abagusii, Kuria, and Somali communities in Kenya. Although national data shows a substantial decline in the prevalence of FGM among women aged 15-49 years between 1998 (38%) and 2014 (21%), the prevalence among the Abagusii (86%), Somali (94%), and Kuria (86%) has remained high (KNBS & ICF Macro, 2015).

Eradicating FGM continues to be a challenge due to cultural sensitivities surrounding the practice, and it is therefore important to identify appropriate entry strategies into communities' communication channels. One such entry strategy is community radio, which has been identified as an effective entry point and awareness tool for social change and development (Zamawe, Banda, & Dube, 2018). According to Amadu and Amin (2017), community radio generally refers to radio stations that are independent from government; and which are owned and operated by and/or in a community. Nirmala (2015) suggests that Community radio may also refer to media that serve and belong to a community, and which produce content with and for that specific community. The authors argue that community radio programs often resonate with the pulse of the community since they are a true reflection of their fears, concerns, values and aspirations.

There is general consensus that local content provides radio with an opportunity to connect with listeners in a meaningful and significant way (Macklin, 2018; Bridget, 2019; Nirmala, 2015). This therefore puts community radio in a unique position of advantage in terms of reaching its audience, considering that the content tends to be largely local (Amadu & Amin, 2017; Bhaskar & Sukmaya, 2017; Smith, 2017). In view of the aforementioned, the study sought to establish the role of audience participation in community radio, in advancing anti-FGM awareness. Towards this end, the study focused on Togotane FM, the only community radio in the Kuria community of Migori County, Kenya. Togotane FM, which started airing in 2018, happens to be very popular among the Kuria, with a listenership of more than 60% of the target population.

2. Methods

This study employed mixed research method, which involved collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data through a questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions and a content analysis of radio programs. The study was conducted in the Kuria region of Migori County in Kenya. The Kuria region comprises of four sub-counties, which form part of the ten sub-counties in Migori County. The other six are Rong'o, Awendo, Uriri, Suna-East, Suna-West, and Nyatike. Migori County is one of the forty-seven counties in Kenya, and is situated in the South-Western part of Kenya. It borders Homa Bay County to the North, Kisii and Narok Counties to the East and the Republic of Tanzania to the South. It also borders Lake Victoria to the West. The Kuria region was purposively selected for this study because it is predominantly inhabited by the Kuria community, which is one of the communities that continue to practice FGM in Kenya. In the study area, the study focused on Togotane FM, which is the only community radio in the region.

The sample size for the study was 399 respondents, which was arrived at using the formula $n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$ (Yamane 1967). Data were obtained from the main respondents - household heads through a semi-structured questionnaire and FGDs. This was complemented by key informant interviews with Togotane FM's management and programming staff, as well as community own resource persons. A detailed content analysis was also carried out on Togotane FM programs. In the content analysis, the researcher listened to programs on the radio station for two weeks, with the aid of an interpreter. All ethical considerations were duly observed. Quantitative data were analyzed with the Statistics Package for Social Sciences, and are hereby presented in Tables and graphs. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically, and are presented in narrative form.

3. Results

The study sought information on community's access to Togotane's FM community radio programs and established that 98.4 percent of the respondents indeed had access to radio, as shown in Table 1.

Access to Radio	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	189	98.4	98.4
No	3	1.6	100
Total	192	100	

Table 1: Respondents' Access to Radio

While almost all the respondents had access to radio as seen in Table 1, qualitative data from FGDs clarified that not all respondents owned radio sets, and that many of them had radios in their mobile phones.

'I tune to Togotane FM through the phone, it's very convenient. I listen in while running my daily errands.' (Male FGD discussant M01 at Komotobo)

'I am yet to own a radio set but that doesn't stop me from listening to Radio. I spend most of the time in the farm. I tune in to Togotane FM through my mobile phone, that way I stay informed on what is happening in my community as I also get entertained.' (Female FGD discussant F05 at Masaba)

'I tune into Togotane FM through my phone especially when am in the farm very early in the morning.....' (Male FGD discussant M03 at Isebania)

FGDs further revealed that most of those who had radios in their mobile phones tended to tune in during the day as they went about their usual duties. This has direct implications for radio, since it signifies new frontiers for radio listenership, with many listeners tuning in on the go while attending to other matters. Furthermore, the data in Table 1 concurs with Shahzadal & Azizul (2019), who argue that despite the global digitization and the shift towards alternative infotainment media, radio is still an important medium of communication, especially in rural settings such as the study area.

3.1. Listenership of Togotane FM

The study also sought to find out how many of the respondents listened to Togotane FM. Respondents were asked to list the radio stations that they usually listen to, starting with the most listened to the least favorite. The most listened to was Togotane FM with 27 percent and the least was KBC radio with 10 percent listenership. The data generated in the listing is presented in Table 2.

Data Collection Site		Radio Stations																	
		TFM		RC		MFM		RJ		RM		KFM		KBC		OT		TO	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Kuria West	Masaba	1	4	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	1	--	-	0	0	0	0	40	12
		4		9		6		6		3		1		1		1			
	Isebania	1	3	1	3	0	3	0	2	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	64	16
		2		0		9		7		9		1		3		3			
	Kehancha	1	3	0	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	51	15
		1		9		6		7		7		7		2		2			
Kuria East	Kegonga	1	4	1	3	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	0	--	-	47	14
		3		1		7		6		6		3		1					
	Komotobo	1	5	0	2	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	0	--	-	0	1	52	15
		8		7		6		9		8		2				2			
	Kugitimo	1	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	1	--	-	0	0	0	0	44	11
		2		8		9		8		5				1		1			
	Masangora	1	4	0	3	1	3	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	48	14
		3		9		0		5		7		1		2		1			
	TOTALS	9	2	6	1	5	1	4	1	4	1	2	7	1	3	1	3	346	100
		3	7	3	8	3	5	8	4	5	3	4		0		0			

Table 2: Respondents' Preferred Radio Stations
KEY

TFM: Togotane FM RJ: Radio Jambo KBC: KBC Radio

RC: Radio Citizen RM: Radio Maisha OT: Others

MFM: Milele FM KFM: KISS FM TO: TO: Total

As can be seen in Table 2, Togotane FM is the most preferred radio station in the study area, followed by radio citizen, Milele FM, Radio Jambo, Radio Maisha, KISS FM and KBC Radio in that order. This finding was confirmed by qualitative data from FGDs and KIIs, in which all informants were in agreement that Togotane FM is the most preferred radio station in the study area. As was explained by one discussant during an FGD for women:

'most people like listening to Togotane FM because it belongs to us, and has programs that are relevant to us' (Female FGD discussant F02 at Kegonga)

Qualitative data further revealed that even those respondents who selected other radio stations as their most preferred still listened to Togotane FM from time to time. Indeed, as revealed by a male discussant at an FGD:

'For us Kurias, listening to Togotane FM is like going home. Even when you live away from your home because of work, you must visit your home from time to time. Most of the members of the Kuria community who prefer other radio stations still tune in to Togotane FM occasionally, to touch base with their home'(MaleFGD MO2 Discussant at Kugitimo)

The perceived sense of ownership is further accentuated by the use of the local language by Togotane FM in all its broadcasts. Qualitative data revealed that Kiswahili is a predominant language in the study area, probably due to the close proximity to Tanzania where Swahili is the main language. Nevertheless, despite the predominance of Kiswahili in the study area, this study found that most of Togotane FM programs are delivered in the local Kuria language, as will be seen later in this document. The use of the local Kuria language could be one of the contributory factors to the station's popularity in the study area. As explained by one of the key informants:

'Togotane FM broadcasts in the local Kuria language, which the local community identifies with. The use of the local language gives community members a sense of ownership, because they can identify with the station.' (Togotane FM's member of staff 02)

This argument resonates well with evidence from previous studies, which have found that local communities tend to associate more with information that is conveyed in their local language. For instance, in a study on the influence of language in communicating information about FGM in Meru County, Kaunga & Ndati (2017) found that the use of the local language was more effective in passing information about FGM. Elsewhere, a study in Somaliland revealed that local communities identify more strongly with information if it is conveyed in their local language (Catterson 2018). A similar study in Kenya, among several rural communities also found a close association between use of local languages and receptiveness to anti FGM information (Mwendwa, et al. 2020)

Furthermore, the apparent popularity of Togotane FM could be associated with the fact that the station carries local content, as will be elaborated later in this document. Qualitative data from Togotane FM management revealed that the station gives prominence to local content. In the words of one of the key respondents:

'Most of our content is local. Indeed, even in the news, we give a lot of prominence to local news. We also carry very many local interest stories, ensuring that we cover matters that are of immediate interest to the local community. Many of the stories and issues that we cover cannot find any airtime in national radio, and that is what makes Togotane FM very popular in this region.' (Togotane FM member of staff 01)

The information highlighted above confirms the findings of previous studies by Khan *et al.*, (2017) and Kaunga & Ndati (2017), who all found that community-based radio stations have gained prominence in recent years, because they contain programs that are relevant to the community. According to the authors, community-based radio stations carry local voices and promote local, community-specific issues, which resonate well with audiences.

The study also sought to find out the times during which respondents usually tune in to Togotane FM's programs. The results are presented in Table 3.

Time of Day	Frequency	Percentage
Between 5am and 8am	241	69.65
Between 8am and 11am	183	52.89
Between 11am and 2pm	141	40.75
Between 2pm and 5pm	136	39.31
Between 5pm and 8pm	197	56.94
Between 8pm and 10pm	152	43.93
Between 10pm and midnight	96	27.75

Table 3: Times during Which Respondents Usually Tune into Togotane FM

Data in Table 3 shows that the largest proportion of listeners tune-in during the early hours of the day, and in the early evenings. This listening pattern could be attributed to the fact that many of the listeners tune-in when they are at home, while a smaller proportion tune-in during the day. Qualitative data further revealed that a majority of those who listen to Togotane FM during the day do so at social places including the local markets, where radios are often tuned on at very high volumes. This revelation has programing implications, since such a listener may not listen to an entire program, or an entire discussion during a program.

3.2. Community Participation in Media Production

The study sought information on three processes of audience participation: design and development of anti-FGM content; hosting anti-FGM shows and providing feedback for anti-FGM shows. Respondents who listen to Togotane FM were asked the extent to which they participated in each of these three processes, and their responses are presented in Figure 1.

As illustrated in Figure 1, none of the respondents participated in content design and development, as well as hosting of the radio shows. Data in Figure 1 was confirmed by staff and management of the radio station, who said that they did not involve the audience in content development and delivery.

'The only time we incorporate the community in the programs is when we use the information they have provided through the calls and text. But the production is done by TogotaneFm staff only' (Togotane FM Staffer 03)

From Klls, it emerged that the station considers program design and delivery to be technical undertakings, which can only be performed by well-trained personnel.

'It had not occurred to us that we need to involve the community in program design and development. Even then, program design and development are a technical endeavour, which most of the community members may not be well versed in. Involving them could therefore compromise the quality of our programs.' (Togotane FM Staffer 01)

Corroborating with the station manager's sentiments, one radio presenter confirmed that they only invite experts from organizations involved in anti-FGM activities such as Action Aid, World Vision, Goseso Women Network, ADRA Kenya, Nyanza Initiative for Girls Education and Empowerment (NIGEA), and Msichana Initiative, among others. In the words of the radio presenter:

'I am not able to remember ever inviting anyone who is not an expert to a show. We usually invite people who can share their expertise in their respective fields, to enrich our listeners lives and experiences.'

Clearly, the station's staff and management were only looking at the technical aspects of program production, without considering the fact that content development and delivery could involve ideas development and presentation, as well as the technical bit.

3.3. Audience Feedback on anti-FGM Content

As can be seen in Figure 1, the only process in which respondents participated was providing feedback to the radio station.

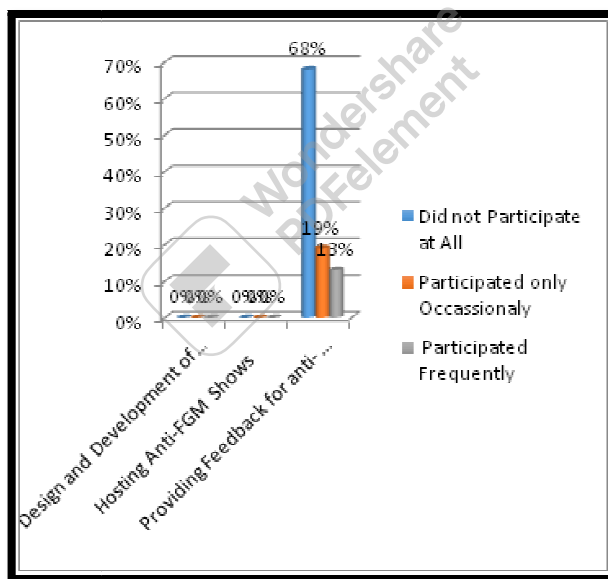


Figure 1: Respondents' Participation in the Programing Process

Even then, close to two thirds of the respondents who listen to Togotane FM said they did not participate at all in providing feedback, with only 32% saying that they participated either occasionally or frequently. The proportion of respondents who participate in providing feedback to Togotane FM is comparatively lower that that reported in other community radios.

The station has adopted three strategies to keep abreast with audience expectations. The first, as earlier highlighted, is to monitor the practice in other stations that have a reach in the Kuria region. The second strategy is to rely on feedback from live call-ins from listeners, while the third is to gather information during road shows and outreach initiatives.

In the second strategy, the station encourages listeners to call in during live shows and send text messages to express their views about programs. The content analysis of the station's programs disclosed that during such calls, radio presenters sometimes asked callers to comment about specific features of Togotane FM's programs, such as what they like most about the program, duration and timing of the program, as well as signal strength. However, available literature suggests that this strategy must be complimented by proper surveys. According to (Alabi 2014) more attention should be given to feedback from audience and incorporating audiences' feedbacks into their programmes is an efficient way of enhancing and building the audiences' confidence.

The third strategy is similarly limited in terms of representability of the general population. According to (Statistics Canada 2017) collecting data during live event attendees is similar to accidental sampling, whereby information will only be collected from those who will happen to have attended the event.

Despite the highlighted strategies of obtaining feedback from their target audience, the study established that the radio station did not have a data capture tool to record the feedback from live calls. It was not clearly discernible if the feedback obtained from the calls that came in during live shows or road shows were escalated to the station's management for action. It was similarly not clear if there was any mechanism for addressing the feedback obtained from the two strategies.

A further analysis of the listeners who said that they participate revealed that approximately half are frequent participants, as displayed in Figure 2.

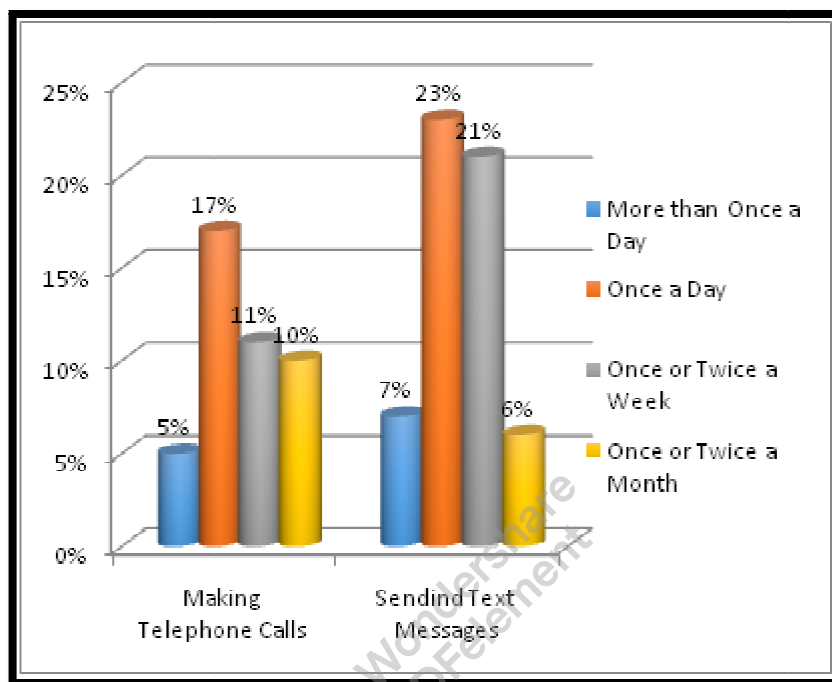


Figure 2: Frequency of Calls and Sms

As illustrated in Figure 2, slightly more than half (52%) of the respondents communicated very frequently with Togotane FM, either sending text messages or making telephone calls one or more times every day. This is an indication that the radio station receives feedback from the same individual's time over time. Considering that the listeners who provide regular feedback constitute only a small proportion of all audiences as illustrated in Figure 1, the implication is that the feedback may not be representative of all audiences.

Figure 2 further reveals that there are only two forums through which Togotane FM's audience provides feedback: 1) telephone calls; and 2) text messages sent through the short message service of telephone service providers. This finding was corroborated by qualitative data from the radio station's staff and management, who confirmed that those are the only two platforms available for feedback communication. In the words of the station manager:

'We are still new, having started only in 2018. We are yet to set up social media platforms that will allow our audiences to communicate with us.'

This study supposes that this could be a contributory factor for the relatively low feedback rates from the radio station's audiences, especially the youth, as illustrated in Figure 3.

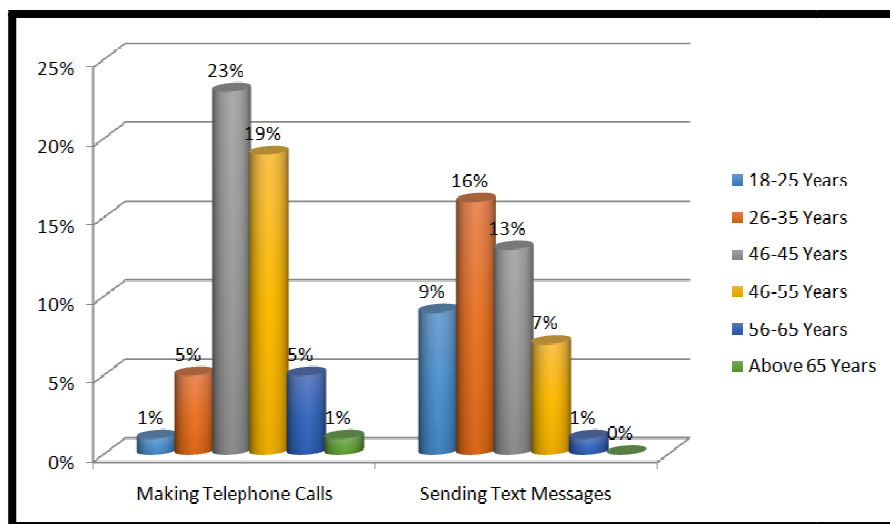


Figure 1: Age Distribution of Respondents Who Give Feedback to Togotane FM

As can be seen in Figure 3, only 10% of the respondents who sent feedback to Togotane FM were aged 25 years and below. A further scrutiny of Figure 3 reveals that an overwhelming majority of the respondents aged 25 years and below, who gave feedback, did so by sending text messages. Sending text messages was also the feedback channel of choice for respondents in the 26-35 years age bracket. On the other hand, however, most of the respondents aged above 35 years made telephone calls.

Qualitative data obtained from FGDs revealed two possible explanations for the data in Figure 3. The first reason is related to costs. Most of the younger respondents averred that they found the cost of making telephone calls to be prohibitive, and that is why they preferred sending text messages which were cheaper. As espoused by one of the FGD discussants in Kegonga:

'Most of us young people have subscribed to SMS packages, whereby we pay as low as ten bob for up-to 200 SMSs per day. We therefore find it cheaper to send SMS, compared to making telephone calls which are very expensive.'

Another respondent in Kehancha said:

'I have subscribed to a package where I am entitled to 200 SMSs per day. I am not able to exhaust these, and therefore sending a text message to Togotane FM is one way of trying to use up all my messages.'

The cost consideration appears to be weighty for the younger listeners, who are likely not to have a stable income, compared to the respondents aged above 35 years, who are likely to have a source of income. Indeed, qualitative data shows that respondents above the age of 35 are more concerned about convenience, than cost. When asked about the cost implications of making telephone calls, one FGD discussant said:

'All good things come at a cost. For me, getting instant feedback is very important, even if it means spending a little more money on airtime.'

The second explanation for the data in Figure 3 is related to the different perceptions of convenience, as seen by the different age groups. The study reveals that the younger respondents perceive the text message to be a very convenient channel of communication, while the older generation find making telephone calls to be a more convenient channel than the former. There appears to be no consensus in previous studies regarding the preferred channel of communication in relation to age.

The aforementioned findings therefore reinforce the need for audience surveys, which can reveal such unique differences in perceptions. For instance, based on the aforementioned, this study suggests that the lower feedback rates for the younger listeners could be related to the confinement of feedback forums to telephone calls and text messages. This study posits that if the available channels of feedback were expanded to include social media platforms, which are largely SMS-based, then Togotane FM could possibly receive more feedback from the younger generation, who are key targets for anti-FGM programming.

Qualitative data obtained from FGDs with young girls confirmed that there is indeed an association between the lack of social media platforms and the lower feedback rates from younger listeners. According to one of the FGD participants:

'Making phone calls is very expensive, yet communicating by WhatsApp or Facebook is very cheap because of the various bundle packages that one can subscribe to.'

Figure 4.6 further reveals that a majority (62%) of the respondents who said they made telephone calls or sent text messages to Togotane FM were between the ages of 36 and 55 years. Only approximately one third (31%) of the respondents who gave feedback were aged below 35 years, while only 7% were aged above 65 years. This is a clear indication that Togotane FM's younger and older listeners participate less in giving feedback, than their middle-aged counterparts.

Overall, the study established that Togotane FM developed their programs schedule with very little input from the local community. For instance, the study observed that the station did not undertake an environmental scan in order to determine the key issues that affect their target audience.

Thus, Togotane FM's current design shows a top-down approach whereby the programs only become participatory during the live broadcasts, mainly through SMS and live call-ins. The study further established that Togotane FM did not seek the input of their target audience before deciding on the radio content but rather engaged listeners during the broadcast of the programs via sms and the telephone call-ins

'We do not have a structure in place that allows our audiences to participate in the pre-production and production stages of broadcast. We only have their participation when it comes to feedback in the different programs' (Togotane Staffer 01)

A clear illustration of this can be seen in the discrepancy between what the station airs, and what the listeners would like to listen to, in relation to anti FGM content. Respondents were asked to freely list the topics or themes that they would like Togotane FM to cover regarding anti-FGM content. These were compared to the topics that are usually covered, as obtained from content analysis and qualitative data from multiple sources. The comparison revealed that while there was general agreement between listener expectations and actual content, there were six points of departure, where actual content was different from listener expectations, as shown in Table 4.

What is Usually Aired	What Listeners would Prefer
Anti-FGM content is more pronounced during the FGM season	Anti-FGM content should be broadcast throughout the year, and not only during FGM season
Most of the content is propagated by NGO's and other pressure groups	Anti-FGM content should feature more stories from local opinion leaders
Many anti-FGM programs by experts are delivered in Kiswahili	Anti-FGM content should be delivered in the local Kikuria language
Limited time for discussions during anti-FGM programs, most of the time taken up by experts	Need for more time for discussions
Presentations by experts focus only on the medical aspects of FGM, ignoring social issues	More holistic discussions, touching on social and cultural matters
Anti-FGM content delivered only in the form of discussions	More creative content like drama episodes, poems and music

Table 4: A Comparison of what Listeners would like to listen to, vis-a'vis what is usually aired

As can be seen in Table 4, there are six points of departure between what is actually aired and what listeners would prefer. The first point of departure is the perception among listeners that anti-FGM programs only gain prominence during FGM seasons, yet they would prefer that they run throughout the year. That anti-FGM programs are more pronounced during FGM seasons was confirmed by qualitative data obtained from personnel in anti-FGM agencies in the study area. In the words of a program manager at one of the NGOs:

'We are constrained by budget limitations, and for this reason we are not able to sponsor a program that runs throughout the year. Sponsoring a program does not come cheap'

This study suggests that the lack of a program dedicated to FGM could be the main contributor to the sporadic airing of anti-FGM content. Since the radio station invites experts to discuss trending issues, inviting an expert to discuss FGM outside the FGM season may not be an attractive prospect for the station.

The second and third points of departure are interrelated, and concern the perception that most of the anti-FGM content appears to be propagated by NGOs and persons considered to be outsiders. Indeed, this finding concurs with the results in

Figure 4.4, which show that the local community does not participate in program design and delivery. As can be seen in Table 4, the local community would be more receptive to anti-FGM content if it included local voices and experiences.

In the fourth point of departure, the audience perceives the time allocated for discussion as being too short. As espoused by one FGD participant:

'Whenever these experts are in the studio, they spend too much time talking, making it more of a lecture instead of a discussion. By the time they open it up for discussion, the program is about to end, therefore limiting the number of people who can call in.'

The aforementioned sentiments are in line with (Amadu and Amin 2017) and (Khan, et al. 2017) who argue that social change tends to be more effective if it is more participatory, rather than directional.

In the fifth point of departure, respondents felt that the discussions tend to focus more on the medical aspects of FGM, yet they perceive the practice to be more holistic. This is reinforced even further by the perception that many of the respondents said most community members already know the medical repercussions of FGM, but the practice persists because it is strongly intertwined with culture. According to one of the FGD participants:

'Most people already know that FGM has harmful health and medical repercussions. They also know that it is illegal and that one can be jailed for participating. That message has been passed many times, but the practice persists. Therefore, discussion on radio should focus on those things that drive the practice, despite the health and medical consequences.'

The sixth and final point of departure is related to the mode of delivery. As indicated in Table 4, FGM content is delivered exclusively in the form of discussions. According to the respondents, the mode of delivery can be made more interesting and exciting if it is more diverse, and embraces other forms of delivery such as drama.

The study also sought to find out if there was a difference in participation, between anti-FGM programs and other programs. Respondents who usually participate in anti-FM programs were asked if they also participate in other discussions on topics different from FGM. This information was then compared and is presented in Figure 4.

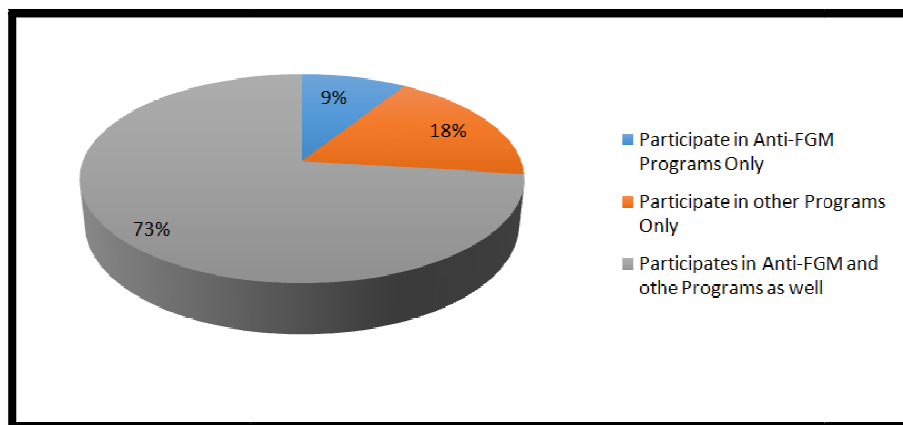


Figure 4: Respondents' Participation in Programs

As can be seen in Figure 4, close to three quarters (73%) of respondents who usually give feedback do so for all programs, with only 9% reporting that they participate in anti-FGM programs only. This is an indication that most of the listeners who provide feedback through the available channels are serial participators, and implies that Togotane FM may not be benefitting from new insights.

Based on the aforementioned, it is apparent that the role of the audience in the design and delivery of anti-FGM content on Togotane FM is minimal. The findings are in contrast with the democratic participant theory and recommended practice for effective community-based radio programming. Johnson-Turbes, Hall, Kamalu and Zavahir (2010) state that when a radio message is developed, the target audiences need to be considered. Jallo (2012) argues that for community-based radio to achieve its developmental objectives, its programs should be well researched, produced and presented in a manner Jalloh that is comprehensible, with the audience's active participation. Considering the framing theory, community-based radio stations need to organize and present their ideas and topics they cover by first being able to understand their target audience characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, values, skills, their environment, and what matters to them (HEC,2008; Calabrese, 2016).

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study therefore concludes that Togotane FM adopts a top-down approach whereby the audience only participates in providing feedback to the radio station while programs were being aired, and does not participate in content creation and hosting of radio shows. Further to this, the study concludes that Togotane FM does not conduct audience surveys due to resource limitations; the level of participation is lower than that reported in other community radios, probably because there are only two channels of communication available to listeners; and that listeners aged 35 years and below participate less frequently than their counterparts aged above 35 years.

In view of the findings, this study recommends that Togotane FM and other community radios should involve audiences in all aspects of programming, including content creation, hosting of radio shows, and providing feedback while programs were being aired. Furthermore, the study recommends that county governments in Kenya should fund community radios so that they are able to effectively deliver services to communities, especially in relation to awareness creation for behavior change.

5. References

- i. Alabi, Oluwole Folaranmi. "Effects of Audience Feedback on Radio and Television Programmes in Lagos State, Nigeria." *Journal of Languages and Communication*, 2014: 38-46.
- ii. Amadu, Mohammed, Faisal, and Alhassan Amin. "Community Access and Participation in Community Radio Broadcast: Case of Radio Gaakii, Ghana." *Journal of Development and Communication Studies*, 2017: 85-102.
- iii. Andro, A, and M. Lesclingand. "Female genital mutilation. Overview and current knowledge. ." *Population* 71, no. 2 (2016): 2215-2296.
- iv. Anti-FGM Board. ANTI-FGM Board Progress Report. Nairobi: ANTI-FGM, BOARD, 2017.
- v. Catterson, K. "Language as a barrier to ending FGM in Somaliland." *Wellbeing*, 2018.
- vi. Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Radio." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. 15 November 2018. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/radio>.
- vii. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey. Nairobi: KDHS, 2014.
- viii. Khan, Anowarul, M.,Rahman Khan, Mahmudul Hassan, Ahmed Firoz, and Shah Haque. "Role of Community Radio for Community Development in Bangladesh." *The International Technology Management Review*, 2017: 94-102.
- ix. Klein, E, E Helzner, M Shayowitz, S Kohlhoff, A Tamar, and N Smith. "Female Genital Mutilation: Health Consequences and Complications." *Obstetrics and Gynecology International*, 2018: 1-7.

- x. Lewis, Peter. "Radio Drama." Longman group limited, 1981.
- xi. Mwendwa, Purity, Naomi Mutea, Mary Joy Kaimuri, Aoife De Brun, and Thilo Kroll. "'Promote locally led initiatives to fight female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)': Lessons from anti FGM/C advocates in Rural Kenya." *Reproductive Health* 17, no. 30 (2020).
- xii. Oloo, Habil, Monica Wanjiru, and Katey Newell-Jones. *Female Genital Mutilation practices in Kenya: The role of Alternative rites of pasasage: A case study of Kisii and Kuria districts*. London: Feed the Minds, 2011.
- xiii. Republic of Kenya. *Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011)*. Nairobi: Government Printers, 2011.
- xiv. Ross, C.T, P Strimling, K.P Ericksen, P Lindenfors, and M.B. Mulder. "The Origins and maintenance of female genital modification across Africa." *Human Nature* 27, no. 2 (2016): 173-200.
- xv. Statistics Canada. Non-probability sampling. 23 October 2017. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/edu/power-pouvoir/ch13/nonprob/5214898-eng.htm>.
- xvi. WHO. Female Genital Mutilation. 3 February 2020. <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>.
- xvii. Yamane, Taro. *Statistics: an Introductory Analysis*. . New York: Harper & Row, 1967.

