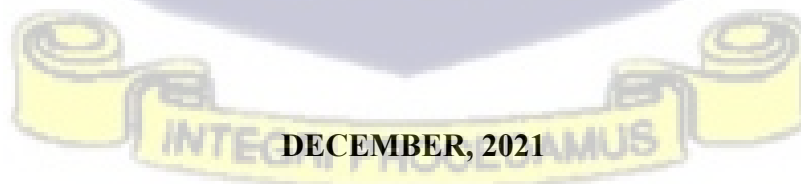


**RADIO MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: A STUDY OF SELECTED PRIVATE RADIO
STATIONS IN SEKONDI-TAKORADI**



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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
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IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEGREE**



DECEMBER, 2021

DECLARATION

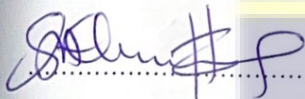
I declare that this thesis, with the exception of the references to other people's work which have been properly acknowledged and cited, is the product of my own research conducted under the supervision of Dr. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo and Dr. Gilbert Tietaah, at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana.



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INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

DEDICATION

This research is first and foremost dedicated to God Almighty, who gave me the strength to finish it, and to my parents, Rev. And Mrs. Cornelius Flintwood-Brace, for their unflinching support to me all my life.



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ABSTRACT

Located in the Political Economy Tradition of the Media, this study explored the management practices of selected radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi (Radio Maxx, Aseda FM, Spice FM, Empire FM and Kyzz FM) as proxy for understanding how normative management practices in Ghana are enacted vis-à-vis the economic considerations that characterise the industry. The study combined in-depth interviews, document analysis and observation to explore the management practices of the radio stations pertaining to the areas of programming, human resource management, financial management and audience management. The findings of the study showed that the stations did not contribute much to Sekondi-Takoradi's creative economy because, for the most part, the stations expend resources on buying content from Accra-based radio stations. This practice denies the local economy any form of patronage that could have resulted from the local production of programmes in Sekondi-Takoradi. Additionally, the stations rely on talents from outside the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, which indicates that the stations do not have any viable talent grooming programmes that benefit local talents in Sekondi-Takoradi. The study also found that the radio stations did little or no formative research to guide their programming decisions. The implication of their failure to investigate their audiences' needs, is homogenised competition among the stations; where all five stations air very similar programmes with very few variations. The study also sought to discover what constitutes the management structures of the radio stations, and how the management structures impact management practices. The study found that three out of the five stations do not have Human Resource Departments, which indicates problematic HR practices in the radio stations. The study ultimately concluded that even though private radio stations operate to maximise profits, there are a number of factors that condition the market model upon which these stations are set up and operated.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background to the study, with a brief account of the context of broadcast pluralism and proliferation of radio stations in Ghana. This chapter also presents the problem statement, objectives and research questions. Furthermore, this chapter explains the significance of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Despite the advent of new technological means of broadcasting, radio remains the most popular mass communication medium in Africa. According to Media Ownership Monitor (2017), almost two-thirds of Ghanaians listen to the radio on a daily basis, with 62.9% choosing radio as their primary source of news. Communication scholars attribute its wide geographical reach and its attractiveness to diverse audiences partly due to its oral and multilingual abilities (Yeboah-Banin, Tietaah & Akrofi-Quarcoo, 2018, p. 55). Gunner et al (2012) similarly affirm that radio's oral character and low cost advantage meet Africa's situation of high illiteracy and poverty rates very well.

In Ghana and most African countries, radio was developed as a state initiative; accordingly, management had been a state preserve until the early 1990s following some African countries' return to constitutional governance after years of military rule and in some cases, dictatorial regimes. Ghana's 1992 Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and supports media privatisation. It states under Article 162 that:

There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a licence as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information. (Article 162).

This constitutional backing was duly accompanied by media de-regulation, a phenomenon that encouraged broadcast pluralism and multiplicity of radio stations with expanded ownership and management. Importantly too, the Constitution recognises freedom of the press as a central condition to the functioning of a democratic society. Croteau and Hoynes (2006, p. 7) rightly assert that the correlation between democracy and free press is at a stage where the latter has become unrealistic and unworkable without the former.

The National Communications Authority (NCA) which is responsible for the allocation of radio and television frequencies, issued its first broadcast license to an Accra-based private radio in the year 1995. The number of radio stations expanded with time and as at the second quarter of 2020, the NCA had granted licenses to 575 (five hundred and seventy-five) radio stations to operate (NCA, 2020). Out of this number, 437 (hundred and thirty-seven) are privately owned. Data further indicate that the number of radio stations just about doubled every decade. The period between 1995 and 2000 saw the NCA award a total of 65 licenses. Between 2001 and 2010, additional 142 licences were awarded to individuals and organisations. Between 2011 and 2020, 368 more licenses were awarded. Even though there are currently 437 authorised private radio stations in Ghana, 137 (one hundred and thirty-seven), which represents 31.5% are not on air. Of note however, is the fact that at present, Ghana is seeing its most liberal media environment ever, for not only does the Constitution guarantee media freedom and independence, but there is

concomitant exponential growth in public interest and participation in media ownership and operation.

The new radio stations have been classified based on purpose, location and coverage. By purpose, the NCA has classified radio stations into public, public foreign, commercial, community radio stations and campus radio stations. According to Barnard (2000, p. 49), commercial radio is the most dominant form of sound broadcasting in the world. This position reflects the current broadcast landscape in Ghana.

1.3 Conceptualising “Management Practices” within the Political Economy of the Media

Siebert et al. (2008) referred to management practices as “working methods and innovations that managers use to improve the effectiveness of work systems.” Similarly, Brito and Sauan (2016, p. 4) have described management practices as sets of practices used by organisations and firms to attain better results. Therefore, management practices relate to the initiatives that make contributions to the workings of an organisation to ensure its progress and sustainability. Across all media organisations, the most common management practices cover a number of areas such as programming and content decisions, financial administration, regulatory compliance, organisational structure and human resource matters that are very integral to the survival of a radio station (Raymond, 2016, p. 4).

Invariably, research shows that radio management practices are largely influenced by the political economy of the media (Apuke, 2017). The political economy of the media approach studies aspects of the media industries and their practices, focusing primarily on media companies' ownership patterns, management, organisational structures, and business operations; and the way these

practices are shaped by governments' laws, regulations, and other policies; and the impacts of these interrelationships not only on media content and media audiences, but also on societies' politics and culture.

Mosco, (2009) explained that the political economy of the media is concerned with the power relations that constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of media products. This implies that the political economy of the media deals with how media content is generated, distributed and consumed within a society and the power that influences this media content generation and distribution. Ogenga (2010, p. 153) argues that economic factors influence the media in ways in which the media becomes an industry like all other industries. Buttressing this argument, Zhen (2016) further remarks that in capitalist societies, commercialised mass media have little difference from other commodities because both are profit-oriented and are bound to be heavily dependent on financiers and investors because media operations are sustained by the sponsorship from enterprises and advertising revenues.

Ogenga (2010) also adds that the manner in which the media is managed is shaped by its owners, the market environment, and funding. The basis of this argument is that since private media are in the business of maximising profits just like any other business organisation in capitalist societies (Hesmondhalgh, 2007), all their practices, including their management practices are motivated by economic factors and what they stand to gain financially. However, even though management practices are primarily implemented for the purpose of increasing profits and improving efficiency, this study argues that management practices must also be sensitive to the public interest imperatives that condition organisational functioning.

1.4 Radio Management in a Plural/Liberal Environment

A major concern of communication scholars regarding the new plural broadcast environment pertains to the management practices of the stations. Karikari (1993) raised concerns over radio pluralism outcomes drawing attention to how these stations would be managed to cater for the needs of all and particularly overall public interest.

Regardless of the geographical location and coverage of radio broadcasting, would content be enough to respond to the needs of lower social classes? Or would they be devoted to the interest of the elite while only incidentally providing doses of “development” messages underived from the total social experiences of these social groups? (p. 7)

In 1997, Karikari made the following comment regarding pluralism and management of radio stations noting:

It is expressed in terms of diversity of ownership patterns....It is manifest in the variety of organisational and management structures and practices. Media pluralism supposes and must express diverse objectives, ideological and political orientations, and audiences. It is at the end of the day how diverse the opinions promoted and the breadth of programme output and the social interests they satisfy. (p. 6)

Since the early years of plural broadcasting, Ghanaians have seen immense changes attributed in part to a plural market and technological advancements. Radio content has increasingly become participatory and more engaging. Audiences have become important contributors to programme content through the vehicle of phone-in programmes, SMS messaging and other social media platforms. For instance, the public can give feedback in reaction to what journalists, government officials, and members of the public say on air. Ansu-Kyeremeh and Karikari (1998) noted that:

One remarkable characteristic of the emerging pluralist media in Ghana is the total departure from the one-way communication format that the technology-based media employed. Almost all the radio stations in Accra (and many of those outside the capital) have phone-in programmes. (p. 8)

These developments notwithstanding, there remain a lot more questions to be answered if one puts the searchlight closely on radio management practices in a post-monopolist broadcast environment. Management scholars such as Reynolds et al. (2005) and Walls and Wood (2005) have directly linked performance and in actual sense, the survival of an organisation to its management practices. Even though management practices are linked with organisational success, the phenomenon has also been said to be the main problem that hinders the smooth running, expansion and survival of many businesses in Ghana (Logli, 1981). In light of these considerations, the question then arises as to what management practices have proven to work efficiently for private radio stations, particularly in Sekondi-Takoradi where very little radio-related research has been carried out. This study is an attempt at examining what management practices are employed and how these practices have contributed to the survival of the selected private radio stations.

1.5 Problem Statement

In granting radio licenses, the National Communications Authority Legislation (Act 524) states that persons interested in establishing radio stations must submit a feasibility report of their enterprise which should include a market plan that will demonstrate how the station intends to promote itself and gain market share. In addition, applicants are expected to indicate the nature of programming the station intends to broadcast to their audience, and a statement on how the company intends to finance its capital investment and its operations during the first ninety (90) days after the commencement of service. These requirements by the NCA are intended for the applicants to prove that their radio enterprise is viable and is therefore deserving of a license to operate, and also to ensure that public interest is adequately served. This is an interesting revelation

because it goes to show that even after meeting all the requirements to get the needed license to set up a radio station, there is an expectation that, in functional and operational terms, a private operation using the frequency, meets basic management benchmarks, which include the public interest mandate.

Although Ghana's radio landscape is very saturated, its development and management are not without challenges. For example, currently, out of the 437 authorised private radio stations, 137 (one hundred and thirty-seven), which represents 31.5% are not on air. In 2017, the NCA announced that it had sanctioned some 131(one hundred and thirty-one) radio stations for breaching various aspects of the Electronics Communications Act (2009), Act 775. Thirty-four of the radio stations had their licences revoked because their authorisations had expired and they were operating illegally. All these issues have implications for radio management practices.

A report by the Ghana Media Standards Improvement Project (GMSIP, 2011) indicates that there have also been concerns about dwindling professional standards, poor conditions of service, disregard for the safety of journalists, and the extreme competition to capture a large portion of the radio market in order to secure advertising revenues to finance radio operations. What are the implications for management practices?

This study explores the management practices of selected private radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi in order to understand how these practices have contributed to their sustainability and survival. The study also intends to present the challenges and constraints that the stations face

specifically regarding the management practices they employ as they pertain to programming, audience management, human resource management and financial management.

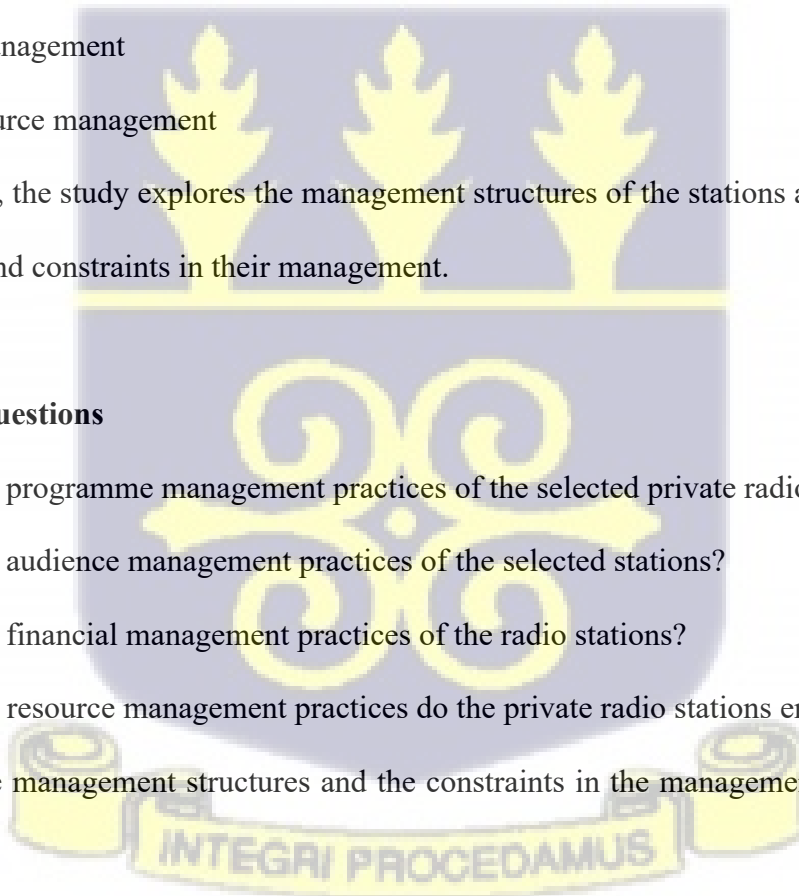
1.6 Research Objectives

The study explores management practices of selected radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi to understand how normative management practices are enacted vis-à-vis the public policy considerations that characterise the industry in the following areas:

1. Programme management
2. Audience management
3. Financial management
4. Human resource management
5. Additionally, the study explores the management structures of the stations and documents the challenges and constraints in their management.

1.7 Research Questions

1. What are the programme management practices of the selected private radio stations?
2. What are the audience management practices of the selected stations?
3. What are the financial management practices of the radio stations?
4. What human resource management practices do the private radio stations employ?
5. What are the management structures and the constraints in the management of private radio stations?



1.8 Significance of Study

It is worth noting that in spite of radio being both one of the most widely accessible global media forms and a subject studied at different levels in universities all over the world, very little is known about its management. This assertion is supported by Lister, Mitchell and O'Shea (2010, p. 20) who observed that there was a limited number of academic texts and literature that focus specifically on managing radio. Their verdict echoes the view of Picard (2008) who noted that:

Media management courses in universities began in the mid-twentieth century, but when one reviews those courses and the literature on media management studies through most of the past 50 years, one finds that it included media but very little management (p. 2)

The situation may not be entirely different in the African context, particularly in Ghana where commercial or private radio stations are fairly new. By documenting management practices, the study does not only seek to address a scholarly gap, but makes a significant contribution to specific areas of radio management notably, programming, audience management, human resource management and financial management practices. The study would make recommendations for the further development of the discipline.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

The entire study is organised into seven chapters. The first chapter gives the background of the study. It looks at what managing radio typically entails, as well as what management practices generally are. The chapter also presents the problem statement, the objectives of the study, research questions, and the significance of the study. Chapter two discusses the theories that underpin this exploratory study, which are the market model of media and the P-O-L-C management framework.

The chapter also discusses how the theories help to understand the nuances of the management practices implemented in private radio stations. Chapter three reviews existing literature on the study under discussion. It explores what communication scholars have found concerning the complexities of radio and its management. Chapter four then delves into the research methodology used in this study. The research design, data collection method, and data analysis are also discussed in this chapter. The chapter also gives a brief description of the population of the study. Chapter five presents research findings from the analysis made from the data collected through the use of semi-structured interview guides. Chapter six presents a discussion of the findings in light of the theory and related literature. Finally, chapter seven gives a summary of the main findings, the study's limitations, a conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

1.10 Operational Definition of Key Terms

Below is a list of key terms employed in this study. Due to the fact that their meanings may differ in other situations, these definitions have been explained specifically to fit the context of this study:

Management practices- This refers to the working methods and innovations that managers use to improve the effectiveness of work systems.

Programme management- This is management concerned with creating media contents, which borders on decisions on content selection, design and realisation.

Audience management- This involves identifying and analysing one's audiences and keeping in touch with them, with the aim of enhancing interactions and building relationships.

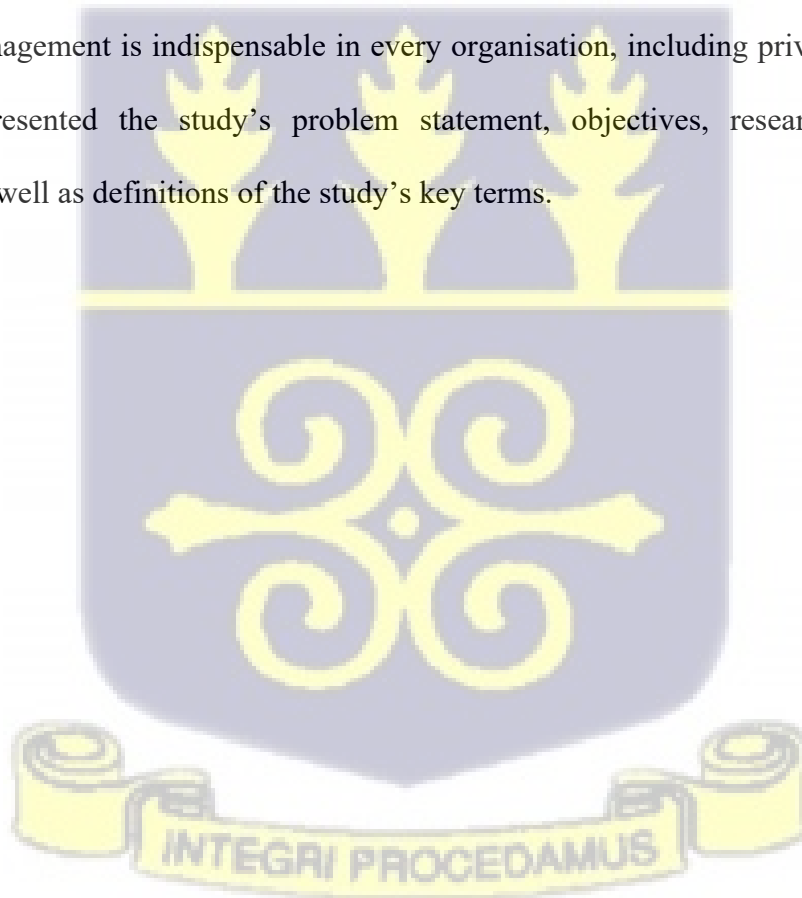
Human resource management- This refers to strategies and activities that focus on managing employees at all levels of an organisation.

Financial management- Involves maintaining a steady supply of funds, ensuring profitability, and efficient disbursement and utilisation of funds.

Public policy- Refers to a statutory regulatory framework that is designed to govern the actions of groups and organisations for the purpose of affecting citizens positively.

1.11 Summary

This chapter served as a background to this study by presenting the current state of the Ghanaian radio landscape, highlighting some changes that have evolved following the coming into existence of the era of media liberalisation in Ghana. It emphasised what management practices are, and the reason why management is indispensable in every organisation, including private radio stations. The chapter presented the study's problem statement, objectives, research questions, its significance, as well as definitions of the study's key terms.



CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This study is grounded in the Political Economy Tradition of Media that was developed from the 1970s and recognises that the mass media are, first and foremost, industrial and commercial organisations which produce and distribute commodities (Murdock & Golding, 1974, p. 205-206). Within the Political Economy of Media, this study was mainly underpinned by the Market Model of Media, and complemented by the P-O-L-C management framework. This chapter discusses the theories in terms of their assumptions and most importantly, how they help to increase the understanding of management practices of private radio stations.

2.2 Market Model of Media

Croteau and Hoynes in their book *Media, Markets and the Public Sphere* (2001) presented the market model of media and the public sphere model as the two perspectives of analysing the media. This study is grounded in the market model of media because the market model generally thrives where there is private, unrestricted ownership of the media, and presents media products as all other goods and services that are “sold” for profits. According to the propounders of the market model, media companies, like all other businesses, develop and sell products, compete for larger market share, mind cost, look for opportunities to expand, and engage in many other activities that will help to maximise their profits.

In the market model of media, success is usually measured by the profits generated by media companies. The market model of media posits that media audiences are consumers of the media with tastes and preferences that need to be taken into consideration and addressed accordingly, and that, it is the consumers in the marketplace who influence media companies to behave in a way that best suits the public.

Additionally, the market model of media takes the competitive environment of the media market into consideration. It suggests that for markets to operate as intended, there must be a sufficient number of suppliers of a good. If not, a small group of suppliers or a single supplier will have the ability to influence market dynamics. In the case where only a few suppliers are able to manipulate market dynamics, the idea of a competitive, market-based economy will be totally undermined. However, when there is adequate competition, the market model has the following assumptions:

First, competition in the media market challenges media businesses to develop quality products so as to attract the highest market share. According to Croteau and Hoynes (2005, p. 18), for most stakeholders of media companies, the idea of making profits promotes innovation as companies try to develop new products that will outdo other companies and capture a larger market share or even secure an untapped market segment altogether. This eventually brings about experimentation with new products that result in a dynamic and proactive industry, full of new and exciting projects. A lack of competition discourages creativity and innovation. For example, in the media industry, a lack of competition can lead to an unwillingness to take initiatives in producing new content and programmes. Rather, repetition of already existing programmes is likely to be the key strategy employed.

Competition in the media market also promotes efficiency. This is because, in their quest to beat competition and increase profits, media companies are forced to develop ways to deliver goods and services at the lowest cost possible. This encourages efficiency on the part of the media organisations and ensures low prices for consumers. When there is insufficient competition, efficiency is lost because there is no motivation for media organisations to reduce costs. And for the consumers, markets which have no competitive forces offer high prices. Consumers are forced to pay high prices for goods and services because they have no other option of getting what they need. For instance, if there are just a few media organisations, the cost of advertising with them is likely to be high because advertisers would only have a few options, and the media firms will take advantage of the situation to offer their services at a high price.

The market model of media promotes responsiveness. Media markets function on the principle of supply and demand. For that matter, markets respond to what consumers want. When the demand for certain media products goes up, their prices go up as well, unless there is an increase in supply, which in this case is an increase in the number of media firms that force prices to go back down. An increase in supply is caused by firms that see an opportunity to make profits either by entering the media market or expanding their already existing firm to meet the increase in demand. In any of the aforementioned situations, media organisations are still being responsive to the demands of their consumers. At the onset of radio pluralism in Ghana, Karikari (1993) was concerned over whether indeed the content of radio broadcasting could meet the needs of every social class. His concern stemmed from the belief that the elite and powerful would most likely dictate the content of radio programming. This theory, however, suggests that the economic interest purpose of private media requires radio to be responsive to all.

From a market model perspective, robust competition is the core indicator of a healthy media industry, and the two key factors in assessing robust market competition are the number of media firms that supply media products and the level of differentiation between the products that are offered (Croteau & Hoynes, 2005, p. 19). While diverse competition, which is explained as a situation where numerous media organisations offer a wide range of media products for consumers to choose from, is usually what is ideal, there is a high chance of homogenised competition. Homogenised competition happens when there are many media companies but not much differentiation between the media products they offer their consumers. Instead, what exist are numerous media firms with identical and repeated content and programmes (Yue-Ping, 2008). Again, Karikari (1997) expressed that what is expected in an era of media pluralism is the promotion of diverse and different opinions, as well as extensive programme outputs that can satisfy many social interests.

The limitation to the market model of media is that society has an interest in how organisations perform that goes beyond profits. The reality check for private radio stations is that there are a number of mandates that are expected of the media which are not concerned with their economic interest goals. For example, labour laws are some measures that society puts in place to put limits on business practices.

Ultimately, the market model of media will help build the foundation for the study by situating private radio stations in a business setting. The theory also helps one understand what drives media

companies and their managers to make choices about the practices they need to employ in order to remain sustainable and survive in the highly competitive media environment.

The assumption of the market model of media that competition in the media market brings responsiveness, helps to understand the audience management practices of radio stations, which include the extent to which the stations will go in order to interact with their audiences so as to meet and respond to their needs. This assumption equally tackles human resource management practices because radio stations hire and train on-air personalities just so they can appeal to their audiences.

The assumption that the market model promotes innovation tackles this study's objective of exploring the programme management practices of radio stations, which include how diverse or similar radio programmes and contents are across the stations under study.

Lastly, the assumption that the market model encourages efficiency by forcing radio stations to develop ways to deliver goods and services at the lowest cost possible focuses on the aspect of this study that deals with financial management practices.

2.3 P-O-L-C Management Framework

P-O-L-C management framework propounded by Carpenter, Bauer and Erdogan (2009) is an acronym for planning, organising, leading and controlling, which are posited as functions of management. The framework establishes that management is needed in every organisation, and managers are expected to plan, organise, lead and control to ensure the success of their

organisations. Planning means evaluating the future and making appropriate provisions for it. Organising is providing an organisation with everything that is useful to its functioning such as personnel, raw materials, tools and capital. Leading is concerned with motivating, influencing and directing employees to work towards the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. Lastly, controlling means cross-checking to ensure that everything is working according to plan, within budget, within timelines and with the allocated resources.

A study by Raymond (2013) on the management practices of student-run broadcast radio stations employed P-O-L-C management framework. Respondents were able to share information pertinent to the four levels of management as presented by Carpentar et Al, which came full circle in painting a clear picture of how student-run radio stations are managed. The study showed that the P-O-L-C management framework provides a solid framework from which to evaluate various areas associated with student-run college radio broadcast stations.

Despite the relevance of the P-O-L-C management framework, the theory was heavily criticised on the basis of its vagueness. Mintzberg (2009, p. 10) claims that the functional categories posited in the theory are not useful because they cannot be linked to specific activities. He expressed this concern by implying that there is no real clear-cut delineation between the roles of planning, organising, leading and controlling. Comparably, Carlson (2009, p. 24) argues that if we ask a manager when he is organising, or how much organising he has been doing in a day, he would not know.”

Secondly, it has been argued that the framework was relevant when organisations operated in a stable and predictable environment (Edwards, 2018, p. 49). It seems less appropriate in the turbulent and highly unpredictable environment of today. For example, present-day managers cannot depend entirely on formal authority and must use persuasion to get the work done. The basis of the critiques against the P-O-L-C management framework is that it offers a set of prescriptions about what managers ought to do, which in actual fact may be entirely different from what managers really do to achieve organisational goals. However, contrary to the views of Mintzberg (1989, p. 9), McLean (2011, p. 33) posits that the P-O-L-C management framework has made significant impact on administrative approaches over the years, and the theory remains relevant and useful to managers of contemporary organisations.

The P-O-L-C framework will help with the analysis of the management structures that exist in the radio stations, with a special focus on the functions of the general managers who are responsible for the running of the respective radio stations.

2.4 Summary

The study was underpinned by the the market model of media, and was complemented by the P-O-L-C management framework. The market model of media touched on the the importance of a competitive media landscape in encouraging the production of diverse and dynamic content so as to garner a good portion of consumers for media companies. Ultimately, private media organisations create and sell media products and recruit personnel, engage with audiences and advertisers alike, in order to rake in good profits.

The tenets of the P-O-L-C management framework spell out the functions of a general manager. This framework is useful in the discussion and analyses of the functions of the managers in the selected radio stations.



CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

There have been some studies which have examined aspects of radio management practices, and media management practices as a whole. This chapter reviews both pioneering and contemporary research into the various management practices associated with the media to give valuable insight and serve as a guide to the study.

3.2 Related Studies

3.2.1 Radio as a Business

Scholars such as Brennan (1996), Rochet et al (2003) and Albarran (2004) have established that most private commercial radio stations are set up by their owners with the topmost aim of making profits. Notable among studies of commercial radio stations as business entities is a study by Rachmiatie et al (2020), that aimed to investigate the challenges that commercial radio stations faced in sustaining themselves as businesses. The study was underpinned by the media political economy theory. Using Thomson Radio and Aden Radio which are considered to be successful in diversifying their radio businesses in Indonesia as case studies, the study found that the rapid development of new media had birthed radio's problem of a continuous decline in advertising revenue. The study showed that commercial radio stations had all the liberty to be profit oriented but, they were equally obligated to perform their social roles. Another interesting finding was that it is spelt out in the Indonesia Broadcasting Law that the sources of income for private radio should be advertising or any broadcast-related business.

The managers of Thomson Radio had emphasised that due to the tight competition in the media, it had become necessary to diversify their radio business to enable them to survive the huge economic pressures. The researchers established that diversification becomes a logical option when private media is analysed as a business which has the main aim of surviving a competitive media market. For that reason, Thomson Radio diversified its business by venturing into the sale of herbal medicines in order to support its broadcast operations with the proceeds from the sales. Factually speaking, the sale of herbal medicine contradicts the Broadcasting Law which was clear on media businesses being broadcast-related. The managers of Thomson Radio contend that in order for their firm to survive, they were willing to go all out, even if it meant going contrary to the law, for the sake of economic gains.

Beyond the sale of products, the study found that both Thomson Radio and Aden Radio had teams that were charged to organise off-air events usually by collaborating with the product manufacturers or distributors as sponsors of the event. Rachmiatie et al (2020), assert that event organising has become increasingly popular for most radio firms today because it brings in significant revenue on the side.

In a study that corroborates Rachmiatie's (2020) position that radio is a business, Denevan (2014) examined the impact of the 1996 Telecommunications Act on the content and programming of radio stations and its effect on how radio is seen as a business. The data collection method for this study was interviews with 28 participants who had worked in the radio business for over 20 years, ranging from general managers, programme directors, disc jockeys, operation managers, sales and marketing directors, engineers, owners and those who were believed to be knowledgeable enough

to give in-depth perspectives regarding the radio industry before and after the Telecommunications Act.

The study found that the passing of the Act totally changed radio. Larger companies started to buy out small, local stations wherever they thought profit could be made. And as the small, local, family-oriented stations transitioned to new ownership, their focus changed to profits. Radio became very transactional, in that, money became the ultimate goal. Radio transformed to become a medium to make money, where “no radio people were involved, but was run by money people.”

The study further asserted that a way that radio stations have increased profits is to accept any money that is made available through advertising, and that the high listenership of a programme is used by radio stations as leverage to relatively raise the cost of advertising. The study adds that before the Act, radio stations aired programmes that were concerned with public interest issues, but in recent times, radio stations are more interested in monetising their slots with paid programmes. It was also apparent from the study that the thirst for financial results placed managers in situations where cost-cutting measures were needed to meet the demands of their new corporate owners. For that reason, radio stations moved from producing local content. This assertion is supported by Crider (2012), who also found that in radio’s efforts to boost profits and drastically reduce cost, cheaper programming is sought out and syndicated shows are now more popularly used. Reports by the Federal Communications Commission (2011, p. 65) point to the fact that the focus on local programming has sharply deteriorated due to programme syndications. The study also found that the current trend in radio is that many radio companies have adopted a

culture where there is reduced staff, and other duties are then contracted-out or performed by freelance workers paid based on the task rather than by the hour, all in an effort to increase profits.

The conclusion that the study draws is that radio has a bright future if only it could return to its past where programming ideals of being local and relevant to the communities it serves were its topmost duty, and not being money-driven.

Both studies have shown that in recent times, managers of radio stations, particularly private radio, are willing to do whatever it takes to maximise profit. What these two studies refuse to show is the extent to which limits are put on the money-making goals of these radio stations that are operated as businesses. This current study will fill this scholarly gap by showing how profit-oriented goals are sometimes put in check by society.

3.2.2 Human Resource Management

Tetteh's (2018) study is one of the few studies which examined the management of radio personnel. The research was done from a Ghanaian and Finnish perspective. The study sought to investigate what was meant by talent in the radio industry and the impact of talent management on the progress of radio. In-depth interviews with ten professionals with over ten years of experience from diverse fields in the Ghanaian and Finnish radio industry were used for the study.

The study found that 7 out of 10 interviewees saw disc jockeys (DJs) and presenters as the main talents in radio firms, mainly because they interacted directly with audiences. This finding was a confirmation of an earlier research by Vaiman (2010) who considered talents as people, mainly presenters and DJs, that were highly valued because they had exceptional skills. One of the major

findings of the study was that for any organisation to have an advantage over competition, knowledge on how to identify talent, how to engage and retain talent, as well as how to train, develop and improve talent, was crucial. Tetteh's (2018) study also established that talent management practices were valued and undertaken in both Finland and Ghana. These practices typically included recruitment of talent, training and employee engagement. Talent recruitment was necessary for radio stations to remain competitive and relevant to their audiences because through talent recruitment, radio stations hire the most qualified and suitable staff who are capable of delivering content that keeps audiences glued. Likewise, Jacobs (2016) confirms that effective selection of staff makes it possible for firms to acquire employees that are highly skilled, which in turn helps the company to save on additional costs that it would have had to spend on training and developing its workers. According to Arbore, Guenzi and Ordanini (2009), effective recruitment ensures that an organisation hires employees who have the capabilities, skills and passion for the job.

Additionally, talent development practices such as training helped employees to evolve and learn new trends, as well as learn more proactive ways of responding to listeners' needs and applying the latest technologies to their work. Radio industry employment practices have changed drastically over the years. This can widely be attributed to the introduction of new technologies for production and distribution. For this reason, managers of radio stations now expect their employees to be multi-skilled and flexible (Marjoribanks 2003, p. 69). Multi-tasking has been identified as a core skill by the industry training body and in practice, many people are training to be involved across a wider front, and not just one specialist role. Akrofi-Quarcoo (2013, p. 47) corroborates this trend by stating that in many stations today, the reporters edit their own sound

bites and handle studio equipment such as the console and sound editing facilities. Meanwhile, in times past, these tasks were left exclusively for technicians. Reporters also perform additional tasks such as anchoring and news presentation while newsreaders are doing more than reading, but also work as reporters and editors.

A study by Inside Radio (2018) corroborated Tetteh's (2018) finding that an organisation that made it a point to train its employees saw better financial performance than those that did not offer any training or development programmes. Inside Radio (2018) also found that the personnel who had been trained by their organisations were much more efficient and effective by ultimately helping their company to cut down on waste and other costs that came as a result of employees being ineffective. In a contrasting view, Schragar (2014) argued that employee training did not help talents since talent in radio was more about creativity rather than training.

While Schragar (2014) and Tetteh (2018) did their research on managing employees specifically in the radio industry, Olasoji (2019) conducted research on the challenges of managing human resources in general, with regard to organisational effectiveness. The researcher suggested that issues of human resource management were not industry specific and were likely to be replicated in different sectors and industries. Underpinned by the Traditional Human Resource Management model and the soft and hard models of human resource management, and using a qualitative research approach, the study involved interviewing the managing director and two other employees of Famkro's Industrial Companies, which is a renovation company in Finland. The study found that achieving organisational efficiency and effectiveness is possible when the management acknowledges that the workforce represents the organisation in front of the customers and so there

was a need to satisfy the workforce. When employees are satisfied, the company will reach its maximum productivity level. Some of the ways of ensuring employee satisfaction, as per the study, were training, motivation and effective communication. It was also found that good relationships among employees and managers assured employees that there was a future for them in the company.

In another radio-specific study on human resource management, Ampong (2012) investigated the reasons and effects of radio presenters' turnovers on the performance of private radio stations. The researcher randomly sampled 100 radio employees from across the 28 private radio stations that were operational in the Ashanti Region at the time of the study. With the help of self-administered questionnaires, the researcher found that 81% of employees had some personal expectations when joining the radio stations but claimed that their expectations were not met. About 90% of the respondents complained of little room for employee development in their respective radio stations. 84% were disappointed and dissatisfied with how promotions were done, and 85% were disappointed with the conditions of service that their jobs at the private commercial radio stations offered. Most importantly, a whopping 80% expressed their discontentment with their current jobs. This revelation highlights the imminence of some more employees quitting their jobs at their private commercial radio stations.

The study also showed that the effects of employee turnover on radio stations were immense. For instance, each time an employee leaves a firm, research suggests that productivity drops due to the learning period involved for a new employee to understand the job and the organisation. Research further indicates that hiring and training a new person to replace a former employee costs about 50

per cent of the employee's annual salary (Ongori, 2007). Also, when an employee departs, it could mean that competitors are potentially gaining intellectual assets (Feeley et al, 2008).

Ampong (2012) concludes that most of the issues raised by the presenters as their reasons for considering quitting were primarily management issues and that if management paid attention to the needs of employees, the rate of employee turnover within private radio stations would drop drastically, and employees will stay with their radio organisations for long periods of time. The first step for managers to curb employee turnover is to maintain the motivation of the workforce, which can be achieved through effective communication (Asaari et al 2019, p. 49).

All the studies agree that employee development is very important to the overall development of every organisation, and sought to offer solutions on how to make employees feel appreciated enough to do their duties efficiently. These studies are relevant to the current study as the findings endeavour to answer the management practices as it pertains to human resources of private radio stations, and tries to understand what the stations do to ensure employee satisfaction and the challenges that come with managing human resources.

3.2.3 Programme Management in the Media

Thompson (2015) looked at the diversity of programming of a media conglomerate in Ghana. The study was carried out to disprove the assumption that ownership concentration led to homogenised programming in the media due to the fact that owners of media firms who had a number of media outlets were likely to duplicate their programmes across all of their firms. Underpinned by the media pluralism theory, the study mainly sought to establish if there was indeed diversity in the programming of three radio stations (Joy FM, Hitz FM and Luv FM) owned by a mother network

called Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation. Using quantitative content analysis of recorded programmes and in-depth interviews, the researcher found that concentration of ownership did not birth homogeneity. This finding was consistent with earlier findings of Williams et al (2002) and Chipty (2007). In fact, Williams et al (2002) further asserted that multiplicity in the media rather promotes diversity. However, unlike Williams et al (2002), Montgomery (2007) estimated that it was only a matter of time till radio contents become monolithic. Thompson's (2015) study concluded that even though a few programmes were repeated across the radio stations, it was safe to say that the stations had diverse programming in general.

Another significant study on programming was that of Brennan (1996) which sought to investigate how radio stations, attract audiences aged between 18 and 25 years old with their programmes. The study examined the factors that influenced the programming decisions of radio stations whose primary target audiences were young adults. Using critical political economy as its underpinning theory, the study assumed that issues of ownership could effect what a radio station would broadcast. For that matter, the case studies for the research included three stations which operated under differing ownership types and levels of government regulation.

The study found that the primary purpose of the privately owned commercial station was to sell audiences to advertisers in order to make profits to sustain itself and ensure its continued existence. Because of that, the private radio station was found to operate within a tight programming format. At the campus radio station, programming was done a bit more loosely than in the commercial station. This was largely because campus radio stations made use of student volunteers and so formatting requirements were applied less rigidly than commercial stations to make room for

volunteers to develop themselves and learn on the job. On the other hand, the management of the public radio station sought to, above all things, promote culturally inclined objectives such as making the use of their vernacular (Maori language) attractive and acceptable to the youth of New Zealand.

In a nutshell, the study found that according to the mission and visions of the stations, programmes were couched to propagate them. This is corroborated by Esiri and Onwubere (2015), who established that apart from attracting audiences, a station's programmes are meant to reflect the philosophy of the station. This position is also held by Ngugi and Kinyua (2014), who note that a station's programmes and format should mirror its principles and philosophies. In so doing, radio stations are able to build their brand and sell airtime slots to advertisers whose ideal targets are found in the demographics of the listeners. Hasling (2000, p. 85) explains that programming is the most important aspect of a radio station's operations because the message that is communicated through a station's programmes is the principal reason for all the technological talents and energies that go into sound transmission.

Interestingly, the study found that in all three types of radio stations, popular recorded music was the staple programme in attracting young adult listeners, be it commercial radio, community radio or campus radio. A study on radio station programming by Ansu-Kyeremeh, Gadzekpo, and Amoakohene (2015) done in the Ghanaian context found that no matter the ownership type or its target audiences, news and current affairs programmes are the staple of all radio stations programming. The study additionally noted that all licensed radio stations were encouraged by the National Media Commission (NMC) to air news and current affairs programmes. The NMC

Broadcasting Standards state, “In order to promote diversity, broadcasters should endeavour to have regular news programmes in their broadcast schedules” (NMC Broadcasting Guidelines 1999, p. 12).

A comparative study by Obono and Madu (2010) sought to explore the programming content of three television stations in Nigeria namely; Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) which is owned by the state; Silverbird Television (STV) which is privately owned, and African Independent Television (AIT) which one of the first private television stations in Nigeria. Content analysis and observation were used to collect data on the programming contents of public and private stations. A mixed method approach was used, and the objectives of the study were to examine media contents, programming patterns and observe the disparities amongst stations. The overarching finding of the study was that the programme contents of the stations were very much influenced by the audience, by ownership type, and by the government.

It was also found that there were differences in the programming of the television stations based on the ownership type. For instance, STV was more foreign-orientated, NTA which is state-owned, had more informative and educational programmes. Obono and Madu (2010) conclude with a suggestion that more indigenous, local programmes should be created and integrated into the programming of Nigerian television stations, and that the media should make it a point to be enhancers of traditional values.

Another study that focused on media content is a study by the Ghana Media Standards Improvement Project (GMSIP, 2011) which employed qualitative content analysis to investigate

the nature of stories that were aired on radio and published in newspapers. The sample size of the study was 4 radio stations (Peace FM, Joy FM, Uniiq FM and Nhyira FM) and 4 newspapers (Daily Graphic, Business and Financial Times, Daily Guide, and The Ghana Palaver) which have different orientations.

Among other things, the study found that on private radio stations and in newspapers, political content was the most popular. In contrast, the state-owned radio station was found to devote more time to issues of national development. The study found that for most radio stations to provide information to the Ghanaian populace as part of serving the public sphere, the stations had resorted to tapping programmes from Accra-based stations instead of producing their own local content.

Another revelation by the study was that even though phone-in programmes had become extremely popular that almost every talk show had a phone-in segment, there had been requests for its ban especially during elections on the grounds that callers are able to call and make obnoxious, divisive utterances because they were confident they could not be tracked down and disciplined for their actions. In addition to the opportunity to make obnoxious comments, the study found that phone-ins on political talk shows especially, were full of serial callers, who called only to perpetuate their parties' propaganda and distort the truth to discredit other political parties. That aside, phone-in programme hosts were put in uncomfortable situations when callers used abusive language or slandered people on air. A situation such as that could have serious consequences for both the host and the radio station.

The study concludes by noting that the factors that hinder the Ghanaian media from creating and providing great content can be addressed through skills and capacity building, as well as training journalists and media workers.

While the focus of Tetteh's (2018) study was on diversity of radio programmes of radio stations owned by one network, Brennan's (1996) research was on what type of radio programming could attract the young adults, Ansu-Kyeremeh et (2015) spelt out what to expect in the programming of radio stations in Ghana, Obono and Madu (2010) offered a comparative analysis of the programming of three television types, and GMSIP (2011) explored the nature of stories and programming on Ghanaian newspapers and radio stations respectively. These studies are relevant to this current study because programmes management has many different facets, with issues of diversity, programming policies, programming content, and maintaining high listenership being the most concerning.

3.2.4 Audience Management and Engagement

Research by Mayer (2011) examined the concept of audience engagement in journalism. The study was grounded in the newsroom sociology theory and organisational culture theory to explore how journalists are incorporating audience-focused values into their work. The researcher employed in-depth interviews with 29 journalists, a case study of one newsroom, and a national survey of daily newspaper editors to attain a broad look at how journalists in different situations are finding ways to get audiences involved in their journalism.

Mayer (2011) found that increasingly, newsrooms were redefining their relationship with their audiences by inviting the audience to participate in shaping news coverage, suggesting ideas, helping gather the news and being in communication with journalists. This finding confirms what Tietz (2000) meant when he said that in a highly competitive media market, audiences are very influential in the determination of content.

The results from the 29 interviews with journalists showed that the concept of audience engagement was very important and for that matter, strategies were constantly in place in newsrooms to enhance relationships with audiences. The journalists explained that the newsroom strategies fell into three categories: reaching out to the community rather than expecting the community to come to them, finding ways to talk and listen to the community and working together to improve coverage.

Results from the case study of Register Citizen (a newsroom in Connecticut) showed that it was employing audience enhancement strategies that were in line with the three categories described by the 29 journalists. In fact, Register Citizen's management had decided to go a step further to improve its relationship with its audience by inviting the audience into its physical space to have face-to-face interactions.

The results obtained from the national survey of daily newspaper editors showed that unlike the journalists and the newsroom, a large gap exists between editors' knowledge of a need for audience engagement and their understanding of how to go about enhancing their engagement with audiences. This was largely blamed on their limited financial resources which prevented them from making huge efforts to interact much with their audiences. The study concluded that media organisations must study their audiences to understand how interactions with them could affect programme content and programme schedule.

A study by Solo-Anaeto (2015) set out to evaluate radio audience satisfaction with programming, using Lagos-based Inspiration 92.3 FM as a case study. The study was grounded in the uses and gratification theory, and questionnaires were purposively distributed to 250 listeners of *Inspiration 92.3 FM* within Lagos and found that audiences were the lifeblood of commercial radio stations. The study also found that audience feedback had become a yardstick by which a lot of radio stations measured the success of their programming, and popularity among their audience. However, the study contends that audience feedback is by no means sufficient in determining audience satisfaction. Rather, audience research provides a more reliable picture of who a station's loyal listeners are. This finding supports Amoakohene's (2004) submission that it is the radio station's task to explore and investigate who their audiences and their needs are, their likes and dislikes, as well as their expectations so as to tailor programmes that they can engage with and appreciate. Also, Napoli (2012, p. 79) notes that audience measurement provides all the necessary data for all the players in the industry. For instance, a media owner could use it for programming and content scheduling while the advertiser could use it to assess how efficient and cost-effective the media expenditure would be.

Ritcher (2016) corroborated what Solo-Anaeto (2015) and Napoli (2013) have said about the importance of audience measurement, but was concerned that the accuracy of the measurement could be undermined. The reason he gave for this concern was that audiences who did not participate in phone-ins may not be counted since there is no real way of knowing who they are and identifying them. Solo-Anaeto's (2015) study also revealed that the factors that largely influenced the listenership of Inspiration 92.3 FM were the unique delivery of the on-air personalities, the house style of the station as well as their choice of words and language. This

finding seems to confirm an observation that has emerged in the study of radio audiences that radio personalities have become important factors that can be used to make audiences tune into the radio. In fact, Cordeiro (2012, p. 495) has asserted that listeners who show loyalty to a radio station by habitually tuning in do so primarily because of a host, or entertainer who comes on the air at a particular time. Also, 96% of the respondents assessed Inspiration 92.3 *FM*'s programming as satisfactory and excellent. The figures showed that programming is a crucial element to attract audiences and ensuring the viability of a station.

The above studies have shown in one way or the other that programming was a very crucial vehicle through which audiences are reached; be it through solicitation of programming ideas or simply just by being an audience to what is being aired. Even though Solo-Anaeto's (2015) finding suggests that the appreciation of on-air personalities also fueled listenership and engagement, these studies did not explore other ways by which audiences are engaged and managed. This current study will fill that gap in scholarship by showing what other audience management practices there are and what these practices entail in private radio stations.

3.2.5 Financial Management Practices

There have been a few studies which have examined the financial management practices of the media. These studies mainly sought to determine the sources of income for radio stations. Notable among them is a study by Murschtez (2006) on the financial management of media firms. The study attempted to discover the sources of income of both offline and online media firms, the impact of competition on media firm performance, as well as the indicators and measures of firm performance. Murschtez (2006) used the TV station *ORF*, which belongs to the Austrian

Broadcasting Corporation and *DerStandard.at*, which is an online print media firm as case studies to explore the financial management of the media industry.

Findings indicated that the online publisher ‘DerStandard.at’, had proven that print media could offer online news and be successful financially. Its success stemmed from the fact that it set standards in Austria as the first German-speaking newspaper to make use of the internet by creating a website. It became highly profitable in 2004, making revenues of about 4.1 million annually. Online advertising was the main source of revenue for the online newspaper, raking in almost 90% of the total turnover. Given the increasing market shares of online advertising, DerStandard.at is expected to grow even further. Similarly, advertising was found to be the main source of revenue for ORF, even though advertising revenue for traditional media was losing its steadiness to online advertising.

A study by Abdul-Basit (2017) on the economic activities of radio stations in Wa, the capital town of the Upper West Region of Ghana, endeavoured to paint a picture of how radio stations generate revenue to sustain their operations, and the challenges they faced in attaining financial sustainability. Underpinned by the economic theory of the media, the data for the study was gathered through in-depth interviews with the managers and/or the programme managers of seven radio stations. Like Tietaah (2000), Picard (2002) and McQuail (2010), the findings of Abdul-Basit’s (2017) study indicated that advertising was the main source of revenue for radio stations and that the sustainability of media as a whole rested heavily on the income garnered from advertising.

The study also found that apart from advertising, subventions from stakeholders as well as renting of masts were also ways through which radio stations generated income. The study further showed that several factors hindered radio stations from attaining ultimate financial stability. Some of the factors that the study identified were the high utility bills the stations had to pay monthly and the little interest of many businesses in advertising. The study concluded with a recommendation for radio managers to be more innovative in their marketing strategies in order to raise their chances of attaining financial stability.

The above studies mainly dealt with how radio stations generate funds. Yet, financial management goes beyond revenue generation. The import of financial management of radio is captured by Zimmerer et al (2008) when they explain financial management practices to include maintaining a steady supply of funds, ensuring profitability, ensuring owners/shareholders get good returns on their investment, and ensuring efficient disbursement and utilisation of funds. Accordingly, this study will explore other ways by which income is generated by private radio stations, how revenue is allocated and what affects the steady flow of private radio stations' income.

3.3 Summary

In this chapter, the review of related literature gives insight into some of the management practices of radio stations. The studies highlighted both conflicting and similar findings of what the practices involved in radio management entail. The literature review showed that most studies had a limited scope, and only slightly concentrated on how the practices that were employed have helped private radio stations to be sustainable. This study will, as much as possible, help fill this gap by examining radio management practices in a much broader and more expansive way.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach used in this study. It explains the processes and procedures for data collection, as well as the reasons for their use. The chapter also provides details on the research design, method of data collection, data collection instrument and method of data analyses. It also gives a description of the media landscape in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis, as well as the sample size of the study.

4.2 Media Landscape of Sekondi-Takoradi

Sekondi-Takoradi is a city in Ghana comprising the twin cities of Sekondi and Takoradi. It is the capital of the Western Region of Ghana. Sekondi-Takoradi is the region's largest city and an industrial and commercial centre, with a population of about 991,000 according to the UN World Population Prospects (2021).

Sekondi-Takoradi has 27 (twenty-seven) operational radio stations. These 27 stations are made up of one public radio station, one foreign public radio station, one campus radio and 24 (twenty-four) commercial radio stations classified by the NCA as Urban Type 1. Urban Type 1 radio stations refer to radio stations located in metropolitan cities and regional capitals like Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi.

Sekondi-Takoradi was ideal for this study because the media sector in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis keeps increasing as the years go by. Figures from the National Communications

Authority over the years have shown that within the last decade, at least one new private radio station has been licensed each year, with some years recording as many as seven new private radio stations. This makes Sekondi-Takoradi ripe for a study that is concerned with the management practices of private radio stations.

The first private radio station to be established in the Metropolis was Skyy Power FM in the year 1995, followed by Good News FM in 1997. After that came the likes of Radio Maxx, Rok FM, Spice FM, Beach FM, Empire FM, Aseda FM, Kyzz FM and a host of many others.

4.3 Profiles

The profiles of the selected radio stations are brief backgrounds of the stations, such as their year of establishment, their mission and vision, the frequency they operate on, as well as who their target audiences are.

4.3.1 Profile of Radio Maxx

Radio Maxx is located in Takoradi, near the Adjumakoman building. Its slogan is “Your magic music station.” And its mission is to provide the people of Sekondi-Takoradi with the best entertainment content. It started its operations in 2002 and operates on the frequency of 105.1 megahertz. Per NCA regulations, Radio Maxx is allowed a 45-kilometre reach. However, the station is occasionally heard in parts of the Central Region and Tarkwa, some 80 kilometres away from where the station is located. Radio Maxx describes itself as a “purely urban” radio station that appeals principally to the elite. For that matter, their primary language of broadcast is English. The Akan language makes up about 10 per cent of their daily broadcasts. The staff of Radio Maxx

are twelve (12) and the interns and part-time staff number up to fourteen (14). Radio Maxx has a social media presence, specifically Facebook and Instagram accounts, with over two thousand (2,000) followers and two hundred and thirty-five (235) followers respectively. The station currently has no website.

4.3.2 Profile of Spice FM

Spice FM is located on the first floor of the Adu-Mante building, a three-storey complex situated in the west of Fijai, a suburb of Takoradi. It operates on the frequency of 91.9 megahertz and broadcasts all its programmes in Akan. The station first went on air in 2016 and labels itself as a news and current affairs-oriented station whose mission is to cater to the everyday people who do not understand the English language but appreciate the value of news. Their primary audiences are described as the masses, while their secondary targets are the corporate people of Sekondi-Takoradi who have an appetite for local news. The station's slogan is "waaye dew" to wit, "it is sweet." Like all private radio stations, Spice FM is allowed a radius of 45 kilometres but can be heard in parts of the Central Region and Half Assini in the southwestern part of the Western Region. As a commercial radio station, Spice FM's main goal is to make profits. Spice FM currently has about thirty (30) permanent staff and seven (7) interns. The station also has a social media presence and is most active on Facebook and Twitter with over three thousand (3,000) and five hundred and seventy-eight (578) followers respectively.

4.3.3 Profile of Empire FM

Empire FM was bought from a private individual in 2014 by the EIB Network which is headquartered in Accra and has nine other media outlets including television stations. Empire FM

currently operates from a suburb of Takoradi called Pipeano, which is a few metres from the Takoradi Mall. It identifies as an urban, lifestyle commercial radio station that caters primarily to the elite between the ages of 20 and 45, and considers people outside of this age bracket as their peripheral audiences. The station goes by the slogan “Feel the difference.” Its mission is to educate, inform and entertain as expected of every good radio station. Because its main target audience is the elite, educated and corporate people of Sekondi-Takoradi, the station broadcasts primarily in English. Empire FM has twenty-two (22) staff members and two (2) volunteers. The station has about 8,146 followers on Facebook, and 834 followers on Instagram.

4.3.4 Profile of Aseda FM

Aseda FM is described as a limited liability commercial radio station, in that, it is owned by a group of private individuals. It first came on the air in September 2009 and operates on the frequency of 105.9 megahertz. Aseda FM reaches a radius of 45 kilometres like all private radio stations, and can sometimes be heard in parts of Elmina in the Central Region of Ghana. Aseda FM is a sports-oriented radio station whose primary audiences are the masses. As such, the Akan language is their main language of broadcast, with English making up about 20% of their broadcasts. The slogan of the station is “Yes, we can!” The station has about twenty (20) staff and no interns.

In 2014, the office of Aseda FM was destroyed by fire which was attributed to a power outage. The fire destroyed their equipment, which forced the station to shut down its operations for a brief while. The office of Aseda FM is currently located at Market Circle, which is arguably the centre

of Takoradi. Although Aseda FM has a Facebook handle, its social media engagement is quite low, with just about 176 followers. It currently has no online portal.

4.3.5 Profile of Kyzz FM

Kyzz FM started its transmissions in 2005 on the frequency of 89.7 megahertz. Its owner/Chief Executive Officer explains that the station has no specific target audiences but rather, the station’s mission is to cater for “anybody who likes to consume wholesome programmes, delivered with facts and figures in a funny way.” Kyzz FM is described as entertainment oriented. The station’s slogan is “agye bebiaa,” which can loosely be translated as “can be felt everywhere.” The station's main language of broadcast is Akan. Its second language of broadcast is English and makes up about 30% of all its broadcasts. It also has a 45-kilometre reach. The staff of Kyzz FM are about twenty (20) in number with no interns or volunteers. The station has thousand four hundred followers on Facebook (1,400), five (5) followers on Instagram, and an online portal for those of their audiences who prefer to consume their content via the internet.

Table 1: Profiles of the stations

Station	Year of establishment	Frequency	Location	Hours of Transmission	Owner
Radio Maxx	2002	105.1 megahertz	Takoradi	24 hours	Businessman
Spice FM	2016	91.9 megahertz	Takoradi	24 hours	Businessman

Empire FM	2014	102.7 megahertz	Takoradi	24 hours	Businessman
Aseda FM	2009	105.9 megahertz	Takoradi	24 hours	Businessmen
Kyzz FM	2005	89.7 megahertz	Takoradi	24 hours	Businessman

4.4 Research Design

According to Punch (2013), two research methods that can be applied in every research investigation. They are the quantitative research method and the qualitative research method. The quantitative research method focuses primarily on the collection of quantifiable, measurable data that can be verified. It has been proven to be most appropriate in scientific investigations that require accuracy and verifiability of the data collected (Crowther and Lancaster, 2012). The qualitative research method, on the other hand, has been explained by Pickard (2007) to be concerned with the collection of non-quantifiable data such as attitudes, perceptions and emotions concerning an investigated phenomenon. The aim of a qualitative research method is to explore and obtain the reason for a behaviour or outcome. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher to explore and obtain explanations about the phenomena by obtaining non-numerical data such as perceptions and attitudes towards a phenomenon that would be difficult to obtain using other research methods.

The aim of this study includes an investigation of radio management practices as well as the implications of these practices on the radio industry. Therefore, in this study, it was crucial that the researcher obtained a well-balanced and comprehensive understanding of the management practices, and their impacts from the professionals. For that reason, the qualitative research approach was more appropriate for this study.

4.5 Population

Saunders et al (2007) define a population as the total number of people or a full set from which a sample can be derived. Establishing the population of research helps to identify all possible subjects of interest and also makes it easy to narrow down to the subject under study. The population of this study was made up of the 24 (twenty-four) private radio stations operating within Sekondi-Takoradi as indicated by the NCA at the time this research was being carried out.

4.6 Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the stations for this study. As noted by Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p. 94) a purposive sample comprises subjects, respondents, or elements selected for the specific qualities they possess. Purposive sampling eliminates subjects who do not meet the required standard. The researcher chose to purposively sample the general manager and two other staff members who had worked at their respective radio stations for at least 5 years. General managers were crucial to this study because they are at the helm of affairs, and oversaw the running of the stations daily. The choice of purposively sampling participants with not less than 5 years of experience was rooted in the understanding that such employees were likely to possess knowledge of the stations' practices and activities, as a result of their many years of membership, and are likely to be efficient as complementary sources of information. The

researcher purposively sampled participants who were deemed to have extensive knowledge about the management practices of their respective private radio stations.

4.7 Sample Size

The sample size for this study was 5 private radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi that consented to be part of the study. For each of the five radio stations, three individuals were interviewed. The researcher sought to involve individuals who had a hand in the management decisions of the stations, as well as employees who had worked at the stations long enough to understand the management practices that were adopted. With the exception of Kyzz FM which had no general manager, the general managers of the other four FM stations (Radio Maxx, Spice FM, Aseda FM and Empire FM) were interviewed because scholars such as Redmond (2006) have observed that the responsibility of overseeing the activities of a station is in the hands of a general manager. For Kyzz FM, the C.E.O was interviewed because he oversaw the running of the station since the station had no general manager. Two other media employees who had at least five years of experience working for the respective radio stations were also interviewed. This was because the researcher believed that employees who had worked in a particular station for at least five years would be privy to the management practices that existed in the station.

At Radio Maxx, the editor, the C.E.O and the general manager were interviewed. At Spice FM, the general manager, the programmes manager and a morning show host were interviewed. At Empire FM, the business manager (which is the station's equivalent of a general manager), a presenter and a member of the finance department were interviewed. At Aseda FM, the general

manager and two journalists were interviewed. Lastly, the C.E.O, the programmes manager and a presenter were interviewed at Kyzz FM.

4.8 Unit of Analysis

Unit of Analysis has been described by Babbie (2014, p. 163) as the major entities examined. The unit of analysis of this study was each of the five selected private radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi.

4.9 Data Collection Methods

The researcher combined in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis as well as airwaves monitoring to gather adequate information in order to draw inferences and make informed decisions on what could be considered factual. The data collection methods are explained below:

4.9.1 In-depth Interviews

According to Newing (2010, p. 98), in-depth interviews are “two-way conversations, with discussions and follow-up questions on each point.” Similarly, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) define an in-depth interview as an extensive one-on-one personal interaction which produces large amounts of information. In-depth interviews were used to gather first-hand information on management practices as carried out by those directly involved in the affairs of the radio stations, in this case, managers and two experienced staff members of each private radio station. Managers of the stations were selected to be interviewees because the researcher believed that because they run the affairs of their respective stations, they would be the most knowledgeable people to discuss

and shed light on the management practices of their stations. Two other media employees who were interviewed were those who had at least five years of experience working for the respective radio stations. This was because the researcher believed that employees who had worked in a particular station for at least five years would be privy to the management practices that existed in the station.

The use of in-depth interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to probe for more detailed responses. In-depth interviews also permitted the interviewer to ask follow-up questions in order to appreciate the complexities of the topic of interest.

The interviews were conducted in English at the request of the interviewees. Each interview lasted between thirty-five minutes to an hour, and notes were taken to enable the researcher to refer as many times as was necessary, for analysis. A voice recorder was important for the data collection process because it helped to make an audio recording of all the responses that the researcher could not capture on a notepad, partly due to the pace of the participant's speech.

4.9.2 Observation

The researcher was permitted to make visits to the radio stations to observe and take notes of some of the perceptible practices that took place. For instance, for the stations that required their staff to record their reporting times, the researcher witnessed members of staff filling the logbook when they reported to work. The researcher also witnessed how show hosts and presenters took over from previous hosts by making use of commercial breaks or musical interludes when it was time for their shows to air. The researcher was also able to observe how the stations would switch from their affiliated stations in order to play local adverts whenever their affiliates were on commercial

breaks. Phone calls and text messages that were received from audiences were also seen and heard by the researcher in the studios.

Radio Maxx, Empire FM and Aseda FM permitted the researcher to observe their radio stations for three days each. Kyzz FM and Spice FM, on the other hand, allowed the researcher access to their premises for observation for a period of five days. All the stations cited precautions against the spread of the coronavirus as the reason why the researcher was permitted in their stations for a short period of time. Even after the authorised number of days for participant observation had elapsed, the researcher was granted liberty to visit the radio stations at any time, whenever additional information was needed.

4.9.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for evaluating both electronic and printed documents or materials (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). While the radio stations were unwilling to share written documents of their policies mostly due to the fear of other stations getting access to them and discovering their trade secrets, the researcher was able to put together and document the programme schedules of all five radio stations based on the managers' and staff members' accounts, as well as the constant monitoring of their airwaves. When reviewed, the programme schedules compiled by the researcher significantly aided in the research by making it possible to compare the broadcasts of the radio stations in order to find the differences and the similarities of the programmes, which is significant to this study.

4.9.4 Monitoring

After the programming schedules of the stations were put together, it was necessary for the researcher to monitor the airwaves in order to test the accuracy of the programming schedules that

were compiled. For this reason, the researcher listened to each station for two consecutive weeks. The entire monitoring exercise spanned for a period of ten (10 weeks), between the 14th of June and the 30th of August, 2021. In the instance where the researcher could not be physically present to monitor the airwaves, a recorder was set up to record the programmes, which the researcher later on retrieved and analysed. Apart from ensuring the accuracy of the programme schedules, the researcher had to monitor the airwaves in order to substantiate the radio stations' claims that their audiences were invited to call and give feedback, pitch content ideas and participate in contests and giveaways. Monitoring the airwaves was also helpful in affirming who the stations' sponsors and advertisers are.

4.10 Data Collection Instrument

An interview guide was constructed to guide the interviews (See appendix B). It was arranged into 5 broad categories namely: introduction, programme management, human resource management, audience management, and financial management. The introduction covered general questions such as establishment dates, management structure, hours of operation and station goals. The programming part centred on what the station's overall format was, the reasons for the station's decision on their choice of programming and their challenges with programming. The second part tackled human resource management, how staff are recruited, how often they are trained and how they are motivated. The third part focused on audience engagement, specifically on the station's definition of their target audience, how they attract and maintain their audiences, as well as how they receive feedback and complaints from their audiences. Lastly, the financial management part sought to question how the stations funded their activities, who their sponsors were and how they are able to attract advertisers.

The choice of a semi-structured interview guide was because semi-structured interview guides help to keep the interview focused on the desired line of questioning, while still allowing the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and probe deeper even after responses had been given.

4.11 Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 9) explain that thematic analysis is a method used for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within the data. In line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) definition, the audio recordings acquired from all fifteen (15) interviews were transcribed and reviewed not less than three times to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. All the transcribed responses were then thematically analysed. The thematic analyses were done in stages. First, the responses to each question were jotted down, after which a list of recurring patterns was made. The data was further categorised into broader thematic areas, based on the objectives of the study which were already concerned with specific areas of practice.

Patterns and relationships between the themes were identified and were made into a report. The researcher's findings after the data were analysed and compared with literature to identify which areas were consistent or inconsistent with what other researchers had found concerning radio and its management.

In analysing data that was gathered via document analyses, the researcher studied the programme schedules that were compiled for all five stations and identified the patterns in the data, based on the research questions of the study. Comparisons were made with the patterns that appeared in the documents of all the stations to identify the differences and similarities with the programming of

all five stations. By the end of this activity, it was clear how comparable the programme schedules were.

Analyses of the data gathered via participant observation were done such that a list was made of the patterns that were repetitive in the data that was collected through recordings and note-taking during the observation period at the various stations. The data were further categorised into broader thematic areas, which centred on the objectives of the study that were based on specific management practice areas. A report on the patterns within the themes was made and compared with the literature.

4.12 Ethical Considerations

Rich (2013, p. 4) defines ethics as “a systematic approach to understanding, analysing and distinguishing matters of right and wrong, good and bad, and admirable and deplorable in relation to the well-being of and the relationships among individuals.” For this reason and at the request of the interviewees, it was necessary for the researcher to assure them that every piece of information they provided was purely for academic purposes and would not be shared or discussed with the other radio stations involved in this research. Also, the researcher duly acknowledged all scholarly work, such as articles, books, journals and theses, during the course of this research.

4.13 Summary

This chapter presented the research design and the methods employed in carrying out the study, as well as the justifications for the methodology employed. In addressing the research problem, the study was conducted using the qualitative research approach, primarily employing the method of

in-depth interviews for data collection. The population, sample and data analysis were also discussed.



CHAPTER FIVE

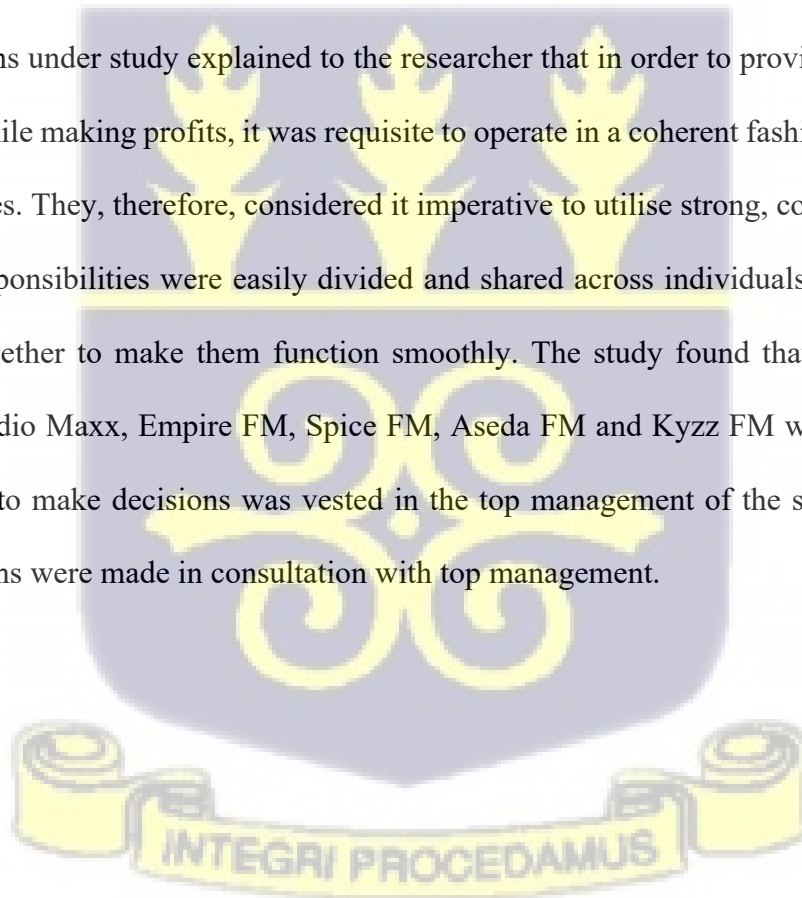
FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the management structures of the stations that are being understudied. Details on practices pertaining to programmes management, audience management, human resource management and financial management of Radio Maxx, Spice FM, Empire FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM are also presented in this chapter.

5.2 Management Structure

The radio stations under study explained to the researcher that in order to provide audiences with good content while making profits, it was requisite to operate in a coherent fashion both on air and behind the scenes. They, therefore, considered it imperative to utilise strong, corporate structures. In so doing, responsibilities were easily divided and shared across individuals and departments, which came together to make them function smoothly. The study found that the management structures of Radio Maxx, Empire FM, Spice FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM were centralised, in that, the power to make decisions was vested in the top management of the stations. In all five stations, decisions were made in consultation with top management.



5.2.1 Management Structure of Radio Maxx



Figure 1: Management structure of Radio Maxx

The management structure of Radio Maxx starts with the Chief Executive Officer, who happens to be the owner of the station, as well as the chairperson of the Board of Directors. Directly answerable to the C.E.O is the general manager. The general manager is said to be the chief of operations, tasked with overseeing the overall operations of the station. Below the general manager are the programmes manager, the marketing manager, the events and promotions manager, the productions manager and the editor, who are referred to as “functional managers.” These mid-level managers report to the general manager and seek his directions and approval on how their respective departments should run. The general manager of Radio Maxx doubles as the programmes manager, and so he is equally responsible for drawing up programmes as well as the budget needed to execute programmes. He also monitors the overall progress of the programmes and rectifies issues that may arise. The marketing manager typically works with sales personnel to promote the image of Radio Maxx to potential advertisers. The role of the productions manager is to ensure that everything production-related is well executed, for instance, producing jingles for

the station to air. The editor runs the News Department and is responsible for news content. He, together with the assistant editors decides what is newsworthy and what is not.

Unless some urgent matters arise, management meetings at Radio Maxx are held fortnightly on Monday mornings to take decisions on what needs to be done to achieve the goals that the station sets.

5.2.2 Management Structure of Spice FM

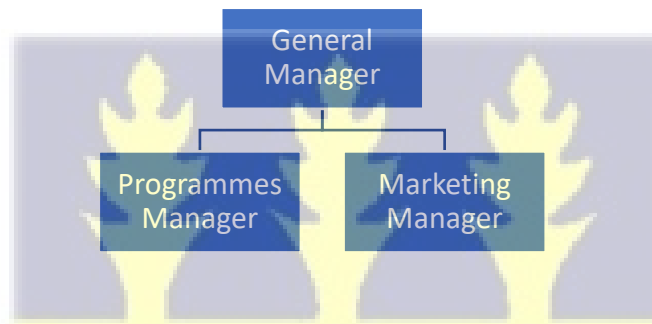


Figure 2: Management structure of Spice FM

The management of Spice FM meet at least once every week to make decisions concerning the station and to address concerns that may have arisen within the course of the week. At the top of the management structure of Spice FM is the Chief Executive Officer, who has no direct involvement with the operations of the station unless it was found to be absolutely necessary to confer with him. Directly after the Chief Executive Officer is the general manager, who coordinates all the departments within the station and oversees the day-to-day activities. After the general manager is the programmes manager who oversees all the content that the station

broadcasts, and the marketing manager who works hand in hand with the general manager and the programmes manager to win over potential clients.

5.2.3 Management Structure of Empire FM

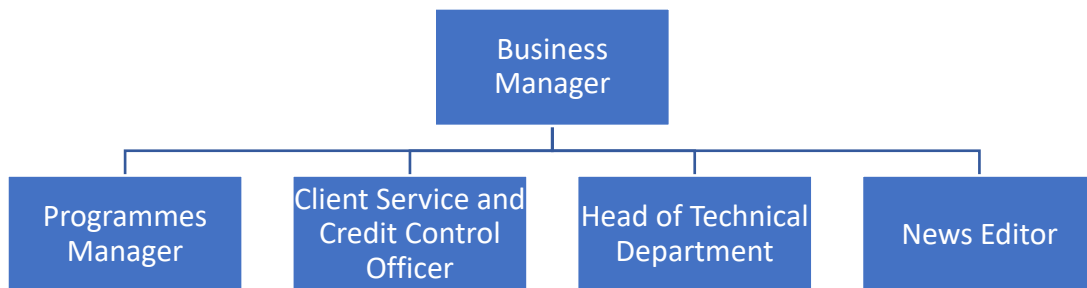


Figure 3: Management structure of Empire FM

The highest rank within the management structure of Empire FM is the business manager, who, in addition to running the station, gives the go-ahead before anything is aired and ensures that the radio station acts in compliance with requirements set by the NCA. Then comes the programmes manager, who is in charge of drawing up programmes, finding new ways of revamping programmes to keep them appealing, and deciding which guest speaker appears on what shows. There is also the client service and credit control officer, who doubles as the head of finance. He is tasked with ensuring that utility bills and salaries are paid on time. He also oversees a team that brings in clients and ensures that clients' requests in terms of advertisements are successfully done. Then there is the head of the technical team who makes sure that the equipments needed for broadcasting are in good shape and are functioning properly. He also supervises the technicians while live broadcasts are in progress and schedules maintenance for all the studio equipment.

5.2.4 Management Structure of Aseda FM

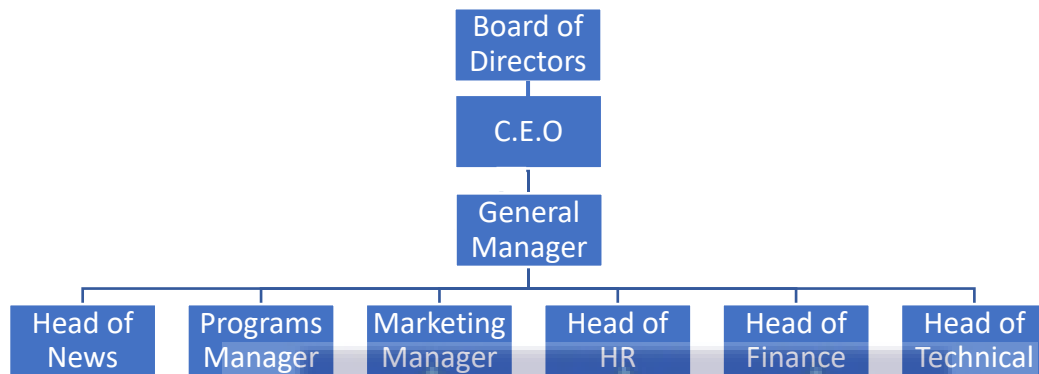


Figure 4: Management structure of Aseda FM

At the top of the decision-making body of Aseda FM is the Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for protecting the interests of shareholders and the owners by ensuring that management acts on their behalf and that they get good returns on their investments. This is done by creating policies for the overall oversight of Aseda FM. Directly beneath the Board is the Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.), who is the administrative head, while his immediate subordinate, the general manager, is the operational head who oversees the day-to-day running of the station and reports to the CEO. Below the general manager are the Head of News and current affairs, the programmes manager, the marketing manager, the Head of Human Resource and the head of the finance department. The head of news and current affairs is the chief editor. He assigns beats to reporters and decides what needs coverage. The programmes manager ensures that the resources needed to make programmes air successfully are available. The human resource manager administers leave and benefits, as well as looks out for the general welfare of the staff members of

Aseda FM. The head of finance conducts profit and cost analyses, approves or rejects budgets, reconciles accounts and ensures that utility bills are paid on time. Finally, there is the head of the technical department who inspects and ensures the maintenance of all of Aseda FM's equipment. He also ensures the editing of sound effects and sound bites needed for news and other programmes.

The management of Aseda FM meets once every month to take decisions on how to move the station forward. If urgent matters arise, they meet as and when necessary.

5.2.5 Management Structure of Kyzz FM

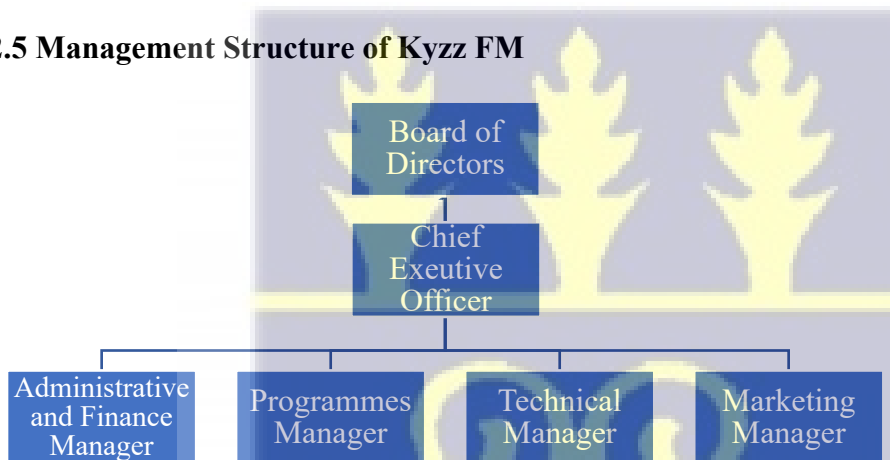


Figure 5: Management structure of Kyzz FM

Within Kyzz FM, the Board of Directors, which is made up of stakeholders, sits at the top of the management hierarchy. The Board sets the objectives needed to direct all the activities that must be performed to ensure that the station fulfils its mission. The next in line to the Board is the Chief Executive (C.E.O). He scans the media environment for opportunities and threats and redirects company efforts accordingly. In addition, he represents the company in important dealings with other businesses and agencies. Right beneath the C.E.O. are the programmes manager, the finance

and administrative manager, the technical manager and the marketing manager. The programmes manager oversees the production and scheduling of the programmes that air on Kyzz FM. The finance and administrative manager, on the other hand, oversees the preparation of financial records related to general expenses, budget and payroll. The finance and administrative manager also handles all client accounts for payment settlements. Next is the technical manager who is tasked with ensuring that Kyzz FM's mast, studio microphones, mixers, consoles, and all other equipment are well maintained and in good shape. Lastly, the marketing manager oversees the sales and marketing team who are tasked with selling Kyzz FM's image to potential clients, in many cases, advertisers and sponsors. The C.E.O. explained that since no one currently occupied the position of general manager, he had assumed that role as well. He told the researcher that it was his intention to groom one of the managers under him to take up the role of the station's general manager to coordinate all the departments and be hands-on with the operations of Kyzz FM.

The management of Kyzz FM meets once a week to review what went wrong in the past week and resolve any other issue that may have come up. Management also monitors if the station is functioning according to plan.

5.3 Similarities and Differences in the Management Structures

It was discovered that the composition and size of the management structures differed from station to station. For instance, the management structure of Spice FM comprised just three members; the general manager, the programmes manager and the marketing manager, whereas a station like Aseda FM had nine members within its management structure. It was also found that each station

had its head of marketing department as part of its management structure. At Empire FM, the Client Service and Credit Control department was found to be the equivalent of a marketing department. This finding proved that revenue generation, especially from advertising, was a main objective of all five stations so much so that those who headed that particular department were on the management board and took part in decision-making.

Another similarity between the radio stations was that, with the exception of Kyzz FM which did not have a general manager by the time this study was being conducted, all the four other radio stations had general managers who were responsible for the running of the stations. Even though the general manager position was referred to as “Business Manager” at Empire FM, the holder of that position executed the same functions as the general managers of the other stations.

5.4 Programme Management Practices

Programme management practices ensure that the best possible content is broadcast with the goal of meeting the needs of the audiences, which will in turn lead to competitive advantages for the radio stations.

5.4.1 Compliance with Programming Policies

All five radio stations confirmed they had programming policies that ensured their adherence to ethical practices. Programming policies typically address the standards and values by which the radio stations were expected to operate in providing programmes to their audiences. For all five private stations, upholding principles such as truth, fairness, accuracy, credibility and impartiality,

as well as cross-checking facts and avoiding political biases formed part of the guiding principles that were explicitly expressed in their programming policies.

The general manager of Spice FM stated that their programming policies were very detailed even to the point where their music selection was guided by the policies.

For us at Spice FM, we don't play songs that contain the "f" word. The songs should be clean. The fact that we target the masses doesn't mean they don't know what they are listening to. They are smart people and these things throw them off. Also, we don't want to hear any liner of a site like 'WWW.' We don't want to hear that on our station (Interview with Spice FM general manager).

Likewise, the business manager of Empire FM said:

All our programmes have a clear and targeted audience and so our programming policy is that every programme we air must be tailored to reach and appeal to its intended audience. In doing so, our programme contents must be devoid of offensive, negative and divisive materials or language (Interview with the business manager of Empire FM).

The programming policy of Kyzz FM considered compliance with the laid down requirements of regulatory bodies. The C.E.O of Kyzz FM indicated to the researcher that:

Our programmes are developed in accordance and in compliance with all regulatory requirements, as well as the constitutional provisions of the nation. Also, our mode of delivery is always in line with the commercial and economic policies of companies in order to ensure maximum revenue generation (Interview with Kyzz FM C.E.O.).

While the managers were quick to talk about their programming policies, none of them was willing to give out a copy of their policies when the researcher requested them for analysis. The business manager of Empire FM stated that because his station is headquartered in Accra, he would have to go through a series of bureaucratic procedures to request a copy of their policy for the researcher. He added that there was still no guarantee that the request would be granted. The general manager of Aseda FM indicated that copies of their editorial policies burnt down in the fire that ravaged their office in 2014. The general manager of Spice FM told the researcher that their written policies

were highly confidential and so he could not give a copy to the researcher for analysis. Both the C.E.O. and general manager of Radio Maxx scanned their computers for a little while and told the researcher they could not find the document. The numerous excuses led the researcher to believe that none of the stations had documented policies that guided their programmes.

5.4.2 Radio Programming Research

Aseda FM's general manager indicated that even before his radio station was set up, a team was sent to survey the media space in Sekondi-Takoradi to find a niche, which he described as something that was not being done already by any other station within the metropolis so that his station would bring it to the table. He further explained that their findings from the market research led the station to decide not only on the programmes they aired but also on the time they are aired:

Our survey revealed that in the morning, every radio station in Sekondi-Takoradi does a talk show that is based on current affairs. All of them. So we decided to move away from that and give the people something totally different. That's how we came up with doing a sports show when everybody else is doing politics (Interview with Aseda FM's GM).

Contrary to the practice of Aseda FM, the researcher found that for Spice FM, Radio Maxx and Empire FM, their technique was to first air a programme and then wait for audience feedback to make necessary refinements to the programmes. For these stations, no form of formative research was conducted to arrive at their decision to air certain programmes. The general manager of Radio Maxx explained:

Me for example, I'm from here. I grew up here so I already know what people want. So what we do is that we draft the programme and push it to air. When it airs for some time, you will see that people will start liking it. Even they themselves will suggest more ideas about the programme to us and we pick it and add (Interview with Radio Maxx GM).

When asked what influenced his station's programming decisions, the C.E.O of Kyzz FM indicated that their programmes were generated purely based on their intuition and intellect. He further added that creativity was one of the qualities that managers needed to possess in order to draw up programmes that had the ability to attract listeners. A presenter at Kyzz FM added that:

As for us, we have a lineup of programmes that our listeners love and that is because we hold a meeting to thoroughly discuss the programmes we want to air. This helps because at the end of the day, we have all chipped in ideas that will make every programme wholesome and of good quality that people will want to listen to (Interview with a presenter at Kyzz FM).

All five radio stations told the researcher that their staple programmes were current affairs shows, news, music and sports because they were what the listeners always wanted.

5.4.3 Programme Syndications

The researcher also found that programme syndication was a common practice for all the stations under study. In their quests to fill time on their programming schedules and most importantly, cut out the high cost involved in producing their own local content, the researcher discovered that all five stations had affiliations of some sort with "bigger" radio networks, that had reached an agreement to sell the local stations some of their programmes. Radio Maxx acquired some of its programmes from Joy FM. Empire FM was acquainted with Starr FM, which is owned by the EIB Network. Spice FM's programme syndication agreement was with Peace FM, and both Aseda FM and Kyzz FM had affiliations with Adom FM:

Madam, if I tell you the cost of producing one single programme, you will be amazed. It is expensive. If you don't take time, by the time you finish doing your own talk show, your station will suffer. So if we have the option of sourcing from Accra, why not? It's a blessing (Interview with the C.E.O of Kyzz FM).

Kyzz FM's stance on broadcast syndication was held and supported by the other four stations:

Tapping programmes from other stations helps us a lot. We bypass the cost of production, logistics, materials and all that. Tapping is not free, but I mean, you can't compare that to the cost involved in producing your own programmes. So in the morning, we take from Starr FM's morning show, we tap their news too and it saves us the headache (Interview with the business manager of Empire FM).

Syndication was found to be a win-win situation for both the producers of the programmes and the local stations that got to acquire those syndicated programmes. The local stations were able to save considerable costs and were also able to generate advertising revenue from those syndicated programmes as well. On the part of the creators and producers, they gained revenue from the programmes they sold out to smaller stations.

Coincidentally, all five private radio stations under study sourced their news from their Accra-based affiliates who aired their news at noon and again at 6 pm. So at 12 pm and 6 pm, all five radio stations also aired the news. In addition to tapping their news from Accra-based stations, Radio Maxx, Spice FM and Empire FM also sourced their current affairs shows from their affiliates in Accra. Kyzz FM and Aseda FM however, produced their own current affairs talk shows.

5.4.4 Adherence to Programme Schedules

All five radio stations under study adopted a 24-hour transmission policy which meant that all things being equal, they had programmes airing every day of the week at every given time. The study also found that they all followed a structured programme schedule, in that, except for when a new programme was being introduced, their programmes were repeated week after week. All five stations believed that sticking to regular routines in the airing of their programmes kept their audiences glued and anticipating for more. For instance, a presenter at Aseda FM concisely explained:

Sometimes, for people to like and really enjoy a programme, you need to allow it to run consistently for a year or two. That way, it'll stick with the listener. Radio work is all about consistency (Interview with presenter 2 at Aseda FM).

In the same vein, the C.E.O. of Kyzz FM told the researcher:

In as much as human beings have an insatiable appetite for new things, as blacks, we invariably also tend to be comfortable with the familiar. So for us, we repeat the same programmes for our audiences, but with new content every day (Interview with the C.E.O. of Kyzz FM).

Even though a programme schedule was followed, Aseda FM, Spice FM and Kyzz FM seemed to be more flexible with regard to the timing of their programmes. Aseda, Spice and Kyzz FM sometimes allowed certain programmes to overrun by a few minutes if they had cause to believe that many listeners were tuned in and/or are calling into the show. This was confirmed through the constant monitoring of the airwaves by the researcher. Empire FM and Radio Maxx however, followed strict timing schedules and did not encourage any of their programmes to overrun. A member of Empire FM's finance department indicated that:

Looking at the kind of audiences we cater to, it is very important for us to stick with our time. If we say a programme starts at 4 pm, it must start at 4 pm. We can't afford to waste people's time. They will find it annoying. We like to do things professionally here. (Interview with a member of the finance department at Empire FM).

When the researcher requested the documents of their programme schedules for review and analysis, the interviewees failed to give written copies but opted to say out the titles of their broadcasts and the time they aired. The researcher was then able to draw up programme schedules for each of the five radio stations based on the interviewees' accounts of their stations' programmes and broadcast times, as well as the constant monitoring of the airwaves to test the accuracy of the information given.

After the compilation and review of the programme schedules, it appeared all five radio stations had very similar programmes (see Appendix A). Typically by daybreak, the stations start their programming with gospel music and/or morning devotions, then move on to air the news around 6 am. Current affairs shows that are very often a combination of discussions on topical issues and news with panellists and phone-ins usually follow between the hours of 6:30 and 10 am. The airing of news and current affairs programmes by all five radio stations complies with public policy demands for the inclusion of regular news programmes to serve the public sphere and promote diversity.

Aseda FM had a slightly different programme schedule. Between 6 am and 10 am where Radio Maxx, Empire FM, Spice FM and Kyzz FM aired their current affairs/socio-political talk shows, Aseda FM did its sports show. Also, between the hours of 2 pm and 6 pm when the other four stations broadcast their drive-time shows, which is usually a magazine show, Aseda opted to air a current affairs/political talk shows. The general manager of Aseda FM explained that the slight difference in the programming schedule was a conscientious effort by his station to do their things differently as a result of formative research the station had much early on conducted.

All five stations had what was called “peak programmes.” The term “peak programmes” was used to describe the programmes that had high listenership. The listenership of peak programmes was heavily influenced by the time period they aired. With the exception of Aseda FM, all the other four stations identified political talk shows and drive-time shows as peak programmes. Across board, the political talk shows aired from between 6 am to 10 am and their listenership was high because around that time, many people listened to the radio on their way to work. Similarly, between 4 pm and 6 pm when most people were returning home from work, they listened to the

radio. Around that time, all five stations aired their drive-time magazine shows. Aseda FM's peak programmes were a sports show and a political talk show which aired between 6:30 am to 10 am and 2 pm to 6 pm respectively.

5.4.5 Keeping Programmes Fresh

In as much as programme schedules were adhered to by all five radio stations, there was an admission that there was the tendency for listeners to be bored over time. To avoid this situation, all the five radio stations under study tried to vary the contents of their programmes. So while the programmes themselves did not change, the contents constantly changed:

On our drive-time show, for instance, there is a segment we do that is called "Auto-Clinic." Auto-Clinic has been running for over five solid years now and people still like it. Do you know why? It is because every time, we discuss a different aspect of cars. If today we talk about car batteries, the next time we will talk about something entirely different, but still about cars like for instance, chassis numbers. So it's a variety of things that that programme presents (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

Likewise, the general manager of Aseda FM expressed that:

As for human beings, if you do something one way all the time, nobody will mind you. That is why from time to time, there is a need to introduce something different and unique. The listeners already like the show, but let them fall in love with it more. Make them excited for the show. So once in a while, you change how you do things. Here, we broaden our discussions, and we don't repeat the same things. We make sure what we do today will be different from yesterday. When nobody is expecting it too, we can share prizes on the show. All this makes our shows interesting every time (Interview with the GM of Aseda FM).

It was also found that apart from diversifying content, another way the stations were able to maintain listenership was to engage a pool of resource persons and experts to bring varying contributions and a sense of newness to the show.

Welcoming and accepting the ideas of audiences was found to be the practice of all five stations. The phone calls and text messages that members of the public sent to radio presenters sometimes set the agenda for discussions and introduced content diversity on air. The programmes manager of Spice FM added that his station occasionally invited listeners to suggest content ideas:

On our programme *Hot Zone*, we do debates on hot issues in sports. So for instance, if yesterday's debate was on who is the better player between Charles Taylor and Don Bortey, and we allow the audience to jump in and debate, another time, the station won't suggest the debatable issue. We dedicate one of the days of that show to the audience to record a voice note of an interesting sports issue. They will send it to us via WhatsApp and we also air it (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

In his opinion, this practice had created a big buzz for the programme. The programmes manager of Kyzz FM shared a similar view. He admitted that his station looked forward to the contributions of the general public in pitching ideas for content via text messages and phone calls.

5.5 Issues with Programmes Management

The study showed that the private radio stations encountered some challenges in the management of their programmes. All five radio stations mentioned that producing their own content, be it news or any other programme was very expensive. It was the biggest reason why they resorted to sourcing some of their programmes from other radio stations. The view of the programmes manager of Spice FM is encapsulated in the statement below:

Under normal circumstances, why should we in Sekondi-Takoradi care what happens at Circle? But as it stands now, it is easier to broadcast information on what is happening in Circle than to cover what is happening right under our noses in Takoradi. And this is bad. But the truth is that it is cheaper to acquire the news from Accra than to do your own local news (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

All five stations indicated to the researcher that some of their audiences had requested that they cut down on content that was centred on Accra in order to make room for more local content.

While some stations like Radio Maxx and Spice FM were considering creating their own local news and content at the requests of their audiences, Empire FM had disclosed to the researcher that they preferred to continue sourcing some of their programmes from elsewhere.

Apart from the general problem of high production costs, each private station stated other challenges they had that were exclusive to them. For instance, the general manager of Radio Maxx cited the struggle of finding the right people to host shows as his station's major problem when it came to programming:

Sometimes, you create a very nice programme and to find the right person to host it becomes a problem. Sometimes you look at the materials you have, which are the presenters and you realise that no, this programme, I don't have the right person to host it. It means that I have to go look for somebody outside and that also comes at a cost (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

He further pointed out that he had recently employed a presenter from Cape Coast to host the brunch show because none of his current presenters could host the show as he had envisioned. Bringing someone from outside the city meant that the station was responsible for finding him decent accommodation within Takoradi.

A morning show host at Spice FM told the researcher that his station's biggest problem with programming was finding resource persons and personalities to appear on the station's shows:

For those of us in Takoradi, and perhaps other regions, when you call these "big people" and they find out you are from Takoradi, they are reluctant to even talk to you. Eventually some of them will, but by the time they agree to talk to you, you'd even be tired. Sometimes too unless they have a direct interest that will benefit them, they won't even mind you (Interview with a morning show host at Spice FM).

Similarly, the business manager of Empire FM revealed that because most government institutions and organisational headquarters were based in Accra, getting their representatives to come to

Empire FM's studios in Sekondi-Takoradi was almost impossible. He added that one way his station got around such situations was to tap such interviews and programmes from their sister station in Accra.

The general manager of Aseda FM indicated that an unstable power supply was their biggest challenge in programming. He explained that when the power goes off and they use generators, the quality of the sound of their programmes reduces and it turns their listeners off:

One of the things that really really bothers us is electricity. I'm not sure if it's just this area or if it's peculiar to the whole of Ghana, but it goes off way too much and sometimes it's frustrating and embarrassing when you constantly have to apologise to your clients and listeners. It doesn't help at all. You see, when the lights go off in the studio, the listeners can tell. One, it takes some time for the generator to transmit power so there will be some silence on air before everything comes back on. And two, the power that the generator produces is not the same as ECG power so you realise that the sound is not sharp. Some of our listeners call to complain that we should work on that problem. So yes, electricity is a big challenge (Interview with GM of Aseda FM).

The C.E.O of Kyzz FM stated that the biggest problem his station faced with regard to programming was the low level of creativity in his staff:

The biggest problem with programming will be when I decide to step back from running the station. I say this because I draw up all the programmes. You can say I am the brain behind programming at Kyzz and I'm teaching them production too. So imagine if I step back (Interview with the C.E.O of Kyzz FM).

5.6 Managing the Radio Workforce

The management of human resources generally covers the areas of staffing, employee benefits or rewards, training, and the general welfare of employees. Apart from Empire FM and Aseda FM, the other three stations neither had a department for handling human resources nor individuals who had the specific task of handling employee affairs. For most radio stations, the general manager

took up this function. For even those stations that had human resource departments/or practitioners, the general manager had the final say on any suggestions or recommendations on employee-related issues.

5.6.1 Staffing

For all five stations, before new staff members, interns and volunteers were engaged, they were made to go through an orientation where the radio stations' rules and regulations were made very known to them. So before a contract of employment was signed, every employee knew what was expected of them.

In all five radio stations, employees who had experience in the radio and media industry were highly sought after. The owners and management placed a high value on the ability to attract audiences with one's on-air personality, which the stations believed, was primarily built by years of experience. The general manager of Aseda FM indicated that his station valued experience so much so that, all his staff were, in his own terms "already cooked," which meant that his station resorted to poaching employees from other radio stations. The practice of poaching not only ensured that the station had a pool of experience and talents to work with, but it also reduced the cost of training and made the learning curve much shorter than it would have been if the station employed newbies. He also added that it was not always his radio stations that chased after the employees of other stations, but sometimes the workers of other radio stations came after Aseda to poach them because they knew Aseda FM took good care of its staff.

In addition, the researcher found that educational background in communications and/or any other media-related studies did not matter much in the recruitment of staff for all five stations. When the researcher asked if a degree in communication studies was an added advantage for anyone who sought to work as a presenter or newscaster, the general manager of Radio Maxx disclosed that educational backgrounds did not matter to his station. He told the researcher:

We look out for experience and creativity. There are some employees here who are just SHS graduates, but they are very creative. We prioritise delivery. The truth is that the listener doesn't care about your qualifications. All they want is for you to meet their expectations (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

Similarly, the C.E.O. of Kyzz FM said that education in communication was not prioritised in the recruitment process. He added, "A degree is good, but what I look out for is energy, intelligence and integrity. As for the rest, you will learn on the job."

While the business manager also indicated that qualifications and education in media-related fields did not matter much, he was quick to add that it mattered only when the recruit was expected to host a "serious" programme. He explained a "serious" programme to be any programme that required discussions and interactions with experts and learned people from specialised fields and who had to discuss distinct topics. In such cases, he admitted an educated person (and not necessarily a media-trained person) who was capable of conducting well detailed research to understand issues and could take control and direct the line of discussion would be preferred over one whose level of education was low.

It was also found that the radio stations valued the ability of their employees to multitask. For instance, they appreciated reporters who could develop stories, edit sounds, conduct insightful

interviews and handle technical equipment. This was because it saved the station the cost of recruiting different individuals to perform different tasks:

I like to work with people that are multitaskers, which means that for every employee here, they must be able to do at least two things. So for instance, the receptionist is also a secretary, and the general manager who doubles as the programmes manager is also the host of the morning show (Interview with the C.E.O of Radio Maxx).

The C.E.O of Kyzz FM partly supported the preference of staff members who are multitaskers by adding that:

Workers who multitask are extremely helpful. For us at Kyzz, it is not really a yardstick for employment, but I admit it can be quite advantageous. It is a good thing to know many things because you may never know when you may be needed to do another thing. So we encourage our people to read a lot to broaden their scope (Interview with the C.E.O of Kyzz FM).

5.6.2 Training

Section 5.9 of the Ghana National Media Policy advocates for the need for training and re-training of media personnel at all levels, due to the multi-faceted roles of media personnel as purveyors of culture, brokers of information, and agents of change.

In line with this policy, the respective managers of Radio Maxx, Spice FM, Empire FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM claimed they organised regular training for their staff which cut across lessons on organisational and professional standards of journalism, interviewing skills, editing skills, ethics of reporting, news presenting, ensuring correctness in grammar, spellings, how to do documentaries and how to talk to audiences who called in to live shows. However, the quality and frequency of training differed from station to station:

I train my staff almost every month. Because I can't pay for other people to do the training, I do the orientation myself. What I do is that I take short courses myself and then I come and also teach them what I've learnt (Interview with the C.E.O. of Kyzz FM).

The general manager of Spice FM said that even though the station's ultimate goal is to make money, the station also understands that the collective efforts of the members of staff made that goal possible. He further added that the training of staff was a way of showing appreciation to them by adding more value to their professional lives. A morning show host corroborated the manager's claim by adding that:

Just two months ago, myself and another presenter were sent to Multimedia in Accra for an attachment. You know Multimedia is the biggest media house in Ghana. So we were sent there to learn their ways so that we can also improve the way we do things. All expenses were borne by Spice FM. From accommodation to feeding, it was all covered. This shows that the company is doing its best to help us acquire more skills (Interview with a morning show host at Spice FM).

So while training was not periodic at Spice FM, whenever opportunities arrived, a section of the staff members was selected to undertake them.

The general manager of Radio Maxx indicated that seminars were organised once in a while for staff members. He further added:

Apart from the seminars, we also have weekly programme meetings to review what went wrong and what didn't go wrong. And among ourselves, we serve as checks. Somebody is monitoring you, criticising you. That is it (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

Contrary to the general manager's claim that seminars were occasionally organised to train employees, the editor revealed that he had never been engaged in any form of seminar or training by the station. He lamented:

Hmmm... I don't know how to put this, but I've never been put through any kind of training since I started working here many years ago. Everything I know as editor, I taught myself. Usually, I learn to upgrade my skills with the help of the internet (Interview with the editor at Radio Maxx).

The general manager of Aseda FM indicated that while training was not done for everyone, employees such as reporters and presenters were obligatorily trained every six months.

Empire FM, on the other hand, organised resource persons to hold departmental training sessions for its staff and managers alike, once every year to help sharpen their skills and introduce them to new things. Sometimes, the training was held at their headquarters in Accra, so the station accordingly covered the costs of accommodation for the duration of the employees' stay in Accra.

5.6.3 Annual Leave

The Labour Act 2003, (Act 651) states that workers in any undertaking are entitled to not less than fifteen working days leave with full pay in any calendar year of continuous service. In accordance with this Act, the managers of all the five radio stations stated that all their staff enjoyed an annual leave. However, the duration of the leave differed across the stations. The employees of Empire FM staff and Kyzz FM were entitled to a 21-day leave, while Spice FM and Aseda FM's staff members enjoyed their annual leave for 30 days.

For Radio Maxx, Spice FM and Kyzz FM, employees were expected to give a month's notice to the general manager and wait for his approval. For Empire and Aseda FM who had human resource departments, the first point of contact was the human resource manager, who would then forward the request to the general manager for his approval. The researcher found that the culture across all radio stations was that, the employees almost never exhausted their total number of leave days at once. They preferred to save some of their holidays for a later time. When asked if their employers required that of them, a presenter at Empire FM answered:

No, I decide. The station doesn't force anyone. It depends on me. If I feel like the 21 days I can't exhaust all, I break it up. Even though I can't push it into another year. So I take it small small (Interview with a presenter at Empire FM).

The situation was different at Radio Maxx. While Radio Maxx's employees were entitled to a month's leave, it was the station, and not the employees themselves, that decided not to give the full month's leave at a go due to the likelihood of a shortage of employees. Interestingly, the manager's claim of a month-long leave was debunked by the editor who revealed that he could not remember the last time he went on leave. When asked if it was a personal decision not to go on leave, he gave a sigh and responded:

I'm one person, I've never been given... I've never gone on leave. Close to two decades. The only time I don't come to work is when I'm sick. But let me just leave it at that. I don't want to go into certain areas (Interview with the editor of Radio Maxx).

Still on the issue of leave, Section 27(1) of the Labour Act promotes paid leave during maternity. When the researcher probed the stations' stance on maternity leave, all five radio stations claimed they had not yet dealt with pregnant employees and so they had no experiences to share with the researcher. However, they were confident they would comply with the Act if they were ever faced with such situations in the future.

5.6.4 Payment of Salaries

Salary is one of the first elements people consider when looking for job opportunities, and is important in most workplaces because the vast majority of people would not do their jobs if they were not being paid for them (Asaari, Desa & Subramaniam, 2019, p. 49). The radio industry is no different. Salary issues seemed to be quite a sensitive topic. While no general manager was willing to disclose any information on the amount of money or even the salary range their

respective employees received, all five radio stations indicated that the amounts their employees were paid depended on their position and experience:

Of course, salaries differ. You can not pay the DJ the same amount of money you pay the political talk show host. That does not happen. But, we ensure that whatever we pay the DJ too is very fair so that everybody will be happy and work well (Interview with the GM of Kyzz FM).

The general manager of Spice FM revealed that in order to keep their workers satisfied, his station tried its best to consistently pay salaries between the 25th and the 30th of every month. He added that the longest their employees had had to wait to receive their salaries was by the 2nd or the 3rd day of the following month, which in his opinion was not such a long time to wait.

The business manager of Empire FM also stated that he ensured that latest by the 28th day of every month, every one of the staff members was paid. A member of the finance department of the station partly corroborated the business manager's claim and explained:

Before the pandemic, we were indeed paid by the 28th of every month. But in recent times, we are made to wait to receive our salaries within the first week of the following month. We generally understand that circumstances concerning the pandemic have made it so (Interview with a member of the finance department at Empire FM).

The general manager of Radio Maxx revealed that the station did its best to pay employees by the first day of every month. He told the researcher that in times when the station's finances were good, he let the employees know. The C.E.O added that there had been times where his employees were paid two months' salaries within a period of two weeks. This claim was outrightly debunked by the editor.

Kyzz FM and Aseda FM also paid salaries within the last week of every month. This was confirmed by the stations' presenters and journalists.

For stations like Radio Maxx, Empire FM and Spice FM who made room for volunteers and interns, they indicated that their volunteers and interns were not paid salaries because they are not considered staff members. However, they were occasionally given stipends and tips to help allay some of their financial burdens.

5.6.5 Motivation

While motivation can be internal, external forces can also boost motivation in employees (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2011). All five radio stations indicated that during special seasons of the year, staff members enjoyed some bonuses in the form of bags of rice, oil, tins of milk, and sometimes cash. The general manager of Radio Maxx stated:

As for motivation, hmmm...I can not tell you it's 100% but let me tell you something. In Africa, chop off your head for the people, they will still have cause to complain. That's why I'm not rating myself as 100%. Because if I call them now, even the person I motivated right now will tell you that oh boss but what you gave me is nothing. But what we do is, once a while, we have a way of motivating them. During occasions like Christmas and Easter, we prepare some packages for them. I'm talking with reference to before the Covid. We had monthly parties. We organised buffets on the last Friday of every month and enjoy (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

The general manager's claim of motivating staff and treating them to a buffet at the end of every month was refuted by the editor who said:

I motivate myself. Everything I even work with belongs to me personally. If I have to be candid, truthful and honest with you, all I take is my salary and nothing else. I've not been given anything. It is all me. I motivate myself. That's all (Interview with the editor of Radio Maxx).

The stations indicated that the culture of giving bonuses was very popular during the pre-covid era, when businesses were doing good. They all agreed that since the onset of the pandemic, they had not had the luxury of treating their staff members to special packages and bonuses:

The pandemic has affected radio stations. The media is now suffering. Most of the advertisers have held back their advertising so financially, we are down and that has also affected how we motivate. Motivation is now very low. So during festive occasions, we would give them something extra to celebrate with their families aside from their salaries. But for the past one and half years, Covid has ruined everything (Interview with the C.E.O of Kyzz FM).

Like the C.E.O of Kyzz FM, the business manager of Empire FM also admitted that the pandemic had altered the mode and frequency of motivating their staff members. He stated:

Now, there is no money in the system. Even before Covid, it was tough so you can imagine the situation now with Covid. To be frank, as much as we try to motivate here and there, it is not our priority as it stands now because of the economic effect of the Covid. The most important thing is to pay them what were are duly obligated to pay them. The bonuses and extras, when they are available, we give... But because of Covid, we have slowed down on things like that (Interview with the business manager of Empire FM).

For the general manager of Aseda FM, motivation came in the form of words of praise and encouragement. He was of the opinion that words had great value and that a pat on the back in the form of favourable words, words of affirmation and commendations were as good as rewards and bonuses.

The general manager of Spice FM also expressed that beyond gifts and bonuses, his station motivated employees by introducing an “open door” policy, where staff members were free to approach him at any time with their ideas and problems alike. He added that the purpose of an open door policy was to encourage communication about any concerns employees might have. Such a policy helped his radio station to boost and maintain staff morale, as well as reduce employee turnover. On the part of staff members, the open door policy enabled them to feel more inclined to communicate with management and the leadership of the station.

5.6.6 Attendance and Punctuality

All the radio stations valued the importance of punctuality in the media space, but this was expressed differently as per the culture of their respective stations. For instance, Aseda FM, Kyzz FM and Radio Maxx did not use a logbook to record the time their employees reported to work. A presenter at Aseda FM explained that even though Aseda FM was firm on punctuality, their coming-ins and going-outs were not strictly monitored. The C.E.O. of Kyzz FM also expressed that:

I've allowed these small laxities in place for now. If you move in a strict manner, it won't sit well with them because they've had their freedom for a very long time so administrative systems and structures will have to be introduced slowly and that is also contingent on the fact that human beings are not used to sudden change. So for now, it will take a while for them to clock in when they come to work (Interview with the C.E.O. of Kyzz FM).

Contrary to the practices at Kyzz FM, Radio Maxx and Aseda FM where staff were not required to record their reporting time, there was a logbook kept at the reception for clocking in the reporting times of staff at all times at Spice FM and Empire FM. The book was also used to record when the employees closed for the day and left the station:

Well, the idea is not to micromanage, but I believe every organisation stands on the pillars of accountability. Now, management requires staff to clock in to track productivity, how much they put into work, what they are doing, if they are compliant with work ethics, work rules, and if they are being productive. We as management need to know where everyone is, their inputs, productivity and to make sure we are operating a profitable business above all. I believe that a company is as successful as its staff. The staff is your strength, so accountability is pivotal to the development of any organisation. Man hours is key. It's a core of operations so we need accountability (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

The general managers of all the radio stations indicated that in the case where an employee is running late or would be totally absent, they expected the employee to call in good time to express it. This gave room for the managers to find substitutes to fill in for them:

Finding a replacement is not difficult at all. If this person can't make it to do it, another person can. I mean, they themselves know that if I'm not there, this person can sit in. So as soon as you are not around, we just fall on the next person (Interview with the business manager of Empire FM).

In the same vein, the programmes manager of Spice FM indicated that while every programme had just one host, there were other employees around who could equally act in the host's stead.

5.7 Challenges with Human Resource Management

The managers of Radio Maxx, Aseda FM and Spice FM mentioned that their biggest challenge with managing human resource is that staff members were constantly tempted to bring along some practices from their former radio stations to their new places of employment. The manager of Radio Maxx cited an example of how a disc jockey (DJ) he had poached from a popular radio station within the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis kept playing loud, fancy sound effects even after he had been cautioned a few times. The DJ insisted that the sound effects were what the audience liked, but the general manager indicated that the radio station's target audience was the elite and corporate people who enjoyed calm, soothing programmes after a long day's work. It was after a renowned lawyer within the metropolis made a complaint directly to the C.E.O that the DJ understood what was at stake:

Don't forget, this station is a brand. The brand changes you, you don't change the brand. The brand is bigger than the individuals here. So when you go to Rome, you do what the Romans do. When you are from other stations and you come to Radio Maxx, we have ways of doing our things (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

In the same vein, the programmes manager of Spice FM added:

When they move from their old stations, nine out of ten times, the staff will attempt to bring with them whatever culture was dominant in their previous places of work. So that is common. Sometimes it takes a long time for them to break free from old habits. When you attempt to talk them out of it, they are adamant that it was a hit where they were and

even try to convince you. I guess it's human nature. You know, it's easy to be comfortable with routines... things you've done over and over again over a period of time. But it's one of the things we don't tolerate. We make sure they do things the Spice FM way (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

The manager of Aseda FM also added that egotistical behaviours, coupled with insubordination were also a big challenge. He explained that because all of the station's employees had experience in the radio industry, they tended to be overconfident and felt they knew it all. They hardly obeyed instructions but were quick to challenge authority. This behaviour, he said, made it hard to manage and direct staff.

Spice FM, Empire FM and Kyzz FM's managers cited apathy as one of their biggest challenges they faced when they managed employees. The general manager of Spice FM said that even though employees were paid well and were expected to work hard, the mantra of the employees was "this company is not even for my father." For that matter, workers displayed no sense of urgency in the execution of their duties. Similarly, the business manager of Empire FM added that what should ordinarily take a day to do, employees could take as long as three days to complete.

5.8 Financial Management Practices

One major objective of this study was to find the financial management practices of private radio stations. Financial management practices include maintaining a steady supply of funds, ensuring profitability, ensuring owners/shareholders get good returns on their investment, and ensuring efficient disbursement and utilisation of funds. Accordingly, general managers were asked questions on how funds were generated and allocated in their respective stations. The findings

revealed that there were a number of ways in which private radio are able to generate funds. Some ways of revenue generation were advertising, shareholder contributions, events and sponsorships.

5.8.1 Advertising

Advertising was the principal source of income for all five private radio stations in this study. Their main advertisers included religious organisations, corporate institutions, businesses, political parties, educational institutions and government agencies. Social announcements such as funerals also raked in some revenue for the radio stations. The radio stations sold airtime to companies, businesses and individuals who wished to reach the audience with messages about their services or products. This was referred to by Empire FM as ‘buy-spot.’

The researcher found that across all five radio stations, there were usually three ways that advertising deals could be made. First, all five stations had sales teams who were tasked with going out to scout for potential advertisers on behalf of the station. For every advertiser that a salesperson won over, there was a commission that was paid to him or her. There were also what were called the ‘agency buy’ and the ‘walk-in buy.’ As the names imply, an agency buy involved a third party, who would bring in advertising deals from companies to the stations and was given a cut from the deal. The ‘walk-in buy’ happened when the business owners or representatives of companies themselves contacted the stations with advertising proposals.

All the stations had a rate card that guided their negotiations with their clientele. The general manager of Spice FM explained that for his station, advertising rates could differ based on whether the advertisers were local or international. Local advertisers, according to him, were

those people who had localised operations within the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. Larger companies that maintained a national presence due to their size and financial standing were classified as ‘international companies’ for billing purposes. For adverts that had the same duration, and were placed on the same programmes, local businesses were charged much lower than international companies:

The person who sells cosmetics at Market Circle, if I place him on my programme and charge him thousand five, it can’t be compared to Club Beer or Malta Guinness. I need to charge Malta Guinness in excess of ten thousand. They can afford it (Interview with the GM of Spice FM).

Aseda FM’s manager also stated that charging someone as much as two thousand cedis to advertise could collapse the person’s business so his station considered factors such as the size of a business and the products they dealt in, in order to be affordable even to such small businesses.

The general manager of Radio Maxx disclosed that even though they considered the size and the financial potency of businesses and individuals who came to advertise their products and services, the harsh truth was that, his station had to get its minimum profit. He added that his station never took less than a thousand cedis from a business to run its commercials for a month, no matter how small that business was.

According to all five stations, the cost of airtime slots varied depending on the length of the advert and also what programme the ads aired on. A much cheaper type of advertising was the Live Presenter Mention (LPM). LPMs were advertisements that were read by on-air personalities and could cost about half or even less than half of what running a standard advert would cost.

The manager of Empire FM explained that adverts placed on the two peak programmes of his

station (Morning Star and Empire Drive) cost more than a placement on all the other programmes. This position was held by the other four stations as well.

Irrespective of the high dependence of commercial radio stations on advertising for sustenance, the radio stations sometimes rejected advertising deals and offers. They were guided by certain public policies, in-house advertising policies as well as personal principles that determined whether an advertisement would be accepted or rejected. For instance, if an advertiser wanted to advertise a consumable product, he/she had to produce a certificate from the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) to prove that the product was approved for advertisement. The C.E.O of Kyzz expressed his station's stance in the sentence below:

If it is food or anything that enters the human body, my station demands that you show that the FDA has cleared you. If we don't do that and later it is found that your product is bad and can cause damage, it is the station that will suffer. We can be easily sanctioned and we don't want that. So in cases like that, if you don't have the necessary documents, we respectfully let you go (Interview with the C.E.O of Kyzz FM).

The other four stations also confirmed that they took the issue of getting approval from the appropriate authorities very seriously. The general manager of Radio Maxx additionally indicated that another type of advertisement offer that his station was sure to reject was those that publicised anything associated with spirituality, magic and charms. His position is captured in the sentence below:

In this station, we don't allow fetish priests and spiritualists to advertise their craft. Apart from being the general manager, I'm also a pastor so how can I allow people who claim they can double money to come and advertise on my station? It doesn't even speak well of me, it's an insult to the calibre of people who listen to us, and I won't sit down and watch these people deceive the general public (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

He also added that another reason that would cause Radio Maxx to refuse to air an advert is when the quality of the jingle of the product is low. When that was the case, the station would try to convince the advertiser to allow them to produce another jingle that was up to its standard. If the advertiser refused, Radio Maxx would not air the advertiser's original jingle because the station has a standard of quality it was mandated to live up to.

Like Radio Maxx, the programmes manager of Spice FM also indicated that the station would never air any advert that sought to promote deception, especially from prophets, pastors and fetish priests. He added:

If we will allow religious bodies, it wouldn't be prophets and fetish priests. We only allow preachers...those who preach the pure unadulterated word of God. In fact, even for preachers, we make them bring samples of their sermons for us to listen to. If it's fit to be aired on our station, we will go ahead and air it (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

Conversely, the business manager of Empire FM stated that one of the biggest reasons his station would turn down an advertising offer would be the unwillingness of advertisers to pay the specified advertising fee:

Usually, when we turn away an advertiser, it is because what he is offering to pay is way below budget. We negotiate but if we see that the advertiser doesn't want to pay a reasonable amount, we just let him go. Even though airtime is perishable, we don't chase every money (Interview with the business manager of Empire FM).

A member of Empire FM's Finance Department also added that sometimes, advertisers refused to sign a contract of agreement, but would rather prefer to have a verbal understanding. When the advert execution time elapsed, however, it became very difficult for them to go by their word and make payment.

While none of the five radio stations was able to provide a policy document that guided their advertising decisions, it was clear that public interest, discretion and personal principles played a major role in deciding which adverts to air and which ones to turn away.

When the researcher further asked what proportion of revenue advertising contributed to the overall finances of their respective radio stations, none of the respondents would readily provide information. They were either simply not willing to share that information with the researcher possibly because they feared their competitors would get to know how much they made, or they were not so sure themselves. So the common response that came from them was "a lot."

According to all five radio stations, their advertising revenues had drastically gone down within the last year and a half due to the Coronavirus pandemic. They explained that since the virus had generally disrupted the global economy, businesses had been hit very hard. In what seemed like a trickle-down effect, businesses had cut down on advertising in order to save cost, which meant that their respective radio stations did not get to play adverts for money.

Apart from advertising, data also revealed that private radio stations had other sources of generating revenue.

5.8.2 Sponsorship

Another source of revenue for some of the stations was sponsorship. While advertising and sponsorship were used interchangeably by the managers of Empire FM, Kyzz FM and Aseda FM, Ungerman-Smith (2015, p. 1) explains that for advertising, payment is made to place an advert with specific messaging in place. On the other hand, sponsorship implies a much deeper, often ongoing relationship between two parties.

The programmes manager of Spice FM indicated that to get sponsors, his station sometimes couched programmes and sold the idea to potential sponsors. He said:

Sometimes, we purposefully create programmes with a certain potential sponsor in mind. Let me give you an example. On our sports show called Centre Sports, we have a segment on it called “Betway Minute.” An idea like that, we conceived it and then proposed it to Betway (a sports betting company) to be its sponsor. Usually, we draft programmes to fit the sponsor’s sector of operations. I mean, what better way to reach sports fans than on a sports show? You see, so we propose such ideas and if the corporations show interest, they will come on board to put their weight behind the show (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

The practice was not different at Radio Maxx. The general manager revealed that they had segments of certain shows that were specifically created to be sponsored by certain corporate organisations. For instance, certain aspects of their Tuesday afternoon show called ‘Business Agenda’ were sponsored by Ahantaman Rural Bank and Tacotel Limited:

So because Business Agenda is business-oriented, we sent proposals to Ahantaman Rural Bank, which we know is a bank that helps the local people with financial assistance to grow their businesses. So every week on Business Agenda, Ahantaman shares business tips on the show as a sponsor (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

In some cases, it was the businesses and corporate organisations that requested to sponsor some of the station’s shows. The member of the finance department of Empire FM explained that when they had events such as the prostate cancer screening that was in the pipeline to celebrate Father’s Day by the time of this study, they had received requests from some corporate institutions to support the event with money in exchange for being put on the station’s flyers.

Empire FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM’s managers told the researcher that there was no difference between advertising and sponsorships. In their opinion, both terms expressed an interest in promoting goods and services via the media. Empire FM’s manager stated that his station got

sponsorship and advertising revenues from companies like BetPlanet, Nestle, Betway, Glico, First National Bank, National Insurance Commission and the Ministry of Health. Aseda FM had Hisense and DSTV as its sponsors, while Kyzz FM indicated that they got sponsorships from some of the local businesses whose interest is to gain publicity.

5.8.3 Events

The radio stations under study occasionally held events, usually in collaboration with their advertising partners and sponsors. These sponsored events served the dual purpose of bringing in extra revenue through ticket sales, sales of the station's merchandise such as branded T-shirts and keyholders, and to an extent, drawing more listeners to the station. At the time the researcher interviewed the managers of Radio Maxx and Empire FM, both stations were making preparations to organise an event to celebrate Father's Day. While Empire FM's aim was to organise prostate cancer screening for fathers, Radio Maxx, in consultation with their sponsors, sought to give away boxes of pizza to fathers to make them feel special:

We organise events every year; on Christmas, on Mother's Day, on many occasions. When we do these events, everybody benefits. We as a radio station benefit, our advertisers benefit, and even the ice water seller benefits (Interview with the business manager of Empire FM).

Like the business manager of Empire FM, The C.E.O of Radio Maxx also stressed the benefits that events brought to his station:

We have outdoor events that we do. For instance, we have this thing that was started by us in the whole Western Region called 'Maxx Orange Kitchen.' We've been doing it for as long as Radio Maxx has been in existence. Every Easter Monday, we feed street children. In fact, but for Covid which happened last year, the average that we've been doing is between five to eight thousand. And when this event rolls out, we get a lot of sponsors supporting us. We get a lot from the clientele base. A lot of people make donations and many give us money to support the course (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

Sometimes, the radio stations also hold galas, dinners or parties within certain periods of the year, to raise funds. The C.E.O of Kyzz FM indicated that the prices of tickets could vary depending on the venue and the calibre of guests, as well as the guest performances. The proceeds earned by the stations could be substantial depending on the turnout of people. All five stations agreed that as the coronavirus spread all over the world, the ability to host outdoor events was either curtailed or altogether cancelled. Even after the ban on congregational meetings was lifted, radio stations and the general public still remained cautious. This had affected the revenue that was generated from events in recent times.

5.8.4 Contributions

The C.E.O of Radio Maxx, together with the general manager of Aseda FM indicated that sometimes, their stations got money from their owners and shareholders. The owner of Radio Maxx, who also doubles as the Chief Executive Officer, stated that before he decided to relocate to Ghana and get actively involved in the affairs of the station, he singlehandedly funded the activities of the station whenever the station was faced with financial difficulties:

Before I took over, there was a backlog of salaries that had not been paid. So one of the things that I did was that, in fact when salaries delay...I am always trying to stay ahead and so I pay from my own pocket. Sometimes, that's what must be done to keep the station moving (Interview with the C.E.O. of Radio Maxx).

This was corroborated by the station's general manager who indicated that the station could not have sailed through some of its financial challenges had the owner not decided to inject his personal cash into the business.

The general manager of Aseda FM also indicated that his station had an internal arrangement where stakeholders contributed some money in the form of equity whenever the station was tight on money. This money was mostly given to the station for production or the purchase of equipment.

5.8.5 Social Media

The study found that even though all five private radio stations had social media handles, activities on social media were quite minimal and so, much was not said about it as a means of revenue generation.

Only Kyzz FM and Empire FM indicated that social media contributed to their revenue stream. A presenter at Empire FM explained that:

There are ‘click-and-view’ ratios that Google calculates and converts to money according to the number of views a post receives over a certain period of time. But we’ve come to realise that people don’t engage much with us on social media as they do via phone-ins and text messages (Interview with a presenter at Empire FM).

He further added that while social media did not contribute as much as their other revenue sources, it was still worth mentioning.

5.9 Allocation of Funds

With regards to how funds are expended, Empire FM, Radio Maxx and Spice FM indicated that the salaries of their employees were their topmost priority and that took the biggest part of their revenue. They explained that when their staff are paid well and paid on time, they are more invested in their work. The general manager of Spice FM explained that:

Paying salaries on time is a way to show employees that they are valued. That way, we can also demand higher quality of work and high productivity in exchange for paying them well and paying them on time (Interview with the GM of Spice Maxx).

Contrary to the logic of Empire FM, Spice FM and Kyzz FM, the managers of Radio Maxx and Aseda FM disclosed that even though salaries took up a chunk of their revenues, it was not their topmost priority. Rather, the payment of bills, goods and services of external parties was a big deal to them:

I'm not saying salaries are not important, please. What I'm saying is that employees are part of our big family. If something comes up and you delay the payment of salary small, at least you can calm them down and explain things to them. But imagine you haven't paid ECG. My sister, they will cut your lines and you are in trouble (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

Empire FM, Radio Maxx and Spice FM indicated that salaries constituted 40%, 40% and 45% of their total revenue respectively. However, no radio station was willing to share the raw figures of employee salaries with the researcher. Aseda FM and Kyzz FM on the other hand, were unwilling to share the percentage of revenue that goes into the payment of salaries.

Empire FM, Kyzz FM and Spice FM pointed out that between 20-25% of their total funds went into the payment of utility bills, which ranged from water bills, waste management bills, electricity bills and the cost of internet. For Aseda, Empire and Kyzz FM, utility bills included rent. Maintenance fees and logistics both took fourth place with about 5% of revenue being distributed for each purpose. What was left of the revenue was for the payment of taxes and for contingencies.

5.10 Establishment of Sister Stations

The researcher discovered that some of the stations had “sister stations” also within the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis. The reason, the researcher found, was to capture another portion of the

audiences which was outside the target audiences of their sister stations, which would translate to more profits for their owners. For instance, while Spice FM had its target audience as the everyday people of Sekondi-Takoradi, its sister station, Beach FM, targeted the elite and corporate groups within the Metropolis. In the same vein, Empire FM catered to the corporate and literate population, and its sister station Radio 360 catered to the semi-literate and the masses. While sister stations had different sets of individuals holding the reigns of management, they were still owned by the same individual or group of individuals.

5.11 Challenges with Financial Management

Each radio station indicated that they had constraints with financial management. Most of these constraints were situations that affected their revenue stream. Among these were issues of an over-saturated media market in Sekondi-Takoradi, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, the refusal of businesses to advertise and the high cost of utility bills.

5.11.1 Saturated Radio Market

The increased number of radio stations operating in the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolis appeared to be a serious challenge for the generation of revenue. With 24 private radio stations operating within the same city, the competition for advertising revenue is very tough. The C.E.O. of Radio Maxx expressed that when his station was established in 2002, radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi were just a handful so they each had a good share of advertisers:

Like any industry, there is a market share which has a direct correlation between the potential audience and the entire population of the intended coverage area. When there is a proliferation of radio stations like we are currently experiencing, there is usually disregard for market share indices. So what's happening is that there are too many radio stations for the population of Sekondi-Takoradi, so returns from competition diminish and that eventually drives down revenue (Interview with the C.E.O. of Radio Maxx).

He further lamented that it seemed the number of radio stations currently operating in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis was more than the businesses that advertised on radio. All five radio stations compete for the same few advertisers, and so the revenue generated from advertising was no longer as sturdy as it used to be.

5.11.2 Little/No Interest in Advertising

The data also revealed that though private radio stations depended on advertising as their main revenue source, all five radio stations complained that many businesses in Sekondi-Takoradi did not prioritise advertising. This was because business owners believed they already had their customer base and so there really was no need to advertise for publicity. Because of the scarcity of advertisers, all five radio stations had marketing teams who would out in search of advertising prospects. Often, these teams were not able to persuade business heads and owners to embrace advertising. Occasionally when they succeeded in securing advertising contracts, the business owners dictate the payment terms and advertising rates instead of following the stations' standard rates. A member of the finance department at Empire FM added that:

What also bothers us is that we can agree on certain advertising terms but when the time comes for them to fulfil their part of the agreement, they will tell you stories. We can all agree on a certain amount as payment. They will come back and tell you that business is not booming so they can only pay part. Meanwhile, we are already running the ads! (Interview with a member of the finance department at Empire FM).

5.11.3 Low Economic Viability of Sekondi-Takoradi

Even though Sekondi-Takoradi is considered to be the third largest city in Ghana behind Accra and Kumasi when it comes to economic activities, the general manager of Radio Maxx admitted that in reality, Sekondi-Takoradi was not as economically viable as one would expect:

Some of the things that affect our revenue flow is that the bulk of businesses is in Accra. All of these corporate bodies, even some of these small banks, their headquarters are in Accra. So you go to them for local business and you're almost always referred to Accra. It makes it a bit difficult because when you cannot generate income locally, it's hard. When you go to Accra too, there are also a lot of radio stations (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

5.11.4 High Utility Bills

The researcher found that high utility costs consumed a big chunk of the stations' revenues. The general managers of Radio Maxx and Aseda FM revealed that a lot of their revenue was spent on utility bills each month. Electricity is an indispensable resource in operating radio stations as it was needed not only to power most of their equipment, but also to transmit their broadcasts. Across all five stations, electricity bills primarily constituted the highest utility bill to be paid.

Additionally, frequent power outages had forced all five radio stations to acquire generators and stand-by power plants to prevent interruptions in their transmissions. It cost them a lot of money to fuel both the stand-by plants and the generators. Aside from the cost of electricity, radio stations were also faced with the regular maintenance of their equipment to prevent the risk of their equipment suddenly or completely breaking down. As the programmes manager of Spice FM put it, it was easier to maintain equipment than to buy new ones.

For stations like Aseda FM, Empire FM and Kyzz FM that did not own the office spaces they operated from, rent was another financial hurdle. While they all claimed that the cost of their facilities did not come cheap, they acknowledged that until they were able to put up their own edifice, rent would continue to be a source of worry. A presenter at Aseda FM stated:

The rent keeps increasing every day but what choice do we have? Moving from place to place can be tricky. We have been at this location for a long time and everybody knows

that. So if we say because of the rent rate we'll leave here, that won't help us. So we are doing our best to keep up with the rent (Interview with presenter 2 of Aseda FM).

5.11.5 Coronavirus Pandemic

With the large number of radio stations and the disinterest of businesses in advertising already posing a threat to revenue generation, all five radio stations agreed that the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic had further aggravated the situation. Empire FM's business manager and Kyzz FM's C.E.O noted that right from the onset of the pandemic when lockdowns and restrictions of movements were introduced, people resorted more to the digital media space. The use of streaming services and social media platforms also rose significantly. For that reason, advertisers adapted to this trend by meeting their consumers where they could be found, which was online. This meant that advertisers prioritised digital advertising over traditional radio advertising. The few businesses that promoted their products and services on radio were also forced to cut back on traditional advertising because of the low engagement of audiences with traditional media. A presenter at Aseda FM expressed that:

It's true that this pandemic has brought problems but it looks like now, people want to take advantage and blame coronavirus for all their problems. You do the client's work for them but when it's time for them to pay, coronavirus (Interview with presenter 1 at Aseda FM).

A member of the finance department at Empire FM also lamented that before the pandemic, corporate businesses would pay cash or in the worst-case scenario, their station would be given a cheque as payment right after an agreement was reached between them and their sponsors but currently, the station had to chase their sponsors for payment even after their contract had long been executed.

5.12 Audience Management Practices

Through audience management, radio stations are able to learn basic things they need to know about their audience, including who they are, what their likes and dislikes are and how they behave. For the selected radio stations, audience management allowed them to monitor their audience base. Generally, audience management involves contact strategies through which radio stations can engage their audiences, receive feedback, complaints and commendations on their programmes and discover the general performance of the station as a whole from the audiences' points of view. Phone-ins, events, market research, giveaways and interpersonal relationships were identified as audience management and engagement channels.

5.12.1 Phone-ins

The elementary way for all five radio stations to interact with their listeners was through phone-ins. Some programmes on their stations had a phone-in segment that allowed members of the public to call into a show and join the discussion at hand. Callers were sometimes given the opportunity to give their opinions of the programme and the station itself on air. Whenever the phone lines are open for comments and suggestions, the station takes note and swiftly acts on their listeners' grievances and concerns. The C.E.O of Radio Maxx iterated that:

In any business setting, I think your best customers are actually the ones who complain because they will tell you exactly what is wrong with your business, so we are very interactive. Our mid-morning programmes are very very interactive. What we do is that, we put ourselves out there for compliments, for criticisms, for whatever it is that comes and we take it. We allow the public to call in and address any issue about us, and we learn from them (Interview with the C.E.O. of Radio Maxx).

Likewise, the business manager of Empire FM recounted an incident where many audiences called the station to condemn the cancellation of a quiz segment called "Say it right" on their drive show.

The show invited listeners to provide the English names of things the host would say in Fante. According to the manager, the sluggish behaviour of the host made management take a decision to cancel the segment. However, through the constant calls from their audiences to rescind their decision, the segment was reinstated.

For most of the selected radio stations, a high number of phone-ins was also an indication of high listenership for a programme and in effect, a high audience base for the station in general.

5.12.2 Events

Organising events was found to be a common practice among all five radio stations. According to the general manager of Radio Maxx, when his radio station organises events, it is usually with the aim of engaging with their audiences, reaching prospective demographics and also providing great experiences for the people present:

If you go down to the ground, like during events, that's where you get the best and the most feedback and interactions with the public. And once the events are done, we put them on our website and people can go and look at it and still give their comments (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

The opinion of the general manager of Radio Maxx was shared by the programmes manager of Spice FM who said:

Events are very important to Spice. Events provide us the workers a chance to release stress and mingle with our clients and listeners. Sometimes, it's during an event that someone comes up to you, introduces him or herself and you'll realise that this person has been calling into your show all the time. This will be a great opportunity to say thank you and to find out one-on-one what some of your shortcomings are (Interview with the programmes manager of Spice FM).

The researcher also found that Spice FM, Radio Maxx and Empire FM equate a high audience turnout to be a manifestation of satisfaction with the station. During such events, there are meet-and-greet sessions where audiences get to meet their favourite hosts, presenters and other on-air personalities. The stations also seize the opportunity to find out the opinions, concerns and complaints from such interactions.

5.12.3 Giveaways

Organising contests and giveaways have been used for a long time in the radio industry to engage audiences and the public at large. They are great ways for radio stations to attract more listeners and reward old listeners for their loyalty. Across all five radio stations, contests usually came in the form of daily quizzes, tests of musical knowledge, and sometimes, all one had to do was to be the first to call into a show in order to win a prize. Normally, the giveaway prizes were in partnership with the sponsors of a show who are aiming for publicity or promoting a product or service.

5.12.4 Audience Survey

Aseda FM's general manager indicated that the station sends out a team periodically to interact with the people within Sekondi-Takoradi to ascertain opinions about their station. The general manager added that for his station, surveys were the surest way to assess the performance and popularity of his radio because while many translate phone-ins and event turnouts to be an indication of acceptance and satisfaction with the station, they were truly not appropriate yardsticks as feedback is often received from just a fraction of the audience who may not necessarily be in the majority.

5.12.5 Interpersonal relationships/ Personal touch

Some of the managers indicated that audience management started with the people around them like friends and family. They believed that people within this group were likely to be honest in their observations. The managers of Radio Maxx and Spice FM stated that they got friends and relatives to listen closely to their programmes and then point out where they went wrong and how they could do better.

The C.E.O Kyzz FM also told the researcher that during phone-in sessions, they assigned somebody in the studio to note regular callers and compile a list. From time to time, the show host would call the frequent callers to build a relationship with them. The C.E.O indicated that the personal touch made the callers feel that they were a part of the station's "family."

5.12.6 Social Media Engagement

All five radio stations had a social media presence, even though their popularity on social media came in varying degrees. For instance, Empire FM had over 8,000 followers on Facebook while Aseda FM had just about 237 followers. On their social media handles, either snippets of a programme or an entire programme is posted and audiences are invited to make comments. This way, audiences are free to complain, commend and suggest ideas to the radio stations. The C.E.O of Radio Maxx explained, "We are very prevalent on social media. So whatever it is they tell us, we go with it, we take it in good faith, and that's how we move."

5.13 Challenges with Audience Management

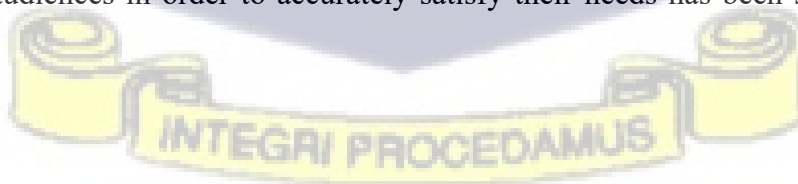
The researcher found that all five radio stations could not easily identify and analyse their audience share. This stemmed from the fact that, as the number of radio choices available to audiences continued to rise, so did the level of the temptation to keep changing the dial to other programmes on other stations that may be more gratifying. And so, it was difficult for the stations to claim to know definitively who was listening to their station all the time. The general manager of Radio Maxx expressed his challenge in managing audiences in the statement below:

When it comes to managing audiences, it can be tricky. You may think that Kwame from New Takoradi is a loyal listener of your station because he participates in your discussions and he is always calling the station. It will surprise you to know that he is calling another station with the same energy. He may be attending Radio Maxx's events and still attend another event somewhere too. And many of the listeners are like that so you never really know how loyal they are to your station (Interview with the GM of Radio Maxx).

Sharing a very similar view, the C.E.O of Kyzz FM told the researcher:

I acknowledge the fact that because there are many other stations, the listener may not necessarily leave their dial on a particular station. They keep changing the stations till they hear what they want. This morning they are listening to you, this afternoon they are not. So in as much as our wish is to capture everyone in Sekondi-Takoradi, we acknowledge that even identifying the ones we have is not straightforward (Interview with the C.E.O. of Kyzz FM).

Coupled with these challenges, radio happens to have a lot of passive audiences who are more than likely engaged in other activities while listening to the radio. For this matter, identifying, analysing and measuring audiences in order to accurately satisfy their needs has been said to be a rather difficult task.



5.14 Other Findings

5.14.1 Qualifications of Radio Managers

The study found that the general managers did not necessarily have prior knowledge or training in the specific area of media management, but rather, a majority of them acquired some knowledge of media management on the job, either by engaging in seminars and fora or by gathering practical knowledge from occupying the position of general manager.

The researcher found that in appointing general managers, the owners of radio stations primarily looked out for values such as hard work, discipline, experience and most importantly, trust, at the expense of academic qualifications and educational backgrounds. The general manager of Radio Maxx disclosed that even though he is a graduate, his training was in marketing. He added that what earned him the position of general manager was the nineteen years of experience he had gathered in radio. He further indicated that he gathered all his experiences from rising through the ranks of Radio Maxx. He was first employed in 2002 as a marketer and was later moved to take the assistant marketing manager position, after which he was promoted to be the assistant programmes manager. He later assumed the position of programmes manager until he was eventually elevated to the position of general manager.

The general managers of Aseda and Spice shared similar experiences. While they had no training in media management, they had training in engineering and business administration respectively. What earned them their positions are their dedication and loyalty to the owners of the station. At Kyzz FM, the situation was not too different. While nobody held the position of general manager at the time of the study, the C.E.O. assumed the mantle. He told the researcher that he intended to groom one of the mid-level managers to fill the position of general manager. When the researcher

probed to find which of the managers he was most likely to promote to the general manager level, he disclosed that he would choose whoever learned fast. Clearly, academic qualifications did not seem to be a factor to consider in appointing a general manager.

The business manager of Empire FM is a renowned personality within the radio space in the Sekondi-Takoradi metropolis. He first entered the radio industry as a host of a brunch show on Rok FM, which is a commercial radio station in Takoradi. He then moved to Spice FM after a few years to host a drive-time show. Shortly after that, he was poached by Radio Maxx to head the Events and Promotions department. Over time, when Empire FM was established, its owners offered him the position of business manager. The business manager told the researcher that he had no formal training in media management prior to his appointment.

5.14.2 Termination of Employment

The radio stations identified some infractions that could cause them to part ways with an employee. Notable amongst them were laziness, slander and political partiality. All five radio stations valued dedication on the part of their employees towards the overall success of the station. To them, laziness could come in the form of frequent absence from work, lateness and a lack of enthusiasm. Usually, if an employee is seen to be indolent, he/she is queried and cautioned. If this approach fails to work after a certain period of time, the stations are left with no other choice than to dismiss the employee in question.

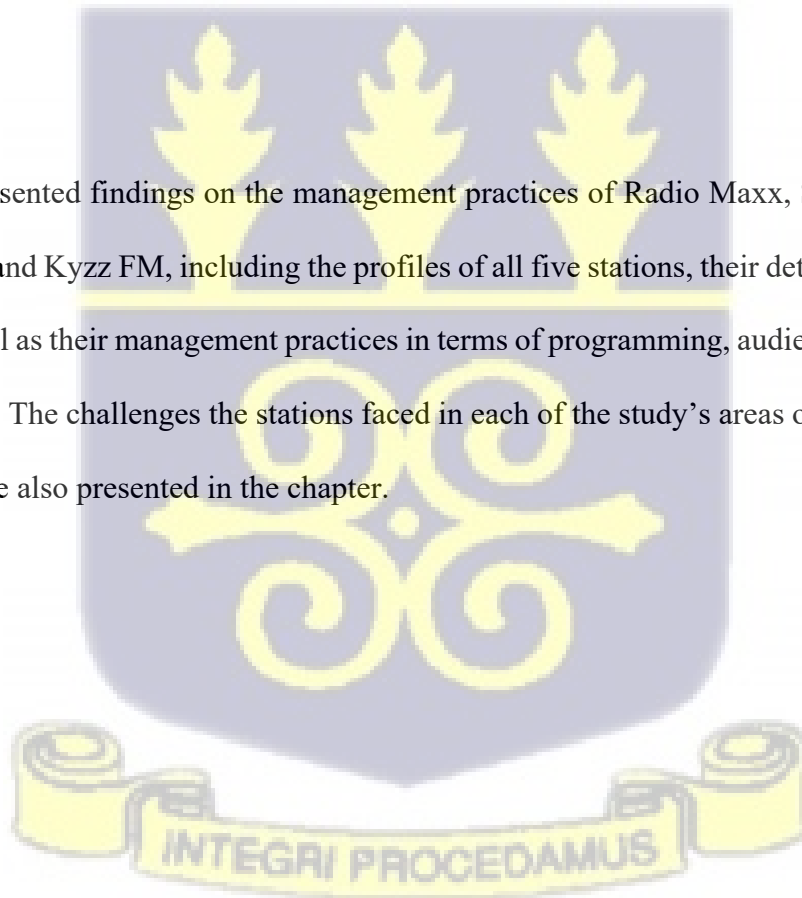
Aside from laziness, the general manager of Radio Maxx also stated that what could warrant the dismissal of an employee would be the promotion of any political party on his station. He insisted

that his station takes pride in being politically neutral and so any employee who would try to jeopardise their political impartiality risked being sacked.

Kyzz FM's C.E.O pointed out that churning out wrong, unchecked, biased information that would require the station to publicly retract and apologise would be the day that any employee will be dismissed on the spot. He explained that in the past, his station had been dragged to the police station a few times over accusations of slander against some of his programmes host which in effect, stained the reputation of the station in general. He sacked the culprit to serve as a deterrent to the other employees. Since then, he had not had to deal with such incompetence.

5.15 Summary

This chapter presented findings on the management practices of Radio Maxx, Spice FM, Empire FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM, including the profiles of all five stations, their detailed management structures as well as their management practices in terms of programming, audiences, finances and human resource. The challenges the stations faced in each of the study's areas of interest as found in the study were also presented in the chapter.



CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the findings which emerged out of the in-depth interviews, the observation and the monitoring of the airwaves, which were analysed and organised thematically. This chapter discusses those findings as they relate to the research questions, reviewed literature and the theoretical frameworks of the study.

6.2 What are the Programmes Management Practices of Private Radio Stations?

The study found that four of the selected radio stations (Radio Maxx, Empire FM, Spice FM and Kyzz FM) did not conduct research on what their audiences would or would not be interested in. Instead, the stations believed they knew what the audience liked, so they used their intuition and discretion to couch programmes to air. Rather, it was after the programmes were aired that the stations would invite listeners for feedback and ideas to modify and refine the programmes to their audiences' tastes. This finding is not in line with Amoakohene's (2004) assertion that in order to tailor programmes to meet their audiences' interests and expectations, radio stations must not resort to assumptions, but must investigate and study their audiences. Only Aseda FM indicated that it had conducted market research prior to its establishment, and the findings from their research had influenced its programme schedule, which varied slightly from the programme schedules of the other four radio stations.

Additionally, all five radio stations under study worked with a structured programming schedule. They all believed that a reasonably consistent programming structure had the ability to capture a large number of listeners. This finding confirms an earlier finding in a study by GMSIP (2011, p.

57) that when programmes are planned and consistent, they garner many audiences. The study further observed that, as posited by the market model of media as a disadvantage of a competitive media market, there is homogenised competition and so all five radio stations have undeniably similar programmes with very few variations. Not only are the programmes identical, but the times the programmes air are also very much alike, with all five stations starting the day with morning devotions, followed by news at 6 am. The study also found that even though programming schedules were adhered to, different contents were introduced to various segments of their programmes to eliminate the element of staleness and to introduce novelty to their programmes. More often than not, the radio stations took these content ideas from their listeners in order to spice up their programmes.

Conversely, the findings also revealed that the programmes do not quite reflect the philosophies of the radio stations under study as Solo-Anaeto (2015) and Ngugi and Kinyua (2014) suggest programming schedules should do. For example, Aseda FM described itself as a sports-oriented radio station, Empire FM was presented as lifestyle-inclined, Radio Maxx is entertainment-oriented, Spice FM is news-oriented and Kyzz FM is an entertainment station, yet all five radio stations had very identical programming schedules. A look at their programme schedules would not very obviously indicate what the format or the philosophy of the stations was.

The study also found that one of the most common practices of the selected private stations' programme management was strict adherence to programming policies. Programming for all five stations was guided by policies that addressed what was acceptable on the airwaves, and the ethical standards by which the radio stations were expected to operate, such as truth, fairness, accuracy,

credibility, impartiality and decency. Most of the programming policies of the selected private radio stations were found to be replicas of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) code of ethics. This finding shows that public policy has an interest in how organisations function within a society that goes beyond the market model of media's assumption that private radio stations are mainly established for their profit-making potentials.

Also, the study found that all the stations under study air the news on a daily basis, even though none of the stations produced their own news. This practice was found to confirm Ansu-Kyeremeh, Gadzekpo and Amoakohene's (2015, p. 46) finding and the GMSIP (2011, p. 73) finding that news is a staple programme of almost all radio stations in Ghana. It was also discovered that all five radio stations sourced their news from their affiliates in Accra.

Lastly, current affairs shows were also found to be staple programmes on all five stations. Spice FM and Aseda FM produced their current affairs shows locally, while the remaining three namely Empire FM, Radio Maxx and Kyzz procured their current affairs programmes from Accra. This finding proves again that even though all the five radio stations function in line with the market model to make profits, they are also mandated by the National Media Commission to function within the public sphere by mediating between the state and society by way of the airing the news and current affairs programmes to keep citizens abreast with the happenings in their society and the country as a whole. Mandatorily airing the news and current affairs programmes where private radio stations could have otherwise monetised airtime slots by broadcasting other paid programmes hinders private radio stations from strictly functioning in line with the market model of media in pursuit of profits, but enforces private radio to serve within the public sphere.

6.3 What are the Human Resource Management Practices of Private Radio Stations?

This study partly confirms Jacobs's (2016) and Tetteh's (2018) findings that effective selection of staff ensures that firms acquire employees that are highly skilled to help the company save on the costs of training. What is not quite in line with their findings is that this present study discovered that rather than skills, managers placed a lot more premium on experience. For that reason, the majority of the presenters and hosts of the selected radio stations were brought in from other radio stations and had gathered years of experience on the job. The experience that the radio staff hold, helps the radio stations to cut down the costs of training considerably. Furthermore, the interviewees indicated that radio personalities are important elements that can be used to make audiences tune in to their stations. It is for this reason too, that the management of all five radio stations sought to hire experienced presenters and hosts to draw in more listeners through the unique delivery of their programmes. This finding supports the assumption of the market model of media that posits that competition brings responsiveness. This is evident in the fact that radio owners and managers are willing to poach experienced personnel in order to satisfy their audiences and attract even more.

Apart from experience, the study also found that managers also appreciate the ability of their employees to multitask. This finding partly supports Akrofi-Quarcoo's (2013) finding that radio stations now looked out for reporters who could, for instance, develop stories, edit sound, conduct insightful interviews and handle technical equipment. It was found, however, that the ability to multitask was not a strict criterion for employment in some of the radio stations like Kyz FM and Aseda FM. To these stations, multitasking was only an added benefit.

The managers had told the researcher that they had a duty of ensuring that employees performed their assigned tasks well in order to improve productivity. One way by which the managers were able to ensure productivity in their respective stations was to encourage communication through open-door policies, where employees' ideas and challenges were discussed with their managers without fear or favour. This finding is consistent with a study by Asaari et al (2019) that found that effective communication can boost morale and improve performance. In addition to communication, the management of the stations was found to occasionally give employees some incentives in the form of cash bonuses and very commonly, food items to motivate and lift their spirits.

In the area of training, the study found that in conformity with Tetteh's (2018) finding that media firms that made employee development a priority had committed employees, all five radio stations organise some form of training for their staff members. The quality, frequency and duration of the training, however, differ. In some radio stations such as Empire FM and Spice FM, training sessions appeared more formal and organised. Staff members had the opportunity to intern elsewhere or be part of seminars organised by their headquarters and sister stations. In some other stations, such as Kyzz FM, Aseda and Radio Maxx, training was much less formal and did not involve any external parties. All in all, the managers believed that training had a direct link to the quality of work done in their respective radio stations.

With the exception of Radio Maxx, the other 4 radio stations had no part-time staff. All those recruited and hired by the stations were expected to work solely for the station and for no one else.

This finding is inconsistent with Denevan's (2014) observation that many media firms have adopted a trend of downsizing their permanent staff and are now embracing the practice of hiring part-time and contractual employees as a way of cutting down salary costs and increasing profits. For stations such as Spice FM and Empire FM that have interns and volunteers, the interns and volunteers are not classified as part of their staff members, and so they are typically not entitled to salaries and other benefits that the staff members receive. They are occasionally given stipends.

Lastly, the findings of the study also revealed that one of the ways in which the market model of media is disadvantaged in the area of human resource management is that public policy in the form of the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) which seeks to protect the welfare of employees, requires that employers give their workers least 15 days of annual leave. Across all five stations, the regulations and legislations that guide the working conditions of all employees in Ghana such as annual leave, minimum wage and nondiscriminatory treatment are adhered to. However, these regulations are adhered to in varying degrees, as per the culture of the radio stations. For instance, while some stations offer 30 days of annual leave, some others offer 21 days. While some stations allow their employees to decide how they would apportion their leave period, in some other stations, it is the station's management (not the employee) that decides how an employee's leave period can be exhausted.

6.4 What are the Audience Management Practices of Private Radio Stations?

Data revealed that with the exception of Kyzz FM, the other stations have a defined target audience that they seek to cater to, as Solo-Anaeto's (2015) study found should be done. Kyzz FM, on the other hand, seeks to broadcast to as many people as possible and for that reason, their logic is to

not put a limit to who potentially could be their audience by segmenting the public. Yet, their programming schedule has programmes that are similar to the programmes of the other stations that have clearly defined who their ideal audiences are. The interviewees of this study confirmed that indeed, audiences are the lifeblood of commercial radio stations and for that reason, all five radio stations claim to put in their maximum effort to capture a lot of listeners. They employ several schemes and practices such as organising events and doing giveaways in the quest to entice new listeners and keep their already existing audience base. This finding is very identical to what Rachmiatie et al (2020) found to be popular among radio enterprises in recent times.

Data gathered for this study showed that the consciousness of fierce competition for a sizable audience base had boosted the desire of all five radio stations to own the largest share of audiences. This was done by creating programmes that, in their opinion, are likely to excite and satisfy their listeners' needs. As the market model of media posits, as long as competitive conditions exist, media businesses that are in operation to pursue profits will meet people's needs and this is evident in this present study. Consonantly, this finding is in line with Solo-Anaeto's (2015) assertion that due to the availability of radio stations, radio stations obligatorily have to offer their best content if they want to stand a chance of attracting new listeners and maintaining old ones as well. This finding equally supports elements of the political economy of the media that show that the media market environment can influence the production and distribution of content.

The study further found the stations were willing to oblige their audiences' requests to the best of their ability. Empire FM, for instance, had reinstated a programme it had previously cancelled because it was a popular request by their audiences. Generally, the interviewees believed that so

far as they listen and respond to their audiences' needs, loyalty towards their stations would be assured. This finding is in line with the market model of media's assumption that competitive forces in the media market result in responsiveness. Constant interactions with audiences offered radio stations the opportunity to know the needs of their audiences in order to respond swiftly to them. For the stations, it was a guaranteed way of attracting high listenership.

Lastly, the study found that the stations were mindful of the language that was used on-air. The researcher found that the use of vulgar language was prohibited in their studios. Generally, the stations indicated that it was both a social and cultural imperative to refrain from the use of indecent words in order not to set examples for both their young and old listeners alike. The NMC Broadcasting Guidelines (1992, p. 2) also admonishes presenters and guests on radio to act as role models to their audiences as far as the use of appropriate language is concerned.

6.5 What are the Financial Management Practices of Private Radio Stations?

The findings confirmed that advertising is the main source of funding for private radio stations, as earlier found by Murschtez (2006) and Abdul-Basit (2017). All five stations have sales and marketing teams that are tasked to go out to scout potential advertisers and clients. The teams typically go to corporate office spaces as well as less formal places of work such as cold stores, and bookshops to persuade businesses to advertise with them.

The study also found that as a result of high competitiveness, advertising revenue for all five radio stations was no longer robust. For that reason, it was common practice for all five radio stations to negotiate and reduce their advertising rates in order to match the financial strength of their clients.

How low the stations were willing to reduce the cost of advertising differed from station to station. But a reduction in advertising charges was a way for the radio stations to not lose potential advertising deals to other stations. This confirms an assumption of the market model of media that posits that in order to beat competition, media companies are forced to develop ways to deliver goods and services at the lowest cost possible.

The study also found that given adverts of the same length, the costs differed depending on what programme the adverts aired on. It cost more to place an advert on peak programmes which are usually the current affairs shows and the drive-time shows than it would cost on any other programme aired during other times of the day. This practice was found to be consistent with an earlier finding by Denevan (2014) that the high listenership of a programme is used by radio stations as leverage to relatively raise the cost of advertising.

The findings of the study further showed that Empire FM and Spice FM had sister stations within Sekondi-Takoradi, which sought to capture another category of audiences outside of the target audiences of Empire and Spice FM. This practice is meant to rake in more income for the owners and stakeholders of the aforementioned stations. This finding is consistent with the market model of media's assumption that media companies look for opportunities to expand and sell products and compete for markets with the aim of maximising profits.

In that same light, this study found that for all five radio stations to save money without losing much revenue to high production costs, they affiliate themselves with bigger stations and relay some of their programmes, especially news and current affairs programmes. Both Aseda FM and

Kyzz FM had affiliations with Adom FM. Radio Maxx had affiliations with Joy FM, Empire FM was affiliated with Starr FM and Spice FM's affiliation was with Peace FM. This finding supports the market model of media's assumption that media organisations watch costs just like all other businesses. The practice of affiliation was found to be convenient for the radio stations because while they are not burdened with finding all the necessary resources to produce their own programmes, advertisers still pay to be promoted on the shows that are sourced from elsewhere. This practice was also found to be in conformity with Rachmiatie's (2020) finding that the need to cut costs but still boost profits had caused radio stations to seek cheaper ways of assessing radio programmes, such as subscribing to bigger media corporations to outsource some its programmes to them. However, this finding shows that Sekondi-Takoradi's creative economy is sacrificed to sustain Accra's creative economy due to the radio stations' decision to cut down costs.

In addition, the findings also revealed that it was a common financial management practice for the profits made by media firms to be invested into paying the salaries of employees, developing content, settling service bills, paying owners and stakeholders, as well as the general sustainability of the organisation. This was consistent with Murschtez' (2006, p. 7) finding on how profits are utilised by media companies.

Most importantly, the study found that even though private radio stations relied heavily on advertising to generate income, they sometimes turned down advertising offers under certain circumstances. This finding is inconsistent with the finding of an earlier study by Devenan (2014) that a way that radio stations increased profits was to accept any money that was made available through advertising. On the contrary, the finding of this present study proves that there are

situations in which the market model of media is mitigated by the radio stations' public interest mandate. This is because data showed that for any of the five radio stations to air an advertisement for a consumable product, the advertiser had to prove that the product had gone through the necessary processes spelt out by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA). Failure to prove the FDA's approval means automatic rejection of the advertising offer. So while income from advertising is important to the sustenance of commercial radio stations, they (radio stations) are charged by public policy to be mindful of the welfare of the public.

6.6 Constraints in the Management of Private Radio Stations

Just like Olasoji (2019, p. 5) had noted that media industries usually encounter issues similar to those faced by any other commercial enterprise, the study found that issues such as competition, concerns over personnel, as well as revenue generation are prevalent issues in the management of private radio stations. While some of these challenges could somehow be circumvented, others were a bit harder to overcome. The overarching constraint for all five stations in the management of their programmes is the high cost involved in producing their own content. All five stations expressed in one way or the other that producing local content is very expensive to execute. Even though they wished to produce content that directly concerned the people of Sekondi-Takoradi, they were forced to make do with content that was riddled with the happenings of Accra and its environs due to financial constraints. This constraint is supported by Denevan's (2014) finding that notes that economic factors have reduced commercial radio's role in delivering local news and homegrown local reporting because they get to acquire programmes from elsewhere at a cheaper cost.

The findings of the study also show that ensuring a steady inflow of revenue is highly threatened by the fierce competition in the media market. This was a huge roadblock to the management of private radio stations. Even though the market model of media suggests that a competitive media market is an essential indicator of a healthy media market, it has also adversely been proven to be a reason for the huge downturn in the income generation of radio stations. Other factors such as the decline in advertising and the coronavirus pandemic were amongst the many threats to the steady revenue streams of private radio stations. Radio stations now have to work harder than before to persuade potential advertisers to advertise with them. Sometimes, to win over advertisers, the stations are forced to compromise their advertising rates to accommodate their clients.

The managers also expressed that since radio has no tangible products, the impressions created by their on-air employees mean everything to their stations. This confirms Ampong's (2012) claim that human resources are the most delicate resources to manage in an organisation. The study found, however, that employee behaviour such as lack of dedication and apathy were serious challenges which have the ability to directly impede the progress of radio stations. Almost all the stations complained that some members of their staff put very minimal effort into their work, took much longer time than needed to complete tasks, were typically uninterested in learning new things and would be visibly angry when they were being corrected. What rather seemed important to them was to make money at the end of each month and go home.

As per the findings of this study, the radio stations had no definite way of measuring their audiences other than equating their audience base to the number of phone-ins they received during a show and also on the audience turnout at events. This confirms Richter's (2006) position that

audience measurement could be tricky. He adds that a more difficult group to measure is the inactive audiences. Radio stations may have much more or much fewer audiences than they presume. While some loyal audience members may have never called into a live show, some one-off listeners may have called the station at some point. Such a situation was likely to distort the measurement and the management of audiences. Advertisers, for example, understandably preferred to advertise with whichever station was drawing the most listeners. The stations usually have to demonstrate how large their audience base is and how well they are managed, to convince potential advertisers to work with them.

6.7 Management Structures of Private Radio Stations

Radio Maxx, Spice FM, Empire FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM acknowledged that management was required for the success of every organisation. For this reason, all five stations had a selected group of people with diverse capacities coming together to form a management structure that was charged with taking decisions and directing the radio stations in ways that would be beneficial to them. This finding is consistent with Albarran's (2002) statement that management in the media involves a variety of typical functions roles and skills, and is carried out at different levels.

The study equally found that the management structures that exist within all five radio stations are such that, decision-making is concentrated in the hands of the members of top management. Employees who were faced with the need to make spontaneous decisions still had to do so in consultation with senior members of the stations. This finding confirms Beleslin and Ratković-Njegovan's (2018, p. 66) observation that media companies are typically organised based on a top-down pyramid type.

Even though the composition of the management structure differs from station to station, Redmond (2006) posits that the ultimate overseeing of the smooth running of a radio company is put in the hands of an executive who is known as the “media manager.” The study found that that was not the case for all five stations. At Radio Maxx, Spice FM and Aseda FM, the individual who acts in the capacity of overseeing the running of the station is referred to as “general manager.” At Empire FM, the title is “business manager.” At Kyzz FM, the portfolio of media manager did not exist altogether at the time this present study was being carried out, so the Chief Executive Officer of the station had taken up the function of seeing to the day-to-day running of the activities of the station. Every responsibility required of a media manager to perform was handled by the C.E.O.

The study found that none of those who managed the radio stations under study had any training in media management prior to being made managers. This finding confirms GMSIP’s (2009) findings that most heads of radio stations did not have training in media or communication-related fields. However, the study shows that they have been able to learn the skill of management by occupying their managerial positions over the years. Some others have had the opportunity to take management courses to help them improve their skills.

The researcher draws upon the P-O-L-C framework propounded by Carpenter, Bauer and Erdogan (2009) to discuss and expand on the functions of the general managers of the respective radio stations under study. The study found that while none of the managers of the private radio stations distinctively knew the functions of management as posited by the P-O-L-C framework, they were all able to describe their tasks which were very much in line with the functions of management

that the framework proposed. For instance, the business manager of Empire FM explained that he was responsible for drawing up programmes that their audiences would like, he verified the resources available to produce and broadcast the programme and he decided where the programme would be placed on the schedule so as to reach its intended audiences. He also added that it was his duty to determine the best person to host programmes as well as who the contributors and resource persons should be in order to contact them in good time. He was also in charge of directing members of staff to execute their tasks, and ensuring that all the station's plans were followed. While he failed to label his tasks along the elements of the P-O-L-C framework because he was not privy to the framework, the description of his tasks identifies with the elements of planning, organising, leading and controlling that the framework posits. This finding supports Parker and Ritson's (2005) argument that if we ask a manager when he is organising, or how much organising he has been doing, he would very likely not know.

6.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the management practices of the selected private radio stations in the areas of programming, audience management, financial management and human resource management, as well as the challenges that came about while executing these practices. The basis of the discussions was the data obtained from the general managers and two other employees of the radio stations, as well as the research questions, related literature and the underpinning theories of the study. It was apparent that the radio stations had some peculiar experiences and situations that were station-specific, even though some of the practices also cut across all five stations. The study also showed that all five radio stations were heavily dependent on advertising for funding.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter comprises three parts. The first part provides the key findings of the study, as relevant to the study's objectives and research questions. In the second part, the limitations of the study are presented. The final part provides recommendations and suggested directions for future research into media management practices.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

The study found that each radio station had a management structure made up of individuals who did not necessarily have any training or educational background in media management or any related field. The management structure included heads of departments, and occasionally the owners and shareholders of the radio organisations, who together took strategic decisions on how the station should operate and what practices to adopt. Apart from Kyzz FM, which at the time of the study, had no general manager, all the remaining four stations had an individual acting in the capacity of general manager and was charged to oversee that the decisions that were taken were duly followed.

In exploring the programmes management practices of private radio stations, it was found that the existence of many other radio organisations which came about as a result of the liberalisation of the media, had driven all five radio stations to broadcast what they believed to be compelling programmes in order to attract more listeners and beat competition within the media market. Also, all the stations sought to involve their audiences in their programmes by making provisions for

phone-in segments on the majority of their live shows. This helped the stations to tweak their programmes based on the requests of their audiences. The stations also sought to bring newness to their already existing programmes by alternating the contents of the programme as well as the resource persons who were invited to contribute to the shows.

Findings showed that in the area of financial management, all the stations depended on advertising as their principal source of funding. However, as revenue from advertising had dwindled over the years, radio stations had found other ways of income generation such as events organising, sponsorships, as well as putting out content on social media which could bring in some money depending on how many views they got. In the case of Empire FM and Spice FM, the owners, in their pursuit of an avenue to expand and gain more revenue, had established other radio stations within the metropolis to capture other segments of the public.

Allocation of funds was a very important aspect of financial management for all the stations. Again, the payment of salaries and services were priorities of all stations. Ensuring that salaries were paid on time, on the one hand, made employees feel valued and appreciated, and on the other hand, made it easier for the stations to demand hard work that yielded results for the stations. Payment of bills and services on time ensured that the stations had no major mishaps or drawbacks in their operations. For all the selected radio stations, a way to reduce costs was to affiliate themselves with other stations, especially in Accra, to acquire some of their programmes. This way, the issue of high production cost was minimised, and advertising revenue was still garnered from such programmes.

As it pertained to human resource management, all the selected radio stations cherished employees who had garnered a wealth of experience from working in the radio industry. For all managers, no amount of education or skill could compare to experience. For this reason, a lot of their on-air employees such as presenters, reporters, show hosts and disc jockeys (DJ) had been poached from other radio stations.

All the stations claimed that some form of training was organised periodically for their staff so as to develop and sharpen their skills, keep them abreast with new trends and also to bring out the best in them. Additionally, staff members were entitled to an annual leave which lasted between 21 to 30 days across all five radio stations.

As a way to lift spirits and increase productivity, the managers of the stations said that they maintained cordial relationships with their employees, which enabled them to open up to them on any challenges, ideas and suggestions the employees may have. But beyond friendliness and cordiality, the managers said they motivated their employees by occasionally giving them bonuses both in cash and in kind.

Audience management is a very important aspect of radio because, audiences are, as Doyle (2013) puts it, the main currency for many media companies. For that matter, the stations put in great effort to attract a large audience size. The radio stations sought to achieve this aim by broadcasting programmes that they believed would satisfy their audiences, in order to maintain them and also pull new ones. Apart from airing programmes that had the ability to keep audiences glued to their stations, the stations also used schemes like giveaways where lucky listeners stood the chance of

winning gifts for listening and engaging with the stations' programmes, all in an effort to lure listeners.

As a way of identifying and analysing their audiences, the stations usually made provisions for phone-ins, where listeners called in to live shows, disclosed where they were calling from and expressed what they liked and disliked about the programmes and the station in general. Events were also found to be a great opportunity for radio stations to interact with audiences. For most radio stations, event turnouts were a sure way to gauge their audience base. Additionally, meet-and-greet sessions at these events also created the opportunity for interactions with audiences. From such encounters, radio stations had a fair idea of who they catered to and what was best suited for them.

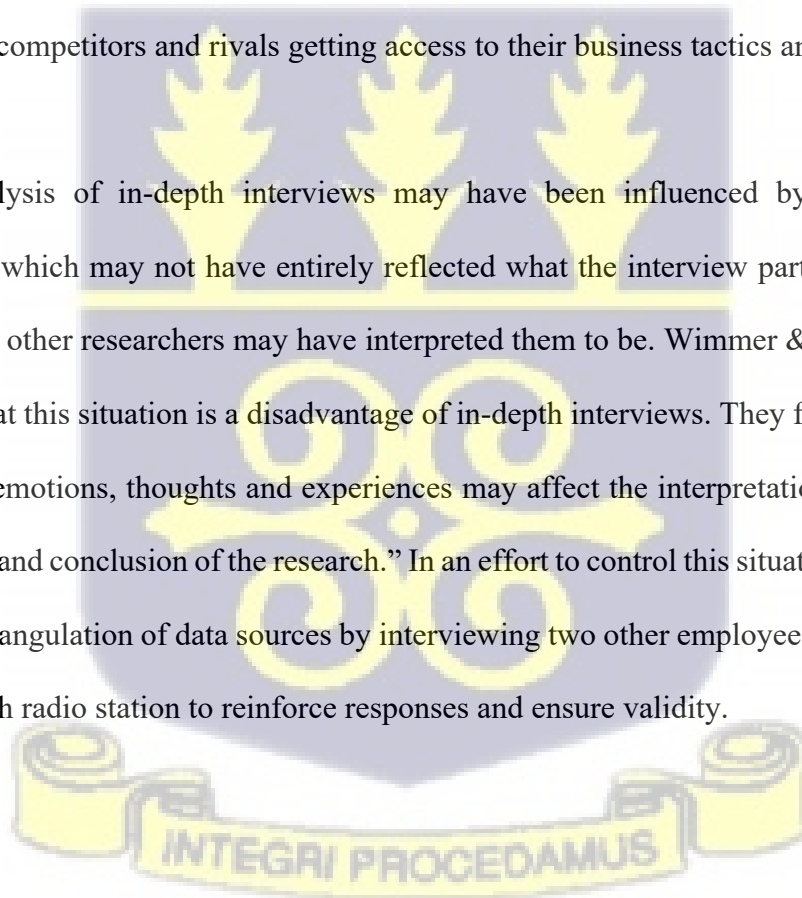
7.3 Limitation of the Study

NCA data indicates that there are twenty-four operational private radio stations located in Sekondi-Takoradi as of the second quarter of 2020. However, the findings of this study are based on the five private stations that consented to participate in the study. Therefore, the findings of this study reflect the reality of Radio Maxx, Spice FM, Empire FM, Aseda FM and Kyzz FM.

On the flip side, this limitation presents interesting opportunities for further studies to build upon what has been established; For instance, another study could also be conducted with a larger number of private radio stations, to prove or disprove the researcher's findings in this present research.

Secondly, the researcher was unable to access the programming, recruitment and advertising policies of any of the five radio stations which would have helped to either refute or confirm the practices the stations claimed to employ pertaining particularly to programme management, human resource management and their advertising decisions, and whether the contents of the policies were reflected in the actual practices of the stations. For this reason, the document analyses for this study were not extensive. The situation of low retrievability is a challenge that has been acknowledged by Yin (1994) as a very common occurrence that is associated with document analysis. Beyond the challenge of retrieving documents for analyses, the researcher noticed that the interviewees from all five stations were generally not forthcoming with information, which could be a result of the fear of their competitors and rivals getting access to their business tactics and secrets.

Lastly, the analysis of in-depth interviews may have been influenced by the researcher's interpretations, which may not have entirely reflected what the interview participants sought to express, or what other researchers may have interpreted them to be. Wimmer & Dominick (2011, p. 139) admit that this situation is a disadvantage of in-depth interviews. They further explain that "a researcher's emotions, thoughts and experiences may affect the interpretation of data, as well as the outcomes and conclusion of the research." In an effort to control this situation, the researcher employed the triangulation of data sources by interviewing two other employees in addition to the managers of each radio station to reinforce responses and ensure validity.



7.4 Conclusions

This study set out to explore the management practices that private radio stations in Sekondi-Takoradi employed in order to survive in a highly saturated radio landscape. Private radio is an essential component of a liberal media landscape, where the freedom to operate for economic gains is permitted. Literature on the political economy of the media assert that private radio stations are businesses that are established with the main purpose of making profits. The Market Model of Media propounded by Croteau and Hoynes further highlights our understanding of why managers of private radio stations would choose to use certain working methods so far as it helps to achieve their principal goal of maximising profits. However, this study confirms that even in a deregulated, profit-driven media market, private radio stations are expected to operate within the boundaries of public policy and public interest. The study discovered that all five stations were conscious of the public policy demands of them as disseminators of information and shapers of public opinion. For this reason, the stations adhered to the set public policy boundaries.

For each of the specific areas of management that the study explored, managers of the respective radio stations sought to use very minimal costs to achieve maximum gains and increase profitability but were also bound by public policies to protect and serve the public interest. For instance, in programme management, the stations sometimes relayed programmes from elsewhere, which was a way to circumvent the high costs involved in producing their own local content. Yet, they pitched these acquired programmes to advertisers and sponsors, who at the end of the day still paid the stations for airtime slots on such programmes. However, all radio stations, irrespective of their type of ownership, are mandated by the National Media Commission to air the news daily to educate and inform the general public. This obligation could be seen as an impediment to the

profit-seeking goals of private radio stations and by extension, the market model of media because where the stations could have only aired programmes which are sure to entice advertisers and make them money, they are compelled by the NMC to make time to air the news

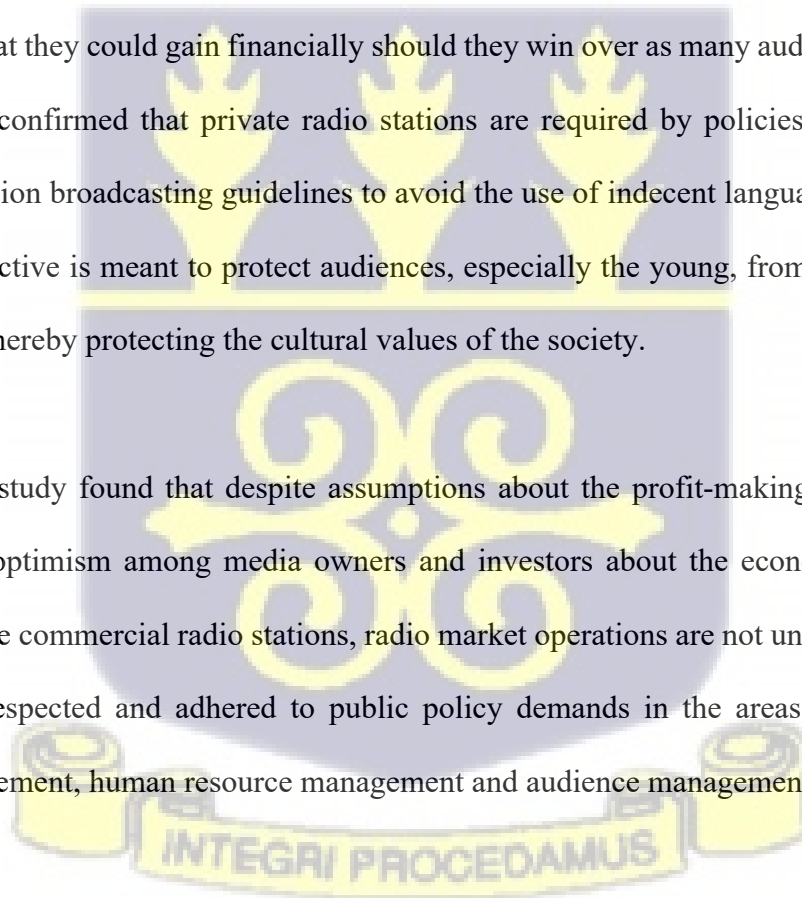
In human resource management, the selected stations were highly interested in hiring on-air employees who were not novices. They sought to employ only experienced people to host shows and present programmes, some of who did not stay long on the job. This way, much money, time and resources would not have to go into developing and training staff. No matter how well on-air personalities were able to get audiences glued to a station, public policy in the form of the Labour Act (2003) demands that employees be given at least 15 days off work, in the form of annual leave. Lister, Mitchell, and O'Shea (2010, p. 222) stipulate that a radio station, like any other business, is fully covered by regulations and legislation that guarantee fair working conditions. This study found that the employees of the radio stations were entitled to annual leave and salaries. The study also found that the stations were bound by section 5.9 of the Ghana National Media Policy to train their employees. This directive was adhered to by the stations, and periodically put sections of their staff through some form of training, usually seminars and workshops, to sharpen their skills.

In the area of financial management, the study found that even though all the radio stations rely heavily on advertising revenue for sustenance, the media's responsibility to protect the public interest is paramount even for private radio stations which are generally profit-driven. They are mandated to ensure that the products and services they advertise are credible and safe for use. For instance, most of the private radio stations that were under study informed the researcher that adverts for consumable products had to be first approved by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA)

before they would be aired. If the advertisers could not prove that their products had been approved, the stations would turn down the advertising offer.

Audience management was a very crucial area for all the radio stations. For that reason, radio stations were willing to go all out to lure people to listen to them. One way they achieved this was to organise giveaways. Some of the most popular prizes to be won were the stations' branded merchandise like t-shirts and keyholders, as well as other gift items by their sponsors. The stations were willing to do giveaways because they acknowledged that much more could be made if they were able to capture many more audiences. In other words, give away prizes were nothing compared to what they could gain financially should they win over as many audiences as possible. The study also confirmed that private radio stations are required by policies like the National Media Commission broadcasting guidelines to avoid the use of indecent language and vulgarities on air. This directive is meant to protect audiences, especially the young, from being exposed to indecency and thereby protecting the cultural values of the society.

Ultimately, the study found that despite assumptions about the profit-making intentions of the media and the optimism among media owners and investors about the economic prospects of setting up private commercial radio stations, radio market operations are not unmitigated. All five radio stations respected and adhered to public policy demands in the areas of programming, financial management, human resource management and audience management.



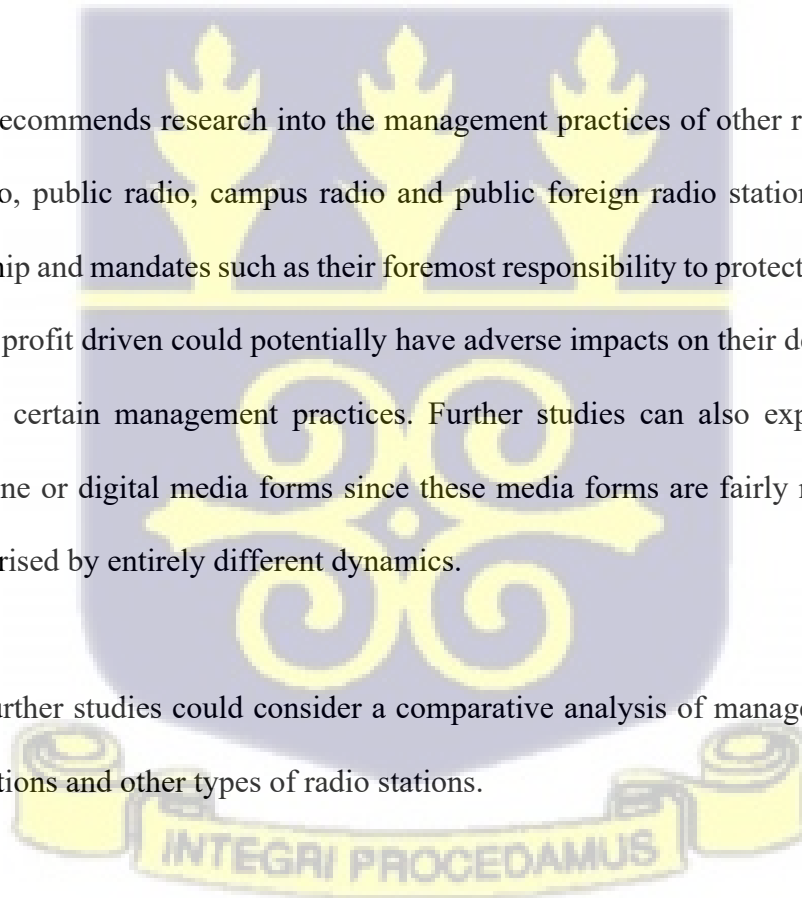
7.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings that arose from this current study, the need for further investigations into other areas would be highly desirable.

Because this present study focused on the management practices of some selected private radio stations in the specific areas of programmes management, audience management, human resource management and financial management, it is recommended that the next line of further research would be to explore the management practices of many other private radio stations in Ghana, as the findings of this study cannot be generalised due to its small sample size.

The study also recommends research into the management practices of other radio types such as community radio, public radio, campus radio and public foreign radio stations. Their different types of ownership and mandates such as their foremost responsibility to protect the public interest as against being profit driven could potentially have adverse impacts on their decision to adopt or otherwise reject certain management practices. Further studies can also explore management practices of online or digital media forms since these media forms are fairly new in Ghana and may be characterised by entirely different dynamics.

Alternatively, further studies could consider a comparative analysis of management practices of private radio stations and other types of radio stations.



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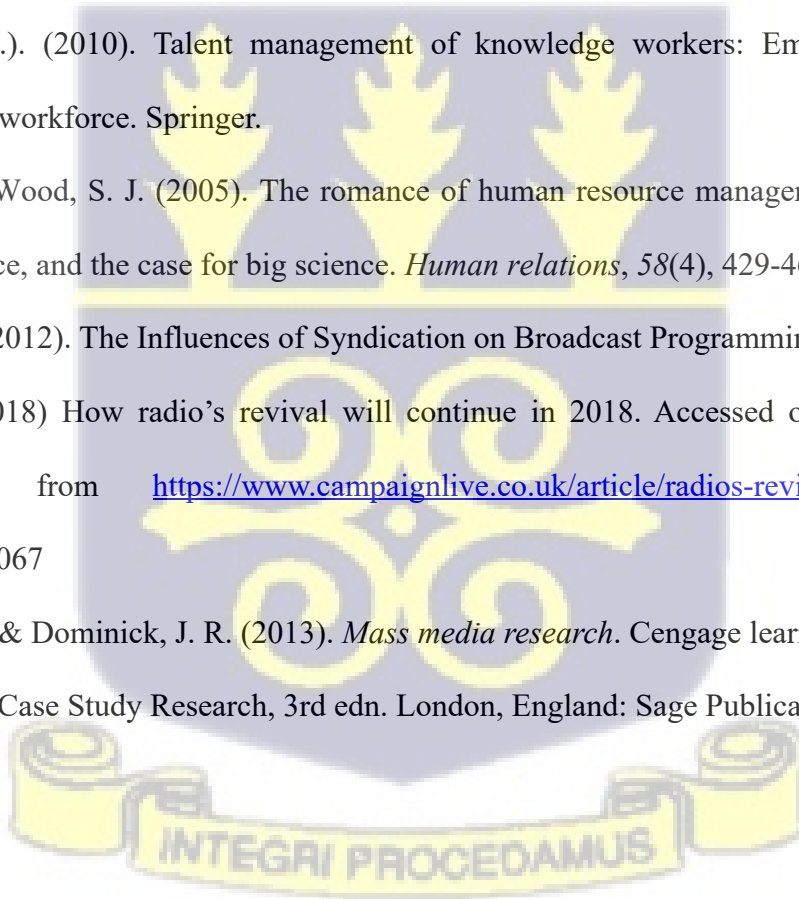
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PROGRAMMING SCHEDULES (MONDAY)

Figure 6: Programme Schedule of Radio Maxx

	Name of Programme	Type of Programme	Time
MONDAY	Voice of America	Talkshow	12am-3am
	Maxx Morning Bells	Devotional	3am- 6am
	A.M News	News	6am- 7am
	Orange Discourse	Socio-Political talk show	7am- 10am
	Local News	News	10am-10:30am
	Brunch show	Music	10:30am- 12pm
	News	News	12pm-1pm
	Christian Message	Religious	1pm-2pm
	Local News	News	2pm-2:30pm
	Overdrive	Drive time show	2:30pm- 6pm
	News file	News	6pm-7pm
	Music	Music	7pm- 9pm
	Slow jams	Music	9pm- 12am

Figure 7: Programme Schedule of Spice FM

	Name of Programme	Type of Programme	Time
MONDAY	Adekyee mu nsem	Socio-political talkshow	5:45am- 10am
	Centre Sports	Sports show	10am-12pm
	News at 12	News	12pm-1pm
	Gospel Express	Religious	1pm-2:30pm
	Keteke	Drive time show	2:30pm- 6pm
	News	News	6pm-7pm
	Efie ne Fie	Music	7pm-10pm
	DJ's Corner	Highlife Music	10pm-12am
	Automation	Gospel music	12am- 5:45am

Figure 8: Programme schedule of Empire FM

	Name of Programme	Type of Programme	Time
MONDAY	In His Presence	Devotional	4am- 6am
	News	News	6am-6:30am
	Morning Star	Political talk show	6:30am- 10am
	Brunch Mix	Music	10am- 12pm
	News	News	12pm-12:30pm
	Empire Sports	Sports show	12:30pm-2pm
	Empire Drive	Drive time show	2pm- 6pm
	News	News	6pm-7pm
	Ekwan so bokoo	Music (secular)	7pm-9pm
	Onyame tumi so	Sermon (Religious)	9pm-12am
		Nyame n'ayeyi	Gospel music

Figure 9: Programme Schedule of Aseda FM

	Name of Programme	Type of Programme	Time
MONDAY	Adom News	News	6am-6:20am
	Sports Morning Show	Sports show	6:20am- 10am
	Work and Safety	Music	10am- 12pm
	Adom News	News	12pm-1pm
	Fire4Fire	Sports	1pm-1:30pm
	Preaching	Sermon (Religious)	1:30pm- 2pm
	Ekosiisen	Political talkshow	2pm-6pm
	Adom News	News	6pm-7pm
	Aseda sports	Sports show	7pm-8pm
	Preaching	Religious	8pm-6am

Figure 10: Programme Schedule of Kyzz FM

	Name of Programme	Type of Programme	Time
MONDAY	News	News	6am-6:20am
	Ade akye yen bia	Current affairs show	6:20am- 10am
	Ayeyi bre	Music	10am- 12pm
	Midday News	News	12pm-1pm
	Sekunde Sports	Sports show	1pm-3pm
	Ayekoo Ayekoo	Drive time show	3pm- 6pm
	Evening News	News	6pm-7pm
	Music	Music	7pm-10pm
	Devotion	Religious	10pm-5am

Compiled by the researcher



APPENDIX B

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dear participant,

The purpose of this interview is to explore the management practices employed by your radio station to ensure its sustainability and survival in a media environment that is highly saturated. We would be grateful if you could respond to the questions as honestly as possible. Rest assured that your responses will be kept confidential. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION

- a. Was your radio station established?
- b. What category of radio station do you run?
- c. Within what radius does your station operate? (Reach of the station)
- d. What is the primary language of broadcast. What is your secondary language of broadcast?
- e. What is your station's mission?
- f. Describe the management structure of your station
- g. Where do you stand within this structure?
- h. Describe the day-to-day functions you perform in this station
- i. What makes your station different from other stations?



PROGRAMMES MANAGEMENT

- a. What is your programming philosophy?
- b. How much time do you devote to each of the following: education, information, entertainment, culture, politics.
- c. What are your staple programmes?
- d. How do you generate programming concepts?
- e. What is your station's programming policy?
- f. Do you have regular programme schedules?
- g. What are your challenges with programming?

AUDIENCE MANAGEMENT

- a. Who are your target audiences?
- b. How do you engage your audience?
- c. In what ways do you sustain listenership?
- d. What are your audience feedback mechanisms?
- e. What are your challenges managing with your audience?

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- a. How many staff members and volunteers does your station have?
- b. What is your recruitment policy?
- c. What is the minimum requirement for recruiting staff and volunteers?
- d. How often do employees undergo training?
- e. How do you ensure your staff are paid on time?

- f. General conditions of service- How are your staff motivated?
- g. What is the duration of leave for your staff?
- h. What are your challenges with managing staff volunteers?

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- a. What are your main sources of funding?
- b. How do you secure sponsorship?
- c. Who are your main sponsors?
- d. How much revenue does advertising generate for your station?
- e. How do you disburse your revenue?
- f. What are your constraints in financial management?

