

**DIVERSITY IN THE PROGRAMMING OF A MEDIA CONGLOMERATE: A STUDY
OF MULTIMEDIA BROADCASTING CORPORATION (MBC)**

BY

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**THIS THESIS/DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA,
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DECLARATION

I declare that except for references to other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is as a result of my own research conducted at the Department of Communication Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, under the supervision of Ms Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo.

.....
Ms. Sarah Akrofi-Quarcoo

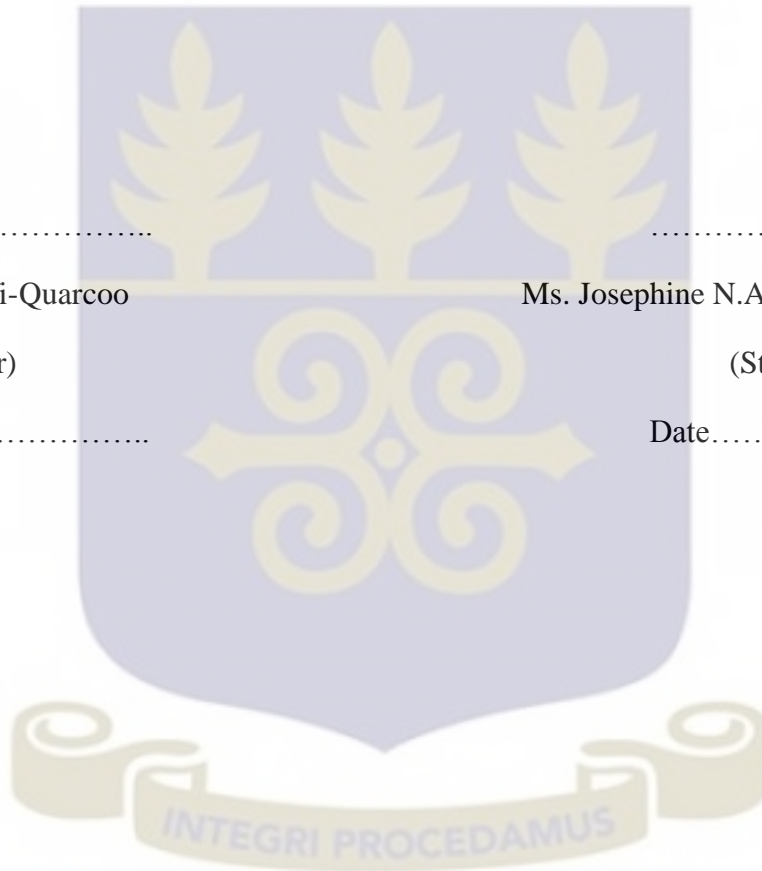
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Mr Kenneth Addy in recognition of his faith, support, encouragement and time towards the achievement of my educational goals. You pushed me hard and you are deeply acknowledged and appreciated. Love always.



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My utmost thanks go to the Almighty God for His numerous blessings, mercies and love. I also owe a plethora of thanks and deep appreciation especially to my father, Mr Kwesi Thompson who has supported me immensely in my life and especially in my education and to my beloved mother, Ms Nana Adwoa Arko for her prayers and support and to my brother Mr Kofi Thompson who encouraged and cheered me up when I felt fed up. I love you guys so very much.

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ABSTRACT

The changing patterns of media ownership as a result of media liberalization and technological advancements have been globally acknowledged. Of particular interest is the growing phenomenon of media concentration in the hands of a few owners who are becoming conglomerates in the sector and the implications on the development of programming diversity. The study examined the programming patterns of three radio stations *Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM* owned by an emerging conglomerate, Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation (MBC). Two of the stations, *Joy FM* and *Hitz FM* are located in Accra while the third, *Luv FM* is located in Kumasi. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the extent of diversity in their programming. The other objective was to find out the programming policy of the company. The study was conceptualised within the framework of the media pluralism theory.

A mixed method approach of content analysis, documentary analysis and in-depth interview was employed for the study. A total of 199 recorded programmes from the three stations covering an entire week and from the stations' advertising block cards, were content analysed. These were augmented with an in-depth interview with the programmes manager of MBC. The study found that while some content was the same for especially *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*, *Hitz FM* was totally different in terms of orientation as it remained a music and entertainment station even after its acquisition. However, data showed diversity in the format, type and pattern of the programming of *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*. It was observed that *Joy FM* had a wider range and variety of programmes than the other two stations. The study also found that all three stations devoted more time to programming than to advertising.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter begins with a definition of a media conglomerate and how the phenomenon develops along with some global examples. It further discusses the consequences of conglomeration and the issue of media concentration. The chapter also examines the media scene in Ghana, changes in ownership as a result of the liberalization of the airwaves and a history of the organization under study, Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation (MBC). Furthermore chapter one presents the problem the study seeks to examine, the objectives and the research questions it sought to address. The significance of the study as well as the operational definitions of the key terms are also presented in this chapter.

1.1 Background

A media conglomerate refers to a large media company or business that owns several media companies such as television, radio, publishing, movies and the internet. It also refers to media institutions or media groups that have come together to form a whole (Steven 2004). Conglomeration is a type of ownership structure resulting from changing ownership patterns. Across the world, ownership patterns and structures are changing as a result of liberalization of the media, deregulation of telecommunication, technology and privatisation.

Some of the world's biggest media conglomerates are found in the United States. Six of them, known as the Big Six, dominate the global media industry. These are General Electric, Walt Disney, News Corporation, Time Warner, Viacom and CBS. These media industries alone own in total, over a thousand television stations, cable networks, radio stations, music

and book publishing companies as well as production companies and numerous websites. These media conglomerates have grown in size through acquisitions, purchases and mergers with their competitors (www.freepress.net).

In Ghana, the restoration of constitutional rule in 1992 provided for the liberalization of the media within the context of a democracy and a free market economy. The liberalization of the airwaves has resulted in various ownership structures – public, private/commercial and community. Figures from the National Communications Authority as at the last quarter of 2011 show that there were 316 authorized radio stations in the country out of which 240 were in operation. Two hundred and seventeen out of the 240 authorized stations were private/commercial radio stations while 36, 51 and 12 were public, community and campus radio stations respectively. There were 28 licensed television stations as well as 1,500 registered newspapers circulating in the country as at the last quarter of 2011 (National Communications Authority, 2011). There were also several regular newspapers, magazines, and direct satellite broadcasting services. In a space of 19 years about five organizations have grown to own the top rating radio and television stations in Accra alone.

A number of these television and radio stations are owned by some media conglomerates in the country. Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) blazed the trail with the ownership of several radio stations *Joy FM*, *Luv FM*, *Adom FM*, *Nhyira FM*, *Asempa FM* to name a few and now owns a cable television network, *MultiTV*. Kencity Media Ghana also owns three radio stations, two newspapers and a television station. Another media conglomerate, Global Media Alliance owns *Happy FM*, *YFM YFM Takoradi*, a television station, *Etv Ghana* and cinemas, *Silverbird Cinemas* as well as a bookstore, *Silverbird Lifestyle Store*. The Despite Group of Companies owns *Peace FM*, *OK FM*, *Neat FM* among several other media products. Apart from owning media outlets, these organizations also have affiliations with

radio stations in other regions through which they air syndicated programmes. Evidenced by the global example, these media companies in Ghana have grown in size through acquisitions, purchases and mergers with their competitors (See page 4 for examples of such acquisitions, purchases and mergers). With conglomeration taking place, few companies become bigger and own several businesses. Considering the important role that a free and diverse media plays in a functioning democracy, the major concern that arises from concentration of media in the hands of few corporations is that there are very few media owners in the mainstream that reach out to the publics. This has consequences on the diversity of voices in mainstream media. Few media owners can affect the perspectives of many (Shah, 2009).

Concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few has its merits and demerits. According to Downing (2004) when media ownership is concentrated, a number of undesirable consequences follow including the fact that public interest is sacrificed for commercial interests. Downing goes on to say that healthy market based competition is absent, leading to slower innovation and increased prices (Downing, 2004). The advantage however is that according to Downing, resources from the group could be invested in providing quality programming.

1.2 Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)

Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) is a Ghanaian media and entertainment company established in 1995. It is the largest private commercial media group in Ghana. MBC is considered a conglomerate because the company is horizontally integrated with six of Ghana's leading radio stations, six on-line media sites, a multi-channel digital television service and a marketing and events management division.

In 1995, it was authorized to operate the first private radio station in Ghana, *Joy FM*. The following year, the group launched myjoyonline.com, the first Ghanaian based news site streaming live radio. The site currently streams three radio stations (*Joy FM*, *Adom FM* and *Asempa FM*). In 1997, *Luv FM* was launched in Kumasi. Four years later, the Multimedia Group acquired *Groove FM* which was then, a rhythms and blues(R&B) station and reformatted to a local Akan language station; it was rebranded as *Adom FM* and relocated from Osu to Tema.

In 2002, Multimedia reorganized and formed a corporate centre where the radio stations became decentralized business units. Two years later the group acquired *Invisible FM* in Kumasi and the following year in 2005 re-launched *Invisible FM* as *Nhyira FM*. In 2006, Multimedia acquired *Radio Hitz*, which was a local language music station. The station was reformatted and rebranded as *Hitz FM*, an English music and entertainment station targeted at middle to upper income listeners.

A year later in 2007, MBC acquired *Asempa FM* and launched it as a local all talk and sports station. The station also boasts of being the only one in the country with a sports morning show. Later on that same year, www.mypaddies.com was launched as Ghana's first social networking site and then in 2009, Multimedia launched Ghana's first multi-channel digital television, MultiTV, which currently operates 20 radio and television channels.

MBC has a wide range of brands that seek to cater for various audiences. *Joy FM*, for instance, is an English language station that targets middle to upper income listeners. The station's format consists of news and talk programming interspersed with entertaining music based programmes. *Luv FM* also targets middle to upper income listeners. JOY Marketing Services (JMS) which is the events management and marketing division of the group,

conceptualizes, organizes and manages some of the biggest and most sought after events in the country (www.multimediaghana.com). The venture into events management, which is not a mainstream media product, shows the horizontally integrated nature of MBC where according to Croteau and Hoynes (2003), large portfolios of television stations, magazines and radio stations mutually support one another's operations. Concentration of media ownership has the potential of homogenizing media content and concentration of media power. Hence, the diversity of voices in the public sphere could be affected in a seeming pluralistic media environment.

1.3 Problem Statement

In Ghana, the growing incidence of media concentration in a few hands, resulting from media liberalization has provoked concerns about pluralism and programming diversity. Some media scholars (Montgomery, 2007; Williams and Brown, 2005; Blevins 2002; Ahlkvist and Faulkner, 2002; Chambers, 2003) argue that the consolidation of media ownership results in the homogenization of media content and affect the diversity of voices. These scholars argue that the phenomenon often results in the same content throughout the various outlets of one conglomerate and that the fact that a wide array of media may imply a rich variety of entertainment and dissemination of information, may not necessarily be the case. Conversely, Berry and Waldfogel (2001); Rogers and Woodbury (1996); Williams, Brown and Alexander (2002); and Chipty (2007) assert that the consolidation of media ownership does not diminish diversity but rather common ownership results in more diversity.

According to Karppinen (2012), with more information available in public than ever before, concerns for media pluralism and diversity appear to have become not only increasingly contested, but for some, analytically obsolete or anachronistic. The question therefore remains -

Does plurality translate into diversity of voices and opinions? This study sought to investigate which of the two dominant views on pluralism and diversity holds in the Ghanaian context using MBC as case. This study examines content of three radio stations owned by MBC. The purpose is to find out the extent of diversity in their programming.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following are the main objectives of the study:

- 1 To examine the programming of three stations (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*) and establish if there is diversity in terms of:
 - Types of programmes aired by the three stations;
 - Programme format of the three stations;
 - Title of programmes on the stations; and
 - Advertising types on the stations.
- 2 To find out the programming policy of Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation.

1.5 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1 Would there be diversity in the type and format of programmes aired on the three stations owned by MBC (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*)?
- 2 Did the three stations under the same ownership devote more time to programmes than to advertising?
- 3 What are the similarities and differences in the type of advertisements on the three stations?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Media conglomeration is a new trend in Ghana and it has the potential to develop during the coming years, given the liberal and plural media environment. Due to its novelty, it has attracted little or no research attention. Therefore, barely any literature exists on the subject in the context of Ghana. The present study relied extensively on literature in Western countries to shed light on the subject. The study is expected to provide empirical understanding of how media conglomerates influence programme diversity in the mass media in Ghana. MBC is a bouquet of stations with literate radio being their dominant medium. A cursory look at their English speaking radio stations suggests that they would have the same audience. Pluralism looks only at the numbers, but the minimalist interpretation of pluralism goes beyond numbers to content. Finding out about the possibility that, unregulated as it is, radio pluralism in Ghana is failing to produce the expected variety in content as suggested by the minimalists is the concern of this study.

This study aimed to help, among other things, regulatory bodies in the media streamline rules and regulations so as to avoid the homogenization of voices in the mass media. It is the expectation of the researcher that the study will generate research interest on the subject to complement the efforts to tackle the issue of programme diversity in the age of media concentration and contribute to knowledge in the context of Ghana.

1.7 Definitions of Key Variables

The following are the operational definitions used:

- **Media Conglomerate**

A company that owns large numbers of companies in various mass media such as television, radio, publishing, movies, and the internet.

- **Programming**

This is the determination of what programmes to put on air and at what points in the programme schedule (Chester *et al*, 1978).

- **Programming Pattern**

Programming patterns refer to the type, format of broadcast in relation to time of broadcast.

- **Programme Format**

This refers to the genre and style of a programme (e.g. talk show, news, documentary and mixed bag).

- **Programme Type**

This refers to the nature of a programme (e.g. music, sports, religious, etc).

- **Programming Diversity**

This refers to programming content defined by differences in terms format, type and pattern.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study with a discussion on the phenomenon of media conglomeration and how it occurs, how the liberalization of the media has changed the media landscape in Ghana and the phenomenon of plurality and its consequences on diversity. The chapter also presents the objectives of the study, the research questions, significance of the study and the operational definition of key terms in the study. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework within which the study was conceptualized and as well as a review of related studies to put the study in context.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study. The concept of media pluralism theory and some studies which are related to this study are also discussed.

2.1 Media Pluralism

Proponents of the media pluralism concept such as Montgomery (2007), Berry and Waldfogel (2001) and Chipty (2007) argue that media owners are generally responsible in the way that they manage information because media content is mainly shaped by consumer demand in the marketplace (Karppinen 2012). They therefore only give the buying public what they want. Media pluralists assert that different media within the same conglomerate can still produce programme diversity if legislation ensures the avoidance of homogeneity of content and audiences. For them, a government has the power to intervene to address any problems that might arise with diversity of media programming content.

In Ghana, while the national frequency allocation plan of the National Media Commission clearly defines the geographical coverage areas of radio stations in furtherance of pluralism, the National Media Policy (2001) is rather silent on the issue of content. The policy does not place any sanctions on radio stations that go beyond the required geographical areas either. Media conglomerates in Ghana therefore have the laxity to do whatever they please with regard to content and programming. It therefore remains to be seen if indeed the content output will allow more diverse voices to be heard as well as to cater to the various information and entertainment needs of its publics.

Pluralists also argue that concentration of ownership is a product of economic rationality rather than political or sinister motives. It is driven by the need to keep costs low and to maximise profits. Globalisation too results from the need to find new audiences rather than from cultural imperialism. The concept further argues that it is practically impossible for owners to interfere with the content of newspapers and television programmes because their businesses are economically far too complex for them to regularly interfere in the day-to-day running of the content.

For liberal pluralists such as Karppinen (2012), media plurality contributes to a well-functioning democratic society - through the means of creating informed citizens who are able to access and consume a wide range of viewpoints across a variety of platforms. At first glance, plurality seems to ensure the diversity of viewpoints available and consumed across and within media enterprises. McLennan (1995) notes that it may seem that in all things plural, diverse and open-ended are automatically to be regarded as good. This seems to suggest that media plurality, properly conceived, should prevent one media owner or voice having too much influence over public opinion and the political agenda.

It is assumed by liberal pluralists that in a media pluralistic society, consumers actively multisource - such that the large majority of individuals consume a range of different news sources. They also argued that no organization or news source has a share of consumption that is so high as to create a risk that consumers are exposed to a narrow set of viewpoints and that there is a diverse range of independent news media voices across all platforms. Diversity of viewpoints can be formed within an organization and between organizations, external and internal. External plurality refers to the range and number of persons having control of media enterprises in the context of their ability to influence opinions and control the agenda. Internal plurality, on the other hand, covers how far the range of views expressed

within media enterprises may ensure sufficient plurality, including the effects of the impartiality rules for broadcast news, the culture of newsrooms and audience expectations (Ofcom 2012). But does the plurality of media sources necessarily lead to diversity?

The concept of media ownership - the number of persons with control of media enterprises - and the concept of plurality of persons with control of media enterprises give concerns over how plurality encourages the diversity of voices and viewpoints. According to Karppinen (2012), this creates a tension, a seeming paradox, between plurality and diversity. It seems that the tendencies of pluralization on the one hand and centralization and control on the other are forces that simultaneously affect media environment. The concepts of media pluralism and diversity are at the heart of the debates on media and democracy in academic theories as well in contemporary media policy debates. The debates center around the question, in what sense is it meaningful to speak of diversity and pluralism when media systems as a whole are characterized more by abundance than scarcity? (Karppinen 2012). The current study seeks to investigate if the multiplicity of MBC's radio stations necessarily leads to the diversity of voices and opinions.

2.2 Related Studies

Montgomery (2007) looked at ownership concentration and format homogeneity in the American radio industry. The study was based on the assumption that ownership concentration would be expected to have an impact on format homogeneity in the radio industry mainly due to the fact that radio station owners who possessed multiple radio stations presented a viewpoint of privilege through redundant formatting. The study sought to answer two questions. Firstly, was radio industry ownership concentration and format homogeneity higher after the country's Telecommunication Act in 1996 than before the Act came into force? The 1996 Telecommunications Act increased ownership concentration even

more by allowing one proprietor to own as many as eight stations in a market of 45 or more stations and where a single owner could possess six stations in a market where 15 to 29 radio stations operated (FCC, 2003). Secondly, will format homogeneity increase as ownership concentration increases? The researcher collected and analysed data on ownership concentration and format homogeneity among radio stations over a nine year period using content analysis.

The findings showed that format homogeneity increased with ownership concentration over time implying a tendency toward general proprietor consolidation and repetitious programming selection. The study concluded that trends leaned towards greater ownership concentration and format homogeneity in the radio industry, at best, of a few formats repeated among radio stations and at worst, a small number of syndicated programmes throughout the industry. The researcher predicted that radio would over time assume a more monolithic voice.

Berry and Waldfogel (2001) examined the effects of mergers on product variety with emphasis on radio broadcasting. The study assumed that since multiproduct firms did not want their products to compete with each other, mergers could lead firms to spread similar products apart, to withdraw duplicative products or to crowd products together to pre-empt entry, with ambiguous overall effects on variety. The study suggested that increased concentration caused owners to space their stations differently and that concentration increased the number of formats relative to the number of stations operating. The research also contended that cost reductions brought about by consolidation could allow firms to offer additional products, which had the tendency to increase variety. Using a panel data set on 243 radio broadcast markets in the U.S in 1993 and 1997, the study found that jointly owned stations broadcasting from the same market were more likely than unrelated stations (and

more likely than jointly owned stations in different markets) to broadcast in similar formats. Berry and Waldfogel (2001) concluded that consolidation increased the amount of programming variety relative to the number of stations. And also that pairs of jointly owned local stations were substantially more likely to program in different albeit nearby formats.

Closely linked to the studies of Montgomery (2007) and Berry and Waldfogel (2001), is a study conducted by Chipty (2007). Chipty's study looked at the effects of radio ownership structure on content diversity, using a cross-sectional dataset reflecting information from the third quarter of 2005. The data included format information for each of the stations in the U.S as well as detailed content information from an airplay database. The research asked empirical questions on whether and how common ownership affected radio station programming and the effects of consolidation on the availability of programme formats. The study also looked at stations programming decisions, such as percentage of time devoted to advertising, talk entertainment, sports and news. The findings revealed that consolidation of radio ownership did not diminish the diversity of local format offerings. The analysis also suggested that common ownership resulted in more diversity in actual programmes aired.

A study conducted by Rogers and Woodbury (1996) examined the relationships among the number of advertiser- supported radio stations, the number of programming formats offered by those stations and radio listenership using data from Spring 1987. They found that increasing the number of stations increased the number of programming formats offered.

Williams, Brown and Alexander (2002) assessed the impact of consolidation of radio station ownership on diversity in broadcast radio. Diversity was measured by the songs played by the radio stations. The researchers obtained lists of the top songs played by the stations and conducted a pair wise analysis on the effects of consolidation on their sample of 174 stations

between 1996 and 2001. They concluded that consolidation had played very little role in playlist diversity, although this was not necessarily the case in smaller markets.

Williams and Brown (2005) used playlists obtained from Rock and Roll Magazine from 1996 and 2004 to address changes in diversity following the Telecommunications Act in the U.S in 1996. The authors also conducted a pair wise analysis on the effects of consolidation. They found that when two stations in the same market went from separate to common ownership, the stations grew more different, while station - pairs in the same format that went from separate to common ownership grew more similar. They concluded that “commonly owned stations within the same format and market play more similar music than separately- owned stations within the same format and market, because common ownership within format generates greater play list similarity” (Williams and Brown 2005:19).

Sweeting (2006) investigated the impact of common ownership i.e. both of stations in the same local market and stations in different local markets on programming and listenership for 1,095 contemporary music radio stations. Using a panel dataset from 1998 to 2001 from station airplay logs, he found that commonly-owned station-pairs in the same local market and format category were more highly differentiated than their separately-owned station-pairs counterparts.

Ahlkvist and Faulkner (2002) explored how music formats in commercial radio were managed by conducting a qualitative analysis of interviews with 32 radio station programme managers. They found that group owned radio stations repeated existing formats while independently owned radio stations transmitted more unique formats. The findings revealed that independently owned radio stations formats were determined by the director’s musical tastes because independent radio station programmers wanted their stations to educate

audiences while programming at group owned radio stations was determined by demographic information compiled by the corporate office.

Ahlkvist and Faulkner (2002) concluded that radio station programmers that were components of large conglomerates believed that radio stations existed to make profits therefore programming was approached from an economic marketplace model that emphasized generating the greatest revenue for the station. They further concluded that since group owned radio was becoming more prominent, radio stations would sound more and more similar.

Chambers (2003) discovered that consolidation of radio markets hampered radio programming diversity. The study found a moderately negative relationship between ownership concentration and format diversity, as ownership concentration increased throughout radio markets, format diversity also decreased. Chambers found three fewer formats in the high concentration markets in the sample than in the less concentrated markets. The study concluded that ownership concentration promotes format redundancy.

Another study conducted by Seo (2004) used a meta- research¹ of past research on diversity in media content. The study believed that the examination of the previous research on diversity in media content would be necessary in the light of the importance of diversity as a critical concept in media economics and policy. Seo makes a point that the relationship between market competition and diversity as a media output has been a key interest among media economists for a long time and that some researchers have argued that a positive

¹ Meta-research is a study on research and an analysis of analysis; it can be defined as the synthesis of primary research results into more general conclusions. Thus meta-research could provide valuable information that could not be obtained in another way. See Rogers, 1981, pg 3.

relationship exists between competition and diversity although others have argued that diversity increases only in a concentrated market structure.

The study examined published research that focused on diversity in media content using Rogers' (1981) propositional inventory² to conduct meta- research as a method for the study. The study tried to locate previous work on the diversity in media content through Communication Abstracts and online communication databases such as Communication and Mass Media Index.

The study defined published work on diversity in media content as research that examined the information, category/genre, and feature/format of media products in different media industries, for example, an article in newspapers or in programme broadcasts. The population of diversity in media content research was identified by doing a review of all issues of Communication Abstract from the years 1978 to 2002, and Communications & Mass Media Index search for relevant work under the key words such as 'diversity', 'content diversity', 'variety', 'programme variety' and 'product differentiation'.

Conference papers and organizations' reports on diversity in media content were also included in the analysis. Through the approach used, 40 articles were identified as potentially focused on some aspects of diversity in media content. Most of the studies investigated the relationship between diversity and the impact of related regulation and policy while other studies were primarily concerned with the relationship between competition or market concentration and diversity in media content. The studies concluded that market competition

² Propositional Inventory is the synthesis of general conclusions from research where the original data is not available and hence where only written conclusions from each of the primary studies are available to the meta-researcher (Rogers, 1981). According to Hollifield(2001) quoted in Seo, (2004), the propositional inventory method uses the categorizing of discrete elements such as variables, methods, or finding in a specific study.

increases content diversity available to consumers. However on the other hand, other researchers argued that there was a negative relationship between market competition and diversity. They asserted that programme diversity increases as the media industry becomes more consolidated or less competitive. However, one study found that there was no relationship between competition and diversity.

A study conducted by Olmsted- Chan and Chang (2003) looked at the diversification patterns of the leading global media conglomerates and examined the factors that influenced those strategic choices. The study analyzed the top seven global media conglomerates' product and international diversification strategies. The study utilized a case study design with a quantitative data collection method for the purpose of theory testing. The media conglomerates were selected based on their overall revenue for the year 2000-2001. The data for the conglomerates' financial performance, geographical and product diversification and resources were collected through archival sources such as company annual reports and various financial resources. The study relied mostly on cross- sectional data to explore the differences in diversification strategies of the conglomerates.

The study found a range of product and international diversification among the leading conglomerates. The study also found that, the decision to diversify for conglomerates was a matter of degree and target and not the decision of whether to diversify. Olmsted- Chan and Chang (2003) concluded that the media specific characteristics such as the complementary nature of content and distribution and the windowing process for media content products played a role in shaping conglomerates' diversification strategies.

Peterson & Berger (1975) cited in Croteau & Hoynes (2003) was an analysis of the post war music industry. The authors argued that high market concentration led to homogeneity while

a competitive market led to diversity. The study provided a historical analysis that demonstrated the relationship between market concentration and several measures of music diversity. The premise of their argument was that the late 1950's and 60's produced a great deal of innovation and diversity in the popular music industry, which represented a dramatic shift from the more homogenous and standardized music which was available in the 1940's and early 50's. It was argued that the cause was the opening of the popular music market to increased competition. They based their conclusion about the relationship between competition and diversity on analyses of both ownership trends within the music industry and Billboard magazine's singles chart from 1949 to 1972.

They found that the measures associated with increased diversity increased at times when market concentration decreased. They concluded that a loosening of market concentration through increased competition permitted greater innovation and diversity. This study investigates whether increased concentration influences diversity using the Multi-Media Broadcasting Company (MBC) as a case study.

Much of the literature establishes a negative relationship between ownership concentration or consolidation and programming diversity except for Berry and Waldfogel (2001), Williams, Brown and Alexander (2002), Rogers and Woodbury (1996) who find a positive correlation where consolidation increases the amount of programming variety relative to the number of stations and Chipty (2007) who concluded that consolidation of radio ownership did not diminish the diversity of local format offerings and that common ownership resulted in more diversity in actual programmes aired.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the study presented the theoretical framework of the study. The study was conceptualized within the framework of media pluralism with a discussion of the liberalist pluralist model which argues that different media within the same conglomerate can still produce programme diversity with the required legislation. The chapter also reviewed relevant studies on media pluralism and diversity to draw similarities and differences in the findings of other scholars on pluralism and diversity. The next chapter presents the research methodology used in this study.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the general approach, the research design, and the sampling procedure for the study. It also presents the data collection procedure, the coding instrument and how data collected were analysed.

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used as the study design. This involved an in-depth interview, monitoring and recording of programmes and quantitative content analysis of recorded programmes. In addition, a documentary analysis of advertising block cards was undertaken. The in-depth interview was conducted with the programmes manager of Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation to gain a deeper insight to the phenomenon under investigation. Questions concerning the programming policy, factors that drive the policy and issues concerning diversity with respect to programming were asked.

Recordings of programmes for a week on all three stations (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*) were included in the analysis. Also observations made during the interview and recordings were identified and included in the analysis of the data to enrich the findings of the data. A quantitative content analysis of the programmes of both stations was done to find out the similarities and differences that existed in the programming patterns.

3.2 Sampling

The three stations were purposively selected because they are the English speaking stations of MBC and target more or less the same audiences (upper class and middle class income listeners). *Joy FM* and *Hitz FM* are both located in the capital city Accra while *Luv FM* is

located in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. Apart from the fact that all the chosen stations are English speaking and target the same audience, the interest was to find out if there would be differences or similarities in the programming especially with the station (*Luv FM*) that was located outside of Accra as well as similarities with the stations that are located in the same (*Joy FM* and *Hitz FM*) region.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure and Instrument

The researcher chose a week's programmes for analysis because programming schedules in the three stations were consistent. Radio programmes on *Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM* were recorded for a week between the hours of six am and midnight from Monday to Sunday. The period for the study (6th to 12th April, 2015) was chosen because recordings of the programmes were available during the time of data collection. Programming patterns were identified in terms of the scheduling of programmes with respect to time, type, format, titles and advertisements that were aired during the period. Programmes were coded with the aid of a coding guide and covered altogether over 380 hours of programming. The content categories were developed by the researcher for the purposes of the study.

An in-depth interview with an unstructured interview guide was conducted with the programmes manager of MBC. Questions centred on the programming policy of MBC as well as the basis of the policy, advertising, the influence of management on programming and competition between stations in MBC. A documentary analysis of advertisements from the audio server of the stations was also done to determine the times allocated to advertising. Documentary analysis is defined as "any written material other than a record that was not prepared specifically in response to some requests from the investigator" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981: 228). Silverman (1993) provided a classification of documents as i) files, ii) statistical records, iii) records of official proceedings and iv) images.

3.4 Coding Instrument

The three radio stations (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*) and their various programmes were coded separately. The titles, types, formats and advertisements of the programmes were also coded as and when they were broadcast. The times of broadcast were classified as the time frame within which a programme was aired: for example the time frames between 6 and 10a.m. The duration of programme referred to the amount of time devoted to a particular programme, whether 15 minutes or 2 to 4 hours.

Programme Type

The types of programmes were categorised as follows:

- a. News/Current Affairs - a programme devoted to current events, often using interviews and commentary or that which concerns things that are happening in the general community, (topical issues) be it political (relating to the affairs to the state or administration), social, environmental news, information and education.
- b. Religious – a programme concerned with religion, and religious teaching.
- c. Business – a programme concerned with news about businesses and investments.
- d. Health – a programme that caters to the general condition of the body or mind.
- e. Sports – a broadcast of sports news or commentary.
- f. Music - music programmes offer music for easy listening and less talk
- g. Magazine- a programme that is a mixture of news, entertainment (celebrity gossip, music reviews) health tit bits, current affairs and music.
- h. Family- this programme concerns issues about housekeeping, relationship issues, marital, family and domestic affairs.

Programme Format

The format of the programme was categorised as:

- a. Discussion/ Talk – this is where people discuss a topic or answer questions telephoned in by an audience. The host is the moderator of the conversation and asks the questions.
- b. Mixed bag – this type involves a varied format that combines interviews, commentary, documentary, entertainment, music etc. For example ‘The Super Morning Show’ on *Joy FM*, ‘Music Box’ on *Luv FM* and ‘Day break Hitz’ on *Hitz FM*
- c. Documentary – this format is a pre-recorded programme in which the story unfolds in front of the listener. E.g. ‘Living Word’
- d. News - a programme devoted to current events, often using interviews and commentary. E.g. ‘News Night’ ‘Sunday Edition’

Type of advertisements

The advertisement types were categorised as:

- a. Jingles – a short tune with one or more hooks and meaning that explicitly promote the product being advertised usually through the use of one or more advertising slogans.
- b. Live Presenter Mentions (LPMs) – a presenter voices advertising from a script provided by the advertiser in the course of their programmes at every opportune time.
(www.acma.gov.au)
- c. Interviews – these are conducted in person to promote a product or event.
- e. Announcement –an advertising message that is broadcast between programmes regardless of time length that presents an advertisers message or a public service message. (glossary of advertising terms, American Academy of Advertising)

Shared Programme

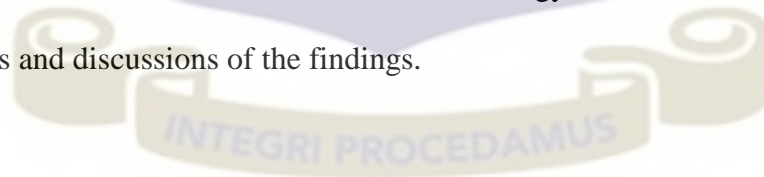
This was defined as programmes that were broadcast simultaneously amongst stations and shared the same content.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data from the content analysis was fed into the Statistical Software Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Frequency distribution tables were generated for relationships between the variables studied. A thematic analysis, based on the key variables for the study, was done for the data collected from the in-depth interviews. An analysis of Daily Rate Card of the three radio stations was also done to corroborate and/or refute the claims of the programmes manager of MBC.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology adopted for this study. The chapter discussed the sampling, data collection and instrument, the coding instrument and a description of the content categories of the coding instrument. The study adopted the mixed method approach to research as the suitable methodology. The next chapter presents the findings, analysis and discussions of the findings.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

The chapter begins with a general overview of data gathered from studying programming patterns and content of *Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*. Using simple frequency tables and graphs, it discusses in detail findings in relation to the study objectives and research questions and also attempts to establish if there is diversity in the programming pattern of the three stations serving audiences in Accra and Kumasi. It also discusses the programme policy of Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation based on an in-depth interview with Mr. Ahuma Ocansey, the programmes manager of the company.

4.1 Findings

A total of 199 programmes were recorded for *Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM* during the week of the study - Monday 6th April to Sunday 12th April 2015. *Joy FM* aired the most programmes with a total of 81 programmes while *Hitz FM* aired 48 programmes, *Luv FM* aired an overall total of 70 programmes for the week. All three stations consistently broadcast the same number of programmes from Monday to Friday 12, eight and eleven respectively with slight variations (13 and eleven) on Thursday and Friday for *Joy FM*. The weekends had the least number of programmes aired on all three stations. A total of nine programmes for *Joy FM* and six each for *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM* respectively on Saturday. On Sunday *Joy FM* aired more (12) programmes than *Hitz FM* (two) or *Luv FM* (nine).

4.1.1 Programme Type

Programme type, as used in this study, refers to the nature of programmes aired by the radio stations. Programme type was categorized into current affairs/news, religious, business, health, sports, music, magazine, family to reflect the different types of programmes aired on the stations. The findings are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Programme Type

PROGRAMME TYPE	JOY FM	HITZ FM	LUV FM	TOTAL
Current affairs/News	19 23.5%	0 0%	19 27.1%	38 19.1%
Religious	10 12.3%	0 0%	2 2.9%	12 6.0%
Business	6 7.4%	0 0%	0 0%	6 3%
Health	1 1.2%	0 0%	0 0%	1 .5%
Sports	4 4.9%	0 0%	7 10%	11 5.5%
Music	33 40.7%	41 85.4%	32 45.7%	106 53.3%
Magazine	5 6.2%	7 14.6%	5 7.1%	17 8.5%
Family	3 3.7%	0 0%	5 7.1%	8 4%
Total	81 100%	48 100%	70 100%	199 100%

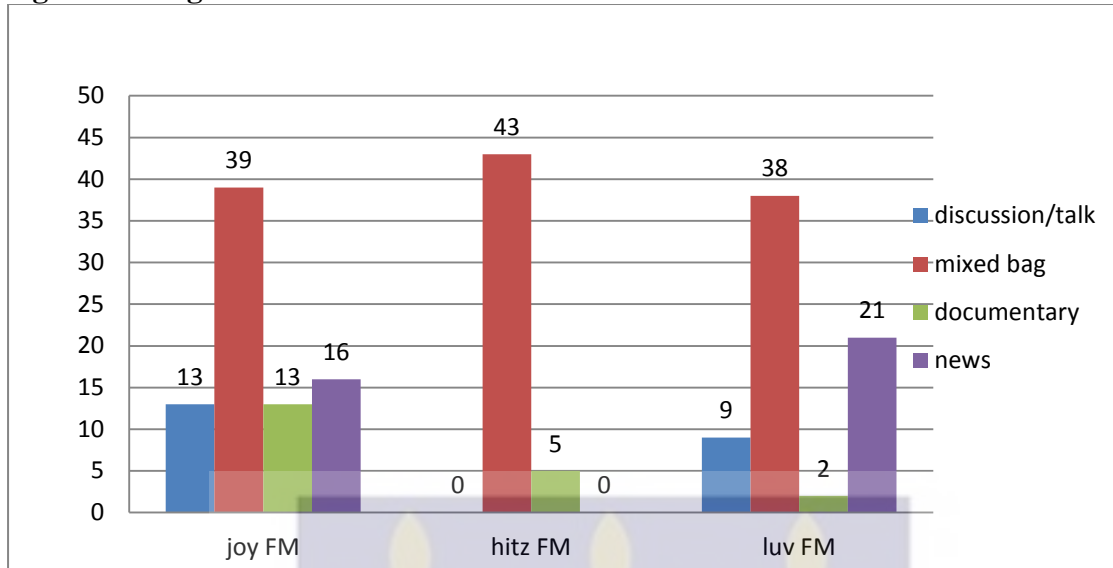
The findings show that *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* had similar programme types. Across the three stations, music programmes were the most programmes aired. A large majority (85%) of programmes aired on *Hitz FM* were music programmes while two out of five (40.7%) of every programme aired on *Joy FM* was a music programme. *Luv FM* on the other hand, had a little over nine out of 20 (45.7%) of their programmes aired being music. *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* recorded parity in numbers (19 each respectively) with regard to news/current affairs programmes.

Among the three stations, *Hitz FM* had the most magazine programmes with *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* recording the same number of magazine programmes (five each). The fourth most aired programme type after music, current affairs and magazine programmes was religious programmes with *Joy FM* airing the most religious programmes among the three. *Luv FM* had just two religious programmes.

Luv FM had more sports and family (seven and five respectively) programmes than *Joy FM* did (four and three respectively). However, *Luv FM* did not record any programme on business and health while *Joy FM* recorded six programmes on business and a programme on health. The findings reveal that apart from music and magazine programmes, *Hitz FM* did not record any other programme type. This is attributed to the fact that *Hitz FM* is a music and entertainment radio station.

4.1.2 Programme Format

Programme format refers to the genre and style of a programme. It was categorized into discussion/talk show, news, documentary and mixed bag. Discussion/talk show refers to a format where people discuss a topic or answer questions telephoned in by an audience. The host is the moderator of the conversation and asks the questions on the topic being discussed. News was defined as a programme devoted to current events, often using interviews and commentary while documentary is a pre-recorded programme in which the story unfolds in front of the listener. Mixed bag is a programme that involves a varied format a combination of interviews, commentary, documentary, entertainment, music etc. The findings of programme format are presented in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Programme Format

The mixed bag programming format was dominant among the three stations. Three out of five (60.6%) of all programmes on all three stations were mixed bag programmes. *Joy FM* had nearly half (48.1%) of their programmes being mixed bag while a vast majority (89.6%) of *Hitz FM*'s programmes were of the mixed bag format. Well over half (55.1%) of *Luv FM*'s programmes used the mixed bag format.

The next most aired programme format after mixed bag was news forming 18.2% of all programming formats. *Luv FM* had 21 programmes using the news format while *Joy FM* recorded 16 programmes with the news format. *Hitz FM* on the other hand, recorded no programme with this format. *Joy FM* had 13 (16%) programmes using the discussion/talk format while *Hitz FM* recorded none at all for this format. *Luv FM* had 13% of their programmes using the discussion/talk format. The documentary format was the least used of all the formats representing 10.1% of all formats on the three radio stations. *Joy FM* recorded a total of 13 programmes with the documentary format. *Hitz FM* on the other hand had five programmes using the documentary format while *Luv FM* recorded only two.

4.1.3 Programme Sharing/Titles

The study also sought to find out the number of programmes that the stations shared among themselves. Shared programmes were defined as programmes that were broadcast simultaneously with same content shared among the stations. It also sought to find out if programme titles were similar or the same. Findings of shared programmes are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Shared Programme

Name of station	Shared programme	Programme Type						Music	Magazine	Family	Total
		News/current affairs	Religious	Business	Health	Sports					
JOY FM	Yes	19	2	0	0	0	0	5	0	26	
	No	0	8	6	1	4	33	0	3	55	
	Total	19	10	6	1	4	33	5	3	81	
HITZ FM	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	-	0	
	No	-	-	-	-	-	41	7	-	48	
	Total	-	-	-	-	-	41	7	-	48	
LUV FM	Yes	19	2	0	-	-	0	5	0	26	
	No	0	0	7	-	-	32	0	5	44	
	Total	19	2	7	-	-	32	5	5	70	

The findings show that among the three radio stations, *Hitz FM* shared no programme with the other two stations. However, between *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* a total of 26 programmes were shared throughout the week. Of all the programme types, news/current affairs were the most shared (19) programmes between *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* representing a majority (73.1%) of all programmes that were shared on the station. Magazine programmes that were shared between *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* were five representing 19.2% of shared programmes. Apart from these programme types, *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* shared two religious programmes indicating 7.7% of all shared programmes.

The study also identified these programmes: - *Joy Midday News*, *BBC News*, *News Night*, *Newsfile*, *Sunday 6pm News on Joy* and *Sunday Edition* (news/current affairs programmes) as programmes that were shared and broadcast at the same times. *The Super Morning Show* was the only magazine programme that was shared between *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* while both stations also shared *Morning Glory* and *Living Word* as religious programmes. It was observed that programmes such as *Weekend City Show* and *Lunch Time Rhythms* which were broadcast within the same times and have the same titles had different content altogether on *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*.

4.1.4 Advertising Type

Advertising type refers to the specific type of advertisements aired by the radio stations. Advertising types were categorised into Jingles, Live Presenter Mentions (LPMs), Interviews and Announcements. Jingles were defined as a short tune with one or more hooks and meaning that explicitly promote the product being advertised usually through the use of one or more advertising slogans. LPMs were also described as where a presenter voices advertising from a script provided by the advertiser in the course of their programmes at every opportune time.

Interviews however, are conducted in person to promote a product or event. Announcements on the other hand refer to an advertising message that is broadcast between programmes regardless of time length that presents an advertisers message or a public service message. Findings from the documentary analysis of the advertising rate card from the 3 radio stations are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Advertising Type

Advertisement Type	Joy FM	Hitz FM	Luv FM
Jingles	911	216	777
LPMs	274	22	221
Announcements	72	0	10
Interviews	2	0	1
Total	1,259	238	1,009

Findings from Table 3 above show that of the three radio stations, *Joy FM* aired the most advertisements with a total of 1,259 advertisements. *Luv FM* also aired a total of 1,009 advertisements while *Hitz FM* trailed with a total of 238 advertisements throughout the week. Jingles were the most prevailing advertising type on all three stations. *Joy FM* throughout the week aired a total of 911 jingles while *Luv FM* followed with a total of 777 jingles. *Hitz FM* on the other hand trailed with 216 jingles. After Jingles, LPMs were the second most aired advertising type on the stations. While *Hitz FM* recorded the least (22) number of LPMs, *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* recorded a total of 274 and 221 respectively. Regarding announcements and interviews, *Hitz FM* did not record any for these advertising types. However, *Joy FM* aired 72 announcements while *Luv FM* on the other hand aired ten announcements. Interviews that were recorded during the week had *Joy FM* at two and *Luv FM* at one interview. The low figures of advertising types on *Hitz FM* are attributed to the nature of *Hitz FM* as a music and entertainment radio station. *Hitz FM* as a music and entertainment station has longer hours of uninterrupted play as compared to *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*.

4.1.5 Time spent on Advertising and Programming

The study investigated the broadcast times devoted to advertising as compared to the times devoted to programmes. Findings from the documentary analysis of the advertising rate cards are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Time Spent on Programming and Advertising

Name of station	Programming hours	Hours spent on advertising
Joy FM	126	25 hours 30minutes 00seconds
Hitz FM	126	9 hours 17minutes 21seconds
Luv Fm	126	20 hours 20minutes 18secs

From Monday to Sunday, programming hours totalled 126 each for all three radio stations. *Joy FM* by a large margin spent more hours on advertising than *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM* with an overall total of 25 hours and 30 minutes. *Luv FM* closely followed with 20 hours, 20 minutes and 18 seconds while *Hitz FM* spent the least hours on advertising with nine hours, 17 minutes and 21 seconds.

It was observed that the weekends (Saturday and Sunday) had the least hours for advertising on all the stations. This was explained by the programmes manager who said that the programmes with the most commercial traffic (*'Super Morning Show'*, *'Drive Time'* on *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* and *'Day Break Hitz'* on *Hitz FM*) were aired on weekdays. It is evident from the table that all the stations devoted more time to programming than to advertising during the week under review.

Programme Types and Broadcast Times

Table 5 below shows the relationship between programme types and the times radio programmes were broadcast on the stations. This was done to help identify if the same programmes were aired within the same time blocks across the 3 radio stations.

Table 5: Programme Types and Broadcast Times

Name of station	Time of broadcast					Total
	Between 6am and 10am	Between 10am and 2pm	Between 2pm and 3pm	Between 3pm and 8pm	Between 8pm and 12am	
Joy FM						
News/Current affairs	1	6	0	12	0	19
Religious	3	6	0	0	1	10
Business	0	5	1	0	0	6
Health	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sports	0	1	2	1	0	4
Music	1	11	2	8	11	33
Magazine	5	0	0	0	0	5
Family	1	0	1	1	0	3
Total	11	29	7	22	12	81
Hitz FM						
Music	1	6	5	17	12	41
Magazine	5	1	1	0	0	7
Total	6	7	6	17	12	48
Luv FM						
News/Current affairs	1	6	0	12	0	19
Religious	2	0	0	0	0	2
Sports	0	1	1	5	0	7
Music	2	12	1	5	12	32
Magazine	5	0	0	0	0	5
Family	0	0	5	0	0	5
Total	10	19	7	22	12	70

The findings from Table 5 above show that *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* had the same number of news/current affairs programmes broadcast within the same time categories. One, six and 12 programmes aired between the hours of 6am to 10am, 10am to 2pm and 3pm to 8pm

respectively. Most (12 each) of the news/current affairs programmes for *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* were coded between the hours of 3pm to 8pm. For *Joy FM*, of the 33 programmes coded for music, eleven each were recorded between the hours of 10am to 2pm and 8pm to 12am. One, two and eight music programmes were recorded between the hours of 6am to 10am, 2pm to 3pm and 3pm to 8pm respectively. Other programme types on *Joy FM* were unevenly spread out within the various broadcast time categories.

Out of the 32 programmes coded for music on *Luv FM*, 12 each were coded between the hours of 10am to 2pm and 8pm to 12am while two, one, and five music programmes were coded between the hours of 6am to 10am, 2pm and 3pm and 3pm to 8pm respectively. Five family programmes were broadcast between 2pm and 3pm. The various programme types were broadcast within the other time categories.

With *Hitz FM*, the findings reveal that of the 41 programmes that were coded for music, majority (17) were recorded between the hours of 3pm and 8pm. Twelve music programmes were coded between 8pm and 12am, six, five and one music programme were recorded between the hours of 10am to 2pm, 2pm to 3pm and 6am to 10am respectively. Majority (seven) of the magazine programmes coded for *Hitz FM* were aired between the hours 6am to 10am while one each was broadcast between 10am to 2pm and 2pm to 3pm in that order.

Listener participation

Listener participation has become a common feature of most programmes since the liberalization of the airwaves and many radio stations give their listeners the opportunity to say what they feel or think regarding many issues, be it social or political, that affect their lives. The findings regarding the frequency of listeners actively participating in programmes are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Listener Participation

Listener Participation	Joy FM	Hitz FM	Luv FM
Yes	40 49.4%	31 64.6%	42 60%
No	41 50.6%	17 34.4%	28 40%
Total	81 100%	48 100%	70 100%

Out of the 81 programmes that were coded for *Joy FM*, nearly half (49.4%) of the programmes engaged listeners. A little over half (50.6%) of *Joy FM*'s programmes did not involve its listeners. Six out of 10 (64.6%) of the programmes on *Hitz FM* engaged listeners while 17 (34.4%) programmes of the 48 did not have listener participation. *Luv FM* on the other hand had 42, representing sixty percent of its programmes actively involving its listeners while two out of five (40%) of the programmes did not involve listeners participating.

Nature of participation

The nature in which listeners participated in radio programmes varied among the three stations. Nature of participation was categorised into text messaging, social networks i.e. facebook, twitter, whatsapp, etc, phone-ins, studio presence and all four categories (calls/texts/internet/studio presence). Findings from nature of participation are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Nature of Participation

Name of station	Nature of Participation					
	Text Messaging	Social networks	All four (calls/texts/internet/studio presence)	Phone calls	Studio Presence	Total
Joy FM	9	0	17	5	9	40
Hitz FM	0	0	19	10	2	31
Luv FM	0	0	23	12	7	42

The findings from Table 7 above reveal that out of the 40 programmes that *Joy FM* involved its listeners, most (17) of them were done through all four types of participation i.e. phone calls, text messaging, studio presence and social networks. Programmes that engaged listeners with text messages were nine. Five programmes had listeners participating via phone-ins while those who participated in live in the studio were nine. *Luv FM* on the other hand had a majority (19) out of the 31 programmes using all four types of participation to involve its listeners. Listeners had the opportunity to contribute to discussions through phone-ins, social networks, text messages and studio presence. 10 programmes had listeners contributing through phone-ins only while two programmes had listeners live in the studio. No programmes were coded using text messaging only or social networks only to involve its listeners.

More than half (23) of the 42 programmes that involved listeners on *Luv FM* used all four types of participation. Twelve programmes involved its listeners through phone-ins only while seven programmes had listeners participating through their presence in the studio.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: Would there be diversity in the type and format of programmes aired on the three stations owned by MBC (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*)?

Programme diversity was operationalized to mean the differences in programme pattern, format and type. Based on this definition, the findings of the research corroborate the assertion by liberal pluralists that suggest that multiplicity in media outlets leads to the diversity of voices. Indeed the findings as evidenced by sub section 4.1.1 (see page 26) and 4.1.2 (see page 27) reveal that there were some differences in the programme patterns, format and types across the three radio stations (*Joy FM*, *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM*) although *Hitz FM* had a totally different programming pattern, format and type from *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*. The difference in *Hitz FM*'s programming pattern can however be explained in terms of it being largely a music and entertainment radio station.

The differences in the programming pattern, format and type give credence to the assertions of the liberal pluralists that claim that plurality can lead to diversity. This finding is also heavily supported by media scholars (Berry and Waldfogel, 2001, Williams, Brown and Alexander, 2002, Rogers and Woodbury 1996 and Chipty, 2007) who conclude that consolidation of ownership plays very little role in media diversity and that concentration of ownership does not in any way diminish the diversity of programming patterns and content. This conclusion is however contrary to the findings of Montgomery (2007), Chambers (2003a), Williams and Brown (2005); and Ahlkvist and Faulkner (2002) who found in

various studies that concentration of media ownership usually generates similar programming patterns and contents across media outlets owned by a sole proprietor.

RQ 2: Did the three stations under the same ownership devote more time to programmes than to advertising?

The findings of the study revealed that during the week under study, all the three radio stations – *Joy FM*, *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM* – devoted more hours to programmes than to advertisements. On the average, the maximum advertising hours for a day on all three radio stations was a little over three hours while the minimum advertising hours were about an hour and half out of the 126 broadcasting hours each on the three radio stations. A total of 25 hours out of the 126 broadcasting hours were devoted to news and current affairs programmes. Although the stations seemed to have had less advertising hours, there were instances where the stations went beyond the allotted times for advertising due to commercial reasons. According to the programmes manager, they could not stick to the stipulated 15 minutes each hour and were forced to go beyond to about twenty minutes each hour for advertising. This, he explains, is meant to sustain the radio stations because they do not benefit from subventions because they are commercial radio stations.

RQ 3: What are the similarities and differences in the type of advertisements on the three stations?

Close observation of the content of advertisements revealed that majority of the advertisements played on all the three radio stations were jingles. *Joy FM* had more advertisements than the other two radio stations whether they were jingles, LPMs, announcements or interviews. One key observation that was made in the course of the study was that some of the advertisements that were played, particularly on *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* were the same in content and music. The only difference was that while *Joy FM* played the advertisements in English, *Luv FM* played them in Akan. For example, all advertisements on “Onga seasoning” (food advertisement) that were played on *Joy FM* were played in Akan on

Luv FM with the same jingle. Although *Hitz FM* comparatively played the least number of advertisements between the two stations, it was observed that the contents of the advertisements aired were similar to *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* except that the frequency with which the advertisements were played were not as that of the other two stations largely due to the fact that *Hitz FM* as a music and entertainment station has longer hours of uninterrupted music play.

Programming policies of Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation (MBC)

In order to arrive at some conclusions regarding ownership and diversity, and also shed light on factors that influenced programming patterns of MBC, the programmes manager (Mr Ahuma Ocansey) of the company was interviewed. It was revealed that issues of national interest, the welfare of the community and the sensibilities of society were paramount in the planning of programmes and that was the basis that formed the programming policy of MBC. The reason why some programmes of the same type and format were broadcast simultaneously was explained that issues discussed on those programmes were of national character. The manager stated that although there were about 40 or 50 percent similarities in programming patterns and content, there were times that content was entirely different. This was corroborated by the findings from the content analysis. For example, though *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* aired the *Weekend City Show* at the same time, the contents differed. A point was also made that the world had become a global village and that forms of recreation had become similar, that was why certain programmes had the same titles and formats on the stations. It was disclosed that the audience scope for *Joy FM* was broader than that of *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM* therefore music played on *Luv FM* was to appeal more to the ethnic Ashantis in Kumasi while music on *Hitz FM* was played to appeal to the cosmopolitan nature of the “bustling” city, Accra.

On the issue of the influence of management on the planning of programmes, the programmes manager said that programmes were assessed on the impact of the bottom-line of the company. According to him, due to the fact that the company wanted to segregate the market and reach different demographic audiences, programmes were discussed individually, critiqued and solutions brought up to make the programme better and relevant to target audiences. Although the findings show that the radio stations devoted a fairly high amount of time to advertising during the week, the decision to do so was not based solely on profit motives. It was revealed that occasionally, certain advertisements and propositions from clients were refused or rejected because the station was governed by “issues of quality and outlook”. (A transcript of the full interview can be found in the appendix). The researcher gathered during the interview that what the stations considered was in public interest was paramount in designing programming content contrary to the general notion that media institutions thrive on advertising to flourish and would succumb to pressures from advertisers. According to the programmes manager, issues the stations considered were of national interest and for the welfare of the community were the key that guided the company and theirs was to play the watchdog role in society therefore although the stations were owned by the same company as commercial entities, what they considered as public interest was paramount.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the research, analysis of the findings and a discussion of the findings within the context of the concept of media pluralism and related studies on pluralism and diversity. The study found that although the three stations were owned by the same entity, there were some differences in the programming pattern, format and type of the three radio stations. The next chapter is the last chapter of the study and it presents the conclusion of the study, limitations and makes some recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine diversity in programming of a media conglomerate. The study used Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation as a case study. Three stations owned by MBC (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*) were studied for a week to ascertain the diversity of programming in terms of format and types in catering to the audience of the different environments. The underlying assumption was that although the three radio stations were owned by one entity, programming patterns of the stations would differ because plurality is expected to offer diversity. The other assumption was that the three radio stations would devote more time to advertising because they thrived on commercial interest or political economic interest rather than seeking diversity.

5.1 Summary

This study was set within the concept of media pluralism and sought to investigate whether the multiplicity of media sources led to the diversity of voices. Specifically, the study sought to establish if there was diversity in terms of types of programmes aired by the station, programme format, title of programmes, and advertising types of the station. The study also sought to find out the programme policy of MBC. To address these objectives, the research sought to find answers to the following questions: 1. Would there be diversity in the programming patterns and content of the three stations owned by MBC (*Joy FM*, *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM*)?; 2. Did the three stations under the same ownership devote more time to advertising than programming?; and 3. What are the similarities and differences in the type of advertisements on the three stations? The findings revealed that the programming patterns for *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* were somewhat similar. For the two stations, the same types of

programmes were broadcast during the same time blocks for some of the programmes while that of *Hitz FM* was different, with programming being largely of music and magazine formats. This shows that there was some diversity in the programming patterns of radio stations owned by Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation. Although there was some similarity in the programming patterns for especially *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* the content varied with regard to music, resource persons and topics for discussion on their show. The only times content was the same was when programmes were broadcast simultaneously such as *Joy Midday News*, *BBC News*, *News Night*, *Newsfile*, *Sunday 6pm News on Joy* and *Sunday Edition*, *The Super Morning Show*, *Morning Glory* and *Living Word*. *Hitz FM* on the other hand did not share any programme with the other two stations.

It was also assumed that the three radio stations which are commercial in nature would devote more time to advertising than to programming given that theoretically, private owned stations are profit driven. This assumption was not confirmed by the findings of the study because all the three radio stations devoted more time to programmes than to advertising. During the interview, the programmes manager admitted that although most stations thrived on money from advertising, they had had to reject certain offers from clients as they were governed by issues of 'quality and outlook'. However they sometimes could not help but to go a bit overboard with the stipulated minutes for advertising for each hour on their various programmes. To an extent it can be argued that though MBC is driven by commercial interests it does not override the responsibility of providing quality programmes to its audiences.

5.2 Conclusion

Plurality of media sources has been argued by scholars to ensure the diversity of viewpoints available and consumed across media and within media enterprises. The findings of this study partly support the aforementioned notion. It corroborates, to some extent the views of liberal pluralists such as Berry and Waldfogel (2001), Chipty (2007), Rogers and Woodbury (1996) and Williams, Brown and Alexander (2002) who are strongly of the view that the multiplicity of media sources leads to diversity. They further contend that the concentration of media ownership plays very little role and does not diminish the diversity of radio programme formats. There was some amount of diversity in the programming patterns of *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* although both stations had certain similar programme types that were broadcast during the same broadcast times. *Hitz FM*, per the findings of this study, had a totally different programme pattern, format and type from *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*. This difference can largely be attributed to the fact that *Hitz FM* before it was acquired by MBC was a music and entertainment radio station and has remained so even after the acquisition. The situation with *Hitz FM* confirms the assertions of Berry and Waldfogel (2001) who concluded in their study that diversity does not diminish when mergers and acquisitions occur. Although Montgomery (2007) predicted in his study that radio would overtime assume a more monolithic voice, it is yet to be seen. Perhaps future studies will confirm Montgomery's assertion but for now radio is not very homogenous. There are differences as evidenced by the findings of this study.

Hitz FM had more music programmes to cater for its listeners than *Joy FM* and *Luv FM*. As observed there were music programmes that were dedicated to different genres of music like jazz, African music, music from the 70's and 80's (old school music), salsa etc. All three radio stations had most of their programmes being interactive as listeners were given opportunities to participate. The three stations also had programmes largely suited to the mixed bag format in structure. For advertising, it was found that the stations did devote more

time to programming than advertising. Comparatively, *Joy FM* devoted more time to advertising than *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM*.

5.3 Recommendations

Having studied three radio stations from the same company, the researcher recommends that further research be carried out on the other media conglomerates in Ghana for a comparative view of these organisations. The researcher also recommends that since *Joy FM* and *Luv FM* are especially catering to audiences in different regions, the stations should structure programmes to suit their respective audiences. Programmes that are of national interest should not be synergised to reflect the views of one locale but replicated on both stations to have different views from the different locales represented. The plurality of voices in a diverse media will help give a voice to all no matter their locations. Also though private stations rely on advertising to thrive, the researcher recommends that less time be spent on advertising and more on programmes. The researcher also recommends that the NCA formulates clear policies and guidelines that will ensure programme diversity in media conglomerates.

5.4 Limitations of the study

One major limitation encountered during the study was difficulty in accessing some of the programmes for *Luv FM*. The recordings were however made available at a much later date. Another limitation which delayed the speed of the study was that during the time of the study, the Joy Division did not have a programmes manager which meant that the researcher had to endure long periods of waiting to get an appropriate person to speak with.

Finding literature that discussed media conglomerates in the Ghanaian local context was difficult. The researcher, therefore, had to rely heavily on literature discussing conglomerates on Europe and the West. Finally, given the qualitative nature of the study and the fact that the study focused on one media conglomerate, its findings do not reflect the character of all media conglomerates in Ghana.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the summary and the conclusion of the study. The purpose of the study was to examine diversity in programming of a media conglomerate. The study used Multimedia Broadcasting Corporation as a case study. Three stations owned by MBC (*Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*) were studied for a week to ascertain how diverse the programming pattern was in catering to the audience of the different environments. The underlying assumption was that although the three radio stations were owned by one entity, programming patterns of the stations would differ because plurality is expected to offer diversity. The chapter also presented the limitations of the study and made some recommendations for future studies.



APPENDIX ONE

TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH PROGRAMMMESMANAGER (MBC)

FULL INTERVIEW.

R: I would like to know if you have a programming policy

MBC: What?

R: A programming policy

MBC: Yes we do

R: Oh you do? Please tell me what this policy is about.

MBC: Yes, we do have a programming policy. You see, society is at the centre of everything we do in our community so in all our programming, across all our platforms, we try to programme with a few things in mind. 1. National interest, the welfare of the community and the sensibilities of the society we serve. So what it is, is that any of the stations that we're programming and one for instance, the music that we play eeem let's look at *Joy FM* for instance, there are certain songs u hear on other stations that you'll never hear on *Joy FM*, and certain language you hear on certain stations, you'll not hear either on *Joy FM* or *Asempa FM*, *Hitz FM* or something like that. So that is the basis of our programming philosophy.

R: Em the other stations within the Multimedia family like *Luv*, *Joy* and so on; doing a comparison between *Luv*, *Hitz FM* and *Joy FM*, I noticed that some of the programmes especially on *Luv FM* are broadcast live from *Joy*, while *Luv* is in Kumasi, don't you think that programmes should serve the interest of the local environment? Why the need to broadcast simultaneously?

MBC: What it is, is that, eem the *Joy* platform seeks to, especially on current affairs and news seeks to have a national character, so the issues that we discuss on the Super Morning Show have a national character, so if we are talking about medical doctors strike, it's a national issue, so what we do is, yes we're programming from Accra, we're programming on a national level. So what it is is that stuff on the show will impact the people in Kumasi, and also in Accra. Talking of content, Kumasi has an input so if there's something that is topical in Kumasi of particular relevance, we feed it into the programming here in Accra. As you are aware *Hitz FM* is doing a totally different thing, it appeals more to the cosmopolitan nature of Accra. (laughs)

R: I also noticed that some of the programmes on *Luv FM*, even the titles are similar to some of the titles on *Joy FM*, like drive time, lunch time, etc. For the work that I am doing, I'm looking at diversity in programming and there's the tendency for media conglomerates to share content and there are issues about diversity, so why is it that you have some of the titles, even the format of some programmes are on the same level, even the kind of music that they play, all sound so similar.

MBC: (nodding) ok, the reason is that em, such programming is targeting a cosmopolitan listenership, now, truth be told, a white collar worker in this globalised village, right now, they have facebook, they tweet, they use social media, the forms of recreation are similar so, a drive time programme in Accra, a drive time programme in Kumasi have similarities, issues like road safety, the relevance in Accra will have relevance in Kumasi. So in the modelling programming for the stations, you know we always look at what is happening before, it is not wise to reverse the wheel totally so that is one reasons that informs these. Even everywhere you go, there is the morning drive, lunch drive and the late drive so those are the broad parts that govern programming everywhere you go in the world. That is why you hear drive time on *Luv FM*, you hear drive time on *Joy FM*, but the content will be different, Bola will be

talking about something different, even the music selection. But if you do a critical assessment of the content, you will realise that yes, similarities might be 40 or 50% but the remaining 60 or 50% will be totally local if I should put it that way. So yes, you'll hear a Nicki Minaj here in Accra, you'll hear a Nicki Minaj in Kumasi, but then when we come to local songs, a song like Sarkodie's "y3nko nkoa" might resonate here and in Kumasi but a particular track by Okyeame Kwame will be big in Kumasi but not here in Accra, so there, you'll have your differences.

R: I noticed that *Joy FM* has a wider variety of programmes than the other two stations I am studying, even *Joy FM* has a broader content than *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM* do you think this is because the *Luv FM* and *Hitz FM* audience or listenership is smaller?

MBC: Em no em, you see, Kumasi is a cosmopolitan but their lifestyle are very very, I wouldn't like to say local but in Kumasi, daily life picks up after 9/10 because a lot of them are not employed. It's not like Accra where a lot of people who listen to *Joy FM* are employed by either government, NGO's or stuff like that, so for them, the day starts after 6am, so let's see how the similarities, the differences are pronounced. You will realise that the programmes for Accra where there are embassies and so on, the scope will be broader than Kumasi where you have a few expatriates and a few people who are not ethnic Ashantis.

R: I would also like to know the influence management has on planning of programmes.

MBC: Which level of management? There is the corporate management...

R: I definitely do not think corporate management will have that much level of influence because it is not directly linked to programming, probably more of brand management etc, I'm thinking more of station management, and some of the literature I have read makes reference to the fact that certain programmes are planned along political lines. I don't want to

think that *Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* or *Luv FM* programming is based on political ideologies but more along economic lines, meaning you are looking more at profit than at politics.

MBC: Em a lot of our programmes are assessed on the impact of our bottom-line. Like you rightly said, yes, let me quickly chip this in, commercial radio programming seems to be opposition biased so in the days of the NPP, we were like the watchdogs so someone will say ooh we sound very NDC, in the days of the NDC we play the same watchdog role so we sound like NPP but it's not like we're aligned to any political ideology. We're playing our role as mandated by constitution as the fourth estate of the realm that is what we do.

R: Concerning the planning of programmes, as a station manager or programme manager, I don't think that you'll just get up and plan your own programmes. My interest is, at the station management level, what is the extent of influence on programming.

MBC: Yes, if someone brings up a programme for instance, the person has to defend it before their peers, who'll either critique it or bring up solutions to make it better. I don't know if you have noticed Gabby Adjetey is back, he had a programme, we discussed it and agreed on what we wanted to do, etc and gave feedback. Programmes are critiqued and best ideas are put together including the titles, formats and style etc.

R: Is there competition between the stations in Multimedia? Are the stations treated as separate entities and compete with each other?

MBC: Yes, what it is is like sibling rivalry, so if you're first today, Daddy celebrates you, your kid sister is also motivated to excel. Eeeem having said, this morning, I was having a chat with my guys, we were complimenting each other's programmes for instance Joy Beach Jam on Sundays, they used to play a certain type of music, *Hitz FM* which is also a music station also plays similar music on Sundays. So what we did was, Doreen said, let's skew Sunday Joy Beach Jam to suit a certain demography and *Hitz FM* also to suit a certain

demography. So we try to segregate the audience. On the Super Morning Show we talk about the big political issues and so on, nowadays we try to integrate issues on the broad end of the spectrum which will interest people like you Nana Aba. Recently we had a discussion where a man who's travelling, packs a box of condoms, as his girlfriend what will you do about this? You are laughing, look at your face. What will you do? How will you react?

R: (laughing) hmmm personally, the world these days and the things that are happening, if he is going out there to do something and he's using condoms, I'll prefer it more than he coming to infect me with something. On the other hand, he may share the condoms among his friends. Who knows? (Laughs).

MBC: So what we're doing is segregating the market and try to reach different demographic audiences. We try not to compete with each other at the same time in the same arena. That is why take *Asempa* for instance, we do sports in the morning and then politics then back to sports, while *Joy* does socio-economic and political issues in the mornings.

R: One last thing, this is about advertising, the extent to which advertising dictates or influences content. I know that most media houses thrive on money from advertising.

MBC: All private media houses thrive on money from advertising except for GBC which gets some support from the government. There is an ongoing argument that the government should not give subvention to only GBC but to all radio stations because we all do public announcements and so on to serve and improve society, so in the absence of this subvention, we're pandering to money from advertising and this may affect content.

R: But does it affect content?

MBC: Eeeeeeeem truth be told, truth be told, sometimes we reject or refuse certain adverts or certain propositions from clients. So it's not that we thrive on money from advertising

revenue anything that they want, we give it to them. No. Sometimes we agree, usually we're governed by issues of quality and outlook.

R: I am doing a content analysis and I am listening to recordings of *Joy FM*, *Hitz FM* and *Luv FM*, I noticed that for example, the cosmopolitan mix, for the first 15 minutes of the show, it's full of adverts while on the metropolitan mix, there'll be adverts for like 20 minutes running leaving less time for music and other things on the show. That's why I'm asking about the influence of advertising; more adverts, less content.

MBC: Actually, the FCC in the US stipulates 15 minutes each hour for commercial adverts. However, eeeeeeeem I think for economic reasons here in Ghana means that certain stations at certain times cannot afford to stick to the 15 minutes. Remember that I told you in Kumasi, life starts after 9 so people want to reach a certain target audience and they know that for the people's lifestyles this is the best time to reach them so these are some of the reasons why. If you watch, after that 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock time, the commercial load is less, also commercial load is not on all stations.

R: I noticed you said something about the FCC, is that what you use as a guideline?

MBC: Yes, because everyone models on America (laughs).

R: But we have our own NCA?

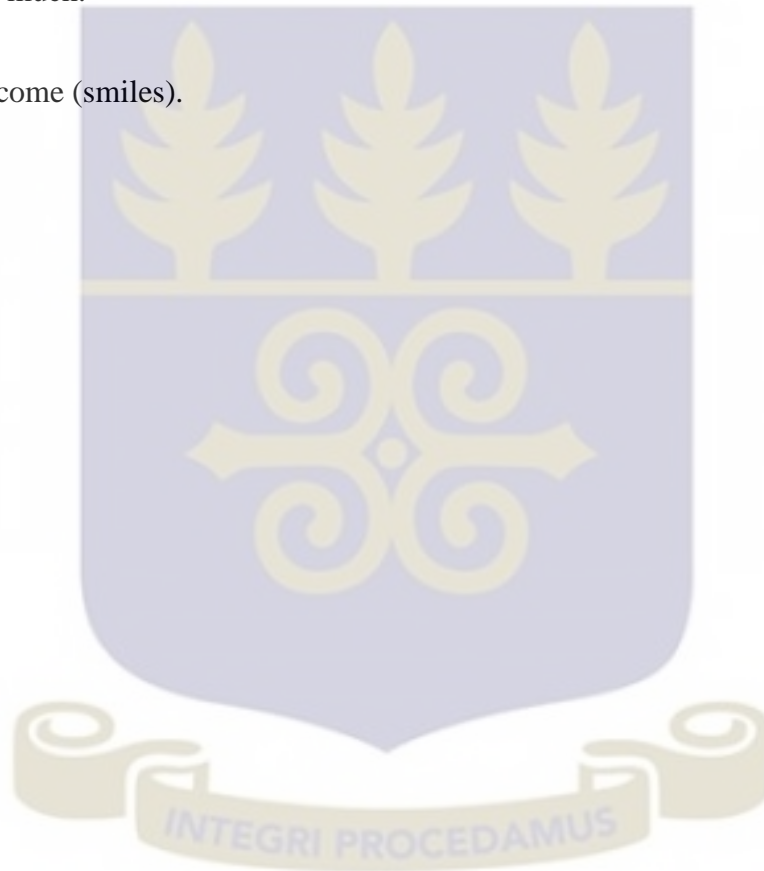
MBC: Yes, but they all model on the FCC. Truth be told, I haven't seen any regulation from NCA on commercial content, I think the only thing they have said is that your programming shouldn't be duly influenced by commercial what do you call it...for instance you cannot advertise liquor before 12 o'clock those are the broad guidelines I've seen from the FCC, so no station advertises liquor before 12, but as to the volume of commercial load, I don't remember anything on that.

R: I think I have exhausted all my questions for now (laughs). And I have enjoyed talking to you very much. But if there is anything I do not understand, I hope I can call for clarification. I don't know what the results my analysis will bring out but I'll let you have the results so that if there's need for changes here and there you can implement them.

MBC: As you can see, the door is wide open. You're welcome anytime. It's been a pleasure talking to you too.

R: Thank you so much.

MBC: Most welcome (smiles).



APPENDIX TWO

CODING GUIDE

Question 1. Name of Station

1. Joy FM
2. Hitz FM
3. Luv FM

Question 2. Day of the week

1. Monday
2. Tuesday
3. Wednesday
4. Thursday
5. Friday
6. Saturday
7. Sunday

Question 3. Programme Title

1. 1 Super morning show
2. Cosmopolitan Mix
3. Midday news
4. Living Word
5. Business Trends
6. Lunch time rhythms
7. Sports Track
8. BBC



9. Drive time on Joy
10. News night
11. Multitrack Show
12. Late Night Express
13. Ultimate health
14. Business Trends
15. That's my Opinion
16. African Sauce
17. Vintage Music Show
18. Soul Serenade
19. On the Sport
20. Ghana Connect
21. Weekend Warmer
22. Home Affairs
23. Weekend City Show
24. Newsfile
25. Sports Link
26. Rhythms A-Z
27. Flashback
28. Open house party
29. Morning Glory
30. The Reason In Jesus
31. Country Land#
32. Worship Zone
33. Easy Sunday Soul to Soul
34. Sports Arena



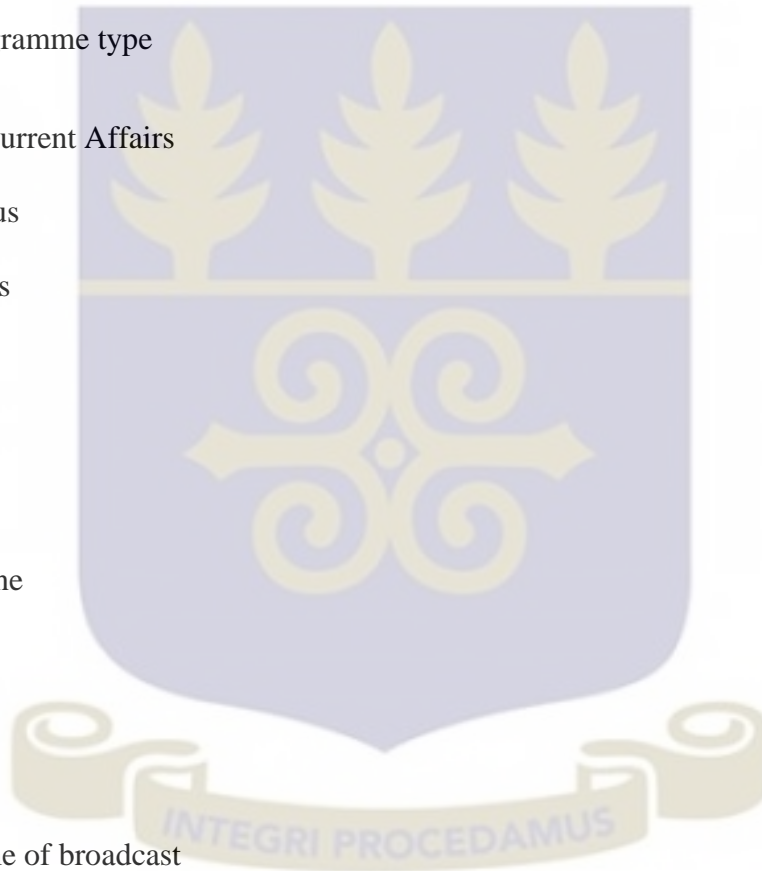
35. 6pm News
36. Sunday Edition
37. Springboard
38. A walk with Jesus
39. Jazz on Joy
40. Day Break Hitz
41. Taxi Driver
42. Cruise Control
43. Hitz Entertainment News
44. Easy Listening
45. Hitz Gallery
46. Hitz Jamz
47. Mix of Blackness
48. Showbiz today
49. Hitz Chart Show
50. Hitz Morning Groove
51. Weekend Lock Down
52. Weekend Party Mix
53. DJ's Choice
54. Metropolitan mix
55. The diary
56. Luv sports
57. Drive time on Luv
58. Music box
59. Luv slow jam
60. Weekend city show



61. Sports avenue
62. Luv weekend drive
63. Private party
64. Easy like Sunday morning
65. Osei krom chart show
66. Gift of songs

Question 4. Programme type

1. News/Current Affairs
2. Religious
3. Business
4. Health
5. Sports
6. Music
7. Magazine
8. Family



Question 5. Time of broadcast

1. Between 6am and 10 am
2. Between 10am and 12 pm
3. Between 2pm and 3 pm
4. Between 3pm and 8pm
5. Between 8pm and 12am

Question 6. Duration of programme

1. 15 minutes
2. 30 minutes
3. 1 hour
4. 2 hours
5. 3 hours
6. 4 hours

Question 7. Audience/ listener participation

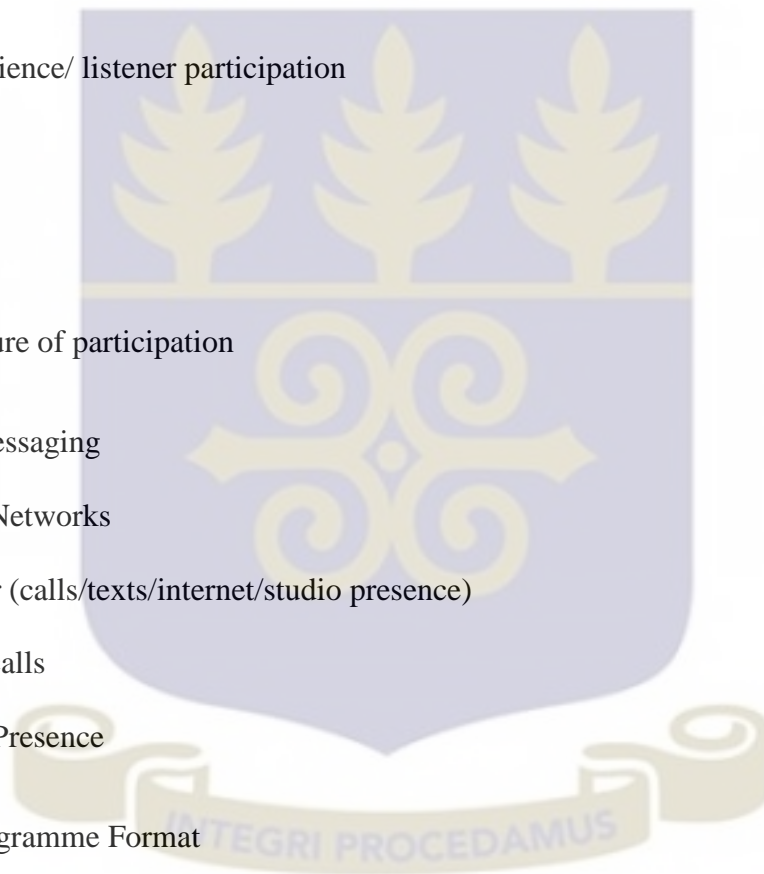
1. Yes
2. No

Question 8. Nature of participation

1. Text messaging
2. Social Networks
3. All four (calls/texts/internet/studio presence)
4. Phone calls
5. Studio Presence

Question 9. Programme Format

1. Discussion/talk
2. Mixed bag
3. Documentary
4. News



Question 10. News/ Programme Sharing

1. Yes
2. No



APPENDIX THREE

DIVERSITY IN THE PROGRAMMING OF A MEDIA CONGLOMERATE

CODING SHEET

Name of station							
Day of the week							
Programme title							
Time of broadcast							
Duration of programme							
Programme type							
Audience/ listener participation							
Nature of participation							
Advertisement Type							

Personal notes.....

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