

**RADIO AS A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AND STUDENTS’  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES:  
A STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CROSS RIVER STATE  
STUDENTS**

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**Abstract**

This study examines radio as a pedagogical approach and students’ academic performance in Nigerian universities. The objective of the study aims to ascertain the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level, among others. The quantitative (survey) method was adopted for the study. Data were collected with questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed with the simple percentage method while the result of the analysis revealed that radio is very effective as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level. Based on the findings, it was concluded that though there are other educational policies and programmes aimed at improving students’ academic performance in the university, students can also improve to a high extent on their academic performance in the university through active radio listenership.

**Keywords:** Radio, pedagogy, listenership.

## **Introduction**

Radio from the period of invention has been a powerful mass medium. Because of its personal and emotional nature, it has a wider or larger audience than television (Goldmark, 1996, p.15). These unique features also gave it an edge (advantage) over other mass media. Radio is known also for its distant transmission of information beyond international boundaries to people in the rural areas. It is the voice of the common man, the hope of the hopeless in terms of publicity. Everybody, including the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate, the old and the young; is associated with the radio. This is why Kuewumi (2009), posits that radio has radicalized the face of human communication and ultimately become a fixed point in the daily lives of humans whereby people are informed, taught, nurtured and reformed by way of relaxation, reinvigoration and resuscitation. He adds further, that these potentials make radio as a medium of mass communication to be constantly sought after by its ardent listeners.

Egbuchulam (2002), asserts that radio is a mobilizer and a formidable factor in the new world order in economy, technology and politics. This therefore implies that radio positively affects all sectors of the economy and all aspects of human endeavour. Kuewumi (2009, p. 148), paints a positive picture of radio, thus:

Imagine a world without radio; it will be like a garden without flowers and trees. Radio daily feeds us with information, teaches us and calms our nerves. If radio is well understood and its potentials realized, hardly will there be any one that will live without a radio; many anxious moments will be healed.

The rate of radio listenership is increasing rapidly as radio is building more audience on a daily basis. In the developed countries of the world like the United States for instance, in an average week, 226 million people, 95% of all Americans, 12 and over, listen to radio (Arbitron, 2002). In Nigeria, 60% of people including those in the rural areas and students listen to radio due to the use of radio supported mobile phones (Ayo, 2003, P.7).

However, as radio caters for all, radio listenership and usage differ according to the audience involved. It therefore means that the effect of radio listenership on one demographic audience will not be the same with

another. It is in this searchlight that this study was designed to examine the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical approach and students' academic performance in Nigerian Universities, using students of University of Cross River State, Calabar, as the focus of study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The relevance of radio as a pedagogical tool has been undermined especially by people who only think that the functions of radio are limited to news and entertainment. While some students in Nigerian universities listen to radio, others do not see or have any reason to listen to it. Also, some educational instructors are not abreast of the effectiveness of radio in education at the tertiary level. This study therefore, investigated the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical approach and students' academic performance in Nigerian universities.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study was set to achieve the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level.
2. To find out the impact of radio listenership on students.
3. To determine the extent to which students in Nigeria universities can improve on academic performance through radio listenership.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level?
2. How does radio listenership impact on students?
3. To what extent can students in Nigerian universities improve on their academic performance through radio listenership?

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was framed within the tenets of the uses and gratification theory and agenda-setting theory.

### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

Proposed by Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in 1974, the Uses and Gratification theory assumes that audience members are not passive

consumers of media contents. Rather, the audience has power over what is consumed and assumes an active role in interpreting and integrating media into their own lives. Folarin(1998, p.65), posits that this theory perceives the recipient as actively influencing the effect process, since he selectively chooses, attends to, perceives and retains the media messages on the basis of his or her needs, beliefs, etc. The focus is thus shifted from media production and transmission functions to the media consumption function.

The basic assumptions of the theory are:

1. An individual has some needs related to communication;
2. He or she selects the media that appears likely to satisfy those needs;
3. He or she selectively consumes the contents;
4. An effect will occur.

Drawing inference from this theory, suffice it to say that students are responsible for choosing media to meet their desires and needs to achieve gratification. This gratification is also reflected on their various activities such as academic performance, social life and interaction among others. Homann (2006, p.36), affirms that the impact of radio listenership on students' academic performance depends on the type of radio programmes they listen to, that the programmes inculcate in them, virtues which they apply on their academic activities to improve performance.

### **Agenda-Setting Theory**

This theory, proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972, predicts that the amount of attention given to an issue in the media affects the level of importance assigned to it by the public. When we say that the media have an impact on agenda-setting, we mean the ability to choose and emphasize certain topics; thereby causing the public to perceive those issues as important (Ineji, 2003).

The mass media by defining, analyzing and interpreting issues and attracting or attaching attention to specific issues in the society, set agenda for public discussion. These issues could be presented in the form of news, drama, documentaries, features, etc., all these are reflected on various programmes on radio which people listen to. When the radio is used to teach topics that appeal to students, it makes them also to attach some

importance to such topics by way of active listening, similar to the conventional classroom situation.

### **Conceptual Review of Radio Listenership**

Radio listenership means the audience for radio programmes. It refers to the total number of people that listen to radio on daily basis. According to Webster, Phalem and Lichty (2014,P.35), audience measurement is used to determine how many people constitute the audience for a particular programme on radio; on hourly, daily, weekly and monthly basis, which is also used to attract advertisers to the radio stations with the highest listenership rate. Sometimes, this term is used as pertaining to practices which help broadcasters and advertisers ascertain who is listening rather than just how many people are listening.

A number of methods and techniques have been devised for audience measurement of radio listenership. These include dairies, electronic, software, etc. The goal of audience measurement is to deliver results to inquiries such as; the nature of audience, the number of listeners , the programme listened to, the amount of time spent listening, the programme genre and the audience interest in those programmes.

Napoli (2003), adds that the rating industry breaks their statistics down in several ways, to express different measurement as follows:

- i. **Share:** This is the percentage of radio listeners tuned into a given station at a given time. For instance, a “1.4 share” means that 1.4% of people listening to radio at a specified time are tuned into the specified station or programme.
- ii. **Rating:** This is the percentage of potential audience members-whether tuned into any programme or not, who are also tuned into a particular programme or station at a given time.
- iii. **Cume:** Cume or cumulative audience is the number of unique people tuned into a progarmme or station at a given time. Cume is usually expressed as the estimated number of listeners in any given quarter- hour.
- iv. **Average Quarter Hour (AQH):** The AQH figure is the average number of audience members during a typical quarter-hour (measured as quarters of the hour from: 00 to : 15, : 15, to :30, :30 to :45 and :45, after the hour to the top of the hour respectively.

- v. **Time Spent Listening (TSL):** This refers to the amount of time an average listener spends listening to a station or programme before changing the frequency or tuning to another station. This measurement derives both the frequency of radio commercial breaks as well as the station's programming strategy. Stations whose radio formats tend to have short TSLs (such as music stations and day parts) will have more frequent commercial breaks, while formats and time with longer TSLs will schedule breaks less frequently.

### **Types of Radio Listenership**

Listening is the focus and attention that is given to a speaker (encoder of a message) by his or her receiver (decoder of the message or information) in the process of communication. Listening is the conscious effort of an individual to obtain information and interpret a given phenomena through the engagement of his auditory organs (the ears) to what is said, either on radio or other formal and informal conversations.

According to Oyelade (2006), listening is the ability to perceive information adequately. It is a receptive communication skill, which allows the audience to receive information. The following are types of radio listenership which are common or prevalent among radio audience:

1. **Critical radio listenership:** This is the type of listenership in which the listener evaluates, judges and forms opinion about what is heard or said on radio. Here, the listener also assesses the positivity and negativity of the information that is received from the radio and either agrees or disagrees with it.
2. **Appreciative radio listenership:** In this type of listenership, the listener or audience seeks certain information which caters for his needs or meets his goals. If a particular programme on radio does not appeal or interest the listener, he or she will quickly tune to another station or turn off his radio set.
3. **Dialogical radio listenership:** This is the type of listenership in which the radio presenter and the listener are involved or engaged in a dialogue or conversation in order to exchange ideas and information. Here, the listener has the opportunity and privilege of interacting with the presenter through phone calls, text messages, etc. Phone-in and audience participatory programmes in which

listeners call to contribute to the issue that is being discussed on radio at a particular time, are used to build or promote dialogical listenership.

The above types of radio listenership are also summarised as active and passive listening. Active listening as coined by Gordon (1977, p.57), is the ability of a listener to concentrate, understand, respond and recollect what is said or heard. Therefore, a listener is said to be active, when he is able to make meaning from what is said by the speaker in any context. He is passive, when he does not respond or react to what is said or heard.

### **Merits of Radio Listenership to Students**

Radio offers a lot to its audience. It is an instructive medium which imparts knowledge and complements the classroom teachers or lecturers. Peter (2004, p.39-40), posits that radio listenership affects students positively in three perspectives-psychological, sociological and cultural perspectives.

**Psychological perspective:** This is concerned with the effect of radio listenership on the mind. The mind is like a “store house” from which thoughts emanate. The academic performance of a student especially in times of examination is determined by his state of mind towards academic works or activities.

In this vein, frequent listenership to radio improves the minds (psychology) of students which also increase the level of academic performance among students. The psychological effects of radio listenership among students are:

1. Creativity: Radio listenership makes students to be creative in thinking and reasoning as it gives them what to think about. Thinking is the conception of idea while reasoning is the careful examination of the idea-whether good or bad, should be adopted or discarded. The creative ingenuity of a student makes for good academic performance. This is what radio listenership fosters.
2. Comprehensiveness and understanding: Radio listenership aids students to be fast in comprehending phenomena or the world around them. Once an event occurs or an explanation is given on a particular subject, the students would understand immediately because the contents (programmes) of radio are transient in nature.

3. **Inquisitiveness:** Since the radio reveals a lot about life and humanity, listening to radio makes students to be inquisitive especially at lecture times where they ask the lecturers questions that yield positive results. Inquisitiveness also expands the horizon of students' knowledge, which affects their academic performance significantly.
4. **Communication skills:** Radio is a communicative medium. It completes communication by serving as a channel for creating shared meaning between the encoder and the decoder of a message.

So, radio listenership endows students with communication skills that enable them to express ideas in oral and written forms which also boost their academic performance. The communication that flows between students and lecturers goes a long way in strengthening their relationship and enhances a two-way excellent performance; the lecturers on one hand, and the students on the other.

**The sociological perspective:** Socialization is the process of relating and interacting with one another within the human cosmic environment. On the sociological perspective, Peter (2004, p. 61), opines that radio listenership improves the relationship among students, students and lecturers, as well as students and the environment which in turn, affects their academic performance positively.

Radio is a sociological medium, a unifying factor that enhances students' manners of friendship with one another. This is because excellence in academics cannot be achieved in isolation but a collective efforts and resources of others.

**The cultural perspective:** Culture is a historically transmitted pattern of meaning, embodied in symbolic forms by means of which people communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about attitude towards life (Taylor, 1991, p.91). On the cultural perspective, radio listenership helps students to create and maintain a good culture by way of thinking, acting, perception and reaction to notions which also enhances their academic performance.



## **The Pedagogy of Radio**

Pedagogy is the art and science of good teaching. It is the theory and practice of education and its effect on the academic growth of the learner, taking into cognizance the age of the learner, his level of cognitive development, environment, etc. Agba (2015, P. 28) posits that:

Educational pedagogy is the ability of devised appropriate aids or objects for learning, whether on radio or television or in traditional education. The term generally refers to the strategies of instruction or styles of instruction. It is sometimes referred to as the correct use of teaching aids or motive models and theories.

Educational pedagogy can take different forms and approaches including the mass media. One of these approaches is radio. As a pedagogical tool or medium, radio imparts and disseminates knowledge to students in the following ways:

1. Individual programme presentation: This is the ability of an individual who is endowed with wisdom to conceive an idea (programme conception), treat it creatively (process), package it (the finished programme) and then deliver it on radio (presentation) to an audience. During this presentation, knowledge is imparted to a learner.
2. Talks on radio: One of the objectives of the media is to set agenda for public discussion on issues of public interest or importance. The Agenda-Setting theory implies that the mass media predetermine what issues are regarded as important at a given time in a society. Though, the Agenda-Setting theory does not ascribe to the media, the power to determine what we actually think, but it does, ascribe to them the power to determine what we are thinking about. Talks are logical thoughts on topics or matters of public importance discussed on radio. In the course of this discussion, knowledge is imparted to people in the society.
3. Phone-in programmes: These are programmes designed for audience participation. Talks also belong to this category. They create a platform for the audience to respond instantaneously to the broadcast through phone calls or phone messaging. During this

presentation, the interaction and communication between the source (encoder) and the audience or callers (decoders) increases and advances knowledge among themselves.

4. Quizzes on radio: These are interactive sections among students in which a teacher(s) ask questions and students answer the questions accordingly, after which scores are awarded according to the level of performance of each student. The quiz is a veritable tool of communication through which knowledge is imparted from one person to another on radio. It is also an educative mode of communication.
5. Radio drama: Drama is a story told through dialogue and action. It is often divided into acts and scenes. It is also a three-in-one (entertainment, education and information) approach of imparting knowledge and creating shared meaning. This mode of radio communication easily draws and holds the attention of the audience and makes them to comprehend the message effectively.
6. News: One of the most prevalent means through which radio disseminate knowledge is news presentation. News is an account of current events in the society and the world around us. Once information is given through the radio, knowledge is gained by the public.

News is also what is not known, which is broken at first to a listener; making him fresh, refreshed and abreast of current knowledge and events in the society. This also implies that whatever is not known to a listener, which is revealed to him or her in the course of listening to radio can be considered as news. Furthermore, a radio programme is judged to be news-worthy, if it has the propriety of disseminating and imparting new knowledge.

7. Radio or News Commentary: This is an opinion or view expressed on a public issue, which is of public interest, by an individual and presented on radio. The broadcast commentary is like an editorial in print media. When a broadcast station (radio) collectively analyzes or comments on an issue of public importance, knowledge is imparted as this often help the public (students) to make adjustment where necessary.

## **Review of Studies**

Numerous researches have been conducted by scholars and media practitioners on radio as a mass medium and radio listenership. A study conducted by Okwu (2007), to investigate the use of radio as a medium for agricultural information delivery to farmers in Benue State, Nigeria, revealed a high level of listenership to the programme. The study found that 66% of the respondents listened to the agricultural programmes aired on Radio Benue and 42% of the listeners indicated that they found the programmes relevant to their agricultural information needs.

Another study by Odera (2008), on the use of school radio programme in Kenya, established that radio technology is viewed by teachers as a useful tool for teaching and learning languages like English, French, German and Kiswahili at all levels of education. The study also found that programmes on radio help to increase the students' mastery of vocabulary and pronunciation as students learn to imitate the radio presenters.

Also, Mano (2006), in his study on scheduling for rural and urban audiences on Radio Zimbabwe, found that radio is effective as an educative platform for promoting African traditions. Radio in Zimbabwe advances African traditions by providing a discursive space. Mano's study shows how public radio in Zimbabwe adapted traditional materials from the past and use them to educate the youths and children on cultural values.

While the above studies centred on the use of radio in diverse ways to achieve a myriad of objectives, this study bridges the gap between radio listenership and students' academic performance.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted the quantitative (survey) method. The survey method enabled the researcher to access the population under study. The population of study was drawn from students of University of Cross River State, Calabar. The random sampling technique was also adopted for the study. A total of 500 students selected from the five faculties of Calabar campus of the university, were used as a sample to represent the entire population.

Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used for the study. For the primary source, the researcher used the questionnaire as a research instrument to obtain data from the respondents. The closed-ended questionnaire structured on a three-point likert scale model was divided into two sections; A and B respectively. Section 'A' contained

demographic information about the respondents which bothered on their gender, age, marital status and level of study while section ‘B’ contained information on the subject matter. The questionnaire was pretested on a few respondents before administering it on the research respondents to ensure validity and reliability of the instrument. Secondary sources of data on the other hand, were the library materials (textbooks and journals) and the internet.

Data collected from field work was further calculated and classified into relevant tables. The statistics and information obtained were analyzed using simple percentage method of calculation. The discussion of findings was based on the objectives of the study.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

The data used in this study were the 15-item closed-ended questionnaire which was designed to address basic research questions. A total of 500 copies were administered but 493 copies were duly responded to, and returned. The figure, 493 thus became the 100% rating in this study.

**Research Question One:** What is the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level?

Table 1: The Effectiveness of Radio as a Pedagogical Tool in Education at the Tertiary Level

	Indicators	Response Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	You often listen to radio and learn from it.	Agree	203	41
		Disagree	188	38
		Neutral	102	21
		Total	493	100
2.	You perform better in academics after a period of radio listenership.	Agree	214	43
		Disagree	200	40
		Neutral	79	17
		Total	493	100
3.	Radio listenership enhances your study habits to improve performance.	Agree	222	45
		Disagree	231	47
		Neutral	40	8
		Total	493	100

4.	Radio listenership aids your understanding when studying.	Agree	314	63
		Disagree	111	22
		Neutral	68	15
		Total	493	100
5.	There is a correspondence between your radio listenership and academic performance.	Agree	289	58
		Disagree	176	35
		Neutral	28	7
		Total	493	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

Research question one, sought to ascertain the effectiveness of radio as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level. Table 1, indicates that 41% of the respondents agreed that they listened and learned from the radio 38% disagreed and 21% were neutral. Whereas, 43% of the respondents agreed that they performed better in academics after a period of radio listenership, 40% disagreed and 17% were neutral. Meanwhile, 45% of respondents agreed that radio enhances their study habits to improve performance while 47% disagreed and 8% were neutral. Also, 63% of the respondents agreed that radio listenership aids their understanding when studying, 22% disagreed and 15% were neutral. Furthermore, 58% of the respondents agreed that there is a correspondence between their radio listenership and academic performance while 35% disagreed and 7% were neutral.

This revealed that radio is effective as a pedagogical tool in education at the tertiary level of studies.

**Research Question Two:** How does radio listenership impact on students?

**Table 2: Indication of the Impact of Radio Listenership on Students**

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	Radio makes you creative in thinking and reasoning.	Agree	202	40
		Disagree	198	38
		Neutral	93	22
		Total	493	100
2.	Radio gives you information which enhances your moral conduct.	Agree	227	46
		Disagree	144	29
		Neutral	29	15
		Total	493	100
3.	Radio listenership makes you curious about issues of life.	Agree	219	44
		Disagree	221	45
		Neutral	53	11
		Total	493	100
4.	Radio listenership motivates you.	Agree	292	59
		Disagree	177	35
		Neutral	24	6
		Total	493	100
	Radio listenership makes you to develop analytical skills.	Agree	209	42
		Disagree	205	41
		Neutral	79	17
		Total	493	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

Research question two sought to find out the impact of radio listenership on students. Table 2, indicates that 40% of the respondents agreed that radio listenership makes them to be creative in thinking and reasoning while 38% disagreed and 22% were neutral. Whereas 46% of the respondents agreed that radio gives them information which enhances their moral conduct, 29% disagreed and 15% were neutral. Meanwhile, 44% of the respondents agreed that radio listenership makes them curious about the issues of life while 45% disagreed and 11% were neutral. Also, 59% of the respondents agreed that radio listenership motivates them while 35% disagreed and 6% were neutral. Furthermore, 42% of the respondents

agreed that radio makes them to develop analytical skills while 41% disagreed and 17% were neutral.

This also revealed that radio listenership has a positive impact on students in the university, as it affects their thoughts, moral conduct and equips them with analytical skills.

**Research Question Three:** To what extent can students in Nigerian universities improve on their academic performance through radio listenership?

Table 3: Indication of Students' Improvement on Academic Performance through Radio Listenership

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Response Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1.	You are now kept abreast of educational trends than you used to be, because of radio listenership.	Agree	347	70
		Disagree	109	22
		Neutral	37	8
		Total	493	100
2.	You are satisfied when educational subject matters that concern you are presented on radio.	Agree	319	64
		Disagree	101	20
		Neutral	73	16
		Total	493	100
3.	You excel in you academics when you listen often to radio than when you do not.	Agree	229	46
		Disagree	218	44
		Neutral	46	10
		Total	493	100
4.	When listening, you paid attention to all details of the presentation on radio and that also helps you in class.	Agree	284	57
		Disagree	121	24
		Neutral	88	19
		Total	493	100
5.	The students' segments in radio programming should be continuous.	Agree	382	77
		Disagree	78	15
		Neutral	33	8
		Total	493	100

**Source:** Field Survey, 2023.

Research question three sought to determine the extent to which students in Nigerian universities can improve on their academic performance through radio listenership. Table 3, indicates that 70% of the respondents agreed that they are now kept abreast of educational trends than they used to be, because of radio listenership while 22% disagreed and 8% were neutral. Whereas, 64% of the respondents agreed that they are satisfied when educational subject matters that concern them are presented on radio, 20% disagreed and 16% were neutral. Also, 46% of the respondents agreed that they excel in their academics when they listen often to radio than when they do not while 44% disagreed and 10% were neutral. Meanwhile, 57% of the respondents agreed that they are always attentive to all details of the presentations on radio when listening and that also helps them in class, while 24% disagreed and 19% were neutral. Furthermore, 77% of the respondents agreed that the students' segments in radio programming should be continued while 15% disagreed and 8% were neutral.

This also implies that students can improve to a high extent on their academic performance through radio listenership.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

From the data presented and analyzed, the three key research questions were answered. Summarily, this study establishes from the analysis of data that radio is very effective as a pedagogical approach or tool in education at the tertiary level. This can also be achieved by critical, appreciative and dialogical radio listenership. The Agenda-Setting and Uses and Gratification theories which are the theoretical framework, support this finding as well.

The finding that radio listenership has a positive impact on students in the university, as it affects their thoughts, moral conduct and equips them with analytical skills; is supported by Peter (2004), who posits that radio listenership affects students positively in three perspectives; psychological, sociological and cultural perspectives.

This study concludes that though there are other educational policies and programmes aimed at improving students' academic performance in the university, students can improve in their academic performance in a high extent through active radio listenership. The study recommends that those who do not listen to radio actively should cultivate the habit of radio listenership and radio programmers and producers should



produce more educational programmes for the benefit of students in the higher institutions of learning.

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