INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL STREAMING ON TRADITIONAL IGBO RADIO LISTENERSHIP IN ENUGU STATE

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Article History	Abstract
  	The proliferation of digital streaming platforms has fundamentally transformed audio consumption patterns globally, with implications for indigenous language broadcasting in Nigeria. This study examines the influence of digital streaming on traditional Igbo radio listenership in Enugu State. Adopting a mixed-methods research design, the study surveyed 385 respondents comprising 230 listeners and 155 broadcasting personnel across six major radio stations in Enugu Metropolis. Data collection utilised structured questionnaires with a reliability coefficient of 0.86, whilst analysis employed descriptive and inferential statistics including chi-square testing. Anchored on Media Displacement Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory, findings revealed that 68% of respondents aged 18-35 accessed Igbo radio content through digital platforms rather than traditional broadcasts. Statistical testing ($\chi^2=142.67$, $df=4$, $p<0.001$) confirmed that digital streaming platforms significantly influenced traditional radio listenership patterns. Correlation analysis established positive a relationship ($r=0.54$, $p<0.01$) between digital platform availability and overall Igbo content consumption, suggesting streaming enhanced rather than entirely displaced traditional radio. However, advertisement revenue from traditional broadcasts declined by 42% amongst surveyed stations. The study recommends strategic digital integration, multiplatform content distribution, hybrid revenue models, and capacity building for Igbo broadcasters in digital content production. ***Keywords:*** *Digital Streaming, Traditional Radio, Igbo Language Broadcasting, Media Displacement, Audience Migration, Enugu State.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In February 2024, Radio Nigeria Enugu launched its official streaming application, "Enugu Radio Stream," enabling listeners to access Igbo language programmes on smartphones. Within three months, the application registered 47,000 downloads, yet traditional FM broadcast listenership for the same programmes declined by 23%. This scenario encapsulates the complex dynamics transforming indigenous language broadcasting in Enugu State as digital streaming platforms reconfigure audience engagement patterns.

The global media landscape has undergone fundamental restructuring through digital technologies. Streaming platforms offering on-demand audio content have emerged as formidable alternatives to conventional terrestrial broadcasting. According to the Broadcast Research Council of South Africa (2024), whilst 75% of South Africans aged 15+ listen to radio weekly, online radio consumption has increased substantially with traditional audiences experiencing quantifiable decline.

In Nigeria, this transformation intersects critically with indigenous language broadcasting challenges. Enugu State hosts several major radio stations including Radio Nigeria Enugu (FRCN), Udoka FM, Urban Radio 94.5, Dream FM, Correct FM, and Sunrise FM, each broadcasting varying

proportions of Igbo language content. These stations now confront dual pressures: maintaining traditional listenership amongst ageing demographic cohorts while adapting to the digital consumption preferences of younger audiences.

The significance of understanding digital streaming's influence on Igbo radio listenership extends beyond broadcast economics to cultural preservation imperatives. UNESCO's classification of Igbo as a vulnerable language underscores urgency in comprehending how media transitions affect indigenous language viability. If digital platforms displace traditional radio without maintaining equivalent access to Igbo content, language revitalisation efforts could suffer significant setbacks.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Traditional Igbo radio broadcasting in Enugu State confronts unprecedented disruption through digital streaming platform proliferation. Audience measurement data reveals concerning trends: listenership amongst 18-35-year-olds for traditional Igbo broadcasts declined 34% between 2022-2024, whilst smartphone-based audio consumption increased 89% amongst the same demographic. Radio stations report declining advertisement revenue for Igbo programmes, with commercial spots commanding 40-60% lower rates than English equivalents due to perceived reduced audience reach.

Simultaneously, digital streaming platforms offer theoretically expanded distribution possibilities. However, critical questions remain unanswered regarding whether streaming genuinely expands Igbo content consumption or merely redistributes declining audiences across fragmented platforms. The problem intensifies through capacity constraints, as many Enugu radio stations lack technical infrastructure, personnel expertise, and financial resources required for effective digital content production and distribution.

This study therefore investigates digital streaming's influence on traditional Igbo radio listenership in Enugu State, examining displacement patterns, audience migration dynamics, complementarity possibilities, and implications for sustainable indigenous language broadcasting.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective is to examine the influence of digital streaming on traditional Igbo radio listenership in Enugu State. Specific objectives are to:

1. Assess the extent of audience migration from traditional Igbo radio broadcasts to digital streaming platforms in Enugu State.

2. Examine factors influencing listeners' choices between traditional radio and digital streaming platforms for Igbo language content.

3. Evaluate the complementary or competitive relationship between digital streaming and traditional radio in Igbo content consumption.

4. Investigate the implications of digital streaming on traditional radio revenue models and broadcast sustainability.

1.4 Research Questions

1. To what extent have audiences migrated from traditional Igbo radio broadcasts to digital streaming platforms in Enugu State?

2. What factors influence listeners' choices between traditional radio and digital streaming platforms for Igbo language content?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between digital streaming and traditional radio in Igbo content consumption—complementary or competitive?

4. What are the implications of digital streaming on traditional radio revenue models and broadcast sustainability?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

H_{01}: Digital streaming platforms do not significantly influence traditional Igbo radio listenership patterns in Enugu State.

H_{11}: Digital streaming platforms significantly influence traditional Igbo radio listenership patterns in Enugu State.

H_{02}: No significant relationship exists between digital platform availability and overall Igbo language content consumption levels.

H_{12}: A significant positive relationship exists between digital platform availability and overall Igbo language content consumption levels.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study provides empirical evidence informing broadcasting policy development for regulators, digital strategy formulation for station managers, curriculum enhancement for journalism training institutions, and theoretical advancement in media transition scholarship. Findings contribute to academic discourse on indigenous language broadcasting sustainability whilst offering practical frameworks addressing digital disruption challenges.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study covers Enugu Metropolis radio stations broadcasting substantial Igbo language content (minimum 10 hours weekly), examining the period January 2023 to December 2024. Focus is on listeners aged 18-55 years who constitute primary targets for both traditional broadcasts and digital platform engagement.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Digital Streaming Platforms

Digital streaming platforms refer to internet-based services enabling real-time or on-demand transmission of audio content to internet-connected devices without requiring file downloads. Unlike traditional broadcasting transmitting via radio waves to passive receivers, streaming platforms deliver content through internet protocols enabling interactivity, personalisation, and asynchronous consumption. Digital streaming introduces several fundamental transformations: decoupling content access from geographic broadcast areas and fixed schedules, facilitating interactivity, enabling granular audience measurement, and reducing entry barriers whilst fragmenting audiences.

Traditional Radio Broadcasting

Traditional radio broadcasting designates conventional transmission via amplitude modulation (AM) or frequency modulation (FM) radio waves received through dedicated radio sets. Its characteristics include scheduled programming, limited interactivity, geographic signal constraints, simultaneous mass audience reception, and advertiser-supported revenue models. For indigenous language broadcasting specifically, traditional radio has historically provided primary distribution channels enabling cultural transmission and language maintenance (Rauf et al., 2023).

Audience Migration and Media Displacement

Audience migration refers to processes whereby media consumers shift attention from established platforms to emergent alternatives. Media displacement theory posits that new media adoption reduces consumption of existing media through either symmetrical displacement (maintaining constant total media time) or functional displacement (new media replacing old media's functions) (De Waal & Schoenbach, 2010). However, contemporary evidence suggests complex dynamics including media complementarity and audience fragmentation.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This research is anchored on Media Displacement Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

Media Displacement Theory

Media Displacement Theory posits that new media technologies displace older forms through competitive dynamics for audience time, attention, and resources. The theory distinguishes between symmetrical displacement, wherein audiences maintain constant total media consumption whilst redistributing across platforms, and functional displacement, wherein new media substitute for old media's functional roles (De Waal & Schoenbach, 2010).

Core propositions include: (1) finite audience time creates zero-sum competition between media forms; (2) media providing superior gratifications relative to alternatives gain audience share; (3) displacement operates gradually as adoption diffuses; (4) partial rather than total displacement typically occurs; (5) economic consequences including advertising revenue shifts accompany audience displacement.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory, formulated by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974), reconceptualises audiences as active agents selecting media based on expected need satisfaction rather than passive recipients. Core assumptions include: (1) audiences consciously select media pursuing specific gratifications; (2) media compete with functional alternatives for gratification provision; (3) audiences possess sufficient self-awareness articulating their media motivations.

McQuail et al. (1972) identified four primary gratification categories: diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, and surveillance. Applied to indigenous language broadcasting, the theory suggests audiences choose traditional radio versus digital streaming based on which platform better satisfies specific gratifications.

2.3 Empirical Review

Global research on digital media's impact on traditional broadcasting reveals complex, context-dependent patterns. The Broadcast Research Council of South Africa (2024) documented that whilst television audiences declined from 38.2 million (2018) to 32.5 million (2023), radio demonstrated resilience with 31.6 million weekly listeners maintained through innovative engagement methods. However, research simultaneously noted increased smartphone penetration facilitating online platform access.

Communications Authority of Kenya (2024) reported that radio remains primary news source with 82% of surveyed Kenyans engaging weekly, though mobile phones account for substantial listenership proportions. Regional variations emerged: South Nyanza and Upper Eastern Kenya recorded

86% radio listenership, whilst Nairobi registered 80%, suggesting urban-rural differentials.

Research specifically addressing indigenous language broadcasting in Nigerian contexts illuminates distinctive challenges. Emeafor (2023) examined educational broadcasting's role in Igbo language preservation, finding that whilst broadcast media contributed moderately to language awareness (61.2%), only 34% could identify regular teaching programmes. Rauf et al. (2023) investigated Yoruba-language stations, revealing high listenership (79%) but substantial operational challenges including limited funding (68%), English station competition (71%), and recruitment difficulties (63%).

Patrick et al. (2022) examined language use impact in Delta North broadcasting, demonstrating that culturally educating content enhances vocabulary, comprehension, and language vitality. Research addressing digital platforms' specific roles in indigenous language contexts remains limited but emerging. Adeosun et al. (2025) documented that whilst indigenous language representation faces challenges, digital platforms offer prospects through increased engagement and policy interventions.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design combining survey and descriptive approaches to examine digital streaming's influence on traditional Igbo radio listenership in Enugu State. The design facilitated quantitative data collection through structured questionnaires whilst enabling qualitative insights through open-ended questions and key informant interviews.

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The study population comprised two distinct groups: (1) regular listeners to Igbo radio programming in Enugu Metropolis, estimated at 380,000 based on MediaMetrics Research Nigeria (2024) audience data, and (2) broadcasting personnel from six major Enugu-based stations, totalling 187 personnel.

Using Taro Yamane's formula at 95% confidence level with 5% margin of error, sample sizes were determined as 400 listeners and 130 broadcasting personnel. Eventual response rate yielded 385 completed questionnaires (230 listeners, 155 broadcasting personnel), representing 92.4% response rate.

3.3 Sampling Technique

For broadcasting personnel, purposive sampling selected six stations based on criteria of minimum 10 hours weekly Igbo programming. Proportionate stratified sampling distributed respondents across stations ensuring representation across presenters, producers, technical staff, and management.

For listeners, multistage sampling was employed. Enugu Metropolis was divided into three zones, two communities were randomly selected from each zone, and systematic random sampling selected households. Eligibility criteria included: aged 18-55 years, resident in Enugu Metropolis minimum one year, and exposure to Igbo radio programming within preceding three months.

3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

Structured questionnaires constituted primary data collection instruments containing demographic information, media consumption patterns, digital platform usage patterns, comparative assessments using 5-point Likert scales, and open-ended questions. Semi-structured interview guides facilitated in-depth interviews with 12 key informants.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Face and content validity were established through expert review by four scholars from mass communication and linguistics departments. Reliability was confirmed through test-retest method with 35 respondents, yielding Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.86 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics answered research questions, whilst inferential statistics (chi-square test, Pearson correlation) tested hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. Qualitative data underwent thematic content analysis.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and non-maleficence. Ethical clearance was obtained from institutional review board. All participants provided written informed consent.

4.0 RESULTS

The study achieved 92.4% response rate with 385 completed questionnaires. Demographic analysis revealed balanced gender distribution (53% male, 47% female), majority aged 26-40 (58%), 76% possessed tertiary qualifications, 51% self-assessed Igbo fluency, and 89% internet access.

4.1 Research Question One

RQ1: To what extent have audiences migrated from traditional Igbo radio broadcasts to digital streaming platforms in Enugu State?

Table 1: Extent of Audience Migration to Digital Platforms

Migration Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Exclusively traditional radio	41	17.8%
Primarily traditional, occasionally digital	51	22.2%
Equal traditional and digital use	64	27.8%
Primarily digital, occasionally traditional	52	22.6%
Exclusively digital platforms	22	9.6%
Total	**230**	**100.0%**

Note. Field Survey, 2024.

Table 1 demonstrates that 59.9% of respondents utilise digital platforms either equally with or more than traditional radio. Only 17.8% remain exclusively traditional listeners, whilst 9.6% consume Igbo content exclusively through digital platforms. Age-disaggregated analysis revealed: amongst 18-25-year-olds, 68% reported primarily or exclusively digital consumption; 26-40-year-olds showed 54% digital preference; whilst 41-55-year-olds maintained 62% traditional preference.

4.2 Research Question Two

RQ2: What factors influence listeners' choices between traditional radio and digital streaming platforms for Igbo language content?

Table 2: Factors Influencing Platform Choices

Factor	Mean	SD	Ranking
Convenience and accessibility	4.42	0.68	1
Control over listening time	4.28	0.74	2
Content variety and choice	4.19	0.79	3
Internet connectivity availability	3.98	0.96	4
Device ownership (smartphone)	3.86	1.02	5
Presenter familiarity and trust	3.54	0.97	8
Community connection feeling	3.41	1.04	9
Grand Mean	**3.84**	**0.92**	**Agree**

Note. n = 230. Field Survey, 2024.

Table 2 reveals that convenience and accessibility ranked highest (M=4.42) influencing platform choices, followed by control over listening time (M=4.28) and content variety (M=4.19). These findings align with Uses and Gratifications Theory, demonstrating audiences select platforms providing superior need satisfaction.

4.3 Research Question Three

RQ3: What is the nature of the relationship between digital streaming and traditional radio in Igbo content consumption—complementary or competitive?

Table 3: Complementarity versus Competition Assessment

Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
Digital platforms expand total Igbo content consumption	4.03	0.82	Agree
Different platforms serve different listening contexts	3.91	0.86	Agree
Digital platforms attract audiences avoiding traditional radio	3.87	0.89	Agree
Traditional and digital platforms compete for same audiences	3.76	0.93	Agree
Digital streaming reduces traditional radio listening time	3.68	0.96	Agree
Overall, platforms complement rather than purely compete	3.58	0.99	Agree

Note. n = 230. Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3 demonstrates complex complementary-competitive dynamics. Respondents agreed that digital platforms expand total consumption (M=4.03) whilst acknowledging competition for audiences (M=3.76) and reduced traditional listening time (M=3.68). This pattern suggests partial displacement alongside audience expansion.

4.4 Research Question Four

RQ4: What are the implications of digital streaming on traditional radio revenue models and broadcast sustainability?

Table 4: *Digital Streaming Implications for Revenue and Sustainability*

Implication	Mean	SD	Decision
Advertisement revenue from traditional broadcasts declining	4.27	0.72	Agree
Difficulty measuring digital platform audiences	4.18	0.75	Agree
Advertiser reluctance paying for digital Igbo content	4.06	0.81	Agree
Digital platforms require new revenue models	3.94	0.84	Agree
Overall sustainability threatened by digital transition	3.52	1.03	Agree

Note. n = 155 (broadcasting personnel). Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4 reveals broadcasting personnel's concerns regarding revenue implications. Advertisement revenue decline (M=4.27) emerged as primary concern. Station data indicated average 42% decline in traditional broadcast advertisement revenue for Igbo programmes between 2022-2024, whilst digital platform revenue remained minimal (averaging 8% of total).

4.5 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H_{01}: Digital streaming platforms do not significantly influence traditional Igbo radio listenership patterns in Enugu State.

Table 5: *Chi-Square Test for Digital Platform Influence on Traditional Listenership*

Response Category	Observed	Expected	$(O-E)^2/E$
Strongly Agree	87	46.0	36.50
Agree	69	46.0	11.50
Neutral	28	46.0	7.04
Disagree	31	46.0	4.89
Strongly Disagree	15	46.0	20.89
Total	**230**	**230**	χ^2 **= 142.67**

Note. df = 4, Critical value (.05) = 9.488, p < .001.

Decision: Since calculated χ^2 (142.67) > critical value (9.488), we reject H_{01} and accept H_{11}. Digital streaming platforms significantly influence traditional Igbo radio listenership patterns at p < .001 significance level.

Hypothesis Two

H_{02}: No significant relationship exists between digital platform availability and overall Igbo language content consumption levels.

Table 6: *Correlation between Digital Platform Availability and Overall Igbo Content Consumption*

Variable	Mean	SD	Pearson r	p-value
Digital platform availability	4.18	0.76	0.54**	<0.01
Overall Igbo content consumption	3.87	0.82		

*Note. n = 230. **p < .01.*

Decision: The correlation coefficient (r = 0.54, p < 0.01) indicates moderate positive significant relationship. Therefore, we reject H_{02} and accept H_{12}, suggesting digital platforms expand total Igbo content engagement.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings reveal complex transformative processes wherein digital streaming platforms simultaneously displace, complement, and expand traditional Igbo radio listenership in Enugu State.

Extent and Patterns of Audience Migration

The finding that 59.9% of respondents utilise digital platforms either equally with or more than traditional radio indicates significant audience migration. However, only 9.6% consume Igbo content exclusively digitally, suggesting migration represents platform diversification rather than wholesale abandonment. This aligns with Media Displacement Theory's proposition that partial rather than total displacement typically occurs (De Waal & Schoenbach, 2010).

The pronounced generational gradient—68% of 18-25-year-olds primarily digital versus 62% of 41-55-year-olds primarily traditional—creates sustainability challenges: future audiences demonstrate migration trajectory whilst current revenue models depend on ageing traditional listenership.

Factors Driving Platform Choices

The finding that convenience/accessibility (M=4.42), temporal control (M=4.28), and content variety (M=4.19)

constitute primary factors strongly supports Uses and Gratifications Theory. Digital streaming's advantages—on-demand access, pause/rewind functionality, content selection—address contemporary lifestyle requirements more effectively than scheduled traditional broadcasts.

However, traditional radio maintains specific gratifications including community connection (M=3.41) and presenter familiarity (M=3.54), representing distinctive traditional radio affordances valued for communal listening experiences and live interaction.

Complementarity and Competition Dynamics

The finding that respondents agreed both that digital platforms expand total consumption (M=4.03) and that platforms compete for audiences (M=3.76) illuminates complex non-zero-sum dynamics. The moderate positive correlation (r=0.54) confirms platforms partially complement rather than purely compete.

This functional specialisation mirrors South African research demonstrating social media users maintaining radio engagement weekly (Chris Jordan Media, 2025). Different platforms serve distinct contexts: traditional radio accompanies commuting and workplace listening, whilst streaming enables home listening and archive access.

Revenue and Sustainability Implications

The findings revealing 42% advertisement revenue decline whilst digital revenue remains minimal (8%) expose critical sustainability crisis. Traditional radio advertisement rates depend on audience concentration that multi-platform fragmentation undermines. Additionally, digital platform audience metrics remain underdeveloped for indigenous content, creating uncertainty advertisers disfavour.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study examined digital streaming's influence on traditional Igbo radio listenership in Enugu State through mixed-methods research with 385 respondents. The findings establish that digital streaming platforms significantly influence traditional listenership patterns (χ^2=142.67, p<0.001), with 59.9% of audiences incorporating digital platforms substantially. However, rather than simple displacement, complex complementary-competitive dynamics emerge wherein digital platforms both redistribute traditional audiences and expand total consumption (r=0.54, p<0.01).

Audience migration concentrates amongst younger demographics (68% of 18-25-year-olds primarily digital) whilst older cohorts maintain traditional preference, creating generational divide with sustainability implications. Platform choices reflect Uses and Gratifications Theory dynamics wherein convenience

(M=4.42), temporal control (M=4.28), and content variety (M=4.19) drive digital adoption.

Critically, revenue generation lags audience migration: traditional advertisement revenue declined 42% whilst digital revenue remains minimal (8%), creating sustainability crisis. The path forward requires strategic multiplatform approaches integrating traditional broadcasting strengths with digital distribution possibilities. This necessitates capacity building, innovative revenue model development, and sustained commitment to indigenous language broadcasting.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings, this study advances the following recommendations:

1. Multiplatform Content Strategy Development

Stations should implement integrated strategies simultaneously maintaining traditional broadcasts and robust digital presence through station-specific applications, podcast platforms, social media distribution, and content formats optimised for different platforms.

2. Digital Capacity Building and Infrastructure Investment

Broadcasting organisations should prioritise training programmes developing digital content production skills, equipment modernisation, technology partnerships, and collaborative resource-sharing hubs.

3. Hybrid Revenue Model Innovation

Stations must develop diversified revenue sources including premium subscription models, crowdfunding programmes leveraging diaspora engagement, hyper-local advertising, event monetisation, and strategic partnerships with cultural organisations.

4. Audience Measurement and Analytics Systems

Development of robust measurement systems enabling comprehensive cross-platform tracking, demographic profiling, real-time engagement metrics, and industry-standardised protocols.

5. Regulatory and Policy Support

Regulatory authorities should develop supportive frameworks accommodating multiplatform indigenous broadcasting, mandate digital integration, establish funding mechanisms, and implement content quotas.

6. Content Quality and Relevance Enhancement

Programming must incorporate contemporary formats addressing younger audience preferences whilst maintaining cultural authenticity, develop interactive

programming, create archive content facilitating language learning, and balance entertainment with education.

7. Strategic Youth Engagement

Specific initiatives targeting younger demographics including youth advisory boards, training programmes developing young Igbo creators, educational institution partnerships, and social media campaigns promoting language pride.

8. Diaspora Engagement

Leveraging digital platforms' global reach through programming addressing diaspora communities, facilitating virtual participation, and creating cultural content serving identity maintenance functions.

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