

THE APPEAL OF IGBO RADIO DRAMA AND STORYTELLING AMONG AUDIENCES IN ENUGU METROPOLIS

Okafor, Sebastine Chukwuebuka Ph.D^{1*}, Barr Ugo-Ferdinand Ukwueze ²; Abonyi Cynthia Chinaza ³;

Department of Mass Communication, Enugu State University of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: Okafor, Sebastine Chukwuebuka Ph.D

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>Radio drama and storytelling represent vital conduits for cultural transmission and language preservation in indigenous communities. This study investigates the appeal of Igbo radio drama and storytelling among audiences in Enugu Metropolis, South-East Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research examined 384 audience members and 40 broadcasting personnel across five major radio stations. Data collection employed structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews, analysed through descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations, and thematic analysis. Anchored on Uses and Gratifications Theory, findings revealed that cultural authenticity emerged as the strongest appeal factor (Mean=4.52, SD=0.68), followed by entertainment value (Mean=4.38, SD=0.72), educational benefits (Mean=4.29, SD=0.79), and emotional connection (Mean=4.41, SD=0.71). However, significant demographic disparities exist, with older audiences (56+ years) demonstrating substantially higher appeal ratings (87.3%) compared to youth aged 18-25 years (23.1%). Quality of production (Mean=3.82, SD=0.91) and scheduling patterns emerged as critical constraints, with only 18% of indigenous drama broadcast during prime-time hours. Statistical analysis confirmed that cultural content authenticity ($\chi^2=142.38, p<0.001$) and production quality ($\chi^2=98.47, p<0.001$) significantly influence audience appeal. The study recommends enhanced investment in production quality, strategic scheduling reforms, youth-oriented content development, partnerships with cultural organisations, and capacity building for indigenous language dramatists to strengthen the appeal and sustainability of Igbo radio drama.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Radio Drama, Storytelling, Igbo Language, Audience Appeal, Enugu, Indigenous Broadcasting, Cultural Preservation.</p>
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In October 2024, Dream FM Enugu suspended production of "Akuko N'Egwu" (Stories and Songs), a popular Igbo radio drama that had aired for twelve years, citing declining youth listenership and inadequate sponsorship. This development exemplifies the precarious position of indigenous language radio drama across Enugu State's broadcasting landscape. Despite Enugu's status as a cultural hub hosting major stations including Radio Nigeria Enugu, Coal City FM, Urban Radio, Dream FM, and Owelle FM,

the appeal of traditional Igbo radio drama and storytelling appears increasingly challenged by contemporary entertainment alternatives and shifting audience preferences.

Radio drama occupies a distinctive position in Nigeria's broadcasting heritage. Since the establishment of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in 1956, radio drama has served as a powerful medium for cultural transmission, moral education, and entertainment. The Igbo people, renowned for their rich oral traditions encompassing folktales (akukọ ife), proverbs (ilu), and narrative poetry,

found in radio drama an electronic extension of their age-old storytelling practices. Traditional Igbo storytelling, typically conducted under moonlight in village squares (obodo), employed distinctive techniques including call-and-response patterns, musical interludes, and performative elements that created immersive experiences for audiences.

The contemporary challenge facing Igbo radio drama stems from multiple intersecting factors. Demographic shifts show younger generations exhibiting markedly different media consumption patterns, gravitating towards digital platforms, social media, and English-language content. Urbanisation has disrupted traditional communal storytelling practices, whilst formal education systems emphasising English language proficiency have diminished Igbo language fluency among urban youth. Concurrently, production constraints including limited budgets, shortage of skilled indigenous language scriptwriters, obsolete recording equipment, and marginalised scheduling slots during off-peak hours undermine the quality and accessibility of Igbo radio drama.

However, the medium retains substantial potential. Radio's accessibility, particularly for rural populations and elderly demographics, combined with the inherent power of storytelling in Igbo culture, suggests that radio drama could remain relevant if appropriately adapted to contemporary contexts. The 2018 launch of BBC Igbo service demonstrated significant appetite for quality Igbo language content, whilst successful initiatives like Owelle FM's exclusively Igbo programming model indicate viability when properly resourced. Understanding what drives audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama becomes crucial for developing sustainable strategies that balance cultural preservation with contemporary entertainment expectations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite Igbo culture's rich oral traditions and the historical significance of storytelling in community life, Igbo radio drama and storytelling programmes face declining appeal, particularly among younger demographics in Enugu Metropolis. Available data indicates that audiences aged 18-35 constitute merely 15% of regular listeners to indigenous drama programmes, whilst those aged 55 and above represent 68% of the core audience. This generational divide threatens the sustainability of Igbo radio drama as a cultural preservation mechanism.

Radio stations report challenges attracting advertisers for indigenous drama slots, with sponsorship rates 50-70% lower than equivalent English-language programming. Production budgets for Igbo drama average ₦45,000 per episode compared to ₦180,000 for English drama productions, resulting in quality disparities that further

diminish appeal. Scheduling patterns compound the problem, with 82% of Igbo drama broadcast between 10:00pm-6:00am or during mid-afternoon slots (2:00pm-4:00pm) when listenership is minimal.

Furthermore, content adaptation challenges persist. Traditional folktales, whilst culturally significant, often fail to resonate with contemporary audiences seeking relevance to modern life experiences. The scarcity of trained indigenous language dramatists capable of crafting compelling narratives that balance cultural authenticity with contemporary appeal exacerbates production challenges. Technical limitations including poor sound quality, inadequate voice acting, and minimal sound effects reduce competitive advantage against well-produced English content or digital alternatives.

Against this background, this study seeks to comprehensively examine the factors influencing audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama and storytelling in Enugu Metropolis, understand demographic variations in appeal patterns, identify constraints limiting broader appeal, and propose evidence-based strategies for enhancing the attractiveness and sustainability of indigenous language radio drama.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective is to investigate the appeal of Igbo radio drama and storytelling among audiences in Enugu Metropolis. Specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the cultural and entertainment factors that enhance audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama and storytelling.
2. Assess demographic variations in audience appeal across age groups, educational levels, and language proficiency categories.
3. Evaluate the influence of production quality and presentation standards on audience appeal.
4. Investigate scheduling patterns and accessibility factors affecting audience engagement with Igbo radio drama.
5. Identify constraints limiting the broader appeal of Igbo radio drama among contemporary audiences.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What cultural and entertainment factors enhance audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama and storytelling?
2. How does audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama vary across different demographic groups?
3. To what extent does production quality influence audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama?

4. How do scheduling patterns and accessibility factors affect audience engagement with Igbo radio drama?
5. What constraints limit the broader appeal of Igbo radio drama among contemporary audiences?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study provides empirical evidence informing programming strategies for radio managers, policy development for broadcast regulators, and curriculum design for training institutions. Findings contribute to academic discourse on indigenous media sustainability, cultural preservation through broadcasting, and audience behaviour regarding traditional media forms. Practically, the research offers actionable insights for enhancing the appeal and viability of indigenous language radio drama, thereby supporting linguistic diversity preservation and cultural continuity in rapidly modernising urban contexts.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study covers radio stations in Enugu Metropolis operating indigenous language drama and storytelling programmes, examining the period January 2024 to November 2024. Focus is placed on Igbo language radio drama and storytelling, though insights may apply to other Nigerian indigenous languages facing similar challenges.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Radio drama constitutes a dramatised, purely acoustic performance broadcast on radio or published on audio media. Okigbo (2010) defines it as performance relying exclusively on dialogue, music, and sound effects to assist listeners in imagining characters and narratives without visual components. Whilst auditory in physical dimension, radio drama functions as a powerful visual force in the psychological dimension, enabling audiences to construct mental imagery that often surpasses visual media's limitations. The medium flourished internationally by the 1940s, becoming a leading popular entertainment format before television's ascendancy.

Indigenous language radio drama encompasses dramatic productions performed in native languages of specific ethnic communities, incorporating culturally specific communication styles, traditional knowledge systems, proverbs, and narrative structures rooted in indigenous epistemologies. For the Igbo people, radio drama represents an electronic adaptation of traditional storytelling practices characterised by distinctive features. Traditional Igbo storytelling employed formulaic openings such as "Ifochakpii!" (audience responds "Waa!"), creating participatory atmospheres that distinguished storytelling

from ordinary conversation. Stories were categorised into tales with songs (*akukọ na egwu*), tales without songs, and tales sung without prose, each serving specific pedagogical or entertainment functions.

Storytelling in Igbo culture served multiple instrumental purposes. Educationally, stories transmitted moral values, social norms, and cultural wisdom across generations. Characters like the cunning tortoise (*mbe*) or clever spider (*ududo*) embodied virtues and vices, providing moral instruction through entertaining narratives. Socially, storytelling fostered community cohesion, with communal gatherings creating shared cultural experiences that reinforced collective identity. Linguistically, storytelling preserved the Igbo language's richness, including idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and rhetorical devices that might otherwise disappear. Psychologically, stories provided emotional outlets, allowing audiences to experience vicariously the triumphs, struggles, and transformations of characters.

2.2 Igbo Oral Traditions and Narrative Forms

Igbo oral literature encompasses diverse genres beyond storytelling, including chants by women during childbirth ceremonies, folk songs accompanying agricultural activities, narrative poetry recounting historical events, and riddles (*agumagu*) for children's entertainment and intellectual development. Proverbs (*ilu*) held particular significance in Igbo communication. Chinua Achebe famously wrote that "among the Igbo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten", underscoring linguistic artistry's cultural premium.

Performance theory illuminates how Igbo folktales achieve impact through performative dimensions rather than textual content alone. Schechner (1985) argues that "performance is a way of knowing, a way of being in the world", suggesting stories are best appreciated when performed by narrators with audience participation. Igbo storytelling traditionally occurred under moonlight, with professional raconteurs employing vocal inflections, facial expressions, and gestures to transport audiences into narrative worlds. The setting itself contributed to the experience, with conducive environments deliberately created for storytelling sessions.

2.3 Radio Drama in Nigerian Broadcasting

Radio drama developed significantly within Nigeria's broadcasting history. The Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, established in 1956, integrated drama programming to promote cultural values whilst providing entertainment. Indigenous language drama served developmental purposes, addressing social issues including family planning, agricultural practices, public health, and

civic education through accessible, culturally resonant formats.

Simon and Ndoma (2016) observe that indigenous language broadcasting enables radio stations to convey messages effectively to both literate and illiterate populations, ensuring democratic access to information. Beyond communication effectiveness, indigenous language radio programming supports language development by providing formal usage contexts that standardise vocabulary and grammatical structures whilst demonstrating contemporary relevance of indigenous languages.

2.4 Cultural Preservation and Language Vitality

Broadcasting in indigenous languages contributes substantially to cultural preservation and language vitality. Adekaa, Igyuve, and Akase (2024) demonstrate that radio broadcasting successfully adapts folk media elements into contemporary formats, creating cultural continuity whilst embracing technological advancement. Their study of North Central Nigeria stations revealed that incorporating traditional storytelling techniques, proverbs, and musical elements into radio programming enhances cultural advocacy effectiveness.

However, challenges persist. Akanbi and Aladesanmi (2014) note that despite indigenous language importance, most Nigerian electronic media remain English-based, with vernacular programming occupying minimal airtime. This linguistic imbalance reflects broader societal attitudes where English enjoys prestige associated with education, modernity, and upward mobility, whilst indigenous languages face marginalisation perceived as provincial or backward.

2.5 Audience Engagement and Production Quality

Production quality significantly influences audience appeal. Njoku et al. (2024) found that whilst cultural content authenticity attracts audiences to indigenous programming, poor production quality including substandard audio, weak voice acting, and unimaginative soundscapes diminishes appeal, particularly among younger, media-savvy audiences accustomed to high production values from international content.

Patrick and Emmanuel (2022) investigated Delta State audiences' perceptions regarding local language broadcasts' contributions to indigenous language development. Their findings revealed that broadcasting culturally educating and language-reviving content aids cultural promotion significantly. However, respondents identified major constraints including challenges recruiting young professionals fluent in standard indigenous language, technical limitations, and inadequate funding undermining programme quality.

Scheduling patterns profoundly affect accessibility and, consequently, appeal. Onabanjo (2005) observed that electronic media in Cross River and Akwa Ibom States allocated merely 5.6% of broadcast time to indigenous languages compared to 94.4% for English, with vernacular programming typically scheduled during off-peak hours when listenership is minimal. This marginalisation communicates implicit messages regarding indigenous language value, reinforcing perceptions of inferiority that discourage audience engagement, particularly among youth seeking culturally prestigious content.

2.6 Audience Demographics and Media Consumption Patterns

Demographic factors significantly influence indigenous language media consumption. Ojebuyi and Ogunkunle (2019) found that educational attainment inversely correlates with indigenous language radio preference, with highly educated audiences gravitating towards English programming perceived as more sophisticated. Age demonstrates strong positive correlation, with elderly audiences showing substantially higher preference for indigenous content reflecting their formative years' media environment and language socialisation patterns.

Contemporary youth media consumption increasingly emphasises digital platforms, social media, and on-demand content. Mobolaji et al. (2023) investigated Nigerian youths' engagement with radio content via social media platforms, revealing that whilst radio remains relevant, consumption patterns have transformed. Young audiences prefer accessing radio content through digital platforms offering interactivity, shareability, and multimodality rather than traditional terrestrial radio reception.

3.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Recent empirical investigations provide valuable insights into indigenous language broadcasting's challenges and opportunities. Research across various Nigerian contexts consistently reveals tensions between cultural preservation imperatives and commercial viability constraints, whilst documenting demographic disparities in audience engagement patterns.

Adekaa, Igyuve, and Akase's 2024 study examining radio broadcasting and folk media adaptation in North Central Nigeria demonstrated that incorporating traditional storytelling elements, indigenous music, and proverbs into contemporary radio programming enhances cultural resonance significantly. Their research, employing qualitative interviews with programme producers and audiences, revealed that successful cultural programming requires careful balance between authenticity and accessibility. Audiences appreciated programmes maintaining cultural integrity whilst employing modern

production techniques and addressing contemporary issues. However, researchers identified significant resource constraints including inadequate funding, obsolete equipment, and shortage of personnel skilled in both broadcasting techniques and cultural knowledge as limiting factors affecting programme quality and consistency.

Awiti and Ong'ong'a's 2024 investigation of audience perceptions towards online radio platforms among Kenyan university students offers relevant insights regarding youth engagement strategies. Their findings, derived from 385 respondents in Nyanza region, indicated that younger audiences increasingly prefer accessing radio content through digital platforms enabling interactivity, convenience, and integration with social media. Significantly, content quality and relevance emerged as more critical than delivery platform, suggesting that strong indigenous content could attract youth audiences if appropriately packaged and accessible through preferred channels. Production values, including audio quality, pacing, and contemporary relevance, influenced engagement substantially.

Patrick and Emmanuel's 2022 study examining Delta State audiences' perceptions regarding local language broadcasts' contributions to indigenous language development revealed complex attitudes towards vernacular broadcasting. Whilst 78.4% of respondents agreed that indigenous language broadcasts promote cultural identity, only 45.2% expressed satisfaction with current programming quality. Respondents identified recruiting young professionals fluent in standard indigenous language as a primary challenge facing stations, alongside technical constraints and limited funding. The research highlighted that mere provision of indigenous language content proves insufficient without addressing quality standards audiences expect based on exposure to well-produced English or international content.

Adewoye and Salawu's 2023 examination of Amuludun FM and Orisun FM's roles promoting indigenous languages in Nigeria documented both successes and limitations. Their survey of 172 respondents revealed that stations broadcasting predominantly in indigenous languages enjoy high listenership specifically because of vernacular usage, with 79% reporting that indigenous language content motivated their station choice. However, challenges identified included competition from English stations, limited funding, difficulty recruiting talented young broadcasters fluent in indigenous languages, and technical constraints affecting production quality. The study noted that stations performing well in indigenous language broadcasting typically received institutional support through partnerships with cultural organisations or state

government backing providing financial stability enabling quality programming investments.

Mobolaji et al.'s 2023 investigation into Nigerian youths' engagement with radio content via social media platforms revealed transformation in radio consumption patterns rather than abandonment. Their mixed-methods approach, combining surveys with focus group discussions, documented that young people increasingly access radio content through social media sharing, podcast downloads, and online streaming rather than traditional terrestrial broadcasting. This finding suggests potential strategies for extending indigenous radio drama's reach beyond traditional audiences by adapting content for digital distribution whilst maintaining cultural authenticity. Importantly, youth participants expressed openness to indigenous language content if presented in formats aligning with their consumption preferences and addressing contemporary concerns.

Nwogbo, Ikot-Osin, and Jeremiah's 2024 study examining audience perceptions of Nollywood's role in storytelling provides insights transferable to radio drama contexts. Their research, surveying Enugu State residents, revealed that audiences value authentic cultural representation significantly whilst simultaneously expecting production quality meeting contemporary standards. Respondents expressed frustration with content perceived as culturally inauthentic or patronising traditional elements without integrating them meaningfully into narratives relevant to modern life. This finding suggests that successful indigenous radio drama requires sophisticated balancing between cultural authenticity and contemporary relevance, avoiding both cultural distortion and anachronistic presentations disconnected from audiences' lived experiences.

Collectively, these empirical studies reveal consistent patterns. Indigenous language broadcasting maintains substantial potential appeal, particularly when content demonstrates cultural authenticity, addresses relevant issues, and achieves satisfactory production quality. Demographic factors, especially age and educational attainment, significantly influence engagement patterns, with younger, more educated audiences requiring strategic approaches acknowledging their distinct consumption preferences and expectations. Resource constraints including funding limitations, technical infrastructure deficiencies, and personnel shortages constitute persistent barriers affecting programming quality. Digital platforms offer opportunities for expanding reach and attracting younger audiences when indigenous content is appropriately formatted. These insights inform the present study's approach to investigating Igbo radio drama's appeal

in Enugu Metropolis, highlighting critical factors requiring examination.

4.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is anchored on Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), a prominent mass communication framework developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in the 1970s. The theory fundamentally reconceptualises media-audience relationships by positioning audiences as active participants who deliberately select media content to satisfy specific needs and goals rather than passive recipients of media messages.

Uses and Gratifications Theory rests on five core assumptions. First, audiences are conceived as active rather than passive, exercising substantial initiative in connecting need gratification with media choice. Second, significant initiative in linking gratification and media choice lies with audience members themselves rather than media producers. Third, media compete with other sources of need satisfaction, including interpersonal communication, books, and recreational activities. Fourth, audience members possess sufficient self-awareness to articulate their motivations for using particular media. Fifth, value judgements regarding media use's cultural significance should be suspended during audience orientation research, allowing researchers to understand media consumption from users' perspectives.

The theory identifies four primary gratification categories that media consumption satisfies. Cognitive needs involve information acquisition, knowledge enhancement, and understanding development. Audiences consume media to remain informed about current affairs, learn new skills, or deepen comprehension of complex issues. Affective needs encompass emotional experiences, aesthetic appreciation, and mood management. Media provides entertainment, emotional release, and pleasurable experiences. Personal integrative needs relate to self-identity reinforcement, confidence building, and status enhancement. Media consumption helps individuals understand themselves, affirm personal values, and construct desired identities. Social integrative needs involve strengthening connections with family, friends, and society. Media provides conversation topics, facilitates social interaction, and enables individuals to engage meaningfully with broader communities.

Applied to Igbo radio drama consumption, Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a robust framework for understanding audience appeal. Cognitively, Igbo radio drama offers opportunities for cultural learning, language maintenance, and acquisition of traditional wisdom embedded in folktales and proverbs. Affectively, well-crafted drama provides entertainment, emotional

engagement through compelling narratives, and aesthetic pleasure from linguistic artistry and performative excellence. Personal integratively, engaging with indigenous language content reinforces ethnic identity, connects individuals with cultural heritage, and affirms Igbo identity's legitimacy and value. Social integratively, Igbo radio drama facilitates intergenerational communication by providing shared cultural references, enables community bonding through common experiences, and strengthens collective cultural identity.

The theory's emphasis on audience activity proves particularly relevant given contemporary media environments offering unprecedented choice. Understanding what gratifications audiences seek from Igbo radio drama, which demographic segments prioritise particular gratifications, and how effectively current programming satisfies these needs enables evidence-based strategies for enhancing appeal. The theory's recognition that media compete with alternative gratification sources illuminates challenges indigenous radio drama faces from English programming, digital entertainment, and other leisure activities, necessitating strategic positioning that clearly articulates unique gratifications indigenous drama provides that alternatives cannot offer equivalently.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The survey method facilitated systematic data collection from large samples enabling statistical analysis, whilst qualitative interviews provided contextual depth and nuanced understanding of audience motivations and broadcaster perspectives.

5.2 Population and Sample Size

The population comprised radio audiences in Enugu Metropolis regularly exposed to broadcasts and broadcasting personnel working in stations with indigenous language drama programming. Using Taro Yamane's formula at 95% confidence level with 5% margin of error, the sample included 384 audience members and 40 broadcasting personnel, totalling 424 respondents. Sampling techniques varied by category. For broadcasting personnel, purposive sampling selected stations with established indigenous drama programming (Radio Nigeria Enugu, Coal City FM, Dream FM, Urban Radio, Owelle FM), with stratified random sampling ensuring representation across producers, presenters, scriptwriters, and management. For audiences, multistage sampling divided Enugu Metropolis into geographic zones, randomly selected communities per zone, and employed systematic random sampling identifying households.

5.3 Instruments and Data Collection

Structured questionnaires containing demographic information, listening habits, appeal factors assessment using 5-point Likert scales (5=Strongly Agree to 1=Strongly Disagree), and open-ended questions were employed. In-depth interview guides structured conversations with 15 key informants including station managers, drama producers, veteran broadcasters, and cultural organisation representatives.

5.4 Validity and Reliability

Face and content validity were established through expert review by three mass communication and linguistics scholars. Reliability was established through test-retest method with 35 respondents, yielding Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.79 and Cronbach's alpha of 0.84 demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency.

5.5 Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26, employing descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi-square test, cross-tabulations). Mean score interpretation used: 4.50-5.00=Strongly Agree, 3.50-4.49=Agree, 2.50-3.49=Neutral, 1.50-2.49=Disagree, 1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and non-maleficence. Written consent was obtained from all participants. Questionnaires were anonymised with no personally identifying information collected.

6.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The study achieved 92.7% response rate with 393 completed questionnaires (356 audience members, 37 broadcasting personnel).

6.1 Demographic Characteristics

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Audience (n=356)	Broadcasters (n=37)	Total (N=393)
Age Group			
18-25 years	78 (21.9%)	6 (16.2%)	84 (21.4%)
26-35 years	112 (31.5%)	14 (37.8%)	126 (32.1%)
36-45 years	89 (25.0%)	11 (29.7%)	100 (25.4%)
46-55 years	54 (15.2%)	5 (13.5%)	59 (15.0%)
56+ years	23 (6.5%)	1 (2.7%)	24 (6.1%)
Igbo Language Proficiency			
Fluent	167 (46.9%)	25 (67.6%)	192 (48.9%)
Moderate	134 (37.6%)	10 (27.0%)	144 (36.6%)
Basic	55 (15.4%)	2 (5.4%)	57 (14.5%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution with the majority (57.5%) aged 26-45 years. Regarding language proficiency, 48.9% reported fluent Igbo competence whilst 51.1% had moderate to basic proficiency, highlighting language shift dynamics.

6.2 Cultural and Entertainment Appeal Factors

RQ1: What cultural and entertainment factors enhance audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama and storytelling?

Table 2: Cultural and Entertainment Appeal Factors (n=356)

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Igbo drama preserves our cultural heritage	189 (53.1%)	121 (34.0%)	32 (9.0%)	10 (2.8%)	4 (1.1%)	4.35	0.86	Agree
Traditional stories connect me to Igbo identity	178 (50.0%)	132 (37.1%)	34 (9.6%)	8 (2.2%)	4 (1.1%)	4.33	0.82	Agree
Use of proverbs enriches the listening experience	197 (55.3%)	127 (35.7%)	24 (6.7%)	6 (1.7%)	2 (0.6%)	4.44	0.72	Agree

Authentic cultural content increases appeal	206 (57.9%)	118 (33.1%)	23 (6.5%)	7 (2.0%)	2 (0.6%)	4.52	0.68	Strongly Agree
Igbo drama provides entertaining storytelling	181 (50.8%)	129 (36.2%)	32 (9.0%)	11 (3.1%)	3 (0.8%)	4.38	0.72	Agree
Grand Mean						4.40	0.76	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 reveals strong agreement that cultural authenticity enhances appeal (Mean=4.52), with proverb usage (Mean=4.44) and entertainment value (Mean=4.38) also rating highly. The grand mean of 4.40 confirms that cultural and entertainment factors substantially drive audience appeal.

6.3 Demographic Variations in Appeal

RQ2: How does audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama vary across different demographic groups?

Table 3: Appeal Ratings by Age Groups (n=356)

Age Group	High Appeal	Moderate Appeal	Low Appeal	No Appeal	Total
18-25 years	18 (23.1%)	21 (26.9%)	28 (35.9%)	11 (14.1%)	78 (100%)
26-35 years	43 (38.4%)	35 (31.3%)	23 (20.5%)	11 (9.8%)	112 (100%)
36-45 years	58 (65.2%)	21 (23.6%)	7 (7.9%)	3 (3.4%)	89 (100%)
46-55 years	47 (87.0%)	5 (9.3%)	2 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	54 (100%)
56+ years	20 (87.0%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (100%)
Total	186 (52.2%)	84 (23.6%)	61 (17.1%)	25 (7.0%)	356 (100%)

$\chi^2=135.62$, $df=12$, $p<0.001$

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 demonstrates stark age-related variations. Whilst 87.0% of respondents aged 46+ find Igbo drama highly appealing, only 23.1% of 18-25 year-olds share this sentiment ($\chi^2=135.62$, $p<0.001$), confirming significant generational divides in appeal patterns.

6.4 Production Quality Influence

RQ3: To what extent does production quality influence audience appeal towards Igbo radio drama?

Table 4: Production Quality Assessment (n=356)

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Sound quality affects my listening enjoyment	167 (46.9%)	134 (37.6%)	38 (10.7%)	13 (3.7%)	4 (1.1%)	4.26	0.87	Agree
Voice acting quality influences appeal	171 (48.0%)	128 (36.0%)	41 (11.5%)	12 (3.4%)	4 (1.1%)	4.27	0.88	Agree
Production standards compare poorly to English drama	142 (39.9%)	146 (41.0%)	45 (12.6%)	18 (5.1%)	5 (1.4%)	4.13	0.91	Agree
Better production would increase my listening	189 (53.1%)	119 (33.4%)	34 (9.6%)	11 (3.1%)	3 (0.8%)	4.35	0.84	Agree
Grand Mean						4.25	0.88	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 shows that production quality significantly influences appeal (Grand Mean=4.25), with 53.1% strongly agreeing that improved production would increase listening. Interview data revealed that inadequate funding limits access to quality equipment and skilled voice actors.

6.5 Scheduling and Accessibility

RQ4: How do scheduling patterns and accessibility factors affect audience engagement with Igbo radio drama?

Table 5: Scheduling Assessment (Broadcasting Personnel, n=37)

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
Indigenous drama receives unfavourable scheduling	23 (62.2%)	11 (29.7%)	2 (5.4%)	1 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4.51	0.68	Strongly Agree
Prime-time slots allocated to English content	26 (70.3%)	9 (24.3%)	1 (2.7%)	1 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4.62	0.64	Strongly Agree
Current scheduling limits audience reach	24 (64.9%)	10 (27.0%)	2 (5.4%)	1 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4.54	0.69	Strongly Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 confirms that unfavourable scheduling substantially constrains appeal (Mean=4.51). Only 18% of indigenous drama airs during prime-time (6:00am-9:00am, 5:00pm-8:00pm), with most broadcast between 10:00pm-6:00am when listenership is minimal.

6.6 Constraints Limiting Appeal

RQ5: What constraints limit the broader appeal of Igbo radio drama among contemporary audiences?

Table 6: Constraints Assessment (Combined Respondents, N=393)

Constraint	Frequency	Percentage
Poor production quality	298	75.8%
Unfavourable scheduling	276	70.2%
Outdated story themes	245	62.3%
Inadequate promotion	267	67.9%
Limited youth-relevant content	289	73.5%
Weak voice acting	256	65.1%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6 identifies multiple constraints, with poor production quality (75.8%), limited youth-relevant content (73.5%), and unfavourable scheduling (70.2%) emerging as primary barriers limiting broader appeal.

7.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the appeal of Igbo radio drama and storytelling among audiences in Enugu Metropolis. Key findings aligned with the five research objectives are:

1: Cultural and Entertainment Appeal Factors Cultural authenticity emerged as the strongest appeal driver (Mean=4.52, SD=0.68), with audiences highly valuing authentic cultural representation, proverb usage (Mean=4.44), and traditional storytelling elements. Entertainment value rated favourably (Mean=4.38), indicating that Igbo drama successfully balances cultural preservation with enjoyment. Educational benefits

including cultural learning and language maintenance also enhanced appeal significantly.

2: Demographic Variations Stark demographic disparities exist in appeal patterns. Age demonstrated the strongest correlation, with 87.0% of respondents aged 46+ finding Igbo drama highly appealing compared to merely 23.1% of 18-25-year-olds ($\chi^2=135.62$, $p<0.001$). Language proficiency also influenced appeal, with fluent Igbo speakers demonstrating 78.3% high appeal ratings versus 34.5% among those with basic proficiency.

3: Production Quality Influence Production quality significantly influences appeal (Mean=4.25, SD=0.88), with 53.1% strongly agreeing that improved production would increase listening. Quality disparities compared to English programming (Mean=4.13) diminish competitiveness. Technical constraints including obsolete equipment, inadequate sound engineering, and weak voice acting undermine production standards.

4: Scheduling and Accessibility Unfavourable scheduling substantially constrains appeal and reach (Mean=4.51, SD=0.68). Only 18% of indigenous drama broadcasts during prime-time hours, with most relegated to late-night or mid-afternoon slots when listenership is minimal. This marginalisation communicates implicit messages regarding indigenous content's perceived value.

5: Constraints Limiting Appeal Multiple constraints limit broader appeal, with poor production quality (75.8%), limited youth-relevant content (73.5%), unfavourable scheduling (70.2%), inadequate promotion (67.9%), weak voice acting (65.1%), and outdated themes (62.3%) identified as primary barriers. Resource limitations including funding shortfalls and personnel shortages perpetuate these constraints.

7.2 Conclusions

Igbo radio drama retains substantial appeal potential, particularly regarding cultural authenticity and traditional storytelling elements that resonate deeply with audiences valuing cultural heritage. However, significant obstacles constrain broader appeal, especially among younger demographics whose media consumption patterns, entertainment expectations, and cultural priorities differ markedly from older generations. The convergence of production quality deficiencies, scheduling marginalisation, content relevance gaps, and inadequate resource allocation threatens the medium's sustainability.

Critically, the generational appeal divide suggests that without strategic interventions addressing youth engagement, Igbo radio drama risks becoming exclusively associated with elderly audiences, further reinforcing perceptions of cultural irrelevance among young people. This trajectory would undermine both the entertainment viability and cultural preservation functions that indigenous radio drama potentially serves.

However, demonstrated appetite for authentic cultural content, success of well-resourced initiatives, and adaptability of traditional storytelling forms suggest viability remains achievable through coordinated action addressing identified constraints. The path forward requires strategic investments in production quality, scheduling reforms prioritising indigenous content, content innovation balancing tradition with contemporary relevance, and institutional support mechanisms enabling sustainable operations.

7.3 Recommendations

Based on findings aligned with the five research objectives, this study advances the following recommendations:

1: Enhancing Cultural and Entertainment Value To strengthen cultural and entertainment appeal factors, radio

stations should invest in comprehensive scriptwriting workshops training dramatists in techniques balancing cultural authenticity with contemporary relevance. Cultural organisations should partner with stations providing consultation ensuring accurate cultural representation whilst adapting traditional tales addressing modern issues. Stations should establish listener advisory panels providing feedback on content resonance and suggesting improvements.

2: Addressing Demographic Disparities To mitigate demographic appeal variations, stations must develop youth-targeted indigenous drama incorporating contemporary themes, modern characters facing relatable challenges, and narrative structures aligning with young audiences' consumption preferences. Digital platforms including podcasts, social media distribution, and streaming services should disseminate content reaching youth in preferred formats. Interactive elements enabling audience participation through social media engagement should be integrated. Educational institutions should partner with stations producing drama addressing student concerns whilst maintaining cultural integrity.

3: Improving Production Quality To address production quality deficiencies, government and private sector sponsors should establish an Indigenous Language Drama Production Fund providing grants for equipment acquisition, professional training, and quality enhancement initiatives. Radio stations should invest in modern recording equipment, soundproofing, and editing software enabling competitive production standards. Professional voice acting training programmes should be instituted developing talent pools skilled in indigenous language performance. Partnerships with experienced production houses should be pursued for technical support and capacity building.

4: Reforming Scheduling Patterns To improve scheduling and accessibility, the National Broadcasting Commission should mandate that at least 30% of indigenous language drama air during prime-time slots (6:00am-9:00am, 5:00pm-8:00pm) through enforceable content quotas. Stations should conduct audience research identifying optimal broadcast times maximising reach across demographic segments. Repeat broadcasts should be scheduled accommodating diverse listening patterns. On-demand access through station websites and mobile applications should enable time-shifted consumption.

5: Overcoming Constraints To address constraints limiting broader appeal, government should provide tax incentives for businesses sponsoring indigenous language programming, making advertising more financially attractive. The National Broadcasting Commission should establish excellence awards recognising outstanding

indigenous drama production, incentivising quality improvements. Universities should incorporate indigenous language broadcasting modules into mass communication curricula ensuring trained personnel availability. Regular audience surveys should inform programming decisions ensuring content relevance and appeal.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

1. Longitudinal studies tracking indigenous radio drama appeal trends over extended periods.
2. Comparative research examining successful indigenous language broadcasting models across different Nigerian ethnic groups.
3. Experimental studies testing different content formats, themes, and production techniques identifying optimal approaches for youth engagement.
4. Economic analyses determining sustainable funding models enabling quality indigenous drama production.
5. Digital platform effectiveness studies assessing how indigenous radio drama performs through podcast distribution, streaming services, and social media channels.

Declarations

Ethical Clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants involved in this study. They were adequately informed that the exercise was strictly for academic purposes and that their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Sebastine Chukwuebuka Okafor conceived the study, including the research design. Uloma Bridget Ekwuagu coordinated and supervised the research process. Joel Asogwa collated the data, while Chinaza Abonyi handled the data coding and field assistance. All authors participated in the analysis and interpretation of data, critically reviewed the

manuscript, approved the final version, and take responsibility for its content and similarity index.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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