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**LISTENERS' PREFERENCE FOR FM RADIO IN THE FIRST DISTRICT OF
BILIRAN PROVINCE BASED ON THE FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES OF
BROADCAST MEDIA**

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ABSTRACT

From time to time, there are a lot of radio stations that emerge. But one thing these radio stations don't know is their audience. They don't know who listens to them and why the people listens to them. The purpose of this research study is to find out what functional approaches of broadcast media that the listeners use and what are their reasons for tuning in or listening to their preferred radio stations or programs. The researcher decided to purposely choose this topic in order to discover the reasons why radio audience patronizes such local FM radio/radio programs. Results revealed that radio listeners have a particular preference in terms of radio programs or stations based on the functional approaches of broadcast media.

KEYWORDS: radio, radio program, broadcast media, functional approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

Until the Internet paved its way, nothing could match the reach of radio—not even television. Radio, as the first broadcast media, served as a provider of free news, music, and entertainment wherever we go. Long before the word “radio” became familiar, the most important use was to send telegraph messages to places with long distances without the aid of wires to connect the places that wanted to communicate.

Today, radio plays a very significant role in the community particularly in the field of communication. It has been an important tool which brings information to the people in order for them to be aware of recent developments and important news and events in the community. With the birth of FM stations that are capable of providing better sound quality, radio has become a source of entertainment among listeners considering that it plays a variety of music.

A study of N. Galdson Nwokah et.al (2009) on the Consumers Preference on FM stations in Port Harcourt which was published on the European Journal of Scientific Research, stated that talk and music are the two main components of a radio program. Consumers prefer a particular station basically because of its kind of program carried. Most students prefer musical programs, educative programs, entertainment, and news.

In order to meet this need, FM radio stations in Biliran needed to have a variety of programs to fit the needs of the listeners thereby attracting and getting more audiences. In fact, FM stations in Biliran use the vernaculars (Cebuano & Waray-Waray) in their broadcast. Moreover, they develop programs that will hook the listeners in which they are given options on what programs to listen to depending on what they need.

It is a fact that the listeners' profile varies in terms of age, gender, educational status, and occupation, therefore it can be assumed that they also have different preferences of functional approaches of broadcast media when they listen to FM radio stations. In a publication by Maria Elena C. Reyes et.al (2012), these functional



approaches include surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission, entertainment, mobilization, imposition, and word usage.

To date, there are two radio stations that are actively operating in the Province of Biliran. These stations, situated in the capital town of Biliran (Naval) are RadyoNatin 103.9 Naval, Biliran “Your friend, your radio” which first hit the airwaves in 1997 and 101.7 DYLN Nice Radio which started its operation on 2015. Each station runs its own shows/programs and disc jockey/announcer and somehow gained their followers and established individual images.

As a Communication Arts Graduate, a Communication Instructor and a media practitioner, the researcher was interested in knowing what functional approaches of broadcast media that the listeners use and what are their reasons of tuning in or listening to their preferred radio stations or programs. The researcher decided to purposely choose this topic in order to discover the reasons why radio audience patronize such local FM radio/radio programs.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used the descriptive research design. It gathered quantitative data focusing on the listener’s profiles and preferences with regards to FM radio programs. The researcher used/asked open-ended questions in order to validate the responses of the respondents. This method was used to qualitatively and quantitatively describe the data obtained from the respondents, to answer the questions concerning the preferences of radio listeners in the 1st District of Biliran Province on the functional approaches of broadcast media.

Research Setting and Respondents

This study was conducted in the 1st District of Biliran Province between January to June 2018. The respondents of this study were 750 randomly selected respondents from the 15 randomly selected barangays of the district (5 barangays per municipality with 50 randomly selected respondents per barangay). The respondents of the study were the residents of the Municipalities of Naval, Almeria, and Kawayan.

Research Instrument and Validation

The main tool in gathering the data from the respondents is a survey questionnaire adopted by Reyes, et. Al. (2012). The questions were based on reviewed literature on the functional approaches to broadcast media. The instrument is comprised of four (4) parts. Part 1 focused on the respondents’ profile. Part 2 determined the listeners FM radio program preferences. Part 3 inquired on the respondents’ preferred functional approaches of broadcast media in terms of **surveillance, correlation, cultural transmission, entertainment, mobilization, imposition, and language**. Part 4 included the open-ended questions.

Data Gathering Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed to the randomly selected respondents but before giving the questionnaire the researcher explained first the purpose of the study. The researcher assured the respondents of total confidentiality of their answers. In order to get additional information, the researchers also conducted an informal interview with the participants. The data gathered from the answers of the respondents was tabulated accordingly.

Statistical Analysis

The data gathered were retrieved, tabulated, interpreted, and analyzed using frequency counts, percentage distribution, weighted mean, and F-test.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. FM Radio programs respondents listen to

FM PROGRAMS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	RANK
RadyoNatin Ito ang Pilipinas (Radyo Natin FM)	759	84.33	1
RadyoNatin Nationwide (Radyo Natin FM)	750	83.33	2
Kulitan (Radyo Natin FM)	746	82.89	3
Mandirigma sa Kawanggawa (Radyo Natin FM)	745	82.78	4
Halo-Halo Espesyal (Radyo Natin FM)	745	82.78	
Tugstugan (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	5
Flashback (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	
Chillax Time (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	
Best by Request (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	
Boys After Dark (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	
BFF (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	
The Leaven (Radyo Natin FM)	744	82.67	
May Trabaho, May Negosyo (Radyo Natin FM)	743	82.56	6
RN Weekly Top 10 (Radyo Natin FM)	743	82.56	
SerbisyongBiliranon (Radyo Natin FM)	734	81.56	
AngGalingmoDok (Radyo Natin FM)	734	81.56	7
Dear Heart (Radyo Natin FM)	733	81.44	
RH Balita (Radyo Natin FM)	733	81.44	
Balik Sa Dios (Radyo Natin FM)	733	81.44	
Go Negosyo (Radyo Natin FM)	733	81.44	
Soopermix (Radyo Natin FM)	731	81.22	8
PaglaomAlangkanimo (Radyo Natin FM)	730	81.11	9
Morning Express (Radyo Natin FM)	730	81.11	
Music Companion (Radyo Natin FM)	730	81.11	
Daily Bread (Radyo Natin FM)	725	80.56	10
Twilight Express 362 (Radyo Natin FM)	722	80.22	11
Sunset Special (Radyo Natin FM)	722	80.22	
Your Song (Radyo Natin FM)	720	80.00	12
Hight Habit (Nice Radio)	553	61.44	13
Pamahaw Espesyal (Nice Radio)	553	61.44	
Straight from the heart (Nice Radio)	402	44.67	14
Afternoon Drive (Nice Radio)	401	44.56	15
Afternoon Love Drive (Nice Radio)	401	44.56	
Finger Play (Nice Radio)	401	44.56	
Maayong Buntag Naval, Maayong Buntag Biliran (Nice Radio)	401	44.56	
Harana Sa Kagabhioan (Nice Radio)	191	21.22	16
Ikwento mo kay Papa Dodot (Nice Radio)	191	21.22	

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of radio programs that respondents listened to. As reflected on the table, Radyo Natin Ito ang Pilipinas (Radyo Natin FM) ranks the highest (84.33%) and followed by Radyo Natin Nationwide (Radyo Natin FM) (83.33%), Kulitan (Radyo Natin FM) (82.89 %) and followed by another two (2) radio programs of Radyo Natin FM which ranked 4th (82.78 %). Ranked fifth were also seven (7) programs of Radyo Natin FM. Four (4) programs of Radyo Natin FM also ranked 6th (82.56 %). Another four (4) Radyo Natin FM programs ranked 7th. Ranked 8th is Soopermix of Radyo Natin FM (81.22%), followed by another three Radyo Natin FM programs with a percentage rate of 81.11 each. Daily Bread of Radyo Natin (80.56%) ranked tenth while another two (2) program of Radyo Natin ranked 11th. Your Song of Radyo Natin FM (80%) ranked 12th.

The other 9 remaining radio programs of Nice Radio got low rating which is quiet far from the programs that acquired the highest, 2nd highest and 3rd.

Radyo Natin, Ito ang Pilipinas- an empowering magazine radio program giving you the latest and the hottest events as it happens. Airing live from 6:00am-7:00am, Monday-Friday, Radyo Natin, Ito ang Pilipinas! is anchored by Ms. Beth Vetonio and Ms. Ellanie Bensal. Radyo Natin, Ito ang Pilipinas! is sure to jump-start your day as it equips you through a powerful one-hour hard-news radio platform. During this hour, more than one hundred local Radyo Natin FM stations strategically positioned all over the Philippines' 7100 islands converge as one, as provinces voice out the most up to date and real time occurrence in their respective areas. The power of one hundred, giving you the Philippines in an hour – Radyo Natin, Ito ang Pilipinas.

While Radyo Natin Nationwide is a news and public affairs program which is simultaneously aired over the more than one hundred Radyo Natin stations nationwide which includes Radyo Natin FM Naval which means that it can also be heard by the Biliranons.

Kulitan is a gag-format radio show initially aimed at featuring timeless pinoy jokes and other funny stories. But as years went by, jokes have been part of an impromptu spiel which made the program livelier, real-time, interactive and dynamic. For years now, Kulitan has been an exciting part of every Radyo Natin listener's week. The program aims to relieve the boredom and stress among the listeners who are usually students, working professionals, business people and homemakers. Kulitan airs every day, 3PM, hosted by Dj Maja Limuyak and Ate Cheska.

Table 2. Functional approaches of broadcast media preferred by the local radio audience

VARIABLES	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Information (Surveillance)			
1. The announcers provide regular update on breaking news to inform the listeners of the current situation.	3.6973	.45972	Always
2. The newscast is arranged based on its significance.	3.6933	.46142	Always
3. I learn more about what's going on in the province, the country and the world.	3.3893	.48792	Often
4. I liked how they monitor the reliability of the sources of the news.	3.5987	.49050	Always
5. The announcers fairly deliver news presenting both sides of the issue.	3.3827	.48636	Often
OVERALL	3.55226	0.47718	Always
Correlation			
1. The Announcers are open-minded on issues discussed on-air and listens to the opinion of others.	3.6933	.46142	Always
2. I learned something from the issues being discussed on-air.	3.3853	.48700	Often
3. The Announcers demonstrate knowledge about the issue since their opinions are well-said.	3.3920	.48852	Often
4. I am enlightened through the way they explain and interpret the news.	3.6987	.45914	Always
5. The announcers are objective in treating controversial issues.	3.6000	.49022	Always
OVERALL	3.55386	0.47726	Always
Continuity (Cultural Transmission)			
1. I like how they accommodate the views, reactions and opinions of the listeners.	3.7120	1.16914	Always
2. I am encouraged to be more proud of being a Filipino.	3.7027	.45739	Always
3. I like how they relate the issues with our daily life.	3.6507	0.47708	Always
4. I like the way the station observes gender equality/sensitivity.	3.3893	.48792	Often

5. I have observed that they are fair with their opinions.	3.5947	.49128	Always
OVERALL	3.60988	0.61656	Always
Entertainment			
1. I like the music they are playing.	3.7760	1.15568	Always
2. I am entertained because of the jokes and love quotes inserted between breaks.	3.7240	.44732	Always
3. I like to listen to the program because of the wit and humor of the announcer.	3.6573	.47492	Always
4. I find the program entertaining because of the banter between the announcers and the callers/listeners.	3.6040	.48939	Always
5. I enjoy participating in their promos on-air.	3.4360	.49622	Always
OVERALL	3.63946	0.61271	Always
Mobilization			
1. I am mobilized to act on pressing issues.	3.6747	.46881	Always
2. I am reminded of my spiritual obligations.	3.3867	.48731	Often
3. I am encouraged to contribute positive changes in our area.	3.6707	1.17589	Always
4. I am motivated to participate in the civic activities.	3.6187	.48604	Always
5. I am encouraged to participate and share my ideas on social issues discussed on-air.	3.5907	.49204	Always
OVERALL	3.5883	0.62202	Always
Imposition			
1. It's the radio station that my family listens to.	2.9	1.05869	Often
2. I have no choice because it's the only station available in our area.	2.7627	1.12962	Often
3. It's the only radio station that I know.	2.6013	.97759	Often
4. I do not own the radio.	2.8653	1.08848	Often
5. I cannot choose my own radio program because my parents imposed on me to listen to a specific radio station.	2.4867	1.52652	Seldom
OVERALL	2.7232	1.15618	Often
Word/language Usage			
1. I can easily understand the program since it uses the vernacular.	3.0440	1.17128	Often
2. I observe that Announcers use some indecent language but still listen because I find them funny.	1.9453	1.11355	Seldom
3. I tend to imitate the expressions they use.	2.0680	1.03576	Seldom
4. The announcers use words loaded with sexual implications to entertain listeners.	2.0240	1.14361	Seldom
5. I like the announcers' use of colored language and words with double meaning.	2.0787	1.17402	Seldom
OVERALL	2.232	1.12764	Seldom
GRANT TOTAL	3.27128	0.72708	Often

Table 2 presents the functional approaches on broadcast media preferred by the respondents when they listen to FM radio stations. In terms of surveillance, *“The announcers provide regular update on breaking news to inform the listeners of the current situation”* ranked first with the highest weighted mean of 3.6973. This is closely followed by *“The newscast is arranged based on its significance”* with a weighted mean of 3.6933 while the lowest mean (3.3827) falls on the item *“The announcers fairly deliver news presenting both sides of the issue”*. The overall mean is 3.55226 which means that the respondents tune in to their preferred radio stations in order to get updates on news and current events. The results showed that stations were able to deliver news in accordance with what the audience wants. Just like Radyo Natin, although it is airs through Frequency Modulation, its programming format is AM/FM taking into consideration that the listeners do not only need

music but also news and current events to hear. Station was able to deliver news that are reliable which keeps the audience up to date and hooked up.

In terms of Correlation, the highest mean falls on ***“I am enlightened through the way they explain and interpret the news”*** while the lowest mean is ***“I learned something from the issues being discussed on-air”***. The overall weighted mean is 3.55386 which means that one of the biggest reason why the listeners tune in to their preferred radio stations and programs is for them to be aware of and learn from the issues in the society which are discussed by the announcers on-air. This implies that listeners do not only listen to radio for the sake of entertainment or mere information but as citizens, they also want to acquire deeper knowledge and understanding as to what is happening in the society. This is supported by the findings of the study conducted by Nwokah et. A (2009) about the *Consumers Preference on FM stations in Port Harcourt*, (A survey on UST students) published on the *European Journal of Scientific Research* which revealed that most students preferred to listen to educative programs. This presents that the audience listens to programs that make them educated.

When it comes to Cultural Transmission, ***“I like how they accommodate the views, reactions and opinions of the listeners”*** got the highest mean (3.7120) while the one with the lowest is ***“I like the way the station observes gender equality/sensitivity”*** (3.3893). This means that the announcers accommodate the views, reactions and opinions of the listeners in such a way that the audience will not be offended. While the lowest mean falls on how the announcers observes gender equality/sensitivity which is interpreted as often, it implies that there is a tendency that announcers cannot or do not observe gender sensitivity unintentionally but only with a small probability.

In terms of Entertainment, the highest mean (3.7760) falls on ***“I like the music they are playing”*** while the lowest mean (3.4360) falls on ***“I enjoy participating in their promos on-air”***. The overall mean is 3.63946 which is interpreted as Always. This implies that the audience are hooked up to their preferred radio station because the station is playing music that they want to be heard and they are always entertained and enjoy participating in the programs/promos on-air.

It is suggested by the item with the highest mean that the respondents always listen to their preferred stations because the love the music being played and also of the jokes, and love quotes inserted in breaks. This is supported by the study of Nwokah et.al (2009) about the *Consumers Preference on FM stations in Port Harcourt*, (A survey on UST students) published on the *European Journal of Scientific Research*, which discovered that music attracts larger audience compare to talk since the youths prefer music.

In addition, this implies that people like music and entertainment because being their past time, it makes them relax and kills their boredom. The DJs and the music that they play relieves the listener’s stress and makes them forget their problems even for a while (Reyes et.al, 2012).

This suggests that radio stations must continue in with the music and entertainment that the give to the audience without sacrificing the quality of their programing format.

In terms of mobilization, ***“I am mobilized to act on pressing issues”*** (3.6747) and ***“I am encouraged to contribute positive changes in our area”*** (3.6707). The lowest mean falls on ***“I am reminded of my spiritual obligations”*** (3.3867). The overall mean (3.55883) indicates that the respondents are often mobilized to act on the issues concerning public interests in the community. They are also motivated to initiate and contribute positive changes in the locality by way of participating in civic activities. The respondents are also encouraged in participating and sharing their ideas or opinions on the issues discussed by the announcers on-air. Lastly, the audience are also reminded of their spiritual obligations.

On imposition, ***“It’s the radio station that my family listens to”*** got the highest mean (2.9). This is followed by ***“I have no choice because it’s the only station available in our area”*** (2.7627). The lowest mean is 2.4867 ***“I cannot choose my own radio program because my parents imposed on me to listen to a specific radio station”***. The overall mean is 2.7232. This indicates that children are often encourage by their parents/guardians

to listen to specific radio stations and they seldom have the freedom to choose their preferred radio or radio programs.

When it comes to word usage, item *“I can easily understand the program since it uses the vernacular”* has the highest mean (3.0440) while item *“The announcers use words loaded with sexual implications to entertain listeners”* has the lowest mean (2.0240). This indicates that the audience often chooses to listen to radio programs and stations that they can understand because it uses the vernacular. They seldom like the use of colored languages, and languages with sexual implications.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, it can be drawn that the respondent's preference for FM radio programs are Radyo Natin Ito ang Pilipinas, Radyo Natin Nationwide and Kulitan. This indicates the audience are more inclined into listening to programs that keeps them updated with the news and current events, and entertainment that contains jokes, love quotes, and also music. All of the radio programs of Radyo Natin FM are on top while the other 9 remaining radio programs of Nice Radio got low ratings which is quite far from the programs that acquired the highest, 2nd highest and 3rd. This implies that Radyo Natin, being a duly established radio station for quite a long time has also established its audiences that can be regarded as solid patronizers of its radio programs, and it has maintained the quality of its programs.

It can also be drawn that the most preferred functional approach of broadcast media by the respondents are entertainment, cultural transmission, and information surveillances which implies that people listen to radio stations for the purpose of entertainment, share their views and opinions and to get updated of the latest current news and events.

In view of the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that FM radio stations should continue to create and experiment on programs designed to entertain the listeners that can cater to a variety of audience. In the process of creating FM radio programs to entertain the listeners, radio programmers should not compromise and sacrifice the quality of their programs; hence, they should always abide with the guidelines set by the Broadcast Code of the Philippines in terms of content and language.

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