**THE IMPACT OF DIGITIZATION ON BROADCASTING: A STUDY OF ATLANTIC FM**

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***Abstract***

*This research examined**the Impact of Digitization on Broadcasting Media using a case study of Atlantic FM. Findings have shown that one of the hallmark of digitization of broadcasting media is access to multiple of channels by audience. It is of note that before the advent of digitization majority of the people can only access between 1-2 channels but now with the help of DSTV, StarTime, GOTV and others more than 70 channels both local and foreign channels can be accessed even in the remote locations through either a dish or indoor decoder. Similarly, subscription fee, epileptic power supply and other factors has been attributed to some of the challenges facing digitization among the people. However, question now is when will Nigerian broadcasting media move totally from analogue to digital transmission? The survey research method was used while some questionnaires were administered to the respondents in Atlantic FM.*

**CHAPTER ONE**

 **INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background Of The Study**

 Digital television transition is the technological evolution and advance from analogue terrestrial television, which broadcasts land based (terrestrial) signals. The purpose of digital terrestrial television, similar to digital versus analogue in other platforms such as cable, satellite, telecoms, is characterized by reduced use of spectrum and more capacity than analogue, better-quality picture, and lower operating costs for broadcast and transmission after the initial upgrade costs. A terrestrial implementation of digital television technology uses aerial broadcasts to a conventional antenna (or aerial) instead of a satellite dish or cable connection.

 Competing variants of digital terrestrial television technology are used around the world. Advanced Television Standards Committee, ATSC, is the one used in North America and South Korea, an evolution from the analogue National Television Standards Committee standard NTSC. Integrated Services Digital Broadcasting – Terrestrial (ISDB-T) is used in Japan, with a variation of it used in Brazil, Peru, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, Ecuador and most recently Costa Rica and Paraguay, while DVB-T is the most prevalent, covering Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Colombia, Uruguay and some countries of Africa. DMB-T/H is China’s own standard (including Hong Kong, though Hong Kong’s cable operators use DVB); the rest of the world remains mostly undecided, many evaluating multiple standards. ISDB-T is very similar to DVB-T and can share front-end receiver and demodulator components.

 The switch over from analogue to digital in Nigeria was to take place in the year 2012. DTV is transmitted on radio frequencies through the airwaves that are similar to standard analogue television, with the primary difference being the use of multiplex transmitters to allow reception of multiple channels on a single frequency range (such as a UHF or VHF channel) (Wikipedia,2010).

 The digital Television transition refers to the shift from analogue broadcasting to digital broadcasting. Many countries of the world have recognized the huge benefit which digital broadcasting offers and are making a huge effort to shift from analogue broadcasting to digital broadcasting.

 The transition from analogue to digital broadcasting involves many such as changing the transmission signals as well as making sure that members of the public buy high definition television sets and get rid of standard definition television sets.

 In the United States of America, February17, 2009 was set as a date when broadcasting in analogue will be stopped and the whole country will commence digital broadcasting. To this effect, the US congress passed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Under this Act all local stations in the US are required to switch off their analogue channels and start broadcasting in digital format.

The transition to digital broadcasting will mark the end of free television programmes. However, this is not the case. While some television set may be affected by the change, others will not for example, television sets that receive cable and satellite signals will still receive signals from digital transmission. However, television sets that receive analogue signals via antenna (these antennas have analogue tuners) and will be out of place in the digital era.

 In this state of affairs, old antennas will need to be upgraded to meet up with the technology. In countries like the United States of America where digital transition is planned to take off, all analogue television sets will be no longer useful and will have to be dispose off, perhaps shipped to other countries of the world where analogue broadcasting is still used. People who wish to continue using analogue television set in the U.S will need to have a converter installed. This converter changes digital signals which are broadcast to analogue signal so that the television set will be able to pick.

 Traditionally developing countries in Africa, Latin America and South East Asia are often the dumping ground for out dated technology. The digital transition is just one example of the factors that make developing countries recipients of technology that advanced countries no longer need. Digitization programme in Nigeria commenced in Abuja on June 3, 2008, following a meeting of stake holders in the broadcast industry where forum under scored the need for Nigeria to embrace the new technology, so that the country would not be turned into a dumping ground for obsolete analogue equipment. Reports shows that Nigeria had set June, 17, 2010 as the switch- over date from the current mode of broadcasting to the ultramodern digital terrestrial broadcasting. The date is three years before the June 17, 2015 deadline for the entire world set by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) after its congress in Geneva, Switzerland in 2006.

 However the country officially stated the digitization of its broadcast industry in December 2007, following late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua’s approval, directing the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the industry’s regulator to set motion and pilot the programme towards the target date (Adeniyi 2009).

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

 Advancement in communication technology in this era has brought about digitalizing the media contents with the hope that it will make media content relatively available to everyone everywhere. Digitization is aiming at improving the audio and visual signal quality while it promises advanced use of digital equipment unlike analogue for the processing, distributing and consumption of media content.

 Since several deadlines have been fixed to fully switchover from analogue to digital but none has been met including the June 17, 2012 and June 2015.

 It is against this background that the research examines the impact of digitization on broadcasting in Atlantic FM with the view to know how it will enhance their performance and of what benefit or problems would it be to the broadcast audience in Nigeria if fully implemented.

**1.3 Objectives Of The Study**

The study aimed to:

1. Ascertain the challenges that transition from analog to digital poses for Atlantic FM.
2. Find out if digital broadcasting has enhanced broadcast production in Atlantic FM.
3. Examine the impact of transition from analogue to digital broadcasting on Atlantic FM.
4. Determine the benefits of digitization to the broadcast audience.

**1.4 Research Questions**

i. Does transition from analogue to digital broadcasting have an impact on broadcast industries in Nigeria?

ii. What challenges do the transition from analog to digital poses on Atlantic FM?

iii. Has broadcasting service in the country being enhanced through the digitalized process?

iv. Of what importance will digitization bring to broadcast audience?

v. What efforts have Atlantic FM put in place to achieve digitization deadline if not already digitized?

vi. Will digital transmission increase the number of available channels to audience?

**1.5 Significance Of The Study**

**Research**: Limitations of this research will open a door for new research since research is cyclical in nature.

**Knowledge:** Thecore significance of the study is to add to the body of knowledge in mass communication and fill the gap in the area of digitization of broadcasting media and its benefits cum challenges in Atlantic FM.

**Theory:** Some relevant theories were put to test to see how relevant they are in explaining the research problem, among the theories are Uses and Gratification and Diffusion of Innovation theory.

**Policy:** i.e. Government through its agencies such as National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Broadcasting Organization of Nigeria (BON), Nigerian Communication Satellite (NIGCOMSAT) that are saddled with the responsibility to ensure transforming Nigeria media into a digital level within the stipulated time, should provide needed logistics to set bed for full digitization of broadcast media.

**Practice:** The study will help to provide adequate insight to meet the changing demands in the dynamic media environment of our society hereby helping media managers and practitioners to make better policies. The study will assist the media practitioners on the need to upgrade as their equipment goes digital to enable them man the equipment for maximum benefits.

**Public:** Members of the public will see the need for all broadcast media to move to digital status, as benefits associated with digitization is highlighted in this research.

**1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

 The demography factors of the staff of Atlantic FM will be considered before the structuring and administration of research instrument (questionnaire) and such factors include but not limited to gender, age, marital status, educational level, religion, social status etc. The findings of this research will not mire despite the scope while the outcome will be generalized.

**1.7 Limitation of the study**

 The research is limited to Atlantic F.M in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State in which responses are to be generated only from radio perceptive and neglect television.

 Duration for the research work is relatively short compared to tasks involved in carrying out this research, as there are other stresses emanating from other academic activities.

 There are little literatures available in this aspect as few researchers have explored the area. In all, the researcher will make sure that the constraints mentioned above are managed adequately to come up with a new and worthwhile knowledge for further research in the field.

**1.8 Operational Definition Of Terms**

 For the purpose of this project, there are terminologies used in the project and definition of their meanings. This is also done to ensure understanding of the project work and to avoid double meaning to the readers especially Nigerians.

**Digital Television Transition:** The digital television transition is a process in which analogue television broadcasting is converted to and replaced by digital television. This primarily involves both TV stations and over-the-air viewers; however it also involves content providers like TV networks, and cable TV conversion to digital cable (Wikipedia, 2010).

**Broadcasting:** Is a process of disseminating information through electromagnetic waves to a large proportion of users (audience).

**Impact:**  It is the influence or effect of something on the other, either negative or positive.