

## NIGERIAN AUDIENCES' PERCEPTION OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES' OWNERSHIP OF SATELLITE TELEVISION CHANNELS

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**ABSTRACT:** *Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels is a relatively new trend in Nigeria; apparently, it is one of the aftermaths of deregulation of broadcasting industry in the country. By the application of uses and gratifications theory; this paper investigated Nigerian audiences' perception of Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels. Survey research method was adopted for the study and a sample of 300 respondents was drawn using multi-stage sampling techniques, whereas the questionnaire served as the instrument of data collection. The work's major finding is that the public perceives Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels as a welcome development in Nigeria; they uphold the channels' airing of miracles, albeit with regulations. Again, it found out that broadcasting of such religious programmes help to draw people closer to their Creator.*

**KEYWORDS:** Audience, Broadcasting, Channels, Media, Pentecostal Churches, Programmes

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### INTRODUCTION

Humans are both religious as well as political beings who have the natural inclination to conspicuously show their attachments to either of the two aspects of life. They bring their instincts of each of the mentioned aspects to bear on the other one. Thus, in the running of any religious organization, there is always a subtle politics, and in playing political activities, human being seldom ignore or hide their religious leaning. In Nigeria, those at the helm of affairs of Pentecostal churches apply some socio-scientific parameters including the use of broadcasting to achieve their evangelical ends. Pentecostal church administrators seem to know that broadcasting as a genre of the mass media has an overwhelming aura which influences the psyche of the audience just like the impact of what some Nigerian folks often tout as 'anointing,' on congregation in their milieu.

The leaders of orthodox churches (Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion) in Nigeria appear to be conservative by retaining their administrative tactics strictly outside the use of temporal methodologies as handed over to them over a century ago. Contrary to that stance, their Pentecostal counterparts are wont to application of social science administrative strategies to score evangelical goals. This view was underscored by Ukah (2013, p.3) who argues that a significant feature of the new churches (Pentecostal) was "its leadership that was made up of...young men (and in a few cases, women) who were self-assertive, upwardly mobile...These leaders liberally injected a massive dose of secular learning acquired in such disciplines as economics, political science, marketing and advertising into church teachings, practices, organization and administration." Broadcasting happens to be key social machinery which Pentecostal church administrators find useful in their evangelism.

In Nigeria, Pentecostal churches surfaced many decades after the emergence and consolidation of evangelical works by the orthodox churches in various parts of the country. However, on their arrival for evangelism in Nigeria, it seemed that the Pentecostals' knew the prevailing influence of broadcast media and shrewdly apply it to win converts for their Christian denominations that they compete with the orthodox in the number of converts and spreading of Christendom in the country. Perhaps, deregulation of the broadcast industry was the major catalyst which gave the impetus to the churches' utilization of the airwaves and eventually ownership of satellite channels. On August 24, 1992, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria promulgated the National Broadcasting Commission Decree No.38, (now deemed an act of the National Assembly) deregulating the broadcast industry and establishing the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to regulate the entire industry, (NBC, section, 2012, p.17).

Through the liberalization policy, many trends penetrated into the practice of broadcasting business especially with regard to airing of religious programmes. "Maybe the Pentecostals deemed the time allotted to religious programmes by the NBC as inadequate, hence, they resort to establishment of their satellite television channels to enable them broadcast their programmes to the audience in details," Okoduwa (2015). The orthodox churches in Nigeria did not wake up to such opportunities of massive evangelization through the airwaves unlike the Pentecostals who are used to deployment of broadcasting in their evangelical activities. That the latter did by delving into establishment and sole ownership of private satellite television channels used for broadcasting their religious programmes and dogmas. That pattern is one of the new trends in religious broadcasting as obtainable in Nigeria currently.

With the above scenario, part of the thrust of this discourse is to examine Nigerian audiences' views vis-à-vis the trend of the ownership of satellite television channels used for airing of the collections of the Pentecostal churches' programmes. Maybe, due to the sensitive nature of religious issues and the likely havoc they could inflict on a nation with diverse religions if handled with kids glove, NBC Act of Nigeria does not grant operational licence to religious organizations to own and manage an open-to-air terrestrial broadcast outfit, Section 10 (a) of the National Broadcasting Commission Act of 1992 cited in (NBC, 2006). Ukah (2011, p. 39) added to that notion as he explained the position of Nigerian Constitution with regard to the citizens' ownership of a broadcast outfit. According to him:

Since Nigeria received political independence in 1960, all the constitutions drafted and promulgated have guaranteed freedom of religious association, expression and practice. What the constitutions have not granted citizens, in a straightforward, uncomplicated manner, is freedom to own and operate a broadcast medium. In a multi-religious society such as Nigeria, the role of the state with respect to religious communication is critical.

With the commanding influence of broadcasting on the target audience, various aspects and things pertaining to it including but not limited to its ownership needs to be properly checked for modest usage towards the actualization of national objectives like the Nigerian Constitution provides. The custodians of Nigerian Constitution might have considered the overwhelming control which broadcasting has and decide that no religious institution as a body would own an open-to-air terrestrial broadcast outfit, to avoid undue uses that might be costly for the nation to bear. Also, the politics of using broadcasting for evangelism brings mixed dimensions which seem like a deviation from the evangelical works as pioneered by the orthodox churches, Little wonder Kalu (1985, p.223) observes that, "in her relation with

the society, the church performs so many tasks that her true goal is often beclouded amid the varying perceptions of the institution..."

In addition to the trend of ownership of satellite channels for broadcasting of religious programmes which is fashionable among Nigerian Pentecostal churches now, they pay and occupy a chunk of the broadcast air-time in both radio and television stations all over the country. Achunike (2004, p.11) corroborates that view as he states that, "to tune in the radios or to turn on the television sets particularly on weekends is to listen to blaring messages from Pentecostals." Also, the scholar further described other activities of the Pentecostal churches noting that, "there are open air preaching, outreaches and crusades. Of recent is the market evangelism where people are preached to and are taught to pray and trade at the same time. Pentecostalism is regularly megaphoned in our street corners and at the portals and entrances to our tertiary institutions," (Achunike, 2004).

### **Statement of Problem**

The Nigerian Broadcasting Code, which is the canon stipulating the dos and don'ts in broadcasting does not grant a licence for religious organizations to operate terrestrial broadcast stations. Meanwhile, with technological advancement which led to the upsurge in availability and usage of satellite channels, many Nigerian Pentecostal churches ventured into sole ownership of satellite television channels where they air their religious programmes. That trend has been in vogue in the country for about a decade. However, as pointed out earlier, religion is a very delicate and sensitive issue; there are plethora of religious denominations and systems of worship in Nigeria. Some of the religious groups are aligned to some ethnic interests and value systems. So, what is offensive to particular religious adherents' dogmas may be inimical to a given ethnic group. Nigeria as a multi-ethnic and religious country endeavors to shield herself from any issue that can cause disunity. How does broadcasting queue into that principle? This is a critical phenomenon facing Nigerian broadcast programme producer. With regard to that, Head (1974, p.78) cited in Udeajah (2004, p.34) aptly observes that:

The broadcasting system of Nigeria faces major challenges such as how to reach the whole land area with an acceptable broadcast signal and how to satisfy the programme needs and desires of sub-audiences. Head sums up the challenges as that of programming to contain the nation's historical philosophy of 'unity in diversity.' That is programming to embrace many factors of national interest, such as... religions...and ethnic values.

The issue of broadcasting to uphold national interests is made more imperative in religious matters as what is pleasing to one religious denomination may not be pleasing to the other, because each of them has distinct dogmas and doctrines. Even the same religion that propagates one central idea differs often in certain ideologies. So in a given religion for instance, Christianity, there are different denominations, all of them generally profess their belief in Christ, albeit, each denomination has a peculiar dogma different from others. These religious denominations that own satellite television channels among other things promote their own doctrines via the airwaves. Then the challenge is that, there is a need to find out the audience perception of the Pentecostal churches' ownership of the satellite television channels in Nigeria. It is crucial to ascertain how the audience perceives the programmes which the channels broadcast. Also, it is vital to ascertain the extent at which the audiences watch the channels. These are the issues which this paper has attempted to systematically provide solutions to.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives guided this study:

- [1] To ascertain Nigerian audiences' perception of the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels.
- [2] To find out the audiences' perception of programmes of the churches' owned satellite television channels
- [3] To determine the extent at which the people watch the programmes aired on the Pentecostal churches' satellite television channels.

## **Research Questions**

These research questions below guided this paper

- [1] How do Nigerian audiences perceive the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels?
- [2] How do the audiences perceive the programmes of the churches' satellite television channels?
- [3] To what extent do the people watch the programmes aired on the Pentecostal satellite television channels?

## **Brief overview of broadcasting and religion in Nigeria**

Broadcasting is a unique means of mass communication. It possesses some characteristics which distinguish it from other mass media and attract people's interest to apply it in actualizing political, economic and socio-religious goals. In a professional parlance, it is the only form of public communication whereby messages, ideas, experiences, attitudes, habits etc could be simultaneously transmitted through the airwaves to a heterogeneous and scattered audience using audio, visual and or audio-visual. In line with the above view, Udejah (2004, p.3) submits that broadcasting, "is the transmission of audio and video signals to a mass audience through electric rays." Also, to Nworgu (2005, p.22) broadcasting is "the dissemination of information to a mass audience through the propagation of ...waves. Broadcasting involves the sending out of signals in form of sound and pictures over a distance to a heterogeneous and diversified audience through the medium of either the radio or the television."

Broadcasting as a form of communication wields torrential powers to manipulate the audience towards accepting or rejecting an idea, belief, campaign, service, product, etc. It has the potency of creating and projecting an issue and influence the public to buy it as a reality. Ukah (2011, p.44) refers to that influence of broadcasting as "awesome powers of broadcast media to form and influence thought, conduct and actions." This characteristic may be one of the reasons Pentecostal churches in Nigeria opted for owning satellite television channels ostensibly to propagate their activities as well as hunt for new members. With the powers which broadcasting controls, Dunu (2002, p.133) refers to it as "the most pervasive machinery or channel of communication that uses electromagnetic impulses to reach the public instantly without the connection of wires." Meanwhile, Udejah (2004, p. xxv) acknowledges the fact that broadcasting exerts monumental influence on the psyche of homo-

sapiens when he avers that, “broadcasting blends history and life, time and eternity, reality and legend into a significant mosaic to enhance human aspirations.”

The owners of Pentecostal channels perhaps aspire to project their religious activities to a distinct height where their adherents and other viewers could understand better and perceive the churches’ dogmas as the ideal beyond any other denominations.’ This may be why they decide to employ broadcasting to position their programmes and basic activities strategically in the minds of the public. This would undoubtedly give them an edge over other religious sects in the country. Broadcasting ignites the perception which professionals programmed it to mold in the minds of the receivers. So, it has the potency to subtly command the attention and psyche of the audience to welcome an idea being propagated in the airwaves. This implies that, broadcast programmes are orchestrated deliberately to achieve certain purposes for the sponsors (owners).

The present Pentecostal churches’ domination of most broadcast media’s air time and even ownership of channels in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon to them. One Pentecostal church, Lutheran Church was the trailblazer of religious broadcast in Nigeria. Although the orthodox churches – the Church Missionary Society (Anglican Communion) and the Roman Catholic Mission came first to Nigeria, none of them pioneered broadcasting of religious programmes in the country. A Pentecostal mission, Lutheran Church came and kicked it off in April 1958, with a programme entitled “Lutheran Hour Ministry-Nigeria.’ According to information from the Website of the Church, Nigerian chapter, the programme was the brain child of the missionaries: J. P. Dredke, Paul Volz, R. A. Krugler Meissner and H. A. Hein. It was produced and recorded in the former’s living room at Obot-Idim, Ibesikpo in the present Akwa-Ibom State which is the headquarters of the Church in Nigeria.

Also, the website source revealed that the first programmes were produced in two dominant languages of the then Eastern Nigeria, i.e. Efik and Igbo Languages. They were broadcast over the Radio Eternal Life Wins Africa (WLWA) operating in Monrovia-Liberia; the Igbo version of the programme was entitled ‘Ikwusa Kristi Nye Mmadu Nile; while in Efik it was entitled ‘Ediworo Christ Nno Kpukpru Owo.’ The meaning of both titles in English Language is ‘Bringing Christ to the Nations.’ It is essential to note that, “ELWA Radio was the first Christian radio station built in all of Africa and it has broadcast the gospel throughout Liberia and neighboring countries,” (ELWA Ministries Association, USA, 2015). The stated efforts paint a picture of the genesis of religious broadcasting and the Pentecostal missions’ penchant for radio-evangelism. This was how what is seen today in the broadcasting of religious programmes started in Nigeria and eventually the trend metamorphosed into Pentecostal churches ownership of satellite channels for broadcasting of their programmes to the people.

### **Broadcast media Programmes and Pentecostal evangelism in Nigeria**

In broadcast media, the word ‘programme’ is an indispensable term. Broadcast programmes are produced through the interplay of science and artistic skills which the audience receives as audio-visual services on televisions or radio stations. A programme is the fundamental ‘commodity’ (service) which the broadcast media offer to the audience. Pepple (200, p.93) expressed similar view as he asserts that, “programmes are individual packages or materials produced and transmitted by a broadcast station as its service.” So, programme is the general product professionally and or systematically compiled and aired to an audience as services by a broadcast organization. In essence, the term ‘programme’ is simply the generic name for all the services which the broadcast media deliver to the people. This is because virtually all they

broadcast is known professionally as programme. For instance, the news, documentaries, phone-in services, talks, interviews, dramas, and even music played in any broadcast media studio are all forms of programmes.

Uyo (1985) quoted in Okunna (1999, p.67) lays credence to the above view when he opines that “the broadcast media carry different types of messages...which are called programmes.” Dunu (2002, p.134) argues also that “...broadcast station offers a service to the public. This service is its programmes.” Another scholar Daramola (2001, p.166) states that programme means, “what is transmitted through radio station to the listener.” In the context of this study, what the channels transmit to their audience are their collections of programmes. These form the cardinal services which prompt the viewers’ patronage of the channels. The satisfactory nature of the programme or otherwise determines the degree of the audience’s hunger for consumption of it.

Therefore, a programme is expected to among other things, educate, entertain, inform, mobilize and socialize the audience. One programme might perform a combination of the above functions. However, the emphasis is that it must serve a definite purpose for the audience. This is why Ngwu (2011, p.200) advises that, “it is expected that each programme should offer a rewarding experience to its audience, so as to serve as a motivator to the audience.” Every programme has a defined subject matter or theme which would portray the function or the reward it has for the audience. This implies that broadcast media programme producers tactically and deliberately mold them to fulfill certain aims.

The dominant feature of the programmes of the Pentecostal churches’ satellite channels has been broadcasting of mainly their religious programmes, which airing of miracles takes large chunk of it. It is worthy of note that the activities of some of the Pentecostal churches with regard to airing of unsubstantiated miracles, led the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission to ban the broadcasting of miracles on the broadcast media in 2004. Citing the Commission, Borzello (2004) says that, “Nigerian broadcasters are no longer allowed to show miracles on television in a way which is not "provable and believable."

That ban ostensibly was due to the perception that the churches involved (mostly the Pentecostals) were into commercialization of the service of God. Olukoya quoting Ojo (2004) corroborates that opinion by noting that, “these people are not preaching the gospel, they are advertising miracles. It is a marketing strategy to woo more people to their churches knowing that the more people they have, the more money they get.” Meanwhile, in the views of one of the leading promoters of the tele-evangelism, Temitope, (popularly known as Pastor TB Joshua, Leader and Founder of the Synagogue, Church of All Nations), the ban was like interrupting the work of God, which he noted nobody can stop. Olukoya (2004) puts it better, “but Temitope Joshua, a "prophet" notable for performing miracles on television, says: "No-one can stop the work of God."

### **Theoretical Background**

This paper is anchored on the uses and gratifications theory. The fundamental provision of the uses and gratifications theory making it apt for this work, is that mass media audience is not mere passive recipients of the media messages, but rather they are active participants in the choice of what content to be consumed or not. This is because they (the audience) know the particular channel, programme or media content that interests them and the one that does not. As such they expose themselves to a medium or view a programme and reject the other

ones that do not satisfy their desire. In his view on what the uses and gratifications theory means, Folarin (2002, p.72) argues as follows:

The theory perceives the recipient as actively influencing the effect process, since he selectively chooses, attends to, perceives and retains the media messages on the basis of his/her needs, beliefs etc. The focus was thus shifted from media production and transmission functions to the media consumption function. Instead of asking; “what kinds of effects occur under what conditions?” The question became: “who uses which contents from which media under which conditions and for what reasons?” The question of effect was now rather tangential to the analysts concerned.

The relevance of the theory to this study stems from the fact that what the programmes of the Pentecostal-owned satellite television channels offer to the audience, would determine their perception and interest about the programmes of the channels. If the channels’ programmes hold no worthwhile package to deliver to the audience, that would surely reflect on how they perceive the channel’s existence. On the other hand, if the channels are replete with lofty programmes in their contents, the audience would acknowledge that, because they are the essence for the existence of any broadcast outfit. This is why it is pertinent to examine the public’s perception of the channels and the (programmes) services they render.

The uses and gratifications theory is of the view that the audience are active enough to reject or accept certain media contents. That is to say, that the media have no commanding powers to propel the audience in the choice to make over the media or their messages, but the audience select media contents or programmes which they consume based on the benefits the contents offer to the users (audience).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Survey research design was used in this paper as people’s opinions constitute the source of primary data collection. The population of the study comprises all residents of Anambra State who are up to 18 years and above. According to the information from Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as cited by Salu, (2015), Anambra State has 1, 963, 173 (one million, nine hundred and sixty-three thousand, one hundred seventy-three) registered voters. The choice of this category of people was because owing to their level of educational attainment and maturity, most of them could offer useful views on the subject matter being studied.

The sample size is 300 selected in accordance with the fundamental rule given by media researchers (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011, p. 103) who direct that one guideline recommended for a multivariate study like this “is as follows: 50=very poor; 100=poor; 200=fair; 300=good; 500=very good; 1,000=excellent” (Comprey & Lee, 1992).

The sample technique involves a multi-stage sampling technique. The technique was used because both probability and the non-probability sampling techniques were used in the selection of the sample elements. By the use of stratified random sampling, we stratified Anambra State into the three senatorial districts existing there, i.e. Anambra Central Senatorial District, Anambra North Senatorial District, and Anambra South Senatorial District. Through the use of purposive sampling, we chose to study a town in urban area within each of the districts, because residents of the places are connected to the national grid

and have power supply that could enable them more opportunity to use the satellite television channels. We conducted simple random sampling among the towns that make up the urban areas. Based on the sampling, Amawbia was selected from Anambra Central Senatorial District, Onitsha Town (Inland Town, from Onitsha North LGA) was selected from Anambra North Senatorial District and Nnewi-Ichi was selected from Anambra South Senatorial District.

The instrument of data collection for the paper was the questionnaire, which copies were administered in the shops of some traders and offices as well. The content of the instrument was structured using both close-ended and open-ended questions. The close-ended questions were used to draw answers relevant to the research questions as framed by the researchers, while the latter was added to enable the respondents input their own appropriate views in response to the questions.

### **Validity and Reliability Tests**

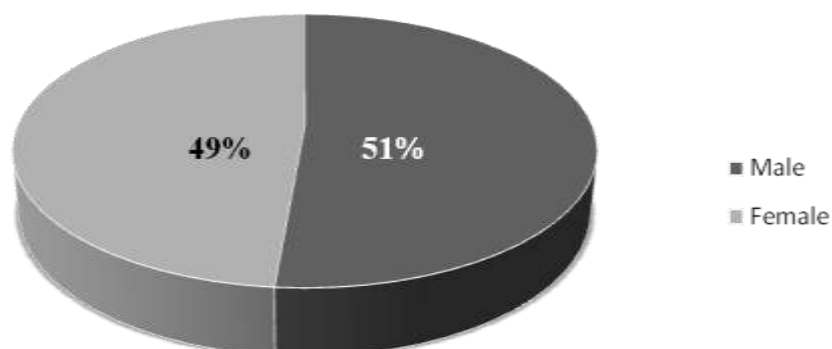
In testing for validity, a draft of the measuring instrument was submitted to some senior lecturers in media studies that scrutinized it and pointed out certain omissions and additions which were effected accordingly. After that, through the use of face validation, they confirmed that the contents were convincing enough to elicit appropriate answers to the research questions for the paper. The reliability of the measuring instrument was ascertained by administering a pre-test questionnaire of (50 copies) randomly to selected respondents within one of the towns in the urban areas. The pilot test's result was not presented in the final analyses within the corpus of the paper, as it was used for confirmation of the reliability or otherwise of the measuring instrument.

Three hundred (300) copies of the questionnaire were distributed, out of which two hundred and ninety (290) were intelligibly filled, returned and were used for the analyses. For data presentation and analyses, pie charts with simple percentages were used for analyzing the sex and marital status, while other demographic data such as religious background and age were analyzed using a table and simple percentages; also tables with mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the views of the respondents on the items presented on the questionnaire.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

The questionnaire used for this paper was divided into two parts. The first part contained questions designed to elicit responses on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The other part of the questionnaire contained structured and unstructured questions used to get the opinions of the respondents on the subject matter of the study.



**Gender classification of respondents**

*Source: Researchers' survey, 2016*

From the data generated on gender classification, 149 respondents are males which represent 54% of the sample of study. There were 141 female respondents which represent 46% of the sample of study.

**Table 2: Age Distribution and religious background of respondents**

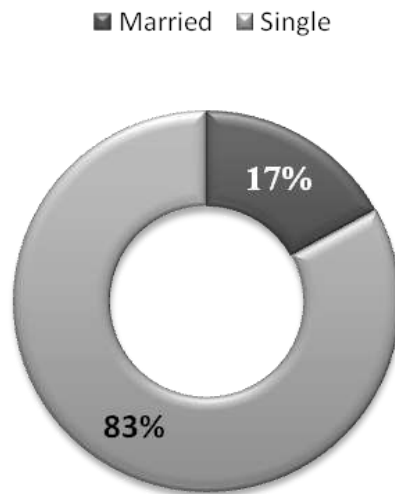
<i>Age</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (100%)</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Frequency (290)</i>	<i>Percentage (100%)</i>
<b>18-28</b>	26	9%	<b>ATR</b>	Nil	Nil
<b>29-38</b>	139	48%	<b>Christianity</b>	287	99%
<b>39-48</b>	125	43%	<b>Islam</b>	3	1%
<b>49 / above</b>	Nil	Nil	<b>Others</b>	Nil	Nil

*Source: The researchers' survey, 2016*

In age distribution of the respondents on the table above, there is a preponderant of respondents within the age brackets of 29 and 38. The persons under the category are 139 in number representing 48% of the sample of the study. Under the ages of 39-48, there are 125 respondents which represent 43% of the sample of the study, in the ages of 18-28 years, there are 26 respondents representing 9% while there were no respondents under the ages of 49 and above years old.

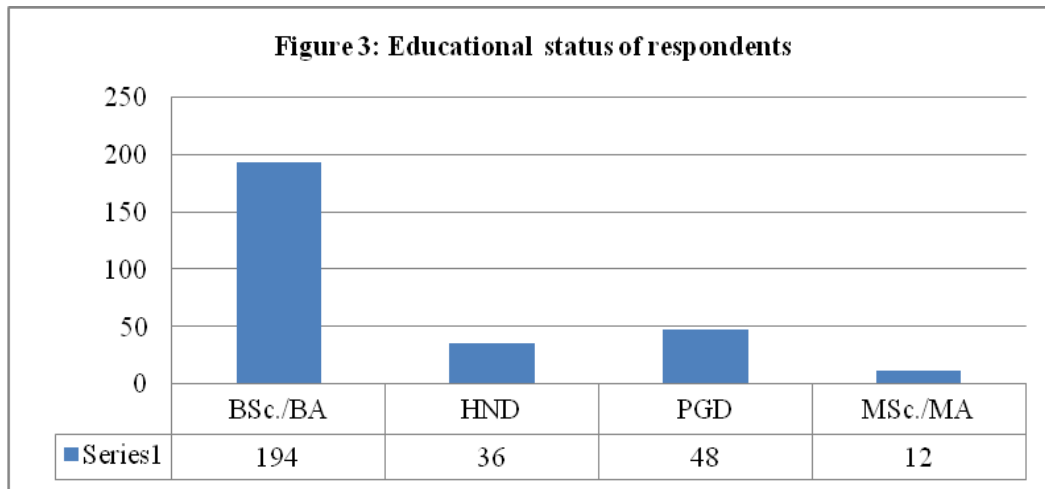
The data on the table show that none of the respondents is an adherent of African Traditional Religion (ATR); 287 respondents representing 99% are Christians; while 3 respondents representing 1% are Muslims. The reason for the preponderance of Christians in the data on the above table maybe because Christianity is a dominant religion in the South-Eastern parts of Nigeria, where the study was conducted.

**Figure2: Marrital status of respondents**



Source: The researchers’ field work, 2016

The data on figure 2 above show that 83% of the respondents were married while 17% of them were single.



Source: The researchers’ survey, 2016

The data on figure three above show that 194 respondents hold either Bachelors of Science or Arts, 36 others hold Higher National Diploma, 48 other respondents have PGD whereas 12 others hold either masters of Science or Arts.

**Research question 1: How do Nigerian audiences perceive Pentecostal churches’ ownership of satellite television channels?**

The data presented on the table below were used to elicit answers to the research question one posed above.

**Table 3: Audience Perception of Pentecostal Churches Ownership of satellite TV Channels**

<i>Questions</i>	<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage%</i>
Are you aware that some Pentecostal churches in Nigeria own satellite television channels?	<i>No</i>	<i>Nil</i>	<i>Nil</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>100%</i>
		<b>290</b>	<b>100</b>
How do you perceive the churches' ownership of satellite tv channels?	<i>Bad</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>4%</i>
	<i>No idea</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
	<i>Good</i>	<i>277</i>	<i>96%</i>
		<b>290</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researchers' survey, 2016

From the table above, none of the respondents was unaware of the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels in Nigeria. So all the respondents 290 (100%) accepted that they were aware of the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite channels.

In a follow-up question to know whether the respondents like the ownership arrangement, 13 respondents representing 4% of the sample of the study did not like the ownership arrangement; while 277 respondents (96%) accepted that they like the ownership arrangement. None of the respondents chose the option of 'undecided' as regards to whether they like the ownership pattern or not.

### **Research Question 2: How do the audiences perceive the programmes of the Pentecostal churches' satellite television channels?**

The questions in the table below were specifically designed to elicit answers for research question 2 above. The result is presented in the table 4 below:

**TABLE 4: AUDIENCE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTENTS OF THE PROGRAMMES AIRED BY THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES' SATELLITE TELEVISION CHANNELS**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Do you watch the Pentecostal churches' satellite TV channels?	<i>No</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>5%</i>
	<i>No idea</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
	<i>Yes</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>95%</i>
		<b>290</b>	<b>100</b>
If your answer to the above question is, yes, how would you assess the	<i>Bad</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2%</i>
			<i>53%</i>

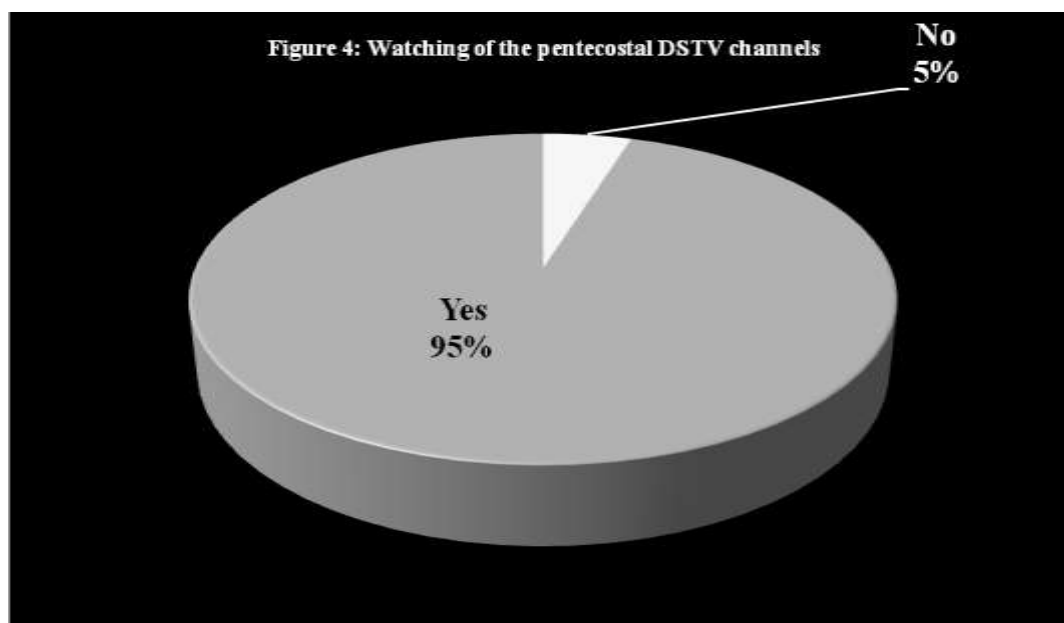
contents of the satellite TV channels' programmes?	Good	145	
	No idea	3	1%
	Very good	122	44%
		<b>276</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: The researchers' survey, 2016*

The data on the above table show that 276 respondents (95%) affirmed that they watch the channels; while 9 (nine) other respondents (5%) reported that they do not watch the channels. On a follow up question, 6 respondents (2%) out of those who affirmed that they watch the programmes adjudged them (the contents of the channels' programmes) as bad; 145 respondents (53%) adjudged them as being good; 122 respondents (44%) described them as very good. Three of the respondents (1%) had no idea of what the contents of the channels' programmes are.

### **Research Question 3: To what extent do the people watch the programmes aired by Pentecostal churches' satellite television channels?**

The data presented below were used to obtain information for proffering answers to research question three of this paper. The researchers repeated the question on the first part of table three for ascertaining whether the respondents watch the Pentecostal churches' satellite television channels' programmes and the same number of respondents (276) who accepted that they watch the programmes of the satellite channels earlier, did affirm again. The responses recorded on that repeated question are presented in figure 4 below.



The data used to ascertain the respondents who watch and those who do not watch the Pentecostal churches' satellite channels showed that 276 (95%) of them accepted that they watch the channels while, 14 (5%) others declined that they watch the channels. The information for the responses is represented in figure 4 above. The above data were addition to the main data used for research question three which is presented below:

**Table 5: The extent of the respondents' watching of the satellite television channels**

<i>Question</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage %</i>
To what extent do you watch the programmes of the Pentecostal churches' satellite television channels?	<b>Daily</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>53%</b>
	<b>3 times weekly</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>19%</b>
	<b>4 times weekly</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>22%</b>
	<b>Once weekly</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>7%</b>
		<b>276</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: the researcher's survey, 2016*

From the data on table 5, 145 respondents (53%) watch the churches' satellite channels daily; 52 other respondents (19%) watch the channels 3 times in a week; 60 respondents (22%) watch them 4 times in a week; while 19 respondents (7%) watch the channels once in a week.

**Note:** Questions on the following tables below were specifically structured to enable the respondents respond to the open-ended questions on some points relevant to the research objectives.

**Table 5: Respondents open-ended opinions on the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels and broadcasting of religious programmes in Nigeria**

Question	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Please is there any item on the Pentecostal churches' satellite television channels' programmes you consider offensive?	No	63	23%
	No idea	14	5%
	Yes	199	72%
		276	100

Source: *The researchers' survey, 2016*

From the data displayed on table five above show 63 respondents (23%) declining that there was any item on the Pentecostal churches channels' programmes that they deemed offensive; 14 respondents (5%) had no idea on whether there was any item on the channels' programmes that they considered offensive; while 199 other respondents (72%) accepted that there were some items of the channels' programmes that they (the respondents) assessed as offensive.

**Table six: Contents of the satellite Channels' programmes assessed as offensive by the audience**

Question	Responses	Frequency
If your answer to the question on table five is <b>YES</b> , please briefly state the contents you do not like:	<b>Subtle criticizing</b> of other churches' dogma;	12
	<b>Frequent</b> airing of unverified miracles;	137
	<b>Excessive</b> airing of recorded programmes	9
	<b>Over</b> displaying of the sick and the disabled.	41
		199

Source: *The researchers' survey, 2016*

The question on table six above is a follow-up to the question on table five where 199 respondents agreed that there were contents of the channels programmes they (the respondents) adjudged as offensive. Out of the 199 respondents, 12 noted 'subtle criticizing of other churches' dogma,' as an offensive item on the channels' programmes; 137 respondents highlighted 'frequent airing of unverified miracles,' as an offensive item they found in the programmes of the channels; 9 respondents deemed 'excessive airing of recorded programmes,' as offensive and 41 respondents considered 'over-displaying of the sick and the disabled as offensive items in the programmes of the channels.

**Table seven: Audience's general comments on Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels and their programmes**

Question	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
What is your general comment on Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite channels and broadcasting of religious programmes in Nigeria?	It should continue, but with strict regulations;	72	25%
	It should be encouraged because it draws people nearer to God;	87	30%
	Good development, but should be done with caution to avoid attacking other religions.	81	28%
	It should be banned entirely	50	17%
			290

Source: *The researchers' survey, 2016*

From the above table, 72 respondents representing (25%) were of the opinion that Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels in Nigeria should continue albeit with regulations; 87 respondents representing (30%) stated that the churches' ownership of channels should be encouraged because it draws people closer to God; 81 respondents representing (28%) saw the ownership as a good development but suggested that it should be done with caution to avoid attacking other religious sects and 50 respondents representing (17%) demanded that the churches' ownership of satellite television channels be banned entirely.

### Discussion of Findings

This work has empirically unraveled some facts about Nigerian audience perception of Pentecostal Churches' ownership of satellite television channels in the country. It has revealed that the audience welcomed the current development where some Pentecostal churches own and manage satellite television channels. With the audience's expression of their acceptance of the phenomenon; it portends that churches and other religious organizations' operating of free open-to-air or terrestrial television stations in Nigeria could be experimented to ascertain the pros and cons of the ownership of such stations, contrary to the status quo, where they are banned from that. These public's view above is vital information that the National Broadcasting Commission should look into and consider granting broadcast licences to churches to own and manage terrestrial television stations in Nigeria. Meanwhile, that has to be done with regulations as some of the respondents averred. If such would be done and the rules complied to, both the public and the government will benefit from it. That shall generate fund to the government via the licence charges and other fees or fines in cases of breach of the rules of operation, the religious outfits would be required to pay in the course of their operations. When that is done, the religious channels shall broadcast what would be in tandem with the standard which the public appreciates. Such new broadcast channels shall be another advert medium that may propel other stations to trim down advert rates as a result of stiffer competition.

This paper also found out that Nigerian populace welcomed the programmes broadcast by the satellite television channels, especially airing of miracles; meanwhile, the people suggested

that the airing of such miracles should be regulated and not banned. Some of the respondents believed that through the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels and broadcasting of programmes, people could be drawn nearer to God. In the other hand, some of the audience detests some contents of the programmes broadcast by the churches' satellite channels. For instance, some of the respondents outlined subtle criticizing of other churches' dogma, 'frequent airing of unverified miracles, excessive airing of recorded programmes, and over-displaying of the sick and the disabled as offensive items in the programmes aired on the channels.

With the contents pointed out as offensive in the programmes, the audience suggested that the Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels and broadcasting of religious programmes should continue to exist in Nigeria, but with some regulations to avoid unwarranted attacks on other religious sects. The pattern of ownership of satellite channels and broadcasting of religious programmes was also noted as a means of drawing people nearer to God.

Moreover, this work equally found that greater number of the people watch the churches' satellite television channels to a large extent every week. Most of the respondents admitted watching the channels daily, while others watch them four times in a week and there are audiences who accepted watching three times in a week.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper has found certain facts with regard to the subject matter, and this makes it imperative to make the following recommendations:

1. Hence Nigerian audiences perceive the trend of Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels as a welcome development, National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has to keep on espousing the phenomenon.
2. The NBC has to raise its regulatory 'eyes' more on the programmes of Nigerian Pentecostal Churches' owned satellite television channels, especially airing of miracles by the channels. There is a need for a stiffer regulation of the programmes of the channels to be completely aligned to the taste of the members of the public as revealed in this paper.
3. The owners of the religious satellite television channels in Nigeria have to re-examine the contents of their programmes, especially the miracles they broadcast, because many members of the viewing audience watch the programmes frequently and some of them abhor the contents showing unverified miracles and others which excessively display sick people.

## CONCLUSION

This work x-rays Nigerian audiences' perception of Pentecostal churches' ownership of satellite television channels. From the perspective of the audiences in this paper, the churches' ownership of channels and broadcasting of religious programmes should be adopted in Nigeria, albeit, with regulations over some of the contents they broadcast. This



implies that they cherish the programmes offered to them by the churches' owned satellite television channels as many of the audience members view the channels frequently.

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