



Evaluation of Child Rights Reporting on Two Radio Stations in Abuja Nigeria (2022-2023)

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ABSTRACT

Background: Child rights remain a critical area of focus globally, and the media play a vital role in creating awareness and advocating for the protection of these rights.

Objectives: This study evaluated the reportage of child rights issues by two radio stations in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory focusing on Human Rights Radio and Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) from January 2022 to December 2023.

Method: The study employed survey method within a cross-sectional design. Participants included 51 staff members from Human Rights Radio, 31 staff members from FRCN, and 314 residents of Abuja, resulting in a total of 396 respondents who completed structured questionnaires. The study was anchored on the Interest Theory of Rights. Data were presented using charts and frequency tables, while hypotheses were tested using one-sample T-Test and Chi-Square test of significance.

Results: Findings revealed that Human Rights Radio, Abuja, provided greater and more specific coverage of child rights issues and exposed more acts of child rights abuse and neglect compared to FRCN, Abuja. Additionally, radio was found to play a significant role in educating Abuja residents about child rights.

Conclusion: The study concluded that Human Rights Radio outperformed FRCN, Abuja, in the three aspects reviewed: extent of coverage, specificity of issues, and exposure of abuses.

Unique Contribution: This study underscores the pivotal role of radio in promoting child rights and highlights the need for enhanced support and resources for media organizations to improve their advocacy for child protection.

Key Recommendation: Radio stations should prioritize training for journalists and increase focus on child rights reporting to amplify advocacy and public awareness.

Keywords: Evaluation, Child Rights, Reporting, Radio Stations, Abuja



INTRODUCTION

In many African countries including Nigeria, high levels of child rights violations still exist with many children homeless, uneducated, sexually molested and abused, subjected to forced labor and face physical beatings Angle. Daftari, Roshani, Rambaud & Roshan (2014). This is happening despite the provisions in the United Nations Convention and the Nigerian Constitution, and other international conventions and Child Rights Acts that emphasized the need to protect the rights of children (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Since the media have the power to influence both public and private behaviours through their functions and various information and communication dissemination strategies, exchange of ideas, education, surveillance and of course, entertainment as well as the serving as the platform for the promotion and communications of value systems in the society, sensitization, knowledge provision, reactions/feedback as well as policy and decision-making process of the public sphere (Ojiakor, Ihenancho, Nkwam-Uwaoma, & Dibia, 2019). Angle, Daftari, Roshani, Rambaud, & Roshan (2014), it can help substantially in reducing child rights violation when it provokes public debates that are inclusive of child voices, expert advocates, and that explains policy issues (Angle, et al., 2014).

Children are the future hope of any nation and ensuring that they grow and develop to contribute to nation building is dependent on their well-being and improved standard of living (Uzochukwu, Morah, & Okafor, 2015). Unfortunately, many of the children in Nigeria are subjected to abuse and neglect – a practice that has negative effects on them and paints a bad picture of the country's image (Olusegun & Idowu, 2016). Children in Nigeria are subjected to different forms of abuses which amount to denial of their rights. Such abuses include child marriages, molestation, child labour, kidnapping, and neglect, among other forms (Olusegun & Idowu, 2016). Some of these abuses are not recognized as abuse but part of the cultural practices of the community or the nation, hence, they are seen as normal in such societies, particularly because they are culturally accepted and have been in practice for ages (Olusegun & Idowu, 2016). Cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and the beating of children to instill discipline in them are viewed as normal way of life in many Nigerian communities, the adoption of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on Child Rights by the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2003 and the passage of the Child Rights Bill in 2005 by the National Assembly and the subsequent passage by some states as well as other governmental regulations, decrees, enactments and laws on child rights (Maduko, 2018) notwithstanding. In spite of the promulgation of many laws against child abuse in Nigeria, the practice has continued to be on the rise (Olusegun & Idowu, 2016). This could be because of the poor implementation of the laws against child abuse and neglect.

However, the broadcast media and in fact, the mass media generally, have been engaged in airing programmes and writing news aimed at curtailing these ugly practices in Nigeria (Oyero, 2009). The Nigerian broadcast media run diverse and multiplicity of programmes on daily basis. Such media coverage and reportage could create awareness of child rights and prompt strategic actions on the part of individuals, governments and organizations to address the issues.

It is against this background that the researcher undertook to assess the programmes of two radio stations: The Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN) and the Human Rights Radio (HRR), Abuja in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria, to find out their contributions to the protection of



children from abuse and neglect in their areas of coverage. The two radio stations air programmes on child rights. Radio Nigeria, Abuja airs a one and half hour programme called *Public Complaints*. The programme comes on air every Monday. The Human Rights Radio on the other hand air a programme called *Breketé Family or Reality Radio and Television programme* which come on air between 7.30 to 8.30am every Monday.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate child rights reporting issues on two radio stations in federal capital territory, Abuja Nigeria. The specific objectives include to:

1. Determine the frequency of coverage given to child rights issues by the Human Rights Radio and FRCN, Abuja in terms of frequency.
2. Investigate the challenges that confront the two selected radio stations in their reportage of child rights stories.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In Africa, particularly in Nigeria, the awareness and attention on child abuse and neglect is a recent development (Nnaemeka, Ndukaihe & Abamara, 2013). However, many governments in Africa and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs) such as African Network for the Prevention and protection of Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), including Nigeria now has laws prohibiting child abuse and neglect with the aiming of bringing to the knowledge of both the citizens and the government the dangers of child abuse in society (Nnaemeka, et al., 2013). The researchers argue that the helplessness, hopelessness and powerlessness of children and consequently, their low esteem and status in the society have been exploited by adults as many children have been psychologically and physically battered, abused and neglected by parents, guardians and by strangers. These situation has continued to exist despite the various laws in Nigeria against child abuse and neglect. The reasons according to Taofeeq, Abolaji, Kamaldeen and Hussein (2015) is because the provisions of the enacted laws against child rights infringements are largely not implemented by the citizens who make reference to their religions as the reason for not complying with the laws, and they also consider the ideas of child rights that are enshrined in the Child Rights Act as incongruous with cultural and religious rules (Njoku & Oladiji, 2009).

Contrary to the findings of empirical studies on the reportage of child rights by the Nigerian mass media and the media of many other developing and developed countries of the world, (e.g. Korac; 2001; Ikpe, 2007; Media Monitoring Project, 2004; Williams-Thomas, 2010; Media Monitoring Project, 2004; Adeniran, Hassan, Mikaila & Kayode, 2015; Oyero, 2010), other researchers (e.g. Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, Turcotte, Drapeau & Ivers, 2011; Clément & Dufour, 2009; Franklin & Gilbert, 2009) argue that stories about child maltreatment are making the headlines in newspapers because child abuse and neglect has become a recognized social problem whose consequences are being increasingly documented and discussed. The authors substantiate their claims by stating that the prominence give to child right issues in the media occur because many journalists wants to report horror stories in the belief that such publications about children make



significant contributions to the recognition of child maltreatment, and putting up a mechanism to stem the tide of child maltreatment issues (Johnson, 1995 as cited in Saint-Jacques, Villeneuve, Turcotte, Drapeau, & Ivers, 2011). According to Jones, Finkelhor, and Halter (2006), and Whitehead, Chiodo, Leschied, and Dermot (2004), who have studied variations in news media coverage of child abuse, it encourages the development of institutions and policy and also affect the ways individuals behave toward children. The authors found in their study that reporting of abused children by the news media makes the public more aware of these cases, and cause them to realise the need to report such situations to the proper authorities. However, the same might not be true for the broadcast media which do not or might not have the opportunity to increase sales based on child rights horror news. So, the researcher argues that the prominence that the print media reportage gives to child rights abuse and neglect could be aimed at increasing the sales volume of their newspapers some of which do not attract enough adverts to cover costs.

In contrast to the forgoing, UNICEF (2007) states that although the media hold a powerful position, they do not always ally their selves with children's rights. Researchers notes that the media across the globe reportage of children has remained a stereotype of negative reporting. The media are accused of not giving attention to young people's civic engagement, but rather the media see young people as people who always cause problem and engage in the display of delinquency, violent behaviour, and drug abuse rave-parties (UNICEF (2007)). In this regard, the media fail to uphold their social responsibility of serving as the voice of the voiceless.

However, it is arguably true that according to Besharov and Laumann (1994), media reports on child abuse and neglect make the public to feel emotionally compelled to "do something" in suspected child abuse cases, and even report the slightest concern about a child. In this regard, the mass media play the role of a catalyst to initiate change in society (Khalid, Ahmed & Mufti, 2015). The media achieves this by enabling people through news coverage and reporting to learn about issues and make their voice heard (Oyero, 2009).

Ojiakor, Ihenancho, Nkwam-Uwaoma and Dibia (2019) studied *Coverage of Child Right Abuse in Nigerian Newspapers*. The study used content analysis of two Nigerian Newspapers: Daily Sun and The Punch (January-April 2017) to ascertain the frequency, depth, direction and prominence of coverage of reports on child rights in Nigeria. The study found that the newspapers studied did not give adequate coverage to the issues of child rights abuse and neglect in Nigeria. In another study, Salihu and Chutiyam (2016) investigated Trends of child trafficking Situation in Nigeria and a way forward. The study captured Child maltreatment; sexual abuse and neglect were captured.

METHOD

This study employed descriptive survey research the study was carried out in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The city came into existence in 1976 as the capital of Nigeria in replacement of Lagos which had become over congested. The area comprises six local councils, namely: Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Bwari and Kwali (Abuja City Profile: Culture, History & Districts, 2019). These areas are inhabited by people from different parts of Nigeria. Thus, the area provided adequate context for examining the influence of child rights



messages and campaigns by Human Rights Radio and FRCN, Abuja. Most of the residents of the area are traders while some of them are found in civil service and farming.

The population of the study was the listeners of the two radio stations who reside in the FCT, Abuja and the staff of FRCN and the Human Rights Radio, Abuja who receive transmission or signals from the two radio stations. This population was considered appropriate to provide insight into the two radio stations reportage of child rights issues. As at 2006 census, the city of Abuja had a population of 1,406,239. The projected population was estimated to be 1,826,705. Taro Yamane formula for determining sample size was used to determine the sample size. The resulting number of 400 from the total population was considered adequate to produce a dependable research result. In addition, Bowler's Proportional Allocation Formula was used to determine the portions of questionnaire that was fair enough to be distributed to each local government council. The area comprises six local councils, namely: Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Gwagwalada, Kuje, Bwari and Kwali (Abuja City Profile: Culture, History & Districts, 2019). Before then, the researcher worked out the population projection for 2022 based on the 2006 population census figure. The data generated in the course of study was presented in tables of frequency and percentages. This was done with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27.0. T-test was used to test the hypotheses. The use of T-test was considered suitable because this statistical tool enabled the researcher to break down and analyse the data generated to find out the extent of agreement or disagreement between what was observed and what was expected and the level of significance of such agreement. The test was carried out at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULT

Presentation of Data Relating to the Main Questions Regarding Abuja Residents

A different set of Questionnaire was administered among people resident in Abuja who are part of the audience of Human Rights radio and Radio Nigeria, both in Abuja. The items reviewed below were intended to be used to ascertain how the audience assessed the child rights programmes of the two radio stations as well as to determine whether the audience have been influenced positively by the said programmes to defend child rights in the society. The main points are covered in Items 5 to 13 of the questionnaire.

(i) Listenership of Human Rights Radio, Abuja

In Questionnaire Item 5 in Section B of the instrument relating to Abuja residents, respondents were required to indicate whether they listened to Human Rights Radio, Abuja, and the data obtained is presented in Figure 1 as follows.

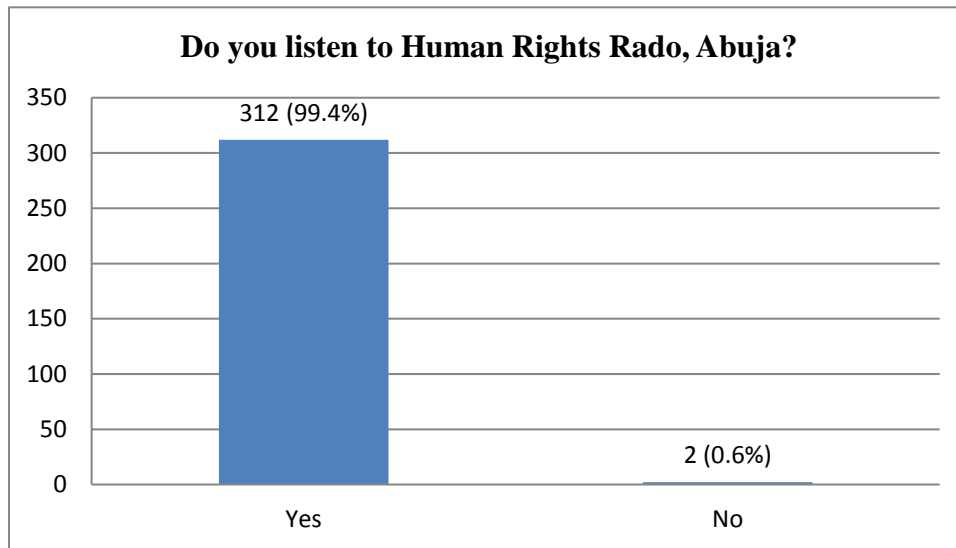


Figure 1: Listenership of Human Rights Radio, Abuja

Questionnaire Item 5 posed the question: Do you listen to Human Rights Radio, Abuja? As presented in Fig. 1, 312 persons or 99.4% of the 314 valid responses answered *Yes* while 2 persons or 0.6% only answered *No*. It is very clear that the majority of the respondents did listen to the radio station under focus, so they are well positioned to provide unbiased answers to the questionnaire items.

(ii) Listenership of Radio Nigeria, Abuja

In Questionnaire Item 6 in Section B of the instrument relating to Abuja residents, respondents were required to indicate whether they listened to Radio Nigeria, Abuja, and the data obtained is presented in Figure 2 as follows.

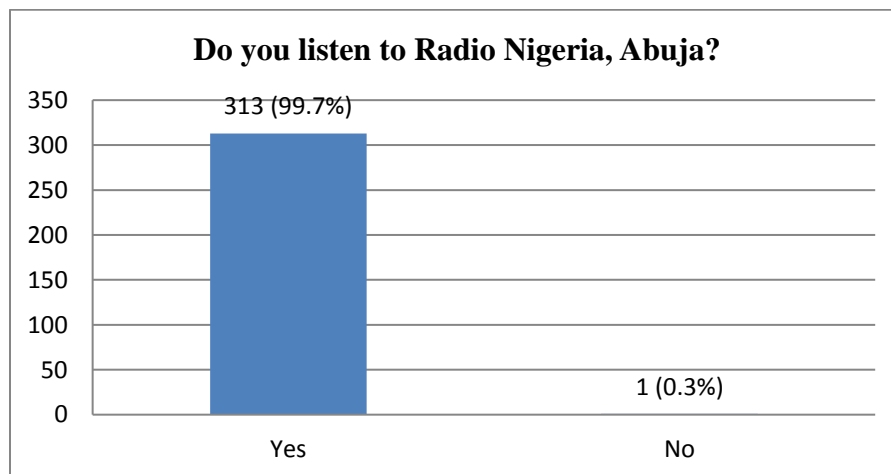


Figure 2: Listenership of Radio Nigeria, Abuja



In Questionnaire Item 6, respondents were required to indicate whether they listened to Radio Nigeria, Abuja. As presented in Fig. 2, 313 persons or 99.7% of the 314 valid responses indicated *Yes* while only 1 person or 0.3% indicated *No*. It is very clear that the majority of the respondents did listen to the radio station under consideration, which is the precondition so getting unbiased responses to the research instrument.

(iii) Frequency of hearing about child right issues on Human Rights Radio, Abuja

In Questionnaire Item 7 in Part B of the instrument relating to Abuja residents, the respondents were required to indicate how often they heard about child right issues on Human Rights Radio, Abuja. Figure 3 presents the data obtained.

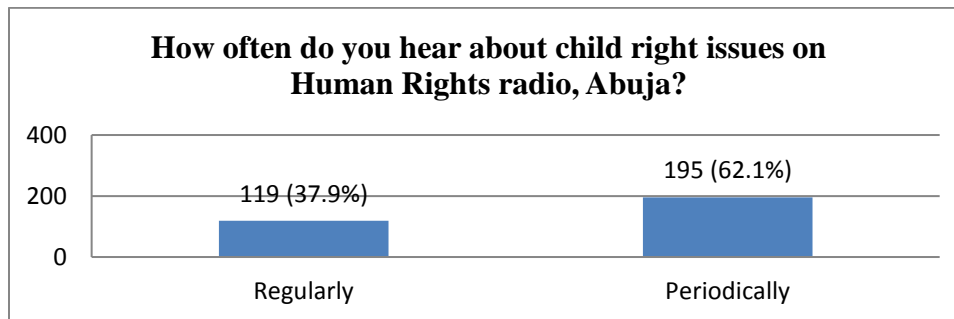


Figure 3: Frequency of hearing about child right issues on Human Rights radio, Abuja

As presented in Figure 3, 119 persons or 37.9% of the 314 respondents indicated that they heard about child rights issues on Human Rights Radio on a regular basis, whereas the majority 195 persons or 62.1% said they heard same periodically. The data proves that the radio station did air child right issues regularly as revealed by the audience who have a healthy frequency of listenership to the radio station.

(iv) The child rights which respondents have heard about in the radio stations

In Questionnaire Item 8 in Section B of the instrument relating to Abuja residents, several child rights were listed and respondents were required to indicate their extent of agreement or disagreement regarding whether they had heard about the rights from any of the radio stations under review. Figure 4 presents the data obtained.

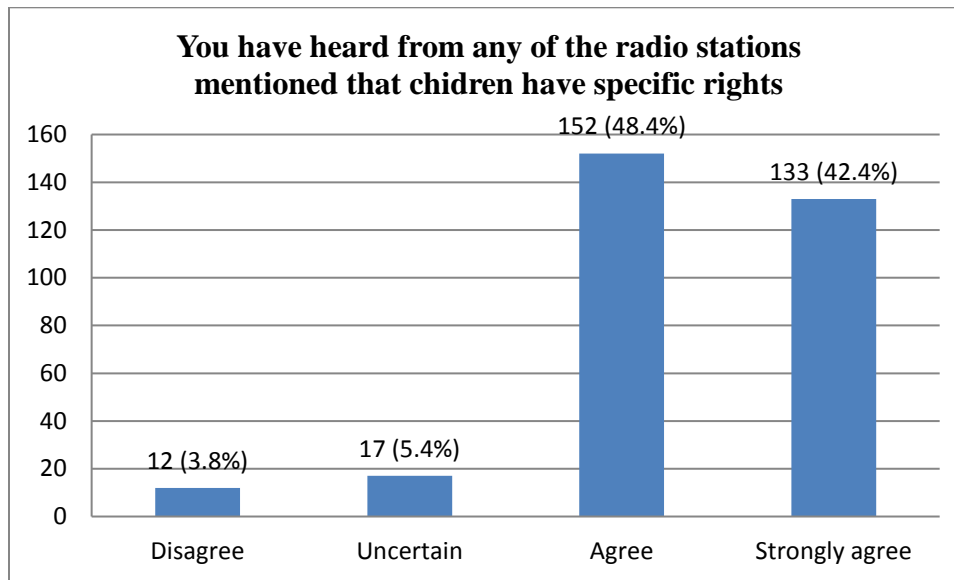


Figure 4: Specific child right issues which respondents heard from the two radio stations

The specific child rights issues listed were right to life, survival and development; freedom of association or assembly according to the law; right to express opinions; protection from any act that interferes with their privacy, honour, and reputation; adequate rest and recreation (leisure and play), according to their age and culture; compulsory basic education and equal opportunity or higher education; right to good health, protection from illnesses and proper medical attention; protection from indecent and inhuman treatments through sexual exploitation, drug abuse, child labour, torture, maltreatment and neglect, etc. Figure 4 presents that 152 persons or 48.4% of the 314 respondents agreed and another 133 persons or 42.4% strongly agreed that they had heard about one or more of the listed child rights from either radio stations. Cumulatively, it means that as much as 285 persons or 90.8% of the respondents at least agreed that they had heard about some of the rights from at least one of the radio stations under review.

Frequency of hearing about the aforementioned child right issues on Radio Nigeria, Abuja

In Questionnaire Item 9 in Section B of the instrument relating to Abuja residents, the respondents were required to indicate how often they had heard about the aforementioned child right issues on Radio Nigeria, Abuja. Figure 5 presents the data obtained thereof.

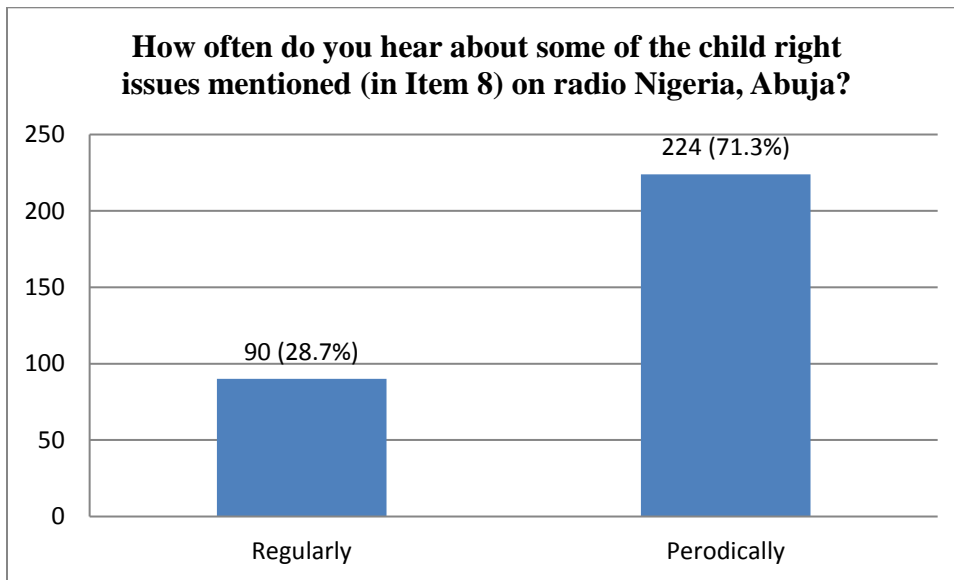


Figure 5: Frequency of hearing about child right issues on radio Nigeria, Abuja

The data prove that the radio station did air the child right issues regularly.

Presentation of Data relating to the main Questions regarding the two Radio Stations from staff

Section B of the Questionnaire features various items relating to the subject matter under investigation meant for staff of Human Rights Radio and those of Radio Nigeria, both in Abuja. The same questionnaire was administered to both groups but with necessary modifications to suit audience. Hence the presentation of data below focuses on comparisons of the data obtained from the two groups.

(i) Manner of coverage of child rights issues by the two radio channels

Questionnaire Item 5 in part A of the instrument obtained data on the whether the two radio channels covered child right issues the way that can influence parents to ensure that children enjoy their child rights. The data obtained is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Manner of coverage of child rights issues by the two radio channels

Response category\Response group	Staff of Human Rights Radio, Abuja	Staff of Radio Nigeria, Abuja
Strongly Agree (SA)	23 45.1%	12 38.7%
Agree (A)	28 54.9%	16 51.6%
Uncertain (U)	-	3 9.7%
Disagree (D)	-	-
Strongly Disagree (SD)	-	-
Total	51 100%	31 100%

Source: Researcher’s computations from survey data (2023)



Comparing the two sets of data we observe that the agreement is stronger among staff of the Human Rights Radio than in the case of Radio Nigeria, Abuja. This is understandable because Human Rights Radio is more dedicated to programmes that promote human rights issues more than the Radio Nigeria, Abuja.

(ii) Whether the two radio channels have problems that hinder them from reporting child rights issues regularly

Questionnaire Item 6 in Section B obtained data on whether the two radio channels have problems that hinder them from reporting child rights issues regularly as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: The two radio channels have problems that hinder them from reporting child rights issues regularly

Response category\Response group	Staff of Human Rights Radio, Abuja	Staff of Radio Nigeria, Abuja
Strongly Agree (SA)	20 39.2%	9 29%
Agree (A)	14 27.5%	16 51.6%
Uncertain (U)	8 15.7%	5 16.1%
Disagree (D)	- -	1 3.2%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	9 17.6%	- -
Total	51 100%	31 100%

Source: Researcher's computations from survey data (2023)

The high percentages give the indication that the members of staff of both radio stations are aware that certain challenges have constrained their effective reporting of child rights issues.

(iii) Problems that hinder the two radio channels from reporting child rights issues regularly

In Questionnaire Item 7 in Section B, attempt was made to pinpoint the problems that hinder the two radio channels from reporting child rights issues regularly and the data obtained is presented in Table 3.



Table 3: Problems that hinder the two radio channels from covering child rights issues regularly

Human Rights Radio, Abuja (Total No. of respondents: 51)			
Problem/Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Lack of adequate funds	48	94.1	1 st
Lack of dedicated staff for handling child right issues	45	88.2	2 nd
Too many other programmes becloud the investigation and airing of child right issues	39	76.5	4 th
Inadequate support from government	42	82.4	3 rd
Language, religion, and cultural barriers	34	66.7	5 th
No budget for child rights	22	43.1	8 th
There is no free education for the girl child	27	52.9	7 th
Poor level of children education	32	62.7	6 th
Radio Nigeria, Abuja (Total No. of respondents: 31)			
Lack of dedicated personnel to cover the news	25	80.6	2 nd
Lack of finance from government to facilitate investigation and reportage of child right issues	29	93.5	1 st
Poor level of education on the part of the audience, especially the children, which hinders them from understanding the radio messages	14	45.2	5 th
Investigations into child right issues are often frustrated so reportage is often shallow	19	61.3	3 rd
Language, religion, and cultural barriers	10	32.3	6 th
Time factor	5	16.1	7 th
Difficulty in getting children’s voice on such issues during news coverage	18	58.1	4 th
There is no budget for child rights protection	2	6.5	9 th
Details are not allowed to be aired	3	9.7	8 th

Source: Researcher’s computations from survey data (2023)

Table 3 presents specific perceived hindrances to the reporting of child rights issues by the two radio stations under review. Eight items are identified in the case of Human Rights Radio, while nine were noted in the case of Radio Nigeria, Abuja, and the respondents were required to indicate all points that reflect their choices. Beginning with Human Rights Radio, out of the 51 respondents, 48 persons or 94.1% selected ‘Lack of adequate funds’, so it is rated 1st out of the seven items; then 45 persons or 88.2% selected ‘Lack of dedicated staff for handling child right issues’, so it is ranked 2nd; 42 persons or 82.4% selected ‘Inadequate support from government’ so it is ranked 3rd; 39 persons or 76.5% selected ‘Too many other programmes becloud the investigation and airing of child right issues’ so it is ranked 4th. In the same vein, ‘Language, religion, and cultural barriers’ is ranked 5th; ‘Poor level of children education’ is ranked 6th; ‘There is no free education for the girl child’ is ranked 7th; and ‘No budget for child rights’ is ranked 8th out of 8th.



In the case of Radio Nigeria, Abuja, 29 persons or 93.5% of the total 31 respondents selected ‘Lack of finance from government to facilitate investigation and reportage of child right issues’ as the most significant problem/challenge, so it is ranked 1st of eight. Similarly, ‘lack of dedicated personnel to cover the news’ ranked 2nd; ‘Investigations into child right issues are often frustrated so reportage is often shallow’ ranked 3rd; ‘Difficulty in getting children’s voice on such issues during news coverage’ ranked 4th; ‘Poor level of education on the part of the audience, especially the children, which hinders them from understanding the radio messages’ ranked 5th; ‘Language, religion, and cultural barriers’ ranked 6th; ‘Time factor’ ranked 7th; ‘Details are not allowed to be aired’ ranked 8th, and ‘There is no budget for child rights protection’ ranked 9th out of 9. Comparatively, lack of adequate funds and lack of dedicated staff for handling child right issues constitute the biggest obstacles to the reporting of child right issues across the two radio stations, as the respondents had indicated.

(iv) Regular coverage of news about child rights abuses in Nigeria by the two radio stations

Questionnaire Item 8 in Section B relates to whether the two radio stations covered news about child right abuses in Nigeria regularly and data obtained are presented as follows,

Table 4: The two radio stations cover news about child rights abuses in Nigeria regularly

Response category\Response group	Staff of Human Rights Radio, Abuja	Staff of Radio Nigeria, Abuja
Strongly Agree (SA)	5	2
Agree (A)	-	1
Uncertain (U)	13	6
Disagree (D)	20	15
Strongly Disagree (SD)	13	7
Total	51	31

Source: Researcher’s computations from survey data (2023)

The data in Table 4 show that out of the 51 persons surveyed among staff of Human Rights Radio, Abuja, 5 persons or 9.8% only strongly agreed that Human Rights Radio, Abuja, covered news about child rights abuses in Nigeria regularly; 13 persons or 25.5% were uncertain, and a combined 33 persons or 64.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Similarly, whereas some 3 persons or 9.7% of the respondents from Radio Nigeria, Abuja, agree or strongly agreed to the point under review, a combined 22 persons or 71% disagreed or strongly disagreed while 6 persons or 19.4% were undecided. Comparatively, greater proportions of the respondents from each radio station disagreed or strongly disagreed that the radio stations covered news about child rights abuses in Nigeria regularly.

(v) Government interferences and the radio stations’ reportage of child rights issues

The study in Questionnaire Item 9 inquired from the respondents whether government interferences sometimes affects the way the radio stations reported child rights issues to the public. Relevant data obtained are presented in Table 5.



Table 5: Government interferences sometimes affected the way the two radio stations report child rights issues to the public

Response category\Response group	Staff of Human Rights Radio, Abuja		Staff of Radio Nigeria, Abuja	
Strongly Agree (SA)	10	19.6%	8	25.8%
Agree (A)	-	-	11	35.5%
Uncertain (U)	13	25.5%	3	9.7%
Disagree (D)	16	31.4%	5	16.1%
Strongly Disagree (SD)	12	23.5%	4	12.9%
Total	51	100%	31	100%

Source: Researcher’s computations from survey data (2023)

The data in Table 5 show that out of the 51 persons surveyed among staff of Human Rights Radio, 10 persons or 19.6% strongly agreed to the point expressed in Item 8 of the questionnaire, 13 persons or 25.5% were undecided, and then a combined 28 persons or 54.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed that government interferences sometimes affected the way the radio station reported child rights issues to the public. In contrast, some 19 persons or 61.3% of the total 31 respondents from staff of Radio Nigeria agreed or strongly agreed to the point under discussion; whereas only 29% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Being a public radio station, Radio Nigeria, Abuja, comes under direct control of the Federal Government, no wonder greater percentage of the respondents agreed that government’s influence on Radio Nigeria is more noticeable than on Human Rights Radio which of course is a privately owned radio station.

DISCUSSION

It was found that the Human Rights Radio reported child rights issues more frequently than the FRCN, Abuja. The result of the tested hypothesis one yielded the conclusion that Human Rights Radio, Abuja, gave greater coverage to child rights issues than their Radio Nigeria counterpart.

The above finding of this study differs from the result of a baseline survey report on media and child protection in Uganda by Panos East Africa (2013) which sampled 24 radio stations and six television stations and found that the media gives poor coverage of child right issues. The authors note that the said poor coverage was linked to factors such as lack of requisite skills by journalists for reporting child right issues, the media still prefers adults to speak for the wards under their care, and inadequate funding available to the media to follow up on stories on child rights and protection, among others.

The second research question/objective/hypothesis of the study sought to identify the challenges faced by the two selected radio stations in their reportage of child abuse and neglect. The result of the hypothesis test affirmed the proposition. The data got support the affirmation that the two radio states face some challenges that constrain their reportage of child rights issues. Some of the challenges faced by the Human Rights Radio include lack of fund, lack of dedicated and trained staff for handling child rights issues, inadequate support from the government, poor level of children education on child rights, language, religion and cultural barriers, etc. On the side of the FRCN, their reportage is constrained by too many other programmes competing for the limited air



time, difficulty in getting the voices of the abused children, details are not allowed, lack of support from the government, lack of well trained staff for handling child rights issues and government interference etc. It can be seen that the challenges are similar but differ slightly in the area of other programmes competing for the limited air time. In this area, the Human Rights Radio has advantage over the FRCN.

Just as the current study established the relevance of radio in educating Abuja residents on child right issues, other studies have reported similar findings though about other forms of media. For example, the study by Awosola and Omoera (2008) on Nigeria's experience in child rights and the media, which focused on three television channels – Nigeria Television Authority, Edo Broadcasting Services and Independent Television – found that, though the visual media has helped to create awareness on child right issues, the awareness has not translated into the desired change in attitude of the people to child right abuse and neglect. In contrast, the findings of the current study seemed to suggest that the radio had been an effective means of not only educating the residents in the study area on the subject matter, but also to motivate them to act to ensure the rights of children are not violated by adults as well as to ensure that cases of child abuse are reported to the appropriate authorities.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result, the study concludes that the findings indicate that Human Rights Radio provided more extensive and specific coverage of child rights issues compared to FRCN. This included exposing acts of child rights abuse and neglect more frequently, thereby demonstrating a stronger commitment to raising awareness about these critical issues. Despite these efforts, both stations significantly contributed to educating Abuja residents about child rights, underscoring the vital role of radio as a medium for advocacy and public enlightenment. However, challenges such as resource limitations, editorial constraints, and potential gaps in journalist training continue to hinder optimal reportage. To enhance the impact of their work, it is essential for these radio stations to address these challenges, prioritize consistent and in-depth coverage, and foster stronger collaborations with. Based on the findings, the study makes the following recommendations: as a national radio network with the widest of coverage, Radio Nigeria, Abuja, should take practical measures to ensure it gives regular coverage to child right issues than it currently does. This will ensure that the messages about upholding child rights, protecting children from child abuse, and reporting cases of such abuse to appropriate authorities gets to the largest number of listeners possible. Since radio plays a crucial role in educating Abuja residents on child right issues, the relevant stakeholders should help the two radio stations overcome the challenges that limit their reportage of same issues; topmost of which are lack of funds to conduct and conclude robust investigation into suspected cases of child right abuse and lack of trained staff dedicated to gathering information about, preparing and presenting reports on child right issues.



Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and 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.

Onwudi, Augustina conceived the study, including the design, collated the data, and Oyeleke Adeola handled the analysis and interpretation, also initial manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of data and materials.

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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