Significance of Satellite Television Viewing Centres in Makurdi, Nigeria

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Abstract
Satellite television centres in Nigeria have grown with the popularity of foreign football, especially international competitions. This study identifies the social significance especially the uses and abuses of satellite television centres in Makurdi town. Also, the study identifies the strategy that is effective in curbing the abuses of satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi town. Using a survey of two hundred and twenty (220) respondents who patronise satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi, the study finds among other things that: satellite television viewing centres are used to advance sporting interests, however they are abused when criminals use these centres as meeting places and hideouts. Furthermore, the study finds that the dominant use of satellite television viewing centres to televise football matches leads to neglect of local football teams and this has far reaching implications. The study recommends that proprietors should regulate entry and the police force should step up monitoring of these centres to ensure order and rule of law. Also, proprietors of these centres should explore the profitability of such centres for other purposes such as music videos as an additional income earner to football. Finally, the Nigerian government should utilise the huge gathering of youth at satellite television viewing centres as an opportunity to create awareness on a wide range of issues.
Keywords: Satellite Television, Viewing Centres, Football, Use, Abuse

1. Introduction

Satellites are digital devices that are launched into space and they orbit the earth for various reasons. One of these reasons is communication. The use of communication satellites to propagate television signals has given birth to satellite television. Charles (2008:23) writes that when communication satellites are used to broadcast television and radio signals they are referred to as Broadcast Service Satellites (BSS). Communication satellites are used for other purposes as well, not just television broadcasting. Moroney and Hamilton (2005:3) write that "Mobile operators are also using satellite for their transmission networks." Furthermore, satellites are also used to provide internet services in many African countries including Nigeria. Hamamoto (2004:3) captures the essence of satellite communication when he states that,

> Satellite communication is used in a number of fields e.g. to provide trunk links for communication providers, private networks for corporations, and temporary communication systems in disasters. In these situations their advantages include wide coverage, flexible network configuration and anti-disaster capability.

The use of satellites for communication has grown in Nigeria to a point that Moroney and Hamilton (2005:1) identify the dependence of African countries on satellite technology. They state thus,

> African countries have a very high dependency on satellite, with the majority of countries more than 95% of international traffic carried by satellite…, the existing satellites above Africa are heavily subscribed. There is simply not much capacity left, and it is increasingly difficult to lease capacity on them.

Satellite television has become very popular in many parts of Nigeria through the numerous viewing centres dotted across the country. Thus, it is pertinent to take stock and ascertain the uses and abuses of satellite television viewing centres. This position originates from the basic assumption that everything in life that has a good side to it also has its disadvantages.

In the early days when satellite television was introduced in Nigeria, it was largely an elitist phenomenon. Only people who were wealthy could afford the technology. However, a lot has changed as the years have passed by. Satellite television has seeped into the nooks and crannies of Nigeria via viewing centres. People at the grass roots and those in urban slums pay an entrance fee to enable them view programmes on satellite television stations. In other words, viewing centres have increased access to programmes on satellite television. Were it not for satellite television, these programmes on satellite television stations would have remained the preserve of the movers and shakers of society. Indeed, satellite television has increased access of Nigeria's poorest groups to television via viewing centres. Wedell and Tudesq (1997:32) support this assertion when they state that,

> … despite state control of television exerted almost everywhere in Africa, the development of commercial channels and the arrival of satellite networks are bringing about a beneficial, pluralist development and are opening up the ordinary citizen's horizon to images from the whole world.

Access to satellite television via viewing centres has brought the needed competition which is lacking in the Nigerian broadcasting. Healthy competition is said to improve efficiency of the various television stations involved in the race. Writing on the competitive spirit which has been induced by satellite television, Wedell and Tudesq (1997:12) note that,

> Television in Africa has to confront three types of competition: from other national media, from the media of other African countries, and from foreign television networks relayed by satellite…. The competition from satellite networks is the toughest for national television companies.

Very often, satellite television has an edge over national television stations. The Nigerian situation is a glaring example. As a result viewers are often attracted to satellite television. This explains the high patronage of satellite television viewing centres. A number of reasons make satellite television attractive and preferred. Wedell and Tudesq (1997:18) identify these reasons when they state that,

> … certain countries broadcast satellite channels on national television, or authorise private channels…. They are popular because of the good reception conditions and the quality of the picture.

The very nature of satellite television makes it alluring and this has facilitated the rise of viewing centres in many parts of Nigeria. This study locks in on these viewing centres with a view to identifying its uses and abuses.

2. Conceptual clarification
2.1 Satellite television
Satellite television is a type of signal transmission where by broadcasting stations on earth send signals into space to satellites which are orbiting the earth. According to Nice and Harris (2005) these satellites then re-transmit the signal back to the earth so that people in any part of the world can pick up the signal with appropriate equipment.

Satellite television signals are broadcast from satellites that are in orbit. The signals consist of three different stages: the first part is the original broadcaster at the television station. It sends off radio waves from that station into the air. The second part of the system is the satellite orbiting in the sky. It receives the signal and magnifies it while broadcasting to back to earth. The third part of the system is the receiver placed on roofs of buildings and other places to capture the signals that are viewed through the television.

From the above Priddy (2010) highlights the three stages that are involved in satellite television transmission. Each of these stages are important in the process. On the whole, if communication satellites were not orbiting the earth, satellite television would not have been possible.

2.2   Communication Satellites
A communication satellite is an advanced technological device which is designed on earth and launched into space. Once the communication satellite is in space it receives television signals and other signals and relays the signals back to the earth. Charles (2008:8) writes that,

> Communication satellites facilitate communication between two stations and also between television station and viewers via the needed reception gadgets.

Furthermore, Charles (2008:9) notes that communication satellites are useful for the following reasons:
- *The coverage area of a satellite greatly exceeds that of a terrestrial system.*
- *Transmission cost of a satellite is independent of the distance from the coverage area.*
- *Satellite to satellite communication is very precise.*
- *Higher band width are available for use.*

2.3   Satellite Television Viewing Centres.
Satellite television viewing centres are places where people pay an admittance fee and are allowed entry for the purpose of viewing programmes on selected satellite television stations. Most of these are football programmes. These centres have become very popular in Nigeria due to the popularity of international football. Owners of these centres advertise upcoming football matches, times and admittance fees on chalkboards.

3. Statement of the problem
Satellite television in Nigeria is no longer an elitist phenomenon with the many viewing centres that are found in various parts of the country. The number of people who patronise these viewing centres raises pertinent questions in the minds of many observers. Thus, there is need to find out the social significance of satellite television viewing centres, firstly identifying the benefits of these centres in the lives of people who patronise these places. Conversely, the abuses or detrimental uses of satellite television viewing centres are also what the study investigates.

4. **Research questions**
- What are the uses of satellite television viewing centres among residents of Makurdi town?
- What are the abuses of satellite television viewing centres among residents of Makurdi town?
- What solutions/strategies are effective in curbing the abuses of satellite television viewing centres among residents of Makurdi town?

5. Theoretical framework
5.1 Uses and Gratifications theory
The uses and Gratifications theory examines why people use specific media and what they gain from the use of these media (this is the gratification component). Basically, Uses and Gratifications theory identifies and explains the appeal of certain media, and why members of the audience choose one medium and disregard others. For example, a study in Uses and Gratifications may hypothetically seek to establish why satellite television viewing centres have become so popular in Nigeria. This is indeed the intention which this study seeks to accomplish. Similarly, Katz, et.al., (1974:510) note that,

> Scholars who adhere to this concept (uses and gratifications) are concerned with: (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities, resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones.

The uses and gratifications theory is based on the idea that the mass audience plays an active role in making choices about what media to use. This mass audience is goal directed in their media use behavior- in the way they use media. In other words, they use media according to the desires which they have. The experience one gets from media depends upon their individual use of specific media and the satisfaction they derive from using such media- this is also referred to as gratification, hence the uses and gratification theory. The uses and gratifications theory is based on the following assumptions stated by Blumler and Katz (1974: 23): that the audience is active in its mass media use; each audience member discerns which medium will serve their needs; media outlets compete with other sources of gratification since media cannot satisfy all human needs; empirical assessments can determine the intention of media users when they express motives and; inferences about the cultural relevance of media should be kept and not extended to popular culture.

These assumptions (tenets) are similar to the conceptual framework of the uses and gratifications theory developed by Lundberg and Hulten (1968) when they studied the theory. According to Katz, et.al., (1974:511), the framework for the uses and gratifications theory is as follows:

> (1) The audience is conceived of as active, i.e., an important part of mass media use is assumed to be goal directed.
> (2) In the mass communication process much initiative in linking need gratification and media choice lies with the audience member. This places a strong limitation on theorizing about any form of straight-line effect of media content on attitudes and behavior.
> (3) The media compete with other sources of need satisfaction.
> (4) Many of the mass media use can be derived from data supplied by individual audience members themselves

The uses and gratifications theory originated from research about media effects. In the early days it was a re-defined approach. Instead of thinking about what media does to people, the reverse was conceived- what do people do with the media and in what ways. Katz (1959:2) aptly puts it when he writes thus,

> … it is the program that asks the question, not 'What do the media do to people? but 'What do people do with the media?

Toward this end early media effects research sought to identify the motives for media use, especially the selection patterns which people use for various media. Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974:20) blazed the trail of research into the uses and gratifications approach and found that people may use media for various reasons especially to,

> To match one's wits against others, to get information and advice for daily living, to provide a framework for one's day, to prepare oneself culturally for the demands of upward mobility, or to be reassured about the dignity and usefulness of one's role.

Furthermore, according to Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch (1974: 512), the purpose of the uses and gratifications theory is to: explain how people use media in order to serve their needs; to understand the reasons for particular media behavior among people and; an identification of the outcomes derived from the needs, motives and behavior which people have.

5.2 Criticisms of the Uses and Gratifications Theory
The uses and gratifications theory is said to be parsimonious in nature. This means that media use is followed by
an effect (i.e. gratification). If this effect is not derived then there will not be media use in the first place.
Ruggiero (2000) finds that although the uses and gratifications theory is straight forward, there are complications
at various stages. Wimmer and Dominick (1994:22) write that there are complications in:

> *(a) media selection initiated by the individual;*
> *(b) expectations for media use that are produced from individual predispositions,*
> *social interaction, and environmental factors; and*
> *(c) active audiences with goal-directed media behavior.*

Secondly, Elliot (1974) writes that the uses and gratifications theory is too individualistic, because it focuses on
audience consumption. Since the theory is individualistic, it makes limits the studies to the sample population. In
other words, it becomes difficult to predict beyond the people studied.

5.3 Relevance of the uses and gratifications theory
The relevance of the uses and gratifications theory to this study is encapsulated in the findings of Ruggiero
(2000:3) when he notes that,

> *…. if a chief tenet of Uses and Gratification theory of audience behavior is that*
> *media use is selective and motivated by rational self-awareness of the individual's*
> *own needs and an expectation that those needs will be satisfied by particular types*
> *of media and content.*

It follows that as new forms of media are developed, new ways of usage and gratification will continue to
evolve. Satellite television is indeed a new form of media. It may be television but the very fact that it is
television "blasted" across continents via satellite gives it a "newness." Furthermore, it has certain potentials
which other forms of television do not have. This makes it unique and puts forth the notion that it might serve
particular needs among the audience.

In most parts of Nigeria (especially urban slums and rural areas), viewing centres are very popular. At
these viewing centres, people have access to satellite programmes for a fee. The mere existence of these satellite
television viewing centres supports accessibility to satellite television programmes. Thus the uses and
gratifications theory is relevant to this study because it attempts to identify the uses which these satellite
television viewing centres are put to and the satisfaction that is derived by people who visit these viewing
centres.

6. Proliferation of satellite television in Nigeria
When satellite television was first introduced in the early 1990s, home dishes were expensive metal units that
took up a huge amount of space in the compound. In those early years of satellite television, only the most elite
and dedicated television enthusiasts ever went through the trouble and expense of putting in their own dish. In
other words, satellite television at that stage was an elitist phenomenon in Nigeria. Then, Satellite television was
hard to get as it was the preserve of the "haves." The "have nots" had no place in owning or viewing satellite
television.

This has changed since then and in many Nigerian cities today there are compact satellite dishes
perched on rooftops all over the place. Even in rural areas beyond the reach of local Nigerian television stations
there are satellite television viewing centres. Major satellite television companies in Nigeria such as DSTV,
Stron, HiTV, etc., are luring in more consumers every day with movies, sporting events and news from around
the world and the promise of high movie-quality picture and sound. At this stage satellite TV technology is still
evolving, it has already become a popular choice for many television viewers in Nigeria because the use of
viewing centres has increased affordability and accessibility to the programmes on satellite television stations.
Satellite television is a preferred form of television because it connects continents and indeed the entire world
without heavy dependence on the use of cables and other wire connections. Furthermore the stations available on
satellite television are a welcome shift from local television stations. Igbokwe (2009:20) says that,

> *…, with the growth of satellite television (which has long been preferred throughout*
> *the African continent due to the expensive nature of laying ground cables). The*
> *substantial uptake in Pay TV in Nigeria has been attributed to the broadcast of*
> *European football.*

The advent of European football in the psyche of Nigeria's soccer enthusiasts has further encouraged the growth
of satellite television. Nigerian home videos too have found their way on satellite television channels in the same
way religious groups are using satellite television as a means of evangelization. Even Deeper Life Christian
Ministry which once frowned at the use of television have embraced the technology and launched their own
satellite television channel. Mohammed (2003:5) adds that,

> *For sports fans and movie goers, the advent of Super Sport and M-Net was a big relief and an alternative to the Nigerian Television Authority which is battling with obsolete equipments and brain drain. Nigerians no longer depend on NTA for international sports meets or events as they have multiple channels on the DSTV to choose from. Apart from giving the viewer the desired satisfaction or value for his money, the DSTV channels are more reliable to the Nigerian viewer than the NTA which finds it difficult to transmit live events in most cases. Therefore, to the Nigerian viewer, there is value for money to register with DSTV than remain glued to the NTA which can disappoint him when it matters most.*

The popularity of satellite television in Nigeria's nooks and crannies cannot be separated from the "craze" among Nigerians for European football. For one reason or other, many Nigerians prefer to watch European football and these matches are brought to them primarily via satellite television. Satellite television has further broken the monopoly held by the government owned television station- the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). With satellite television, viewers had a wider variety of choices. Igbokwe (2009:4) recounts Nigeria's slow but steady drift to satellite television which is often referred to as pay television thus,

> *Until the early-to-mid 1990s, when private operators began to come on-stream, the provision of radio and television (broadcast) services was monopolised by the State and Federal Governments. Nigeria now has one of the vibrant media sub-sectors on the continent with the licensing of private radio and TV stations have been licensed, and there is substantial take-up of pay TV.*

Although the NTA is regarded as the largest television network on the African continent, its presence has not stopped the proliferation of satellite television on in many local communities in Nigeria and indeed throughout Africa. There is something about satellite television which attracts the audience to it- a service which is not provided by the NTA with its network of stations across Nigeria. According to Igbokwe (2009:20) the NTA has a network of 97 stations across the country. Wooley and Southwood (2008:32) recount the growth of satellite television on the African continent when they note that,

> *Television broadcasting outlets have also increased steeply; out of 40 markets surveyed in Sub-Saharan Africa, the report finds nearly half (18) have licensed Free-To-Air TV channels…. Growing cable and satellite subscriber bases suggests more people are willing and able to pay for services.*

When mention is made of the fact that people on the African continent are "willing and able" to pay for services, there is need to clarify the cost of these services vis a vis the fact that there is extreme poverty on the African continent. The use of satellite television viewing centres has reduced the cost of satellite television and made it accessible even to the average rural dweller in many parts of Nigeria. These satellite television viewing centres are often powered by generators and people pay a minimal fee to collective view particular programmes on satellite television stations. Adetunji (2010:6) aptly captures the scenario of satellite television viewing centres in Nigeria when he says,

> *Watching English Premier League (EPL) matches has caught the fancy of most Nigerian youths (especially males) ever since the proliferation and increasing affordability of Satellite Television or Pay TV broadcast in Nigeria. On days when games are to be played (usually weekends and sometimes Wednesdays) these fans make their ways to viewing centres (halls, mostly make-shift, where matches from foreign football leagues are shown live at affordable rates) in their neighbourhoods to support their favourite teams or watch the games of rival teams.*

The popularity of satellite television cannot be understated. Mohammed (2003:5) adds his voice in support of the growth of satellite television in Nigeria when he writes that,

> *Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) has also taken over the airwaves with its stations such as Channel O, Super Sport M-Net, Movie Magic and many more. Today Nigeria's television stations do not attract the attention of the viewer than these foreign firms…. In fact, Nigerians prefer watching M-Net channels than NTA or local stations.*

7. Benefits of satellite television in Nigeria

Satellite television offers a number of advantages to the populace. In the first place, if satellite television were not beneficial in developing countries such as Nigeria, it will not be as popular as it is. Wedell and Tudesq (1997: 6) note that,

> *…, the development of commercial channels and the arrival of satellite networks are bringing about a beneficial, pluralist development and are opening up the ordinary citizen's horizon to images from the whole world.*

In a multilingual country like Nigeria, the many tribes and languages in the country can have a basis for expression. Satellite television offers a seemingly "limitless" number of channels which can be used to cater for the various linguistic groups in Nigeria. Adding credence to this point, Wedell and Tudesq (1997: 6) write that,

> *In the satellite era, the possibilities for multilingual programming are becoming technically more feasible, but remain financially prohibitive…., the digital revolution should bring about the development of multilingual channels.*

Satellite television has continued relevance in war torn countries. In these places where much of the broadcasting infrastructure is destroyed by violence people in the area can turn to satellite televisions stations while the local stations are rebuilt. Southwood (2008: 4) writes that, "satellite is the most immediate means available for creating a national backbone." This happens when conflict has left no existing broadcast structures to rely upon. This is because satellite television is essentially a wireless connection unlike other forms of television broadcasting which rely heavily on the use of wires and fibre optic cables. In conflict prone areas in Nigeria such as Jos the reports from satellite television stations can be compared with local stations in ascertain the level of truth, thus the real situation.

The arrival and growing popularity of satellite television is expected to spark competition from local television stations which produce lack luster programmes that leave much to be desired. Wedell and Tudesq (1997: 21)

> *Television in Africa has to confront three types of competition: from other national media, from the media of other African countries, and from foreign television networks relayed by satellite.*

For a very long time, these television stations in Nigeria (notably the NTA) have operated in a monopoly which has not been healthy for the growth and development of television broadcasting in Nigeria. With satellite television, the world of high quality broadcasting is opened to the average Nigeria and this has far reaching consequences on the patronage of local stations. With satellite television, local stations are propped to improve on the quality of programmes they produce as well as their efficiency. Wedell and Tudesq (1997: 21) delve more into the issue of competition when they state that,

> *The competition from satellite networks is the toughest for national television companies. For diplomatic reasons, and to encourage cooperation, certain countries broadcast satellite channels on national television, or authorise private channels. Imported programmes can have destabilising effects. They are popular because of the good reception conditions and the quality of the picture. However, the subjects raised, the scenery, the relations between men and women, between young and old, can conflict with local traditions. These effects are, of course, variable, and depend on age, social environment and the country itself.*

Furthermore, satellite television frees television of the political constraints which are derived from the fact that television in Nigeria is largely owned by government. Arguments can be put forth that there are private stations in Nigeria, but what level of freedom do these stations have. Regulatory bodies set up by the Nigerian government such as the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) are still answerable to the government of the day. Thus, local stations in Nigeria suffer a number of limitations which satellite television stations are not encumbered with.

On the whole, Holla-Maini (2005:1) notes the following advantages of satellite communication and indeed satellite television, thus,

- *Ubiquitous coverage with one main piece of infrastructure.*
- *Can deliver the same data (e.g. TV, radio, etc) to many people at the same time.*
- *Don't require a physical connection to enable reception.*
- *Existing capacity for faster solutions.*
- *Are not disabled by natural disasters.*

With satellite television, vast areas are covered without the need to build many earth stations. Also, absence of the need for wires makes satellite television devoid of problems caused by vandals. Furthermore, rainstorms may interfere with the reception of satellite television programmes but once the rain it over, reception is restored because the water falling from the sky which causes interference is no longer there. The many natural disasters which befall many parts of Nigeria cannot affect satellite television broadcasting.

8. Related empirical studies
8.1 An African Al-Jazeera? Mass Media and the African Renaissance
Satellite television plays an important role in ensuring that people on the African continent have access to mass media. There is a need to break the dominant hegemonic model of broadcasting which is present not only in Nigeria but on the African continent as a whole. Satellite television may be effective in more ways than one in establishing a different and more effective model of broadcasting in the entire African continent. In the study, "An African Al-Jazeera? Mass Media and the African Renaissance," Fiske de Gouveia (2005) explores the need

for media pluralism in Nigeria which is essential for good governance and for the benefit of the entire African continent. Using a survey and analysis of the Al-Jazeera and indeed the station as a case study, Fiske de Gouveia (2005) finds among other things that satellite television improves access to mass media by people on the African continent. In many African countries, existing structures which impede access to mass media are by-passed by the presence of satellite television.

African countries are in dire need of effective media because they cannot cope with democratization, prosperity, or carry on with other countries in the world as equals. However, it should be noted that in Africa the development of media pluralism (both print and broadcast media) has been difficult. As a result, the African media have struggled to make positive contributions to the political, economic and social needs of the continent, yet to no avail. Fiske de Gouveia (2005) observes that an indigenous pan-African broadcaster could help to redress this quickly, yet to date such a project has received scant attention from policymakers and stakeholders. This proposed indigenous pan-African broadcaster is expected to have the independence which Al-Jazeera has in order to be effective. Based on findings in the study, Fiske de Gouveia (2005:32) aptly notes that,

> *Satellite television and internet websites, although favouring the urbanised elite, will become more important with time. Many rural villages in Africa already have some access to satellite television.*

The conclusion reached by Fiske de Gouveia (2005:32) is very pertinent. In the past satellite television was perceived as an elitist phenomenon. However, this is no longer the case. Indeed, satellite television is no longer an elitist urban phenomenon in Nigeria (and in many other African countries). People in rural areas as well as those who dwell in urban slums have a place in viewing satellite television programmes.

8.2 Pay-TV's potential in Africa and the Middle East

In the study, "Pay-TV's potential in Africa and the Middle East" Pyramid Research (2009) pays specific attention to pay television in Nigeria, South Africa and Saudi Arabia. Of these countries, pay TV in Nigeria is most relevant to this study, thus focus is directed to the results of the study of pay TV in Nigeria. However, on the whole the study made the following projection based on detailed surveys undertaken. Thus, using a survey of pay television in Nigeria, South Africa and Saudi Arabia, Pyramid Research (2009:1) projects that,

> *Over the next five years, we expect these positive changes in the market environment to improve pay-TV subscription adoption rates in the region, leading to an overall CAGR of 13% through 2013 and a total of 27.5m subscriptions by year-end 2013. This means the pay-TV market in Africa and the Middle East (AME) will enjoy the world's highest growth rate over the next five years.*
>
> *Although infrastructure shortcomings and limited content availability will continue to affect growth in the short term, we expect total regional pay-TV revenue to reach $8bn by 2013, almost double 2008 levels.*

The second projection presented above begs the question: How can pay TV revenue increase when there are infrastructure shortcomings and limited content availability? This is simply because the way pay television (which is mostly satellite television) is used on the Africa continent is unique. With viewing centres, even the rural populace has access to satellite television for an affordable fee.

According to the study the population in Nigeria is 12% of the total population in Africa and presents great potential for pay television because much of the market is not yet penetrated. More so certain factors make the Nigerian market favourable to pay television. In the first place, incomes in Nigeria is expected to increase. According to Pyramid Research (2009:7), "incomes in Nigeria will rise nearly 30% over the next five years, reaching $1,650 by 2013." Furthermore, 65% of the population in Nigeria is under 25 years of age. Young people are more prone to adopt technology such as pay television than the older population. Finally, competition between service providers will ensure an increase in the adoption rates. This competition will address the problems of affordability and build infrastructure to ensure reach and access to untapped markets. On the whole, the study by Pyramid Research (2009:13) made the following key findings:

> *…, pay-TV penetration in Africa and the Middle East will increase from 8% of households in 2008 to 11% in 2013, an 11% CAGR, while revenue rises from $4.5bn to $8.0bn.*
>
> *The main barriers to pay-TV adoption are the low incomes of many potential subscribers, poor or non-existent wireline infrastructure, lack of effective competition in some markets and too much competition from free-to-air alternatives in others, and the difficulty new players have faced in gaining access to premium content.*
>
> *New opportunities for pay-TV in the region are developing from regulatory actions aimed at awarding licenses to more players, the entry of new fixed operators keen to deploy copper or fiber-based networks to facilitate the provision of triple-play*

bundles, and the entry — albeit limited to date — of new mobile operators.

8.3 ICT provision to disadvantaged urban communities: A study in South Africa and Nigeria

Satellite television is indeed an Information and Communication Technology whose adoption in developing countries like Nigeria raises a lot of issues. Before mention is made of the people in the rural areas, there are disadvantaged groups even in urban communities. In the study, "ICT provision to disadvantaged urban communities: A study in South Africa and Nigeria" Akinsola, Herselmann and Jacobs (2005) attempt to develop a sustainable Information and Communication Technology (ICT) model in a Nigerian community, by evaluating ICT provision in South Africa's disadvantaged communities and comparing it with the Nigerian situation; to identify applicable models and service mechanisms; and, to identify pitfalls and risks. According to Jegede (2002:1), a breakdown of the statistics available on Nigeria shows the following: More than 55% of the people are female; the poverty rate is about 67,8%, the majority of the people (70%) lives in the rural areas, and over sixty per cent of the young (0-15) are under the age of 15. These statistics indicate that the majority of Nigerians fits the main focus of the Global Forum, which is to reach those who are yet to be reached (the class of the poor, the illiterate, women, the marginalized, and those living in remote areas) through one form of education or the other (whether formal or informal education). In particular, women and minority communities, such as nomads, fishermen, and unemployed youths are examples of these hitherto neglected communities in Nigeria

The research method used by, Akinsola, Herselmann and Jacobs (2005) was survey with the following instruments of data collection: semi-structured interview and non participant observation. Based on the data generated from the study, Akinsola, Herselmann and Jacobs (2005:35) made the following recommendations to policy makers in Nigeria in order to bridge the digital divide:

> *Provide an enabling environment and improve social amenities, such as stable electricity, telecommunication infrastructure, etc.*
> *Encourage ICT inflow, reduced taxes, or subsidies on ICT infrastructures (hardware/software), legal support to disadvantaged community ICT centre operators, etc.*
> *Encourage the use of public institutions (schools, libraries, hospitals research centres, etc.) in introducing ICT, while private entrepreneurs are encouraged to set up public access in the form of cyber cafés.*
> *Reform national educational systems to embrace the use of ICT by learners and teachers alike. Create ICT research centres and training institutions.*
> *Encourage the implementation of e-government, e-education, e-health, e-commerce, etc, which will enhance the use of ICT for information access.*
> *Create public awareness and training to enable the public to make use of the services offered by ICT centres.*

As a part of ICT, satellite television fits the picture presented above. Policy makers can encourage the penetration of satellite television through reduction of taxes, creaticng awareness and ensuring that the facilities that are necessary for operating satellite television such as electricity is constantly available.

9. Research Method

The research method used in this study is survey. According to Osuala (1982:181) surveys are of great advantage because they do more than just uncover data. Surveys also interpret, synthesize and inter-relate findings. In other words, surveys are usually thorough in approach. Surveys often use questionnaire or interview to collect data. Ada et al (1997:26) write that the questionnaire used in survey contains a set of questions that is asked to a large number of people in order to find out about their opinion. Survey is used to investigate problems which occur in real life settings. In surveys, large amounts of data are collected from a variety of respondents.

9.1 Population of the study

The population of this study is people who use (visit) satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi metropolis. Walter, Gall and Gall (1993:219) reveal what population means when they write that,

> *Researchers ideally would investigate all the persons to whom they wish to generalize their findings and these persons constitute a population.*

9.2 Sample size.

The sample size of this study is 220 respondents. The sample size for this study was determined based on purposive sampling. Some potential respondents were not willing to participate in the study. In this case they were left out.

9.3 Sampling techniques and procedure

The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. In order to arrive at a representative sample of respondents upon which copies of the questionnaire were administered, the twenty two (22) parts of Makurdi metropolis were identified. These various parts are: High level; Wadata; Wurukum; Low Cost North Bank; Low Cost Naka road; Akpehe; Demekpe; Ankpa Ward; Ankpa quarters; Kanshio; Old GRA; New GRA; Gyado villa; Judges Quarters; Lobi Quarters; Brewery; Logo (I and II); Idye; Angwan Jukun; Owner occupier; New Market and; Nyiman.

In order to achieve geographical spread, all the parts of Makurdi metropolis identified above were used. In each of these parts, the largest satellite television viewing centre were purposively selected. The larger the satellite television viewing centre, the more the people (viewers) it can cater for. Smaller satellite television viewing centres were not selected because they cater for few people. Thus the study identified twenty two (22) satellite television viewing centres in each of these parts of Makurdi metropolis. In each of the selected satellite television viewing centres, ten (10) respondents were purposively selected based on literacy level and willingness to complete the questionnaire. Thus, this study had two hundred and twenty (220) respondents.

10. Data Presentation

Two hundred and twenty (220) copies of questionnaire were administered on respondents in satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi town. All the copies of questionnaire were returned because the researcher waited for the respondents to fill the copies of questionnaire and return them. In other words, the respondents were not allowed to take the copies of questionnaire away and submit at a later date. Obviously the latter arrangement would have resulted in loss of copies of questionnaire.

Table I Uses of satellite television viewing centres.

s/n	Uses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Revenue generation.	20	9.09
2	Employment opportunity.	25	11.36
3	Entertainment purpose.	60	27.27
4	Sporting interests.	85	38.64
5	Enhance access by have-nots	30	13.64
	Total	220	100

Table I presents a distribution of respondents according to the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres. From the table, 20 respondents representing 9.09 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Revenue generation," 25 respondents representing 11.36 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Employment opportunity," 60 respondents representing 27.27 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Entertainment purpose," 85 respondents representing 38.64 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Sporting interests," while 30 respondents representing 13.64 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Enhanced access by have-nots."

Most respondents (by 38.64 percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Sporting interests," while few respondents (by 9.09 percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Revenue generation."

Table II Beneficial uses of satellite television viewing centres.

s/n	Beneficial uses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Spread political information.	25	11.36
2	Sell goods and services.	55	25
3	Recreational purposes.	95	43.18
4	Pass health information.	15	6.82
5	Avenues for interpersonal contact.	30	13.64
	Total	220	100

Table II presents a distribution of respondents according to the most significant potential benefits of using satellite television viewing centres. From the table, 25 respondents representing 11.36 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is to "Spread political information," 55 respondents representing 25 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is to "Sell goods and services," 95 respondents representing 43.18 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is for "Recreational purposes," 15 respondents

representing 6.82 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is to "Pass health information," while, 30 respondents representing 13.64 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is as "Avenues for interpersonal contact."

Most respondents (by 43.18 percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is for "Recreational purposes," while few respondents (by 6.82 percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is to "Pass health information."

Table III Negative uses of satellite television viewing centres.

s/n	Negative uses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Meeting point/hideout for criminals.	105	47.72
2	Encourage teenage/youth delinquency.	40	18.18
3	Sale of marijuana/prohibited drugs.	5	2.27
4	Verbal abuse/street talk.	20	9.09
5	Venue for prostitution.	50	22.72
	Total	220	100

Table III presents a distribution of respondents according to the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres. From the table, 105 respondents representing 47.72 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is as "Meeting point/hideout for criminals," 40 respondents representing 18.18 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is "Encouraging teenage/youth delinquency," 5 respondents representing 2.27 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is "Sale of marijuana/prohibited drugs," 20 respondents representing 9.09 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is "Verbal abuse/street talk," while 50 respondents representing 22.72 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is "Venue for prostitution."

Most respondents (by 47.72 percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is as "Meeting point/hideout for criminals," while few respondents (by 2.27 percent of the total population) indicate that the most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is "Sale of marijuana/prohibited drugs."

Table IV Strategy against abuses of satellite television viewing centres.

s/n	Strategy against abuses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Monitoring by police.	60	27.27
2	Banning sale of illicit substances.	10	4.55
3	Regulating entry.	80	36.36
4	Punishing offenders.	30	13.64
5	Regulating these centres.	40	18.18
	Total	220	100

Table IV presents a distribution of respondents according to the most effective strategy against abuses of satellite television viewing centres. From the table, 60 respondents representing 27.27 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most efficient strategy against abuse of satellite television viewing centres is "Monitoring by police," 10 respondents representing 4.55 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most efficient strategy against abuse of satellite television viewing centres is "Banning sale of illicit substances," 80 respondents representing 36.36 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most efficient strategy against abuse of satellite television viewing centres is "Regulating entry," 30 respondents representing 13.64 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most efficient strategy against abuse of satellite television viewing centres is "Punishing offenders," while, 40 respondents representing 18.18 (percent of the total population) indicate that the most efficient strategy against abuse of satellite television viewing centres is "Regulating these centres."

11. Findings

The most significant use of satellite television viewing centres is for "Sporting interests," Satellite television viewing centres are used most often for sporting interests. Thus satellite channels which televise sports competitions and matches are often subscribed to and people pay an admission fee to gain entrance into the satellite television viewing centre to view the match. Ordinarily these people cannot afford the subscription fees of satellite television channels, nor the television set and power supply to enable them view these matches.

The most significant beneficial use of satellite television viewing centres can be put to is for "Recreational purposes." The football matches which are viewed at satellite television viewing centres is a means of relaxation for many people. These people also use these Satellite television viewing centres to pursue their hobby, which is

football. As a recreation facility, satellite television viewing centres enable people to laugh and unwind from the many pressures they face in everyday life.

The most significant negative use of satellite television viewing centres is as "Meeting point/hideout for criminals." Everything that has a positive benefit also has a negative side to it. Satellite television viewing centres are not an exception. Since youth dominate the audience of satellite television viewing centres and most of these youth are from the streets, these satellite television viewing centres become meeting points for criminals and they may use the centre to discuss other issues apart from the sporting interests which these satellite television viewing centres perpetrate.

Football matches are most often viewed at satellite television viewing centres. The reason for being of satellite television viewing centres is football. If it were not for football, these satellite television viewing centres would not exist. In the world today, there are a lot of football event and since specific satellite channels televise these sporting events, satellite television viewing centres relay these for viewers.

The most efficient strategy against abuse of satellite television viewing centres is "Regulating entry." If there is a system of checking people on their entrance into Satellite television viewing centres, a lot of the violence and potential abuses of Satellite television viewing centres will be curbed. Currently, since there is no way of checking entry into these satellite television viewing centres criminals and other vagrants know that they can enter these satellite television viewing centres with any weapons they possess and behave badly. However, when these checks are put in place, deviants in society will realise that satellite television viewing centres must be orderly thus misbehaviour is not condoned in such places.

12. Conclusion

Satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi are mainly used to advance sporting interests. Other interests are relegated to the back ground. Were it not for these sporting interests, the satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi will not have come into existence. Apart from sporting interests, satellite television viewing centres inadvertently serve a recreational purpose. These satellite television viewing centres are away from home and a means by which people relax and unwind from the pressures of modern society.

Satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi are often used negatively when criminals use these satellite television viewing centres as a hide out and meeting point. Such negative uses (indeed abuses) of satellite television viewing centres are inadvertent; however, they can be curtailed. The sporting interests which satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi advance are mainly about football. Satellite television viewing centres have nothing to do with other sports. Football matches and competitions are the mainstay of satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi.

The European league is very popular among the audience of satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi. They may see other football competitions but a large number of them view European league competitions at these satellite television viewing centres. Due to the many football matches of the European league that are televised at satellite television viewing centres, there is a proliferation of fan clubs among viewers. Following this predicament, fan clubs have become very popular.

Satellite television viewing centres have become popular in Makurdi because of the high subscription cost of satellite television channels. These subscription fees are paid by proprietors of satellite television viewing centres who break even by charging an entrance fee. By doing so, they recover the high subscription fees and make profit for themselves.

Arguments often arise at satellite television viewing centres. When this happens, there is verbal abuse and other exchanges. Satellite television viewing centres are indeed very rowdy places. These satellite television viewing centres are not elitist because they offer access to satellite television to the lowest classes in society. The dominance of the European league football matches at satellite television viewing centres leads o neglect of local football teams. The European league is favourably showcased on satellite television, thus people prefer to view European league matches, much to the neglect of local football teams.

The most efficient strategy against the abuse of satellite television viewing centres is regulating entry. This means checking who enters satellite television viewing centres in order to prevent violent episodes. Earlier, this study found that satellite television viewing centres in Makurdi may be used as a hideout/meeting for criminals, thus regulating entry will discourage criminals from using these satellite television viewing centres for such purpose.

13. Recommendation.

The Nigerian government as well as non governmental agencies in Nigeria should take advantage of the large gathering of youth at satellite television viewing centres to disseminate vital information. For example, non governmental agencies involved in health promotion may use the opportunities may use the opportunity spread awareness against communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Agencies of the Nigerian government may use the opportunity to enlighten youth about the dangers of political thugs and violence during

election. The potential uses of satellite television viewing centres in this direction are limitless.

The Nigerian Police force should constantly monitor satellite television viewing centres because they are hideouts and meeting places for criminals. When the police monitor these satellite television viewing centres, criminals will realise that they should not use satellite television viewing centres for their nefarious activities. With increased police presence at satellite television viewing centres, criminals are also less likely to prevent proprietors of these satellite television viewing centres from regulating entry.

Proprietors of satellite television viewing centres should regulate entry into these centres by checking for possession of weapons. This way, they help the police make society safer and prevent the abuse of these satellite television viewing centres by criminals. Body searches may reveal the possession of metals and other weapons. There is largely no need for metal detectors and other sophisticated devices.

The Nigerian government should recognise the existence of satellite television viewing centres and promote it as viable business ventures. In recent times, these satellite television viewing centres have been established to serve specific needs in society. The government should work hard to support the continued existence of these satellite television viewing centres because they create jobs and are viable income earners.

Proprietors of satellite television viewing centres should realise that there are other profitable uses that satellite television viewing centres can be put to. Concentration on football may be profitable for these satellite television viewing centres but if these centres televise other programmes such as music videos, they might may extra profit.

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