



Preference for Television Stations among Inhabitants of Akropong Akuapem, Ghana

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Abstract

With little known about the preference for individuals in semi-rural areas' choice and preference for television (TV) stations and programmes, this study was carried out using a semi-rural town in Ghana, Akropong-Akuapem. The findings were that, the participants watched the TV for education, relaxation, entertainment and to aid studies/work. The significant factors determining TV choice included the overall image of the station, clear reception, station heritage, news coverage and kinds of programme. Again we found that respondents placed importance on health, religious/inspirational, current affairs business, relationship, educational, and educative programmes. The awareness of the programme, language of the programme, guest/panel members, content of programme and time were observed to have strong influence in the choice of TV programme.

Key words: Television, Consumer behavior , Akropong-Akuapem, Ghana,



Introduction

Television broadcasting in Ghana has seen some tremendous growth recently. Unlike the early 1990s where citizens had access only to the state own Ghana Television (GTV), Ghanaians are now exposed to about eight more free-to-air private stations including TV3, Metro TV, TV Africa and Crystal TV, together with pay TV stations like Multi TV, DSTV and Smart TV. The implication of such growth in the number of TV stations is the tight competition among the stations for viewership of their programmes. So what will make an individual choose one station over the others or a programme over the others? The answer to the above questions can be answered by applying the theory of consumer behavior particularly the factors influencing individual's choices.

The theory and studies on consumer behavior have shown that individuals' preferences and choice are influenced by the cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors (see Donthu and Gilliland, 1996; Babicz-Zielińska, 2007; Hasslinger et al, 2007; Kolter and Armstrong 2007; Munyoki and Odudoh, 2011; Ashaduzzaman et al, 2011; Abraham 2011; Idris, n.d. and Montgomery, n.d.). Although viewers' preference for TV stations and programmes have gained attention from researchers like Onah and Anyaruvu (1988), Aslam (2008) and (Munyoki and Odudoh, 2011), the focus has been on bigger towns/cities and urban centers with little known from the small and non urban towns. As a result, this study is meant to shed some light on the individuals' preference for TV stations and programmes in a semi-rural town, Akropong Akuapem in the Eastern region of Ghana.

Methodology

Study Area

Akropong-Akuapem, a semi rural town, is the district capital of the Akuapem North district in Ghana. The town which is about 58km from Accra, the capital of Ghana, is located at 5.97462(latitude in decimal degree), -0.08542 (longitudde in decimal degree) at an elevation/altitude of meters. The town has farming as the major occupation for the residence.



Sampling Size and Technique

The questionnaire was administered to the individuals who were willing to answer the questionnaires. By employing convenient sampling method, a total of 70 well answered questionnaires forming 68% of the targeted population were used. Data was analyzed using frequency distributions and chi square test with the help of SPSS.

Questionnaire

A mixture of both closed ended and open ended questions were asked to get the required information from participants. Questions asked included the age, level of education, reasons for watching TV, factors influencing their choice of a particular station and important programmes to participants among others. The likert scale was used to assess the extent to which some identified variables may influence participants' choice for a station and a programme.

Findings and discussion of Results

Socio-cultural Background

The findings of the study revealed that 47.9 percent were students either at the high school or college, 46.6 percent were employed in the formal sector and the remaining 5.5 percent employed at the informal sector. The age distribution was such that majority (45.9%) were aged between 16-25 years, followed by 41.9 percent who were between 26 and 35 years. 6.7 percent were between 36 and 45 years and 2.7 percent were both at 46-55 years and 55+ years. Apart from English which was spoken/understood by 93.2 percent of the respondents, the local languages that were spoken/understood by respondents were Twi with 86.7 percent, followed by Ga with 44.7 percent and Ewe with 40.4 percent. The Nzema language had the least respondents with 7.5 percent.

Motives for Watching TV

Respondents said they would watch TV for a number of reasons: for entertainment, to aid work/studies, get information and education. The full outcome is shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Motives for watching TV

Motive for watching TV	Valid Percentages
Entertainment	36.5
To aid work/studies	56.2
Information	56.2
Relaxation	57.4
Education	58.7

From the above table it is seen that majority of respondents (58.7%) watch television to educate themselves. Another 57.4 percent would watch TV for relaxation, and a minority (36.5%) will watch the TV because of entertainment. The present age has placed emphasis on education in the development of both individual and society at large. Since a number of educative programmes are telecast on TV it is therefore not surprise that majority of the respondents watch TV for education.

Factors Influencing the Choice of a TV Station

With another objective to establish the factors that influence the respondents' preference of TV stations, a number of variables were listed and respondents were to select the extent such variables may influence their decisions. The pertinent results are presented in the Table 3.

Table 3: Factors influencing the choice of a TV station

	No extent	Small extent	Moderate	Large extent	Very large extent	Chi square
Station overall image	16.4	7.5	29.9	16.4	29.9	12.627**
Clear reception	6.1	12.1	13.6	22.7	45.5	31.424***
Station heritage	10.6	7.6	34.8	22.7	24.2	16.121***
News coverage	4.5	4.5	19.4	34.3	37.3	33.075***
kind of programme	7.1	2.9	20.0	21.4	48.6	44.714***

Station presenters	3.1	12.3	24.6	16.9	43.1	29.538
Your status as a student/worker	12.9	8.6	28.6	22.9	27.1	11.000**
Type of business commercials run	14.7	25.0	22.1	16.2	22.1	2.588
Friends/colleague influence	8.7	34.8	31.9	10.1	14.5	21.217***
Family influence	17.1	25.7	22.9	27.1	7.1	9.286*
Teachers influence	24.6	20.3	21.7	15.9	17.4	1.652
Religious belief	23.2	8.7	29.0	15.9	23.2	8.464*

*, **, *** indicate level of significance at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

Table 3.1 above tell us that all the variables apart from the type of business commercials run on the TV influence the choice of TV by an individuals. The top most three factors that influence participants choice for TV were the clear reception, news coverage and the type of programme with each having more than 60% in the range of large extent and very large extent. Other variables like station heritage, station presenters, and the status of the individual matter a lot when it comes choosing a particular TV station to watch. This is explained by the fact that these variables in the range of large extent to very large extent, received more than 50% votes from respondents. Again to find out whether differences (between observed and expected) of the result was due to chance, the chi square test was employed and the results imply that clear reception, station heritage, news coverage, kind of programmes, station presenters and the status of the individual effect on individuals choice for a TV station were not due to chance. Influence of friends/colleague, religious and family had about 50% impact in the range of moderate to large extent. This again was confirmed by the chi-square test. The finding here confirms the findings by Munyoki and Odudoh, (2011). The implication is that, TV stations that have carved a good image for themselves, those with good reception, nice heritage and cover in their news interesting things are likely to have a good number of viewers than those that do not have.

Important Programmes

The respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance for a number of programmes and the results are tabulated below.

Table 4: Importance Level of TV programmes

Programmes	Least important %	Less important %	Important %	More important %	Most important %	Chi square %
Entertainment prog. like music	4.3	12.9	34.3	11.4	37.1	30.429** *
Current affairs prog. Like News	5.7	4.3	15.7	24.3	50.0	48.571** *
Educational programmes like documentaries	7.1	4.3	22.9	18.6	47.1	40.571** *
Sports programme	19.7	16.7	15.2	21.2	27.3	2.929
Inspirational/religious programmes	1.5	4.4	22.1	33.8	38.2	37.882** *
Business related programmes	10.1	11.6	24.6	27.5	26.1	9.768**
Health programme	1.4	1.4	18.6	27.1	51.4	60.571** *
Relationship programme	5.8	17.4	27.5	15.9	33.3	15.855**

** , *** indicate level of significance at 5% and 1% respectively

The level of importance attached to TV programmes as seen from table 4 informs that current affairs programme, health programme and inspirational/religious programme gained the top three positions with each having more than 70% in the range of more to most important. Other significant programs to participants were education, business, and relationship as they had above 50% in the range of more important to most important. The chi square test also confirmed the importance of such programmes at significant levels of 1% and 10%. This means one is more likely to watch TV when the programme is about business, current affairs

and health. Others programmes one would watch were educative and inspirational/religious related. The outcome here is similar to Nwokah et al, (2009) study on radio preference in Nigeria. Thus TV programmes that educate, inspire and give information about health may receive many viewers.

Factors that Affect the Choice of Aired Programmes

Respondents again were asked to state the extent to which selected factors influenced their preference for TV programme and the result is shown in the table 5 below.

Table 5: Factors that affect the choice of aired programmes

Factors	Not at all %	Small Extent %	Moderate %	Great extent %	Very Great Extent %	Chi square %
Awareness of programme	8.8	10.3	26.5	20.6	33.8	15.382***
Language of the programme	7.4	2.9	25.0	30.0	33.8	26.706***
Interactivity with the station	19.0	11.1	36.5	20.6	12.7	12.794**
Timing of the programme	7.5	13.4	32.8	19.4	26.9	13.821***
Number of commercial breaks in the programmes	16.9	18.5	13.8	23.1	27.7	13.821
Presenters of the programme	12.1	10.6	30.3	24.2	22.7	9.303*
The guest/panel members	7.7	13.8	30.8	23.1	24.6	10.923**
Preference of other students	26.2	15.4	33.8	16.9	7.7	13.385**
Influence of teachers	24.2	19.7	30.3	7.6	18.2	9.303*

Content of the programme	7.6	13.6	19.7	25.8	33.3	13.394**
Family influence	22.7	24.2	22.7	15.2	15.2	2.636
Friends influence	20.6	26.5	27.9	10.3	14.7	7.735
Religious influence	14.5	13.0	24.6	15.9	31.9	8.899*

*, **, *** indicate level of significance at 10%, 5% and 1% respectively

The results from table 5 indicate that the influence of family, friends, and number of commercials did not play a significant role in determining the kind of programme one would watch on the TV. While some of the remaining factors had a weak influence on choice of TV programme others had a strong influence. The weak factors were the influence of teachers, friends and religion. The strong factors influencing choice of TV programme were the awareness of the programme, language of the programme, guest/panel members and content of programme, time. Again, the significance level of the chi square test also confirms the extent that these variables influenced the choice of programme by respondents. Thus one is more likely to watch a TV programme so long as the person is aware of a programme with preferred contents, and understands the language and the time is favourable.

Top Three Stations

The study again sought to find out which TV stations would be ranked as the top most three respondents like to watch.

Table 6: Top three TV stations

Position	Station	Percentages
Number one	TV 3	48.9%
Number two	GTV	25.7%
Number three	Metro	10%

Table 6 above informs that majority (48.9%) ranked TV3 as their number one TV station followed by GTV with 25.7 percent and Metro followed third with 10 percent. The fact that the top three stations are free to air can mean that participants prefer the free to air stations to the pay TV stations.

Satisfaction for Number One TV Station

When asked to indicate the satisfaction they received from their number one TV station 36.4 percent indicated they get excellent broadcast from their number one TV station, 42.4 percent said it is very good and 21.2 percent indicated good (Table 7).

Table 7: Satisfaction for number one TV station

Satisfaction	Valid Percentages
Excellent	36.4
Very good	42.4
Good	21.2

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study has been able to establish very important aspects about watching TV in the Akropong Akuapem, a semi rural area in the Eastern region of Ghana. The findings were that, the participants watched the TV for education, relaxation, entertainment and to aid studies/work. A number of factors were found to influence the choice of TV station watched by participants. The significant factors determining TV choice included the overall image of the station, clear reception, station heritage, news coverage and kinds of programme. Another finding was that free to air stations TV 3, GTV and Metro TV were ranked the Top three stations preferred by respondents. Again we found that respondents placed importance on health, religious/inspirational, current affairs business, relationship, educational, and educative programmes. With regard to the choice of a particular programme on TV participants revealed that the awareness of the programme, language of the programme, guest/panel members, content of programme and time had strong influence in their choice of programme.

It is therefore recommended that TV programmes need to take into consideration a number of factors like the timing, the guest/panel, language used, the content and the number of commercial breaks among others if managements want to catch the attention of the general public.



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