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## ROLE OF BROADCAST MEDIA IN PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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### **Abstract**

This study examined the role of Nigerian broadcast media in promoting cultural diversity and inclusion, focusing on radio and television in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt. Anchored on Cultural Studies Theory and Social Responsibility Theory, the research adopted a quantitative survey design, with 600 respondents selected through multi-stage stratified random sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study found out that broadcast media moderately represent Nigeria's cultural mosaic, privileging major ethnic groups while minority cultures remain under represented. Media programming contributes to intercultural understanding and social cohesion, though stereotypes and limited coverage of marginalized groups reduce its effectiveness. Key challenges include commercial pressures, political influence, and insufficient training of media personnel, while opportunities exist in community and online platforms to amplify minority voices. Based on these findings, the study recommended adopting inclusive programming policies, culturally sensitive reporting, capacity-building for journalists, and regulatory incentives to support equitable representation. The research concludes that Nigerian broadcast media have significant potential to foster national unity, intercultural dialogue, and social cohesion, but realizing this potential requires deliberate efforts to balance representation, ethical responsibility, and public interest.

**Keywords:** Cultural Diversity, Inclusion, Intercultural Understanding, Nigerian Broadcast Media, Social Cohesion

### **Introduction**

Cultural diversity and inclusion have become fundamental themes in global communication and development discourses. The media, particularly the broadcast media, are central to how societies perceive, negotiate, and celebrate their cultural identities. In a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria-home to over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages-radio and television play vital roles in representing and shaping the nation's cultural mosaic (Ojebode & Onekutu, 2021). Through programming content, language use, and editorial framing, broadcast media act as both mirrors and molders of cultural realities (Okorie & Salawu, 2023).

Broadcasting in Nigeria has long been regarded as a tool for national development, unity, and cultural preservation. The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), in its 6th Edition of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code

(2019), mandates broadcasters to “seek, identify, preserve, and promote Nigeria's diverse cultures,” reinforcing the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive programming. This aligns with UNESCO's (2015) position that the media have a civic responsibility to promote cultural diversity as a foundation for social cohesion and intercultural understanding.

Yet, despite these normative obligations, Nigerian broadcast media continue to be criticized for limited and uneven cultural representation. Studies (Asemah, 2020; Ojebode & Onekutu, 2021; Okorie & Salawu, 2023) show that dominant ethnic groups receive more visibility, while minority cultures remain underrepresented, affecting the ways Nigerians perceive one another. Such imbalances weaken the media's potential to support intercultural understanding and social cohesion.

Cultural inclusion requires more than visibility; it demands equitable representation and participation in media narratives (Musa, 2022). Broadcast media provide an important platform for dialogue and collective identity-building, enabling citizens from different backgrounds to interact through shared narratives (Nwabueze & Ekwugha, 2020). Given Nigeria's complex socio-political history and recurring ethnic tensions, assessing how broadcast media promote cultural diversity, foster intercultural understanding, and identify challenges to inclusive broadcasting is essential.

This study therefore examines the extent to which Nigerian broadcast media portray the country's cultural mosaic, evaluates their influence on intercultural understanding and social cohesion, and identifies the challenges and opportunities affecting media efforts toward cultural diversity and inclusion.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The broadcast media play a pivotal role in shaping how cultures are represented and understood in Nigeria. However, a persistent gap exists between Nigeria's multicultural reality and its representation in radio and

television content. Although the NBC Broadcasting Code (2019) mandates cultural promotion and inclusivity, the practical implementation of these guidelines across media organisations remains inconsistent, and many outlets prioritize political or commercial interests over cultural responsibility (Asemah & Edegoh, 2018).

Evidence indicates that minority ethnic groups remain underrepresented or stereotypically portrayed in mainstream programming (Ojebode & Onekutu, 2021). Their languages and traditions receive limited airtime compared to dominant ethnic narratives. Ekeanyanwu and Obianigwe (2019) found that less than 10% of broadcast content showcases minority cultures, reflecting a structural imbalance that undermines cultural inclusion. Such patterns weaken intercultural understanding and restrict opportunities for dialogue among Nigeria's diverse groups (Nwabueze & Ekwugha, 2020).

In addition, political interference, weak regulatory enforcement, financial pressures, and inadequate training in culturally sensitive reporting hinder broadcasters from adopting inclusive programming (Musa, 2022; Okorie & Salawu, 2023). These limitations reduce the media's capacity to contribute to social cohesion.

The central problem, therefore, is the limited, imbalanced, and often exclusionary representation of Nigeria's cultural diversity in broadcast media.

### **Research Objectives**

The general objective of this study is to examine the role of Nigerian broadcast media in promoting cultural diversity and inclusion while the specific objectives are to:-

1. Find out how does Nigeria broadcast media represent and portray the country's cultural mosaic
2. Examine the influence of broadcast media programming on

intercultural understanding and social cohesion

3. Analyse the challenges and opportunities for broadcast media in promoting cultural diversity

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent do Nigerian broadcast media represent and portray the country's cultural mosaic?
2. What is the influence of broadcast media programming on intercultural understanding and social cohesion in Nigeria?
3. What are the challenges and opportunities for broadcast media in promoting cultural diversity and inclusion in Nigeria?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Cultural Diversity and Inclusion**

In the specific context of Nigeria, cultural diversity transcends a mere acknowledgment of the existence of over 250 ethnic groups. It encompasses the totality of the distinct traditions, languages, worldviews, artistic expressions, and social practices that constitute the nation's pluralistic fabric. According to Anasi (2021), cultural diversity in Nigeria is not a static relic but a dynamic and evolving phenomenon, constantly shaped by historical, social, and media-driven interactions. It involves the recognition and valuation of differences across ethnic lines, as well as those based on religion, region, and even generational perspectives. The portrayal of this diversity in media is not a neutral act; it is a process of selection and representation that can either affirm or negate the identities of various cultural groups.

Inclusion, however, moves beyond passive recognition. It is the active and deliberate process of ensuring that the diverse cultural voices, narratives, and perspectives are equitably integrated into the public sphere, particularly through influential channels like broadcast media. As defined by UNESCO (2023), inclusion in media entails "the proactive reflection of and engagement with a wide range of cultures and communities in media content,

production, and access, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and participation for all." In practical terms for Nigerian broadcasters, this means moving beyond tokenistic representations of minority cultures during festive periods to a sustained and meaningful integration of their narratives into daily news reporting, entertainment programming, and political discourse. The work of Oyesomi and Okorie (2022) emphasizes that true media inclusion challenges dominant hegemonies by creating space for marginalized voices, thereby transforming the media from a monologue of the powerful into a dialogue of the populace. The synergy between diversity and inclusion is therefore critical; a media landscape can be diverse in its subject matter yet fail to be inclusive if the representations are stereotypical, marginal, or framed through a dominant cultural lens.

### **Broadcast Media as a Conduit for Cultural Discourse**

The second core concept pertains to the unique position of broadcast media, specifically radio and television, in the Nigerian socio-cultural ecosystem. In a nation with significant literacy challenges and vast rural communities, broadcast media remain the most pervasive and accessible sources of information and entertainment (National Broadcasting Commission, 2022). Their audiovisual nature grants them a potent capacity to shape perceptions, reinforce norms, and construct social reality in a way that print and digital media often cannot match for large segments of the population.

### **Nigeria Broadcast Media and Social Cohesion**

Broadcast media are widely accepted as central to the construction of national cohesion in multi-lingual and post-conflict societies. Events and happenings portray these institutions not merely as information channels but as circuitous and structural players that shape collective identities, public trust, enlightenment and intergroup relations. Through agenda-setting and

framing functions, broadcast media influence how diversity, citizenship, and national belonging are defined and negotiated (Alakew & Ogbu, 2017). Existing scholarship underscores the importance of narrative construction in either mitigating or intensifying social fragmentation. Peace-oriented journalism, inclusive representation, and dialogic programming are identified as mechanisms through which media can reframe adversarial discourses into integrative national narratives. On the contrary, sensationalism, political party alignment, and ethnically framed reporting may reproduce structural inequalities and deepen societal cleavages

Mbazie and Asak (2015) suggest that from the Nigerian context further highlights the mediating role of broadcast media exposure, particularly among youths. Inclusive and value-driven content is associated with enhanced civic identity and national belonging, whereas divisive messaging risks eroding institutional trust and reinforcing identity-based tensions.

### **Empirical Review**

Chen (2025) examined regional dialect broadcasting and cultural diversity protection in China using a multidimensional model assessing communication effectiveness, sustainability, and cultural preservation. Through comparative case analysis, the study found that dialect broadcasting strengthens cultural identity, emotional belonging, and intergenerational heritage transfer. The current study aligns with Chen's findings by emphasizing inclusive broadcasting as a tool for unity and pluralism, broadening the focus to representation, participation, and social justice across diverse groups. However, while Chen focused primarily on language preservation, the gap this study addresses is how inclusive broadcasting in a multi-ethnic context like Nigeria can actively promote intercultural understanding and social cohesion across all cultural groups.

Ire (2025) investigated Broadcast Media as a Catalyst for Language

and Cultural Identity in Rivers State, Nigeria using the Cultural Transmission Theory. Findings showed that local radio and TV sustain indigenous languages and traditions through localized programming but face representation inequalities favoring dominant ethnic groups. Ire concluded that improved funding and policy support are needed for equitable participation. The current study supports this view, stressing that inclusive broadcasting promotes integration, amplifies marginalized voices, and strengthens national identity through culturally grounded content. The gap addressed here is the need to examine the mechanisms through which Nigerian broadcast media can systematically balance representation across dominant and minority groups.

Akiki (2024) analyzed the role of broadcast media in promoting cultural and national integration in Uganda, highlighting broadcasting's ability to reach diverse audiences and foster national cohesion. The study found that media emphasizing indigenous values and arts enhance identity and tolerance. The current study corroborates this by showing that inclusive and participatory programming fosters intercultural dialogue and equitable representation. The gap filled by this study is the contextual understanding of how Nigerian media content can be leveraged to enhance cultural inclusion in a highly pluralistic and multi-ethnic society.

Adila, Imam, Sultan, Nurlaila, Vitriani, Purwanto, Rahma, & Kristian (2022) examined how mass media shape cultural identity through selective representation and discourse framing, showing that media can either promote cultural homogenization or support local diversity. This aligns with the current study, which emphasizes that radio and television serve as instruments for inclusion by amplifying underrepresented voices and preserving indigenous culture. The gap addressed is the lack of empirical insight into the practical approaches Nigerian broadcast media use to balance selective representation with equitable cultural inclusion.

Chen (2024) examined Cultural Diversity in Media: Promoting

Inclusivity and Representation, using a literature review to show that authentic and inclusive storytelling fosters empathy and social cohesion, though systemic barriers still hinder full representation. This supports the current study, which also highlights how media can bridge cultural divides and promote unity through inclusive and representative content. The gap this study addresses is the need for primary data on Nigerian media practices, audience perceptions, and how inclusivity translates into real cultural representation.

Aiseng (2024) studied *Language Revitalisation and Community Broadcasting in South Africa: A Case of Vaaltar FM*, using a case study approach to show how community radio promotes indigenous language use and cultural identity through participatory broadcasting. This supports the current study by demonstrating how local radio fosters inclusivity and cultural preservation. The gap addressed is the investigation of similar mechanisms in Nigeria, including how both local and national broadcast media integrate participatory approaches to foster cultural inclusion.

Akanbi and Aladesanmi (2014) examined how Yoruba-language radio, particularly Orisun FM, fosters linguistic development and cultural preservation through language engineering—the coining of new words to express modern ideas. Their qualitative analysis showed that indigenous broadcasting enriches vocabulary and strengthens cultural identity. This supports the current study, which extends this view by emphasizing how inclusive broadcasting promotes participation, understanding, and respect for cultural diversity in a plural society. The gap this study addresses is the broader application of such inclusive strategies across multiple ethnic groups in Nigeria, beyond a single-language context.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For better explanation of this study, the researchers anchored it on the Cultural studies theory and Social responsibility theory.

### **Cultural Studies Theory**

Cultural study theory as developed by Richard Hoggart, and Stuart Hall (1964), The theory explains how culture, power, and society interact to produce meaning. It argues that culture is not passive but an active space where identities, ideologies, and power relations are constructed and contested (Hall, 1997; Williams, 1977). Stuart Hall emphasizes that media representation shapes how audiences understand race, gender, class, and other social identities. Cultural texts do not mirror reality; they construct it. The theory highlights that media content is influenced by power, ideology, and social context, making culture dynamic and open to different audience interpretations (Wheatley, 2024).

This theory is suitable for the study because it provides tools to examine how Nigerian broadcast media represent cultural diversity, negotiate power relations, and shape public perceptions of cultural identities. From the perspective of Cultural Studies, media are not mere mirrors reflecting a pre-existing reality but are active sites where meaning is produced, contested, and circulated (Hall, 2020). Every media text, from a news bulletin to a television drama, encodes specific ideologies and cultural assumptions. The selection of which language to use for a national programme, which cultural event to cover as headline news, and which spokesperson to feature on a critical national issue, are all acts of constructing a particular version of Nigeria. This encoding process is rarely neutral; it often privileges the narratives of the culturally and politically dominant groups, thereby perpetuating symbolic annihilation or negative stereotyping of minority groups (Adesoji & Alimi, 2023).

### **Social Responsibility Theory**

Social Responsibility Theory was developed in by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm (1956), the Theory emphasizes that media freedom must be balanced with ethical responsibility. It requires the media to provide truthful,

fair, diverse, and inclusive content that promotes social harmony and reflects all societal groups (McQuail, 2010). It stresses public accountability, accuracy, and the moral duty of the media to serve the public good.

The Social Responsibility Theory imposes a normative obligation on media institutions. It posits that the privilege of operating a broadcast license comes with the duty to serve the public interest, which in a plural society like Nigeria, unequivocally includes the promotion of social cohesion and national unity (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 2021). This theory challenges the purely commercial or partisan motivations of media houses, arguing that they have a responsibility to provide a platform for diverse viewpoints and to foster intercultural understanding. The Nigerian National Broadcasting Code (2022) implicitly draws from this theory, mandating broadcasters to promote national unity and pay regard to the diverse culture of Nigeria. Therefore, the conceptualization of broadcast media in this study is that of a powerful social actor with the agency to either bridge cultural divides through inclusive programming or deepen them through biased and exclusionary practices.

This theory is appropriate for the study because it explains the obligation of Nigerian broadcast media to promote intercultural understanding, represent diverse voices, and contribute to social cohesion. It reinforces the expectation that media should not only entertain but support inclusion, equality, and national unity through responsible cultural representation.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to examine how Nigerian broadcast media promote cultural diversity and inclusion. The target population consists of approximately 24,198,300 adults (18 years and above) residing in Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt (StatisticsTimes, 2025). These cities were deliberately selected based on demographic, socio-cultural, economic, and media-system considerations. Demographically,

they are among the largest and most ethnically diverse urban centres in Nigeria. Socio-culturally, they accommodate residents from virtually all ethnic groups in the country, making them appropriate for examining intercultural representation and inclusion. Economically and politically, they serve as major hubs of commerce, governance, and media operations, with high concentrations of broadcasting stations and diverse media audiences.

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations:

$$\begin{aligned} \hat{N} &= \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \\ \hat{N} &= \frac{24,200,000}{1+24,200,000(0.05)^2} \\ \hat{N} &= \frac{24,200,000}{24,201,000(0.0025)} \\ \hat{N} &= \frac{24,200,000}{24,201,000*0.0025} \\ \hat{N} &= \frac{24,200,000}{60,50.5} \end{aligned}$$

Thus, the statistically required  <sup>$\hat{N}=400$</sup>  minimum sample size was 400 respondents. To enhance statistical power, strengthen subgroup comparisons, and further reduce sampling error, an additional 200 respondents were added, resulting in a final sample size of 600 respondents.

A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was employed. The population was first stratified geographically into the three selected cities. Although strict proportional allocation based on population size would have yielded approximately 410 respondents for Lagos, 100 for Abuja, and 90 for Port Harcourt, the study adopted a disproportionate stratified allocation of 300, 200, and 100 respectively. This adjustment was deliberately made to ensure analytical balance across cities, prevent under representation of smaller strata, and allow meaningful comparative analysis.

Within each city, Local Government Areas representing varied socio-economic characteristics were selected: Alimosho and Oshodi-Isolo in Lagos; Abuja Municipal Area Council and Bwari in Abuja; and Port Harcourt City and Obio-Akpor in Port Harcourt. These LGAs were chosen to reflect differences in population density, income levels, and cultural composition. Households within the selected LGAs were identified using the random-walk method to enhance randomness, and one eligible respondent per household was selected using the most-recent-birthday technique to minimize selection bias.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire divided into demographic and research-specific sections. The instrument was subjected to expert review to ensure content validity and clarity. Ethical standards were maintained through informed consent, voluntary participation, and assurance of anonymity. The collected data were coded and analysed using SPSS (Version 28). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize responses and address the research objectives.

#### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

**Table 1: Representation of Nigeria’s Cultural Mosaic**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Broadcast media represent diverse ethnic groups fairly	50	180	120	200	50	3.0	1.2
Language diversity is adequately reflected in programming	30	120	150	230	70	2.6	1.1
Minority cultures are included in national broadcasting content	20	90	150	270	70	2.4	1.0

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Results indicate limited representation of minority cultures and languages in Nigerian broadcast media. While major ethnic groups are more visible, minority communities remain underrepresented, reflecting an imbalance in media portrayal of Nigeria's cultural mosaic.

**Table 2: Influence of Broadcast Media on Intercultural Understanding and Social Cohesion**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Broadcast media content promotes understanding among ethnic groups	60	200	150	150	40	3.3	1.0
Media coverage reduces ethnic stereotypes and prejudice	40	160	180	180	40	3.0	1.1
Exposure to diverse cultural content encourages social cohesion	50	190	140	160	60	3.1	1.0

Source: field work, 2025

While broadcast media contribute moderately to intercultural understanding and social cohesion, respondents indicate that stereotypical representations persist, limiting the full potential of media as a unifying force.

**Table 3: Challenges and Opportunities for Promoting Cultural Diversity**

Challenge / Opportunity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Commercial pressure limits culturally diverse programming	400	66.7
Political influence shapes content priorities	250	41.7
Insufficient training for journalists on cultural inclusion	320	53.3
Growth of online platforms for minority voices	280	46.7
Policy incentives from NBC for inclusive content	180	30

Source: Field work, 2025

Respondents identified commercial pressures, political influence, and limited professional training as key barriers to inclusive broadcasting. However, online platforms and supportive policies provide opportunities for expanding cultural representation and promoting inclusion.

## **Discussion of Findings**

### **Research Question 1: To what extent do Nigerian broadcast media represent and portray the country's cultural mosaic?**

The findings indicate that Nigerian broadcast media moderately represent the country's cultural diversity, with major ethnic groups (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo) dominating airtime, while minority cultures are underrepresented. For instance, survey responses showed that only 20–30% of programming includes minority cultural content, reflecting an imbalance in cultural representation.

This aligns with Ire (2025) and Adila et al. (2022), who found that mainstream media often favor dominant groups while minority communities remain marginalized. Similarly, Akanbi and Aladesanmi (2014) noted that indigenous-language radio strengthens cultural identity but is limited in scope.

From the Cultural Studies Theory perspective, media actively construct social reality rather than simply reflect it (Hall, 1997). The disproportionate visibility of dominant groups demonstrates how power structures shape media representation, limiting equitable participation of minority cultures.

### **Research Question 2: What is the influence of broadcast media programming on intercultural understanding and social cohesion in Nigeria?**

Respondents indicated that broadcast media moderately promote intercultural understanding and social cohesion. Exposure to diverse cultural content fosters awareness and empathy; however, stereotypical portrayals and limited airtime for minority groups reduce the media's overall impact.

This finding corroborates Chen (2025) and Akiki (2024), who observed that inclusive broadcasting strengthens cultural identity and

tolerance, but structural barriers can constrain effectiveness.

Social Responsibility Theory (McQuail, 2010) emphasizes that media have an ethical duty to serve public interests, promote inclusivity, and ensure fairness. The moderate impact observed in this study suggests that while broadcasters contribute to social cohesion, gaps remain in fulfilling their responsibility to represent all societal groups equitably.

### **Research Question 3: What are the challenges and opportunities for broadcast media in promoting cultural diversity and inclusion in Nigeria?**

Key challenges identified include commercial pressures, political influence, and inadequate training of media personnel. Survey data revealed that 66.7% of respondents perceive commercial interests as a major barrier, while 53.3% noted insufficient journalist capacity for culturally sensitive reporting.

Opportunities include the growth of community and online broadcasting platforms, which allow minority voices to reach wider audiences, consistent with Aiseng (2024) and Adila et al. (2022). These platforms enable participatory approaches, aligning with Cultural Studies Theory, where audiences can actively engage with and interpret cultural narratives. Social Responsibility Theory reinforces that media institutions must leverage these opportunities to fulfill ethical obligations by ensuring inclusive, representative, and socially beneficial content.

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the role of Nigerian broadcast media in promoting cultural diversity and inclusion. Findings reveal that broadcast media moderately represent the country's cultural mosaic, with major ethnic groups dominating content and minority cultures underrepresented. Media programming contributes to intercultural understanding and social

cohesion, but stereotypical portrayals and limited exposure for marginalized groups reduce its effectiveness. Challenges identified include commercial and political pressures, and insufficient journalist training, while opportunities exist through community and online broadcasting platforms. Overall, the study demonstrates that Nigerian broadcast media have significant potential to foster national unity and cultural inclusion, but structural, ethical, and operational gaps limit their full impact. Anchored on Cultural Studies Theory and Social Responsibility Theory, the research highlights the media's role in constructing cultural realities and fulfilling ethical obligations to society.

### **Recommendations**

1. Broadcast media should adopt inclusive programming policies that actively integrate content from minority ethnic groups and languages.
2. Media organizations should implement culturally sensitive reporting guidelines, train journalists in intercultural communication, and produce programs that promote mutual understanding, tolerance, and shared national identity across ethnic groups.
3. Policy-makers and regulators (e.g., NBC) should incentivize inclusive programming through funding, grants, or recognition awards. Media houses should leverage community and digital platforms to amplify minority voices and reduce reliance on commercially driven content.

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