

Avoiding Mixed-Methods? Methodological and Theoretical Approaches in Women's Radio Participation Research

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Abstract

Previous media studies that did meta-analyses of methodological and theoretical approaches have addressed subsets such as political communication, health communication, and gatekeeping. However, scant attention has been paid to women's participation in radio discourse despite its importance to the developmental agenda. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the methodological and theoretical trends in women's radio participation studies. Content analysis was used to examine a total of 70 purposively selected women's radio participation-related studies published between 2009 and 2019. Findings reveal that 55.7% of the analysed articles employed quantitative methodological approaches, while 25.7 % of the articles used qualitative approaches. Only 18.6% of the studies employed a mixed-methods design. Findings also show that more quantitative studies (67.5%) were hinged on theoretical frameworks compared to 32.5% not driven by theories. Conversely, fewer qualitative studies (27.8%) were driven by theories, while 72.2% were not theory-driven. Generally, 57.1% of the articles analysed had theoretical backgrounds. The

pattern established in this study shows that existing women's radio participation studies scantily adopted mixed-methods approaches, but the use of relevant theories as frameworks is fairly high. Scholars in the field of women's radio participation research should adopt the -mixed methods design as this would help in getting more robust and in-depth findings.

Keywords: Quantitative methods, Qualitative methods, Theoretical frameworks, -Mixed methods, Women, Radio

Introduction

Civic participation remains one of the key elements of a truly democratic society. Everybody in contemporary society is expected to participate actively in all the decision-making process of the country as this is one of the ways inclusive development could be achieved. Irrespective of the platforms through which the participation comes from, the tenet (of a democratic society maintains that there must be civic participation which has been described as an individual and group activity addressing issues of public concern. Carpentier (2001) in his definition describes participation as a process where each member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions. Besides religious participation and connections at the workplace, civic engagement and participation form the cornerstones of civic life and contribute to the fabric and infrastructure of social life in society (Kaun & Uldam, 2018).

Another explanation comes from the fact that political knowledge and political efficacy affect civic participation both directly and indirectly (Reichert & Print, 2016). The foregoing submissions are part of many other arguments for the relevance of inclusive participation in society. Carpentier (2016) notes that there are two approaches to the concept of participation which are sociological and political. The sociological approach to participation is when individuals take part in certain social

processes, while the political approach sees participation as the balance of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal or informal decision-making processes (Carpentier, 2016).

It is noteworthy that radio is one of the media of communication that makes citizens' participation and engagement possible. This corroborates the position of Livingstone and Markham (2008) that the explanation of civic participation could also be linked to media habit such as listening to the radio and engagement with the news. This is possible as a result of the democratisation that radio has witnessed in the Nigerian media space. Radio is cheap, portable and accessible; and technological advancement has also made it possible for radio audiences to have the radio on their phones. This prompts the submission of Oni (2014) that the ubiquity of mobile phones and the convergence of the interactive media of the Internet with radio have increased the potential of radio as a medium of mass communication.

Ojebuyi (2012) also notes that radio has the unmatched capacity to reach the mass audience at a relatively cheaper cost and within a short time. Similarly, Ojebode (2008, p.139) notes that "radio is battery-powered, which means the usual failure or lack of electric power supply is not an impediment to the listener. Radio is cheap and portable. It is found in the remotest parts of the world". The preceding submission validates the view of Ojebuyi (2012) that radio is not hindered by the factor of illiteracy. All of these qualities make the radio a medium of communication that enhances civic participation.

An important aspect of civic participation in Nigerian is audience engagement in media discourse, especially the phone in segment that comes after radio newspaper reviews and other development-oriented programmes on Nigerian radio stations. Most radio stations across the nation have included phone-in segments into their development programmes to enable the audience to express their opinions on different national issues. In the context of this study, development programmes on the radio are the categories of programmes that focus on issues that touch the development of the country. Matters like insecurity, insurgency,

unemployment, education, economy, police brutality, foreign affairs, governance are the themes of some of these development programmes in the Nigerian radio space. Another reason for audience inclusion in radio development programmes is to achieve two-way communication and to ensure that the audiences have a sense of belonging as citizens whose voices are important to the development of the nation. The impact has proven successful especially during the election period as politicians depend on radio to reach communities, they could not reach during campaign exercise.

Previous media studies that adopted meta-analysis of methodological and theoretical approaches have focused on areas such as political communication, health communication and gatekeeping (e.g., Kamhawi and Weaver, 2003; Onekutu and Ojebode, 2007; Ojebuyi and Ojebode, 2011; Ogundoyin and Soola, 2014, Olasinde and Ojebuyi, 2017). However, despite the significance of gender and women's participation in radio discourse regarding the developmental agenda, scholars have not given adequate attention to this aspect of communication studies. Given its importance, it is imperative to join this scholarly conversation on research trends in women's participation in radio. Therefore, this study was designed to explore a theoretical and methodological trend in communication research on gender and women participation in radio discourse. The core questions that guided the study are as follows:

- 1) What predominant methodological approaches are employed in studies on women's participation in radio discourse?
- 2) To what extent are studies on women's participation in radio discourse driven by theoretical frameworks?

Literature Review

Nigerian Women's Participation in Radio Development Discourse in The Mix of Gender Inequality and Patriarchal Dominance

Despite the democratisation of radio in Nigeria, there is an apparent gender imbalance in audience participation in development programmes on Nigerian radio. It has been observed that Nigerian

women remain invisible in the media, and hardly participate in public discourse on the radio. Concerning this, one of the significant gaps in knowledge that exist in participation research is that of gender inequality in audience participation in Nigerian radio phone-in development programmes. Scholars have also reported that there is a gender imbalance in audience participation in media, especially radio interactive discourse (Amobi, 2013; Hungbo, 2015, Mitullah, Mudhai and Nwangi, 2016, Srinivasan and Lopes, 2020). In this regard, Amobi (2013) asserts that women's invisibility in news is a reflection of women's invisibility in society, where women are not recognised as people in their rights but as appendages to their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers.

The submission of Amobi (2013) points to the patriarchal structure of the Nigerian society, which has made women passive when it comes to participating in interactive shows in the media. O'Neill, Gidengil, Thomas and Bittner (2017) also note that women's responsibilities of caring for their homes and families leave them with lesser time than fathers, to understand political activities. Even where women are involved in public life and politics, their activities and concerns are expected to be imbued with the private significance of being a woman (O'Neill *et al* 2017).

It is, therefore, needful to investigate the reasons for Nigerian women's invisibility and low participation in radio phone-in development discourse. This aspect also needs to be examined along with the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society and how it contributes to women's feeling of marginalisation and subordination that is taking a toll on women's participation in media discourse. As the agenda setter, the role of the media on this subject matter also needs thorough scholarly attention, as it is important to investigate why media practitioners make use of mostly males as analysts in radio development discourses.

Nigerian women's apparent minimal participation in the phone-in segment of radio development programmes signals marginalisation and gender inequality. Gender inequality of audience participation in radio is one of the areas of communication and media studies that have become appealing to

communication scholars around the world. This trend of gender disparity diverges from *Goal 5* of the Sustainable Development Goals, which maintains that providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work and representation in political and economic decision making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit society and humanity at large. To ensure sustainable development, therefore, it is important to raise awareness among women, inform, educate, empower and let them see the need to participate in the media discourse of socio-political issues.

Empirical inquiries into gender inequality and the patriarchal structure of the Nigerian society (Agbalajobi, 2010; Ogbogu, 2011; Makama, 2013; Anyalebechi, 2016; Atu, Odeh, Odibo and Agbo, 2019) have spurred researchers to identify different angles through which gender inequality and women's marginalisation could be approached. Conversations of some of these studies have helped to understand the way gender inequality has permeated different aspects of Nigerian society. In light of this, Makama (2013) notes that all forms of human discrimination and gender inequality must be challenged. Makama (2013), therefore, advocates a deliberate, sensitive, consistent and systematic approach to gender relations, which should include gender mainstreaming in all aspects of life.

It is important to note that feminism, gender and audience participation are some of the emerging and growing fields in research. Therefore, studies must contribute to knowledge and literature in the field of gender and audience participation in media discourse, especially on radio, which is one of the most popular media of communication in Africa. To achieve this, researchers have significant roles to play not only in investigating the socio-cultural peculiarities of the Nigerian society but also the way this cultural uniqueness has regarded men as the dominant group and women as the marginalised group. Because of this, academic research needs to examine trends on how the societal placement of men is influencing so many aspects of Nigerian society, especially how socio-cultural patriarchal dominance of Nigerian society is affecting women's participation in phone-in radio development programmes.

Focusing on gender inequality and the patriarchal nature of Nigerian society will help in tracing scholarly conversation about this phenomenon and pointing out the neglected aspects for discussion and raising suggestions for further studies. It would also contribute to efforts at testing and building theories and methodologies on gender and audience participation research in the Nigerian context, and discovering the reasons for Nigerian women's low participation in phone-in discourse of development issues in the media, especially radio. Based on this, Hungbo (2015) remarks that the preponderance of male voices on live radio shows in Nigeria signals the patriarchal cultural landscape within which media operate in the country. He adds that the gendered nature of participation in radio programmes need to be seen as a challenge in the claims to pervasiveness made in favour of radio. No doubt, inclusive participation of people is fundamental to nation building and meaningful development. It is on this note that Mitullah et al (2016, p.5) state that

Inclusive citizen interaction with the media is important for development. It enables citizens to express their opinions on issues of common concern and to contribute to public debates, including providing input into policy making processes

The fact remains that civic participation is an element of policy-making, and it is also important to note that civic participation and policymaking cannot make sense if there is an imbalance in the voices of all genders on the platform for decision making. It is, therefore, expected of researchers to make use of a specific method of data gathering which will help them achieve their desired research goal, especially the phenomenon of women's low participation in radio discourse. Therefore, the principal objective of this study is to carefully examine the way researchers make use of theory as well as their preference for either quantitative or qualitative research method. This study analysed the trends in women's radio participation research, regarding the choice of research methodology and the extent to which women radio participation studies are driven by theories.

Researchers' Methodological Preferences

Scholars around the world, in their attempt to explore the aspect of women's marginalisation and low participation in the media, have employed different research methodologies, either qualitative or quantitative social scientific methods, as they best align with their studies. Research designs, either quantitative or qualitative have different peculiarities, and the adoption of any of these designs is dependent on the research objectives and the focus of the study. Concerning this, Eid (2016) asserts that qualitative researchers are more concerned about getting authentic data directly from people or an environment. On the other hand, quantitative researchers depend on numbers and quantifications in getting answers to a research phenomenon.

The foregoing position shows that researchers could belong to two schools of thought; it is either a researcher is qualitatively or quantitatively oriented. It must be enunciated that a researcher that wants to study peoples' lived experiences would employ a qualitative research approach to effectively capture the respondents and get rich data. It is also instructive to point out that the research goal is one of the factors that determine the choice of research design by a researcher. Especially in communication research, no research design should be acclaimed to be superior, as far as the research design generates data that are needed for the study. Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011, p.166), however, note that "some communication researchers, naturally, because of their ideological proclivity, would prefer to adhere to one particular methodology where the alternative, or combination of both, would have been more effective". This means that some researchers might choose to employ a particular research method because of their research ideologies or orientations, regardless of the benefit that could be derived from mixing research methods.

Therefore, in a bid to achieve research that will contribute to global research conversations, the inclusion of a theoretical framework becomes germane because of its ability to create a point of convergence for past and future researchers. According to Kawulich (2009), a theory is a general body or body of principles offered to explain a phenomenon. Theories remain a vital part of

research because of the meaning they add to research objectives. Also, theory helps researchers to find explanations for different aspects of research. This is why Kawulich (2009) submits that a theory is a model capable of predicting future occurrences or observations, being tested through experiment or otherwise, and empirically verified.

Similarly, Olorunnisola (2007) states that appropriate application of theories, model, hypotheses and concepts that have been generated by other scholars would enable researchers to display awareness of those that have hitherto treaded the space of inquiry, and demonstrate willingness or ability to speak to others in the area of specialisation, in a universally understandable language. The submission of Olorunnisola is an indication that the knowledge of theory enables a researcher to keep track of research conversations and would help in identifying research trends and gaps that need to be filled. The pattern of connection between researchers, the method of research and the theoretical framework can be seen in Figure 1.

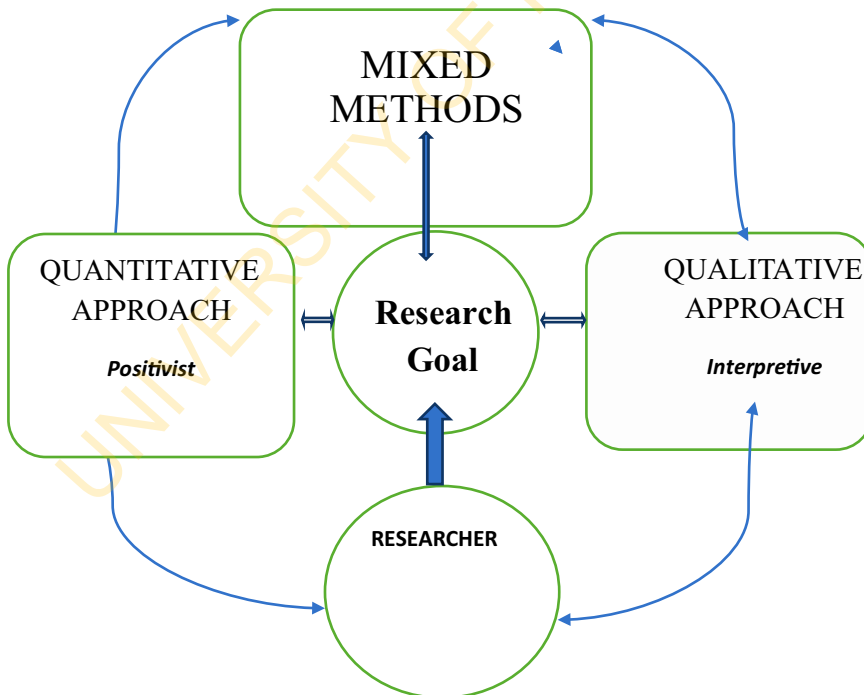


Figure 1: Model for researcher's synergy with research methods and research goals Source: Mobolaji and Ojebuyi, 2021 (Authors)

We conceived the model in Figure 1 to explicate the link that exists between researchers, their desired research goals and their preferred method of research execution. The model, which we code-name *R-R-M Model* (Researcher, Research goal and Methods Synergy) portrays how researchers, in their efforts to get the most appropriate method (s) that captures their research goals, bestride in between methodological approaches which are the quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches. Regardless of this, as shown in Figure 1, there exists a strong connection between researchers and their choice of method. In short, methods and researchers cannot be pulled apart because as researchers bank on methods in achieving their research goals, research methods also become relevant based on their appropriateness and continuous use by researchers.

The Model in Figure 1 also makes it clear that the research goal is the nucleus of any research endeavour; it is central to the investigation of any phenomenon because it determines the appropriate methods to be adopted by the researcher. The proper understanding and application of research methods, therefore, will help in achieving the desired research goals. Besides, the goal that a researcher has in mind will inform the method of data gathering that will be employed; hence, the need for the researcher to set the research goal(s) and be acquainted with the appropriate research methods to be adopted. Also, the model shows that there is an interwoven connection between the three strands, as neither the researcher, research goals nor methods can stand aloof to achieve the desired results.

The Significance of Investigating Methodological and Theoretical Trends in Research

Examining trends in research methodologies is important as it gives researchers direction of what to do and what to focus on in their particular area of research. Given this, Ngulube (2015) notes that

knowledge that is produced in any scientific field primarily depends on the methodology that is used. This suggests that research makes more sense and becomes universally acceptable when it is built on an appropriate methodology. In other words, the knowledge derived from a research endeavour is solely dependent on the kind of methodology that is adopted by the researcher. Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011, p.167) concisely capture this in their exploration of trends in gatekeeping research, as they aver that,

Unless we examine trends in researchers' methodological choices, we would not know if the field of gatekeeping research is benefitting as it should from the fruitfulness that occurs when methodologies straddle the traditional quant-qual divide. And unless we examine researchers' applications of theory we would not know if gatekeeping research is enriching and if it challenges existing theories and evolves new ones.

The submission of Ojebuyi and Ojebode in the foregoing citation suggests that the knowledge of trends in a particular field of research enables a researcher to become aware of ongoing scholarly conversations as well as the research gaps in that field of research. This substantiates the position of Ngulube (2015) that an investigation into the research procedures used by researchers in a particular research field is necessary as this would not only help in getting appropriate research methods but also to conceptualise and define research gaps that need to be filled and phenomena that are being examined.

Similarly, Olasinde and Ojebuyi (2017) state that trends review in communication research by communication scholars is seen as self-reflection by some researchers. They expatiate that self-reflection, therefore, is considered a process whereby communication scholars retrospectively evaluate and progressively project into the future in the field of communication. In essence, exploring the trends in communication research will help researchers to understand their research goals better, based on the scholarly conversations they have been exposed to. In short, examining research trends will ultimately give researchers an

inkling of future directions of research in the field of communication.

Studies have been conducted on trends in research methods in different fields including communication. For example, a study conducted by Mazur (2009) reveals that from 1999-2003, most of the studies conducted, whose goals were to systematically assess the impact of Europeanisation on member states through the lens of gender equality policy made use of comparative method through 'diversity-oriented research' or Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) where the observation or case contains a constellation of factors that produce a given outcome. Also, Kamhawi and Weaver (2003), in their analysis of mass communication research trends from (1980-1999), reported that qualitative research methods (25.6%) continued to be much less common than quantitative methods (71.9%) throughout the period. They also reported that funding for research was relatively rare, with the university becoming the main source and private support decreasing significantly in the 1990s.

Furthermore, Ngulube (2015) analysed research procedures employed in knowledge management (KM) research between 2009 and 2013. A total of 303 articles published in the *Journal of Knowledge Management* were critically reviewed and subjected to a descriptive content analysis research approach. Ngulube (2015) found that positivist epistemologies and quantitative research approaches dominated research in knowledge management (KM). Ngulube (2015) also found that surveys, case studies and content analysis were the most favoured research approaches. Other major research approaches such as field experiments, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology were conspicuous by their absence. Questionnaires and interviews were commonly used for data collection, however, the use of more than one research method was not prevalent.

In a study by Olasinde and Ojebuyi (2017), findings reveal that in the 160 political communication-related journal articles published between 2005 and 2015, political communication researchers seldom employed mixed methods (6.3%), while they seemed to prefer quantitative designs (75.0%) to qualitative

approaches (18.8%). According to the findings, under quantitative orientations, researchers employed survey (43.3%) and content analysis (35.4%) more frequently than other methods, they used interviews (39.4%) and case studies (27.3%) more frequently than other qualitative methods. Also, Ogundoyin and Soola (2014) in a study that explored the trends in methodological and theoretical approaches to interpersonal health communication research, found that over twenty years from 1991 to 2010, 51.4% of the articles employed qualitative research methods, 18.1% employed quantitative research methods, while 30.5% adopted mixed methods.

The Peculiarities of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods

Quantitative and qualitative research methods are two divides that must be well engaged because of the distinct ideological orientations that they both possess. Based on the individual philosophies of the researchers that employ these methods, these two research methods belong to two different research paradigms, that is, the positivist and the interpretive. The quantitative research method is widely regarded as the positivist approach, while the qualitative research is referred to as the interpretive approach. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p.49)

Quantitative research requires that the variables under consideration be measured. This form of research is concerned with how often a variable is present and generally uses numbers to communicate this amount. Quantitative research has certain advantages. One is that the use of numbers allows greater precision in reporting results.

The foregoing submission points to the fact quantitative research approach focuses on quantification; essentially, data gathered in this kind of research are presented in numbers. The quantitative research approach also gives room for precision and accuracy, and this validates the position of Daniel (2016) that the use of statistical data for the research descriptions and analysis reduces the time and effort which the researcher would have

invested in describing his result. The Positivist research approach enhances researchers' detachment from the research and inspires impartial results. It is important to understand that, objective explanation of some phenomena cannot be achieved without the absolute neutrality of the researcher; thus, the positivist research paradigm requires that the researcher gives the respondents the freedom to participate in the research without any form of influence and interference from the researcher (Ojebode, Ojebuyi, Oladapo, and Oyedele, 2018).

Conversely, qualitative research design belongs to the interpretive paradigm and this research design takes a holistic approach to research as it goes beyond mere numerals and quantification in the understanding of a phenomenon. According to Astalin (2013), qualitative research is a systematic scientific inquiry, which seeks to build a holistic, largely narrative, description to inform the researcher's understanding of a social or cultural phenomenon. The qualitative research design does not just report research data, rather, it describes, narrates, observes, interrogates, imagines and paints the picture of a phenomenon being investigated. Unlike the positivist, a qualitative researcher is not detached from the research, he is fully involved, and in a way, his ideas, experiences, opinions and personal biases might filter into the research. In their clarification, Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011) note that research is value-and-context-bound, and explanations are inductive products of the narrative data emanating from informants (subjects).

The foregoing submission is an indication that context is very crucial, as it plays vital roles in qualitative research. This aligns with the submission of Mohajan (2018) that the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the perspectives of individuals or the population being studied and to generate new concepts and theories. It is noteworthy that qualitative research is people-oriented, and basically, the focus of any qualitative investigation is on people; therefore, the researcher is required to be fully involved in the investigation and be sensitive to everything in the research environment. It is important to note that there are instances when

the positivist paradigm will capture the investigation of a phenomenon more than the interpretive paradigm and vice versa.

The adoption of any research method solely depends on the purpose of the research; thus, it could be said that no research method is superior. However, in situations where either of the quantitative or qualitative research methods cannot capture research goals, mixed-methods research has been encouraged, to achieve a balance. In essence, one research method will complement where the other is lacking. Creswell (2007, p.9) substantiated this position by stating that:

Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative research in a single study or a longitudinal programme of inquiry. The purpose of this form of research is that both the qualitative and quantitative researches, when combined provide a better understanding of a research problem or issue than either research approach alone.

The foregoing explication by Creswell (2007) shows that mixed methods type of research enable researchers to acquire a deeper knowledge of the research gap they want to explore. Creswell (2008) opines that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative data provide a better understanding of the research problem than either type by itself. This implies that researchers may adopt mixed methods when one type of research (qualitative or quantitative) is not enough to address the research problem or answer the research questions.

According to Heale and Forbes (2013), the objective of triangulation is to increase confidence in the findings through the confirmation of a proposition using two or more independent measures. This submission validates the position of Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011, p.170) that “when a researcher combines multiple methodological techniques and sources, other factors being equal, the findings would be richer, better, more valid and present a more substantive picture of reality and more complete body of symbols and theoretical concepts”. It could be inferred that mixed-methods research enhances researchers’ flexibility, creativity and dynamism, in a way that makes researchers go deeper in their

exploration of a phenomenon.

Methods

Research Procedure and Data Gathering

This study specifically adopted two data gathering approaches to examine the current trends in women's radio participation research. First, the study employed content analysis for gathering, presenting and analysing data. Citing Kerlinger (2000), Wimmer and Dominick (2011, p. 156) define content analysis as "a method of studying and analysing communication in a *systematic, objective, and quantitative* manner to measure variables". Second, the study made use of a meta-analytic approach which according to Crombie (2009), is a statistical technique for combining the findings from independent studies. Similarly, Kavale (1984, p.62) notes that "meta-analysis attempts to statistically accumulate the findings from separate studies into a review. The synthesis makes meta-analysis an inductive method since it proceeds from particular observations to a general inclusive statement".

As evident from the foregoing explications, the essence of a meta-analysis is to numerically aggregate the findings of studies from the same area of study, to come up with general statements. On the other hand, content analysis helps in achieving objective evaluation of research works, thereby detecting trends and patterns and making inferences regarding the antecedents of communication (Bhasin, 2020). Thus, it is important to note that findings from a meta-analysis serve as a guide and template for scholars that will tread the same path of research. On this note, Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011) maintain that meta-analysis gives room for quantitative findings of a variety of studies of the same topic or study area, which are converted to a common metric for generalisation and replication. The two approaches of data gathering for this study will help in doing objective analysis of methodological and theoretical trends which are the key intents of this paper.

Consequently, the study population included all national and international journals in the areas of civic participation, radio audience participation, women's radio participation, radio listenership, gender, feminism and other communication and

participation related areas. Some of these journals are *Journals of Gender Studies*, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, *Gender and Society*, *Gender and Behaviour*, *Feminist Africa*, *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, *European Journal of Women Studies*, *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy*, *Journal of Media and Communication Studies*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Feminist Media Studies*, *Southern African Feminist Review*, *Women's Studies in Communication*, *Human Communication Research*, *European Journal of Communication*, *Media Culture and Society* and *Asian Journal of Communication*.

These journals are published in America, Asia, Europe and African continents, and represent journals from developed and developing countries. The journals engage research efforts in communication, women participation in radio, gender issues and feminism. In situations where accesses to full texts were denied, only the abstracts were studied. Only studies related to women participation in radio published between 2009 and 2019 were purposively selected and content analysed. A total of 115 articles were examined for this study. Out of 115 journal articles examined to identify those with the relevant unit of analysis, 70 articles relevant to the study were examined. Equal consideration was given to the analysed articles and their abstracts were carefully studied to see specific research methods that researchers adopted. The analyses were done for the following categories:

Content Categories and Operationalisation

Relevant journal articles were content-analysed and each publication examined for this study formed the unit of analysis. Therefore, the following categories that guided the coding, are operationally explained as follows:

Research Methods Used: The first aspect of the content category is the research method which consists of all the techniques and method which are employed by a researcher in a research process to find the solution to a research problem (Bhasin, 2019). The two broad categories for research methods here are the quantitative and qualitative methods. A study that combined both

quantitative and qualitative methods was coded under the ‘mixed method category’.

The specific methods of data gathering by women’s radio participation researchers This part represents the particular method of data gathering under each of the two research methods. For the quantitative method, survey and content analysis methods were generated, while under the qualitative method, the subcategories generated are observation; focus group discussion (FGD); in-depth interviews; semi-structured interview, front-line SMS data collection; participatory action research; case study; ethnography and ethnomethodology.

Theories adopted in women’s radio participation research: This aspect was used to represent the exact communication theories or models the authors employed to generate hypotheses, form research questions or support their findings in the articles studied for this review. The specific theories (democratic participant media theory, participatory communication theory, uses and gratification, standpoint theory, and agenda-setting theories) were identified and coded under appropriate sub - categories.

Unit of Analysis: For this study, journal articles on gender and audience participation, media and communication, formed the unit of analysis. However, books, technical reports, review of events were not included in the units of analysis as they would not effectively drive the purpose of the study; it was limited to only journal (researched) articles published in the relevant areas.

Sampling Procedure: All publications of the study population which were available, were sampled. However, editions that are not within the period (2009-2019) were not included.

Results and Discussion of Findings

In the following section, we present the findings and discuss them in the context of existing literature. The findings are presented according to the categories already identified in the methodology section above.

Dominant research designs adopted in women's radio participation research

Table 1 shows the frequency of the use of research methods in women's radio participation studies. The majority (55.7%, n=39) of the 70 articles examined used a quantitative research method. Articles that employed qualitative method accounted for 25.7% (n=18), while only 18.6% (n=13) articles used mixed methods. This is consistent with the findings of Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) in their analysis of mass communication research trends from (1980-1999) where they revealed that qualitative research methods (25.6%) continued to be much less common than quantitative methods (71.9%) throughout the period.

Findings, as presented in Table 1, also reveal that a mixed-methods research approach is not commonly used by radio audience participation researchers as compared to their use of qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed methods research accounted for (18.6%, n=13) in the reviewed studies. Regardless of the minimal use of mixed-methods research in the reviewed studies, it is instructive to note that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a study, especially when results are triangulated, enables validation of data through cross verification from different sources (Honorene, 2017). In essence, data derived from mixed-methods research are more reliable. Therefore, the process of the triangulation of data strengthens a study in terms of the validity and credibility data set (Honorene, 2017).

Table 1: Research methods adopted by women's radio participation researchers

Designs	Frequency	Percentage
Quantitative	39	55.7%
Qualitative	18	25.7%
Mixed	13	18.6%
Total	70	100

This current study connects to the findings of erstwhile studies that have been conducted to examine overriding research designs that are employed in the field of communication. Previous

studies have established the fact that in communication research, scholars have employed different kinds of research methods. For instance, a study conducted by Olasinde and Ojebuyi (2017), revealed that from 2005 to 2015, political communication researchers seldom employed mixed methods (6.3%), while they seemed to prefer quantitative designs (75.0%) to qualitative approaches (18.8%).

Similarly, Kamhawi and Weaver (2003) in their analysis of mass communication research trends from (1980-1999) also noted that qualitative research methods (25.6%) continued to be much less common than quantitative methods (71.9%) throughout the period. More so, through a meta-analysis of 128 media gatekeeping-related studies purposively drawn from communication-based journals (published between 2000 and 2008), Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011) also found that there was a drift from the quantitative method (38.3%) towards the qualitative method (57.0%).

Some scholars have suggested the most appropriate methodological approach for audience research. Concerning this, Davis and Michelle (2011, p.527) note that “ Q Methodology provides insight into audience subjectivities in a much richer way than that provided by conventional surveys while providing more structure and better replicability than purely qualitative approaches such as focus groups or ethnographic observation”.

Hirzalla and Van-Zoonen (2017) also state that the only way to really “know” the audience is to carry out an ethnographic study which would help in having a profound understanding of the social and discursive perspective of audiences’ media experiences and activities. It is clear from the foregoing that different approaches have been used and suggested for communication and audience research and all of these could be determined by researchers’ objectives or even the compositions of the research participants or respondents.

Specific Methodological Approaches in the Analysed Studies

As shown in Table 2, survey, under the quantitative method, was the most frequently used methodological approach (77.5%, n=31). This is followed by content analysis (22.5%, n=9). In-depth interview (27%, n=8) was most employed while semi-structured interview, Front Line SMS data collection, participatory action research, ethnomethodology (3.3%, n=1) were the least used as methodological approaches under the qualitative method. Focus Group Discussion (20%, n=6) was the next most frequently employed methodological approach, followed by observation (16.6%, n=5), and ethnography (16.6%, n=5).

Table 2: Frequently used methods of data gathering in the reviewed journals

QUANTITATIVE METHOD			QUALITATIVE METHOD		
Methodological Approach	Frequency	%	Methodological Approach	Frequency	%
Survey	31	77.5	FGD	6	20
Content Analysis	9	22.5	In-depth Interviews	8	27
			Observation	5	16.6
			Frontline SMS data collection	1	3.3
			Semi-Structured Interview	1	3.3
			Participatory Action Research	1	3.3
			Case Study	2	6.6
			Ethnography	5	16.6
			Ethno-methodology	1	3.3
Total	40 (57.1%)	100	Total	30 (42.9%)	100

It could be inferred from the findings that in women's radio participation research, survey (77.5%) is the most commonly

adopted quantitative methodological approach, while in-depth interview (26.6%) is the most often employed qualitative approach. Every data gathering method that appears in Table 2 has research significance, but the reason for the dominance of the survey method in the reviewed studies could be linked to the submission of Gaille (2020) that survey is one of the most inexpensive methods of data gathering.

Furthermore, apart from the fact that the survey is fast, a well-constructed survey enables a researcher to gather data from audiences of any size (Gaille, 2020). Moreover, an in-depth interview enhances the relative closeness of the interviewer and interviewee and which increases the credibility of the data by reducing response bias (Roller, 2019). The foregoing submissions explain why survey and in depth interview are the two dominant methods of data gathering. The overall findings from Table 2 indicate that qualitative methodological approaches accounted for 42.9%, while quantitative approaches accounted for 57.1%.

Theoretical Preferences of Researchers in the Reviewed Studies

As shown in Table 3, a total of 67.5% (n=25), out of the 37 studies that employed quantitative methods, used communication theories, while 32.5% of studies in the same category did not apply any communication theory. On the other hand, only 27.8% out of the 18 studies that used qualitative methods applied communication theories as against 72.2% of qualitative studies that did not apply any communication theory. Out of the 10 studies that used a mixed-methods approach, only 66.7% were theory-driven, while 33.3% did not have theoretical frameworks.

Table 3: Most adopted communication theories in the analysed journals

Application of Theory	Quantitative Method		Qualitative Method		Mixed Methods		Cumulative	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Applied	25	67.5	5	27.8	10	66.	40	57.1

Theory							7		
Did not apply Theory	12	32.5	13	72.2	5	33.3	30	42.9	
Total	37	100	18	100	15	100	70	100	

The findings reveal that Uses and Gratifications Theory n=10; 23.8% was the most predominantly applied communication theory, followed by Democratic Participant Theory, Agenda-Setting Theory and Participatory Communication Theory, which accounted for 16.7%, 9.52% and 9.52% respectively. Also, Development Media Theory and Standpoint Theory accounted for 6.9% and 4.8% respectively. Theories like Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Empowerment Theory, Gender Theory, Participatory Development Communication Theory, Perception Media Theory, The Status Conferral Theory, The Social Responsibility Theory, Social Learning Theory, Persuasion Theory, Drama Theory, Alternative Media, Adaptive Structuration Theory all accounted for 2.38% (n=1).

Findings from the review have shown that generally in radio audience participation studies, researchers, to some extent, drive their studies with theoretical frameworks. It is evident from the findings that, at least, 57.1% (n=40) out of 70 studies examined were theory-driven, while 42.9% (n=30) were not theory-driven. It is, however, important to note that, more radio audience participation studies that employed quantitative methods were theory-driven (67.5% theory-driven against 32.5% non-theory-driven), while most of the qualitative studies were predominantly non-theory-driven (72.2% non-theory-driven against 27.8% theory-driven). This finding implies that communication researchers, to a reasonable extent, have started making an effort to hinge their studies on theoretical frameworks. This is therefore contrary to the position of Ojebuyi and Ojebode (2011, p.176) that “predominantly, communication researchers do not frequently hinge their studies on theoretical frameworks”.

Nonetheless, a cursory look at the findings has shown that more still needs to be done by communication researchers regarding the application of theoretical frameworks to drive their

studies. From the findings in Table 3, 57.1% (n=40) applied theories, while 42.9% (n=30) did not apply theories. This alludes to the fact that some communication researchers have not fully recognized the need to drive their studies with theoretical frameworks. Concerning this, Olorunnisola (2007) notes that most Nigerian postgraduate students, and even a good number of their counterparts in the United States of America (USA), because of their 'weak' backgrounds in communication theories, submit theses and dissertations that are not theory-driven.

The Implications

Findings in this study have shown that in the period (2009-2019) covered by this study, radio audience participation researchers employed more of the quantitative research approach. This result of this current study reveals a similar pattern with the findings of Borah (2015) that surveys and experiments were common methodologies adopted to examine the audiences' use of emerging communication technology. In the analysis of theoretical and methodological trends of agenda-setting theory between the period of 1972-2015, Kim, Kim, and Zhou (2017) also reported that the quantitative research method was the most adopted method of data gathering, while few studies employed the qualitative approach. This trend is evidence of the fact that researchers in arts and social sciences still believe in the veracity of quantification as a method of data gathering.

The reason for the consistent adoption of the quantitative research method by researchers could be linked to the submission of Savella (2018) that quantitative methods mitigate personal bias and provide valuable insight into the ordering of reality and the materialised discourses. Scholars, because of their different schools of thought, have continued to declare their methodological loyalty based on the research approach that appeals to them.

Concerning this, Amadi, Ekeanyanwu and Onwubere (2018) assert that scholars who employ FGD to gather research data flaunt their technique and condemn the one-sidedness approach of survey research design where questionnaire items are solely generated by the researcher without any contribution from the researched. It

could be inferred from the foregoing position of Amadi, Ekeanyanwu and Onwubere (2018) that there has been persistent ideological friction between the two groups of researchers in terms of methodological orientations. However, as argued by Olasinde and Ojebuyi (2017), using only one research approach to explain a social phenomenon may be insufficient and inappropriate. None of the two research approaches is the best. The peculiarity of the social phenomenon being investigated and the overall objective of the study should determine which of the two research approaches the researcher should employ. In some cases, the combination of the two research approaches is ideal (Bryman, 2008; Kristine & Florczak, 2014).

It is important to note that scholars are still grappling between the use of quantitative approach and the qualitative approach in women's radio participation research. Although in the studies reviewed, the quantitative method is the most used approach by researchers, the qualitative approach still boasts a reasonable percentage. It could, therefore, be inferred that, apart from the frequent use of the quantitative approach, to some extent, studies on women's participation in radio still have some touches of the qualitative approach. However, unlike the findings of Taipale and Leopoldina (2014) and Borah (2015) that reported limited use of theories in their reviewed studies, findings in this current study have revealed that the application of communication theories to drive the studies is fair and encouraging compared to the extent to which the mixed methods approach is employed in the reviewed studies.

So many arguments have been put to the fore by scholars on the peculiarities and importance of different research methods. Although this current study has established the fact scholars in the field of radio audience research have a penchant for quantitative research methods, the need to have the in-depth knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative research method have been mooted by scholars. In this regard, Amadi and Ekeanyanwu (2019), in their explication of how the quantitative research method encourages fake news in journalism, submit that unlike journalists with only quantitative training, the ones who have been schooled in the

aspect of qualitative research can muster the necessary critical insight that will help them deploy different critical analytic tools in ways that would boost nuanced understanding and exhaustive interpretation of the texts as displayed. The position of Amadi and Ekeanyanwu (2019) does not discredit the importance of quantification in research; it, however, suggests that the inability of a researcher to have a full grasp of the positivist and the interpretive school of thought might result in weak and unreliable findings of research phenomena. In short, no matter the accuracy that the quantitative research method gives, the relevance of qualitative research design can never be downplayed in any research endeavour.

Apart from the fact that qualitative research design enhances the credibility of data, researchers who wish to have good research findings will not disregard the practical demands for the inclusion of qualitative methods in scientific enquiries that involve humans and how they communicate (Amadi, Ekeanyanwu and Onwubere, 2018; Amadi and Ekeanyanwu, 2019). Therefore, based on the findings from this study and the position of different scholars, it must be underscored that pragmatism—adopting a mixed-methods approach—is one of the wisest ways for researchers to have research that involves both the researcher and the researched. It could, therefore, be implied that this kind of research will not only have a blend of quantitative and qualitative approach but will also comprehensively capture research phenomena with robust data that produce findings that significantly contribute to the global research conversations.

Conclusion

From the reviewed studies, it is clear that the quantitative methods dominated research studies conducted to examine women's participation in radio programmes. Findings also reveal that although the extent of application of theories is fairly encouraging, the number of studies that employed mixed-methods was generally low. This pattern shows that radio audience participation

researchers have not fully valued the need to adopt the mix-methods approach in their exploration of audience participation in radio. It could also mean that most of these researchers did not know about blending the qualitative and quantitative research approaches to investigate a phenomenon.

The implication of this trend in women's radio participation research is that researchers will not be able to get rich data if they rely on only one research approach. It is, therefore, important for women's radio participation scholars to adopt mixed methods that produce rich data from diverse sources. Also, triangulation through the mixed-methods approach ensures that one method complements and strengthens the weakness of another method.

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