

**SUSTAINABILITY OF FM RADIO STATIONS IN A COMPETITIVE  
ENVIRONMENT AMONG SELECTED FM RADIO STATIONS IN BUNGOMA  
COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Award of the  
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Social Sciences, Masinde Muliro University of Science And  
Technology**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own original work prepared with no other than the indicated sources and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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JMC/LG/13/2015

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

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## CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a Research report entitled **“Assessment of Sustainability of FM Radio Stations in a Competitive Environment Among selected FM Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

As a result of the liberalization policies in the early 1990s, the broadcast media in Kenya has grown exponentially. The number of radio stations has multiplied significantly bringing with it cut throat competition among licensed FM radio stations. These radio stations are grappling with challenges that threaten their survival. The study presents an assessment of the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment whose objectives include: to explain the resource deficiencies affecting sustainability of FM Radio stations; to determine effects of liberalizing the broadcasting airspace on the development of radio and to find out if advancement of technology plays a role in sustainability of FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya. The population for this study was purposefully identified and consisted of personnel working in selected FM radio stations. The respondents were drawn from key departments within selected FM radio stations. The study site was Bungoma Town in Bungoma County Kenya. This research employed ‘total population sampling’ as a type of purposive sampling technique where the entire population of 56 personnel was used in the study. Mixed-method research design was adopted. It involved combining of quantitative and qualitative research to address research questions. The main data collection methods used included questionnaires and interview schedules. The key informants were 5 and their selection was informed by the fact that each of the five radio stations had a single manager. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented descriptively and complemented by graphs, percentages and chart. The findings of this study revealed that lack or limited resources was a major factor affecting sustainability of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County. The findings of this study will benefit media owners, radio station managers and investors in the media industry. The study recommends an in depth study on the financial aspect of sustainability as well as the ability of the management of these radio stations managers to effectively run them with financial transparency.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CAK</b>	Communications Authority of Kenya
<b>CCK</b>	Communications Commission of Kenya
<b>DAT</b>	Digital Audio Tape
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>FM</b>	Frequency Modulation
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunications Union
<b>KBC</b>	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
<b>NACOSTI</b>	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NICTs</b>	New information and Communication Technologies
<b>PSSP</b>	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>PTP</b>	Point to Point link
<b>SABC</b>	South Africa Broadcasting Corporation
<b>SMS</b>	Short Message Services
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical package for Social Sciences
<b>STL</b>	Studio Transmitter Link
<b>TBC</b>	Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation
<b>TV</b>	Television
<b>UPS</b>	Uninterrupted Power Supply
<b>VOK</b>	Voice of Kenya

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Liberalization** It is any process whereby a state lifts restrictions on some private individual activities or reduction of state involvement in the economy for this case opening up radio airwaves and pulling out of government control.
- Airwaves** Medium for radio broadcasting, covering a specific area allocated. Usually Managed by the Communications Authority of Kenya.
- Frequency Spectrum** Coverage area of electromagnetic frequency used for a FM radio communications. Usually assigned by the Communications Authority of Kenya through a specific licence allocation
- Competence** Ability of an individual to perform a task effectively and efficiently without close supervision with no faults
- Professional qualification** Occupational qualifications often involving an element of practical training linked with the FM Radio Broadcast industry in Kenya
- Sustainability** Sustainability focuses on FM radio stations meeting her needs without compromising future ability. The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental and social

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Overview

This chapter covers; background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance, justification, scope and limitation as well as assumptions of the study; The section also presents a conceptual framework and the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

### 1.1 Background of the study

In Kenya, the airwaves were liberalized in the early 1990s, with no broadcasting legislation or regulatory system in place. The then, Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) was mandated to manage the radio frequency spectrum, but the awarding of licenses and frequencies was carried out selectively, on an ad-hoc basis and with no clear pattern or policy African Media Barometer (2005). This liberalization of broadcasting has had profound effect in Nairobi, but outside the main urban centres, state-run Kenya Broadcasting Corporation provides the only domestic radio and TV for many listeners and viewers, with the rest of FM radio stations still struggling to go further upcountry. The broadcast media, partly as a result of the liberalisation policies, has grown in leaps and bounds as the number of radio and television outlets has multiplied significantly (Githaiga, 2011).

Radio has a long tradition of serving as an informational medium on topics such as health, gender, peace and agriculture in rural areas (Gilberds & Myers, 2012; Myers, 2010). There are various advantages that make it the medium of choice in these environments. On the forefront stands the affordability. For a broadcaster, it is affordable

to install a radio station and for the audience, it is affordable to buy a battery or even a solar-powered radio set, which can be shared among various listeners. Radio programs can be an effective tool for communicating with clients. One successful example is Bio-vision international radio programs used to reach clients (producers) with target messages on enterprises production. Radio programs have a wide reach and are gender neutral (Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries, 2017).

According to the CCK Quarterly Sector Statistics Report, Second Quarter, October–December 2010/2011 as quoted by Githaiga (2011) the demand for broadcasting frequencies outstrips availability, especially in urban areas. Githaiga documented that there were, three hundred and seventy two (372) FM frequencies that have been issued to radio stations nationally. Of these, 233 were on air while 139 were dormant. Githaiga (2011) notes that radio is the most accessible and affordable medium in Kenya. A survey to establish radio and television ownership, conducted in February and March 2008, revealed that at least 10.7 million Kenyan homes had access to either a radio or a television set. Therefore, it can be affirmed that in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, the media has been enjoying a period of growth supported by liberalization. This has seen a sharp rise in the number of independent radio and television stations.

Radio broadcasting has registered the largest growth and there is a tendency of media concentration and cross media ownership attributed to the cut throat competition in a crowded liberalized market (Oriare, 2010). Local radio stations in Kenya which are often referred to as vernacular radios, are very popular. These radio stations are notoriously partisan and routinely flout codes of ethics with impunity mainly because they have political backing and are mostly owned by local politicians and investors with state house connections. In the specific case of Kenya, radio has been historically

dominated by English and Swahili (Okoth, 2015). It is just in recent years that radio stations broadcasting in local language have begun to emerge, a practice which seems to bear the potential of strongly benefitting the target audience. However, there is also a need to increase professionalism in these radio stations through adequate training of the staff Okoth (2015).

The programming of private stations is dominated by entertainment, especially music. Politically sensitive public affairs programming is shunned and only left to those radio stations that have the political clout and backing of powerful politicians. Live phone-in talk shows on current affairs are a common feature. Kenya's broadcasting history shares similar characteristics with Uganda. Prior to the liberalization drives of the 1990s, broadcasting in Kenya was monopolized by the government. Voice of Kenya (VOK) was more of a government mouth piece than a public space for citizen's deliberation. Dissenting voices were muzzled. The last fifteen years has witnessed an enormous growth in Kenya's media industry with ownership base expanding to include faith groups, local and foreign investors.

Githaiga (2011) contends that the challenges faced by FM Radio stations include the difficulty of how to develop programmes that would gratify the audience's expectations and needs. Today, the substance and format of the content is dull, repetitive and hard to follow. This is because the emergence of numerous FM radio stations have brought about greed to command a certain audience and the competition to emerge as number one radio station in the country following listenership surveys by accredited research institutions. In this regard, radio programming has been caught up with lack of sufficient content back-grounding, which during the airing of the program, makes the listener to

detect comprehension deficiencies in the entire production resulting to ‘dull’ radio listenership experience.

Most of the radio stations have no defined target audience considering the duplication of programmes. Through the researchers’ observations, it is worth mentioning that celebrity branding has been seen as the motivator of listenership in these radio stations at the expense of professionalism. Radio producers have assumed that comical presentation by renowned comedians would attract listenership compared to issue based programming with a more interesting approach. This cycle has continued to demoralize professional producers in radio station considering that value is placed on such celebrities thus reflecting on remuneration.

For lack of uniqueness, ‘flat programme production’, absence of newness, uninteresting or offensive content and general unattractive and inappropriate presentation skills, most radio stations have lost loyalty and command of listenership. Instances of listeners switching between stations as a way of trying to escape repetition are no longer an amusement. This has led to new or upcoming FM radio stations not able to attract advertisers and sponsors, thus making it difficult to operate in the media space (Bosibori, 2011). Presented with such eventualities, the management of these radio stations opts to embrace cost-cutting measures in a bid to meet its obligation as a broadcaster while at the same time meeting its operation costs and remaining profitable as well as relevant. Radio stations are using the essence of balance in production and priming advantage to attract audiences. Advertisers and sponsors have resorted to splitting their advertisement budgets between radio and alternative advertisement media such as online advertising.

According to Kijana (2012) there are concerns that the radio industry seems to be trivializing journalism by doing what is fashionable instead of what is right through FM

stations. The reporting culture, premised on gathering and verifying information is being increasingly overrun by sensational programming trends. Primary values of journalism stress accuracy, truthfulness, fairness and balance. These seem to have been disregarded by the new media stations. Presenters are not interested in verifying facts. The principle of keeping facts separate from suspicion and analysis is no longer honored.

Kijana (2012) observes that, the Kenyan media is now the most diverse in East Africa, with a large middle class providing a base for substantial advertising revenue. The concept of radio is drastically changing. Gone are the days when the entire country had only a single state radio. Now everyone with money to invest is racing to secure an FM frequency, and the moment they get the station going, they apportion lots of airtime to talk-shows and call-ins.

The challenges affecting the FM radio industry are numerous. They include; absence of clear strategies and technical abilities around important functions like audience research. Other weaknesses include lack of technical skills, celebrity branding which seems a trend for 'audience-catch' strategy, high interest in comedy as a listenership catalyst at the expense of pure objectivity and education in radio programmes. All these are just but a pinch of the entire mountain of challenges surrounding the sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya.

Content on the social media platform should follow a clear editorial style and must be consistent for relevance. Through the researcher's observation, radio stations have dived into social media with little regard to clear editorial policies such that almost all the staff working in the radio station as producers or presenters are administrators of these accounts and comments made by them are not filtered before being shared on-line.

Masolane (2005) and Simmering & Fairbairn (2007). Many new local independent and community radio stations start with high flown ideals of development programming, community service and self-sustainability, but practice has produced mixed and sometimes contradictory results. Despite radio's advantages of being one of the cheapest and accessible mass communications technologies, small stations still struggle to survive. While open access does execute the original aesthetic and moral imperative of FM radio's founding generation", issues of sustainability, and more specifically, financial resources have far reaching effects on the stations' ability and capability to fulfill their functions

Mbuba (2015). Most of these rapidly increasing FM Radio stations suffer from income deficiency because they compete for common potential advertisers and sponsors who prefer to work with established radio stations. For survival and the need to find alternative means of income generations, these radio stations have turned other ways of generating revenue such as SMS premium rate services in conjunction with the mobile telephone service providers, parallel businesses such as Internet services and marketing

Majority of the radio stations raise revenue by charging for services like faxing, scanning, desktop publishing, training, internet access, radio announcements and messages and program sponsorship by local NGOs. This revenue barely covers the overhead cost. Additional revenue is generated through contributions from local community and project funds (Hughes, 2005). For most of the community radio stations in the region operating within the contexts of extreme rural poverty, it is difficult for individuals to contribute towards the sustenance of their radio stations. More crucially, due to limited funding, trained community radio practitioners are often lured away to paid jobs in private broadcasting (Myers, 2008)

## **1.2 Statement of the Research problem**

The broadcast media, partly as a result of the liberalization policies, has grown in leaps and bounds as the number of radio stations outlets has multiplied significantly. Liberalization brought with it a cut throat competition among the licensed FM radio stations. They had to innovate survival tactics to become relevant. These radio stations grapple with challenges that threaten their survival among them, difficulty in developing programmes that would gratify the audience's expectations and resource deficiency. Some radio stations have been forced to re-brand and others closed down due to inability to be self-sustainable in their operations.

Lack of competent personnel to manage programming, inadequate and obsolete production tools and equipment such as recorders, sound editing software, mixers and internet are some of the major factors hindering production of radio content in Kenya. There lacks a standardized professional know-how in production of world class radio programming. FM radio stations in the country have had to go through a disordered journey of operation that makes them fail to achieve minimum stands compared to effectiveness and efficiency expected in liberal environment like the one in Kenya thus the hard struggle for sustainability is inevitable.

Apparently, there are a number of challenges facing licensed radio stations including the survival for existence, dynamics in Technologies, issues relating to human resource, government policies and other legal regulations. All these have in one way or the other presented a challenging environment for FM radio stations to prosper and even sustain themselves in the broadcasting industry.

It is against this backdrop that this study will present a retrospective assessment of the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment while focusing on Five FM radio stations that broadcast from Bungoma County, Kenya. This study therefore comes at an opportune time to assess the whole concept of how to ensure sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment.

### **1.3 Research assumptions**

A research assumption is hereby considered to be a tentative statement about relationships that exist between or among various variables. Furthermore, it is viewed as a conjectural statement about relationships that need to be tested and resultantly accepted or rejected at the end of the research. As such, the following assumptions have been formulated for this research. Poor performance of FM radio stations in Bungoma County can be attributed to:

- i. Lack of viable social acceptance from target listeners
- ii. The absence of innovative and effective fundraising and marketing strategy.
- iii. Inappropriate and/or ineffective organizational and management policies

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.4.1 Main objective**

This study sought to investigate the factors that affect the sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya amid the highly competitive market that is operating in a techno savvy environment.

### **1.4.2 Specific objectives**

Specific objectives of the study were;

- (i) To determine the effect of liberalizing the broadcasting airspace on the development of radio in Bungoma County, Kenya
- (ii) To examine the resource deficiency in sustainability of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.
- (iii) To establish if advances in technology plays a role in the sustainability of FM stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The research questions that guided the study are;

- (i) What is the effect of liberalizing the broadcasting airspace on the development of radio in Bungoma County, Kenya?
- (ii) What are the resource deficiencies in sustainability of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County?
- (iii) Does advancement in technology play a role in the sustainability of FM stations in Bungoma County?

### **1.6 Justification of the study**

Considering the research done in the area of FM radio, it is affirmed that there is little research carried out to determine the elements affecting the underperformance of FM radio stations situated in Bungoma County of Kenya. There was need to study the

various FM radio stations and present a thorough report of the situation on the ground. There is exponential development of FM radio in the nation; nonetheless, a large portion of these stations are attempting to sustain themselves. Findings of this study will empower FM radio stations to deal with sustainability challenges they face, thus achievement of FM radio.

The Board of Directors of the FM radio stations, the administration, Association of media proprietors of Kenya, policy makers and other related organs can utilize discoveries from this examination to improve manageability of existing and potential FM radio stations in the nation. FM radio stations can gain from discoveries of this investigation and grasp the three part of manageability to improve self- sustainability

### **1.7 Significance**

The findings, recommendations and report of the study will be beneficial insights to the positive growth of FM radio in Kenya as well as direct the radio industry towards profitability margins and sustainable path. The findings from the study will be availed to media industry and other scholars researched information on the state of the FM radio broadcasting industry from a very analytical perspective. The research findings among other things illuminate the resource deficiencies that affect the sustainability of FM Radio stations; conduct an appraisal of the effects of liberalizing the broadcasting airspace on the development of radio in Kenya and eventually try to establish whether advances in technology plays a role in the sustainability of FM stations in western Bungoma County, Kenya and how radio stations would cushion themselves to the massive technological advancement in the media in order to maintain relevance.

## **1.8 Scope and limitations**

This study was confined to assessing the sustainability of FM Radio Stations in a competitive environment with specific reference to FM radio Stations in Bungoma County, Kenya. The results from the study may however not be generalized to all FM radio stations in the country. This is because of the diversity in the ownership/management and running of the media industry and the environment in which it is situated. The coverage scope in terms of licensed radius may also vary despite all the FM radio stations being categorized as small commercial radio stations.

The study was bound to small commercial radio stations broadcasting within former western Province, more of which are apparently stationed in Bungoma County. Thus, the study does not have in-depth insights of community radio stations. The respondents included a sample of journalists, editors, managers and radio station owners drawn from respective FM radio stations in Bungoma County. More importantly, the study was guided by the running objective and the research questions that are highlighted in this study.

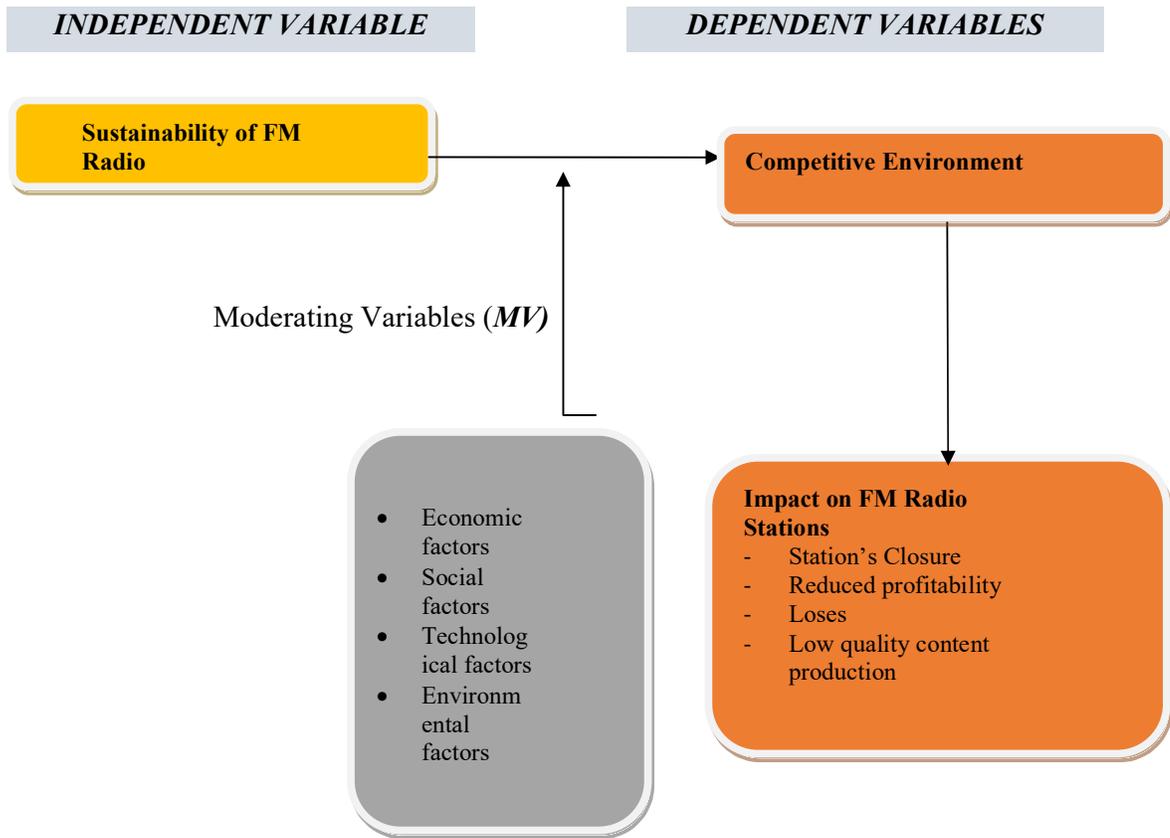
Limitations are influences that as a researcher, there is no control over. They are the shortcomings, conditions or influences that cannot be controlled and place restrictions on methodology and conclusions. These limitations tend to influence the results or the findings. In this research it was anticipated that there would be withholding of information by the managers of these radio stations especially on issues of serious resource inadequacies and therefore the research solely relied on the provided information for analysis.

## **1.9 Conceptual framework**

FM radio stations broadcast with the objective of reaching out to the community, involving members of the community and address their needs. Therefore this study will conceptualize three important forms of sustainability of rural FM radio stations. For these radio stations to become sustainable, the station has to succeed in all forms of sustainability. This will involve activities that will mobilize the right kind of resources. Although the aim of rural community radio is to become sustainable, the station should provide quality service to its audience. Content verification before dissemination is important to ensure that what the audiences receive does not infringe on others' rights or influence community negatively. In addition the station must maintain independence and play its role of serving the community. Sustainability involves ability for the radio station to perform through various activities put in place. It also has to do with the radio station's flexibility, especially with regard to the changing needs of the community and good long-term plans by the management.

A conceptual framework is a diagrammatical representation that shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables Young (2009). Mugenda (2013) defines conceptual framework as a concise description of the phenomenon under study by a graphical or visual description of the major variables of the study.

In this study the independent variable is Sustainability of FM Radio while the dependent variable is a competitive environment. A Conceptual Framework has potential usefulness as a tool to assist a researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings, see Figure 1, the conceptual framework which indicates the interrelationship between concepts and variable as presented in the research problem in this study.



**Figure 1. 1: Conceptual Framework (Author 2017)**

### 1.10 Theoretical framework

In this study, theoretical framework is intended to provide a theoretical structure upon which the research is underpinned. The study therefore draws from *Development Media Theory* applicable in countries at lower levels of economic development and with limited resources. The media is seen to fulfil particular and political duties; hence media freedom while desirable should be subordinated to national integration, socio-economic modernization, promotion of literacy and cultural creativity. Development media theory seeks to accentuate the positive; it nurtures the autonomy of the developing nations and gives special emphasis to indigenous cultures. The theory focused on passive audience which was not participatory. It involves capacity

building for institutions or individuals related to freedom of expression, pluralism and diversity of media, as well as transparency of media ownership. Media development plays a role in democracy and effective democratic discourse through supporting free and independent media.

McQuail (1987) canvasses media support for an existing government and its efforts to bring about socio-economic development. It argues that until a nation is well established and its economic development well underway, media must be supportive rather than critical of government, but assist them in implementing their policies. McQuail states that there is freedom but not absolute freedom at such there should be a limit to the freedom of journalist.

Larin states that the theory can be further time tuned to fit perfectly into the situation the assumptions that the media should accept and carry out positive development task in line with national established policy; they should accept and help in the special developed task of national integration. In other to safeguard press theory, journalist and other media worker should at all times faithfully fulfil their obligations and strongly defend their rights in the course of information gathering and disseminating task and all this should fit into the situation of developing countries.

Unlike developed countries such as Western Democracies, the developing nations have built their systems on a colonial legacy that made little provision for the unique conditions of third world countries. These include “the absence of communication infrastructure and professional skills, economic means, and production and cultural resources” compounded by a high rate of illiteracy and the diversity of languages used in these countries (Roelofse, 1997). The dependency syndrome has continued in the post-colonial era in the form of neocolonialism and cultural imperialism. Hence, developing

countries have advocated for the positive use of media to promote national development, autonomy and cultural identity (McQuail, 2005).

As the press performs its responsibilities, according to McQuail (2005) it bears the following tenets in mind: Media must accept and carry out positive development tasks that are in line with the policies formulated by the political leadership and freedom of the press should not be at variance with economic priorities of the government and the development needs of the citizenry. Media should therefore give priorities to the coverage of those areas that touch on the lives of the people. In other words, content should be development-driven and should center on socio-economic and political lives of the people.

This theory is generally opposed to the dependency and foreign domination, and the arbitrary authoritarianism. It encourages positive use of the media in national development for the autonomy and cultural identity of the particular national society. It favors democratic grass-roots involvement and participative communication models. The Development Media Theory presents pertinent issues that are of importance to the growth of the media industry. This research however singles out the following principles and proponents of the theories based on each objective as applied to this study:

**Objective 1:** To determine the effect of liberalizing the broadcasting airspace on the development of radio in Bungoma County, Kenya

Freedom of the media should be open to the restrictions according to the economic priorities and development needs of the society: Media and practitioners are governed through the statutory laws as well as various institutions such as the Journalists Unions, Media owners associations, Kenya Film Classification Board , Media Council of Kenya, Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO) and the Communications Authority of Kenya.

Indeed even with liberalization of the air waves, the media has freedom at disposal but with conflicting rights to regulations with regards to some of the programmes aired not just in our FM Radio stations but also in the entire media fraternity. At this point, it is survival for the available market of listenership by trying to be unique.

**Objective 2:** To explain the resource deficiency in sustainability of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

Media should carry out and accept positive development tasks in line with nationally established policy: Media is no doubt given power but there is no check kept upon it and instead of being led by the government it may be led by another ideology that may be business minded which would have nothing to do with the betterment of the society. This is why most of the media houses in Kenya compete for advertisers and sponsors by producing programmes devoid of setting agenda but purely entertainment through music. Such programmes require less effort and resources.

Journalists and other media workers have responsibilities as freedoms in their information-gathering and dissemination task. Through the Kenya Union of Journalists and the Media Council, Media practitioners and journalists have their interests and rights protected. They provide an umbrella under which all grievances concerning media misconduct can be addressed.

In the interest of development, the state has a right to intervene in, or restrict media operations and devices of censorship; subsidy and direct control can be justified. This comes in handy through in-house styles of productions pegged on station policies. However, direct censorship and control has become subjective in FM radio clouded by controversies on the language used and presentation of content to the public.

**Objective 3:** To find out if advances in technology play a role in the sustainability of FM stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

Issue regular guidelines for day-to-day operation of media: Although different degrees of self-regulation is encouraged, media practitioners are not trusted by government officials to carry out their responsibilities without guidance and constant monitoring. The Communications authority of Kenya has come up with Technical guidelines of media operations. Each FM radio station has to fulfill specific conditions with regards to equipment use thus approval before operations begin as well as routine inspections to ensure that the quality, only licensed spectrum is utilized and that the right equipment is used.

Bala Musa (2010) African media are caught in a dilemma of role definition. It functions both as part of the sub- and the super-structure, without enjoying the benefit of either. It is also seen as a precursor of nation-building in developing countries. Mass media systems in sub-Saharan Africa display problems of technology transfer, while media practitioners and policy makers are yet to invent an appropriate philosophy to articulate the media's role. The dream for the media to deliver rapid development to Africa remains an illusion. This research identifies the functions and dysfunctions of the theory, as well as its use and abuse by journalists and governments. It shows that journalistic practice in sub-Saharan Africa suffers from the dislocation between its mass media system and other socio-political institutions.

According to Siebert et al (1956) in their book *Four Theories of the Press*, "the press takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates". The press and other media, in their view, will reflect the "basic beliefs and assumptions that the society holds". In the western liberal tradition, this refers to matters

such as freedom, equality before the law, social solidarity and cohesion, cultural diversity, active participation, and social responsibility. Different cultures may have different principles and priorities.

### **1.11 Chapter summary**

In the light of the discussion presented above, small FM radio stations should therefore be viewed as an important element of a collective communication system not just in their limited scope of operation but also in the country. Its potential and instrumentalities for role performance, capacity development and its ability to respond to the communication needs of individuals and institutions cannot be underestimated. Outstanding among its noble intentions is its potential to spread the social benefits of community development through the promotion of indigenous initiatives; additionally, it is through the Radio that communities are empowered to understand their responsibilities and rights in building democratic societies. Even so, the cost of operating these FM Radio stations in Bungoma County remains a challenge for most operators.

The chapter presented the Background to the Study, Challenges facing the FM radio in Bungoma County, Problem Statement, Research Assumptions, Aim and Objectives, Definition of concepts, Significance and a Theoretical Framework of the study as well as established the key elements that are pertinent in the sustainability of FM radio stations which has been described as one with diversity operating in an environment that is facing stiff competition. With the aid of a conceptual framework, the chapter has also depicted the relationship of the variables as well as identifying the controlling variables in the media industry. In the next chapter, more gaps that need to be filled are discussed as well as information that informs the variables for the development of the study through literature reviews.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Overview**

This Chapter begins by presenting a situational analysis of the environment in which FM radio stations operate in Kenya. Under this, the factors covered include; political, economic, social, technological environmental and legal factors. It also presents the global view on the challenges faced by the radio industry. The Chapter by extension revisits the effects of liberalizing the airspace for broadcasting. The Chapter winds up with an incisive discussion on sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya.

#### **2.2 Analysis of the FM radio environment**

According to GeoPoll audience patterns (2019), Kenya has a high number of radio stations; including many regional stations which mean only a few stations have a high share of audience. Liberalization of the media has had some rather more problematic effects. Although there is a code of conduct for journalists, this code is often not followed – especially in the case of entry level journalists (Amutabi, 2013). The widely popular local radio stations, broadcasting in local languages, often encourage ethnic conflict. The national broadcaster, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) often falls short of the standard of a public interest information service because of its bias and partiality in reporting politics. The Business Today August 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 Edition notes that there is a significant growth of community radio stations which has increased the geographical footprint compared to other media platforms. The Kenyan market currently has 356 radio stations and growing.

Radio has become a dominant source of definitions and images of social reality for individuals but also collectively for groups and societies; we now have very many radio stations in Kenya. As many scholars and researchers such as Myers, 2008; Girard, 2003 and Mbuba, 2015) agree, the radio industry continues to be the most effective medium of public command.

MP Charles, Manenosabini (2019) affirms that the community radio commercial in Tanzania are those radio stations which have some features of community radios but in nature they are commercially oriented. Most of their programs appear not to target the needs of their listeners or communities. Their major concentration is to maximize profit and not to serve the people in their localities, in other words, they are less to people participation like the purely community radios. Most of the community radio commercials in Tanzania are established at district level and thus they serve very few people in the country. Therefore, there is a need for the government and other stakeholders in the country to invest more in community radio in order to allow majority of community members to participate in the developmental goals of the country through the various programs aired by community radio stations.

Githaiga (2011) contends that, Internet radio allows traditional FM stations to reach global audiences with minimal investment and without a change of editorial policy. It is also notable that the broadcasting sector has integrated social media platforms into their broadcasts with nearly every station setting up Face book and Twitter accounts to interact with their audiences.

A number of studies have been conducted and a lot of content generated to identify and fill the gaps in the radio industry. Despite these efforts, the radio environment continues to experience a mired of challenges affecting the sustainability of the FM radio

environment. This study analyses of the notable happenings in the FM radio environment over the years. For instance, according to Myers (2008), every African country without exception has a state broadcaster with at least one radio and one TV channel. But there are wide differences between countries as regards the numbers of commercial and independent radios. Taking an overview of Sub-Saharan Africa, some countries stand out as being very radio-rich - they either have high overall numbers of radio stations, or a high proportion of stations in relation to their population size, or both.

In the past twenty years, Kenya has witnessed an explosion of many private FM radio stations. Kenya's media have certainly played a substantial role in mediating relationships between citizens and state, in shaping the democratic dispensation in the country and have transformed how some of the marginalized people in society access information on issues that shape their lives.

Thirty years ago, there were only ten independent (non-State) radios in all of Sub-Saharan Africa Girard (2003). Since then, radio has had a renaissance. This is due to the spread of cheap transistors, the inability of television to compete due to high unit costs and lack of rural electrification, the opening-up of the airwaves in many countries, a thirst for alternatives to government-controlled media, and to fresh investment by international donors, civil society, the private sector, NGOs and governments.

Saidou (2002) comments that, constraints related to political independence and the requirements of national development subsequently gave radio a popular foothold, thus solidifying its vital importance as a major means of informing and educating the population. In assigning it a major role within the national information system, the authorities provided radio with a unique niche left vacant by the dramatic development of a dynamic but highly elitist written press and the later introduction of television, with

its overly urban orientation. Despite the seemingly fast pace of change, broadcasting liberalization have been relatively slow to follow the political changes. For example in Senegal a decision was taken to end the monopoly of the state broadcaster in 2000 but it was not until this year (2008) that actual competitor free-to-air channels were allowed licenses and frequency (Balancing Act, 2008).

Myers (2008) alludes that, radio seems to have proven itself as a developmental tool, particularly with the rise of community and local radios, which have facilitated a far more participatory and horizontal type of communication than seemed to be possible with the older, centralized broadcasting model of the 1960s and 70s. The opening up of the broadcast sector has been part of the wider liberalization of African economies in the 1990's.

Radio is uniquely suited to the African context, being an aural and portable medium in a continent that is predominantly non-literate and has communal living patterns Spitulnik (2000). The use of new information and communication technologies (NICTs), particularly the telephone (fixed and cellular) and multimedia computers, allowed for the emergence of more user-friendly radio and signalled the advent of greater democratization in radio communication (Saidou, 2002).

Radio is a new alternative communication paradigm and one that is a tangible symbol of the people's desire to appropriate a technology for disseminating information and culture. It is simply a technology that lures masses to identify with it. The broadcast and communications industry in Kenya has been undergoing rapidly changing environmental conditions in terms of the regulatory framework and competition. The Government should create a conducive environment for profit while preserving consumer's rights. Environmental challenges are issues facing the business organization from within and

without that threaten the ability of the organization to compete successfully in the market. There-fore, in today's highly turbulent business environment, it is important for the organization to engage in continuous scanning of environment in order to promptly identify the issues facing the organization and undertake timely responses (Omae *et al*, 2013).

Radio, like all mass-media, flourishes best in countries where the rule of law is respected and where media regulation is independent and even-handed. This, unfortunately, is not the case in the vast majority of African countries (as can be seen in the map overleaf). In most places the body that regulates the media either operates directly out of the ministry of information or its officers are direct appointees of the ruling party of the day Myers (2008). Media and telecommunications are also merged within the regulatory bodies of Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Tanzania and Uganda.

The above notwithstanding, in some countries, there is no separate regulator at all, as in Central African Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gambia, Liberia, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Swaziland. This obviously has negative consequences for independent journalism (*ibid*, 2008).

### **2.3 Global view of the challenges facing the radio Industry**

Peter da Costa in his paper, “The Growing Pains of Community Radio in Africa”. *Emerging Lessons towards Sustainability* posits that, the sheer proliferation of radio stations that have come into existence, particularly since the airwaves begun to be liberalized in the 1990s, represents both progress and challenge. In 11 countries surveyed across Africa, local commercial radio grew by an average of 360 percent between 2000 and 2006, whereas community radio grew by a striking 1,386 percent, on average, over the same period (Myers, 2011).

The use of NICTs by radio stations has produced repercussions on radio itself, as well as on its basic functions as an information dissemination technology. Likewise, the emergence of private radio stations has had significant effects on the audiovisual landscape. First, as a technology, radio has moved from being merely an information and communication technology (ICT) to an NICT, due to modern advances such as frequency modulation. Moreover, the telephone, the computer and its applications (particularly DAT) have allowed radio to modernize and become global. Besides the diversification and enrichment of the national audiovisual scene, the appearance of independent radio stations has engendered greater familiarity between radio and its listeners (Saidou, 2002).

According to Myers (2008), radio journalists in Africa, are, on the whole badly paid, have little job-security and are poorly organized in terms of professional or trade-union bodies. In such dire economic circumstances, editors and journalists must find income where they can which often means accepting payment for covering stories. Thus, politicians (or their extended families) are often the patrons of private radio stations, or if a politician/businessman cannot afford to buy a radio station outright, s/he can opt for paying in cash or kind for positive coverage. In Kenya, this has been widely referred to as *brown envelop journalism*.

It amounts to cash payments or free meals, per diems, and other gifts and favours which, in many countries, keep most journalists alive, yet in thrall to local and national political and business interests, and with dire consequences for the neutrality and quality of content. The impediment of this vice is best summed up by the Balancing Act, 2008:39) which states denotes that:

*Media, whether private or otherwise, is very “political” and involvement in media is often seen as a way of getting or currying political favour. As a result, African media is not seen as a business sector in its own right that can generate jobs and money but rather more as an act of political patronage.*

On the whole, radio journalists are poorly trained, if trained at all, and due to low job security and scant professional rewards, there is a high turnover and brain-drain out of the radio profession. Faced with this scenario the need for investment in training is continuous and as vital as ever.

Bowing to the study done by Bosibori (2011) on ‘Challenges in Setting up and Operating a Community Radio Station in Kenya: Study of Community Radio Stations in Nairobi’; his findings indicated that most of the challenges the audience experience from the radio stations are the short programmes aired, limited coverage area, language barrier, limited music played, unprofessional presenters and inadequate community participation. Other challenges include; lack of salary or poor remuneration, inadequate equipment, low capacity generators, insufficient working space, unprofessional productions and high staff turnover and lack of finances.

Fardon & Furniss (2000) revealed that the biggest problem that community radios face is that most of community radio stations hardly know their audience and lack the methodological or material resources to get to know them. He argues that rural radio has not been in practice as participatory as it is in principle and rhetoric and this has hindered fulfilment of its true potential. Globalization, access to training, quality equipment that are durable and easy to maintain, and legislative framework are among challenges that rural community radio face. Frequent audience research is a requirement for rural community radio since it helps the broadcaster to know the kind of audience the station reach out to and adopt the programs to the aspiration and expectations of the listener.

Fardon & Furniss (2006) insist that lack of research has made the broadcaster to address themselves to the potential public they imagine to share their own tastes and preoccupations

The findings from the above study, although dwelled on Community Radio Stations, are applicable to commercial FM radio stations. The major undoing of the above research was however that it only concentrated on the challenges of Community Radio Stations at the point of setting up the radio station.

#### **2.4 Impact of liberalizing the airwaves**

The sheer proliferation of radio stations that have come into existence, particularly since the airwaves begun to be liberalized in the 1990s, represents both progress and challenge. In 11 countries surveyed across Africa, local commercial radio grew by an average of 360 percent between 2000 and 2006, whereas community radio grew by a striking 1,386 percent, on average, over the same period, Myers (2011). Total radio stations range from three or four each in Rwanda and Kenya to countries such as Mali with 159 community radio stations (ibid).

Mbuba (2015) while studying the *Effects of Liberalization of Airwaves on Television Advertising in Kenya*, notes that, liberalization eliminates state control over economic activities. It consists of a process through which some restrictions, mainly on economic or social policy of the government ought to be relaxed. More related, Abuoga & Absalom (1988), define liberalization as the loosening of government controls and is most often used as an economic term. This argument is however inept in the field of journalism and mass communication. It lacks a direct touch with the topic under study. Thus, to make it acceptable, there is need to further look into it so as to understand media liberalization.

In Kenya, liberalization can be defined by the entry of private players in early 1990, which brought revolutionary changes. This was the emergence of the media liberalization. With the entry of other media outlets in the industry, programming changed. An interactive culture emerged to completely democratize the electronic media space that was hitherto a preserve of the political elite. The increasing number of media outlets especially the broadcasting sector as well as the cut-throat competition among media outlets, has increased plurality of information. The concept of radio is drastically changing. Gone are the days when the entire country had only a single state radio. Now everyone with money to invest is racing to secure an FM frequency, and the moment they get the station going, they apportion lots of airtime to talk-shows and call-ins (Kijana, 2012). For a more elaborate purview of the impact of liberalization in the media industry, the following areas have been identified.

### **2.5 Impact on the Industry's competitive environment**

Mbuba (2015) did a study on the Effects of Liberalization of Airwaves on Television Advertising in Kenya. When it comes on the effect of liberalization on media houses, his findings indicated that there have been effects of liberalization of airwaves on media houses especially as was represented by a 78% of the respondents who agreed that there was higher attitude of creativity within the media houses. In the same study however, 17% of the respondents felt that the effects of liberalization of airwaves on media houses has had a negative effect where there have been unhealthy intra and inter media conglomerate rivalry and a few other effects at 6% like signals interference, overlap and jamming, commercialization of news, audience confusion and apathy due to wide range of options on television stations and improved technology.

Exposing the media industry to competition has reduced government dominance in the sector as a regulator and media service provider, thus allowing maximization and full exploitation of the sector. The process of liberalization has become a driving force for modern economic development throughout the world. Both developed and the developing economies have been initiating suitable reform measures in order to make their economies more vibrant and strategically competitive which would lead to greater efficiency in the allocation of resources and promote savings hence maximize growth. Liberalization of airwaves fostered competition which in turn has spurred improvement in quality and efficient marketplace through advertising of organizations products and services (Robert, 1960).

## **2.6 Impact on government**

Oketunmbi (2003) in his Seminar Paper titled, *Theory of Mass Media Hegemony and Evaluation*, noted that, liberalization of broadcasting in Nigeria had great effects on the government where the government after liberalization stated that every person was entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions provided that no person other than the Government of Federation shall own, establish or operate a television broadcasting station for any purpose whatsoever.

The above finding is not only vague, but also suppressive in two ways. First, Nigeria's government decision to liberalize the media airwaves accords the people the freedom to establish and own information dissemination media, yet on the other hand, directs that only the Federal Government is allowed to own, establish and operate TV broadcasting. Second, the directive in itself fails to expressly decentralize media establishment, ownership and dissemination of information to the people other than the Federal

government. The interpretation to this is that as much as there purports to be liberalization, control and power of broadcasting is still vested in the government. The current study shall deeply ascertain the sustainability of radio stations particularly in a competitive environment.

### **2.7 Effect on human resource**

Human resource can be available but getting the right people can be difficult. Some stations hire wrong people who end up failing the stations. Liberalization of the airwaves brought in numerous media outlets which in turn have affected the staffing in FM radio stations. Poaching of the top crème from one radio station to another is now the norm of the day. FM radio stations have resulted to engaging unprofessional staff or untrained staff in journalism and mass communication. Celebrity branding in FM radio stations has provided a thick blanket to professionalism and instead focus more on audience loyalty.

### **2.8 Sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya**

In appreciation of the need to project a broader view and understanding of the concept sustainability, a brief discussion of this term in relation to FM radio's social, operational and institutional sustainability is imperative. The chapter begins with a contextual definition of community radio sustainability. Subsequently, the researcher highlights how various sustainability factors work together to contribute to the overall sustainability of FM radio. These variables include; marketing and advertising; fundraising activities; financial management; technical and human resources management. According to Simmering & Fairbairn (2007), "sustainability is the ability of a radio station to maintain a good quality developmental broadcasting service over a period of time". It also can be viewed as the capacity of a station to manage a range of available resources to sustain its

service to the community without compromising its community service mission (Fairbairn, 2000).

Lush and Urgoiti (2012) defined sustainability as the ability to keep something going either continuously or for a period of time. Sustainability of FM radio is mostly thought of in terms of finance; however this is not the case, there is more in terms of social and institutional sustainability. It is worthy to note that apart from management of staff and resources, and sourcing of funding for the sustainability of the FM radio station, policy regarding its establishment and at times its mode of operation or guideline is also very important.

Lush and Urgoiti (2011) point out that, until recently sustainability tended to be defined in financial terms. Gumucio (2001), identifies three dimensions of sustainability which determine the ability of radio stations to survive and grow. All three are inter-related and have an impact on each other.

Social sustainability refers to community ownership of the station and participation in production and airing of programmes at both decision-making and operational levels. According to this definition, only communities that have 'appropriated' or 'owned' a communication process can make it socially sustainable. Social sustainability refers to community ownership of the station and participation in the production and airing of programs at both decision-making and operational levels. Buckley (2011) on the other hand defined social sustainability as the relationship between media organization and the community or audience it serves.

While the issue of financial sustainability is supreme, it is also necessary for stations to sustain themselves in other ways. A station that has enough funding or is well resourced but lacks well produced local quality programming cannot hold listeners and will not be able to sustain itself for long. Social sustainability involves community ownership of the station, and participation in production and airing of programming at both decision making and operational levels (Bosch, 2007; Hussain, 2007 and Simmering & Fairbairn, 2007).

Institutional sustainability Relates to the ways the broadcasters function: station policies, democratic processes, management styles, internal relationships and practices, and partnerships with external agencies. It entails proper application of radio related regulation; appropriate management mechanism; trained work force; effective programming structure; participation based organizational development and development of a robust technical resource pool. Institutional sustainability as defined by Buckley (2011) is about structural arrangement for operational management and governance that include accountability to a sustainably constituted and representative governing body.

Grumucio (2001) who refers to it as operational sustainability asserts that it refers to station's policies; management styles; internal relationships and practice, furthermore, it involves partnerships with external agencies. Operational sustainability demands that these elements be complemented by the development of an up scalable information network that is adaptable to the new and ever changing information technologies for effective community radio sustainability (Wesso, 2007).

According to Grumucio (2001), it is the ways in which broadcasters function; station policies, democratic processes, management styles, internal relationships and practices, and partnerships with external agencies that determines sustainability. This form of

sustainability is influenced by the external environment, in particular the presence or absence of enabling laws, policies and regulation.

Financial sustainability relates to the station's model for generating revenue and how its funds are managed and accounted for. One of the main problems for radio in Africa is economic sustainability. This is true to even commercial entertainment-oriented radio, and for radio services aspiring to public service and to developmental content. As Gumucio (2005) and others have pointed out, sustainability is not necessarily 'just about money'.

Rural community radio just like any other organization requires financial sustainability to enhance daily operation of the station. Community radio seeks to build economic model of sustainability in order to achieve success. Rural community radio has to meet financial ends by engaging in economic activities that can generate revenue (Buckley, 2012; Lush & Urgoiti, 2012; CIMA, 2007 and Mefalopulos, 2008). The income should be sufficient to cover the station's operational cost. No matter how insignificant the activity might be, for example, selling airtime, event participation, and merchandise sales, sharing in-house infrastructure; grants and donations from external sources, all these contribute immensely to stations' sustainability (Hussain, 2007 and Open Society Foundation, 1999).

Sound institutional organization, social inclusiveness and participation are also crucial elements for sustainability of Radio. Africa's broadcast output has always been largely funded through advertising - even the state broadcasters. This is because most Africa states have never had the tradition nor the means by which to raise significant funds through taxation or a license-fee. For example, South Africa's SABC, finds 80% of its

revenue from advertising; Tanzania's TBC raises 85% in the same way (Balancing Act, 2008).

It is also imperative to note that a change of tactic to conform to the current trends and as a measure of sustainability, the Kenyan scenario with the closure of FM radio stations comes into play as a great challenge in radio operations. On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 the standard newspaper through Rawlings Otieno and Graham Kajilwa in their story “*Nation Media Group Shuts down TV and Radio*” Nation Media Group Closed down its three subsidiary media entities, in a move to scale down broadcasting services thus minimizing on the operation costs. A number of jobs were cut in Kenya and Rwanda following the closure of QTV, Nation FM and K.FM in Rwanda. Singling out on the closure of the radio, Nation media group defended the move sitting changing trends in the media industry. The group opted to maintain the online presence in line with her digital media strategy.

Nation Media is a well-established entity in Kenya scaling down its operation cost through closure of its subsidiary entities. This closure prompts an informed excavation of how exactly other media houses in Kenya work towards self-sustainability considering the current challenges in media, more so upcoming or small broadcast entities with special interest in Bungoma County, Kenya.

## **2.9 Sustainability Factors in FM Radio stations**

### **2.9.1 Quality programming**

Radio stations are in the center business of delivering programs for advancement. This accomplishment is practical just when radio stations think of value programs that would satisfy audience needs and goals. In doing as such, Fm radio stations will most likely pull

in promoters, supports or by and large organizations along these lines thus helping in sustainability.

Bell & Morse (1999) upholds that a useful way of understanding the sustainability of any development project is to ask what it is that needs to be sustained. The answer in local development radio is clearly good quality development programming. In their view, this idea applies to all kinds of stations that have development missions, whether religious; community; commercial; NGO or any combination of these. Linked to this is the need to understand what good quality development programming is. Mtimde (2000) contends that good community radio programming needs to be relevant to its community and actually relate to the mission stations set themselves to achieve.

Bosch (2007) emphasizes that all kinds of development stations face the same challenge producing quality development programming using participatory methods owing to high expenses. Quality programming requires good management of volunteers and fieldworkers, development of community skills and understandings, as well as research trips. The high cost of programming is a fact of life for small radio stations with development missions and it is the main reason why so many stations are tempted to give over their airtime to cheap music or talk formats when donors withdraw sponsors

### **2.9.2 Programme variation**

According to Wigston (2001), many stations with a wide variety of talk programmes are too unpredictable. Stations need to avoid making dramatic changes to programming as this makes programmes to be too unpredictable, and listeners get bored, and switch off. However, this does not mean that stations should not be creative. Unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, stations should try to make the content of their programmes a little more creative although the starting times should remain as predictable as possible.

Listeners prefer a little more variation than they usually get in terms of content (List, 2002 and Wigston, 2001). Whether through planning or not, all programming conveys a message about the station and listeners form opinions about the station on that basis. While total unpredictability does not satisfy most listeners creativity remains necessary.

### **2.9.3 Marketing programmes**

Marketing is a total approach that defines the running of a business and is centered on understanding the customer and developing the product to meet the customers' need Maphiri (1999). Marketing starts with being aware of the customer, knowing the customer and developing the product for the customer following which then advertising and selling the product can be possible (Pavlicevic, 1999).

In any FM Radio station, marketing is not an afterthought but it is built in. Simply by choosing one programme format, programmers limit one set of marketing options, but at the same time creating another. Key aspects of marketing through programming comprise staying on air, quality, originality, interactivity, community building and programme variation among others.

### **2.9.4 Staying on-Air**

It is imperative that FM radio stations stay on air continuously to retain listenership. At no point should radio afford to go off-air and disrupt normal programming. Such inconsistencies would negatively impact to sustainability.

The top priority, far ahead of everything else, was simply being available (List, 2002). If a station is off air, it is not going to win listeners. An automated broadcast, for example, playing unannounced music all night from a multi-CD player is preferable to being off

air. However, there is another way of being off air that is usually more confusing than silence which is called frequency sharing.

### **2.9.5 New programme ideas**

Radio like other media needs a consistent supply of new thoughts. Broadcasters will in general come up short on thoughts following a year or two, so they will in general duplicate projects from different stations. In the event that every one of the stations are duplicating each other, they are probably going to come up short on thoughts quickly. This would result to a boring listening and therefore lack of audience loyalty which in turn affects sustainability of these radio stations.

### **2.9.6 Interactive programming**

Interactivity is radio's big advantage over other media. Combining radio with the telephone provides an instant feedback system which is absent in print media because even a daily newspaper has a minimum turnaround time of one day. For the time being, till cheap television production, videophones, and broadband internet are universal, radio remains by far the best medium for quick feedback.

Therefore, to be successful, community radio marketing must facilitate interactive links between producers and consumers for them to learn from each other and to produce an improved product that better meets the consumers' needs (List, 2002).

This means programmes that give listeners voices an opportunity to be heard on radio. List (2002), recommended three main ways highlighted hereunder. Programmes that create two-way communication, between the listeners and the station such as talkback or phone-in programmes, musical requests, free classified ads, on-air competitions, games,

talent quests, appeals, radio thons, "question and answer" programs, and radio browsing programmes which appeal to various community groups.

Programmes that encourage listeners to discuss such as special programmes, major sports matches, community notice boards, "vox pop" interviews with ordinary people, controversial presenters and opinions, outside broadcasts, programmes of greeting and commemoration as well as phone-in segments which are appropriate for audience-building. Programmes of co-operation with other local media, creating an exchange of audiences. For example, stations could invite the local newspaper editor to read the editorial on air once a week, followed by a phone-in discussion. In return, the newspaper could print the program schedule, and review some programme (*ibid*,2002).

### **2.9.7 Audience research based programming**

Most of the advertisers are interested in knowing about the performance of the station before they can decide to do business. Quality programming and useful audience research information available to shareholders can attract more co-operation and general support from these players. Audience research also has positive influence on the policies and structures developed at the stations (Scheepers, 1999). Stations need to conduct community mapping and low cost participatory audience research projects in order to produce appropriate programming

### **2.9.8 Station formats and positioning**

Radio programmes have two main components: talk and music. Throughout the world, the most popular stations are the ones that play music the majority of the time (List, 2002). But listeners want more than just music, and a station that has no news will get a smaller audience (other things being equal) than a station with short news bulletins every

hour. The most popular stations have either "mostly talk" or "mostly music", but not a 50-50 mixture (which produces very small audiences), nor 90-10. A programme mix capable to maximize audience share, would be that which plays music about 80% of the time, 10% news/information, and 10% commercials. A mostly-music community station would probably have several half-hour programmes a day that are mostly talk, but interspersed with music (List, 2002 and Wigston, 2001).

Before deciding on a station format, programmers should be aware of the potential audience it will attract (Wigston, 2001). Any radio station format will have an audience ceiling, because some people will not be interested in some types of programmes. In most parts of the developed world, a "foreground radio" station that specializes in produced talk programmes will do very well to get an audience share of 10% but it will often have a high reach, because its listeners won't spend much time with it, not because they do not want to, but because they cannot spare the time to fully concentrate.

### **2.9.9 Equipment hire**

Stations might hire their spare studios plus a technical operator to local production companies so that they can record a tape or CD or use them for any related business for an agreed fee. Though facility hire usually involves studios, anything else that a radio station has can also be hired out. A popular presenter could be hired out as an announcer at weddings and private events. Facility hire can take various forms including hiring a large studio suitable for meetings, computers and skilled technicians who can fix other people's computers. As a radio station usually has better communications facilities than most other local organizations, they may be able to charge for the use of fax machines or internet access (List 2002).

According to Bosch (2007), stations could also consider equipment rental, studio and premises rental, and consultancies to business and social organizations. This method of fundraising is convenient and practicable for stations which are premised in their own buildings rather than those that are renting or using temporary premises.

#### **2.9.10 Open days and entertainment**

Regular listeners are always curious about what happens behind the scenes at their favorite radio station. An open day or entertainment event could be announced and listeners charged a small amount to visit and see the station in action. If people can be persuaded to visit the station, they will have a much more detailed mental image of it. Following their experiences at such events visitors are likely to become faithful listeners. Thus, an open day or entertainment occasion is as much an audience-building activity as a money-raising event (List, 2002). By mounting these audience-building events, stations will get both admission fees as well as build content for a programme at the same time.

#### **2.9.11 Airtime sales and trade exchanges**

Another strategy that has worked well for South African community stations is airtime sales where blocks of airtime are sold to another organization. Several examples could be drawn from a variety of stations in the country. The local University Law programme for example, could run an On-air Legal Aid Clinic, while organizations such as the Institute for Democracy in Southern Africa (IDASA) could run a slotted programme on democracy and local governance (Bosch, 2007). In these cases, the presenters and producers of the programmes would become members of the station, and receive technical training before going on- air. However, the station should make sure that the content does not come into conflict with the station's principles.

### **2.9.12 Financial accountability**

Financial accountability can be broken down into two components, namely: financial accountability and financial responsibility. Financial accountability in community radio involves being transparent to stakeholders such as donors, boards and committees, members, and the people whom the money is meant to benefit. As such, good financial responsibility has to do with monitoring whether the station does uphold obligations the organization is supposed to meet, paying staff and accounts on time, keeping proper records of the money that comes into and goes out of the organization (Pavlicevic, 1999). Following this, community stations should ensure that finances are properly controlled as guided by organizational policies. It has been well documented in several researches and is also evident through the desk research of this study, that greater diversity of funds provides greater long-term financial sustainability to the Community Radio station.

Sustainability therefore needs to be linked to the question of what needs to be sustained. Financial sustainability parameters cannot alone help respond to questions of what indicates long-term sustainability of the small commercial FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya

### **2.10 The role Advancement of Technology plays in sustainability of FM Radio stations**

According to the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, there was need to Migrate the National broadcaster, Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation (KBC) from Medium Wave Radio Transmission (KBC) to FM radio transmission to contribute to sector development and growth, increased access to information that will lead to improved education and health services and promotion of local cultural heritage. The programme which is on-going and it is 50% complete has so far seen several stations

installed and commissioned, among them:- Limuru, Timboroa, Kapenguria, Kisii, Nyamnia (Yala), Vuria, Malindi, Lamu, Garsen, Nyambene, Kitui, Garissa, Kisumu, Nyeri, Mazeras, Kapsimotwo and Nyadundo

Kenya also took a bold step in 2015 to implement the digital migration process that was initiated back in 2009. This process saw key major media houses transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. Prior to this implementation, media houses were involved in legal tussles with the intention to stop the transition. The Supreme Court of Kenya ruled in favour of digital migration and as a result, consumers of local television had to switch from analogue signals to using set-top boxes (STB) to receive programming on their TVs as well as being able to receive prescribed FM Radio stations (Bosch, 2007).

Satellite and HD radio have increased the amount and diversity of available programming by making more stations available. Internet radio has also increased the accessibility of radio communication, and practically anyone who has access to a computer can create subscription podcasts to distribute around the world. These new technologies promise to make radio an enduring, innovative form of media (List, 2002). Due to the introduction of new technologies, the way FM radio is defined is changing even more. In recent years, new technologies have promised to expand the reach of radio and to expand the kinds of programming it offers

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter overview**

This chapter presents the research design, study area, target population and sampling procedures that were used as well as the sample size, research approach, data collection tools, data analysis and ethical considerations of the study.

#### **3.2 Research design**

According to Kothari (2004), research design is a plan, roadmap and blueprint strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research question. Further, the design allows an economic, rapid data collection and generalization from a sample suitable for extensive research.

This study adopted a Mixed-methods research design. The mixed methods are seen in sampling process and the data collection stage. The methodology was employed in collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

#### **3.3 Study area**

The study was carried out in Bungoma County, Kenya. Bungoma County is located in the former Western province. It is host to majority of the radio stations licensed to operate in the former western Province, Kenya. This study selected five FM Radio

stations which include; Nyota FM, Radio Mambo, West FM, Biikap Koreet FM, and Mukwano FM.

Bungoma County (see appendix VIII) is one of the four counties in the former Western Province of Kenya. It has a population of 1,375,063, Census report (2009) covering on an area of 2,069 km<sup>2</sup>. Agriculture is the backbone of Bungoma County and most families rely on crop production and animal rearing. The economy of Bungoma County is mainly agricultural, focusing on the sugarcane and maize industries. The area experiences high rainfall throughout the year, and is home to several large rivers, which are used for small-scale irrigation.

### 3.4 Target population

The population for this study was purposefully identified and consisted of personnel working in selected radio stations. The respondents were drawn from key departments within selected FM radio including; management, programme producers/presenters, technical crew, as well as the marketing & advertising departments.

**Table 3. 1: Study Population**

Name of FM radio Station	Specific Respondents in all the stations
Nyota FM	
Radio Mambo	Radio Managers
West FM	Marketing Personnel
Biikap Koreet FM	Technical Personnel
Radio Mukwano	Producers/Presenters

*Source: Researcher 2019*

### **3.5 Sampling procedure and sample size**

This research employed Total population sampling as a type of purposive sampling technique where the entire population of 56 having a particular set of characteristics was examined out of which key informants were 5 and this number was informed by having a single manager for each radio station. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study. It is also referred to as judgemental, selective or subjective sampling. This type of sampling can be very useful in situations when you need to reach a target quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the main concern (Crossman, 2017).

Purposive sampling was used to identify respondents for the study. Specific radio staffs were identified to volunteer information useful for the study. By default, the participants from each category of the population bear similarities in the characteristics that differentiate them from others in a particular radio station. This thus yields homogeneity in the targeted respondents from each of the identified groups. For this case therefore, a homogeneous purposive sample is created based on the occupation of the respondents. The sampling procedure is explained as follows.

Through total population sampling as a type of purposive sampling technique the population was predictable and manageable and therefore, the researcher was able to collect information about the number of staff per radio station in relation to the identified categories. The entire population was 56 each having a particular set of characteristics. Five (5) Key informants were identified and this number was informed by having a single manager for each radio station. The sample size is represented in the table below:-

The sample size is shown in table 3.2 below:

**Table 3. 2: Sample Size**

<b>Name of FM Radio Station</b>	<b>Sample respondents</b>		<b>Sample size</b>
Nyota FM	Radio Managers	1	5
	Technical Personnel	4	
	Producers/Presenters	4	12
	Marketing Personnel	3	
Radio Mambo	Radio Managers	1	12
	Technical Personnel	5	
	Producers/Presenters	4	
	Marketing Personnel	2	
West FM	Radio Managers	1	12
	Technical Personnel	4	
	Producers/Presenters	5	
	Marketing Personnel	2	
Biikap Koret FM	Radio Managers	1	8
	Technical Personnel	3	
	Producers/Presenters	3	
	Marketing Personnel	1	
Radio Mukwano	Radio Managers	1	12
	Technical Personnel	2	
	Producers/Presenters	7	
	Marketing Personnel	2	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>56</b>

*Source: Researcher 2019*

### **3. 6 Data collection methods and tools**

The main data collection methods that were used include questionnaires and interview schedules. Interviews were done face-to-face with the respective radio managers, presenters, producers and marketers. Orodho (2005), describes a questionnaire as an instrument that gathers data and allows measurement for or against a particular new point. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented descriptively and complemented by graphs, percentages and charts. Inferences were then be drawn from the findings. A report was written in accordance to objectives of the study.

### **3.7 Data Collection procedure**

The researcher secured an appointment with the sampled radio stations, through the managers for the purpose of visiting and administering the questionnaire as well as schedule interviews with the respective respondents who would then be required to participate in the study. The researcher employed the services of research assistants who he trained in data collection procedures. The trained assistants then administered the data collection tools accordingly. This is in tandem with Crossman, (2017). Confidentiality of the respondents' feedback and general participation in the research was guaranteed before commencing the data collection. Questionnaire were administered and filled by the interviewer. The researcher allowed the respondents to expound on their explanations and opinions but guided them against irrelevance and redundancy. This process was recorded using a portable recorder for reference purposes during analysis of course with permission from the respondents.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

Creswell (2014) posits that qualitative research is an inquiry approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. To learn about this phenomenon, the inquirer asks participants broad, general questions, collects the detailed views of participants in the form of words or images, and analyzes the information for description and themes. According to Marczyk, Dematteo & Festinger (2005), collected data is analyzed to help the researcher get meaningful insights on the problem being examined. Data analysis is sought to provide answers to the evaluation questions. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis was used in the study. The analysis of the data collected was based on the specific evaluation questions of the study.

In method literature, there is not one single right way or most appropriate way to analyze qualitative or quantitative data. Analysis implies and indeed requires a principal choice (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). For example, in analyzing and interpreting both qualitative and quantitative data – it is the process of systematically organizing the materials collected, bringing meaning to them so that they tell a coherent story and writing it all up so that others can read what one has learned (Ololube, 2006). Based on this premise, the collected data was analyzed using both the qualitative and quantitative analysis procedures to enable the researcher draw informed conclusions from the participants' responses.

#### **3.8.1 Quantitative analysis**

Quantitative approaches simply consider the number of people who said this or the other, period. In analysis of social, psychological and cultural dynamics, this approach is shallow and cannot unearth deep motives, innuendos and hidden feelings or the “non-dit” — the veiled, the sublime and perhaps the shameful and unconventional. It assumes that

human motives can be measured in bytes and binary combinations. In many instances quantitative approaches are used in opinion polls. It is important to note that opinion polls are just one of the many forms of research surveys whose findings get to the public domain. Unfortunately, without exception, they all utilize quantitative research methods. The challenge, especially in trying to understand human motives, is that they fail to visualize the social dynamics and treat society, not as a social system, but a techno-economic system. From this premise, their generalizations are small specks scratched from the tip of the iceberg.

Gay & Airasian (2000) observed that quantitative research includes the collection of numerical data in order to explain, predict and/or control phenomena of interest. On their part, Gall, Gall & Borg (1999) opined that quantitative research relies heavily on numerical data and statistical analysis. Pole & Lampard (2002) on the other hand revealed that quantitative data analysis is far from being simply a technical exercise. It involves a process of decision-making and data manipulation which is guided by a mixture of the following – theoretical ideas, the researcher’s substantive insight, his or her degree of experience as a data analyst and the data itself. Therefore, quantitative research data is usually gathered using more structured research instruments. The results provide less detail on behaviour, attitudes and motivation.

Quantitative analysis began in the field by controlling the manner in which participants understood and responded to questions. This was a key starting point in minimization of errors. Quantitative data manipulation included data coding, entry, cleaning, transcription, analysis and interpretation. Quantitative data that was collected was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21.0. The data collected was then summarised using tables, percentages as charts.

### 3.8.2 Qualitative analysis

Saunders & Thorne (2016) to achieve reliable results, researchers have to establish connections through application of multiplicity of interconnected interpretive practices for a cumulative view of the subject matter. For opinion polls to be reliable they have to interrogate experiences of human beings in a variety of situations. Qualitative approach is useful especially when dealing with human feelings and perceptions. Generally, qualitative research method enables the researcher to explore a subject in detail. It further helps the researcher to capture data, using a non-standardized way of collecting data.

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). Gay & Airasian (2000) describe qualitative research as the collection of extensive data on many variables over an extended period of time, in a naturalistic setting, in order to gain insights not possible when using other types of research. This definition has little or no difference from the one presented by Creswell.

The data gathered was done using less structured research instruments. Denscombe (2005) guides that for the findings to be more in-depth, the questions ought to be more open-ended. The results will provide much more detailed information. It should be mentioned that figures alone do not make much sense unless they are explained qualitatively. Furthermore, mere figures do not render a study scientific (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Qualitative information was gathered using interview schedules from the radio personnel (*Radio station managers*). The information processed and analyzed through the

following steps: recording the interview using a tape recorder, data cleaning, transcribing the record, classification of various responses; identifying key responses for various themes; listing and tallying key responses by specific themes; identifying patterns emerging from key responses; studying the interrelationships between identified patterns and drawing inferences from the patterns and their interrelationships. Processing of the qualitative data will begin from the field. After each interview session, all relevant responses from the discussions will be put together. Classification of various responses will then be carried out for individual sessions. This information will be thematically analyzed and presented in summaries (Saunders & Thorne, 2016).

### **3.9 Ethical considerations**

Ethics has been defined as a branch of philosophy that deals with one's conduct and serves as a guide to one's behavior (Mugenda, 2013). Despite the high value of knowledge gained through research, knowledge cannot be pursued at the expense of human dignity and a researcher should describe how he or she will ensure that ethical requirements are upheld in the study (Oso & Onen, 2009).

To ensure the aforesaid, the researcher obtained permission to carry out the study from the School of Post Graduate Studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. A research permit was applied from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before commencing in data collection.

Before administration of the data collection tools, the researcher sought for the consent of the participants. They were fully informed of the purpose of the study, methods and its relevance. They were assured of their privacy and confidentiality and no person was forced into participating in the study. The researcher ensured that all participants and

informants were treated with respect and their concealment observed as advised by Marczyk, Dematteo & Festinger (2005).

The researcher also informed the participants of the use of voice recorders and permission thereof sought.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of data analysis in line with the objectives of the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were adopted for this study. Descriptive Analysis of the Variables in the study included an assessment of how a competitive environment affects the sustainability of FM radio stations while being controlled by Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal factors. There were two sets of data collection tools. These included interview schedules for the five sample FM radio stations; tailored questionnaires meant for; marketing personnel, technical personnel, and producers/presenters.

Apart from establishing the demographic characteristics of the respondent, each tool was crafted to seek information that would aid in answering the research questions. The responses collected by each tool were collated qualitatively and quantitatively under themes. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and deviations were used to describe the results.

#### **4.2 Response rate**

The response rate was 56 questionnaires (100%) . Respondents who took part in the study were FM radio staff from; Nyota FM, Radio Mambo, West FM, Biikap Koret FM, and Radio Mukwano. The researcher personally held one-on-one interviews with each FM radio station manager as the research assistants administered the questionnaires to other radio staff. The distribution of the data collection tools in each FM radio station is shown Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4. 1: Summary of Return rate per FM Radio Station**

<b>Name of FM radio Station</b>	<b>Total number administered</b>	<b>Filled and returned</b>	<b>% frequency</b>
Nyota FM	12	09	23.1
Radio Mambo	12	09	23.1
West FM	12	10	25.6
Biikap Koret FM	8	04	10.3
Radio Mukwano	12	07	17.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Researcher 2019*

A total of 56 questionnaires were administered to the sampled FM stations of which all operate from Bungoma County. The questionnaires were then distributed to each department (category of the radio personnel) depending on the number of staff for each category in the radio station. Out of the totals (56) that were administered (39) were returned having been filled thus giving a response rate of 69.6%. This response rate, (69.6%) was acceptable since it surpassed the minimal value of 50% response rate prescribed for statistical analysis Mugenda & Mugenda (2003).

Causal-Comparative study was conducted in the five FM Radio stations that were used in the study. As indicated above, a total of 39 participants successfully responded in the entire sample population. On average the responses from each FM radio station was as follows: - West FM had the largest response rate of 25.6% while both Radio Mambo and Nyota FM posted a 23.1% each and followed closely by Radio Mukwano with 17.9%.

The range among the response rates was obviously wider when it came to the Mount Elgon based radio station, Biicap Koreet FM which had only 10.3% response rate.

The low percentages were affected by minimal staff numbers within the radio stations which did not match the expected sample size. Most of these radio stations have staff doubling up as technical, production staff as well as marketing staff. West FM, being the first radio to be established in Bungoma County had the largest response rate compared to other radio stations. It has the capacity to employ a higher number of radio professionals.

Radio Mukwano and Biicap Koreet FM are among the new radio stations with a small size of staff most of who are not employed on a permanent basis. Quite a number of these staff are on voluntary engagement and some are still students on an extended attachment thus requiring that in this research, we identify valid staff members only. This informed the low response rate from each radio station.

The researcher was also interested in knowing the return rate per category of participants. This information is shown below in Table 4.2 which summarises the return rate of the administered and filled questionnaires. These were then used in the analysis and presentation of results.

**Table 4. 2: Distribution of response rate per category of participants**

<b>Category of Respondents</b>	<b>Returned</b>	<b>% frequency</b>
Radio Managers	5	12.8
Marketing Personnel	3	7.7
Technical Personnel	6	15.4
Producers/Presenters	25	64.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Researcher 2019*

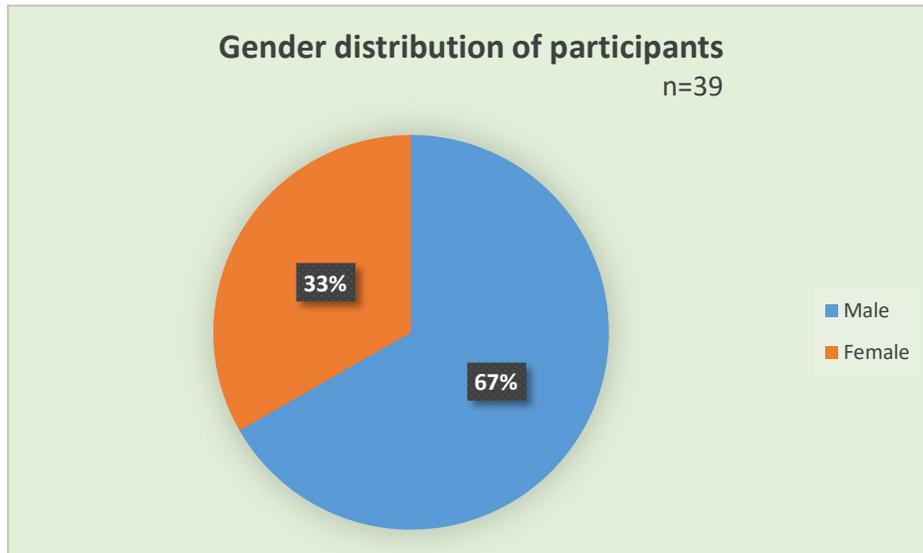
Results depict that; five (5) radio station managers were also involved in the study through an in depth interview to get insights on the issues affecting sustainability of FM radio stations. A total of three (3) marketing personnel participated across in filling the questionnaires while the technical personnel that participated were six (6). Majority (25) of the participants in the study were producers who also doubled up as presenters.

#### **4.3 Demographic Information of participants**

This section presents the respondents' personal information that would be useful in drawing valid conclusions on the state of FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya. The data collection tools also collected their demographic characteristics including; name of FM radio station, gender, age bracket, educational level of the respondents. The responses were as described below.

### 4.3.1 Gender

The gender distribution of respondents is summarized by figure 4.1 below.



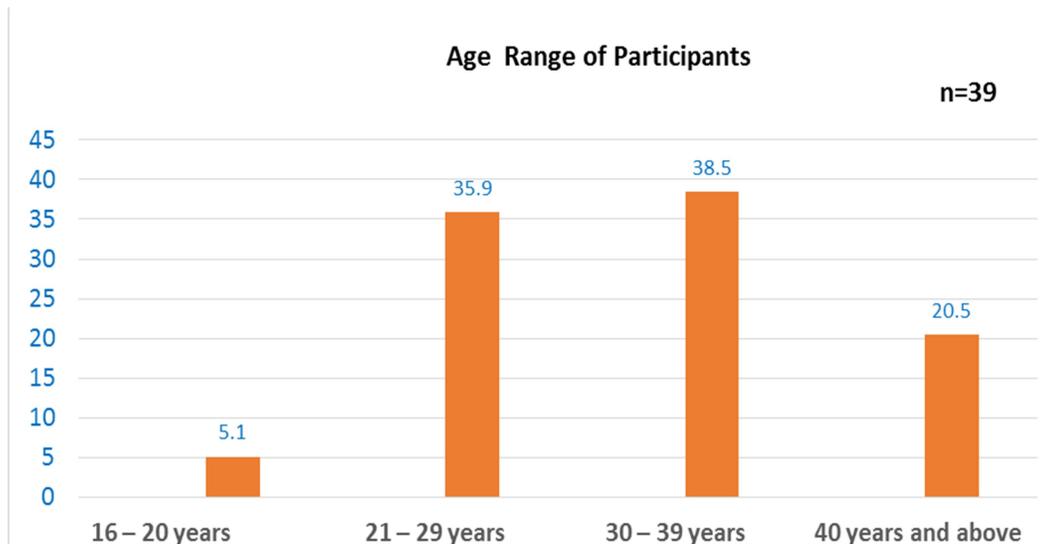
**Figure 4. 1: Gender Distribution of Participants**

*Source: Researcher 2019*

The 39 participants consisted of more male (26) than female (13) which was represented by 67% and 33% respectively.

### 4.3.2 Age

The study also established the age of each participant by asking them to indicate the range in which their age lies. This information is presented in the following figure.



**Figure 4. 2: Participant's age**  
*Source: Researcher 2019*

Through this study, it was discovered that only two of the staff working in the radio stations are within the age bracket of 16 to 20 years. This was the least recorded with a percentage of 5.1% of the entire population. Radio station employees above 40 years accounted for 20.5% with 8 radio staff. It was further noted that a majority of these were managers of the stations. This can be alluded to their work experience and charisma in leading the FM radio station team.

There was no significant difference between FM radio staff in the age bracket of 21-29 years and that of 30 to 39 years. The frequency for the two groups was at 14 and 15 respondents respectively, representing a percentage of 35.9% (21-29 years) and 38.5% for respondents with the age bracket of 30 to 39 years.

#### **4.3.3 Education level**

The participants were asked to indicate their levels of education. The responses are indicated in Table 4.3.

**Table 4. 3: Educational Level of Respondents**

Highest education attained	Frequency	%age frequency
Completed class 8	0	0
Attended Secondary	0	0
Completed form 4	2	5.1
Attained Tertiary training Certificate/Diploma	14	35.9
Undergraduate degree	19	48.7
Master's degree	4	10.3
Other	0	0

*Source: Researcher 2019*

There was no participant who reported to have no formal education at all, just as there was nil response to as having attended primary and secondary school. This means that none of the radio stations that participated in the study had illiterate or semi-literate staff.

However, the study found out that two (2) of the participants working in the FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya were having staff that have attained form four Certificates as their highest level of education which translates to 5.1% of the respondents. It was eminent during the research that one of this staffs was working in the sales and marketing department during road shows to promote the brand of the station in the region. The other one was a true reflection of celebrity branding (music artiste) who also doubled as a hype-man (entertainer who accompanies the main radio presenter) during a breakfast show.

This finding is a clear indication that some of the FM Radio stations in Bungoma County prefer to engage unqualified staff who would in turn practice through on-job training. This staffs don't have high expectation on remuneration and therefore a preferred group by some of these radio stations whose intention is to minimise operating costs.

Participants who had undergone through tertiary institutions of higher learning and qualified with either a diploma certificate commanded 35.9%. Undergraduates with the first degree formed the highest number of personnel engaged by radio stations in the study area with 48.7%. This finding puts graduates number in these radio stations at 59% for both undergraduate and postgraduate collectively.

In order to balance the emphasis on sales and getting advertising as a source of income, there has to be a strong focus on community participation in community sound broadcasting. The community is the most important 'customer' of a radio station (Pavlicevic , 1999). Hence, marketing is a total approach that defines the running of a business and is centered on understanding the customer and developing the product to meet the customers' need (Maphiri, 1999).

Marketing is not the transaction itself but the information that surrounds it, and the perceptions that build up through repeated communication (List, 2002 and Maphiri ,1999). In a community radio station, marketing is not an afterthought but it is built in. Simply by choosing one programme format, programmers limit one set of marketing options, but at the same time creating another. Key aspects of marketing through programming comprise staying on air, quality, originality, interactivity, and community building and programme variation among others.

Radio programmes have two main components: talk and music. Throughout the world, the most popular stations are the ones that play music the majority of the time (List, 2002). But listeners want more than just music, and a station that has no news will get a smaller audience (other things being equal) than a station with short news bulletins every hour. The most popular stations have either "mostly talk" or "mostly music", but not a 50-50 mixture (which produces very small audiences), nor 90-10. A programme mix capable to maximize audience share, would be that which plays music about 80% of the time, 10% news/information, and 10% commercials. Optimum utilization of FM Radio resources in marketing and production of such competitive programmes require well trained personnel.

It is with this background that the researcher concludes that involvement of untrained staff in related areas of marketing as well as in general production of programmes becomes an impediment in development of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya because Radio stations concentrate on building a brand of staff through on-job training at the expense of vigorous and competitive production to stay afloat with listenership.

#### **4.4 Responses by Producers/Presenters**

The following results were obtained from the questionnaires for Producers and presenters working in the radio stations. Their responses were organised thematically and presented as follows:-.

#### 4.4.1 Period Served in the current FM station

**Table 4. 4: Period staff has worked in current radio station**

Length of time in the current station	Frequency
0-1 years	7
1-2 years	5
2-5 years	12
5-10 years	1
Above 10 years	0
Total	25

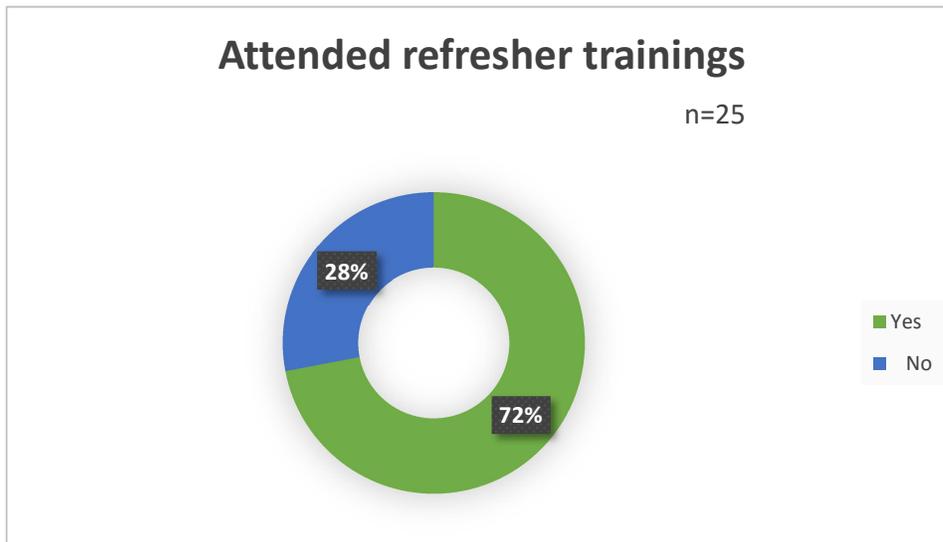
*Source: Researcher 2019*

The above tabulation indicates that majority of the presenters and producers who participated in the study have worked in their stations for two (2) to five (5) years, followed by those who have spent 0-1 year in the current stations. Staffs that have worked in the FM station between 1-2 years came in third. In this study, no radio employee had worked in any of the sampled FM stations for ten (10) years and above, only one (1) participant had been in the current station for a period of 5-10 years. However, it was also good to note that some radio stations in Bungoma County have been in operation for less than ten years.

#### 4.4.2 Attendance of capacity building /refresher trainings while working in the station

At the point when asked whether they have ever gone to any trainings/short courses, the recorded information demonstrated that 72% of the respondents had gone to different trainings. This is against a 28% minority who have not gone to any capacity building

trainings since they began working in their particular radio stations. This information is introduced in Figure 4.3 below.



**Figure 4. 3: Response to whether workers have undergone any refresher trainings while in the current FM Station**

*Source: Researcher 2019*

Those who agreed to have undergone refresher and other short courses trainings while in the current media house had varied explanations. The participants indicated to have been trained on various topics such as human resource management, gender issues in media, child rights, reporting during elections, first aid, news writing and reporting, media house marketing, health, maternal and new-born reporting , renewable energy journalism, investigative journalism, reporting on devolution and presentation skills.

In the research findings, one of the organizations which have been partnering with the radio stations to offer capacity building training is Deutsche Welle (DW) Academia from Germany. These radio stations have not initiated their own training programmes but solely rely on partnering organizations such as DW Germany who offer such trainings for free. During the interview with radio managers, one of the radio managers said “We

cannot initiate trainings right now because we have less staff and also our financial positions cannot allow us to. However, if a partner comes in handy, why not take advantage”.

A producer in one of the radio stations confirmed that indeed there are rare opportunities for training but if such opportunities arise, most of the beneficiaries for the trainings are the management of these radio stations who make themselves priorities for training targets. “We are never considered for these trainings, and if we have to be considered, it is only done when our managers are not available for the trainings or when the sponsor is considering all of us for the training.

Based on these findings, one critical challenge that still weighs down the small commercial FM Radio in Bungoma County is skills training and retention strategies or human resource capacity. This is negatively contributing to sustainability of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

#### **4.4.3 Factors affecting sustainability of FM radio Stations in a competitive environment**

A four-point Likert ranking was used to assess the participants’ level of agreement to social, environmental and economic factors that affect the sustainability of the FM radio stations in a competitive environment.

##### **i) Social factors**

The participants were asked to state their opinion on the following social factors and if they affect sustainability of FM radio stations.

**Table 4. 5: Social Factors affecting sustainability of FM Radio stations in a competitive Environment**

<b>Statement</b>		<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
High staff turnover affect	Count	11	8	4	2
	Percentage	44%	32%	16%	8%
Use of temporary staff	Count	6	8	3	8
	Percentage	24%	32%	12%	32%
Under marketing	Count	7	10	8	0
	Percentage	28%	40%	32%	0%
Little market share hence lower revenues	Count	6	3	12	5
	Percentage	24%	12%	48%	20%

*(SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree)*

*Source: Researcher 2019*

Table 4.6: Outlines that 44% of the participants strongly disagreed that high staff turnover is a social factor affecting the sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya. According to 32% of the presenters and producers, high staff turn-over is not a social factor affecting the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment. While 16% were in agreement that high staff turn-over affects sustainability of FM stations, 8% strongly disagreed to this statement.

This clearly indicates that there is still a high staff turnover in the radio stations; however it does not in any way affect sustainability of these radio stations. Those who agree and those who strongly agree combined translate to 24% of the respondents and this is not a statistic to ignore. A good number of participants in the radio stations are in agreement that staff turnover affects sustainability of radio stations.

This is informed by various reasons of presenter-listener attachment and varied approach to issues within programmes. Discontinuity or disruption of programmes along the way affects listenership and this automatically negatively affects sponsorship and advertisement engagements as the core contributor to financial sustainability.

24% strongly disagreed that the use of temporary staff in the FM station has a negative effect on sustainability of the station, while 32% recorded that using temporary staff is a social factor that affects the sustainability of FM stations in a competitive environment. 12% agreed that the use of temporary staff contributes to sustainability of radio stations. This is somehow complemented by another 32% who strongly support the statement that using temporary staff is one of the social factors affecting how sustainable FM radio stations operate in a competitive environment.

Temporary staffs have a diverted attention with fear of unknown due to the uncertainty. Such staffs dedicate their time to secure a permanent opportunity either with another entity or the same entity. This in turn affects productivity in these radio stations and eventually affecting sustainability. In view of this, temporary staff cannot contribute towards the development of a programming format that is capable of expanding the radio's potential advertising revenue. Having permanent radio staff is essential in the process of attracting a strong audience that can enable the radio to wean itself from dependency from the proprietors.

Under-marketing is strongly disregarded by 28% of the participants to be a factor that would affect FM stations' sustainability. This is highly supported by 40% who disagree as opposed to 32% who agree that undertaking marketing is a social factor that has a greater impact on the sustainability of the FM radio industry.

The power of marketing cannot be ignored considering this research findings. Marketing plays a most important role in sustaining FM radio stations. On a management perspective, radio stations market their programmes and this can be done through below the line or above the line strategy in order to attract listenership. Radio stations that do not engage marketing as a way of expanding their listenership net wider usually get content with a predictable listenership scope thus enjoying an equilibrium status. They in turn limit active listenership because of the obvious and routine approaches. Such limitations affect sustainability because prospective advertisers and sponsors are more interested to buy the ears of the listeners.

In the research findings, 24% strongly disagreed that little market share by FM radio station does not affect sustainability of the station, while 12% agreed to this statement, 48% agreed that having a little market share lowers revenues while another 20% strongly agreed to this statement. This means that majority of the little market share is a social factor that impacts on the sustainability of the FM radio station in a competitive environment.

Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya enjoy almost the same limited spectrum allocation based on their operation licensing by the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK). This in turn also limits their market share. The radio stations compete for this market together with well-established and nation-wide radio stations. Such a congested market calls for stiff competition attracting a high charged strategy for sustainability.

In summary, other social factors that were listed by the participants as those that affect sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment of Bungoma County, Kenya included the following:

- i. **Lack of research when programming:** Competition pressure from well-established radio stations have resulted to FM radio stations in Bungoma county producing poorly researched programmes and playing more of music with the intention to attract more listeners. This in turn does not in any way attract sponsors especially from NGOs.
- ii. **Less use of social media (New media) to engage the audience:** Social media is the trending medium among the youth. Programs that target the youth could be emphasised through the use of social media thus attract immediate feedback.
- iii. **Little regard to the community through CSR initiatives:** Limited financial resources and Radio stations not being able to make profits results to the management of these radio stations not being able to initiate CSR activities.
- iv. **Lack of professionally qualified personnel** in running the station in key sectors such as marketing, and business development: Radio stations in Bungoma County have resulted to employing less qualified personnel as a way of cutting operation costs. This in turn affects productivity thus sustainability of these radio stations
- v. **Little or no consideration of the content consumers when developing programs:** Radio stations in Bungoma County have failed to involve the community in their programming. Involving the community and making them feel as part of the radio stations operations will make these radio stations acceptable thus translating to good listenership. One radio manager said” our

perception of community involvement is simply localizing our content. The community has no knowledge in programme production and therefore we can target them only as sources”.

vi. **Absence of teamwork when adopting key policies that govern the FM station**

Rivalry among radio staff as well as employment without due process is one factor that leads to lack of team work. Employment of family members in different capacities also creates a vacuum in coordination of activities. Such staffs will have a feeling of entitlement and ownership and therefore transfer work backlog to other employees who have no family relationship with the management or owners of these radio stations. This calls for employment through merit for posterity.

Therefore, a number of critical challenges still beset the community radio sector today, inter alia, fundraising strategies; digital migration; skills training and retention strategies or human resource capacity; audience measurements; marketing and advertising; provision of participatory quality programming; and funding. In addition, organizational and financial management as well as policy implications have been stated as other problem areas affecting community radio (Mmusi, 2002 and Mtimde, 2000).

**ii) Environmental factors**

The study also required the respondents to rate their levels of agreement or disagreement to the following statements and if they affected sustainability of FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

**Table 4. 6: Environmental factors affecting sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment**

Statement		SD	D	A	SA
Liberalized market environment	Count	4	2	11	8
	Percentage	16%	8 %	44%	32%
Highly qualified radio presenters	Count	0	7	8	10
	Percentage	0%	28%	32%	40%
Lowly qualified radio human resource	Count	6	3	8	8
	Percentage	24%	12%	32%	32%

*(SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree)*

*Source: Researcher 2019.*

From Table 4.6, it is evident that 16% of the respondents strongly disagreed on the statement that a liberalised market environment affects the sustainability of the FM radio station in a competitive environments compared to 8% who disagreed. A majority 44% were in the affirmation that liberalised market environment has an effect to performance of FM radio in terms of sustainability, while 32% closely followed by strongly agreeing to the statement. From these responses, it can confidently be ascertained that liberalization of FM radio broadcasting space has a significant effect on the sustainability of FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

Engaging of highly qualified radio presenters as an environmental factor had no participant in the study that strongly disagree. It was interesting to see the steady progression sequence on how participants responded to this statement. While 28% of them disagreed, 32% agreed that FM Radio station with highly qualified staff has an

effect on the sustainability of the station. An overwhelming 40% strongly agreed that an FM radio station with highly qualified staff is a positive factor that contributes to sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment.

In this research findings, touching on less qualified radio human resource, 24 % strongly disagreed that FM Radio having less qualified staff may not affect sustainability. There was 32 % of the respondents who disagreed while 32 % agreed that it has an effect on the sustainability of the FM station. Similarly, 32 % were of the strong opinion that FM Radio stations with less qualified human resource affects the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment.

During the interviews with Radio producers and presenters, asked to mention any other environment related factors that impact on the performance of FM radio in Bungoma County, Kenya, part of the dominating factors in the discussions included:-

**Stiff competition from well-established media:** In the research findings, it was noted that well established media houses have the capacity to employ a large number of staff and therefore build a strong team for production of well researched programmes. These stations have well-funded programmes and campaigns that help them build a wide listenership base which is a recipe for attraction for advertisers. These radio stations are aided by sophistication of equipment that produce enhanced quality sound compared to basic equipment available at the small Radio stations in Bungoma County Kenya. A manager in one of the radio stations said “it is not easy to compete with established radio stations especially when you have limited resources”.

**Use of unsuitable/unqualified staff in running radio programming:** In this research, it is clear that some radio stations have employed unqualified staff in their departments. All rounded trained media personalities are an asset to any organization because one person can act in different capacities and produce more deliverables. This helps the radio station to cut down on unnecessary staffing who play a small role within the production circle. It also saves time and money in that the radio station does not invest so much on training. Working with qualified staff enhances the quality of production and minimises wastage of resources.

**Poaching of good and talented staff by established and upcoming radio stations:** In this findings, staff turnover from these small FM radio stations affect sustainability. Staff turnover is occasioned by identification of talent by well-established radio stations and the ability to give lucrative offers to staff from these small radio stations who view it as an opportunity not just for career growth but also a life changing venture through a descent pay.

**Lack of modern equipment to match the current broadcasting trends:** It was noted in this findings that, radio stations in Bungoma County have basic equipment not necessarily designed for competitive live broadcast thus customised to serve the purpose. This limits productivity especially during breakdowns and technical hitches. For example, most of these radio stations do not have a professional broadcast console with hybrid telephone lines. Through observation, these radio stations have connected handheld mobile phones to their mixer channels which most of the time distort feedback sound quality due to echoes especially when making of receiving calls during live broadcast. They also don't have broadcast automation software's which can be used to timely locate commercial spots and other programming schedules. These radio stations

use Dj software's whose settings change with slight carelessness from whoever is on air. Some of the radio stations are still not able to have a live stream broadcast due to lack of necessary equipment.

**Key decision makers having little or no journalistic knowledge that is required in the general management of the FM media houses:** In these findings, quite a number of these radio managers and directors have little or lack knowledge in Journalism and mass communication. Some have acquired it on job through trainings and others through experience and interaction with the professionals. This however still affects sustainability of the radio stations because irrational decisions are made especially within the management structures and cascaded down to the general staff of these FM radio stations.

**Over dominance by well-established FM radio stations that have taken over command of the airwaves due to their social status and influence:** During the research, participants acknowledged the takeover of air waves by established radio stations like Citizen Radio, Radio Maisha, Radio, Jambo among other radio stations. Their dominance is felt to the core of sustainability because advertisers prefer to do business with these radio stations owing to the fact that they enjoy a huge following or listenership. This has intern reduced the market share for these small FM Radio stations which are struggling to survive.

**Lack of motivation programs for staff such as capacity building and refresher courses:** These small FM radio stations have no organised or structured in-house training programmes for their staff as part of capacity building. They have need based trainings occasionally facilitated by NGOs and International media houses such as DW Germany. Some of the available lucrative training opportunities are a reserve of the management of

these radio stations who benefit at the expense of other radio staff due to either lack of finances to sponsor a huge number of staff to attend the trainings or sheer ignorance to the fact that the trainings are important and able to contribute to sustainability of these FM radio stations.

### iii) Economic factors

This study further sought to investigate the respondents' level of agreement to a list of statements that described the extent to which the sustainability of FM radio is affected in a competitive environment. Their responses are summarised in table 4.7 below.

**Table 4. 7: Economic factors affecting sustainability of FM Radio stations in a competitive environment**

Statement		SD	D	A	SA
Workforce's demand for higher pay	Count	2	1	10	12
	Percentage	8%	4%	40%	48%
High cost of living	Count	1	6	11	7
	Percentage	4%	24%	44%	28%
High cost of doing business	Count	0	2	7	16
	Percentage	0%	8%	28%	64%
Unrealistic expectations about the media fraternity	Count	4	9	3	9
	Percentage	16%	36%	12%	36%
Lack of knowledge on resource management	Count	3	1	16	5
	Percentage	12%	4%	64%	20%
Inadequate financial resources to support the radio stations	Count	0	2	4	19
	Percentage	0%	8%	16%	76%
Unhealthy competition from emerging radio stations	Count	5	2	10	8
	Percentage	20%	8%	40%	32%

(*SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree*)

Source: Researcher 2019

Table 4.8 indicates that majority (48%) of the respondents strongly agree that workforce's demand for higher pay affects the sustainability of an FM radio station in a competitive environment. This means that a station with employees that are undergoing financial starvation are more likely to be lost over to the competitor who pays more or promises to pay the staff more if they joined them. It is therefore a risk to the FM Radio industry which eventually has a negative effect to the sustainability of such affected radio stations. This will resort to fresh recruitment or even struggle to attract competent human resource.

More related, 40% of the FM radio presenters agreed that a work force's demand for higher pay has the potential to affect the operations of the radio station. Only 4% representing one respondent disagreed to this statement, while the rest (8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment can be affected by demands for higher pay by workers in the FM radio stations.

28% strongly agreed that high cost of living affects the sustainability of FM radio in a competitive environment, 44% of the respondents agreed to the statement that high cost of living is a contributor to how FM radio stations remain afloat in a liberalised environment. On the other hand, 24% of them disagreed with another 4% strongly disagreeing that the high cost of living has an effect on FM radio's sustainability in an environment where there are many other exiting to provide the same service.

More related to the above, there were a 64% of the participants who were of the strong opinion that high cost of doing business affects the sustainability of FM radio stations amid a highly competitive surrounding. 28% agreed to the statement that high cost of conducting business in the country affects radio's operations. There was however an 8%

of the respondents that disagreed with this statement. Analytically, the absence of any response strongly disagreeing to the statement that high cost of doing business affects sustainability of FM radio means that; there is a high likelihood of cost of doing business affecting the sustainability of FM radio in a liberalised market like the one in Kenya.

Unrealistic expectations about the media fraternity are strongly not a factor among 16% of the presenters as an issue that has a bearing on the sustainability of FM radio stations. Moreover, 36% disagree to this statement while 12% and 36% agree and strongly agree respectively that, unrealistic expectations about the media fraternity has the potential to affect the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment.

When it came to the lack of knowledge on resource management, 12% strongly disagreed in the same way another 4% disagreed that is affects FM radio's operations in a competitive environment. However, there was a major 64% of the participants who agreed that FM station's staff without resource management knowledge can affect sustainability. The participating media houses indicated through a 20% response that sustainability of the FM radio station can be compromised if there is a lack of knowledge on resource management. What this mean is that for the FM radio industry to be sustainable in the current competitive environment, the people working in these FM Radio stations must know how to utilise resources in a prudent way.

A commendable 76% of the respondents were of the strong opinion that inadequate financial resources to support the radio stations can affect their sustainability. Their response is followed by 16% who agree to the statement that inadequate financial resources to support the radio stations is an economic factor that has a bearing on the sustainability of FM radio in a liberal space while 8% disagreed that radio stations with inadequate financial resources affect their sustainability. The zero result of those who

would probably be strongly disagreeing that inadequate financial resources to support the radio stations affect their sustainability is a clear indication that there is a general feeling that financial resources plays a critical role in sustaining a radio station that is operating in a competitive environment.

Finally, the respondents were asked to state their opinion on the issue of unhealthy competition from emerging radio stations. The varied responses indicated that; 20% strongly disagreeing that it is not an economic factor that affects sustainability of FM radio station in a free market, while 8% disagreed. There were 40% of them who indicated that unhealthy competition from emerging stations pose a reasonable effect to the operations of FM radio. 32% of the results from presenters/producers strongly agreed that the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment can be affected by unhealthy competition from emerging radio stations.

#### **iv) Political factors affecting the sustainability of FM radio stations**

The study established the following factors that affect the sustainability of FM radio stations:-Influence of political class in the media industry by demanding coverage in their events with the promise of unspecified consequences if the FM stations fail to give them airtime. The need by some media houses to align themselves to some political figures and take a specific political stand to serve their interests thus affecting objectivity.

Political patronage which interferes with the societal perspective of the independence the concerned FM radio stations Radio ownership by political class, who strategically put up the radio to serve political interests.

#### **v) Legal factors affecting the sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya**

- Delays in awarding broadcasting licences to emerging radio station

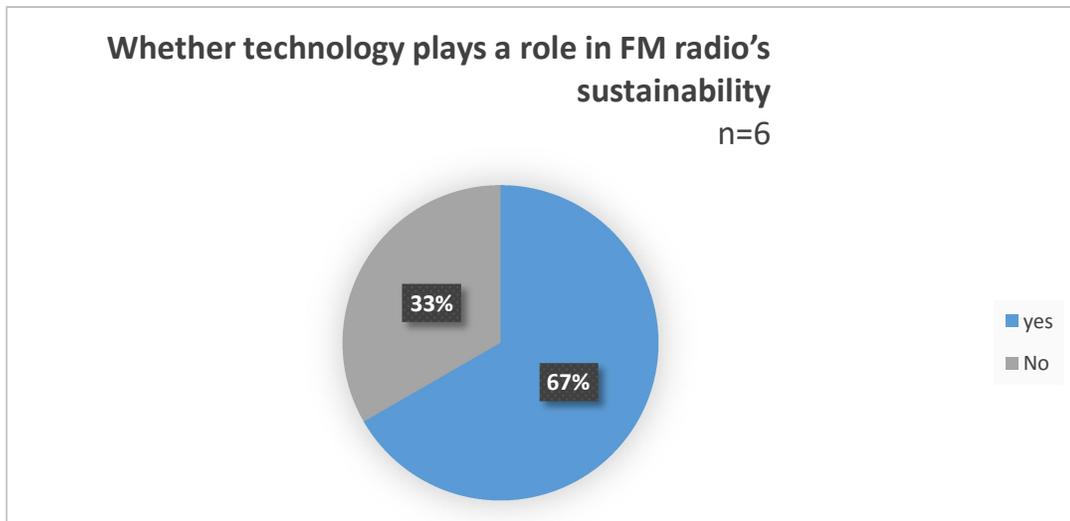
- Bureaucracies in registering upcoming radio stations
- Unfavourable policies that limit media freedom
- Duplication of other station's programming without consent of the originators. This leads to legal battles that may end up in payment of fines and litigation fees. These eat up into the revenues of the FM radio station.
- Unfavourable government regulations regarding advertising
- Defamation litigations
- Forced government regulations such as the recent *digital migration* that was initiated by the regulator (CAK) that led to the closure of some stations due to non-compliance.
- Use of vulgar language and explicit content on radio (especially morning/breakfast shows). This leads to suspensions and penalties to the affected stations, an act that destabilises the growth of the FM radio station in Kenya.
- High licensing fees charged by the Communications Authority of Kenya

#### **4.5 Responses from the technical crew**

The Researcher sought the view of the technical crew from sampled radio stations on whether technology plays a role in sustainability of radio stations and the findings are represented in figure 5 below.

##### **4.5.1 Technology in the sustainability of FM radio station**

The researcher was able to capture the views of six (6) technical crew personnel from the sample FM radio stations. The study sought to establish where the respondents (technical crew) thought that technology plays any significant role in the sustainability of FM radio stations in Western Kenya.



**Figure 4. 4: Whether technology plays a role in the sustainability of FM Radio stations in a competitive environment**

The data analysis revealed that 67% of the respondents, who were also the majority, indicated that technology plays a significant role in the sustainability of FM radio stations in the select FM radio stations. However, another 33% were of the negated by indicating that technology does not play a role in FM radio's sustainability. The following were the common responses when asked to explain some of the significant roles played by technology in the FM radio's sustainability.

**Research:** One of the respondents reported that technology plays a role in conducting research on how to improve programming and content development. That technology provides a highway for searching, verifying, comparing and validating data that would be used to come up with competitive radio content.

**Content collection:** Respondents agree that content collection in radio is fundamental to giving comparison and enriching productions. They believe that with good equipment containing robust storage capacity and compression capacity will enhance collection and archiving of content

#### 4.5.2 Influence various variables on the sustainability of FM radio stations in a liberalized market

In this section, participants were required to indicate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale. They were required to show this by marking **SD**- Strongly Disagree, **D**-Disagree, **U**- Undecided, **A**- Agree, and **SA**-Strongly Agree basis. Their responses were collated and summarised in table 4.8 below.

**Table 4. 8: Level of influence of variables on sustainability of FM Radio stations in a liberalized market.**

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA
Use of modern and updated production software	0	0	0	3	3
Use of modern production equipment in the studio	0	0	0	3	3
Integration of technology in broadcasting	0	0	0	3	3
Research and production of human oriented content	0	0	1	1	4
Radio programs and programming	0	0	0	3	3
Use of social media to reach out to more audience	1	0	0	1	4

*(SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree)*

*Source: Researcher 2019*

From Table 4.9, there were as many technical crew personnel who agreed as there were who those who strongly agreed that using modern and updated production software's

influences the sustainability of FM radio stations. The same result was recorded on the influence of modern production equipment in the studio. Responses from filed data further indicated that integration of technology in broadcasting has the ability to influence the sustainability of FM radio in a liberalised market. On this statement, both those who agreed and those who strongly agreed posted a positive response, which was a strong implication that FM stations that embrace technology has higher chances of staying in business in a liberal market.

From the participants' responses, it was noted that those who strongly agreed to the statement that, research and production of human oriented content influence sustainability of FM radio in a liberal market were more. There was however one undecided respondent and another one who agreed.

It is in the opinion of many technical personnel that radio programs and programming can influence the sustainability of FM radio in a free market. There was none that opposed to this statement. However, when it came on the influence of social media to reach out to more audience, the responses were as follows. One participant strongly disagreed to this, while none disagreed just the same way it were on those who were undecided. The data furthered that four out of the maximum six strongly agreed to the statement that use of social media to reach out to more audience influences FM radios sustainability in a liberal market. The agreement by another one to this is a conviction majority of the participants believe in the effect of social media towards building the FM radio's existence in a free market like that in Bungoma County, Kenya.

#### **4.5.3 Equipment capacity of the radio station**

The study established the equipment capacity of the radio stations according to the uses of each. This research chose to investigate the presence or absence of various basic

instruments, machines, equipment that are necessary for the ruining of an FM radio station as follows.

#### 4.5.3.1 Availability of portable recording devices

Portable recorders are instrumental in daily content development for FM Radio stations in Bungoma County. For production to be credible, voice recording is paramount for any content producer. Every producer requires having a portable recorder for convenience purpose. The researcher purposed to find out if this is indeed a reflection in the five radio stations. The findings of this research are represented in the table 4.9 below.

**Table 4. 9: Availability of portable recording devices**

Number of portable recording devices	Frequency
None	0
1	1
2- 5	4
6 -10	1
More than 11	0

*Source: Researcher 2019*

From the above tabulation (Table 4.10), it can be seen that majority of the FM radio stations poses between 2-5 portable recording devices. Research results indicate among the sampled radio stations, only one has between 6 and 10 portable recording devices. Surprisingly, there was one radio station in the region that has only one portable recorder which serves the entire radio station. It further emerged that none of the participants that took part in the study indicated their radio station to be having more than eleven (11)

recorders that can be carried around. More importantly, is the finding that at least all the FM radio stations had a portable recording device.

Compared to the number of producers in the radio stations, out of 25 producers involved in the research, a total of only 11 recorders are in use in these radio stations. In these finding producers are sharing recorders thus compromising the quality of programme production.

#### 4.5.3.2: Adequacy of machines and equipment

Table 12 below represents answers by radio staff with regards to availability of production equipment radio the stations.

**Table 4. 10: Adequacy of machines and equipment**

Question	Yes	No
Is your audio recording and editing equipment enough for all your productions?	4	2
Is your radio stations data storage capacity enough	5	1
Do you have a reliable power back up system?	3	3
Do you sometimes go off air?	1	5
Do you have a Back-pass Filter for signal stability and restriction?	5	1
Do you have installed transmission delaying machine/Gadget in aid of real-time censorship?	5	1
Is your live broadcast archived on real time?	5	1
Is your live studio fit with a professional broadcast console?	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>
Average Mean	4.0	2.0

*Source: Researcher 2019*

Table 12 indicates that majority of the radio stations had enough recording and editing equipment while another super majority agreed that their station's data storage capacity was enough. Among the six FM radio stations that participated in the study, there was a balance between the stations that reported to be having reliable power back up systems. It was noted that the power back up systems were reliable, but in the finding only one radio station reported to be sometimes going off air due to power outages.

When it came to the presence of a back-pass Filter for signal stability and restriction five (5) out of six (6) agreed to be having these gadgets in the radio station. In a similar way, five of the six FM radio stations agreed to be have installed transmission delaying gadgets that aids of real-time censorship. The study also found out that majority of the FM radio stations had their broadcasting archived as soon the content is broadcasted. When it came to the question of having professional broadcast consoles in the FM radio stations, four of the six claimed to be having the standard console machines.

It is good to note that FM operation without a band filter, which is a requirement by CAK, is an indication that there is poor quality sound from the affected radio station. This Radio station could be interfering with other radio frequency or vice versa. It is also worrying that one radio station has no real-time archiving machine, posing a high risk of defamation suit considering that being a requirement by CAK broadcast back up is important when handling complaints from listeners or clients. The same scenario applies when put into consideration that one radio station has no delaying machine installed for the purpose of real-time censorship of content especially during live broadcast and live feeds.

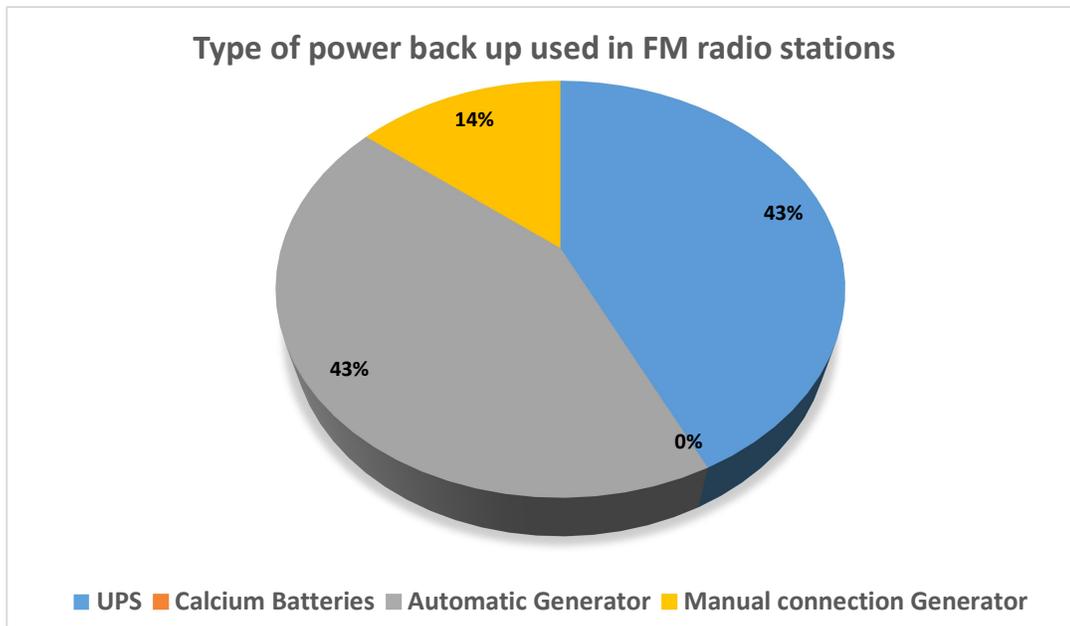
In conclusion based on the findings, some FM Radio stations in Bungoma County have not fulfilled requirement by the Communications Authority of Kenya for them to operate and therefore their defense towards any possible law suit would be counter-productive. As a result, they run a high risk of closure from high defamation damages that could be imposed by the courts of law.

#### **4.5.3.3: Type of power back up used**

Filed data indicated that there was no FM radio station among those that participated that uses calcium batteries. The results also revealed that 14% of the respondents indicated that a number of FM radio stations were using the manual connection generators to power up when there is power outage. A majority (43%) indicated that UPS and automatic generators are widely used to supplement the powering of the FM station.

This is a clear indication that some radio stations usually go off air when there is a power outage considering that 14% of the radio station are using manual power backup which require to be connected after duration of time. This is detrimental to radio continuity thus affecting listenership. FM Radio stations are required to operate with minimal interruption according to the CAK Regulations.

These results are summarised by figure 4.5.



**Figure 4. 5: Type of Power back up used by FM Radio stations**  
*Source: Researcher 2019*

#### **4.5.4: Challenges faced by production departments in FM radio stations**

The study sought to find out the challenges that are faced in production of various programs. The technical crew whom in other stations also serve as producers mentions the following challenges.

Inadequate recording equipment to serve the many reporters as well as stringers in the field: This means that in case there is need to have many reporters in the field, the available recorders won't be enough to serve the purpose. This compromises quality because at times, the journalists are forced to use gadgets like their mobile phones in taking audio sound bites which may not be able to give quality recordings.

Time constraints in preparing broadcast content: Due to lack of enough personnel in this radio stations, the available few are overwhelmed by load of work and therefore don't meet datelines. Some of them are forced to abandon project on the way and this compromises quality.

Limited audio editing equipment: It was noted that each Radio stations in Bungoma County Kenya, has only one audio editing suit or studio. This makes it difficult for different radio projects to be worked on at the same time. Beside, in case of any technical hitches, there are delays in production which affects the entire departments of the radio stations.

Out-dated audio editing software: These radio stations have out-dated software's in that they are rarely upgraded. It was noted that most of these software's are patched software's or free downloadable software's with minimal functionality.

Inadequate and unreliable data storage facilities: Radio stations produce massive data on a daily basis and this require enough storage capacity to store/archive data. Most of the radio stations visited during this research only depended on internal hard disks for data storage. This is a high risk especially when the computers are dysfunctional. It is also possible to lose all the data when the archive source is one and constrained through daily accessibility and routine running of the radio station programmes.

#### **4.6 Responses by sales & marketing personnel**

This research noted the unanimous consideration of candidates' education level when hiring staff by FM radio stations. Their responses were documented in tables, figures and charts as follows.

#### 4.6.1 Income generation avenues for FM radio stations

Marketing personnel of the various stations were asked to indicate how they generate income for the station. The following table gives a summary of their responses.

**Table 4. 11: Income generation avenues for FM radio stations**

Way of income generation	Frequency
Sponsorships	2
Spot Commercial/Adverts	3
Presenter Mentions	0
Short Code Messages(Premium rate services)	3
Sale of airtime	3
Radio announcements	3
Lottery	3
Donations	0
Others	1

*Source: Researcher 2019*

In summary, Table 4.11 represents a situation where most of the radio stations involved in the research, i.e. 3 out of 5 depend on Short code Messages charging a premium rate to generate income. Sale of airtime, sale of airtime, lotteries, radio announcements as well as commercial spots also is dominant in all the radio stations with equal share of frequency.

Looking at this trend, it is evident that these radio stations have limited sponsorships since only 2 out of 5 radio stations generate their income through sponsorship. This is

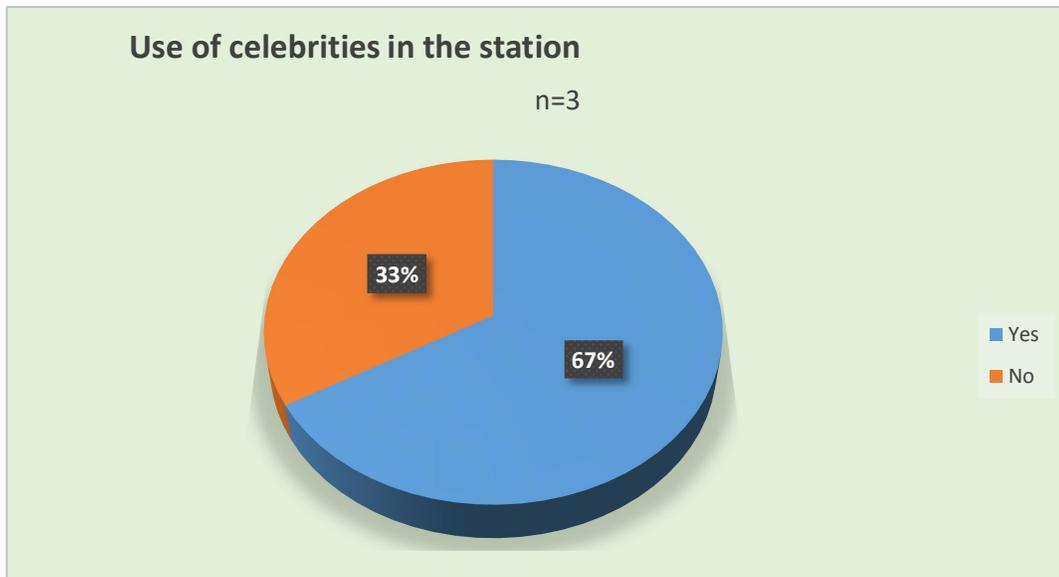
quite alarming because, for sponsorship attraction, these radios must be able to produce quality programs that suit the interest of the prospective sponsors. In conclusion, these radio stations have failed to produce such programs.

It is interesting to note that these radio stations are not able to attract any income through presenter mentions. Good presenter, with good following attracts a massive listenership because of his/her approach and uniqueness. Such presenters don't go through their schedules without winning the heart of potential advertisers who prefer to associate their products with the presenters. This finding opens a gap in the way presenters in this radio stations have failed to attract mentions in their schedules.

#### **4.6.2: Use of celebrities in the station/ Celebrity Branding**

The product in the broadcasting industry includes the brand of the station and the services offered by the broadcaster. Today, there is a growing trend of using celebrities ranging from artistes, comedians, theatre actors and actresses. This study sought to find out if the participating FM radio stations also embrace the use of celebrities in branding of the station in radio shows to increase audience loyalty.

It was evident that 33% of the respondents said no while the majority 67% agreed that their radio stations were using celebrities as a way of promoting the products and brand of the FM radio station. These responses are depicted by figure 4.6.



**Figure 4. 6: Use of celebrities in branding FM radio stations**

Despite the findings that these radio stations in Bungoma County prefer qualification during employment of staff, majority of the radio stations allow engagement of talented individuals and celebrities with the aim of attracting more listenership as well as strengthen loyalty. This is evident that to some extent, professional qualification is compromised for loyalty order so as to fit in a competitive environment. These FM Radio stations invest more time in training these celebrities at the expense of productivity and therefore compromising productivity.

#### **4.6.3: Challenges faced in marketing the FM radio station**

The study established varied challenges in marketing that affected sustainability of FM Radio stations, among them, limited resources to run and sustain effective marketing activities, over-dominance by well-established radio stations in the country that have taken over the loyalty of the listenership hence making sales promotion less effective and Lack of sales and marketing expertise that is specifically customized to sell media outlets

and their products. This was well depicted in the study when it was established that some radio stations have employed unqualified and inexperienced marketing personnel.

High cost of developing and producing sales and marketing materials is also a serious challenge because these radio stations have no budgets for production of quality marketing materials. A good number of managers admitted that they do not have enough budgets for marketing. This is coupled with transmission challenges and limited frequency coverage in such a way that Many of the local FM station have concentrated in serving the western region hence limiting them from running marketing promotions to far flung areas which might have the ability to bring in more business as opposed to the local market.

Unqualified Marketing personnel: According to this research, some radio stations have engaged unqualified marketers in their activation activities and this is done as a coast cutting measure. Unqualified marketers, armed with talent and oration will always be a preference.

#### **4.7 Responses from radio station managers**

The researcher held face to face interviews with the managers of the selected FM radio stations. The aim was to understand the manager's perspectives on various issues about FM radio industry, management issues and generally meeting the research objectives. Their responses were noted down and later organised in subthemes as presented below.

##### **4.7.1: How the FM stations in Bungoma County source for human resources**

The mangers were requested to state how they source for their radio station's staff. Their responses indicated that the process was done through: Assessment of one's abilities

which means that it does not matter whether the person has any background in journalism and mass communication related field. But so long as they demonstrate that they up to the task, the management of the station engages them in running the FM radio station.

Competitive recruitment processes which Involves posting job adverts where candidates are required to apply and selection process follows the standard recruitment procedures such as short listing, invitation for interviews, appointment and confirmation of employment after serving a six months or a minimum of three months' probation.

Absorption of volunteers and interns is also a recruitment strategy by FM radios stations in Bungoma County. This is basically applied to university and college students who work for these FM Radio stations during their industrial training and because of impressiveness, hard work and value addition; they may be absorbed into the station permanently or on a contract basis. Referrals may also be made by internal staff, owners, media networks and other sources that know the candidate. This may also be done through need for celebrity branding where producers identify celebrities within the locality, who can add value to specific identified programmes.

In the research findings, after the researcher's in-depth interview with the radio managers it was noted that Social recruitment is also embraced in these FM Radio stations. This includes interactions with the candidate in other forum upon which the candidate happens to depict skills that are useful to the radio station and also some radio stations recruit though poach from competitors by enticing a media personality to crossover by promising better remuneration packages.

#### **4.7.2: Background Information about FM Radio Staff**

This was an important concern of the research especially when looking at the sustainability of FM radio in Kenya. It is understood that the presence or absence of reliable human resource has the ability to contribute to the performance of the station.

From the field data, it was interesting to find out that one of the FM radio stations (Radio Mukwano) had a unique human resource policy. None of the staff except the management is permanently employed. On further inquiry, the explanation to this was that, using interns, volunteers and contract personnel was one of the ways that the upcoming radio station was using to manage overhead costs and ensure sustainability.

Fairly older FM radio stations like Radio Mambo, West FM, and Nyota FM had both permanent and contract (including volunteers and interns) staff. On its part, Biikap Koreet FM in Mt Elgon had only one employee on permanent basis and all others were volunteers and interns. On average, majority of the FM radio stations were discovered to be engaging between five (5) and fifteen (15) volunteers and internship students. It was interesting to note that one of the radio stations that participated in the study (Nyota FM) reported that it did not have any staff shortage. Analysis of the field data brought out the conclusion that most contract employees are engaged for a period between 3-6months which may be or may not be renewed.

#### **4.7.3: Pertinent issues about the operations of the FM Station**

This section compiled a list of questions that required the manager to give Yes or No answers. Their responses were collected and tabulated accordingly as shown below.

**Table 4. 12: Pertinent issues on the operations of the FM Radio stations**

S/No	Question	Yes	No
6	Can you say that the radio station made profits in the last financial year?	2	3
6 (b)	Was the organization able to sustain its daily operations?	3	2
7	Do you have employment equity procedures?	4	1
8	Do you carry out entry auditions for radio presenters?	5	0
10	Do you have volunteers working in your radio station?	4	1
11	Do you have a volunteer policy document/ guides?	0	5
12	Have you developed a clear job description for staff?	5	0
13	Do you offer any needs-based training to your staff?	5	0
13(b)	Does needs-based training contribute to staff retention at your radio station?	4	1
14	Do you have an employee motivation program?	2	3

*Source: Researcher 2019*

Out of the five radio station that took part in the survey, 2 made profits while 3 did not. In the same breadth, 3 of them were able to sustain their daily activities while another 2 were not due to resource constraints. It was worth to note that all the radio stations subjected their candidates to entry auditions during recruitment however one out of the five FM radio stations does not have an employment equity document.

Most of the FM radio stations in the study reported to be having volunteers amongst their human resource. However, none of the FM radio stations have a clearly laid out policy document specifically for volunteers. They rather rely on the staffing human resource (HR) practices and other policies binding the regular station's employees.

It was established during the research that all involved FM radios have clear job description laid out for their staff, while at the same time, offer need-based training programs to improve the capacity of the staff. Sadly, having a need-based training as a bonus to staff does not contribute to the retaining of staff. In addition to the above, only 2 against 3 of the radio stations offer motivation rewards/awards to their employees. This implies that staff who are not motivated fail in releasing their full potential and therefore compromises quality translating to negative effects on sustainability of these radio stations in a competitive environment.

FM Radio stations in Bungoma County Kenya grapple for continued existence considering that (40%) did not make any profit while 60% admit to have made a profit in the previous financial year. Among other factors affecting sustainability of these radios, respondents revealed that operating costs for these radio stations come from one source and more specifically owners of the radio stations. One radio stations since operations has been solely dependent on the proprietor, who has continued incurring losses through payment of salaries, electricity bills, and security, repair and maintenance costs. This implies that the radio is not self-sustainable nor breaking even.

#### **4.7.4: Organization's code of conduct**

When managers were asked to give their opinion on their organizations' codes of conduct; majority said that it was more of adopted from the standard best practices that are recommended for organizations. It was discovered that most FM radio stations rely on

the staff regulations and other legal frameworks that apply in the operations of entities. Other issues captured on this question included the stations' core values, mission statement, vision and goals, and adhering to the Media Council's Professional Code of conduct for journalists and media practitioners. Other elements that commonly featured were; unity among employees, hard work, dedication to work, and, professionalism.

One of the managers said, "Our codes continue to reflect the changing community expectations and media standards. We strive to remain relevant in the business while understanding that we operate in a competitive media environment. As a radio station, we have adopted a reputable culture that posts a positive corporate image". [KII, Radio station manager, Bungoma County]

#### **4.7.5: Managerial challenges affecting sustainability of radio stations**

Management personnel who participated in the survey highlighted some of the challenges affecting these FM radio stations in Bungoma County. It was evident that that Poor infrastructure is a big challenge because FM Radio stations in Bungoma County rely on rented space to operate. It was worth noting that during the research, one of the managers said, "It is difficult to survive in this competition when you have to hire facilities, including hosting mast. This actually increases the running costs to a level where you no longer break even".

Delayed payment by clients affects the running of programs of the FM Radio stations in Bungoma County. These FM Radio stations have continued to struggle with operations considering that they solely depend on their little income. Delays in payment by clients affect daily operations in these FM Radio stations to an extent that they cannot effectively continue with operations. According to one radio manager, these radio stations do not have a clear debt collection mechanism as well as legal departs that can

commission active contracts with clients. This has in turn created gaps in financial stream. Actually none of these radio stations has an established legal department.

In the findings, high staff turnover seems to be hitting hard these radio stations considering that they make low profits. As a result they are not able to give descent remuneration to their staff and therefore, staff turnover is high considering that competing radio stations are willing to offer although not favorable but better counter offers. Coupled with high operational costs, Radio stations managers are in consensus that that this is occasioned by expensive technological needs, hiring of equipment and infrastructure has affected the daily operations of FM radio stations in Bungoma County. In the research findings, with interviews with radio managers.

It was evident in the research that some radio stations have employed less or unqualified personnel in their radio stations. This is done as a coast cutting measure but detrimental to sustainability of the radio stations in that they are not able to produce quality programmes that would gratify audience expectations as well as attract sponsors and advertisers.

Complementing the scenario presented above, lack of viable social support, technical know-how, and managerial skills in the sector often leads to compromised broadcasting service. Consequently, lack of quality service through irrelevant programming, interrupted broadcasting service, absence of community participation and a weak financial base threaten the sustainability of FM Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya.

#### **4.7.6: Strategies for strengthening sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment**

At the end of the interview process, the participants were asked to suggest some strategies that they thought would help in the sustainability of radio stations. Among the strategies discussed, some radio managers agreed that there is need to facilitate marketing and sales department with a sustainable budget so as to run continuous marketing promotions. They were also of the idea that FM radio stations should embrace new technology such as social media, online broadcasting, and integration of emerging technological platforms in radio. It was also discussed that the government should as well as embrace the digital migration and liberalize FM Radio spectrum to allow for more competition. This will aid in allowing small commercial radio stations to penetrate the countrywide spectrum and level the playing field.

Encourage collaborations with international media houses.

Among other strategies discussed by the managers in summary include:-

- i. Radio FM stations investing in research especially in the development of educative and informative
- ii. Availing the FM radio platform to gamers, lotteries and betting companies to use it as a platform of reaching out to the public.
- iii. FM Radio station in Bungoma County should engage the community through CSR activities and community development initiatives
- iv. They must recruit more skilled and qualified staff especially in critical departments like marketing, broadcast, reporting and branding
- v. FM Radio stations should produce interesting, educative and informative content that will attract more listenership and advertisers.

- vi. FM Radio stations in Bungoma county must have a defined target audience to ensure that the content created is specifically meeting their needs
- vii. Capacity building for the management of FM Radio stations should be prioritized by FM Radio stations in Bungoma County in the interest of value addition.
- viii. FM radio should actively engage in development of enticing and creative advertisements that give the customer value for his/her airtime.
- ix. Radio stations should motivate and encourage the employees to proudly market the brand of the station to increase likeability by the audience
- x. Develop continuous capacity building programs must be enhanced in the FM radio stations especially periodic in-house trainings.
- xi. Small FM Radio stations should come together and form a consortium which can be used to solicit for advertisements thus leveling the bargaining power with the well-established FM Radio stations. Especially when bargaining for government advertisements.
- xii. Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) should revise its frequency allocation policies, which has created allocation imbalances. Currently majority of FM radio frequencies in Kenya are located to a single entity despite the demand by budding new players in the market.
- xiii. CAK should consider digitizing of Radio frequencies to create room for more players and make it easy and affordable for small radio stations to expand coverage thus leveling the playing field. At the moment, radio frequencies are scarce and dominated by a few.

## 4.8 Chapter summary

This Chapter has exhausted the manner in which data was analysed, presented and interpreted. Interview schedules and questionnaires were administered for marketing personnel, technical personnel, and producers/presenters working in the five radio stations that were involved in the study. The chapter covers the response rate as seen in the number of questioners that were returned from the field. In order to draw valid conclusions on the state of FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya, the study considered the demographic information of participants.

The Chapter describe the responses from the sales & marketing personnel whose results touch on; Income generation avenues for FM radio stations, whether FM stations use celebrities in branding them, and the challenges faced in marketing the FM radio station. Some of them are; limited resources, over-dominance by well-established radio stations in the country, and Lack of sales and marketing experts to sell media outlets and their products.

There is a section presenting results posted by managers of the selected FM radio stations to understand the manager's perspectives on various issues about FM radio industry, management issues and generally meeting the research objectives. The overriding issues that were discussed here included; recruitment procedures, Background Information about FM radio staff, operations of the FM Station and finally, on the organization's code of conduct.

Chapter four goes further to probe the managerial challenges affecting sustainability of radio Stations. In their opinion, managerial personnel who participated in the survey mentioned; poor infrastructure, delayed payment by clients which then affects the running of programs of the station, High staff turnover, high operational costs, and lowly

experienced/ qualified recruits Finally, the Chapter outlines the Strategies for strengthening sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment as suggested by various participants in the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings, conclusions and recommendation. In addition to the main findings, this chapter also gives a glimpse of the situation in which FM radio stations in the area of study was like at the time of data collection.

#### 5.2 Summary

This Summary is presented in order of the research objectives in that in the first objective of the research, the researcher wanted to identify the resource deficiencies that affect programming thus sustainability of FM Radio stations in western Kenya. Resource deficiencies in this study was used to refer to the insufficiency in key resources such as human resource, financial resource, infrastructural resources, equipment/material and other critical needs that are required for the effective operations of FM radio stations in a liberalized environment. This study purposed to establish the resource deficiencies in sustainability of FM radio stations in western Kenya. The findings in regard to resource deficiency are documented as follows;

##### a) **Human resource**

The response rate was greatly determined by staff distribution in respective radio stations indicated that West FM had a lot more staff than the other four FM radio stations. Contrary to the expectations of the research, the number of respondents in sampled FM radio stations did not match the target. This is the reason as to why there was a

significant difference between the administered tools against the return rate. In fact, there were departments in the participating FM radio stations that had staff performing more than one role in the radio station. This phenomenon was greatly witnessed among the radio presenters, production, and technical crew.

While still at human resource it was discovered that Radio Mukwano and Biicap Koreet FM are among the new radio stations in the county. For this reason, they were found to be having smaller numbers of staff as compared to the older ones in the region. It was further noted that most of the human resource in the newly established FM radio stations comprised of volunteers and college students that were undertaking their industrial attachment. This is an indicator that upcoming FM radio stations in Bungoma County cannot be able to employ permanent staff and at the same time maintain them on payroll. This is a contributor to the inability to achieve sustainability by such FM radio stations.

Findings also indicate that there exists a great gender parity among the human resource. The number of male working in the FM radio stations in Bungoma County doubles that of females. This is in addition to the finding that among the five FM radio managers heading the radio stations, only one is female. When it came to age of the human resource working in the FM radio stations, findings indicated that majority of the staff are between the ages of 21 and 39 years. This is a productive age, and if given the right working environment and resources, they would play a big role in the sustainability of FM radio stations.

Touching on the education level of the participants, the study found out that all the staff in the FM radio stations was literate with high school education qualification and above. However, the study discovered that some of the staff working in the sales and marketing in some radio stations was neither tertiary nor specialized. This raises questions on

effectiveness of such personnel in marketing the products of FM radio stations in today's liberalized environment. The presence of such scenarios would out rightly have a negative impact among other radio stations nationally that have very competent, experienced and with very high education credentials. Just like any other serious department and profession, marketing of an FM radio station has to be undertaken by qualified staff with matching work experience and relevant education certification.

The study further reveals that majority of the staff in the FM radio stations were possessing tertiary education certification most of who were new graduates with little experience in media practice. This discovery then informs that the radio stations want to engage professionals who are readily trained for their respective positions within the radio stations. New graduates, who are in need of experience, don't mind the minimal remuneration package offered by these radio stations.

Surviving on tight budgets, these radio stations prefer engaging graduates who are ready and willing to take up the jobs with a minimal salary package, in view of this, they form a preferred trained human resource that will help the radio stations save time and minimize immediate capacity building expenses. It was worth noting that most of the graduates working in the radio stations are those who were retained after their industrial attachment with the radio stations with the aim of avoiding recruitment hustles. It is the view of this study that the use of under qualified or unsuitable staff in running FM radio affairs has a direct negative impact on the sustainability of FM radio, especially in a competitive environment.

#### **b) Financial resource**

Without a good financial background the very core product of radio which is programmes will be the greatest undoing. Finance capacity is the driving force of

operations in any organization. In the media industry, the financial muscle of the FM Station is one of the critical resources that helps in shaping the growth curve of FM radio stations. The study established that lack of financial resources is a factor that has had a direct effect on the sustainability of the FM radio station in a competitive environment. This according to the findings determines the employment terms (permanent or temporal), acquisition of modern facilities, area of frequency coverage, market share, among others.

Financial ability was also linked to marketing strategies adopted by the FM stations. Generally, if an FM radio station can comfortably meet the operational costs and make profit, then it is believed to be running in the right direction. There is likely to be a budget for marketing and other programs to promote the station in a competitive environment. Therefore, the intensity and consistency of the marketing has a direct correlation with the amount of financing that is allocated.

Majority of the participating FM radio stations in this research were not well established and hence have a limited licensed coverage of 100 kilometre radius. The implication of this is that, revenues received from their business engagements cannot support their rapid growth in a competitive environment. From the Likert tool, there was a 76% acceptance that a financial resource has an effect in the sustainability of FM radio stations. They in fact reported that inadequate financial resources to support the radio stations can affect their sustainability operating in a competitive environment.

Bosch (2007:6) contends that the Community radio sector cannot continue to depend on outside or donor funding for their survival. They need to promote self-reliance, ownership and the investment of local communities in order to achieve institutional, social and eventually, financial sustainability. Ultimately, a holistic approach towards

sustainability is imperative for community radio, including the rural-based stations where resources are scarce

**c)      **Infrastructural resources****

In this study, infrastructure is used to refer to the key broadcasting framework that includes the spectrum (frequency), transmission equipment such as the antennas, transmitters, and sound equalizers/amplifiers among others. With these resources, technology plays a key role in today's liberalized airwaves and radio operations.

Findings indicate that majority of the technical crew staff (67%) were in agreement that technology was essential in the sustainability of FM radio stations. This study therefore conjectures that technology plays a key role in the manner in which radio stations are sustained in a competitive environment. Given that technical personnel are responsible for ensuring that systems are working as required because they understand to a greater extent the role that technology can play in ensuring the smooth running (including signal transmission) of the FM radio station.

In the findings, only few of the FM radio stations in Bungoma County have a complete infrastructure. Most of the radio stations rent out buildings for studio set up as well are radio masts for transmission. Direct link from broadcast station to the transmission site is still being done using STL(Studio Transmitter Link) which consumes more power, compared to the use of Barix/ point to point (PTP) link on another special radio frequency, or a newer all digital wired link via a dedicated data transmission circuit which intern turn out to lessen the operating costs. STL Radio Links products are found on both analog and digital for the stereo transmission of the signal from Studio to the site. The Barix In streamer and Ex streamer are cheap and versatile network audio over

IP variety of applications which enables users to create flexible, cost-effective distributed audio systems using standard IP technology.

**d) Studio equipment**

This study recognizes the fact that the operations of an FM radio station requires live studio equipment as well as data collection and storage equipment. Among these, this study was interested in establishing availability of portable devices and power backup systems that are used by a radio station.

The research data indicated that most FM radio stations had between two and five portable recording devices. A negligible number had more than six while there was absurd finding that an FM radio station in the study possessed a single recording device that was being shared among all the staff in the entire radio station. Even though there was none without recording devices, this study maintains that the adequacy or inadequacy of portable recording devices greatly impacts on the day to day activities of the radio journalist as well as the nature of programming.

Lack of enough portable recorders greatly affects production of feature stories, issue-based stories as well as creative content that might require maximum resource provision to produce. The data further demonstrated that none of the participating radio stations possessed more than eleven (11) portable recorders.

Findings indicated 4.0 (mean) of population that participated in the study reported that FM radio stations in Bungoma County were adequately resourced when it comes to the basic studio equipment. On the other hand, there was a minority 2.0 (mean) who negated that equipment listed in the study; majority of the FM radio stations did not seem to possess or be using them. It therefore means, basic equipment required to ensure the

smooth running of a radio station are clearly present in majority of the FM radio stations that participated in the study. Given these statistical means of 4.0 and 2.0, respectively supporting and opposing the adequacy of machines/equipment, this research is convinced that majority of the FM radio stations in Bungoma County can sustainably survive in a competitive environment if the status quo remains for their competitors.

It is however good to note that, according to the study, most of these available equipment are basic compared to well established radio stations. This extends to adherence to government (the statutory regulator, CAK) directives with regards to what ought to be in place for the operations of an FM radio station. For instance the presence of broadcast console with hybrid phone connections, archiving of broadcast content on real-time is just but a few of the indicators. This is in compliance with the CAK's requirement that all live broadcasts for the day should be backed up (archived) for future retrieval or reference in case of public complaints or generally defamation.

On the presence of power backup, this study found out that majority of the FM radio stations had some form of power back up systems. This is an indication that they meet the CAK requirement of being on air with minimal interruptions. It was discovered that the automatic generators and UPS were the common gadgets used as alternative sources of power whenever there was power outage. Whilst there was a 14% of FM radio stations' using manual connection generators, none was using the calcium batteries as back systems.

**e) Other critical needs for effective operations of FM Radio stations**

Other critical inadequacies that the respondents believed led to poor performance of FM radio stations operating in Bungoma County, Kenya that were cited in the research included Lack of enough resources to cover the entire nation when developing major

programs such as news and feature/topical stories, failure to attract experienced radio staff who chicken out due to low pay or the need to be associated with prestigious media houses or career growth, Ever increasing emergence of FM stations in the market that bring about throat cutting competition for the dominance of existing stations as well as poorly remunerated staff.

Lateness in paying staff wages and salaries is a dominating challenge which demoralize them to a great extent as well as lack of enough manpower in the radio station and Lack of modern equipment that are expensive to acquire. This gives the competitors an advantage over those that are financially constrained in purchasing such equipment and Lack of a clear plan for the radio stations without market understanding before rolling out.

From the research findings, it was noted that most of the FM radio stations have no internal capacity building programmes for their staff. Although the FM radio stations' staff indicated to be have undertaken capacity building and Refresher trainings while working in the station, the initiatives were mostly sponsored by external organizations like Deutsche Welle (DW) Academia from Germany.

In the second objective, the researcher was interested in bringing to light the effect of liberalizing the broadcasting airspace on the development of radio in Kenya. Liberalization of the airspace was an enabling catalyst for the positive development of radio coverage and its penetration up to the interior parts of western Kenya. It opened up the airwaves by freeing up the spectrum, thus allowing the entry of many more players to take advantage of the opportunities that existed therein. There has been an increased investment in radio broadcast industry since the liberalisation of airwaves (Banda, 2016).

From this research, the effects of liberalizing the broadcasting industry were immense. This includes both the negative and positive effects that have been noted throughout the research process. The impact has since been felt in the daily operations to the performance of the FM radio industry more particularly in the following ways.

**a) Reduction in the number of human resource working for the radio**

Unlike other well established FM radio stations that have comparatively dominated the market, all of the sampled FM radio station in Bungoma had one station manager. Thus, a total of Five (5) radio station mangers participated in the study. Six technical personnel and three marketing personnel were also consulted. The majority of the respondents included the FM radio presenters who also served as producers, totaling to twenty five in number.

From the above distribution of staffs who were also respondents in the study, a huge inadequacy in staffing was detected. As much as this can be interpreted to cost cutting measure, the same can also be interpreted as a deficiency. Low staff numbers is the first indicator that majority of the FM radio stations operating in Bungoma County were facing human resource deficiencies and therefore affecting productivity. This trickles down to inability to produce programmes that would gratify listeners expectations.

This study narrows down to lack of adequate production staff which in turn put pressure on a few who put up long hours to deliver. This was noted in all radio stations because staff are forced to double up either as producers, technician and at the same time presenters. Some of them work as marketers while at the same time serving as reporters. According to Nyabuga, & Booker (2013), the availability of various technologies in media houses has both changed and improved the way of working. People working in newsrooms are now expected to be multi-skilled. Whereas previously photographers accompanied reporters to the field, now reporters carry digital cameras and take their own pictures, particularly if the assignments are in far-flung areas (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013).

**b) Increased platforms for publicity and mass information**

Interviews with the radio managers revealed a number of benefits due to the liberalization of the airwaves. Apart from the employment opportunities to hundreds of journalists that are directly engaged by the FM radio stations, a lot of talent has been identified and given a platform to showcase their abilities. For instance, local artistes who were previously finding it hard to get airtime in the traditional media houses in Nairobi, their popularity has been improved. This finding is supported by a related study that focused on the *Growth of Vernacular Radio in Kenya* which concluded that vernacular FM stations in Western Kenya provided greater popularity for them and an economic bonus from concerts and sales of albums (Okoth, 2015).

**c) Reduced profits or non for young FM radio stations**

Many of the upcoming FM radio stations (40%) that were surveyed indicated not to have made any profits in the previous year. The losses are linked to among other factors, high operating costs. Those that were not making any profits then revert to depending on the proprietors to meet the deficits thus rendering the radio station unsustainable.

**d) Increase in number of FM radio stations and other media outlets**

Since the liberalization of the broadcasting airwaves, radio in particular has experienced a renaissance that has seen many more players come on board. Myers (2008) pins this spread to the availability of cheap transistors, the inability of television to compete due to high unit costs and lack of rural electrification. The period between the 1990s up to the new millennium ushered in a new trend in terms of media ownership and control. It is the period within which the airwaves ceased to be in the control of state machinery. This is not only an occasion that was experienced in Kenya but also across many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world. It was a fresh opportunity for investment by international donors, civil society, the private sector, NGOs and governments (Myers, 2008).

Western Kenya has been able to partake in the opportunity thereby seeing a growth in the number of FM radio stations in the region. Bungoma County in particular now boasts of over six commercial and community radio stations with a number of television stations also completing the broadcasting industry. This is opposed to the previous state when there West Media owned, West FM enjoyed monopoly of the market in the county. As time went by, more FM radio stations including Radio Mambo, Nyota FM, Radio Mukwano, Biikap Koreet FM, Elgon Youth radio, and Sulwe FM (a vernacular radio station broadcasting in Bukusu dialect) tapped in the liberalized airwaves. This proliferation is a positive signal of the performance of radio over other media outlets.

This in essence means that radio remains dominant especially in rural areas with rapid increase in channels (Bizcommunity, 2008; ITU, 2008).

In other research by Matril Moswede, a community radio station' sustainability determines whether it continues to be operational or not, and is able to retain and reduce its high staff turnover. In many situations, "community radio stations find themselves caught in a profitless cycle, and the overall result is that they cannot sustain themselves" (Van Zyl, Knipe, Williams, Singh, Nkalai, & Mostert).

However, analysts point the increase in the number of media outlets after the liberalization of the media to be benefiting only those with financial muscles and networks in the media industry. The pluralistic media landscape is an extension of the exiting media owners' portfolio by buying out struggling media houses and adding more frequency outlets to what they have. The media ownership is concentrated to politicians and influential personalities who want to take advantage of the revenue streams available to media houses (Nyabuga & Booker, 2013).

The researcher also wanted to find out if advancement in technology plays a role in the sustainability of FM stations in Bungoma County Kenya. Technological advancement in this research referred to the progression of various information communication technologies that are incorporated in the radio broadcasting industry. In this study, technology was found out to be playing a very great role in the development of FM radio in Bungoma County Kenya. The following roles of technology in the sustainability of FM radio came out evidently. Some of the participants' responses are as follows.

a) **Enhances better signal transmission and wider coverage**

In this research, respondents noted that radio stations may use new media in dissemination of pre-produced programmes so as to reach even those that may not have time to listen to live broadcast. Such ventures noted were the use of podcast as well as live streaming. It came out that technology is significant in transmitting clear non-static signals to a wider geographical coverage. The Kenya government's commitment to support the media performance through the ICT policy of 2006 is an indicator the quality of the signal that is send out and received reaches a wider coverage. This has been experienced through the Broadcasting digital migration (BDM) in Africa that was agreed upon during the International Telecommunications Union (ITU).

b) **Growth and development of radio**

While tracing the development of radio for a period of twenty years between 1988 and 1998, Girard (2003) observed that the number of non-state radio stations were barely ten in all of Sub-Saharan Africa. This means that majority of the radio stations that were dominating the airwaves then were government owned and very few were privately owned. Radio then, was used as a tool of propagating government agenda to the citizens. Programming was majorly comprised of news, entertainment, education and a conveyor of national functions (both live and recorded).

The advent of new information and communication technologies has been a major boost to the development and expansion of radio in Kenya. The growth is experienced in both geographical coverage of airwaves in the country as well as reach to defragmented sections of Kenyan listeners. The research findings also affirmed from the high concentration of radio stations operating in Bungoma County some even located just a stone throw away from one another.

Previously, radio in Kenya which was under the national Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) used English and Kiswahili as the only languages of transmission. KBC *Idhaa ya Taifa*, used Kiswahili while the KBC General Service used English service. Liberalization of the airwaves saw the Kenya broadcasting Corporation, the company that owns the above mentioned stations also introduce other vernacular radio stations that by extension targets audiences in Western Kenya. This research coincides with that by Okoth (2015) that traces the emergence of vernacular radio in the gradually evolving Kenyan media scene and its potential to bring economic benefits in the media industry.

Although some scholars such Daraja (2017) who is of the opinion that the growth and expansion of radio is mainly depended on the revenue allocations and proceeds from adverts, there is another school of thought that holds that the radio's programming has a significant hand in its development in a competitive environment. The scheduling of programs and identity signal tunes have been identified as a key contributor to FM radio's growth in a technologically advanced and competitive environment. Warren (2004) maintained that a radio station's consistency in how it packages its content and other market forces helps it to get higher listenership, arrest their allegiance which in return has an impact on the radio's sustainability in a competitive broadcast market.

c) **Improved data gathering and manipulation**

This is experienced in the FM stations' way of programming that meets the audiences' preferences, tastes and expectations contributes to customer satisfaction with FM radio content. Therefore, having the prerequisite tools to aid this process has a greater role in ensuring the relevance of FM radio in a liberal market like that of Kenya today. From the responses gathered, it was evident that with good equipment enhances the liking of a

radio station. This revelation was also alluded to in a research on 'Survival of 'radio culture' in a converged networked new media Environment' in *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa*. That study concluded that due to Data has been gathered using online searches of presence of Africa-based and Africa-focused radio broadcasting, limited interviews and review of literature on radio and culture especially in Africa (Mudhai, 2011).

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The findings of this study were aligned to the objectives of the study. The study summarises that liberalization of the airspace was an enabling catalyst for the positive development of radio coverage and its penetration up to the interior parts of western Kenya, specifically Bungoma County. Secondly, it has been established that FM radio stations experience insufficiencies of resources such as human resource, financial resource, infrastructural resources, equipment/material and other critical needs that are required for the effective operations of FM radio stations in a liberalized environment. The third conclusion is that, technology was plays a very great role in the development of FM radio in western Kenya.

This study reports that there are seven FM radio stations that are based in Bungoma County. These include; West FM, Sulwe FM, Radio Mambo, Radio Mukwano, Nyota FM, Elgon Youth Radio and Biikap Koreet FM. Bungoma County is the host to majority of media stations that broadcast in western Kenya. In fact, 98% of the TV and radio stations have their transmission masts and offices in Bungoma County. This study has established that some of the factors that impede the operations and sustainability of FM radio in western Kenya include; political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors.

Western region where the study area is hosted is a competitive environment given the diversity in population and availability of other socio-economic factors. FM radio stations in the study area were discovered to be employing various techniques in order to stay afloat. FM stations in the county face competition from the mainstream media as well as the upcoming FM radio stations that are continuously setting up in the county.

FM stations in the study area had human resource policies but have no such policies for volunteers and internship students. All the FM stations were guided by the Media Council's Professional Code of conduct for journalists and media practitioners. Staff in FM radio stations are engaged in multiplicity of roles and at times work for longer hours because of financial costs and other managerial policies. Media houses in Bungoma County employ staff with less years of media experience and level of education which is the cause for under staffing of professionals in key departments in the majority of FM stations. More specifically, there is a general lack of professional marketing personnel as well as an inadequacy in the number of technical crew and producers in FM radio stations in Bungoma county, Western region.

When asked about staffing i.e. employees/volunteers, the study revealed that some of employees are not trained journalists and are inadequate i.e. both journalist and marketers. They are not well paid because FM radio stations in Bungoma do not generate enough money to pay staff and as a result, they retain poorly skilled staff thus poor content development as well as copying of what other FM stations are doing. Due to poor skills, they are not able to create relevant programs.

Majority of the FM radio stations in the region rely on advertising for their revenues which is split among the seven FM radio stations operating within the highly competitive market. As a result, the FM Radio stations struggle to sustain themselves considering that (60%) did not make any profit while 40% admit to have made a profit in the previous financial year. A number of upcoming radio stations are struggling to stay in the competitive media environment. Most of these radio stations seek for financial help from the proprietors to meet operational costs. The study revealed one FM radio stations which since its inception, has continued to rely on sponsorship from the proprietor to sustain its daily operations.

By continuously relying on revenues from advertising, this study ineditably opines that the FM radio environment in Bungoma County is not self-sustainable. As a result, the stations employ a number of strategies in cutting down costs that include; adoption of technology which offers diversity, reduction in human resource, use of volunteers and interns, constantly sourcing for advertising contracts and capping on rapid expansion plans that demand huge capital investments. While Probert & Graham (2008) argue that economic and commercial needs of the organization come above any other, this study has established that FM stations in Bungoma County strive in getting a balance between economic interests and service provision as media outlets.

Poor initial planning of the broadcast business from the onset has continued to be the greatest undoing of the FM Radio stations in Bungoma County. This is evident in the findings of this research where one of the radio stations (Radio Mukwano) has grappled with inception challenges to an extent that the management saw the need to re-strategize and even rebrand as a change of business tact to stay afloat.

When the Radio managers were asked about the plans to enhance self-sustainability, findings concluded that there are plans to enhance self-sustainability although most of plans are not implemented. Other than programs, Radio stations in Bungoma County are working on other means to improve sustainability for instance, approaching sponsors/partners by writing proposal, request for wider coverage to reach more audience. Request to increase coverage could increase income especially from new advertiser; however this could not be achieved because the radio stations lack quality equipment and financial capacity to enhance coverage.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The study highlighted challenges of stations operating on survival budgets instead of ideal budgets. This has a crippling effect on the sector's ability to achieve its goals. Basically, there is need for more innovative marketing and fundraising approaches, good financial accountability and human resource management policies among other issues. While the study presented a broader view of FM radio sustainability in Bungoma County by highlighting the importance of its various aspects, financial sustainability remains fundamentally linked to small commercial radio's independence and the ability to execute its mandate.

Following the wide discussion and consideration of the different viewpoints about small FM Radio sustenance presented above, it is essential to particularly underscore that a single attempt at providing concrete solutions to this subject was undoable. Henceforth the suggested recommendations are not exhaustive and may be improved on:

In line with the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher found out that there is need to improve on financial generating activities of rural community radio. However this can be achieved through good management. There is also need for FM Radio stations in Bungoma County to reach out and involve the community in production of programmes to make them attractive to their target listeners. There is need to improve on management skills, since the study revealed that there is lack of professionalism in the management team. Training of staff volunteers should be frequent. There is need to improve in the understanding techniques in deficiency especially in programs. There is need to identify the needs of the community and address them because need are different

This study also recommends as follows:-

FM radio stations in Bungoma County should restructure their management to establish distinctive commercial sections from the administrative arms of the stations. The person holding the commercial section should focus on growing the economic portfolio of the station while the administrative arm deals with the operations of the rest of the organization. This will help maximizing the untapped opportunities in addition to thinking outside the box for other avenues that would be useful in sustaining the radio station. FM Radio stations in Bungoma County should strive to establish a Sales and Client Services department run by a Sales Production team as guided by clear monthly targets as a clear indication of operators' commitment to stations' financial sustenance. Additionally, these initiatives should be supported by appropriate accountability mechanisms through good financial management practice.

Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya should embrace technology and modernize their equipment in a bid to enhance broadcast quality and reach a wider audience despite their limited spectrum. The perspective that Information and Communication

Technologies (ICTs) can help communities to achieve their social, economic, cultural, or political goals is central to any FM radio station. Hence, affordable access to frequencies, channels and bandwidth and the adoption of appropriate technical standards remain imperative.

Radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya should recruit more skilled and qualified staffs especially in critical departments like marketing, broadcast, reporting and branding thus remunerate them well and promptly as well as build capacity in tandem with the current demands and trends in the broadcast industry. In as much as Staff education, standards of performance, staff and volunteer policies and procedures are evident at some of the stations, failure by some of the stations to administer auditions and induction courses, on-the-job training remain a cause for concern.

While the involvement of volunteers in FM radio stations in Bungoma County is a positive impetus towards community participation, the dire shortage of skilled human capital compounded with high staff turnover has become counterproductive in station sustenance. Therefore, stations should develop effective skills training and staff retention strategies such as staff development courses, on the-job training, staff bonding and motivational incentives as remedial action against skills shortage and staff attrition.

Creation of quality educative and informative content addressing challenges in their broadcast areas thus attracts sponsors. These radio stations dwell on competing established radio stations instead of cutting a niche for themselves with unique content. It will be possible to uphold quality programming, consistency and predictability all of which are pivotal in restoring the sector's corporate image. Hence, sustainable programming and programme formats should be characterized by programme variation,

interactive programming, and fresh programme ideas based on current audience research data or survey.

Going by the popular view that programming is the “heart beat or soul” of community radio Van Zyl et al (2003) the challenge for the sector is to professionalize programming without losing the fundamental values of access, participation, and empowerment. To provide a unique and locally relevant programming to listeners, it is therefore recommended for programmers to research the airwaves.

Radio stations in Bungoma County should form a consortium which can be used to solicit for advertisements thus levelling the bargaining power with the well-established FM Radio stations. It was worth noting that these radio stations are not able to compete for available advertisers considering that their coverage space is limited and congested. Coming up with a consortium will propel the demand for advertisers to target a block of listeners from the Western region of Kenya rather than basing on individual radio listenership surveys.

Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) should revise its frequency allocation policies, which has created allocation imbalances. Currently majority of FM radio frequencies in Kenya are located to a single entity despite the demand by budding new players in the market; they should digitize radio frequencies to create room expansion of these radio stations and accommodation of more players. Digitization will make it easy and affordable for small radio stations to expand coverage thus levelling the playing field.

### **5.3.1: Recommendation for further studies**

The researcher observes that there is need for further in depth study on the financial aspect of sustainability in FM Radio stations with the intention of understanding the level of losses these FM Radio stations are incurring as well as the ability of the management of these radio stations managers to effectively run the radio stations with process of financial transparency.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Jared Mudanya  
P.O Box 190 - 50100  
Kakamega  
jmudanya@gmail.com

Dear Respondent,

**RE: Participation in completing the Research Questionnaire and Interviews Schedule**

I am a graduate student at Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology undertaking a Master of Science degree in Journalism and Mass Communication.

I request your consent and participation in an interview that will aid me into the completion of my thesis. My topic of study is, "*Assessment of Sustainability of FM Radio Stations in a Competitive Environment: A Survey of FM Radio Stations in Western Kenya*".

Information gathered through a questionnaire will be made available to the academia and other legitimate and interested stakeholders in the media industry. The questionnaire is not a test but merely an information seeking exercise. In order to help unearth first-hand information about the study, your contribution in this research is important. You are kindly requested to provide accurate information. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality. Please do not write your name on this paper.

I will be grateful if you spare some time to provide your candid responses to the completion the exercise. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Jared Mudanya

**APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RADIO**

**PRODUCERS/PRESENTERS**

*Date of interviewer: ...../.....2018; Start Time.....; End*

*Time.....*

*Name of the Radio Station:*

.....

**1. General Information**

**a) Gender**

- Male
- Female

**b) Age bracket**

- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 29 years
- 30 – 39 years
- 40 years and above

**c) Education**

*What is your highest level of formal education?*

- None
- Primary attended
- Primary completed (class 8)
- Secondary attended
- Secondary completed (form 4)
- Tertiary College attended
- Tertiary College completed

- University Undergraduate
- University Master
- Other (*please write it down verbatim*)

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

2. What is your work experience in media?

.....

3. For how long have been working in this radio station?

- 0 -1 Years
- 1-2 Years
- 2-5 Years
- 6-10 Years
- Above 10 Years

4. Professional training in media from a recognized institution?

- Yes
- No

b) If yes, at what level?

- Certificate*
- Diploma*
- Degree*
- Postgraduate*

5. While working in this station, have you ever attended any refresher trainings/short course(s)? if yes explain

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

6. Factors affecting the sustainability of FM radio Stations in a competitive environment

1. **Social factors**

a) In your opinion, what is your level of agreement that the following social factors affect the sustainability of FM radio stations?

*(SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree)*

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
High staff turnover				
Use of temporary staff				
Under marketing				
Little market share hence lower revenues				

b) Apart from the above, what other social factors do you think affect the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment?

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**2. Environmental Factors**

a) What is your level of agreement that the following affect the sustainability of FM Radio stations in a competitive environment?

*(SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree)*

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
Liberalized market environment					
Highly qualified radio presenters					
Lowly qualified radio human resource					

b) Apart from the above, what other environmental factors do you think affect the sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment?

.....

.....

.....

.....

**3. Economic Factors**

a) To what level do you agree to the following statements that economic factors affect the sustainability of FM radio stations?

(*SD- Strongly Disagree D-Disagree U- Undecided A-Agree SA-Strongly Agree*)

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
Workforce's demand for higher pay					
High cost of living					
High cost of doing business					
Unrealistic expectations about the media fraternity					
Lack of knowledge on resource management					
Inadequate financial resources to support the radio stations					
Unhealthy competition from emerging radio stations					

b) Apart from the above, what do you think are other economic factors that lead to poor performance of FM radio stations operating in Western Kenya?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

7. Mention some of political factors affecting the sustainability of FM radio stations

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Mention some of the legal factors affecting the sustainability of FM radio stations in Kenya

.....  
.....

**APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TECHNICAL CREW**

*Date of interviewer: ...../.....2018; Start Time.....; End Time.....*

*Name of the Radio Station: .....*

**1. General Information**

**Gender**

- Male
- Female

**Age bracket**

- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 29 years
- 30 – 39 years
- 40 years and above

**Education**

*What is your highest level of formal education?*

- Primary completed (class 8)
- Secondary attended
- Secondary completed (form 4)
- Tertiary College
- University Undergraduate
- University Master
- Other (*please write it down verbatim*)

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Do you think technology plays a significant role in the sustainability of FM radio stations in Western Kenya?

Yes

No

Please explain how Technology plays a significant role in sustainability (*please write it down verbatim*)

.....  
 .....  
 .....Please indicate your

level of agreement of how the following influence the sustainability of FM radio stations in a liberalized market?

(**SD**- Strongly Disagree **D**-Disagree **U**- Undecided **A**-Agree **SA**-Strongly Agree)

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
Use of modern and updated production software					
Use of modern production equipment in the studio					
Integration of technology in broadcasting					
Research and production of human oriented content					
Radio programs and programming					
Use of social media to reach out to more audience					

3. How many Portable recording devices are available in your radio station?

- 1
- 2-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- None

4. Is your audio recording and editing equipment enough for all your productions?

- Yes
- No
- If No explain how you manage the production with limited equipment

.....

5. Is your radio stations data storage capacity enough

- Yes
- No

6. Do you have a reliable power back up system?

- Yes
- No

a) If yes, what power back up systems do you have?

- UPS
- Calcium Batteries
- Automatic Generator
- Manual connection Generator
- Others.....

7. Do you sometimes go off air?

Yes

No

8. If yes, what caused the power failure? (*Please write it down verbatim*).....

9. Do you have a Back-pass Filter for signal stability and restriction?

Yes

No

10. Do you have installed transmission delaying machine/Gadget in aid of real-time censorship?

Yes

No

11. Is your live broadcast archived on real time?

Yes

No

12. Is your live studio fit with a professional broadcast console?

Yes

No

13. What challenges do you face in production?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SALES AND MARKETING  
PERSONNEL**

*Date of interviewer: .../.....2018;      Start Time.....; End Time.....*

*Name of the Radio Station: .....*

**1. General Information**

**Gender**

- Male
- Female

**Age bracket**

- 16 – 20 years
- 21 – 29 years
- 30 – 39 years
- 40 years and above

**Education**

*What is your highest level of formal education?*

- Primary
- Secondary completed (form 4)
- Tertiary College completed
- University Undergraduate
- University Master
- Other (*please write it down verbatim*)

.....  
.....  
.....

2. From your experience, is level of education a consideration when hiring for your radio station?

Yes

No

3. How does your radio generate income? *(Mark as appropriate)*

Sponsorships

Spot Commercial/Adverts

Presenter Mentions

Short Code Messages(Premium rate services)

Sale of airtime

Radio announcements

Lottery

Donations

Others.....

4. Do you use celebrities (Celebrity branding) in radio shows to increase audience loyalty?

Yes

No

5. What are the challenges you face in marketing? *(Please write in verbatim)*

.....

.....What are some strategies that can be employed for sustainability of FM radio stations in a competitive environment?

a) .....

b) .....

**APPENDIX V: Interview Schedule for manager of the radio station**

*Date of interview:* ...../.....2018; *Start Time*.....; *End Time*.....

*Name of the Radio Station:*

.....

1. How do you recruit your staff?

.....

.....

.....How many staff are permanently employed?

.....

.....Do you have any employees on contract terms? After how long do you confirm those working on contract terms?

.....

2. How many volunteers do you engage annually?

.....

3. Do you have staff shortage?

Yes

No

4. Can you say that the radio station made profits in the last financial year?.....

If yes, was the organization able to sustain its daily operations?

Yes

No

5. Do you have employment equity procedures?

Yes

No

6. Do you carry out entry auditions for radio presenters?

Yes

No

7. Comment on your organizations' Codes of conduct.

.....

.....

..... Do

you have volunteers working in your radio station?

Yes

No

8. Do you have a volunteer policy document/ guides?

Yes

No

9. Have you developed a clear job description for staff?

Yes

No

10. Do you offer any needs-based training to your staff?

Yes

No

If yes, do you think it contributes to staff retention at your radio station?

Yes

No

11. Do you have an employee motivation program?

Yes

No

12. In your opinion, what can you say are the managerial challenges affecting the sustainability in your radio station

.....  
.....What strategies  
can be employed by FM radio stations in Kenya to ensure self-sustainability?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Thank you for your time*

**APPENDIX VI: MAP OF KENYA SHOWING LOCATION OF  
BUNGOMA COUNTY**



## APPENDIX VII: NOTIFICATION OF TEMPORARY CLOSURE

# LANDMERC LIMITED

103.7 FM RADIO MUKWANO

P.O BOX 1233, BUNGOMA 50200 –KENYA Email: [landmerc@landmerc.co.ke](mailto:landmerc@landmerc.co.ke)

---

Our Ref: LDML-2019/01

The Director General  
Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK)  
P.O Box: 14448-00800, Nairobi  
Email: [info@ca.go.ke](mailto:info@ca.go.ke)

15<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Sir,

### RE: TEMPORARY FM RADIO SILENCE

We write to inform you that 103.7 Radio Mukwano will be silent effective from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 until 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019 to facilitate, repair/replacement of damaged transmission systems, upgrading, restructuring, modernization and re-branding.

This shift is geared towards addressing of sustainability challenges in the competitive environment of its operations. We intend to come back stronger in developing programmes that would gratify the audience's expectations and needs as well as address the emerging issues and challenges in the society. We also wish to put together a successful radio station with a rich format of educative programming tailored to foster development.

In this endeavor to restructure, we will be relooking at our radio Identity (Mukwano) which has been one of our major setback in attracting listenership since inception. Our identity continues to raise surmountable reservations considering that it was derived from our neighboring country Uganda. In view of this, we will be communicating our new identity in due course.

We thank you for your continued support in this journey of discovery and we look forward to your steadfast guidance.

Your Faithfully,



Managing Director  
Landmerc Limited

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**APPENDIX VIII: CAK PERMISSION FOR TEMPORARY  
SHUTDOWN**



**Our Ref: CA/ESM/RC/300/ Vol. I**

13<sup>th</sup> May 2019

**Richard Kokonya  
Managing Director  
Landmerc Ltd  
P.O. Box 1233 – 50200  
BUNGOMA**

Dear *Richard,*

**RE: TEMPORARY AUTHORISATION TO SHUT DOWN 103.7 MHz IN  
WEBUYE**

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Reference is made to your letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019 in which you requested to shut down your FM broadcasting radio for a period of six months to re-brand and change the format.

The Authority has studied the matter and regrets to inform you that this is not acceptable since it is too long a period. However, the Authority wishes to grant you a shutdown period of thirty days (**30 days**) with effect from the date of this letter.

Kindly note that if the station will not be on air by 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 the Authority will revoke the assigned frequency and allocate it to other deserving applicants in our waiting list

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding on this matter.

Yours *Sincerely*  
*Francis W. Wangusi*

**Francis W. Wangusi, MBS  
DIRECTOR GENERAL**

## APPENDIX IX: RESEARCH PERMIT

**CONDITIONS**

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.

  
**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

  
**NACOSTI**

**National Commission for Science,  
Technology and Innovation**

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE  
PERMIT**

Serial No.A **20260**

**CONDITIONS: see back page**

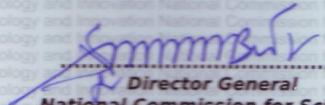
**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:**  
**MR. JARED MUDIMBWA MUDANYA**  
**of MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF**  
**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, 443-50100**  
**KAKAMEGA, has been permitted to**  
**conduct research in Bungoma County**

**on the topic: ASSESSMENT OF**  
**SUSTAINABILITY OF FM RADIO**  
**STATIONS IN A COMPETITIVE**  
**ENVIRONMENT: A SURVEY OF FM RADIO**  
**STATIONS IN BUNGOMA COUNTY -**  
**KENYA**

**for the period ending:**  
**17th August, 2019**

  
**Applicant's  
Signature**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/78292/24129**  
**Date Of Issue : 20th August, 2018**  
**Fee Received :Ksh 1000**

  
  
**Director General!**  
**National Commission for Science,  
Technology & Innovation**

## APPENDIX X: RESEARCH PROPOSAL APPROVAL



MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

Tel: 056-30870  
Fax: 056-30153  
E-mail: [directordps@mmust.ac.ke](mailto:directordps@mmust.ac.ke)  
Website: [www.mmust.ac.ke](http://www.mmust.ac.ke)

P.O Box 190  
Kakamega – 50100  
Kenya

### Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

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Ref: MMU/COR: 509079

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2018

Jared Mudanya  
JMC/LG/013/15  
P.O. Box 190-50100  
**KAKAMEGA**

Dear Mr. Mudanya,

#### RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

Following communication from the Departmental Graduate Studies Committee and the School Graduate Studies Committee, I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies Board meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 at SPD 314 –MMUST considered and approved your Masters proposal entitled: *'Assessment of Sustainability of FM Radio Stations in a Competitive Environment among Selected FM Radio Stations in Bungoma County, Kenya'* and appointed the following as supervisors:

1. Dr. Perez N. Wenje – Department of Journalism and Mass Communication MMUST
2. Dr. Lydia Anyonje – Department of Journalism and Mass Communication MMUST

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Arts and Social Sciences Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication and Graduate Studies Committee. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of two years from the date of registration to complete your Masters thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.

We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Prof. John Obiri  
**DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

DEAN  
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES  
MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## APPENDIX XI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION BY NACOSTI



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349, 3310571, 2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249  
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke  
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Waiyaki Way  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/18/78292/24129**

Date: **20<sup>th</sup> August, 2018**

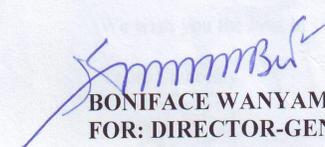
Jared Mudimbwa Mudanya  
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology  
P. O Box 190-50100  
**KAKAMEGA**

#### **RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Assessment of sustainability of fm radio stations in a competitive environment: A survey of FM radio stations in Bungoma County - Kenya,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Bungoma County** for the period ending **17<sup>th</sup> August, 2019**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Bungoma County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

  
**BONIFACE WANYAMA**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Bungoma County.

The County Director of Education  
Bungoma County.

**APPENDIX XII: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION BY COUNTY**

**DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION-BUNGOMA**



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
State Department of Education – Bungoma County

When Replying please quote  
e-mail: [bungomacde@gmail.com](mailto:bungomacde@gmail.com)

County Director of Education  
P.O. Box 1620-50200  
BUNGOMA

RefNo: BCE/DE/19/VOL.1/138

Date: 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2018

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**RE: AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH – JARED MUDIMBWA MUDANYA**  
**REF: NACOSTI/P/18/78292/24129**

The bearer of this letter Jared Mudimbwa Mudanya of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology has been authorized to carry out research on ***“Assessment of sustainability of fm radio stations in a competitive environment: A survey of FM radio stations in Bungoma County, Kenya”***, for a period ending ***17<sup>th</sup> August, 2019.***

Kindly accord him necessary assistance.

  
JACOB ONYIEGO  
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
BUNGOMA COUNTY