

# THE INFLUENCE OF BROADCASTING SKILLS IN ENHANCING PERFORMANCE OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN KENYA

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**Abstract:** *The performance of an organization depends on the present and future work force. The participants need to develop their fullest potential for the benefit of everyone. Training is said to change employee behaviour and attitudes through some type of guided experience. Skills imparted lead to problem solving experimenting, learning from experience which moulds behavior leading to implementation and hence performance improvement. Though the creative skills associated with journalism and productions are deemed innate, the technical skills are recognized for improved performance. Training ensures that the workforce is effective. The objective was to analyze the influence of broadcasting skills in enhancing the performance of community radio. In this research the descriptive research design was applied. Purposive sampling was done by a census of all staff in the radio station. Questionnaires were used for data collection. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings indicate that broadcasting skills are pertinent in enhancing competences needed in communication. The results also indicated that innovation among the media staff also maximizes potential by embracing creative culture.*

**Key Words:** *Community Radio, Broadcasting Skills, Performance.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Organizations perform poorly because of skills-knowledge gaps. Community radio depends on local talent and volunteers with little or no training altogether [1]. Training Needs Assessment is critical in determining the skills required in relation to emerging information needs. The training needs to be in line with the community needs and the goals of the media. This will bridge the gap between the requirements for skills and knowledge of the workers to achieve the qualities needed to carry out broadcast and other tasks. Therefore, Coherent plans of action are crucial in expediting information flow. Communication strategies are pertinent to enhancement of performance of community radio by boosting effectiveness communication though the creative skills associated with journalism and productions are deemed innate, the technical skills are recognized in for improved performance. Training will ensure that the workforce is effective. The training needs to be in line with the community needs and the goals of the media. This will bridge the gap between the requirements for skills and knowledge of the workers to achieve the qualities needed to carry out broadcasting and other tasks.

Professional competences are enhanced; according to Hynes, assessment of individual training needs be outcome of performance appraisal process, interviews; emergence of new technology, previous pit falls regarding professional ethics [2]. It is important to find out how training can address the issue of media malpractice. Due to training needs, Inter News International Network has been providing in-house training for community radio journalists. The content of training includes health communication, legal, ethical issues, media policy and regulations. These aspects are vital for any community radio to maintain professionalism and for improvement of quality of content produced for the communities. Community media need to integrate training of their workers in order to avoid falling short of achieving what they hoped to, this will impact positively in the system improvement.

Training improves innovation, creativity and application of ICT. Today, in the current information age, embracing a multi-platform approach to communication is inevitable. The arrival of technologies and equipment which facilitate social networking e.g. MySpace, YouTube make it possible for individuals to record events with phones and cameras and contribute images and sounds. Communities should be alert to new prospects for community radio development through digitization and the Internet [3]. The software has created a new context for community media. Community radio therefore needs to address these emerging issues which have created new needs in their audiences. According to Bruce, et al a great deal of time- consuming work is necessary to develop new idea into marketable products. It takes innovative mind to turning new ideas into profitable services both in quality and price. Innovation needs champions,

people who will drive through the problems and setbacks convince skeptics of need to do new things and make a good idea produce results[4]. This can lead to continuous improvement for long term impact in organizational performance. Innovation for community media will lead to improvement of the value of existing media content hence enlarging their community outreach and relevance. Innovation will also maximize potential by embracing creative culture. ICT is important for any organization in modern society because technology is becoming more efficient as well as user friendly.

Continuous Skills Training improves professional competences need to impart progressively in order to enhance performance. Community media need to integrate training of their workers in order to avoid falling short of achieving what they hoped to, this will impact positively in the system improvement. The digital Paradigm shift has continuously required media staff to familiarize with modern technology. Today, in the current information age, embracing a multi-platform approach to communication is inevitable due to the arrival of technologies and equipment which facilitate social networking. Communities need to be alert about new prospects for community radio development through digitization of content. Embracing new technologies and innovation is critical in improvement of media content hence enlarging their community outreach and relevance.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN:

The research adopted descriptive survey method. Descriptive survey research is designed to obtain precise information concerning the current status phenomenon and drawing conclusions from the facts discovered. According Kothari, descriptive research includes surveys and fact-finding enquiries of different kinds [5].

**Sampling technique:** The researcher carried out a census of the media staff. Purposive sampling was used to hand-pick all the 15 media staff members. Six (6) among them comprised all the members of management of the radio station including the officer –in-charge of station, programmers ,I.T and technical staff while the other nine (9) comprised of both reporters presenters interns and volunteers.

**Data collection instruments:** In this research, data collection methodology included open ended and close ended questionnaires with Likert scales. Mugenda and Mugenda [6], Wimmer & Dominick [7]), observe that questionnaires are the most used instruments in data collection. Respondents were drawn from media staff i.e. presenters and reporters. These respondents are people who possess knowledge by virtue their training, expertise, experience and position.

### Work Experience

The table 4.1.4 below shows the analysis of the information gathered from the responses about their work experience. The table was generated from the questionnaires filled by management staff and the Reporters/ presenters. The work experience of the staff in terms of years of service was analyzed and presented in the table below.

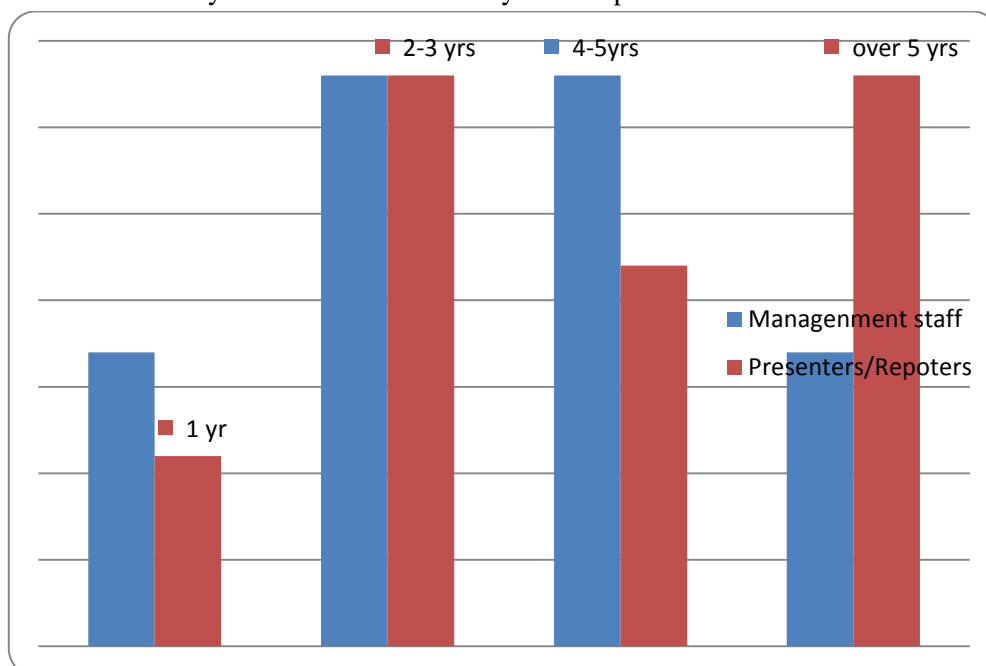
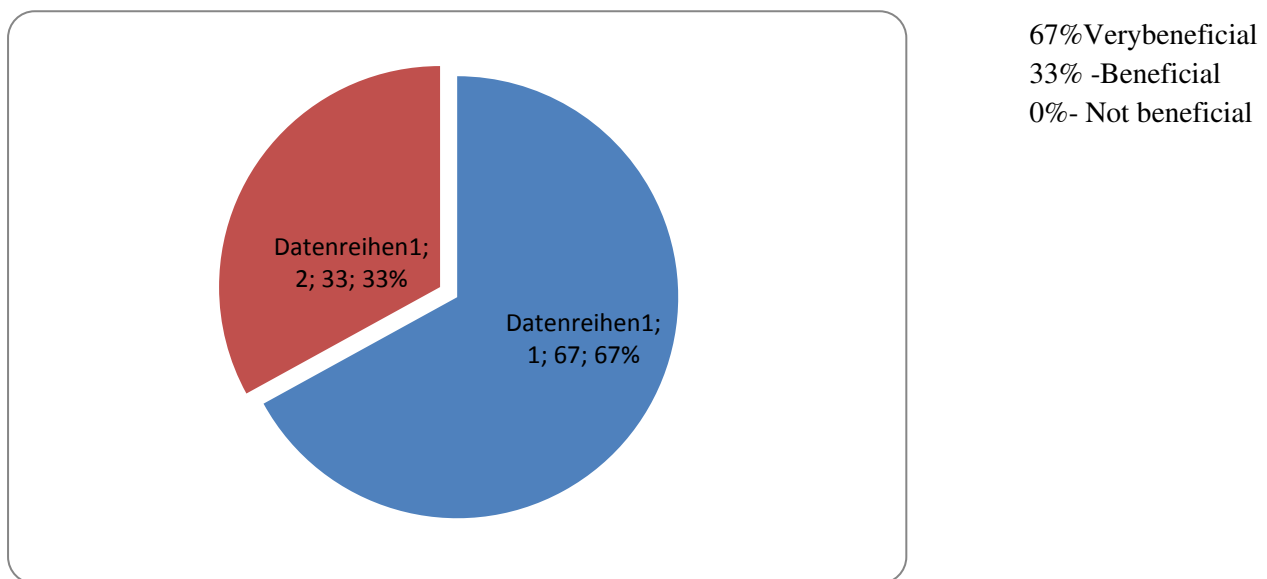


Figure 4.1.4 Work Experience

The analysis in the figure 4.1.4 shows that, only 1 out of the 6 (17%) of management indicated that they had served for a period not exceeding 1 year, while 2 (34%) had served for a period between 2-3 years another 2(33%) indicated that they served for 3-4 years and only one indicated a service period of more than 5 years. Among Reporters/presenters 1 out of the 9 (11%) who responded indicated a service of less than 1 year. 3 (33%) indicated 2-3 years, 2 (22%) had a service of 4-5 years while the other three respondents indicated as having served for a period exceeding 5 years. It indicates therefore that there is low staff turnover and hence high staff retention.

From the questionnaire on broadcast skills, it emerged that during that training the media staff acquired vital skills in broadcast. An analysis on the InterNews Network (Kangema training- Agenda) Document indicated that the training addressed the following areas; community media research, interviewing skills scripting for radio, digital and audio recording, social media, HIV/aids stigma, sound, script writing and packaging.



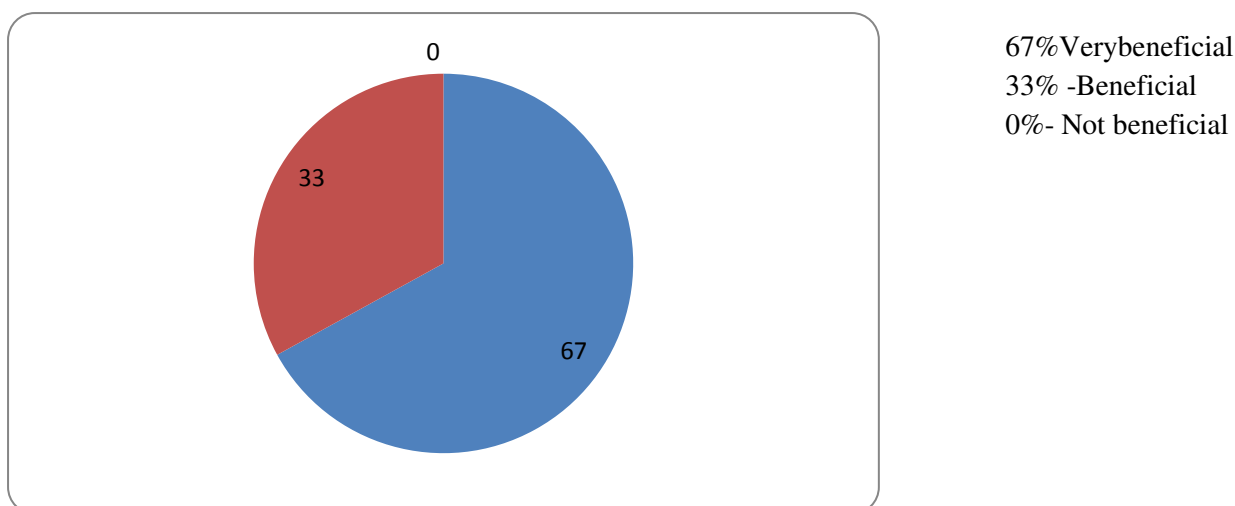
**Figure 4.5.1. The opinion of management on the importance of training**

The opinion held by the members of the management reveals that 67 % felt that the training was very beneficial while 33% of them indicated that it was beneficial. By analyzing questionnaires on this training, it emerged that, all the reporters and presenters 9 out of the 9 (100%) who responded indicated that the training said that it was very beneficial.

The researcher sought to determine whether the in- house training increased creativity among reporters/presenters. Responses gathered indicated that new productions were initiated after the training. The reporters/presenters provided the following list of new productions including HIV/Aids education programmes, weather reading and reporting, upgrading of coffee farming programmes, stock market, gender, drugs and alcoholism, music (New singers & jiggles), interactive counseling segments, question and answer live- studio programmes. It is evident from the above findings that broadcast skills- training have an outstanding impact in enhancing the performance of Community Radio. Skills- training can therefore increase creativity and innovativeness of staff. In the training, the staffs were trained on digital production. This means that the community radio has been able to embrace digital communication.

Al Hassan, *et al* note that, provision of skills and training is, undoubtedly, the key elements of developing a community radio. Skills develop communication efficiency and effective delivery of content in a professional way. While work ethics and independence of media are enhanced; autonomy and technical skills are also acquired [8].

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In this research, the researcher sought to determine the role of broadcast skills in enhancing performance of community radio. Six (6) members of management responded to the questionnaires. The information collected from questionnaires were analyzed and presented in the following frequency table and percentages.

**Table 1.0 Broadcast skills and performance of community Radio.**

	S/ D Agree		D /agree		Neutral		Agree		S/ Agree	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Broadcast skills Enhance technical ability	0	0%	0	0%	0	0 %	1	17%	5	83%
Broadcast skill boost profession Ethics	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%	1	17%	4	67%
Broadcast skills influence quality of content aired	0	0%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0 %	5	83%
Broadcasting skills boost independence and autonomy of media	0	0%	2	33%	0	0 %	1	17%	3	50%
Broadcasting skills	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1		5	83%

enhance respect for media, law and regulation							17%	
Broadcasting skills improve audience needs analysis research	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2 33%	4 67%
Creativity and innovation	1	17%	0	0%	0	0%	1 17%	4 67%
Use of I. C. T	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1 17%	5 83%

The findings indicated, the respondents seem to share the same idea that training in broadcasting skills has a strong influence in enhancing performance of reporters and presenters. 83% of the respondents strongly agree that broadcasting skills boost technical ability. This is the factor that recorded the highest response. The respondents strongly agreed 67%, broadcast skills boost professional ethics. The quality of content transmitted, while the independence and autonomy of media emerged last effective. Audience information needs analysis, creativity and innovation scored 67% response. ICT emerged with the highest score this indicates that generally, knowledge and utilization of I.C.T is enhanced by training. This is crucial particularly in the current digital paradigm. Generally, the findings indicate that there is a strong argument that broadcasting skills are pertinent in enhancing competences needed in communication. Therefore, broadcast skills can be considered as important communication strategy for enhancing performance of community radio. One of the indicators of a performing organization is the evidence of existence of skilled man power. The findings of this study revealed that training in broadcasting skills is core to performance of community radio.

In the questionnaires, radio presenter/reporters listed down new productions created after a 2 weeks in-house training carried out by an NGO. The new productions included HIV/Aids education and stigma reduction, and Gender based productions, Health live-shows, and entertainment by new and up-coming singers. Some other existing programmes were upgraded such as coffee programmes and weather reading, recording and reporting for farmers. It is evident therefore that training has improved the quality and value of content aired. Programmes have been made more interactive. The research also found out that the media staff of Kangema community radio frequently attend training workshops organized by CCK (Communication Communications of Kenya). The benefits accrued from these workshops include: awareness and adherence to media law and regulations, digitization, understanding content and materials for community radio as well as emerging issues.

From research, it emerged that Kangema community radio is based on a management and media personnel with considerably diverse skills and competences. The Head of the radio station has Meteorological knowledge and is the officer in- charge of Sub- County Meteorological Department. One staff has trained at a Degree level in Human Resources Management. The Radio Programmers have skills in Mass communication while the radio station Technician holds a Diploma in Information Technology (I. T). These competences can be considered as a measure of strength in enhancing the performance of the radio. Such competences are indicators of a performing community radio station.

### 3. CONCLUSION:

The findings of the study show that, competence in broadcasting skills is a fundamental communication strategy that influences the performance of community radio. Processing the right skills and creating relevant content is vital in enhancing value of the messages transmitted. The skills help in ensuring value of the news to make it relevant to the listeners as Palmgreen and Rayburn [10] noted, in the Value Expectancy Theory of media use. This theory posits that audiences use certain media due to the value or rewards they get in terms of information satisfaction. This is an approach to finding out what content will be sought in order to obtain gratification hence, audience expect news to

have some certain attributes to address issues related to them in order to receive positive outcome or the intended effect. A survey by AMARC which found out that, Community radio depends on local talent and volunteers with little or no training altogether [ibid]. The fact that, performance of an organization depends on the present and future work force; there is need for effective and continuous training. To enhance performance of community media therefore, time and resources need to be put in place as the way forward toward imparting relevant broadcasting skills. In general, broadcasting skills training apparently play a prominent role in enhancing performance of community Radio. In this research, respondents strongly agreed that broadcasting skills lead to ability to carry out accurate audience analysis, develop relevant content and incorporate interactive segments to allow audience participation. Training in broadcast skills as well enhances professionalism in content delivery, autonomy and ICT skills. In Kangema community radio the media and management staff indicated that they have acquired considerably rich professional and technical skills and competences needed for efficient and effective operation of a community Radio station.

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