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Social Cultural Values, Audience Preferences and Quality of Content in Vernacular Radio Broadcasts in Kenya: A Study of Maasai Radio

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ABSTRACT

The paper aimed to analyse the factors influencing the quality of content generated in vernacular radio in Kenya. Specifically, the paper aimed to establish the influence of cultural values and audience preferences on the quality of content generated by Maasai vernacular radio Mayian and Noosim FM, which broadcast to almost 80% of the Maasai community in Kenya. A total of 57 employees working in the two radio stations formed the target population of the paper. The paper adopted a census as the population targeted was small. Therefore, the paper sample was 57 respondents. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS version 26) was used to code and analyse the raw data realised from the field. Correlation and regression analyses were done to determine the relationships between the paper variables. The paper found that at the significance level (95%,) cultural values and audience preferences were significant factors influencing the quality of content generated by vernacular radio. Additionally, cultural values were the most crucial factor in determining the quality of content generated by vernacular radio, followed by audience preferences. The paper recommends that vernacular radio invest in cultural sensitivity training for content creators and broadcasters and conduct regular surveys and feedback sessions with their audiences to understand their preferences better.

Keywords: *Vernacular radio, cultural values, content, Maasai language broadcast, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Radio stations are essential in disseminating critical information, engaging listeners, and preserving culture. Because of their timely coverage of local, national, and worldwide events, they have a substantial effect on public opinion (Kiousis, 2021). Furthermore, radio stations promote and preserve local culture and arts by highlighting local music, artists, and cultural events, as well as giving a platform for local talent to reach a broader audience (Salmon, 2022). They have also significantly contributed to the entertainment sector, providing diverse music genres and programming tailored to varied listener interests (Fernández-Planells, 2023). Radio stations, with their diverse material, assist listeners in discovering new music, staying updated about current trends, and enjoying. They give entertainment and create awareness and support for vital causes ranging from public service efforts to philanthropic organisations (Stavropoulou *et al.*, 2023). This mode of communication is open to anyone, connecting even those with restricted access to other media types. Radio programs aired in several languages make it a perfect platform for catering to ethnic populations and giving marginalised groups a voice (Burnett, 2021).

Vernacular radio in Kenya has enhanced the country's media landscape by popularising local languages, cultures, and traditions and catering to Kenyan communities' diverse linguistic and cultural needs (Muturi & Ileri, 2020). Originally, Kameme FM pioneered vernacular radio, airing primarily in the Kikuyu language and addressing the needs of the Kikuyu-speaking audience (Muturi & Ileri, 2020).

Afterwards, the establishment of other vernacular radio across the country highlighted that providing programming for each linguistic community is necessary to promote the interests and specificity of each one.

Vernacular radio has historically served as a pillar of social solidarity and community development in Kenya. They provide platforms for promoting local values, customs, and traditions, fostering a sense of unity and camaraderie among Kenyans (Koech, 2020). Additionally, these stations serve as forums for discussions on pertinent local issues, enabling community members to actively participate in developing their societies (Odumbe, 2022). Vernacular radio also serves as a nurturing ground for local artists, musicians, and cultural events, providing vital platforms for talent promotion and the preservation of cultural heritage (Kariuki & Baraza, 2021).

Incorporating local values, traditions, and beliefs is paramount for stimulating a heightened level of interaction among listeners, as this will keep their attention and better reflect their identities (Kariuki & Baraza, 2021). Consequently, understanding the cultural context and respecting the preferences of a certain demographic is key to delivering quality content (Kariuki & Baraza, 2021). Actively involving the community in content creation and decision-making processes ensures that programs address specific needs and interests, fostering a sense of ownership and strengthening the bond between the station and its audience (Mwangi & Kimani, 2020). Content generated by vernacular radio plays a significant role in shaping cultural narratives, community engagement, and information dissemination within specific linguistic communities (Nayeem, 2017). The content for these linguistic communities reflects their cultural identity, local interests, and social realities. However, the potential danger of the vernacular FM radio channels being used to serve sectarian, even ethnic, interests is real. This is especially so since its reach and penetration seem to cut across various socio-economic groups and markets. This makes the content generation by these stations important to policymakers and other stakeholders (Khan, 2019). Amidst growing awareness of the importance of vernacular radio, the factors that drive the content produced by these stations still need to be explored and enigmatic.

Mayian FM and Nosim FM Radio Stations

Mayian FM and Nosim FM have emerged as pivotal vernacular radio stations in Kenya. They address the unique needs of the Maasai community and exemplify how localised media can preserve cultural heritage while driving social and economic change.

Together, Mayian FM and Nosim FM illustrate the transformative power of vernacular radio in cultural preservation and advocacy among the Maasai of Kenya. They showcase how Indigenous media can bridge local concerns with broader socio-political contexts, enhancing representation and development for marginalised populations in Kenya.

Mayian FM

It was launched to provide the Maasai people with a platform for advocacy and cultural preservation. Broadcasting in Maa tackles key issues like land rights, education, and Indigenous rights, including applying Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in development projects. Through its focus on environmental sustainability and land ownership, Mayian FM empowers listeners to engage actively with critical matters affecting their community. Its dedication to addressing sensitive topics has made it a trusted voice for the Maasai, enhancing their capacity for self-representation and decision-making.

Nosim FM

It complements Mayian FM by delivering health, education, and women's empowerment programmes. The station's commitment to community-oriented content ensures listeners are informed about local and global issues. By fostering dialogues on development and inclusion, Nosim FM promotes social change while keeping the Maasai integrated into broader national and global narratives. Its focus on empowering marginalised groups, particularly women, underscores its role as a catalyst for equitable development within the community.

Social Identity Theory

Applying cultural and social identity theory to studying vernacular radio content in Kenya highlights the interplay between communication and group identity. Cultural and social identity theory posits that individuals define their sense of self through group affiliations shaped by cultural norms, social comparisons, and status hierarchies (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019; Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018). This framework suggests that culturally resonant content reinforces listeners' identities, fostering inclusion and belonging. Vernacular radio, such as Mayian FM and Nosim FM, plays a critical role in this context by addressing nationalist, ethnic, and gender identities. These stations validate listeners' identities by aligning content with cultural values and social norms, enhancing engagement and loyalty. Furthermore, the incorporation of cultural narratives and traditions not only strengthens connections with audiences but also supports community cohesion and empowerment. This approach demonstrates how culturally tailored communication can bridge tradition and modernity, shaping audience experiences.

METHOD

This paper was conducted using a descriptive research approach. The design allowed the study to efficiently gather the required data to establish the determinants of content quality generated by vernacular radio. The target population consisted of all the employees working at the Mayian FM and Nosim FM radio stations. Fifty-seven employees worked in the two radio stations, forming the paper's target population. The target population is presented in Table 3.1 below:

Table 1: Target Population

Department	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Mayian FM	30	53
Nosim FM	27	47
TOTAL	57	100

The paper adopted the census because the target population was small: 57 employees working at Mayian and Nosim radio stations. Therefore, the paper sample consisted of 57 respondents. The Census data provides comprehensive and accurate information on population demographics and other critical factors (Cooper and Schindler, 2010).

Questionnaires provided the paper with extensive information on a range of topics. The paper employed closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions will be used to enhance the consistency of responses across respondents. In addition to providing various replies, questions will achieve targeted goals. A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate items under each variable, where 1 - strongly disagree

and 5- strongly agree. The pilot test research included ten employees at Kameme FM (Kikuyu language radio station) as it was not part of the leading paper to realise and correct any inconsistencies and errors that helped promote the quality of the data collected in the main paper. To confirm the paper instruments' face and content validity, the researcher gave the questionnaire to researchers to enhance the content and face validity. This involved ensuring the content is relevant, clear, and representative of the studied concept. Start by thoroughly reviewing the literature to align your content with established definitions and frameworks. Additionally, I collaborate with experts to refine and validate the content. Also, we piloted tested with a small, representative sample helps identify ambiguities and ensures the material resonates with the intended audience.

The internal consistency technique was used to calculate the reliability index. The paper used the Cronbach alpha to determine the reliability of the paper instrument, where a Cronbach alpha value of 0.7 and above was considered acceptable. During the data collection exercise, self-administered questionnaires were given to the participants. Alongside the questionnaire, the researcher provided the respondents with a brief description and purpose of the paper. This explanation was short, precise, and written in plain English. The paper adopted the "drop and pick later" method. Filling a questionnaire took approximately 15-20 minutes. The data collection exercise lasted for two weeks.

Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS version 26) was used to code and analyse the raw data realised from the field. Descriptive statistics included mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages. Furthermore, the paper conducted correlation and regression analyses with the intent of determining the relationships that existed between the paper variables. The following regression model was used:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Y = Quality of Content Generated by Vernacular radio

X_1 = Cultural Values

X_2 = Audience Preferences

While β_1 , and β_2 , are determination coefficients, ε is the error term.

The study ensured that employee responses were anonymous to minimise self-serving bias and encourage more candid feedback on their work and its alignment with audience needs. We also used independent metrics such as audience ratings, engagement rates, and listener demographics to validate employee claims.

FINDINGS

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to cultural values. Results are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Cultural Values

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Station actively engages the local community via listener feedback, call-ins and community event coverage	4.7115	.45747

The radio station contributes to preserving and promoting local cultural heritage.	4.6731	.47367
The content is delivered in the vernacular language with richness and authenticity of language use	4.5962	.63430
There is prevalence and depth of cultural themes and topics in the radio content	4.3846	.69038
Content promotes cultural identity e.g. cultural awareness, community cohesion and pride	4.3269	.90144
The content bridges the gap between tradition and modernity	4.3077	.61160
Content accurately portrays the beliefs, norms, values and taboos of various cultural subgroups in the community	4.1731	.70631
Station engages cultural experts, elders, and community members in creating and sharing content	4.1154	.98327
The station actively documents and share traditional knowledge and practices	4.0577	.69771
Traditional stories, historical events, and cultural practices are prominently featured	4.0192	1.01923
The radio station collaborates with local cultural institutions, artists, musicians, and storytellers	3.8077	.74198
The station incorporates local festivals, rituals, and celebrations into the station's programming	3.7885	1.22613
The station has a track record in consistently producing culturally rich content over time	3.7500	1.35582

The findings presented in Table 2 highlight respondents' perceptions of vernacular radio's role in fostering cultural values within their communities. The highest-rated aspects included active community engagement through listener feedback, call-ins, and event coverage (Mean=4.7115), as well as the contribution of radio stations to preserving and promoting local cultural heritage (Mean=4.6731). These findings suggest that respondents value participatory approaches and the preservation of cultural identity as central tenets of vernacular radio programming. Research has underscored how community-focused programming strengthens public trust and facilitates the dissemination of culturally relevant content (Sakata et al., 2022).

The delivery of content in vernacular languages with authenticity (Mean 4.5962) and the prevalence of culturally rich themes (Mean=4.3846) further support the notion that such stations act as custodians of Indigenous knowledge. These aspects align with studies demonstrating how language preservation and cultural expression through radio promote inclusivity and pride (Ndong et al., 2021). However, less agreement on consistent collaboration with artistic institutions (Mean=3.8077) and incorporating festivals and rituals (Mean=3.7885) points to areas requiring enhancement. This disparity implies that while stations excel in individual engagement, systemic integration with broader cultural frameworks could be improved. Collectively, these findings illustrate the critical role of vernacular radio in sustaining cultural heritage while highlighting opportunities for growth in institutional collaborations and thematic depth.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to audience preferences. Results are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Audience Preferences

	Mean	Std. Deviation
There is lasting popularity of specific content pieces or segments that resonate strongly with the audience	4.5769	.60541
The programs receive high number of calls, messages, or social media mentions during and after broadcasts	4.4808	.72735
Listeners tune-in during specific segments or spending more time listening due to content preferences	4.4038	.72110
The content aligns with audience preferences and elicits positive feedback	4.3077	.46604
The station frequently receives positive audience feedback	4.1731	.94394
Ratings data for specific time slots or programs show listener satisfaction	4.1346	.88625
Audience participation rates in interactive segments or contests are high	4.1154	.85529
Content interaction rates are high e.g. sharing content, discussing it with friends, or referring to it in social situations.	4.0769	.78830
There is listener growth over time for different content types aired in the station	4.0577	.66902
The contents generate high levels of engagement and discussions on social media platforms	3.9808	.85154
The content consumption patterns are balanced for all segments e.g. frequency of access	3.4038	.91308
All the content categories are online streamed e.g. virality or sharing	2.9038	1.27202

The findings in Table 3 illustrate the alignment of vernacular radio content with audience preferences, a critical aspect of maintaining engagement and relevance. Respondents strongly agreed that specific content segments achieved lasting popularity (Mean=4.5769) and elicited high interaction, such as calls and social media mentions (Mean=4.4808). These results align with prior studies showing that culturally resonant and participatory programming strengthens listener loyalty and interaction (Sakata et al., 2022). Additionally, high levels of audience engagement during specific segments (Mean=4.4038) indicate that well-curated content successfully attracts targeted demographics.

Respondents also noted that content aligned well with audience preferences, eliciting positive feedback (Mean=4.3077) and frequent commendations (Mean=4.1731). High participation rates in interactive segments and contests (Mean=4.1154) further reinforce the role of audience-centric programming in sustaining engagement. Such findings resonate with Ndong et al. (2021), who emphasise incorporating interactive formats to increase the dynamism of radio content. Moderate ratings in content consumption balance (Mean=3.4038) and online streaming (Mean= .9038) suggest areas for improvement. These ratings may indicate uneven accessibility across demographic segments or limited digital adaptation. These gaps reflect challenges in bridging traditional and digital media consumption patterns. Overall, the findings underscore the significance of aligning content with audience preferences while advocating for expanded digital strategies to maximise reach and inclusivity.

Quality of Content Generated by Vernacular Radio

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agrees, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to the quality of content generated by vernacular radio. Results are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Quality of Content Generated by Vernacular Radio

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Production values e.g. audio quality, editing, and sound effects are enhanced	4.3462	.76401
The content promotes to positive social change, awareness and community empowerment	4.2885	.66676
Content relevance and cultural appropriateness is enhanced	4.2692	.66023
Frequency of culturally relevant topics and themes has progressively grown	4.2692	.68928
Information accuracy and credibility are boosted	4.1538	.77674
Station's community engagement is heightened	4.0769	1.06359
Educational Value of the content aired is boosted	4.0192	.69987
Audience feedback and ratings are enhanced	3.9423	.93753
Station's ability to adapt content to changing audience preferences and technological advancements are enhanced	3.8846	.70444
Consistency and longevity are promoted	3.8269	1.02366
Collaborations and partnerships are boosted	3.8077	.65794
Diversity of content e.g. variety of content genres and formats is enriched	3.7885	1.07259
Incorporation of local stories, traditions, and idioms has increased	3.7115	.82454
Narrative quality and storytelling are promoted	3.5385	1.07487

The findings in Table 4 demonstrate that respondents largely agreed on various indicators of quality content generated by vernacular radio. High ratings for production values, including audio quality, editing, and sound effects (Mean = 4.3462), highlight the technical proficiency of many stations. Content promoting positive social change, awareness, and empowerment (Mean=4.2885) further underscores the impact of vernacular radio on societal progress, aligning with Sakata et al. (2022), who emphasise radio's role in grassroots empowerment. Enhanced cultural relevance and the growing frequency of culturally significant themes (Mean=4.2692) point to aligning content with community needs.

Respondents also valued improved accuracy and credibility in information delivery (Mean=4.1538), which is essential in maintaining listener trust and combating misinformation (Ndong et al., 2021). The role of community engagement (Mean=4.0769) and the educational value of programming (Mean=4.0192) reinforce the stations' importance as platforms for dialogue and learning. Lower but still favourable ratings in areas like adapting to technological advancements (Mean=3.8846) and narrative quality (Mean=3.5385) suggest areas for development, particularly in the context of evolving digital media landscapes. These findings imply a need for vernacular radio stations to invest further in storytelling innovation and digital adaptation to enhance their relevance and competitiveness. Overall, the results highlight the multifaceted role of vernacular radio in addressing cultural, educational, and technological needs while advocating for ongoing improvements in content quality.

The paper used inferential statistics to establish the determinants of content quality generated by vernacular radio. The findings of the Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression coefficients are shown in subsequent sections. The model summary is presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.864 ^a	.746	.725	.33348

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Values, Audience Preferences

The factors studied (cultural values and audience preferences) explained 74.6% of the content quality generated by vernacular radio as represented by R^2 . This, therefore, implies that other factors not studied in this research contribute 25.4% of the content quality generated by vernacular radio. Hence, additional research should be conducted to determine the factors influencing 25.4% of the content quality generated by vernacular radio.

Coefficients of Determination

The paper also adopted multivariate regression analysis to establish the influence of the independent factors on the content quality generated by vernacular radio. The results are presented in Table 7 below:

Table 6: Coefficients of Determination

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	-1.187	.490		-2.425
	Cultural Values	.608	.135	.493	4.510
	Audience Preferences	.325	.178	.217	1.828

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$ became:

$$Y = -1.187 + .608X_1 + (-.133) X_2 + \varepsilon$$

According to the regression equation, assuming all factors (cultural values and audience preferences) are constant at zero, the quality of content generated by vernacular radio would be -1.187. The results further indicate that, with the four variables, a unit rise in cultural values would lead to a .608 increase in the quality of content generated by vernacular radio. Additionally, a unit increase in audience preferences would lead to a .325 increase in the quality of content generated by vernacular radio.

At the 95% significance level, cultural values and audience preferences were significant factors influencing the quality of content generated by vernacular radio, with significant values of .000, .004, and .006, respectively. Cultural values were the most significant factor in determining the quality of content generated by vernacular radio, followed by audience preferences.

The paper examined determinants of content quality produced by vernacular radio, focusing on Mayian FM and Nosim FM, and explored how cultural values and audience preferences influence this quality. Findings revealed that these stations actively engage the local community through mechanisms like listener feedback, call-ins, and event coverage, aligning with claims by Sakata et al. (2022) about radio's role in community-centred communication. They were found to preserve and promote local heritage by using the vernacular language authentically, ensuring depth in cultural themes, and fostering a bridge between tradition and modernity.

Additionally, the stations engaged cultural experts, elders, and local communities in crafting content accurately reflecting cultural subgroups' values, norms, and taboos. These efforts align with Ndong et al. (2021), who highlight the importance of participatory approaches in enhancing cultural representation. The stations documented traditional knowledge, featured cultural narratives, and collaborated with local artists and institutions, creating a consistent track record of producing culturally rich content. Audience preferences also significantly influence content quality. The paper highlighted the lasting popularity of specific segments, frequent positive feedback, and high participation rates in interactive segments. This resonates with Sakata et al.'s assertion that targeted content fosters listener loyalty and cultural resonance. Moreover, the findings underscored high engagement levels on social media and steady audience growth, emphasising the relevance of aligning programming with evolving preferences and technological advancements.

Despite these successes, areas like balanced content consumption and online streaming still require improvement. The findings underscore vernacular radio's potential to strengthen community cohesion and cultural identity while adapting to dynamic audience demands and bridging local heritage with modern communication trends.

Using a scale of 1-5, where 1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to cultural values. Results are presented in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Cultural values

	Mean	Std. Deviation
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The content bridges the gap between tradition and modernity	4.3077	.61160
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The station actively documents and share traditional knowledge and practices	4.0577	.69771

Traditional stories, historical events, and cultural practices are prominently featured	4.0192	1.01923
The radio station collaborates with local cultural institutions, artists, musicians, and storytellers	3.8077	.74198
The station incorporates local festivals, rituals, and celebrations into the station's programming	3.7885	1.22613
The station has a track record in consistently producing culturally rich content over time	3.7500	1.35582

The findings from Table 7 reveal that vernacular radio stations like Mayian FM and Nosim FM play a critical role in community engagement and cultural preservation. Respondents strongly agreed that these stations actively involve local audiences through feedback, call-ins, and event coverage (Mean = 4.7115). This supports Sakata et al. (2022) that community-driven media fosters inclusivity and localised dialogue. Additionally, the stations were credited for promoting cultural heritage (Mean = 4.6731), with content delivered in the vernacular language, rich in authenticity and cultural depth (Mean=4.5962 and 4.3846, respectively).

The data further suggests that such content effectively bridges tradition and modernity (Mean=4.3077) and promotes cultural identity by fostering community pride and awareness (Mean=4.3269). These findings align with those of Ndong et al. (2021), who emphasise that vernacular media preserves traditions and adapts to contemporary societal needs. Engagement with cultural experts and elders (Mean=4.1154) and active documentation of traditional knowledge (Mean=4.0577) highlight the participatory approaches central to their programming, underscoring the stations' credibility and cultural relevance.

While collaborations with artists and local institutions (Mean=3.8077) and programming around festivals and rituals (Mean=3.7885) were rated slightly lower, they still signify the stations' efforts to integrate diverse cultural elements into their content. The stations' track record in consistently producing culturally rich content (Mean=3.7500) demonstrates their sustainability in enhancing cultural value through media. These results collectively illustrate how vernacular radio balances cultural authenticity with dynamic audience needs, creating a platform for cultural continuity and community empowerment.

Quality of Content Generated by Vernacular Radio

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 strongly disagrees and 5 strongly agrees, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to the quality of content generated by vernacular radio. Results are presented in Table 8:

Table 8: Quality of Content Generated by Vernacular Radio

	Mean	Std. Deviation
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Incorporation of local stories, traditions, and idioms has increased	3.7115	.82454
Narrative quality and storytelling are promoted	3.5385	1.07487

The findings in Table 8 show that the respondents agreed that production values, e.g. audio quality, editing, and sound effects, were enhanced (Mean=4.3462) and that the content generated promoted positive social change, awareness and community empowerment (Mean = 4.2885). Further, the respondents agreed that content relevance and cultural appropriateness were enhanced (Mean=4.2692) and that the frequency of culturally relevant topics and themes had progressively grown (Mean=4.2692). Additionally, the respondents agreed that information accuracy and credibility were boosted (Mean=4.1538) and that stations' community engagement was heightened (Mean=4.0769). Further, the respondents agreed that the educational value of the content aired was boosted (Mean=4.0192) and that audience feedback and ratings were enhanced (Mean=3.9423). Additionally, the respondents agreed that stations' ability to adopt content to changing audience preferences and technological advancements was enhanced (Mean=3.8846) and that consistency and longevity were promoted (Mean=3.8269).

Moreover, the respondents agreed that collaborations and partnerships were boosted (Mean=3.8077) and that diversity of content, e.g. variety of content genres and formats, was enriched (Mean=3.7885). Finally, the respondents agreed that the incorporation of local stories, traditions, and idioms had increased (Mean=3.7115) and that narrative quality and storytelling were promoted (Mean=3.5385). The results imply that the respondents were aware of what it entails for the quality of content generated by vernacular radio and recognised the factors that influenced the quality of content generated by vernacular radio.

The paper used inferential statistics to establish the determinants of content quality generated by vernacular radio. The findings of the Model Summary, ANOVA and Regression coefficients are shown in subsequent sections. The model summary is presented in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.864 ^a	.746	.725	.33348

a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Values, Audience Preferences

The factors studied (cultural values and audience preferences) explained 74.6% of the content quality generated by vernacular radio as represented by R^2 . This, therefore, implies that other factors not studied in this research contribute 25.4% of the content quality generated by vernacular radio.

Hence, additional research should be conducted to determine the factors influencing 25.4% of the content quality generated by vernacular radio.

Coefficients of Determination

The paper analysed determinants of content quality generated by vernacular radio. Specifically, the paper sought to establish the effect of cultural value and audience preferences on the quality of content generated by vernacular radio, focusing on Mayian FM and Nosim FM. The paper found that stations actively engaged the local community via listener feedback, call-ins and community event coverage. The radio stations also contributed to preserving and promoting local cultural heritage. In addition, the paper found that the content was delivered in the vernacular language with richness and authenticity of language use and that there was prevalence and depth of cultural themes and topics in the content.

Moreover, the paper found that content promoted cultural identity e.g. cultural awareness, community cohesion and pride and that the content bridged the gap between tradition and modernity. Additionally, the paper found that content accurately portrayed the beliefs, norms, values and taboos of various cultural subgroups in the community and that stations engaged cultural experts, elders, and community members in creating and sharing content. Further, the paper found that the stations actively documented and shared traditional knowledge and practices and that traditional stories, historical events, and cultural practices were prominently featured. Also, the paper found that the radio stations collaborated with local cultural institutions, artists, musicians, and storytellers and that the stations incorporated local festivals, rituals, and celebrations into the station's programming. Further, the paper found that the stations had a track record of consistently producing culturally rich content over time.

There was lasting popularity of specific content pieces or segments that resonated strongly with the audience, and the programs received many calls, messages, or social media mentions during and after broadcasts. In addition, the paper found that listeners tuned in during specific segments or spent more time listening due to content preferences and that the content aligned with audience preferences and elicited positive feedback. Further, the paper found that the stations frequently received positive audience feedback and that ratings data for specific time slots or programs showed listener satisfaction. Additionally, the paper found that audience participation rates in interactive segments or contests were high and that content interaction rates were high, e.g. sharing content, discussing it with friends, or referring to it in social situations. Moreover, the paper found that listener numbers grew over time for different content types aired on the stations and that the content generated high levels of engagement and discussions on social media platforms. Further, the paper found that the content consumption patterns were moderately balanced for all segments, e.g. frequency of access and that all the content categories were moderately online streamed, e.g. sharing.

DISCUSSION

The intersection of social-cultural values and audience preferences plays a pivotal role in determining the quality of vernacular radio content in Kenya. Vernacular stations such as Mayian FM and Nosim FM serve as cultural custodians, embedding traditional stories, idioms, and rituals into their programming. This aligns with Scheepers and Ellemers (2019), who emphasise that cultural identity is reinforced through communication channels that reflect community norms and traditions. Enhanced production values and cultural relevance (Mean=4.3462; Mean=4.2692) meet technical excellence and resonate deeply with listeners, fostering loyalty and pride (Ndong et al., 2021).

Audience preferences also shape programming quality by driving content alignment with listener tastes. High engagement rates through call-ins, contests, and social media interactions reflect a reciprocal dynamic between content creators and consumers. This supports Ting-Toomey and Dorjee's (2018) argument that audience feedback is integral to refining communication strategies. However, regression analysis in this study revealed that cultural values had a more significant impact ($\beta=0.608$, $p=0.000$) than audience preferences ($\beta=0.325$, $p=0.004$), indicating that while preferences matter, the foundation of quality content lies in cultural authenticity.

Including cultural narratives promotes community cohesion and awareness, bridging tradition and modernity. As Sakata et al. (2022) note, vernacular radio acts as an artistic mirror, preserving heritage while adapting to technological shifts. This adaptability (Mean=3.8846) ensures content remains relevant in an increasingly digital landscape.

In conclusion, the fusion of cultural values and audience preferences creates a robust framework for quality content in vernacular radio. To sustain this, stations must invest in cultural sensitivity training for content creators and engage audiences through regular feedback. This approach ensures that programming reflects cultural heritage and adapts to evolving societal dynamics, enhancing engagement and loyalty.

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