

Taxing the Media out of Business: An Analysis of the Effect of Multiple Tax Regimes on the Economy of Media Stations in Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper evaluates the excessive tax invasion of individuals and media houses by the tax officials. Over the years experts have been worried on how levies on taxation have continued to limit investments on the grounds that the administration of tax is not transparent; and impoverishes the organizations; irrespective of the fact that the government owes some fundamental obligations to the people it governs. The citizens and organizations in the society on their own part owe the government by making equitable contribution in the form of levy on tax; hence, government levy taxes on its citizenry to finance its obligations to the people. The argument lies on the non- transparency and its evasive nature. Anchored on the Corporate Social Responsibility theory, this study looks at media organizations' perception of tax payment and its implications on the economy of the organizations. The study used survey research method with questionnaire as the instrument for data collection to sample 20 media houses. The paper argues that paying of taxes is a civic responsibility of every individual and organizations, but there should be consistency in the policies and the excesses of the collectors should be checked. In effect the paper recommends that there is need for harmonization of National Tax Policy nationwide.

Keywords: *.Taxation .Media .Economy .Nigeria .Implication*

Introduction

Efficient tax system can lead to economic growth and development and any country that engages in it illegally is inviting disaster in the economy. The federal government of Nigeria obtains most of its revenue from income taxes from individuals and corporations and the level of development of any nation depends on the amount of revenue generated from these individuals and corporate entities. Taxes are 'financial charge' or deduction from something you get or own. It is not a penalty or fine for doing something wrong. Taxes are compulsory levies that are regularly imposed and as a rule, not designated for a special purpose, they are regarded as a contribution to the general revenue pool from which most government expenditures are financed (Ogbonna and Appah, 2012). Taxation refers to compulsory payments by individuals and organizations to the relevant inland or internal revenue authorities at Federal, State, or Local Government levels. Taxes perform fiscal or budgetary functions, economic function and social or redistributive functions. Hornby (1988) in Chude and Chude (2015) defined tax as money that has to be paid to the government. He went further to state that people pay tax according to their income and business. Due in his contribution taxation as the process or machinery by which communities or groups of persons are made to contribute part of their income in some agreed method for the purpose of administration and development of the society. This is why it is at times referred to as a civic obligation.

According to Azubike (2009) in Ogbonna and Appah (2012), tax is a major player in every society of the world. The desired outcome requires a lot of money to put the

economy in a position that stimulates investment, therefore, tax policies need to attract potential investors, and the revenue from tax should be sufficient enough to meet the infrastructural expenditures of the government. Apere (2003) notes that taxation is a microeconomic and fiscal policy instrument; it involves the transfer of resources from the private to the public sector for the accomplishment of economic and social goals. It is an instrument the government uses to measure, access and control the informal sector that dominate developing economies of the world (Wambai and Hanga, 2013). It then suffices to mean that taxation is an involvement to every individual and corporate body in as much as the individual work to earn and the corporate body employer of labour.

Media as corporate entities are systems that convey information to an audience and functions to inform, educate, entertain and persuade. Media are all embracing as they comprise the Newspapers, Radio, Television and electronic News media. Categorically they are print, electronic and new media. New media are wikis, blogs, and social media among others. The ownership structure consists of foreign investors and Nigerians. The media have been an avenue of job creation and the empowerment of Nigerian citizens, providing jobs in Nigeria and local capital formation. It is self evidenced that every organization has an obligation of civic responsibility of paying taxes which governments use to finance their expenditure by imposing charges on citizens and corporate entities. These charges which suppose to be just-enough to generate revenue required for provision of essential public services and uniformly stipulated seems to be negotiable by the agencies thus arouses some degree of questioning on the accountability for the tax revenue and its expenditure. According to the law governing taxation in Nigeria, the law permits the Federal Government to collect companies income tax, Value Added Tax, withholding tax, petroleum profit tax from companies, while personal income tax are paid by members of the armed forces, as well as workers and residents of cities, towns and villages, ostensibly through their earnings or in person. The law specifically limits the state government to personal income tax (particularly Pay As You Earn), withholding tax, capital gains tax and stamp duties. What used to be under local government authority has recently been harnessed by the state government, though. These apply to individuals' pools tax, road taxes, business premises fee, market taxes and levies, among others. Also, the local governments are expected to collect shops and kiosks rate', tenement rates, marriage, birth and death fees and other fees of little significance. It is however envisaged that many states and local governments have, however, gone beyond their mandate, thus constituting obstacles to individuals and corporate bodies like the media organizations taxing them more than what is suppose. In effect the crux of this research work is the implication of multiple taxes faced by the media organizations which seems to limits the ability of the media as an economic enabler and social overhead capital to impact positively on the attainment of the country's developmental goals. Non transparency of taxation would surely have effect in the media in particular and the economy in general.

Statement of the problem

Operators and stakeholders in the Nigerian economy appear to be angry by the series of inconsistency in government tax policies over the decades. They are worried over the impact of multiple taxes. Multiple taxes have remained a major challenge to business operation in Nigeria, especially in the media industry. The media industries are so much affected over a conundrum that has continued to limit investments. Fraudulent activities of tax collectors and lack of understanding of the importance of tax payment by tax payers seem to jeopardize the country's developmental goals. Imagine a situation where officials of the Local Government council stormed the premises of a media house and slammed the operator with 150 thousand naira and attempted to shut down the company but were prevailed upon to give 24 hours grace to pay the tax. After much explanation on the commencement of the industry for past six months and inability of the operator to generate the revenue worth talking about, the operator was asked to pay 100 thousand

naira which excluded other charges demanded by the council. If the media houses can be shutting down in this regard, how would they generate revenue for their growth and survival?

Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, the study endeavours to answer the following questions:

1. Does inconsistency in tax policies has limitation on investment in the media?
2. Do multiple taxes have influence on media economics?

Hypothesis

H1- Inconsistency in tax policies have limitation on investment in the media

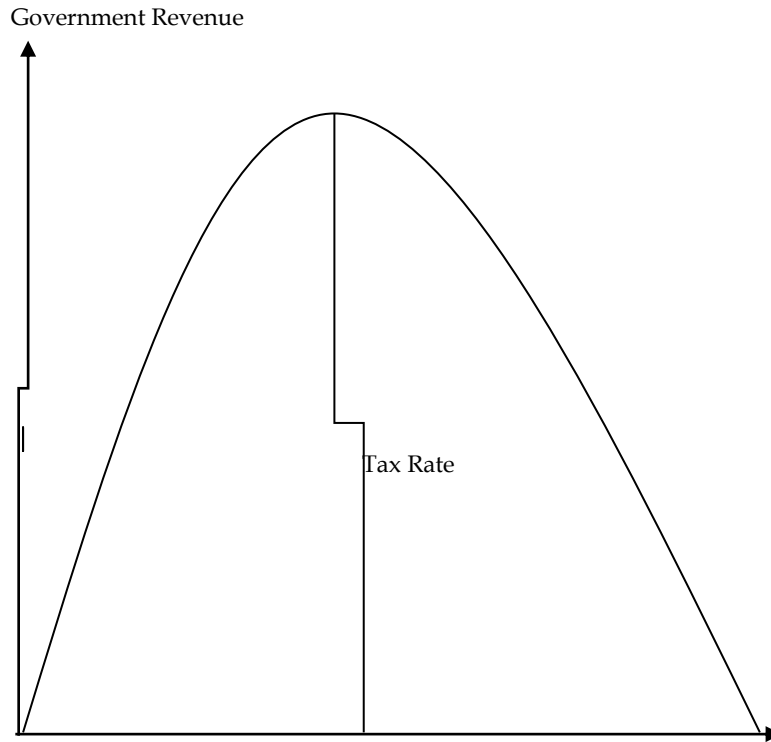
H0- Inconsistency in tax policies have no limitation on investment in the media

Literature review/theoretical framework

Many researchers have looked at the implications of taxation using different methods to arrive at the findings and conclusions, and report on taxation had been submitted as regards to same. The tax system in Nigeria is made up of the tax policy, the tax laws and the tax administration. All of these are expected to work together in order to achieve the economic goal, growth and development of the nation. According to the Presidential Committee on National tax policy (2008), the central objective of the Nigerian tax system is to contribute to the well-being of all Nigerians directly through improved policy formulation and indirectly through appropriate utilization of tax revenue generated for the benefit of the people. In generating revenue to achieve this goal, the tax system is expected to minimize distortion in the economy (Presidential Committee on National tax policy, 2008).

The national tax policy is expected to be in compliance with the principle of taxation, the lubricant to effective tax system. The Nigerian tax system has been flawed by what is termed multiplicity of tax and collecting entities at the three tiers of government levels – federal, State and local government. This problem is inherent in her fiscal federalism (Ahunwan, 2009). This is in line with the Global Systems Mobile Association, GSMA, (2012), report, where the association submitted that the industry has witnessed untoward intervention and actions from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Governments (at the 3 tiers) who see an opportunity to generate revenue from the operations of telecoms operators through the imposition of Multiple, illegitimate levies and taxes. The failure of the industry to submit to these illegitimate regime and demands often results in disruptive enforcement actions by these MDAs. Continuing the report noted that Network operators continue to witness harassment, forcibly sealing of telecoms sites or removing components of site installations in their bid to compel compliance. These continued intervention in telecoms operations by MDAs results in a disruptive of services, degradation of service quality, a major increase in operating expenses and the general cost of carrying on communications business in Nigeria. While we note that the untoward consequences of Multiple and illegitimate levies/taxes is not born solely by the telecommunications industry, it is our cogent believe that the critical nature or services provided by the telecommunications sector.

Scholars contributed reasonable to taxation and some of the theorists' works are the one gotten from Arthur Laffer on taxation, popularly known as the "Laffer Curve." It is a theoretical representation of the relationship between government revenue raised by taxation and all possible rates of taxation. This theory is demonstrated with a curve (i.e Laffer Curve which is constructed through experiment).



Source: Laffer Curve (2004, www.heritage.org in Afuberoh, D. & Okoye, E. 2014).

It considered the amount of tax revenue raised at the extreme tax rates of 0% and 100%. The theory concludes that a 100% tax rate raises no revenue in the same way that a 0% tax rate raises no revenue. This is because at 100% rate, there is no longer incentive for a rational tax payer to earn any income, thus, the revenue raised will be 100% of nothing. It therefore follows that there must exist at least one rate in between where tax revenue would be a maximum. Laffer attributes the concept to Ibn Khaldun and Keynes J.M. One potential result of this theory is that increasing tax rate beyond a certain point will become counterproductive for raising further tax revenue because of diminishing returns (Laffer, 2004).

Another one which helps to shape taxation is Ibn Khaldun theory on taxation. This theory was explained in terms of two different effects that is the arithmetic effect and the economic effect which the tax rates have on revenues. The two effects have opposite results on revenue in case the rates are increased or decreased.

According to the arithmetic effect, if tax rates are lowered, tax revenues will be lowered by the amount of the decrease in the rate. The reverse is true for an increase in tax rates. The economic effect however recognized the positive impact that lower tax rate have on work, output and employment and thereby the tax rate base used in providing incentives to increase these activities whereas raising tax rates here the opposite economic effect is used by penalizing participation in the taxed activities. At a very high tax rate, negative economic effect dominates positive arithmetic effect, thereby, the tax revenue declines (Islahi, 2006 in Afuberoh and Okoye 2014). It then suffices to mean that for absolute growth and improvement the tax system should be well stipulated and explained to tax officials in order to extricate themselves from unnecessary increment in

taxation which attracts negotiation that has negative implication on the growth and development of the media in particular and the nation generally.

Jane (2011) carried out research on the impact of tax reform on the general economy of the nation and tested the research variable with the use of ordinary least square regression method and found out that tax reforms in Nigeria have not had a significant impact on the macroeconomic stability. It was observed that increase in tax rate ultimately result in greater burden for the masses through a shift of the tax liability. As a result, tax reforms in Nigeria have created inequalities rather than bridging such.

A study by Wambai and Hanga, (2013) was on taxation and social development in Nigeria: tackling Kano's hidden economy, they found that the attitude of the government on taxation need to change and recommends a tax system that concentrate on establishing simplicity, predictability, and neutrality. Chiumia and Simwaka, (2012) study analyses the effect of taxation in sub-Saharan Africa. They found that taxes levied on personal and corporate income reduces economic growth. Worlu and Emeka (2012) examined tax revenue and economic development in Nigeria using the three stage least square estimation technique, this study found that tax revenue stimulate economic growth through infrastructural development, it highlight the channels through which tax revenue impacts on economic growth in Nigeria and also that tax revenue has no dependent effect on growth through infrastructural development and foreign direct investment but just allowing the infrastructural development and foreign direct investment to positively respond to increase in output.

Xing, (2011) in his study entitled, Does tax structure affect economic growth? He examine the effects of revenue-neutral tax structure and changes on the long-run level of income per capita using panel data for 17 OECD countries over the period 1970-2004. The study did not obtain compelling evidence in favour of consumption taxes over income taxes or personal income taxes over corporate taxes. The robust result appears to be that shift in tax revenue towards property taxes are associated with a higher level of income per capita in the long run, Poulson and Kaplan, (2008) studied the impact of tax policy on economic growth in the states within the framework of an endogenous growth model. They applied the regression analysis to estimate the impact of tax on economic growth in the state from 1964 to 2004. They found a significant negative impact of higher marginal tax rate on economic growth. This analysis however, underscores the importance of controlling for regressivity, convergence, and regional influences in isolating the effect of taxes on economic growth in the states.

According to Ihenyen, and Ebipanipr (2007), Corporate Income Tax and Value Added Tax, CIT and VAT have significant relationship with economic growth in Nigeria, and finally concluded that the tax revenues should be properly distributed so that economic growth can be harnessed, especially in providing basic social amenities as well as infrastructures in Nigeria.

This work is anchored on corporate social responsibility theory which states that companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. The theory views the corporation as pure profit oriented with the main aim of maximizing profit and has ethical role of being morally responsibility. The theory emphasizes the point that the only reason the corporation take stakeholders under consideration is for it to maximize its profits, however within the framework of the norms in the country they operate (Friedman, 1970).

Therefore, this approach does not necessarily mean that the corporation should not have any responsibility towards stakeholders. In fact it should, but this responsibility should only be active if it leads to creating wealth for the corporation (Friedman, 1970 and McWilliams & Siegel, 2001). According to a pure profit oriented view, the more the corporation is involved in the society the better is the outcome for the corporation.

This is consistent with Jensen (2001), when he says that the corporation would increase its profits by taking responsibility. This view could also be related to Jensen's notion of an economic approach, which emphasizes that the corporation no more can make profit for its shareholders without concentrating on making long term profits by taking responsibility toward the stakeholders. Jensen also argues that the corporation would maximize the wealth for all its stakeholders by maximizing its own profits. Considering the fact that corporation maximizes profit by fulfilling the obligation of taking responsibility towards its stakeholders there will be urge and salvation for that role and this will also go a long way for the corporation to obtain relative advantage towards its competitors, Prahalad (2002). The ethical role of morality emphasize that the corporation should have a moral responsibility towards the society it is active in, treat its stakeholders as important and not just use them as a tool to reach its own profit maximizing ambitions (Borglund, De Geer, & Hallvarsson, 2009).

What the ethical perspective delivers to the concept of CSR is that the corporation has a major part in creating the society and providing a stable future for coming generations, at the same time as they create wealth. Because, if the corporation does not take an active role and moral responsibility in society, by for example reducing different stabilizing factors for its employees (such as less pension in the future), putting pressure on its suppliers for providing (to less cost) and other factors that affect stakeholder loyalty. Then the corporation would lose its legitimacy towards its stakeholders in the same manner as Kennedy (2000) claimed, which would give the corporation a bad reputation in the society it is active and create an atmosphere of distrust by the stakeholders toward the corporation.

Method

The researcher adopted survey method since it involves the collection of views, perspectives or opinions of respondents regarding a particular issue, with questionnaire. This choice was made due to the fact that the survey method is effective when it comes to getting opinions, attitudes. The population of this study is 20 media houses from two states, Anambra state and Ebonyi State, the reasons behind this selection was that the researchers are from the two states and have worked in some of the media houses and can access information easily from the media houses in the states. Copies of the questionnaire were given specifically to the executive members of the media organizations. The media houses include Anambra Broadcasting Television, Onitsha, Nigeria Television Authority, Onitsha, Minaj Systems Television, Obosi, Salt FM, Abakaliki, Unity FM, Abakaliki, Anambra Broadcasting Service, Awka, Brilla FM, Onitsha, Minaj FM, Obosi, Anambra Broadcasting Service, Onitsha, Blaze FM, Oraifite, Madonna Radio (Madonna University) FM, Okija, Unizik (Nnamdi Azikiwe University) FM, Awka, Radio Sapientia FM, Onitsha, Odenigbo FM, Obosi, Purity FM, Awka (FRCN), Alpha FM, Nnobi, Nigeria Television Authority, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State Television and Nigeria Television Authority, Awka. The media houses were grouped under A, B, C, D. We have under A, federal government RTV, B- state government RTV, C- commercial RTV and finally D- campus radio, where RTV stands for Radio and Television.

Since the population of study is small (20), the researchers decided to do a census study, which according to Australian Bureau of Statistic (2013) is a study of every unit, everyone or everything in a population. In other words, it counts everyone in a population rather than a fraction. This method is apt because it provides a true measure of the population (no sampling error) and detailed information about small sub-groups within the population is more likely to be available (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013). The purposive sampling technique was used because respondents needed to be selected based on certain criteria (the respondents know whether the media organization pay tax and the effect of the tax on the organization in effect only the management of the

organizations were reached). The questionnaire contained closed questions and was administered personally to the respondents by the researchers.

Results

The data were collected in response to 20 copies of questionnaire distributed to the management staff of the media organizations, which were fully completed and returned. The hypothesis was tested using Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) and this led to the drawing of conclusions and recommendations.

Table 1. Does inconsistency in tax policies has limitation on investment in the media

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highly negative Limitation	10	50
Negative limitation	5	25
Positive limitation	3	15
Undecided	2	10
Total	20	100

From table 1, Data elicited from the respondents confirm that inconsistency in tax policies has negative limitation on investment in the media with more than 70% establishing firmly the negative effects the inconsistency has on investment in the media.

Table2. Do multiple taxes have influence on media economics?

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bad influence	11	55
Retarded influence	6	30
Minor influence	2	10
Can't say	1	5
Total	20	100

Data elicited from the respondents in the above table confirmed that multiple taxes constitute bad and retarded influence on media economics.

Tests of Hypothesis

H1: There is relationship between tax collection and media organization in Nigeria. The hypothesis proposed by the researchers was put to empirical tests, through the responses obtained from specific question.

Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the hypothesis and the ANOVA table can be seen as:

Table 3

A	B	C	D	x	X	XT
14	8	10	9	41	10.25	
3	5	4	3	15	3.75	
3	4	4	6	17	4.25	
0	3	2	2	7	1.75	
20				20	5	

$$SSB = nka (x - X)^2$$

$$4(5 - 10.25)^2 + 4(5 - 3.75)^2 + 4(5 - 4.25)^2 + 4(5 - 1.75)^2$$

$$110+6.45+2.25+ 42.25$$

$$SSB = 161$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 SSW &= \sum (x_a - \bar{x}_a)^2 \\
 &= (10.25 - 14)^2 + (10.25 - 8)^2 + (10.25 - 10)^2 + (10.25 - 9)^2 \\
 &+ (3.75 - 3)^2 + (3.75 - 5)^2 + (3.75 - 4)^2 + (3.75 - 3)^2 \\
 &+ (4.25 - 3)^2 + (4.25 - 4)^2 + (4.25 - 4)^2 + (4.25 - 6)^2 \\
 &+ (1.75 - 0)^2 + (1.75 - 3)^2 + (1.75 - 2)^2 + (1.7 - 2)^2 \\
 &= 14.06 + 5.06 + 0.66 + 1.56 \\
 &+ 0.56 + 1.56 + 0.06 + 0.56 \\
 &+ 1.56 + 0.06 + 0.06 + 3.06 \\
 &+ 3.06 + 1.56 + 0.06 + 0.06 \\
 &+ 19.24 + 8.24 + 0.24 + 5.24 \\
 &= 32.96
 \end{aligned}$$

$$SST = SSB + SSW = 171.95 + 32.96 = 204.94$$

$$MSSB = \frac{SSB}{K-1} = \frac{161}{3} = 53.7$$

$$MSSW = \frac{SSW}{K-1} = \frac{32.96}{3} = 10.99$$

$$F_{\text{fraction}} = \frac{MSSB}{MSSW} = \frac{53.7}{10.99} = 4.92$$

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if f calculated is greater than f tabulated, otherwise accept.

$$\begin{aligned}
 F_{\text{tab}} &= \frac{k-1 \text{ Numerator}}{N-K \text{ Denominator}} \\
 &= \frac{4-1}{16-4} = \frac{3}{12} \\
 &= 0.25
 \end{aligned}$$

Decision: Accept the hypothesis since f calculated is more than the f tabulated (4.92 > 0.25). This means that taxation has effect on the economy of the mass media organization.

Discussion of findings

The data obtained from the media organizations both the radio and television indicate that there is inconsistency in tax policies and this would limit investment and by implication offers an atmosphere that is business unfriendly, that is why Wambai and Hanga, (2013) submits that the attitude of the government on taxation need to change and recommends a tax system that concentrates on establishing simplicity, predictability, and neutrality. Obviously the action at the same time can lead to depriving the media their pivotal role in the society as creating the awareness of taxation among other things, Chukwuma, Ezeh and Umze (2016) aptly capture the role of the mass media in the society by submitting that mass media especially the broadcast media (radio and television) are the means by which the citizens of Nigeria are informed of current events in politics. In effect if these media do not function appropriately as suppose because of one thing or the other, other sectors will be a mess.

Data elicited from table 2 indicate that multiple taxes constitute bad and retarded influence on media economics with more than 80 percent concurring to the bad and retarded influence multiple taxation have on media economics. Over 50 percent of the respondents noted that multiple taxes constitute bad influence to investment in the country while another 30 percent stated that it has a retarded influence in the economy of the media which will scare the investors away in opposition of attracting potential investors. Apere (2003) notes that taxation is a microeconomic and fiscal policy instrument; it involves the transfer of resources from the private to the public sector for

the accomplishment of economic and social goals. It is an instrument the government uses to measure, access and control the informal sector that dominate developing economies of the world (Wambaiand Hanga, 2013).

Conclusion

It is evidenced from the literature reviewed and from the data collected from this work that national tax policy is expected to be in compliance with the principle of taxation, which is the lubricant to effective tax system because every organization knows what taxation is and what should be accrued beneficially from engaging in the responsibility in the theoretical aspect when Jensen (2001), noted that the corporation would increase its profits by taking responsibility. This responsibility means both the organization civic responsibility and ethical responsibility in fact responsibility in its holistic form. The work then concludes that if taxation should be done as suppose, it would have good potential to build a prosperous economy in the country through many organizations of which media organizations are included.

Recommendations

In line with the findings in this work, the following recommendations are made: Since all the media houses pay tax, there is need for a paradigm shift in our taxation system. Emphasis should move from direct tax to indirect tax, as proposed in the National Tax Policy to harmonize taxes nationwide. The government should stop collecting taxes from newly established companies for the first four to five years of existence so as to help them grow and also streamline and cut down the number of taxes and levies, and continue to educate taxpayers on what taxes to pay, where and how to pay them. The desired revenue and economic development cannot be generated from the tax system in Nigeria except governments review obsolete laws, a corrupt free and well trained tax system will foster a great generation of tax revenue for economic development and above all, accountability and transparency on the part of government officials in the management of tax revenues for the benefit of the citizens.

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