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INFLUENCE OF FRESH FM OCEAN OF POLITICS PROGRAMME ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AMONG OSHOGBO RESIDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Fresh FM Osogbo Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) is a political programme with authoritative voice on politics and political actors. It is arguably a flagship Yoruba political programme on Radio in Osun State. Although, the programme touches on a number of subjects in the political space, its influence on the political participation among Osogbo residents is the focus of this study. The study was anchored on Agenda setting theory and Media dependency theory and survey method was used to generate data from 377 respondents in Osogbo. The findings showed that Osogbo Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme influenced the respondents' participation in politics positively. The study thus recommends that balance and fairness should be taken into consideration by broadcast stations airing political programmes.

Keywords: Fresh FM Osogbo, Radio Broadcast, Influence, political participation, Ocean of Politics, Osogbo residents.

Introduction

Election is an important hallmark of enthroning and sustaining democracy in societies like ours; election is paramount and highly significant in any given society (Umechuhwu, 2004, as cited in Edegoh, Ezebuenyin & Asemah, 2013). According to Alade, (2022) recent elections in Nigeria have witnessed the use of all forms of media as sources of political information for more political participation. Many political parties and candidates lace the media advertisements placed in newspapers, television, radio, websites and social media platforms. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the nation's electoral watchdog, frequently collaborates with the media, particularly broadcast media (television and radio), to produce political programs as a matter of social responsibility and political education for the electorate (Arede & Oji 2022).

The unique ability of radio is that, unlike print, which appeals primarily to the literate class of society, radio meets the needs of both the illiterate (less educated) and literate classes. Radio, with its appeal, plays an important role in disseminating political messages. This role has enabled it to make significant contributions to the political education of the general public, through enlightenment, awareness, consciousness, and, in some cases, a space for political debate. The role of radio in politics has always been maximized by politicians during election campaigns, particularly during democratic rule in Nigeria, by allowing the general public to listen to manifestos of politicians, criticisms by aspirants or political activists when the

aspirant is running for re-elections, and other programs Radio house may run in a bid to educate the public to make rational choices responsible for the country's growth (Arede & Oji 2022).Radio according to Odunola, Babafemi, and Lois (2015), breaks barriers of distance and illiteracy, as well as the constraint posed by electricity availability," and thus has unrestricted access. Radio is primarily used for the distribution of indigenous information. The opportunities for local participation in politics are increased by this distinctive feature.

Programmes organised by radio stations are diverse in number, one major category this study is toiled upon is the political programme aspect. As part of mass media informative, educative and watchdog functions, political programmes are presented to keep the public well-informed of the political issues like elections, voters' registration, government policies that affect them unswervingly. Select candidates contesting for electoral office via radio jingles and campaign achievement of a particular public office holder is played on radio, controversial political issues in the society are debated on radio programmes; government officials are brought on air to defend government policies. It is logical that radio stations who serve as a watch dog follow the trend in the political environment in order to keep the public informed of the whole political strategy and process. However, Nkana (2015, p 230) summarises that the success of any broadcast programme especially radio that appeals only to the ear is determined by the response of the listeners unlike television that has "the influence of the pictorial accompaniment of the message" as an advantage. That is, information disseminated by a Broadcast station has an anonymous audience who in turn, decide the credibility and their reliability to the broadcast station. The feedback gotten shows how progressive and credible a station is; however, due to some political, environmental and structural variables, messages could be regarded otherwise and their results could be unexpected.

Edegoh, Ezeh, & Anunike (2015), noted that radio disseminate information, news items, transmit political programmes, development projects and pitfalls of the various arms of government in a particular country. It is fascinating to note that television stations private radio stations in Nigeria like Fresh FM have contributed and are still contributing to active political mobilisation and participation in the country. Diverse political programmes designed by different broadcast stations with the aim of informing and educating the Nigerian citizens on the political happenings around the country are put in place. In other words, the media has been a very effective instrument in democratic processes in Nigeria over a stretch of time, not until the military tyranny took the purpose from it. However, with the coming back of civilian rule in 1999, the media via the broadcast media have resumed its active and effective role of mobilising the general public for elections. One of the renowned and well-known political programmes of today in Osun state is Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme.

Fresh fm Nigeria is a network of radio stations in Nigeria, owned by Olayinka Joel Ayefele. Fresh FM stations are located in Abeokuta Ado Ekiti, Akure, Ibadan, Lagos and Osogbo. The languages used on the radio are English and Yoruba. Programming began in Ibadan in the year 2015 and Abeokuta in the 2018; the Ado Ekiti station began broadcasting in 2020. The network expanded to Osogbo in October 2021 and to Lagos in 2022 a frequency for Ilorin has also by announced. Fresh FM is stationed in all the 6 southwest states of Nigeria with a vision for expansion to other regions in the nearest future

In Oshogbo Fresh fm 104.9 fm is a commercial radio station operation and with a reach extending to other parts of the country and it also positioned to promote, complement and revamp the entertainment and lifestyle sphere in Osun State

The Programme Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) on fresh FM is a show that discuss political gist in Yoruba language. This is created to carry along the Yoruba lovers of politics. It is also design to call in and give their opinion about politics. The programme helps the people to be familiar with a particular politician.

Listeners shape their opinion of various events about politics and politician via the programmes disseminated by radio stations. This means that the relationship between the mass media and politics does not stop during political campaigns or elections, rather it is, therefore, a continuous activity for the mass media to play the role of intermediary between citizens and their political environment at every point in time. It is against this background that the study sought to examine the examined the influence of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on the political participation among Osogbo residents

Statement of the Problem

Scholars have elaborated on the useful history of radio in political development initiatives, including Ngugi (2014) and Akpor (2013). However, according to Anazodo, Agbionu, and Ezenwile (2013), radio programs addressing political issues are broadcast on a variety of radio stations that were established for a variety of reasons. This suggests that the political stances expressed on the radio are disjointed and disorganized. This demonstrates that when receiving political news and developments, radio listeners are not specifically targeted. The localized political culture of Nigeria is thus undermined by the haphazard and unplanned dissemination of political information.

Political programmes are targeted to not only inform and educate the viewers, but also expose the world of politics and aid viewers' knowledge to make wise political decisions. Thus, there is a need for media organisations to always report and analyse issues via these political programmes as they affect the citizen.

According to studies like Olaniru, Olatunji, Ayandele & Popoola (2020); Arede & Oji (2022), Alade (2022), electorates, particularly young adults, would most likely turn to the new media to gain political information, learn about political aspirants or candidates, share political information, as well as be an active participant in the practice of political activities.

A lot of researchers' works have looked at political programmes, media ownership, voters' perception, political campaigns, political elections, violence and democracy in the country, among them are Arede & Orji (2022); Sale, Bappayo, & Abubakar(2018);Edegoh, Ezeh,& Anunike (2015); Oyesomi, & Okorie, (2013). Most works were more of political campaign and media usage, media ownership political mobilisation and political influence and so on. It is on this basis that the researcher examined the influence of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on the political participation among Oshogbo residents in light of the availability of radio programs as sources of political information for political mobilisation.

Objectives of the study

1. Determine the extent to which Oshogbo residents are exposed to Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM Osogbo.
2. Find out Osogbo residents' perception of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM Oshogbo.
3. Determine the influence of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM Osogbo towards political mobilisation of Osogbo residents.

Review of related literature

The relationship between broadcasting and politics in Nigeria dates back to the colonial times. The political disagreement between Chief Obafemi Awolowo and the then Governor- General of Nigeria- Sir Macpherson, motivated Chief Obafemi Awolowo to pursue the idea of a regional broadcast channel that could serve the political interest of the people in the Western region. Since then, the relationship between broadcasting and politics has become inseparable (Olaoye, Enyindah & Asemah 2022).

According to Aririguzoh (2014), political participation is 'the bedrock of democracy'. This means that in a democratic society, political participation forms its foundation. Political participation is characterised by an involvement or contribution to politics in a society such as voting, campaigns, running for political posts, being a member of a political party, etc. (Aririguzoh, 2014)

How can the radio be used to achieve political participation?

According to Arede & Oji (2022), since the mass media could be used to set agenda, radio would be a useful tool as it is used to reach out to the grassroots of the society. Radio is cheap and portable and even the learned and the unlearned have access to it. However, information concerning public participation could be communicated via the radio to the audience who would get the message anywhere they are a long as a radio is there.

The radio is a very effective tool in the rural areas because it is not restricted to the barriers of time space, illiteracy and electricity supply and it is easy to operate (Adekoya, Akintoye &Adegoke, 2015). This means that the radio, because of its advantages could be used to send a message and receive feedback from the masses. Radio produces programmes which inform and educate the audience on new issues and trends happening in society, such as political issues, business, current affairs, religious issues etc., which are aimed at creating awareness. Radio could also be used to mobilise members of bout politics and the importance of participation in it. Sale, Bappayo, & Abubakar (2018) noted that there could be radio documentaries which also talk about the importance of political participation. Since the radio is a tool used by people of any class, English, Pidgin English or even the indigenous languages could be used to communicate with the public to ensure effective communication. For the radio to achieve such goals of influencing the masses to indulge in political participation, it could be a community radio (Tucker, 2013).

Review of Empirical Studies

Sale, Bappayo, & Abubakar (2018), studied the public perception of radio political programs of Globe FM and Bauchi Radio Corporation (BRC). The stations were owned by Federal and State governments respectively. The researchers adopted the survey method while using

instrumentation of the questionnaire. The researchers found out that the respondents were exposed to political programs from Globe FM than they were to those from BRC. Further findings showed that the respondents perceived political programs from both Globe and BRC as very informative. The researchers thus concluded that Globe FM was perceived to have done better than BRC in the area of political programs. The researchers also recommended that radio political programs should provide sufficient information on the candidates' that can guide the public in their political decisions.

Oyesomi & Okorie (2013), explored the role of radio in mobilising women for politics in Ado-Odo/Ota area of Ogun state of Nigeria. The researchers used the survey method and the instrumentation of the questionnaire. The researchers discovered that the respondents who are women listen to radio, some on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. It was also revealed that radio discusses political issues but many of the respondents are of the view that their community and culture mobilised them the more in participation in politics. The researchers therefore recommended that radio can also play a major role in mobilising women for politics, but radio cannot work in isolation. The radio should therefore seek ways to produce better political programmes that can effectively appeal to the rational of its audience by putting into consideration other factors, (culture, community, etc.) and by so doing the women are confident that their beliefs are still important and not treated as nothing.

Edegoh, Ezeh, & Anunike (2015) did a study titled "Achieving rural political participation through the radio: a study of Idemili North and South local government areas in Anambra State, Nigeria". The researchers used survey and the instrumentation of the questionnaire. Findings showed that radio has been very effective in mobilising rural residents in Idemili North and South council areas for political participation and radio has been used for disseminating political information such as political campaign schedules of politicians, voter education, election dates, etc. the researchers concluded that radio is the most effective available mass medium for mobilising rural residents for political participation and may remain so for a long time to come. The researchers also recommended that political parties and politicians should make more effective use of the many opportunities that the radio provide in communicating political messages to people living in the rural areas of the state
Arede & Oji, (2022), examined the impact of radio broadcasting on political participation in Nigeria's South-South Zone. The study was anchored on across-sectional research design and surveyed 400 respondents. The study reaffirmed the position of scholars on the subject of investigation, indicating that South-South peoples' behaviour towards political activities is strongly affected by radio broadcast. The study recommended that more effort is needed to ensure the information on the radio is knocked together to positively influence the behaviour of people and their thought on election processes in Nigeria

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on agenda setting theory and The Media Dependency Theory. The media agenda-setting theory of McCombs & Shaw established that the mass media could influence their audiences. They analysed the contents of newspapers, magazines and television newscasts that 100 undecided Chapel Hill voters were exposed to during the 1968 Presidential election in the United States. They found that the media agenda influenced the public agenda. The media agenda were the issues that the media thought of as important as

determined by their prominence, length and position. The public agenda were the things that the public thought, discussed or worried about.

According to Asemah (2011) cited in Olaoye, Enyindah & Asemah (2022 p.300) agenda setting refers to the ability of the mass media to influence the level of the public's awareness of issues as opposed to their knowledge about those issues. The theory assumes that the media sets the agenda for the public to follow. Therefore, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping the public agenda in choosing and displaying news. Media audience learn about a given issue and how much importance to attach to the issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position (Anwumabelem & Asemah, 2021). Cohen (1963), cited in Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017) asserts that the media may not be successful in telling people what to think. Still, they are stunningly successful in telling them what to think about. Wimmer & Dominick (2000, p. 408) argued that "agenda setting by the media suggests that the public agenda or what kind of things people discuss, think or worry about is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicise.

Anwumabelem & Asemah, (2021) stated that one of the issues with the agenda-setting theory is that it is difficult to measure. Research on the theory has been largely inconclusive in establishing a causal relationship between public prominence and media coverage. In addition, the theory doesn't work for people who have already made up their minds. For example, someone might believe that his or her elected official was the right choice for office, despite numerous compelling reports to the contrary presented by the mass media.

This theory juxtaposes how the frequent dissemination of Fresh FM Osogbo's political programme Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme has been able to shape their opinions, perceptions and decisions they take on political matter surrounding the nation Nigeria.

The Media Dependency Theory was developed in 1976 by Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin Defleur. The theorist sees media audiences as active participants in the communication process. The theory incorporates psychological elements from the theory of social categories, components from causal inference theories, perspectives from the theory of uses and gratification, as well as long-standing worries about the content of media messages. This explains why Syallow (2015) thinks the theory's main focus is on the need to examine media and audiences within the framework of more extensive social systems. People turn to the media when they want more information; they have a variety of objectives they want to achieve, and the media always has a solution for them (Oji, 2018).

According to Hmielowski (2014), an important factor in determining when and why media messages alter the audience's beliefs or behaviours is the extent to which we rely on media and its content. Syallow (2015) found that a medium's capacity to best serve a person's needs, social stability, its role as an active participant in communication, and the psychological traits of a "Can You Individual" are all directly correlated with how dependent a person is on media. In other words, if a medium meets the need for personal information, the person will rely on it for information. Because of this, people will become more reliant on media that satisfies a wide range of their needs than on those that only do so.

Although this theory seems straightforward, communication critics find it extremely challenging to test experimentally. Also a limitation is that the communication environment has changed as social media and media plurality provides more choices for people to actively select information generated by other people, instead of passively receiving from satellites and cable channels. Media Dependency Theory is Relatively Scientific in nature. It predicts a correlation between media dependence and importance and influence of the media, but each person uses the media in different ways. Also, the media affects each person in different ways (Syallow, 2015).

However, it offers a clear explanation of why people rely on the media for news during specific times in their social lives. The assumption that underlies the relevance of this theory to the study is that people who are particularly interested in political or development processes need media information (like Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM Oshogbo) in order to actively participate in those processes; where audience exposure to such media content is high, this will lead to a higher level of political awareness and participation based on the messages that are produced by the media.

Methodology

This research employed the use of survey method because the survey method is mostly employed to get an overview of the opinion of respondents. Olaoye, Enyindah & Asemah (2022, p.302) noted that survey is an empirical study that uses questionnaire to discover descriptive characteristics of a phenomenon. The population of this study comprises Benin residents. According to the United Nation- World Population Prospects, the current metro area of Osogbo population in 2023 is 772,000, a 2.93% increase from the previous year.
Using the Taro Yamane formula n = N/ (1+N (e)2
Where:
n is the sample size
N is the population of the study
e is the margin error in the calculation (0.05)
n = 772,000/ (1 + 772,000 (0.05)2
n= 772,000/ (1+ 772,000 (0.0025)
n=772,000/ (1+ 1930)
n=772,000/ (1931)
n= 399.79
n=400
Thus in this study 400 is the sampled population.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected in the course of this study were presented descriptively, using frequency tables and percentages. A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents out of which three hundred and eighty (377) were collected back thereby amounting to the shortage of 23 copies of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Respondents Knowledge of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Strongly agree	94	25
Agree	243	64
Undecided	34	9
Disagree	6	2
Undecided	0	0
Total	**377**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that majority (64%) of the respondents have knowledge of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) on Fresh FM Oshogbo. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 2: Extent of Exposure to Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Very High	80	21.2
High	254	67.3
Undecided	34	9
Low	9	2.3
Very low	0	0
Total	**377**	**100%**

Table 2 shows that majority (67.3%) of the respondents are well exposed to Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) on Fresh FM Oshogbo. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 3: Perception of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) effectiveness

Variables	Frequency	Percentages%
Very effective	79	21
Effective	201	53
Can't say	34	9
Less effective	56	15
Not effective	7	2
Total	**377**	**100%**

Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (53%) perceive Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) on Fresh FM Oshogbo to be effective. This is based on the fact that majority of the respondents answered to that effect.

Table 4: Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) engagement of political participation issues in Nigeria

Variables	Frequency	Percentages%
Strongly agree	111	29
Agree	173	46
Undecided	42	11
Disagree	22	6
Undecided	29	8
Total	**377**	**100%**

Base on table 4, majority of the respondents (46%) agreed that Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) engaged issues of political mobilisation in Nigeria.

Table 5: Influence of Fresh FM Politics/ Agbami Oselu on participation in politics

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Positive	319	85
Can't say	15	4
Negative	43	11
Total	377	100%

Table 5 shows that majority (85%) of the respondents agree that Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM Oshogbo has positive influence on the listeners.

Discussion of Findings

The findings showed that the respondents are knowledgeable and exposed to Fresh Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM Oshogbo. The data revealed that the respondents' perception of Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme was effective. This gives credence to the assertion of Charles, David & Olusola (2013), cited in Murkthar (2017, p. 94) that the media are actively involved in shaping citizens' perception of political issues through its educative, informative and enlightenment functions. This is to allow citizens make informed decisions for the betterment of the society. It was also discovered that majority of the respondents understand the contents of information about Nigeria politics disseminated on Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme. Blood (1999), cited in Murkthar, (2017, p. 94) found that people who do not know a candidate to vote or support (undecided voters) exposed themselves to media in order to acquire political knowledge that may later guide their voting decision. The findings showed that Fresh FM Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme on Fresh FM influences the respondents' opinion of politics or participation in politics in the Osun State positively. This gives credence to the assertion of Olaoye, Enyindah & Asemah (2022, p.300), that "the media serve as a tool for political mobilisation.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Fresh Ocean of politics (Agbami Oselu) programme has to a large extent influenced Oshogbo resident's decision on deciding their take about politics and who they choose to vote for. Based on the findings, the study hereby gives the following

Recommendations

1. Radio stations should be objective at all cost in the course of transmitting political programmes.
2. There should be checks and balances, fairness and objectivity whenever it comes to political issues in our society.

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