



Research Paper

The Role of Mass Communication and Television Stations in the Political Mobilization of Rural Women in Edo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The usefulness of television as a mobilization medium for mass communication is widely acknowledged. Mass communication, particularly the use of television, is also useful in political mobilization, as scholars consider it as having an almost infinite rate of human efforts in mobilizing themselves for the attainment of better living conditions. Most remote areas lack access to electricity because of the high cost of television maintenance and a lack of power supply. The goal of this study is to assess the roles of Nigerian television stations in the political mobilization of Nigerian women, particularly those from rural areas. A case study of Edo State's Uziare Local Government Area. Five rural settlements in Uziare were explored for this research project. The Survey research method was employed for this project, and the primary source of data collection for the study was a self-administered questionnaire that served as the main research. The data collection tool included demographic information from participants, the effects of independent television (ITV) and Edo Broadcasting services (EBS) exposure on voting patterns, and the effects of ITV and EBS on the political lives of women in the chosen study area. The SPSS program version 23.0 was used to analyze and interpret the data collected. Data showed that 50 (22%) and 42 (18%) respondents rated independent television, and EBS Benin, positively on the impact they create in the political life of the people, respectively. 120 (53.3%) and 43 (19.1%) of the respondents consented that ITV and EBS Benin programs affect their voting patterns. 35 (15.6%) and 50 (22.2%) respondents said ITV and EBS Benin contents have affected their voting pattern to a large extent, while 90 (40.0%) and 76 (33.8%) were moderately affected, respectively. But to a very large extent, those who have access to the various television stations were influenced by the programs on their choices of candidates during elections.

Keywords: Women, Political, Mobilization, Rural, Television, Edo, Nigeria

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian electorate has become increasingly individualistic in recent years. As a result of the cultural structure of the Nigerian electorate, political parties frequently face profound cultural disparities (Angerbrandt, 2020). The Nigerian broadcasting code serves as a guidepost for Independent Television and Radio under the supervision of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) (Aroh, 2020). The role of media in politics cannot be emphasized. The role of television in motivating people for electoral activities is clear, as it communicates with the public through audio-visual means. The Nigeria Radio Vision Service Limited was formed with the mission of broadcasting radio and television stations under one roof. To supplement government subsidies, Western Region radio and television stations pioneered commercial broadcasting in Nigeria (Aroh, 2020). The Western Region Government assumed complete control of the WNBS/WNTV in 1962 by purchasing all of the shares owned by the overseas Re-Diffusion Ltd. In the same year, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) and the National Broadcasting Company International Limited launched the Nigeria Television service in Lagos. However, management was subsequently transferred to private hands. In 1978, the Federal Military Government of Nigeria assumed control of Nigeria's television stations and renamed them the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) (Answers, 2022; Clue, 2012).

The African leaders at Independent were to understand the impact of broadcasting on the masses and hence employed it as a government megaphone. It assisted in informing people for government attention, and because of the high illiteracy rate, television broadcasting is chosen over other forms of communication because it has both auditory and visual broadcasting methods. Government policy could be translated and broadcast to the public in local languages (Wasserman, 2020). Broadcasting in Africa has long acted as a conduit for official propaganda. However, in Nigeria, television has been viewed as a means through which the government communicates with the governed. Libertarian or free press philosophy specifies that an individual should be allowed to publish whatever he or she wants and to hold and express beliefs freely. It was soon expanded to encompass freedom of assembly with others (Musvipwa, 2021). The Libertarian media is well recognized for its nationalism and natural gift rights perspective. They exist to check on governments and are capable of thinking for themselves, thus they must be free of government control. Nobody has ever argued that freedom should include the freedom to defame, engage in unfettered obscenity, violate individual privacy, or commit sedition, thus it recommends that individuals be left free and given access to many ideas from which they can freely select (LIBERTARIANISM, 2018). As a result of being free of government control, they can provide a free marketplace of ideas for the people's enlightenment. According to this perspective, the press is viewed as a partner in the pursuit of truth rather than a tool of the government (Spence, 2021). This theory tries to expose rural dwellers to political mobilization you give them detailed information freely nobody will force them to do what to do like voting all the rural dwellers need to do is just think about the right decision to take because this particular theory is a free market place of an idea there is no kind of censorship (United Nations, 2022).

Television is also beneficial in political mobilization, as experts have noted, due to the practically limitless pace at which people can mobilize for better living conditions (Shelley Boulianne, 2020). On this basis, the political bureau described political mobilization in its report as a method of mobilizing people to enhance their degree of awareness of particular established objectives to attain those objectives (Eto, 2023). The condition in which rural area development is envisaged differently at various times and locales. In terms of political mobilization in Nigeria, television is one of the channels that can be used for rural development (Wim Heijman, 2019). Television assists in removing the negative aspects of some of our society and allowing citizens to absorb information that will improve their welfare, awareness level, and consciousness of what is going on in their community as a whole (Atkinson, 2017; Wagner, 2021). In political mobilization, they feel like choosing without bias of any individual (Stevens, 2011).

Because television contributes to the establishment and development of national unity and participative democracy, the Independent Television Benin (ITV) was founded to restore order from disorder, restore a sense of national unity, and disseminate common cultural links through television transmission (Abuja, 2023). Television production depends on the human vocation, pictures, sounds or music, and sound picture effects all blended with feature narrative to tell a cohesive story (Mark Reybrouck et al., 2019). News, documentary education, forums, sports, and features, among other things, should all reflect the audience's specifics and wants. Rural community producers should strive to create high-quality activities that will favorably stimulate people, especially during national disasters like religious riots, war, and economic hardship, or when exercising civic tasks like voting in an election (Jaakkola, 2020; Van der Veken et al., 2020). In terms of economics, the television producer should support the local community. This will serve to encourage the community's economic and sociopolitical development. Because the initiative is aimed at rural residents, the resources should be sourced from among them, processed, and returned to them. This will make them feel like they belong and are an integral part of the station (Amanda D. Lotz, 2022; Crawford, 2015).

Political candidates conduct their campaigns on television. The candidates can also be heard advertising themselves on television. People can then determine who to vote for based on this information. As a result, television can transmit knowledge, resulting in the occurrence of learning. In this situation, they are attempting to argue that television, as a visual and aural medium, could be a suitable medium for mobilizing and educating rural residents on politics because it allows people to hear for themselves rather than being told (David J. Grüning, 2021). Due to the centralization of media organizations in Nigeria's urban areas, rural dwellers are sometimes left in the hands of opinion leaders who sometimes use propaganda techniques to lure the rural dwellers into voting blindly (Projectstore, 2019).

However, the signals of Independent Television Benin and Edo Broadcasting Service (EBS) reach rural dwellers, particularly those in Uziare Local Government, and some programs are developed by the station to mobilize rural dwellers on political activities, particularly during elections. Thus, the question that this study seeks to answer is how successful the programs of Independent Television Benin and Edo Broadcasting Service are mobilizing the people of Uziare and surrounding areas. The level of political mobilization in Nigeria, particularly in Edo state, appears to be relatively low (Researchbase.com.ng, 2021). Also, the political crisis occurring in this country has equally been attributed to several factors. The purpose of this study is to identify the reasons that have contributed to these low political mobilizations in Nigerian politics (Swen Hutter, 2019). This current study seeks to ascertain the responses of rural areas surrounding ITV and ITV Benin programs that promote political mobilization, examine strategies employed by ITV Benin and EBS to achieve political

mobilization of women in Uziare and surrounding areas, how exposure to ITV and EBS on Political programs changes the minds of women towards their choice of candidate, and the positive impacts (if any) ITV and EBS programs have had on the political life.

II. METHOD

Study area

The coverage area is Uziare Local Government. The survey approach will be used; it is an inquiry into situational phenomena that have arisen in the state of Edo. This will be used to provide answers to such difficulties, particularly in terms of political mobilization of the people within this local government. The researcher plans to survey the whole population of Uziare Local Government Area municipalities. However, the population of Uziare Local Government is 365,000 people, according to the 2006 population census in the local government area. The survey was limited to five locations, from which 250 respondents were chosen at random and given a questionnaire. The five towns selected from this local government include the following; Jattu, Afasho, Afowa, Iyamo, and Ayogena.

Sample Technique

The target population and any other populations with samples are selected from the whole local government population. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed in the towns of Jattu, Afasho, Afowa, Iyamo, and Ayogena. Other towns are considered when using these towns. The researcher aims to employ a purposive sampling strategy in determining the sample size for this investigation. The method will provide each member of the local government chosen a chance to be picked or included in the sample.

Research Instrument and Data Distribution

This study's measuring instrument was primarily a self-administered questionnaire. It is because it will allow people to respond without fear. It also allows the respondent to express themselves freely when answering the inquiry. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire was conducted for a variety of reasons, including the desire to achieve a high response rate to eliminate bias tendencies and to provide a personal touch to the respondents. It will also be a scientific procedure that everyone may use.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed with SPSS software, version 23.0, using ANOVA and Excel spreadsheet. Data are presented in tabular and chart formats.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Around 250 questionnaires were delivered to the local government under study, with 225 returned and 25 withheld by respondents. These respondents were primarily between the ages of 15-20, followed by those between the ages of 21-40, as well as those between the ages of 41-50, 51, and above. In other words, the responders are largely businessmen, with some students and farmers thrown in for good measure.

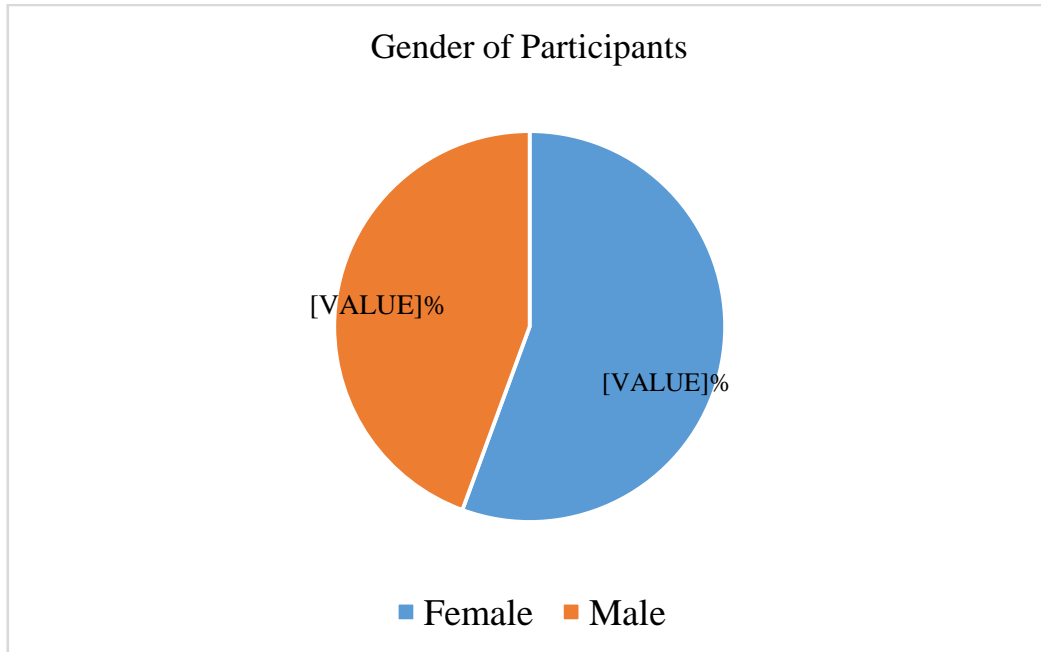


Figure 1. Gender of Participants

The above Figure 1, shows that out of 225 respondents, 125 respondents (55.6%) are female while 100 respondents (44.4%) are male. This implies that the female respondents are more than the male.

Table 1. Demographic Data

Variable		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Marital Status	Married	135	60
	Single	90	40
	Total	225	100
Educational Qualification	BSC	25	11.2
	HND	25	11.2
	OND	15	6.6
	MSC	35	15.6
	PHD	20	8.8
	WEAC	105	46.6
	Total	225	100
Occupation	Businessmen	40	17.8
	Workers	85	37.8
	Farmers	75	33.3
	Students	25	11.1
	Total	225	100

Table 1, above shows that in the total response, the majority are married (60%) while the single people were (40%). Also, higher responses came from those with WEAC which represent 105 (46.6%) of the total respondents, 25 (11.2%) are people with BSC. 25 (11.2%) are those with HND, 15 (6.6%) are those with OND, 35 (15.6%) are those with MSC and the remaining 20 (8.8%) are those with Ph.D. Some of the respondents are civil servants (workers) who are 85 in number representing 37.8% of the total respondents, this was followed by farmers who represent 75 (33.3%) of the total respondents 40 (17.8%) represent the business and the remaining 25 (11.1%) is from the student.

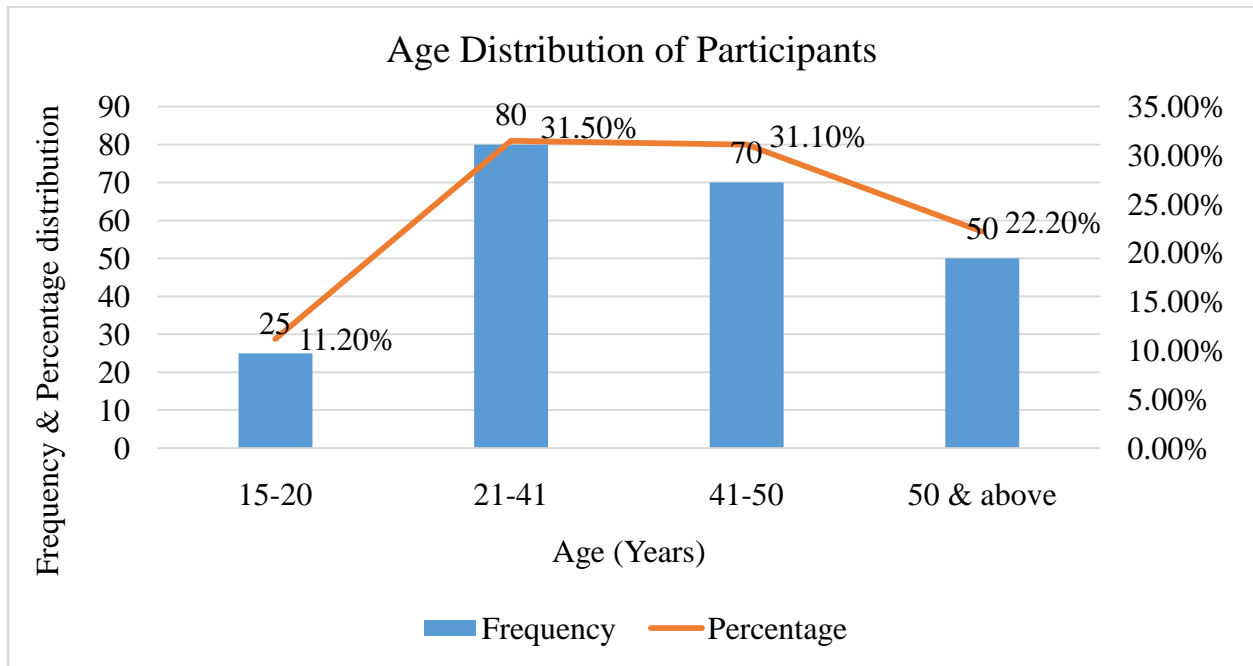


Figure 2. Age Distribution of Study Participants

From the above Figure 2, the age range of 18-20 years was 25 in number; representing 11.2% of the total respondents, 80 were between the age ranges of 21-40 years which makes up 31.5% of the total respondents. Those within the age range of 41-50 years were 70 representing 31.1% of the total respondents, while those between the age ranges of 51 and above were 50 respondents representing 22.2% of the total respondents.

Table 2. Effects of Independent Television and EBS exposure on the voting pattern

Variables		Yes (%)	No (%)	Not sure (%)	Total (%)
How can exposure to Independent Television and EBS affect their voting pattern?	ITV	140 (62)	35 (22)	50 (22)	225 (100)
	EBS	65 (29%)	130 (58%)	30 (13%)	225 (100)
How do ITV and EBS change your mind about your choice of candidate?		Through Adverts	Through political programs	Through news	Total
	ITV	100 (44)	10 (5)	115 (51)	225 (100)
	EBS	80 (36)	25 (11)	120 (53)	225 (100)
To what extent do ITV and EBS content affect your voting pattern?		Large Extent	Moderate Extent	No extent	Total
	ITV	35 (15.6)	90 (40.0)	100 (44.4%)	225 (100)
	EBS	50 (22.2)	76 (33.8%)	99 (44.0%)	225 (100)

Key: ITV - independent television, EBS - Edo broadcasting service

Table 2, shows that 140 respondents 62% represent people who expose to independent television programs, 35 respondents represent 16% who are not exposed to independent television programs, 65 respondents represent 29% of people who expose themselves to EBS programs, 130 respondents represent 58% who don't expose themselves to EBS programs and 30% respondents represent 13% who are not sure of exposing themselves to EBS programs. It further revealed that 205 respondents representing 45% expose themselves to ITV and EBS programs, 165 respondents representing 37% do not expose themselves to ITV and EBS programs and 80 respondents representing 18% are not sure of exposing themselves. It can be said that the majority of people don't expose themselves to ITV and EBS. Also, 100 respondents, representing 44%, have voted through adverts on ITV, 115 respondents representing 51% have voted through political programs and 10 respondents representing 5% have voted through news on the ITV. While 80 respondents representing 36% have voted through adverts on EBS, 120 respondents representing have voted through political programs and 35 respondents representing 8% have voted through the news on EBS. Further analysis revealed that 180

respondents representing 40% have voted through adverts, 235 respondents representing 52% have voted through political programs and 35 respondents representing 8% have voted through the news. It can be said that the majority of the people are not politically mobilized by these stations toward their choice of candidate. Again, 35 respondents represent 15.6% that the content of ITV affects their voting pattern to a large extent, 90 respondents representing 40.0% that the content of ITV affects their voting pattern to a moderate extent and 100 respondents representing 44.4% that the content does not affect their voting pattern, 76 respondents represent 33.8% are those that the content of EBS affects to a moderate extent and 99 respondents represent those that the content does not affect their voting pattern. While 5 respondents representing 2.22% are those who do not think independent Television Benin can help in mobilizing rural dwellers.

From Table 3, 50 respondents representing 22% rated positive on the impact the ITV programs create in the political life of the people, 131 respondents representing 58% rated negative on the impact ITV created, and 44 respondents representing 20% rated not sure on the impact ITV created in the political life of the people. While 42 respondents representing 20% of EBS rated positive on the impact EBS created on the political life of the people, 123 respondents representing 55% rated negative impact on the impact EBS creates, and 60 respondents representing 27% rated not sure

Table 3. Impacts of Independent Television and EBS on the political life of women

Variables	Category	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Not sure (%)	Total (%)
Has ITV television and EBS been able to create any positive impact on the political life of women? What impact do ITV and EBS programs create?	ITV	50 (22)	131 (58)	44 (20)	225 (100)
	EBS	42 (18)	123 (55)	60 (27)	225 (100)
Impact ITV and EBS have created in the political life of women	ITV	85 (37.8)	120 (53.3)	20 (8.88)	225 (100)
	EBS	80 (35.6)	100 (44.4)	45 (20)	225 (100)
Do ITV and EBS contents affect your voting pattern?		Yes	No	Not really	Total
	ITV	120 (53.3)	55 (24.4)	50 (22.3)	225 (100)
	EBS	43 (19.1)	129 (57.3)	53 (23.6)	225 (100)

A Total of 92 respondents representing 20.4% rated positive, 254 respondents 56.4% rated negative, and a total of 104 respondents representing 23% rated not sure. This means that the majority of creates negative impacts on the people. About 85 respondents representing 37.8% said positive about ITV the impact on the political life of women, 120 respondents representing 53.3% said negatively about ITV's impact on the political life the women, and 20 respondents representing 8.88% said they were not sure. While 80 respondents representing 35.6% of EBS said positive about the political impact created in the life of the women, 100 respondents representing 44.4% said negative, and 45 respondents representing 20% said not sure of the political impact created by EBS in the life of the women. It revealed that a total of 165 respondents representing 37% said positively about the impact these stations crates on the political life of the women, 220 respondents representing 49% said negatively about the impact they create, and 65 respondents representing 14% said they were not sure. From the analysis given here, the impact they create in the political mobilization in the life of women is less. Also, 120 respondents representing 53.3% from ITV said yes to how the contents affect their voting pattern, 55 respondents representing 24.4% said no to how the content of ITV affects their voting pattern, and 50 respondents representing people who are not affected. While 43 respondents from EBS representing 19.1% people said yes on how the contents of EBS affect their voting pattern, 129 respondents representing 57.3% are people who said no on how the content affects their voting pattern, and 53 respondents representing 23.6% people who are not affected. This analysis revealed that a total of 163 respondents representing 36% are affected in their voting pattern, 184 respondents representing 41% are not affected in their voting pattern and 103 respondents representing 23% are not affected in their voting pattern. 51% of respondents are exposed to news and make a change in the choice of candidates while 5% do not change their minds. This is clearly expressed in the table of the previous chapter. This shows that the people who made up choices are greater than those who said no to them.

According to the data above, while some people were affected by the television station's broadcasts, the level to which it affected their voting behavior was low. Although its signals are only available in a few cities. Its program contents have been assessed as moderately successful and extremely important to its environment. This advancement has resulted in a good impact on organizing Uziare locals to participate in various social and political activity programs, and Edo Broadcasting Service Television programs influence people's voting patterns.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study discovered that exposure to Independent Television Program has a lesser impact on people's voting patterns, which can be attributed to people's predisposition and some other factors that influence people's voting patterns, such as their exposure to the Independent Television Program and Edo broadcasting service. Based on the facts, it is easy to conclude that Independent Television Political Programs and EBS have little or no impact on people's political lives because only a few people watch political programs and their rate of exposure is average. Furthermore, they continue to rely on opinion leaders for candidate selection as well as campaign pledges.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

AF: Conceptualization, fieldwork, manuscript draft **IO:** Data cleaning, data analyses, and manuscript review **BDE:** Questionnaire design, data cleaning, data interpretation, **TE:** Conceptualization, research supervision, manuscript review, and approval

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