



Edo State Residents' Perception of Broadcast Media Reportage of the Use of Bimodal Voter Accreditation System during 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election

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ABSTRACT

Background: The deployment of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election aimed to enhance the integrity of the electoral process. However, public perception of the level of success of the gadget depends on their knowledge and understanding of how the system works.

Objective: This study examined the perception of broadcast media reportage on the use of BVAS during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.

Method: A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected through a questionnaire administered to 384 respondents in Edo State, Nigeria.

Results: The findings revealed that broadcast media played a significant role in informing the public about BVAS, with 77.3% of respondents accessing information about BVAS through television. The study also found that respondents had a positive perception of broadcast media reports on BVAS.

Conclusion: The study concludes that broadcast media reportage was effective in shaping public perception and understanding of BVAS during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.

Unique Contribution:: This study provides new insights into the role of broadcast media in promoting public understanding and acceptance of electoral technologies in Nigeria.

Key Recommendations: It is recommended that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should collaborate with broadcast media organizations to amplify public awareness and education on electoral technologies. Additionally, INEC professionals should be trained to effectively utilise broadcast media channels for information dissemination on electoral technologies.

Keywords: Broadcast Media, Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), Public Perception, Electoral Technologies, Nigeria.



INTRODUCTION

Broadcast media play a pivotal role in shaping public perception by influencing how individuals perceive various news events and issues. Through the power of television and radio, broadcasters transmit information, opinions and perspectives to a wide audience. Broadcast media extensively covers political events, campaigns and elections thereby shaping public perception of political figures and parties. Exposure to media significantly influences individuals' political perceptions. "By presenting news stories, interviews and debates, broadcast media provide citizens with information that can contribute to their opinions and decision making processes regarding political matters" (Smith, 2010, p. 115). In recent decades, the role of broadcast media has become increasingly vital in shaping public opinion and political outcomes. The broadcast media play a crucial role in the electoral process in Nigeria. It serves as a platform for political parties and candidates to reach a wider audience and communicate their messages to electorates (Asemah & Asogwa, 2016; Omale, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Asemah, 2023).

Furthermore, the broadcast media serve as a watchdog during the electoral process. They monitor the conduct of political parties, candidates and electoral officials to ensure that they adhere to the rules and regulations governing the electoral process. This helps to promote transparency and accountability in the electoral process. However, the broadcast media in Nigeria have been criticised for their bias and lack of professionalism during the electoral process (Santas, Asemah, & Jumbo, 2020; Olaoeye, Enyindah & Asemah, 2022). According to Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023), some media organisations in Nigeria are owned by politicians or have affiliations with political parties, which make them biased in their coverage of the electoral process. Television as a powerful medium has played a crucial role in shaping political narratives and reaching a vast audience during previous Nigerian elections. For instance, during the 2015 general elections, television networks such as the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and Channels TV provided comprehensive coverage of campaign rallies, debates and interviews with politicians. This coverage influenced the electorate's perception of candidates and policies (Odoemelam, & Nwafor, 2012; Meyer, Adebayo & Moses, 2019).

Additionally, radio remains a powerful platform for political discourse and also a dominant medium, especially in remote areas of Nigeria, where it continues to influence electoral outcomes. For example, in the 2019 governorship election in Kano state, radio stations like Freedom Radio provided a platform for candidates to connect with voters through interviews, phone-in and talk shows. This engagement enabled candidates to articulate their agendas directly to the public, shaping electoral opinions (Nwaoboli & Ajibulu, 2023). Some of the anomalies associated with previous electoral accreditation systems and their shortcomings, necessitated the usage of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for the February 25, 2023 presidential election in Nigeria and therefore, to facilitate a grasp of this study, the researcher takes a look at the audience acceptance and use of the system based on broadcast media reportage.

The 2023 presidential election in Nigeria has highlighted a significant issue: a lack of understanding and clarity among the public regarding the implementation and benefits of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS). Despite its potential to ensure free, fair, and



credible elections, many voters remain unaware of how BVAS functions and its importance in the electoral process. This gap in knowledge poses a challenge to the effective use of BVAS, as it may lead to skepticism and resistance among voters.

In response to this challenge, broadcast media outlets like Channels Television and African Independent Television (AIT) have taken steps to educate the public about BVAS through various programs and interviews with electoral officials. For instance, Channels Television's "Politics Today" featured an interview with Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), who discussed how BVAS enhances the credibility of elections. Additionally, live coverage of the electoral process by these media outlets showcased the practical application of BVAS in accrediting voters and transmitting results, reinforcing its role in preventing electoral fraud and ensuring transparency.

However, despite these efforts, there remains a gap in understanding how the framing of BVAS in media reports affects public trust in electoral processes. Moreover, there is limited research on the comparative effectiveness of different broadcast media platforms—such as television versus radio—in educating the electorate about new electoral technologies. This study fills these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of these factors and their implications for future electoral reforms in Nigeria. More so, the effectiveness of broadcast media in shaping public perception and understanding of BVAS remains uncertain. This study investigates Edo residents' perception of broadcast media reportage on the use of BVAS during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election and to assess its impact on public understanding and acceptance of the system. Through examining this issue, the study identified the gaps in communication and understanding that hinder the successful implementation of BVAS in future Nigerian elections.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. Investigate the level of electorate's exposure to broadcast media reports on BVAS during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election,
2. Evaluate the perception of the Edo electorates on broadcast media reports on BVAS during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election,
3. Determine the influence the broadcast media reports shaped the trust of Edo electorates of BVAS during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Understanding Perception

Perception refers to the process by which individuals interpret and make sense of sensory information from the environment. It involves the organisation, interpretation and assignment of meaning to sensory stimuli, such as visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile sensations in some important ways that allow us to get important meanings from our world (Akpan, 2011 as cited in Egwa & Asemah, 2023). Human perception according to Hammons (2009) is related to a



broad range of important endeavours in fields such as health, media and national defence, among others. Perception can influence the way journalists and media organisations frame their coverage of the BVAS. Journalists may have preconceived notions or biases towards the effectiveness or inefficiency of the system, which can shape their reporting (Tallberg, 2012). For example, if a journalist perceives the BVAS as a potential source of electoral fraud, their reporting may focus on instances or allegations of malfunctions or manipulation, which could influence public opinion.

Additionally, perception can impact how viewers and listeners interpret the reportage of the BVAS. The audience's preexisting beliefs and attitudes towards the electoral process and technology can shape their understanding and evaluation of the BVAS. If individuals perceive the system as a positive step towards a fairer election, they may respond favourably to reportage highlighting its benefits (De-Vreese, 2012). Conversely, if the audience perceives BVAS as a means of disenfranchisement or potential manipulation, they may interpret reportage in a more sceptical or critical light. Moreover, effective use of perception in broadcast media reportage can help inform and educate the public about the BVAS as Journalists strive to provide balance and accurate information while being aware of their own perceptions and biases. Presenting a variety of perspectives, including experts and stakeholders, can help the audience better understand the advantages and challenges of the BVAS (Weaver & Willnat, 2012). This approach can foster a more informed perception among the audience, encouraging them to make fact-based judgments about the electoral system.

Conceptualisation of Broadcast Media

The concept of broadcast media has expanded with the convergence of traditional broadcast platforms and digital technologies (Jenkins, 2006; Amiebaho, Nwaoboli & Asemah, 2023). Broadcast media coverage simply refers to the way in which television and radio stations report on news and events. It includes the selection of stories, the framing of these stories and the way in which they are presented to the audience. According to (McQuail, 2010; Baran, 2015) this can have a significant impact on how people perceive events and issues.

In the context of the 2023 Nigerian presidential election, the researcher is of the opinion that the use of the BVAS will likely be a major focus of the broadcast media coverage since the BVAS is a technology that is used to verify the identity of voters during elections and was implemented in Nigeria to ensure the integrity of the voting process. The way in which broadcast media outlets cover the use of the BVAS during 2023 Nigerian presidential election could have a significant impact on the public's perception of the technology, if the media (broadcast) coverage is positive and emphasises the benefits of BVAS, such as increased transparency and accountability, it could help to build trust in the electoral process. On the other hand, if the media coverage is negative and focuses on any challenges or issues with the technology, it could undermine public confidence in the election.

Brief Overview of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS)

Prior to the introduction of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), various accreditation methods were employed in Nigerian elections, each with its own advantages and drawbacks.



Understanding these previous methods is essential for appreciating the welcome development that BVAS represents. For instance, the Direct Data Capture (DDC) system was implemented during the 2011 presidential election to capture biometric data, such as fingerprints and facial features, aimed at preventing voter impersonation and enhancing the accuracy of voter registration (Aghedo, 2013). While the DDC system was deemed a success in reducing electoral fraud, it faced significant technical and logistical challenges that hindered its effectiveness.

The Smart Card Reader (SCR) system was introduced in the 2015 presidential election to further bolster the integrity of the voting process. Designed to authenticate voters' identities and minimise instances of electoral fraud, the SCR scanned Permanent Voter Cards (PVC) and verified biometric data before allowing individuals to vote (Adewale & Winsket, 2016). Although the SCR was successful in improving election credibility, it encountered issues such as technical failures in some polling units, which disrupted the voting process and resulted in the use of manual accreditation in affected areas (Ziriye & Alhassan, 2020). This highlighted the need for improved technology and training for election officials.

The manual accreditation system, utilised in prior elections, required voters to present their PVCs for manual verification by election officials. While this system was a step forward from earlier processes, it was slow and prone to errors, leading to concerns about bribery and the inclusion of ineligible voters (The Punch Nigeria, 2019). The Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) seeks to address these issues by combining biometric identification with manual verification, thereby providing a more secure and accurate voting process. Studies have shown that similar systems implemented in countries like the Philippines and Ghana have successfully reduced voter fraud and improved electoral accuracy (IFES, 2014).

BVAS was first deployed in Nigeria during the Isoko South Constituency 1 bye-election in 2021 and subsequently in several other elections leading up to its use in the 2023 presidential election (Odinkalu, 2021). The system aims to minimise voter fraud by ensuring that only eligible voters can cast their ballots. However, its implementation can be costly and challenging, requiring biometric technology development and training for election officials. Issues such as inaccurate biometric identification can still arise, leading to concerns about the system's reliability (ANFREL, 2010).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perspectives on the 2023 General Election

The 2023 Nigerian presidential election was between 18 political parties. Among the major contenders of the election were the Labour Party (LP) and New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) aside the All Progressives Congress (APC) and The People's Democratic Party (PDP). The election seemed like a three-horse race among the APC, Labour Party and PDP. In Nigeria, nothing like that has ever occurred as it had always been between PDP and APC. One novel act in the election was that the governing party had two Muslim representatives, Kashim Shettima and Bola Ahmed Tinubu, for Vice President and President, respectively (Nwaoboli, Uchenunu & Asemah,



2024a, 2024b). This to some extent, initially caused division among the party as many contended that this goes against the unwritten political tradition of the nation, which stipulates that Christians and Muslims must hold the two highest offices in the nation (Egbulefu & Nwaoboli, 2023). At the end, Bola Ahmed Tinubu won the election.

Broadcast Media Reportage of BVAS use for the Presidential Election

The relevance of fake news to the perception of broadcast media reportage of the use of Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) during the 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election is significant. Fake news can influence the perception of the public towards the credibility of the BVAS system and the election process. According to Al Jazeera News (2023), experts and activists say political actors expanded the scope of misinformation ahead of the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Likewise, according to BBC, false claims about Nigerian's electoral commission sparked concern as voters cast their ballots on Election Day. Videos containing old and misleading footage filmed in previous polls were also circulating (BBC News, 2023).

Broadcast media outlets, such as television and radio stations, have a considerable audience reach and therefore have a great influence in curbing fake news as it is happening. For instance, during the December 7, 2022, talk show (Sunrise Daily) hosted by the Channels television presenter Chamberlain Usuh, on the LP, APC debate on the use of BVAS, Tinubu's Chatham House outing. The debunking of fake news that circulated about the APC, not in support of the Electoral Act and that the reason was because the Act empowers the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to determine the mode of voting and the transmission of results and also to review results made under duress which will indirectly thwart rigging of any sort by any party.

The discussants of a programme are always asked to verify the authenticity of any information (that may be malicious) live on air. For instance, in the case of Tinubu's hand shaking and comments he made like blablablu, a discussant from the opposing party who mentioned it on air had no verifiable sources and it was debunked completely as political propaganda. This was the right action the station could have taken to protect its credibility as a medium that advocates fairness and balance in its reportage.

Therefore broadcast media often serve as one of the primary sources of news for many individuals (Pew Research Center, 2020). In recent years, the influence of digital platforms has led to an increase in online misinformation and the spread of fake news (Vosoughi, Roy & Aral, 2018). Fake news can permeate broadcast media through the production and dissemination of deceptive content by certain media organisations or through the repetition of false information by journalists (Sundar, Oeldorf-Hirsch & Xu, 2017; Okoro, & Nwafor, 2013).

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Igben & Oronukpo (2022) piloted a study on influence of news credibility on public perception of the broadcast media in Nigeria. The paper examined how the influence of news credibility can affect the corporate image of broadcast media in Nigeria. Source credibility theory and perception theory, were used. Survey research design was adopted. Questionnaire was used to gather data.



Sample size is 375. The findings showed that public confidence in government owned broadcast media is low compared to the private broadcast media as a result of the level of credibility of disseminated news. It was therefore, recommended that broadcast media should always support the promotion of credible news in order to improve on their public perception. The above study and this study both used questionnaire; survey research methods; source credibility and perception theories; while the above study is different from this study in sample size. However, this study is focused on perception of broadcast media reportage of BVAS in the 2023, Nigeria presidential election which is the gap.

Udeze & Chukwuma (2013) piloted a study on audience assessment of broadcast media surveillance and national security in Nigeria. The study looked at how broadcast media has been able to fulfill the function of surveillance which is a fundamental role especially in impending dangers, which largely contributes to the insecurity of lives and properties and how the audiences were able to perceive this function through the broadcast media performance. Residents of six selected cities from the six geo-political zones of Nigeria were sampled. Questionnaire was the instrument for data collection. Survey research method was used. The findings amongst others was that the broadcast media are not effective in the discharge of their surveillance function. The study therefore, recommended amongst others that the Nigerian broadcast media must, as a matter of necessity contribute to the security of the country by effectively playing the surveillance role. The above study is similar to this study in the following ways: they both used questionnaire and survey research method.

Ikeme & Obinna (2023) looked at the study audience perception of broadcast media coverage of the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on women in rural communities in Edo state, Nigeria. The study is anchored on attitude change theory. Data was collected through secondary sources of data. Findings showed that women in rural have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, because they face challenges of limited access to healthcare, education and economic opportunities. The study recommended that broadcast media coverage of the effects of Covid-19 on women in rural areas should focus on human stories that resonate with the audience. The above study is similar to this study because, both are using broadcast media. And it is different from this study in terms of data collation. This study used questionnaire, and the above study used secondary sources of data. The study used attitude change theory which is different from this study. Though this study looked at the perception of broadcast media reportage on the use of BVAS in the 2023 Nigeria presidential election which is the gap it covers.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on perception theory. Perception theory is a branch of psychology that seeks to understand how people interpret and make sense of the world around them. One influential theory of perception is the constructivist approach, which emphasises the role of the individual in constructing their perception of the world. According to this approach, perception is not just a matter of passive reception of sensory information but also involves active interpretation and construction of meaning. This approach is exemplified by the work of Bruner (1957) who argued that perception is influenced by the individual's prior knowledge and expectations and that people



actively construct their perception of the world based on these factors. And when the constructivist approach is looked at in relation to this study, the onus will be that, the prior knowledge about the bimodal voter accreditation system will enable the audience to have a good grasp of the messages being broadcasted.

Human sense organs aid in identifying and interpreting environmental information and they also serve as information sources (Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso, 2008). As noted by Asemah & Asogwa (2012); Asemah, Edegoh & Nwammuo (2013); Ogwo, Nnaemeka & Asemah (2013); Asemah, Nwammuo & Nkwam-Uwaoma (2017); Santas, Asemah & Jumbo (2020); Egwa & Asemah, (2023), the theory holds that most of the pictures we store in our heads, most of the things we think or worry about, most of the issues we discuss, are based on what we have read, listened to or watched in different mass media.

According to the theory, perception is a dynamic process through which individuals select, arrange and interpret sensory stimuli to create a meaningful and cogent mental representation of problems in the applicability of this theory to the study rests on the idea that people's perception of the bimodal voter accreditation system will determine how seriously they take it in, regarding the message they have. In a word, how individuals perceive the radio broadcast messages will greatly affect how they behave in terms of taking cognisance of these developments and adopting a good attitude, in the same vein, as cited in (Ogunjobi, Ekharefo & Asemah, 2023).

The perception theory can be related to the perception of broadcast media reportage of the use of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) during the 2023 Nigerian presidential election in several ways. Perception theory focuses on how individuals interpret and make sense of information, including media messages. In this case, individuals' perception of the media reportage of BVAS can influence their understanding and assessment of its effectiveness and impact on the election process.

METHOD

The study used quantitative research design. The population of this study consisted of three towns in Edo State; these include Auchi, Ekpoma and Benin. The population of Auchi as at the time of the study was 62,907, Ekpoma is 83,822 and that of Benin is 1,781,999. The population figures were retrieved from the World Population Review (2021). Therefore, the population of the study is 1,928,728.

The sample size of respondents for this study was 390. This number of survey respondents was obtained at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The study adopted the Cochran 1963 Sample size determination formula. The formula is:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$



Therefore, a sample size of 384 was drawn from this study. The researcher used purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select three towns in Edo state located across the three districts. The three towns are Benin, Auchi and Ekpoma. These towns were selected because they are the towns where you have highly educated people who can provide reliable information on the subject matter. The three towns' areas was therefore chosen by the researcher using the purposive sampling technique because they were representative of the sampled population while the required respondents, 128 from each of the areas were selected using simple random sampling which was achieved by assigning a number to each person in the sampling frame which were properly mixed and drawn from a bowl which can be called lottery or balloting and this was to remove biases and make statistical means of estimating sampling errors are provided in Asemah, Gujbawu, Ekharefo & Opanachi (2017). The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The data for this research was collected through personal administration of the questionnaire. The researcher and a research assistant administered the questionnaire on a face-to-face basis. A total of 390 copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents' and 384 retrieved.

RESULT

Table 1: Level of Knowledge on BVAS

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Very High	220	57.3	57.3
High	100	26.0	26.0
Undecided	45	11.7	11.7
Low	11	2.9	2.9
Very Low	8	2.1	2.1
Total	384	100.0	100.0

$M = 78.7$ $SD = \pm 23.35$

A staggering number of respondents strongly agree that they were aware of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) as depicted in the data on Table 1. The mean value is 78.7 (± 23.35) which infers that the average response is agree. The larger proportion of respondents showing awareness of bimodal voter accreditation system provides credit to their relevance for the research. It means that respondents will supply knowledgeable opinions on components on awareness of BVAS. The mean response from the above aligns with the total opinion of responses in Table 5 about the knowledge of BVAS.



Table 2: Extent of exposure to broadcast media reports on BVAS during 2023 Nigerian presidential election

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	33	8.6
High	125	32.6
Average	142	37
Low	83	21.6
Very low	1	0.3
Total	384	100

According to Table 2, Edo residents were heavily exposed to BVAS reports on broadcast media. This is because, 32.6% of respondents said as much, which implies that the majority of the sampled population watched or listened to the broadcast media on information disseminated regarding the BVAS.

Table 3: Percentage analysis on broadcast media channels through which respondents were exposed to BVAS

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Television	297	77.3
Radio	87	22.7
Sound systems	0	0
Total	384	100.0

According to Table 4, most respondents used television to access reportage on BVAS usage in the 2023 Nigerian presidential election.

Table 4: Percentage analysis of broadcast media reports effectiveness in delivering information about BVAS

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very Effective	108	28.1
Effective	183	47.7
Undecided	64	16.7
Ineffective	22	6
Very Ineffective	7	1.8
Total	384	100

MS=3.81

Table 4 shows that the broadcast media is a useful tool for spreading educative, enlightening and informed reports to aid the respondents on their perception of the effectiveness of perception of the bimodal voter accreditation system during 2023 Nigerian presidential election and how they acted on the reports. This is corroborated on a mean score of 3.81.



Table 5: Percentage analysis of perception of broadcast media reports on BVAS

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	124	32.0
Good	159	41.4
Average	80	20.8
Poor	15	3.9
Very poor	6	1.6
Total	384	100

Table 5 shows that, in terms of "perception of broadcast media reports on bimodal voter accreditation system used during 2023, Nigerian presidential election," 41.4% and 32% said it is good and very good, 20.8% said average, and 3.9% and 1.6% said they disagree and strongly disagree. The average score of 3.30 suggests that most respondents think the perception of broadcast media reports, highlighting and promoting BVAS are well received.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that a significant proportion of respondents (57.3%) had a very high level of knowledge about the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS), while 26% had a high level of knowledge. This suggests that the majority of respondents were well-informed about the BVAS, which is a critical component of the electoral process in Nigeria. The high level of knowledge about BVAS among respondents can be attributed to the extensive media coverage of the system, particularly on television and radio. As noted by McQuail (2010), the media play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing people's perceptions of various issues, including electoral processes. The findings of this study align with the perception theory, which posits that people's perceptions of the world are influenced by the information they receive from various sources, including the media (Bruner, 1957). In this case, the media's extensive coverage of BVAS has contributed to the high level of knowledge about the system among respondents.

The study also found that respondents were heavily exposed to BVAS reports on broadcast media, with 32.6% saying they were very highly exposed, while 37% said they were moderately exposed. This suggests that broadcast media played a significant role in disseminating information about BVAS to the public. The findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that broadcast media are effective tools for disseminating information to a wide audience (Asemah & Asogwa, 2016; Omale, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Asemah, 2023). The high level of exposure to BVAS reports on broadcast media among respondents can be attributed to the fact that television and radio are widely available and accessible in Nigeria, making them effective channels for disseminating information to a wide audience. As noted by De-Vreese (2012), the media's ability to shape public opinion and influence people's perceptions of various issues is influenced by the extent to which people are exposed to media messages. In this case, the high level of exposure to BVAS reports on broadcast media among respondents has contributed to their high level of knowledge about the system.



The study further found that television was the most popular channel through which respondents accessed reports on BVAS, with 77.3% saying they used television, while 22.7% said they used radio. This suggests that television is a more effective channel for disseminating information about BVAS to the public. The findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that television is a powerful medium for shaping public opinion and influencing people's perceptions of various issues (McQuail, 2010; Baran, 2015). The popularity of television as a channel for accessing reports on BVAS among respondents can be attributed to the fact that television is a visual medium that can convey complex information in a simple and easily understandable manner. As noted by Sundar, Oeldorf-Hirsch, and Xu (2017), the effectiveness of media messages in shaping public opinion and influencing people's perceptions of various issues is influenced by the characteristics of the medium, including its ability to convey complex information in a simple and easily understandable manner.

The study also found that the broadcast media were effective in delivering information about BVAS, with 28.1% of respondents saying the media were very effective, while 47.7% said they were effective. This suggests that the broadcast media played a significant role in disseminating information about BVAS to the public. The findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that the media are effective tools for disseminating information to a wide audience (Asemah & Asogwa, 2016; Omale, Nkwam-Uwaoma & Asemah, 2023). The effectiveness of the broadcast media in delivering information about BVAS among respondents can be attributed to the fact that the media provided accurate and unbiased information about the system. As noted by Igben and Oronukpo (2022), the credibility of media messages is influenced by the accuracy and fairness of the information provided.

Finally, the study found that respondents had a positive perception of the broadcast media reports on BVAS, with 41.4% saying the reports were good, while 32% said they were very good. This suggests that the broadcast media reports on BVAS were effective in shaping public opinion and influencing people's perceptions of the system. The findings are consistent with the literature, which suggests that the media play a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing people's perceptions of various issues (McQuail, 2010; Baran, 2015). The positive perception of the broadcast media reports on BVAS among respondents can be attributed to the fact that the reports were accurate, unbiased, and informative. As noted by Asemah, Nwammuo, and Nkwam-Uwaoma (2022), the effectiveness of media messages in shaping public opinion and influencing people's perceptions of various issues is influenced by the accuracy, fairness, and informativeness of the reports.

CONCLUSION

The study shows that broadcast media in Nigeria has played a significant role in informing the public about the BVAS system. The high percentage of respondents who learned about BVAS through broadcast media (73.3%) indicates that broadcast media have been an effective channel for disseminating information about the system. Through various programmes, broadcasters have educated voters on reports on BVAS going by 40% of respondents reported an increased understanding of BVAS which suggests that the content was not only informative but also



comprehensible. Based on the results and conclusion, the study recommends that the Edo State government needs to re-orient people in Edo State based on their use of broadcast media tools for BVAS so that the numbers can surpass the 77.3% who agreed they have access to broadcast media. They should also collaborate with stakeholders by engaging with local governments, civil society organisations and community leaders to amplify the reach and impact of the campaigns to create better understanding among the rural dwellers in the state. As a means of increasing knowledge and exposure to BVAS messages, INEC professionals should be trained, retrained and encouraged to use broadcast media channels for information dissemination on the system.

Ethical Clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants involved in this study. Participants were informed that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Aisha Egwa conceived the study, including its design; Comfort Ene Obaje assisted in data collection and analysis. Ezekiel S. Asemah supervised the study and reviewed the manuscript. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Availability of Data and Materials

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors without undue reservation.



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