



Contributions of Radio Programmes to Women Political Participation in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background: Globally, women political participation is pivotal in achieving sustainable development. It helps provide more responsibility to women and allows women to participate directly in public decision-making. However, concerns about women's political participation are becoming more widespread in Nigeria, particularly in Benue State. Accordingly, the use of radio to enhance meaningful participation of women in national, local, and community leadership roles has become an important focus the Benue State Government initiatives.

Objective: This study investigated how radio programmes contributed to women political participation in Makurdi Local Government Area, Benue State.

Method: Using descriptive survey research design, 400 women residing in Makurdi Local Government Area were sampled using three sampling techniques namely; purposive, simple random, and snowball sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a consistency coefficient of 0.95, while analysis was done using descriptive statistics and presented using frequency tables.

Results: There was a high level of listenership to the Platform Radio Benue and Political Trend of Joy FM and both programmes have contributed considerable to women political participation. More so, the most preferred radio programmes formats were discussion and Phone-in segment.

Conclusion: The study concludes that majority of women in Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State preferred discussion and phone-in programmes used in promoting women political participation. This could be attributed to the ability of both programmes to give listeners access to experts, public figures, and political leaders while they participated in the program, offering a forum for democratised discourse and unrestricted public participation. This means that concerns of women's political mobilization and involvement have been addressed to a considerable extent by a variety of perspectives.

Unique Contribution: This study has provided fresh perspective on how radio broadcasts contributed to women political participation. It has also provided a valuable insight into the most preferred radio programmes format that appealed to women. Hopefully, policymakers, political parties/politicians, and communication experts will find this fresh insight useful in planning future mobilisation programmes to enhance political participation of women across the Nigeria. **Key Recommendation:** As a potent tool for social mobilisation, the radio need to be used more to encourage and support women's progress towards full political involvement. In the light of this, additional media political programs have to be produced, since the ones employed in this study greatly encourage women to get involved in politics.

Keywords: Radio Programme, listenership, Women Political Participation and mobilization,



INTRODUCTION

Radio is a major mass media in Africa in terms of reach and listenership. In contrast to print media, radio may reach both uneducated and literate audiences. Radio has had a significant impact on the country's political economy. It offers invaluable contributions to the country's progress, as seen by its extensive political education, enlightenment, knowledge, consciousness, and opportunities for discussion, debate, and presentation. Radio, by classification, is the best medium for development, particularly in Africa. According to Roskin, Cord, Medeiros and Jones (2015) radio is a vital force for social change through public information and enlightenment. It exists because people must communicate with one another. Communication is the activity by which people pursue the exchange of idea- an exchange that we pursue continuously throughout our lives. Radio broadcast is an agent of political communication that play vital role in the survival of democracy, political system and the communication system complement each other in a viable democratic process (Okoro, & Nwafor, 2013).

In Nigeria, radio transmission is extensively available and accessible in Nigeria, with figures stating that there are now 439 radio stations distributed over the country broadcasting in different languages (National Broadcasting Commission 2023). Radio, as a political mobilization tool, is intended to be at the forefront of encouraging women's engagement in Nigerian politics by broadcasting educational and informational programming that will bring about gender balance in politics (Anorue, Obayi and Onyebuchi, 2012). Radio broadcasting has a large effect on people; it should behave more responsibly before reporting and publicizing any news that might affect women's involvement in politics. The disparaging portrayal of women in the media demonstrates a lack of gender awareness, and stakeholders have called for the media to be held accountable for such representation of women. Such cases prompted the national commission for women to urge a modification to the indecent representation of women (Prohibition Act) (Ananta and Tauffiqu, 2016).

Radio is critical to political mobilization and participation on issues. Researcher such as Bosch, 2020 and Heywood, 2020 agree that radio broadcasting is an important communication medium in Africa due to low literacy levels. Bosch and Heywood's position echo the view of Kivikuru (2006), who argues that radio is one of Africa's most successful vehicles for political engagement. Most Nigerians believe radio to be their primary source of information. Radio speaks the language understood by the majority of the population (Anderson, Masocha, and Sharma, 2019; Odoemelam, & Nwafor, 2012; Kivikuru, 2006). The obvious conclusion from the above is that radio broadcasting has a significant impact on women's political engagement.

Tham, Wenn, Ong, and Lim (2020) all agree that radio broadcasts have a significant impact on listeners during election campaigns and the delivery of candidate manifestos. Okinda, Nyambuga, and Ojwang (2020), as well as Newton (2009), concurred that radio and other mass media have an impact on government and politics, but said that the impact is decided by several intervening circumstances. Durante and Gutierrez (2014) confirmed that intervening variables other than radio can influence women's knowledge, awareness, and engagement in political activities. As a result, women's exposure to various sources of knowledge about political activity, financial resources, perceived community benefit, and other personal traits all contribute to their political engagement.



Despite some efforts to encourage women's participation in politics and debunk myths that serve as barriers, as well as the fact that Nigeria's female population outnumbers males, women's representation in Nigerian politics remains significantly lower than men (Oluyemi, 2016). Some of the programs aimed at encouraging women's participation in Nigerian politics are the Young Women in Politics Forum (YWiPF), which was launched in September 2017 under the auspices of the Nigerian Women Trust Fund (NUTF), and The National Democratic Institute (NDI), which also organizes seminars and workshops on women in politics in various states of the federation, among others (Olaniru, Olatunji, Ayandele & Popoola, 2020; Oyewole, Olisa, & Damilola, 2017; Omodia, Esidene & Abdul, 2013; and Omojola, 2014).

According to the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU, 2023) Map of Women in Politics in Turkey, as of January 1, 2023, 11.3% of nations have female heads of state (17 out of 151 countries, excluding monarchy-based systems), and 9.8% have female heads of government (19 out of 193). This is an increase from a decade ago, when figures were 5.3% and 7.3%, respectively. According to the Women in Politics Map (2023), the proportion of women MPs in United Kingdom has climbed internationally to 26.5%, up from 25.5% in 2021, while the number of female Speakers of Parliament has increased from 20.9% in 2021 to 22.7%. According to latest data, women hold 22.8% of ministerial positions as of January 1, 2023. Similarly, Europe and North America have the highest proportion of women in ministerial positions (31.6%), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (30.1%). Central and South Asia and the Pacific Islands have the lowest proportion of women in ministerial positions, at 10.1% and 8.1%, respectively (Inter-parliamentary Union, IPU, 2023). According to Musau (2019) African countries with high percentage of women in ministerial positions are Rwanda (51.9%), South Africa (48.6%), Ethiopia (47.6%), Seychelles (45.5 %), Uganda (36.7 %), and Mali (34.4%), while the lowest percentage in Africa are Morocco (5.6%), Nigeria (8%), Mauritius (8.7%), and Sudan (9.5%). Bring it closer home Benue State has 11.8% of female representation as commissioners and 6% in the state house of assembly (Kyegh, 2024).

Radio has been widely employed in political campaigns in both developing and developed nations as a means of political engagement and mobilization. Alingo, Herzenberg, and Gatimu (2015) argue that radio is extensively available in Nigeria. After conducting a research on voter information in Nigeria's 2015 election, Alingo and Gatimu (2015) discovered that of the 82% of respondents who listened to radio, 61% reported doing so daily, 14% 3-6 days per week, and 7% 1-2 days per week. What they did not say was if the information heard via radio affected women's engagement in politics. Equally important is the need for targeted audience to be active listeners of radio programmes to have a desired effect. As Padmakumar (2015) posited that radio listeners could be grouped into two types: active and passive ones. The active listeners according to him show a high level of involvement with the radio station by demonstrating their loyalty towards the station, by actively engaging themselves with the station's activities such as listening to the radio station for a longer duration on a daily basis, showing awareness of the programmes of the station, keeping in touch with the station constantly by calling and texting the station frequently keeping track of all the events and contests conducted by the radio stations and keenly participate in those events. However, the contribution of radio broadcast on women political participation remains an under-investigated area of study in Benue State. Most studies in Nigeria, such as Adekoya, Akintayo,



and Adegoke (2015), investigated the role of radio in mobilizing women for political participation; Omolara (2015) examined women and political participation in the 2015 general elections in Lagos; Oyesomi and Okorie, N (2013) examined radio and political mobilization of women in Ogun State; and Tama and Maiwuya (2022) investigated women and political participation in Taraba. Furthermore, previous research on political broadcasts on Joy FM radio and Radio Benue focused on voter behaviour and civic engagement (Yisa, 2019 and Idoko, 2016), but did not investigate the impact on women's political participation. Therefore, there is a dire need to bridge this gap and sensitize women to participate in politics. It is based on this that this study seeks to investigate the contributions of radio programmes to women political participation in Benue State with emphasis on political programmes Radio Benue and Joy FM.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the contributions of radio programmes to women political participation in Benue State. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

- i. Identify the radio programmes used to promote women participation in politics in Benue State.
- ii. Ascertain the level of listenership and listeners' most preferred segment of radio programmes used to promote women participation in politics in Benue State.
- iii. Determine the contributions of the radio programmes in women political participation in Benue State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study by Fanawopo and Ifeduba (2023) titled influence of radio on political mobilization in Nigeria with emphasis on women in Ede North Local government area of Osun State, Nigeria. Findings of the study reflect that broadcast media have positive impact in mobilizing women to participate in politics. Though, there are still gaps from the broadcast media in fostering development for gender equality in politics. Although Fanawopo and Ifeduba's study is similar to present study because they both sought to empirically establish the influence of radio on women political participation, there are noticeable differences in scope.

Tama and Maiwuya (2022) determined women and political participation in Nigeria with a focus on Taraba State. It was concluded that the issue of women participation in politics in Taraba state is a fight. Women full participation in politics has to be contended. This is important because women's resourcefulness is wasted and the skills women acquire are as good and useful to national development as that of men. Tama and Maiwuya's study is similar to the present study in two different ways. First, Tama and Maiwuya's study and the present study used survey research design. Secondly, both studies focused on women political participation. However, there is a noticeable divergence in the scope of these studies. While the former was on women and political participation in Nigeria with emphasis on Taraba State, the latter is concerned with effect of radio on women participation in politics in Benue State. Although the former study did not analyse the effect of radio broadcast on women political participation, it has proved a framework to measure how women participate in politics as a result of radio campaign.



Masoud (2022) conducted a study on the role of television in mobilizing women to politics in Zanzibar with a focus of Zanzibar Broadcasting Corporation Television (ZBC TV). The study concluded that women's participation in Zanzibar politics is an issue of great importance. Women have been tone down politically for years; this has led to women under-representation in public life. Some of the problems responsible for this situation are entrenched in the fears most women have, some of which borders on insecurity, lack of finances, inadequate political support and many more. Although Masoud's study is relevant to the present study there are differences in the scope of both studies. Masoud's study focused on the role of television in mobilizing women to politics in Zanzibar with a focus of Zanzibar Broadcasting Corporation Television (ZBC TV), while the present study focused the effect of radio on women participation in politics in Benue State. Masoud's study focused on television while the present study focused on radio.

Iheanacho and Orji (2022) conducted a study on radio broadcast and political education using questionnaire and focus group discussion for data collection. Findings revealed that Imo State women's level of awareness of Heartland FM "Politics and Women" programme is minimal at 49%. Also, it was found that exposure to radio has positively influenced Imo State women's participation in the political processes at 84.7%. But, Iheanacho and Orji's study is different from the present study because the formal focused radio broadcast and political education with emphasis on appraisal of women participation in politics in Imo State, while the latter focuses on the effect of radio programmes on women participation in politics in Benue State.

Aredem and Oji (2022) examined the influence of radio broadcasting on political participation among people of South-South Nigeria. The study concluded that despite the fact that the study shows a positive and significant relationship between radio broadcasting and political knowledge, the people of South-South Nigeria's political knowledge has not translated into a desire for them to run for elective office, which is a major flaw in Nigeria's democratic development. However, there is a noticeable divergence in the scope of these studies. While the former was concerned with the assessment of the influence of radio broadcasting on political participation among people of South-South Nigeria, the latter is concerned with the effect of Radio Broadcast on women participation in politics in Benue State.

Apata and Azeez (2019) investigated the motivations for engaging in radio phone-in programmes among Radio Users in Osogbo and found among other things that the majority of the respondents often participate in phone-in programmes on Osun state radio when the topic of discussion interest them; due to programmes' format, when a favourite presenter was anchoring. But, Apata and Azeez's study is different from the present study because the formal focused on the motivations for engaging in radio phone-in programmes among Radio Users in Osogbo, while the latter focuses on the effect of Radio Broadcast on women participation in politics in Benue State.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-setting theory, as originally formulated in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, explains the relationship between the emphasis that the mass media place on issues and the importance that media audiences attribute to those issues. This theory started out as an explanation



of media impact on political behaviour and attitudes during election years - specifically, the ways that news media coverage can prioritize issues, or set the agenda, for the public (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). According to Ilonze (2013), two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda setting. First, the press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it; and second, media concentration on a few issues and subject leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. According to McCombs (2014), across the world, the mass media strongly influences how we picture public affairs. In describing this media influence on what we think about and how we think about it, setting the agenda also discusses the sources of these media agendas, the psychological explanation for their impact on the public agenda, and the subsequent consequences for attitudes, opinions and behaviour. McCombs debates the role of the expanded media landscape on agenda setting, the impact of the internet on the power of legacy media and the role of agenda setting beyond the realm of public affairs.

The relevance of the agenda setting theory to this study is that before, during and after elections, radio stations can project, lay more emphasis on, or attach more importance to particular topical issues concerning the forthcoming elections or the elections proper, and consequently cause the audience to constantly think or discuss in that regards. Agenda setting does not describe to the radio media the power to determine what we actually think, it is right to say that agenda setting theory which the radio uses, is use for political campaigns. This theory uses some elements which are involved in agenda setting and they are: The quantity or frequency of reporting. The prominence given to the reports through jingles, phone-in/discussion programs, or scheduling on radio, as well as the degree of conflict produced in the reports, and the possibility for agenda building by the radio media, gets intensified when the values system of a society is in flux (continual change; condition of not being settled) (McCombs, 2014).

METHOD

The population of the study comprises of the population of Makurdi Local Government Area of Benue State. According to National Bureau of Statistics (2022), the projected population of women in Makurdi is 214,620. A sample size of 400 was chosen for this study. It was statistically determined using the Taro-Yamane's (1967) formula. Purposive, simple random and snowball sampling techniques were used in the administration of questionnaire. Firstly, the researcher used purposive sampling technique to select only women as participants in this study. This is because the study is strictly on the use of radio and its contribution to women political participation in Benue State. Secondly, the simple random sampling technique was used to ensure that every subject in the target population has an equal chance of being selected (Barbie, 2007). To achieve this, the researcher listed all the council wards from Makurdi LGA thus: Fiidi; Agan; Morden Market; Northbank I; Northbank II; Walomayo; Ankpa-Wadata; Bar; Mbalagh; Clerk Mission; and Mbawa. Furthermore, the researcher used simple random sampling technique to select four wards out of the 11 thus; Fiidi, Ankpa-Wadata, Agan, and Morden Market. Additionally, the researcher adopted the snowball sampling technique in getting respondents from each of the selected council wards. She achieved this by accessing the women leaders in the selected council wards who, in turn referred her to registered voters who listened to radio in their council wards.



The data collected for the study were presented in frequency distribution tables and expressed in simple percentages out of which results were analyzed and findings arrived at. These statistical tools were used because they were suitable means of breaking down and analyzing the generated data.

To ensure that the questionnaire used was valid, the instrument was exposed to expert opinion of scholars, on the content, structure, language and relevance of the questions to the research work. Equally significant is the fact that the instrument were carefully examined and authorised by the researcher's supervisor before to use, confirming the validity of the research tool utilised to gather pertinent data. To establish the reliability of the questionnaire used as instrument for this study, test-retest reliability was adopted. This was achieved by selecting 20 women from Wurukum, Makurdi and the copies of the questionnaire were administered twice in two weeks. In order to measure a construct using test-retest reliability, the measure must be administered to the same group of people once more and the data must be graphed to ascertain the relationship of the correlation coefficient. A score of +.80 indicates good reliability (Price et. al., 2017). Arising from the above, the study employed Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used and the result is +.86 which is considered reliable

RESULT

Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire administered, 391 copies were properly filled, 6 copies were found unusable while 3 copies were not returned. The presentation and analysis of data was done based on the 391 copies of the questionnaire that were retrieved from the respondents. This is presented below:

Table 1: Identification Radio Broadcast Programme used for the promotion of women political participation in Benue State

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
The Platform of Radio Benue	276	70.6
Political Trend of Joy FM	115	29.4
Total	391	100(%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data contained in Table 1 are radio broadcast programmes used to promote women participation in politics from Radio Benue and Joy FM in Benue State. Accordingly, 276(70.6%) respondents identified the *Platform of Radio Benue* and 115(29.4%) respondents identified *Political Trend of Joy FM* as radio stations used for the promotion of political participation in Benue State. It was also discovered that both stations had special editions of women in politics to exclusively discuss issues relating to women in politics.

Table 2 Level of Listenership to the Platform of Radio Benue and Political Trend of Joy FM used for the promotion of women political participation in Benue State

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Low	21	5.4
High	370	94.6



Total	391	100(%)
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Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data contained in Table 2 are the level of Listenership to the Platform of Radio Benue and Political Trend of Joy FM used for the promotion of women political participation in Benue State. Consequently, 21(5.4%) respondents level of listenership is low and 370(94.6%) respondents level of listenership is high. According to the above table, the majority of respondents listen to *the Platform Radio Benue and Political Trend of Joy*, which is significant evidence that suggests respondents are in a position to assess their contributions to women's political engagement in Benue State.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by their most preferred segment of the Platform of Radio Benue and Political Trend of Joy FM used for the promotion of women political participation in Benue State

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Drama	10	2.6
Discussion	205	50.1
News Documentary	20	5.1
Phone-in	110	28.1
Public announcement	50	12.8
Advertisement	5	1.3
Total	391	100(%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data contained in Table 3 are on respondents' most preferred segment of the Platform of Radio Benue and Political Trend of Joy FM used for the promotion of women political participation in Benue State. As a result, 10 respondents representing 2.6% preferred drama, 196 respondents representing 50.1% preferred discussion programme, 20 respondents representing 5.1% preferred news documentary and 110 respondents representing 28.1% preferred phone-in programmes while 50 respondents representing 12.8% preferred public announcement and lastly 5 respondents representing 1.3% preferred advertisement.

Majority of the respondents representing 78.2% preferred discussion and phone-in programmes. This suggests that concerns of women's political mobilization and involvement have been addressed to a considerable extent by a variety of perspectives. This has allowed professionals to conduct in-depth analyses of the problem from numerous angles and aspects, which will undoubtedly convince women to engage in politics using radio discussion and phone-in programmes.



Table 4: Ways radio broadcast programme contributed in promoting women participation in politics in Benue State

Options	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Influenced women to vote and participate in elections	116	29.7
To educate women on political matters	95	24.3
To dispel fear in women to contest in an election	80	20.5
To encourage women to openly talk about politics on radio stations	58	14.8
Increase women interest in holding political office	42	10.7
Total	391	100(%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data contained in Table 4 revealed ways radio broadcast programme contributed in promoting women participation in politics in Benue State. Out of the sampled, 120 respondents representing 29.7% picked creating awareness on women participation in politics while 100 respondents representing 24.3% picked to educate women on political matter while 80 respondents representing 20.5% picked to dispel fear in women to contest in an election and 58 respondents representing 14.8% to encourage women to openly talk about politics on radio stations and lastly, 42 respondents representing 10.7% picked increase women interest in holding political office. Hence, this suggests that the 116 respondents that picked influenced women to vote and participate in elections have a highest percentage in the study.

On the whole, information as contained in the table above implies that most respondents representing 74.5% believed that ways radio broadcast programme contributed in promoting women participation in politics in Benue State include influencing women to vote and participate in elections; to educate women on political matters and to dispel fear in women to contest in an election.



Table 5: Contributions of radio programs in mobilizing women to participate in politics

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	X	Decision
Radio broadcast programs contributed in encouraging women participation in politics.	110	148	53	67	13	3.63	Accepted
Radio political content highly motivates women for political participation	103	182	51	38	17	3.59	Accepted
The programs dispel my fears as a woman to actively participate in politics.	98	192	45	28	28	4.01	Accepted
Radio political programs mobilize women to participation in politics.	114	179	29	64	5	3.92	Accepted
Women's participation in politics depends on their exposure to radio.	88	134	31	97	41	2.93	Rejected
Discrimination contributes to the non-participation of women in politics.	102	227	24	24	14	4.11	Accepted
Negative cultural factors affect women participation in politics.	112	211	36	17	15	3.96	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Data contained in Table 5 provided evidence that radio political programs are indeed contributed in promoting women participation in politics in Benue State. For item 2 translated to 3.59, the respondents also accepted that radio political content highly motivates women for political participation. It is also shown in item 3 that decodes to 4.01 mean value, assents that the political programs dispel fears in women to actively participate in politics. Item 4 indicates 3.92 mean value, accepting that radio political programs mobilize women to participation in politics. Item 5 decoded to the mean value 2.93, meaning that the respondents reject that women's participation in politics depends on their exposure to radio. Item 6 that translates to 4.11 accepts that discrimination contributes to the non-participation of women in politics. Finally item 7 decodes to the mean value of 3.96, agreeing that negative cultural factors affect women's participation in politics. Consequently, from the table it has been revealed that radio programmes are contributed considerably in mobilizing women to participate in politics.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated the contributions of radio programmes to women political participation in Benue State. Based on the presentation of data, the study revealed that the *Platform of Radio Benue* and *Political Trend of Joy FM* were identified by respondents as radio stations used for the promotion of political participation in Benue State. It was also discovered that both stations had special editions of women in politics to exclusively discuss issues relating to women in politics. The implication of the above data to this study is that issues discussed in both radio stations programmes will set agenda with regards to enhance women political participation in Benue State.



The above finding and view are rooted in the tenet of Agenda setting theory. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), agenda setting theory explains the relationship between the emphasis that the mass media place on issues and the importance that media audiences attribute to those issues. This theory uses some elements which are involved in agenda setting and they are: the quantity or frequency of reporting. The prominence given to the reports through jingles, phone-in/discussion programs, or scheduling on radio, as well as the degree of conflict produced in the reports, and the possibility for agenda building by the radio media, gets intensified when the values system of a society is in flux (continual change; condition of not being settled) (McCombs, 2014).

Furthermore, the *Platform Radio Benue* and *Political Trend of Joy FM* had a high listenership rate among the majority of respondents, which is important evidence that implies respondents are able to evaluate their contributions to women's political involvement in Benue State. The above data revealed that women are active listeners of both political programmes of stations studied. This view and findings of this study are consistent with that of Padmakumar (2015) who posited that there are two categories of radio listeners: active and passive. According to him, active listeners exhibit a high level of involvement with the radio station by actively participating in its activities, such as listening to it for longer periods of time each day, demonstrating awareness of its programs, staying in constant contact with the station through frequent phone calls and texts, keeping track of all the events and contests the station hosts, and enthusiastically participating in those events.

The study additionally found that most of the respondents preferred discussion and phone-in programmes. This means that concerns of women's political mobilization and involvement have been addressed to a considerable extent by a variety of perspectives. This has allowed professionals to conduct in-depth analyses of the problem from numerous angles and aspects, which will undoubtedly convince women to engage in politics using radio discussion and phone-in programmes. This is compelling evidence that radio phone-in programs gave listeners access to experts, public figures, and political leaders while they participated in the program, offering a forum for democratised discourse and unrestricted public participation. Although, the current study differs in score with Apata and Azeez (2019)'s study, it corroborates their findings which established that among other things that the majority of the respondents often participate in phone-in programmes on Osun state radio when the topic of discussion interest them; due to programmes' format, when a favourite presenter was anchoring.

It is noteworthy that the use of a quantitative approach limited the potential for gaining a thorough understanding of factors that influence women's preferences for discussion and phone-in programmes of both radio stations for the promotion of women political participation in Benue State. Although, it is believed that these limitations have not impacted the primary outcome of the study, future work could use mixed method or triangulation to help in generating in-depth data and robust discussion among participants to determine the factors that motivate women preference in the use of discussion and phone-in programmes in the promotion of women participation in politics in Benue State.



Next, the study found that ways radio broadcast programmes contributed in promoting women participation in politics in Benue State include influencing women to vote and participate in elections; to educate women on political matters and to dispel fear in women to contest in an election. Finally, the study revealed that radio programmes are contributed considerably in mobilizing women to participate in politics. These findings corroborates with those of Fanawopo and Ifeduba's (2023), who concluded that broadcast media have positive impact in mobilizing women to participate in politics in Ede North Local government area of Osun State, Nigeria. Additionally, the present findings match that of Tham, Wenn, Ong, and Lim's (2020), who concluded that radio broadcasts have a significant impact on listeners during election campaigns and the delivery of candidate manifestos. But, the findings of the current do not support that of Iheanacho and Orji (2022), who found that Imo State women's level of awareness of Heartland FM "Politics and Women" programme is minimal at 49%. Also, it was found that exposure to radio has positively influenced Imo State women's participation in the political processes at 84.7%.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this was to investigate the contributions of radio programmes to women political participation in Benue State. Based on the data presentation, the study has established that ways radio broadcast programmes contributed in promoting women participation in politics in Benue State include influencing women to vote and participate in elections; to educate women on political matters and to dispel fear in women to contest in an election. The study also ascertained that women preferred discussion and phone-in programmes. This could be attributed to the ability of both programmes to give listeners access to experts, public figures, and political leaders while they participated in the program, offering a forum for democratised discourse and unrestricted public participation. This means that concerns of women's political mobilization and involvement have been addressed to a considerable extent by a variety of perspectives. Consequently, the study recommends the following:

- i. It is also recommended that producers of political programmes on Radio Benue and Joy FM should seek for sponsorship that will enable package and produce more political programmes aimed at enhancing women participation in politics.
- ii. In order to fulfill its educational duty, broadcast media must play a part in raising women's awareness. This may be accomplished by teaching these women about their fundamental rights in society, which will motivate them to take part as individuals only engage in activities they are aware of.
- iii. As a potent tool for social mobilisation, the radio need to be used more to encourage and support women's progress towards full political involvement. In light of this, additional media political programs have to be produced, since the ones employed in this study greatly encourage women to get involved in politics.
- iv. The *Platform Radio Benue* and *Political Trend of Joy FM* programmes, in their present form enjoy high listenership among the listeners. Therefore, the programmes design should be sustained, while efforts should be made to mitigate the effects of constraining factors to further enhance and sustain listenership.



clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge Peter Odey and Patricia Ibi for assisting me with data collection.

Source of Funding

The study was not funded.

Conflict of Interest

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

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

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