



Comparative Analysis of the Interviewing Styles of Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television on *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News on *The Morning Show*

¹Ayodele Thomas Odunlami, ²Daniel Gbolahan Akinrinola, ³Ifedayo Akinwalere, & ⁴Adejobi Olajide Adeleye

^{1,2&3}Department of Mass Communication, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State Nigeria

⁴Federal University of Technology Ilaro, Ogun State, Nigeria

¹<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7780-7660>

²<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1671-4644>

³<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5600-7330>

⁴<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1071-1491>

***Corresponding Author:** odunlami.ayodele@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Background: Television interviews shape public discourse through questioning patterns, interactional techniques, tone, and ideological orientation. Despite the prominence of Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni in Nigerian television journalism, limited empirical research has comparatively examined their interviewing styles.

Objective: The study compared the interviewing styles of Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television's *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News' *The Morning Show*, focusing on question type and length, interruptions and follow-ups, tone, interpersonal style, and ideological orientation.

Method: The study adopted quantitative content analysis. Eighty-six episodes broadcast in 2025 were selected using composite-week sampling over a 12-month period. Data were collected using a structured coding sheet and analysed with frequencies and percentages.

Results: Both interviewers predominantly used open-ended questions, with Oseni recording a higher proportion (93.0%) than Okinbaloye (72.7%). Questions lasting 0–2 minutes accounted for 93.6% of Oseni's and 91.4% of Okinbaloye's questions. Oseni recorded more interruptions and follow-up questions, while Okinbaloye more frequently conducted interviews without them. Neutral tone and conversational interaction predominated among both interviewers. However, Oseni recorded a higher proportion of objective/balanced interviews (81.3%) than Okinbaloye (61.5%), while Okinbaloye recorded more advocacy-oriented interviews (38.5%) than Oseni (18.7%).

Conclusion: Although both interviewers shared similar questioning, tonal, and interpersonal characteristics, they differed in their use of interruptions and follow-ups and their orientation towards political interviewing.

Unique Contribution: The study provides comparative empirical evidence on the interviewing practices of two prominent Nigerian television journalists, highlighting differences in their approaches to political discourse.

Key Recommendation: Television interviewers should receive continuous professional training in questioning, follow-up techniques, interruption management, and balanced, ethical political interviewing.

Keywords: Interviewing styles, Seun Okinbaloye, Rufai Oseni, discourse ethics, television.



INTRODUCTION

Television journalism occupies an important place in Nigeria's media environment. For many Nigerians, television remains a major avenue through which information about government, politics, public policies, elections, and other national issues is encountered and discussed. Beyond reporting events, television provides spaces where public officials, politicians, professionals, and other social actors are questioned about issues that affect society. Political and current-affairs programmes are particularly important in this regard because they bring journalists and public figures into direct interaction before a mass audience. Through these interactions, journalists can seek explanations, request clarification, challenge claims, and draw attention to issues that may otherwise receive limited public scrutiny (Kur & Nyekwere, 2015; Murkthar et al., 2017).

The interview is consequently one of the most important formats through which television journalism performs this function. A television interview is not simply a question-and-answer exchange; it is an interaction in which the interviewer plays an active role in determining the direction and development of the conversation. The wording and sequencing of questions, the use of follow-up questions, requests for clarification, challenges, interruptions, and the persistence with which an interviewer pursues an issue are all observable features of the interview process. Feldman (2016) argues that televised political interviews can be systematically examined through the questions posed by interviewers, the responses of interviewees, the sequences through which questions and responses are organised, and the context in which the interaction takes place. Similarly, Ekström and Lundell (2011) describe television interviews as specialised forms of interaction in which journalists employ particular interviewing practices in the production of broadcast news. These perspectives suggest that interviewing is not a uniform activity; individual journalists may adopt different approaches when engaging their guests.

This variation is particularly relevant in the Nigerian television environment, where some interviewers have developed recognisable professional and public identities. Two prominent examples are Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television's *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News' *The Morning Show*. *Politics Today* is a major current-affairs programme that regularly features interviews and discussions with political actors and other stakeholders on issues of national importance. *The Morning Show*, on ARISE News, similarly provides a platform for discussions and interviews concerning political, economic, and social affairs. Both programmes regularly place their presenters in situations requiring them to question individuals who may have strong political interests, defend controversial decisions, or provide explanations on matters of public concern. This makes the two programmes particularly suitable for a comparative examination of the interviewing styles of their presenters. Odunlami (2013) argues that the quality and quantity of information at an individual's disposal determines the quality of decision that such an individual can make, hence the need to understudy the style and approaches of these individuals who are involved in the process of gathering, creating and framing information in such a way that can influence the quality of decision that people can make in the society.



The need to examine the interviewing styles of these two journalists is strengthened by existing scholarship on political interviews in Nigeria. Previous researchers have shown that Nigerian televised interviews provide important sites for examining interaction, political discourse, power, and meaning. Amadi (2020), examined turn-taking and overlapping in a Nigerian political interview and found that the interaction did not always follow the conventional question-response pattern expected of news interviews. The study also identified interruptive and non-interruptive overlaps and observed that disagreement between interviewer and interviewee could lead to overlapping speech. Although the study provides useful evidence about interactional features of political interviewing, it focused on a single political interview and adopted a qualitative approach rather than systematically comparing the interviewing styles of two prominent television interviewers.

Similarly, Abdulkadir (2023) examined selected political interviews in Nigerian news media using critical discourse analysis and rhetoric. The study analysed two interviews conducted by Channels Television and found that political actors employed linguistic and rhetorical strategies through which ideological positions and power relations were constructed. While this study demonstrates the value of analysing Nigerian television interviews, its principal concern was the discourse and ideological strategies of the interviewees rather than a comparative assessment of the interviewing styles employed by the journalists.

More recent studies have also examined specific Nigerian television programmes and interview interactions. Onuche and Okpeh (2025) investigated contextual and pragmatic strategies in televised political interviews on *Politics Today*, focusing on interviews involving Nigerian political actors during the 2023 presidential election. Their findings showed that contextual factors and pragmatic strategies such as implicature, presupposition, hedging, and deixis contributed to the negotiation of meaning and ideological positioning in the interviews. In another recent study, Esuola and Okunade (2026) examined facework and adversarial journalism in Nigerian political interviews, including interviews conducted by Rufai Oseni on ARISE Television. The study drew attention to practices such as aggressive questioning, interruptions, and challenges in political interviewing. These studies are relevant to the present research because they demonstrate that Nigerian television interviews can be systematically examined at the level of interaction and interviewing practice.

However, the existing literature also reveals an important area that remains insufficiently explored. The studies identified above largely examine particular linguistic, pragmatic, rhetorical, interactional, or discourse features of interviews, or focus on the behaviour of political actors during interviews. They do not provide a systematic quantitative comparison of the interviewing styles and techniques of Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni as individual television interviewers. In particular, there is limited empirical evidence showing, within a common analytical framework, the extent to which the two presenters differ or resemble each other in their observable interviewing practices. This is an important gap because public perceptions of television interviewers are often formed from repeated exposure to their questioning practices,



yet such perceptions need to be complemented by systematic empirical examination of what the interviewers actually do during their interviews.

The gap is therefore not that Nigerian television interviews have never been studied. Rather, existing research has paid attention to different aspects of Nigerian political and television interviews, but there remains limited comparative empirical evidence focusing specifically on the interviewing styles and techniques of these two prominent presenters. International scholarship has demonstrated the usefulness of examining broadcast interviews through systematic analysis of interviewer questions, interview sequences, and interactional practices (Feldman, 2016; Ekström & Lundell, 2011). Applying such an approach to the Nigerian context can provide a clearer empirical understanding of how individual television interviewers conduct their interviews.

Against this background, the present study focuses specifically on a comparative analysis of the interviewing styles of Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television's *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News' *The Morning Show*. The study adopts a quantitative content-analysis approach to identify and compare the observable interviewing styles and techniques employed by the two presenters in selected episodes of their respective programmes. The study is deliberately limited to the interviewers' styles and techniques and does not seek to determine audience effects, informational outcomes, interview tone, or broader consequences of interviewing. By concentrating on the actual interviewing practices of the two presenters, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can contribute to scholarly understanding of contemporary television interviewing in Nigeria. The study consequently seeks to answer the following research question: What are the dominant interviewing styles and techniques employed by Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni in their respective programmes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on television interviewing has increasingly moved beyond treating the interview as a simple question-and-answer exchange to examining it as a structured interaction in which journalists exercise different degrees of questioning, challenge, control, and participation. A central concern in this scholarship is the extent to which interviewing practices are influenced by programme conventions, professional expectations, cultural contexts, and the individual characteristics of interviewers. Feldman (2016), for example, proposes a framework for analysing televised political interviews through the organisation of questions, responses, interruptions, challenges, and other interactional practices. His work demonstrates that interview questions are not merely vehicles for obtaining information but are also shaped by the journalist's approach to the interaction. This provides a useful basis for understanding interviewing style as a set of observable practices rather than as a general personality trait.

The role of the individual interviewer becomes particularly important when comparing journalists working within different programmes. Marques et al. (2022), in their analysis of Brazil's *Roda Viva*, found that characteristics associated with individual interviewers influenced the level of adversarialism in interviews, suggesting that interviewing practices cannot be



explained entirely by programme format. This finding is important because programmes may establish general institutional and professional conventions, but individual journalists can still differ considerably in the way they question and challenge their guests. Fomchenko (2021), examining co-construction in Russian political interviews, similarly found that journalist personality played an important role in shaping interaction. Taken together, these studies suggest that interviewing style is produced through an interaction between programme structure and the individual journalist's approach.

Questioning is one of the most visible components through which such differences can be identified. Marques et al. (2023) found that professional journalists employed more assertive questioning and were more likely to challenge politicians than non-journalist interviewers. The finding suggests that professional journalistic norms and training may influence the degree to which interviewers adopt challenging or adversarial questioning practices. Hutchby (2025) further discusses the development of the contemporary "accountability interview," in which journalists are expected to ask questions that demand explanations and justifications from public figures. Ekström (2022) similarly demonstrates that follow-up questions can perform an important accountability function because they allow journalists to pursue issues that have not been adequately addressed in an initial response.

The literature therefore indicates that questioning style cannot be reduced simply to whether an interviewer is aggressive or polite. It includes several related practices, such as direct questioning, probing, follow-up questions, requests for clarification, challenges, and interruptions. Croce (2025), for instance, argues that effective questioning requires journalists to seek justification and evidence rather than merely accepting unsupported claims. Gialabouki (2019) further demonstrates that adversarialism is often interactionally produced, as challenging questions from journalists may generate counter-questions, resistance, or disagreement from interviewees. These studies collectively show that the style of an interviewer becomes particularly visible in the ways questions are initiated, pursued, challenged, and reformulated throughout an interview.

Another important dimension of interviewing style is the management of conversational interaction. Research on television interviews shows that journalists can exercise considerable control over the organisation of the exchange. Asyher et al. (2023), in their analysis of BBC's *HARDtalk*, found that interviewers generally exercised greater discourse control than interviewees. Their finding suggests that the interviewer's role involves more than asking questions; interviewers can also determine when topics are introduced, when responses are pursued, and when the conversation moves to another issue. Similarly, Riedl (2020), in a longitudinal study of Austrian political interviews, found that journalists strategically introduced topics in ways that strengthened their agenda-setting role. These findings reinforce the view that interviewing style can be examined through observable patterns of questioning and conversational management.



Interruption is another practice through which interviewing styles may differ. Varošaneć-Škarić et al. (2023) identified differences in interruption patterns across cultural settings and reported variations between Croatian and British journalists. Their findings suggest that interruption should not automatically be interpreted as poor interviewing practice because its meaning may depend on the context and purpose of the interaction. Amadi (2020), examining turn-taking and overlapping in a Nigerian political interview, similarly found that political interviews may involve both interruptive and non-interruptive overlaps, particularly where disagreement occurs between interviewer and interviewee. The study is particularly relevant to the Nigerian context because it demonstrates that turn-taking and interruption can provide observable indicators for analysing how journalists manage interactions with their guests.

Studies of political interviews have also shown that interviewing styles can vary according to the broader communicative and political environment. Alqatawna and Abu Quba (2024), analysing press conferences involving former United States President Donald Trump, found that journalists sometimes combined disagreement, reported speech, and direct criticism with their questioning. Sengul (2022), from a critical discourse perspective, argues that conventional interviewing approaches may become inadequate when journalists interview populist political actors, particularly where interviewees seek to resist or redirect journalistic questioning. Selman (2024), in a study of Turkish presidential interviews, similarly demonstrates that the political environment in which an interview takes place can influence the nature of the interaction. These studies indicate that interviewing style is not produced in isolation but operates within particular political, institutional, and communicative contexts.

The literature also provides evidence that interviewing practices vary across media settings and genres. Facchinetti (2024), for example, found differences in emotional expressivity and adversarial questioning between video-mediated and face-to-face interviews, suggesting that the medium can influence interactional practices. Fu (2024), through an analysis of discourse markers in *HARDtalk*, also demonstrates how apparently small linguistic choices can perform different interactional functions. These studies are useful in showing that interviewing style can be identified through specific and observable linguistic and interactional practices. However, they also reinforce the need to distinguish between studies examining general discourse features and those specifically comparing the interviewing practices of individual journalists.

Within the Nigerian context, the available literature remains comparatively limited and fragmented. Okafor (2020), for instance, identified structural deficiencies in Nigerian Television Authority talk shows, including weaknesses in the application of turn-taking conventions. Amadi (2020) examined turn-taking and overlapping in a Nigerian political interview, providing evidence of the importance of interactional management in political interviewing. Abdulkadir (2023) analysed selected political interviews in Nigerian news media and demonstrated how political interviews can be examined through discourse and rhetorical strategies. More recently, Onuche and Okpeh (2025) examined contextual and pragmatic strategies in political interviews on *Politics Today*, drawing attention to the ways linguistic practices contribute to the construction and negotiation of meaning during political interviews. Esuola and Okunade (2026)



also examined facework and adversarial practices in Nigerian political interviews, including interviews involving Rufai Oseni, highlighting the relevance of challenging questions, interruptions, and other interactional practices.

Although these Nigerian studies provide useful insights, they approach television interviewing from different analytical perspectives. Some concentrate on turn-taking and overlapping; others focus on critical discourse, pragmatics, facework, or particular interactional strategies. Consequently, they contribute important pieces to the understanding of Nigerian television interviews without providing a common comparative framework for examining the interviewing styles of individual presenters. In particular, the existing literature does not sufficiently establish how the interviewing practices of Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni compare when examined systematically across selected episodes of their respective programmes.

Taken together, the literature establishes several important points. First, television interviewing is an interactive journalistic practice rather than a simple process of asking and answering questions. Second, interviewing styles can be observed through identifiable practices, including questioning patterns, probing, follow-up questions, challenges, interruptions, clarification requests, and the management of interaction. Third, programme format and professional conventions provide an important context for interviewing, but individual journalists also exercise considerable agency in determining how they engage interviewees. Studies by Feldman (2016), Marques et al. (2022), Fomchenko (2021), and Asyher et al. (2023) collectively support this position by demonstrating the importance of interviewer characteristics and interactional practices in shaping televised interviews.

The literature also reveals that interviewing styles are not uniform across journalists or cultural settings. Differences in adversarialism, interruption, questioning, and conversational control have been identified across countries, programmes, and interview situations. However, the findings do not suggest that one particular interviewing style is universally dominant or appropriate. Rather, interviewing practices are shaped by the interaction between the journalist, interviewee, programme conventions, and broader communicative context. This makes comparative examination particularly useful because two journalists working in similar professional environments may nevertheless demonstrate different patterns of interviewing behaviour.

In Nigeria, the literature confirms that television interviews have received scholarly attention, but much of that attention has focused on specific linguistic, pragmatic, rhetorical, interactional, or discourse features. Studies have examined political interviews on Nigerian television, including *Politics Today*, and have provided valuable insights into turn-taking, pragmatic strategies, discourse, and adversarial interaction. What remains insufficiently explored is a systematic empirical comparison of the interviewing styles and techniques of two prominent Nigerian television interviewers operating on different current-affairs programmes.



The present study responds to this gap by comparatively examining the interviewing styles of Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television's *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News' *The Morning Show*. Unlike studies that focus primarily on the political statements of interviewees or isolated linguistic features, this study places the interviewers themselves at the center of analysis. Through quantitative content analysis of selected episodes, it identifies the dominant interviewing styles and techniques employed by the two presenters and compares the patterns observed in their respective interviews. The study therefore extends existing scholarship by providing empirical evidence on similarities and differences in the observable interviewing practices of two prominent Nigerian television journalists.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study is anchored on the propositions of the discourse ethics theory developed by Jürgen Habermas (1984, 1990), which provides a normative framework for evaluating the ethical quality of communication in public discourse. The theory argues that communication is ethically valid when it promotes rational dialogue, mutual respect, equal participation, and freedom from coercion. Ethical discourse is therefore assessed not only by the information communicated but also by the fairness and inclusiveness of the communication process.

This theory is particularly relevant to television interview programmes, where journalists mediate discussions between public figures and audiences. It offers a useful framework for examining the interviewing styles of Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni by assessing whether their approaches encourage balanced dialogue or hinder democratic deliberation. Habermas maintains that ethical communication should demonstrate sincerity, legitimacy, and clarity, making these principles appropriate criteria for evaluating journalistic practice.

Discourse Ethics also explains how interviewing styles influence audience perceptions of credibility and trust. Behaviours such as excessive interruptions, leading questions, or hostility may reduce public confidence, while respectful and balanced engagement enhances trust and audience participation. In Nigeria's politically polarized media environment, the theory provides a valuable basis for assessing whether broadcast journalists uphold ethical standards that promote democratic dialogue, media credibility, and informed public engagement.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative content analysis research design, which allows for systematic, replicable, and objective analysis of communication content, enabling the researcher to make inferences about messages, their producers, and their audiences (Krippendorff, 2004). The population consisted of all episodes of *Politics Today* (Channels Television) and *The Morning Show* (Arise News) aired between January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025, Monday through Saturday, totalling 626 episodes constituting the full content universe.

The composite week sampling technique was employed to select broadcast days across both programmes. Sundays were deliberately excluded since Sunday Politics, a different programme format, airs on Channels Television on that day; the same exclusion criterion was applied to



Arise News for uniformity. The sampling process produced 53 composite broadcast days, from which 43 episodes were selected for Seun Okinbaloye and 43 for Rufai Oseni, yielding 86 episodes for analysis approximately 16.9% of the total content universe. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) affirm that a sample between 10 and 50% is acceptable for content analysis, validating this sample size. Only episodes in which the target journalists actively hosted or co-hosted were selected, sourced from the official YouTube pages of both programmes to ensure authenticity.

Although equal episodes were selected for both journalists, the programmes differ structurally: Okinbaloye hosts *Politics Today* alone while Oseni co-hosts *The Morning Show*. To ensure comparability, a fixed number of questions per episode was established based on the co-host's average, then applied uniformly across both programmes, controlling for structural differences.

The coding scheme captured sixteen variables including question type, question length, interruptions, interviewer tone, interviewee response tone, reaction to questions, clarification requests, body language, response relevance, tension indicators, humour and sarcasm, topic transitions, interview flow, agenda setting, interpersonal style, and ideological style. Each variable was assigned numerical codes to facilitate systematic recording and comparison.

To ensure reliability, an Inter-Coder Reliability test was conducted using Cohen's Kappa coefficient. Two independent coders analysed six episodes of *People, Politics and Power* on African Independent Television, representing approximately 11 percent of the total sample. Kappa values ranged from 0.55 to 1.00. Question Type and Clarification Requests achieved perfect agreement ($K = 1.00$), while Body Language ($K = 0.88$) and Response Relevance ($K = 0.86$) demonstrated very high reliability. Variables such as Agenda Setting ($K = 0.55$) and Tension Indicators ($K = 0.56$) recorded moderate agreement. Overall, the results confirm that the coding scheme was sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this study.

FINDINGS

To identify and compare the dominant interviewing styles and techniques employed by Seun Okinbaloye on *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni on *The Morning Show*.

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Question Type Used by Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni

Question Type	Seun Okinbaloye f (%)	Rufai Oseni f (%)
Open-ended	136 (72.7)	174 (93.0)
Closed-ended	51 (27.3)	13 (7.0)
Total	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 shows that open-ended questions were the dominant question type used by both Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni. However, Oseni recorded a substantially higher use of open-ended



questions, with 174 (93.0%) compared with 136 (72.7%) for Okinbaloye. Conversely, Okinbaloye used closed-ended questions in 51 (27.3%) instances, compared with only 13 (7.0%) for Oseni. The difference suggests that although both interviewers predominantly relied on open-ended questioning, Oseni demonstrated a stronger preference for this questioning pattern, while Okinbaloye employed closed-ended questions more frequently.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Question Length Used by Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni

Question Length	Seun Okinbaloye f (%)	Rufai Oseni f (%)
0–2 minutes	171 (91.4)	175 (93.6)
3–5 minutes	14 (7.5)	12 (6.4)
5–7 minutes	2 (1.1)	0 (0.0)
Total	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Table 2 indicates a high degree of similarity between the two interviewers in terms of question length. Questions lasting 0–2 minutes accounted for 171 (91.4%) of Okinbaloye's observations and 175 (93.6%) of Oseni's. Questions lasting 3–5 minutes represented 7.5% for Okinbaloye and 6.4% for Oseni, while the 5–7-minute category accounted for only 1.1% of Okinbaloye's observations and none for Oseni. Thus, both interviewers predominantly employed short questions, with only marginal differences between them.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Interruptions and Follow-ups by Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni

Interruptions/Follow-ups	Seun Okinbaloye f (%)	Rufai Oseni f (%)
None	110 (58.8)	72 (38.5)
1–2	64 (34.2)	86 (46.0)
3–5	12 (6.4)	23 (12.3)
6+	1 (0.5)	6 (3.2)
Total	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Table 3 reveals a notable difference in the use of interruptions and follow-up questions. Okinbaloye recorded no interruption or follow-up in 110 (58.8%) observations, compared with 72 (38.5%) for Oseni. In contrast, Oseni recorded one to two interruptions or follow-ups in 86 (46.0%) observations, compared with 64 (34.2%) for Okinbaloye. Oseni also recorded higher proportions in the 3–5 and 6-or-more categories. The findings therefore indicate that Oseni engaged in interruptions or follow-up questioning more frequently than Okinbaloye, while Okinbaloye more frequently had interactions in which no interruption or follow-up was recorded.



Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Interviewer Tone Used by Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni

Interviewer Tone	Seun Okinbaloye f (%)	Rufai Oseni f (%)
Assertive	49 (26.2)	53 (28.3)
Neutral	100 (53.5)	103 (55.1)
Sceptical	31 (16.6)	26 (13.9)
Friendly	7 (3.7)	5 (2.7)
Total	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4 shows that neutral tone was the most frequently observed tone for both interviewers. Okinbaloye recorded a neutral tone in 100 (53.5%) observations, while Oseni recorded 103 (55.1%). Assertive tone was observed in 26.2% of Okinbaloye's interviews and 28.3% of Oseni's. Sceptical tone was somewhat more frequent for Okinbaloye (16.6%) than Oseni (13.9%), while friendly tone was relatively uncommon for both interviewers. Overall, the similarity in the distribution suggests that both presenters predominantly adopted neutral and assertive tones, with only modest differences in the other categories.

Table 5: Comparative Analysis of Interpersonal Style of Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni

Interpersonal Style	Seun Okinbaloye f (%)	Rufai Oseni f (%)
Conversational	171 (91.4)	170 (90.9)
Confrontational	16 (8.6)	17 (9.1)
Total	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)

Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Table 5 demonstrates a very similar interpersonal pattern for the two interviewers. A conversational style accounted for 171 (91.4%) of Okinbaloye's observations and 170 (90.9%) of Oseni's. Confrontational style was comparatively low, accounting for 8.6% of Okinbaloye's observations and 9.1% of Oseni's. The difference between the two presenters is only 0.5 percentage points, indicating a strong similarity in their interpersonal approaches. Both interviewers were therefore predominantly conversational rather than confrontational in the observed interviews.

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Ideological Style of Seun Okinbaloye and Rufai Oseni

Ideological Style	Seun Okinbaloye f (%)	Rufai Oseni f (%)
Advocacy	72 (38.5)	35 (18.7)
Objective/Balanced	115 (61.5)	152 (81.3)
Total	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)



Source: Author's Field Survey, 2026.

Table 6 shows a more noticeable difference between the two interviewers in terms of ideological style. Okinbaloye's interviews were classified as objective/balanced in 115 (61.5%) observations and advocacy-oriented in 72 (38.5%). Oseni's interviews, on the other hand, were classified as objective/balanced in 152 (81.3%) observations and advocacy-oriented in 35 (18.7%). Thus, objective/balanced interviewing was more frequently observed in Oseni's interviews, while advocacy-oriented interviewing occurred more frequently in Okinbaloye's interviews. The difference between the two presenters is 19.8 percentage points in both categories.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study provide an interesting picture of the interviewing styles of Seun Okinbaloye on *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni on *The Morning Show*. Rather than showing two completely different approaches to television interviewing, the findings reveal a mixture of similarities and differences. Both interviewers demonstrate a predominantly conversational approach, rely heavily on open-ended questions, generally use short questions, and most frequently adopt a neutral tone. At the same time, differences emerge in their use of follow-up questions and interruptions, their preference for open-ended questions, and the ideological orientation reflected in their interviews. These findings suggest that while both presenters operate within the professional conventions of contemporary television journalism, they exercise individual choices in the way they conduct interviews.

The predominance of open-ended questions among both interviewers is particularly significant. Seun Okinbaloye employed open-ended questions in 72.7% of the observed instances, while Rufai Oseni recorded a substantially higher figure of 93.0%. This suggests that both presenters generally allow interviewees room to explain, elaborate, justify, or qualify their positions rather than restricting responses to simple "yes" or "no" answers. The difference, however, indicates that Oseni relied more heavily on this approach than Okinbaloye. This finding is consistent with the broader literature which views questioning as a central component of television interviewing. Feldman (2016) notes that the design and organisation of questions are central to the structure of televised political interviews, while Croce (2025) emphasises the importance of questions that encourage interviewees to provide justification and evidence.

The finding can also be understood from the perspective of Discourse Ethics Theory. Habermas (1984, 1990) places considerable emphasis on communicative interaction in which participants have the opportunity to express and examine claims through reasoned discourse. Although a television interview is not identical to the ideal speech situation envisaged by Habermas, open-ended questioning can create comparatively greater conversational space for interviewees to articulate their positions. From this perspective, the high incidence of open-ended questioning by both Okinbaloye and Oseni represents a potentially important feature of their interviewing practice because it permits claims to be presented for public examination rather than reducing the interaction to predetermined responses.



The difference between the two interviewers becomes more pronounced when their use of interruptions and follow-up questions is considered. In Okinbaloye's interviews, 58.8% of the observed instances recorded no interruption or follow-up, compared with 38.5% for Oseni. In contrast, Oseni recorded one to two interruptions or follow-ups in 46.0% of the observations, compared with 34.2% for Okinbaloye. He also recorded higher proportions in the three-to-five and six-or-more categories. This indicates that Oseni was more persistent in returning to issues raised during the interview or intervening in the interaction, whereas Okinbaloye more frequently allowed the initial exchange to proceed without an additional interruption or follow-up.

This finding agrees with Ekström's (2022) observation that follow-up questions can serve as deliberate mechanisms for holding interviewees accountable for their responses. It also resonates with Hutchby's (2025) discussion of the contemporary accountability interview, in which journalists increasingly move beyond simply receiving answers and instead pursue explanations and clarifications. Gialabouki (2019) similarly shows that challenging interview practices can generate further interaction as interviewees respond to the pressure created by journalists' questions. In the Nigerian context, Amadi (2020) also demonstrates that political interviews may involve overlapping and interruptions as participants negotiate disagreement and control of the interaction.

From the standpoint of Discourse Ethics Theory, however, frequent follow-up questions should not automatically be interpreted as unethical or undesirable. Habermas's conception of communicative rationality is concerned with the possibility of claims being subjected to critical examination. A follow-up question can therefore strengthen the communicative value of an interview when it seeks clarification, challenges an unsupported assertion, or gives the interviewee an opportunity to explain an ambiguous position. At the same time, excessive interruption could potentially restrict the opportunity for a participant to fully articulate a position. The data in this study does not, by itself, establish the intention behind each interruption or whether a particular interruption enhanced or constrained rational discourse. What it demonstrates is that Oseni's interviews contained more frequent follow-up and interruption activity than Okinbaloye's.

The analysis of interviewer tone further reveals considerable similarity between the two presenters. Neutral tone was the most frequently observed category for both Okinbaloye (53.5%) and Oseni (55.1%). Assertive tone followed, with 26.2% for Okinbaloye and 28.3% for Oseni. Sceptical tone was somewhat more common in Okinbaloye's interviews (16.6%) than in Oseni's (13.9%), while friendly tone was relatively uncommon for both. The closeness of these figures suggests that, despite differences in some interviewing techniques, the two presenters generally maintained a professional and measured tone during the observed interviews.

This finding is noteworthy because public discussions of prominent television interviewers sometimes portray them primarily through labels such as “aggressive,” “confrontational,” or “friendly.” The empirical evidence from this study presents a more nuanced picture. Neither interviewer was predominantly classified as assertive or confrontational. Rather, neutrality constituted the largest tonal category for both presenters. This finding supports the argument by Marques et al. (2022) that interviewer characteristics can influence the nature of adversarialism, but



it also indicates that adversarial interviewing should not be assumed simply from the public profile or reputation of an interviewer. The actual interaction needs to be examined systematically.

The predominance of a conversational interpersonal style provides an even clearer area of similarity. Okinbaloye recorded a conversational style in 91.4% of the observations, while Oseni recorded 90.9%. Confrontational style accounted for only 8.6% and 9.1%, respectively. The difference of just 0.5 percentage points is very small and suggests that both presenters generally conduct their interviews through conversational rather than overtly confrontational interaction. This finding is important because it challenges a simplistic understanding of political interviewing as necessarily adversarial. An interviewer can ask difficult questions, request clarification, or challenge a response without the overall interpersonal encounter becoming confrontational.

The finding is also consistent with the literature on the interactional character of interviews. Ekström and Lundell (2011) explain that broadcast interviews involve specialised forms of interaction in which journalists manage the conversation while responding to the particular demands of the encounter. Similarly, Asyher et al. (2023) found that interviewers in *HARDtalk* exercised considerable discourse control, illustrating that control of an interview does not necessarily require constant confrontation. In the present study, both Okinbaloye and Oseni appear to combine conversational interaction with other questioning practices, suggesting that interviewing style is better understood as a combination of techniques rather than a single fixed behavioural category.

The ideological-style findings provide one of the clearest differences between the two interviewers. Okinbaloye's interviews were classified as objective/balanced in 61.5% of observations and advocacy-oriented in 38.5%, whereas Oseni's interviews were classified as objective/balanced in 81.3% and advocacy-oriented in 18.7%. Thus, objective/balanced interviewing was more frequently observed in Oseni's interviews, while advocacy-oriented interviewing was more common in Okinbaloye's. The difference of 19.8 percentage points is substantial compared with the differences observed in tone and interpersonal style.

This finding should, however, be interpreted carefully. An advocacy classification does not necessarily mean that the interviewer was politically biased or acting unprofessionally. In a political interview, an interviewer may adopt an advocacy-oriented approach by persistently raising an issue, challenging a public claim, or pressing an interviewee to address a matter of public concern. Similarly, classification as objective/balanced does not mean that every question was completely neutral or free from journalistic judgement. The categories reflect the observable orientation of the interviewing interaction according to the study's coding framework.

This distinction is particularly important when the findings are considered through Discourse Ethics Theory. Habermas (1990) argues that legitimate communicative interaction depends on the possibility of participants testing validity claims through reasoned engagement rather than simply imposing positions through power. In a television interview, the journalist necessarily possesses a degree of institutional and communicative power because the journalist determines many of the questions and controls the sequence of the interaction. The ethical significance of the interviewer's role therefore lies partly in how that power is exercised. An interviewer who challenges a claim can contribute to public reasoning when the challenge creates an opportunity for justification and



response; conversely, an approach that prevents meaningful response could undermine the conditions for communicative engagement.

The overall pattern of the findings therefore suggests that the two presenters share a common professional foundation but express it differently. Both rely predominantly on open-ended questions, brief questioning formats, neutral tones, and conversational interpersonal styles. These common features indicate that both interviewers operate within recognisable conventions of contemporary television interviewing. However, Oseni's considerably greater use of follow-ups and interruptions and his higher proportion of objective/balanced coding distinguish his approach from that of Okinbaloye. Okinbaloye, on the other hand, recorded a greater use of closed-ended questions, fewer follow-up or interruption instances, and a higher proportion of advocacy-coded interviews.

The findings are broadly consistent with previous research showing that interviewing style is influenced not only by programme conventions but also by the individual interviewer. Marques et al. (2022) found that individual interviewer characteristics could contribute significantly to adversarialism, while Fomchenko (2021) similarly highlighted the role of journalist personality in interview interaction. The present study extends this line of reasoning to the Nigerian television environment by demonstrating measurable differences between two prominent presenters working in different current-affairs programmes. At the same time, the strong similarities between them show that individual style operates within broader professional conventions rather than completely outside them.

From the perspective of Discourse Ethics Theory, the findings ultimately point to the importance of examining not merely whether an interviewer is “tough” or “soft,” but how questioning practices create opportunities for claims to be questioned, explained, defended, or clarified. Both Okinbaloye and Oseni predominantly use open-ended and conversational approaches, which provide a basis for substantive interaction. Their differences in follow-up practices and ideological orientation, however, suggest different ways of exercising journalistic control within that interaction. The study therefore demonstrates that the interviewing styles of the two presenters are neither identical nor completely opposed. Rather, they share several fundamental characteristics while differing in the frequency and combination of particular interviewing techniques.

Overall, the findings contribute to the growing literature on television interviewing by providing a systematic comparison of two prominent Nigerian television interviewers. The evidence suggests that Seun Okinbaloye's style can be characterised predominantly as open-ended, brief, conversational, largely neutral, and relatively less interruptive, with a comparatively higher incidence of advocacy-oriented interviewing. Rufai Oseni's style, while similarly open-ended, brief, conversational, and predominantly neutral, is distinguished by more frequent follow-ups and interruptions and a substantially higher proportion of objective/balanced-coded interviews. These findings provide an empirical basis for understanding the similarities and differences between the two presenters and demonstrate the value of examining interviewing style through observable communicative practices rather than relying on public impressions or assumptions about individual journalists.



CONCLUSION

This study comparatively examined the interviewing styles of Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television's *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News' *The Morning Show*. The findings show that both interviewers share several common characteristics, particularly their strong preference for open-ended questions, brief questioning, neutral tone, and conversational interpersonal style. However, important differences were also observed. Rufai Oseni employed open-ended questions more frequently and recorded higher levels of follow-up questions and interruptions. His interviews also recorded a higher proportion of objective/balanced orientations. Seun Okinbaloye, in comparison, used closed-ended questions more frequently, recorded fewer follow-ups and interruptions, and had a higher proportion of advocacy-oriented interviewing. The findings therefore demonstrate that the two presenters operate within similar professional conventions while exhibiting distinctive patterns in the application of interviewing techniques. Viewed through the propositions of Discourse Ethics Theory, the findings underscore the importance of questioning practices that allow claims to be examined, clarified, challenged, and justified within public discourse. The study concludes that television interviewing style is not uniform but reflects a combination of shared journalistic conventions and individual interviewer practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study recommends that television interviewers should receive continuous professional training in questioning, follow-up techniques, and interaction management. Broadcasters should encourage interviewers to maintain a balance between critical questioning and allowing interviewees adequate opportunity to explain their positions. Interviewers should also use interruptions purposefully, particularly where clarification or accountability is required, rather than allowing interruptions to become unnecessarily disruptive. Television stations should develop clear professional guidelines that encourage rigorous but respectful interviewing practices. Finally, journalism training institutions should give greater attention to practical analysis of interviewing styles so that future journalists can develop questioning techniques that promote meaningful, balanced, and responsible public discourse.

Ethical clearance

The study adhered to relevant ethical principles in the collection and analysis of data. The video materials analysed in the study were obtained from publicly accessible YouTube channels and were originally broadcast as television programmes. The study did not involve the recruitment of the television presenters, interviewees, or other individuals appearing in the videos as research participants. Therefore, individual informed consent was not sought from persons featured in the videos. The analysis was limited to materials already made publicly available for general viewing and was undertaken strictly for academic purposes. The study did not seek to obtain or disclose private information about the individuals featured in the videos, and the findings were reported objectively without altering the original content.



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge Miss Olaoye Victoria, Miss Popoola Oluwatobiloba Mr. Pedro Lateef and Mr. Raheem Mustapha for assisting us with data collection.

Sources of funding

The study was not funded.

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

Ayodele Thomas Odunlami contributed in the study's conceptualisation, supervision, development of the research framework, critical review of the manuscript, and overall coordination of the study. Daniel Gbolahan Akinrinola contributed in the conceptualisation, development of the research framework methodology, literature review, development of the coding instrument, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and drafting of the manuscript. Ifedayo Akinwalere contributed in the methodological review, data validation, interpretation of findings, critical revision of the manuscript, and review of the final version, while Adejobi Olajide Adeleye handled the literature review, data analysis support, interpretation of findings, manuscript review, editing, and preparation of the final manuscript. All authors contributed to the refinement of the manuscript, critically reviewed the final version, and approved the manuscript for submission and publication.

Data availability statement

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

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure

Where AI-assisted tools were used

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) used chatgpt.com for the purpose language editing and grammar correction. The author(s) carefully reviewed, revised, and verified all outputs generated by the tool and take full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and integrity of the manuscript content.

Citation

Odunlami A. T., Akinrinola D. G., Akinwalere I., & Adejobi O. A (2026). Comparative Analysis of the Interviewing Styles of Seun Okinbaloye of Channels Television on *Politics Today* and Rufai Oseni of ARISE News on *The Morning Show*. *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 4(3), 363-381. <https://doi:10.5281/zenodo.22973821>



REFERENCES

- Abdulkadir, A. U. (2023). A critical discourse analysis of selected political interviews in Nigerian news media. *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.57040/jllls.v3i2.432>
- Alqatawna, M., & Quba, A. A. (2024). Press conference debates: A conversational analysis study. *World Journal of English Language*, 14(3), 73. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v14n3p73>
- Amadi, A. M. (2020). Turn-taking and overlapping in a Nigerian online political interview. *IGWEBUIKE: An African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 6(3), 57–68.
- Asyher T, Shahzad A.K & Hanif A. (2020). Power Distribution in Discourse: A Lexico-Grammatical Analysis of a Television Interview from HARDtalk. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*. 3(4).[https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol3-iss4-2020\(120-128\)](https://doi.org/10.36902/sjesr-vol3-iss4-2020(120-128)).
- Croce, M. (2025). Expert interviews, good questioning, and the epistemic duties of journalism. *Episteme*, 22(3), 668–687. <https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2025.24>
- Ekström, M., & Lundell, Å. K. (2011). Beyond the broadcast interview: Specialized forms of interviewing in the making of television news. *Journalism Studies*, 12(2), 172–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2010.493328>
- Ekström, M. (2022). Follow-up questions in political press conferences. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 194, 71–83.
- Esuola, D. O., & Okunade, K. (2026). Facework and adversarial journalism in Nigerian political interviews: Facework in journalism. *Journal of Language and Pragmatics Studies*, 5(1), 58–69. <https://doi.org/10.58881/jlps.v5i1.152>
- Facchinetti, R. (2024). The (ever)changing face of news, with broadcast interviews in focus. *Discourse & Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17504813241275239>
- Feldman, O. (2016). Televised political interviews: A paradigm for analysis. *Asian Journal for Public Opinion Research*, 3(2), 63–82. <https://doi.org/10.15206/ajpor.2016.3.2.63>
- Fomchenko, A. (2021). *The use of co-constructions in Russian TV and radio political interviews (on the example of Vladimir Pozner and Alexey Venediktov)* [Master's thesis, University of Arizona]. University of Arizona.



- Gialabouki, L. (2019). Beyond answering: Interviewees' use of questions in TV political interviews. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 152, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.08.002>
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.; Vol. 1). Beacon Press.
- Hutchby, I. (2025). Going meta: Interaction at the normative boundaries of the news interview. *Journalism*, 26(3), 412–429. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241234446>
- Kur, J. T., & Nyekwere, E. O. (2015). Television broadcasting and the democratization process in Nigeria: The successful and unsuccessful story. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 5(4), 116–146. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcm/2529>
- Marques, F. P. J., Miola, E., Comel, N., & Kniess, A. (2022). Adversarial rhetoric or lapdog journalism? Political interviews during the 2018 Brazilian presidential elections. In O. Feldman (Ed.), *Adversarial political interviewing: Worldwide perspectives during polarized times* (pp. 260–277). Springer.
- Murkthar, M. S., Ogakason, R. O., & Nanoh, F. B. (2017). Influence of television political programmes on voters' opinion in the Nigerian 2015 general election: A study of "Politics Today." *KIU Journal of Humanities*, 2(2A), 87–96.
- Odunlami, D. (2013). Media use as a predictor of the political behaviour of undergraduates in south-west Nigeria. *New Media and Mass Communication*, 15, 18–28.
- Okafor, I. C. (2020). Turn taking in Tuesday live and conversations talk shows of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). *Interdisciplinary Journal of African & Asian Studies (IJAAS)*, 6(1).
- Onuche, J. E., & Okpeh, P. O. (2025). Contextual dynamics and pragmatic strategies in the media discourses with selected Nigerian political actors. *AL-QALAM Journal of Languages and Literary Studies*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.36349/alqajolls.2025.v01i01.026>
- Riedl, A. (2020). *Political TV interviews in Austria 1981–2016 – Structures and strategies through times of substantial changes in media and politics*.
- Sengul, K. (2022). The role of political interviews in mainstreaming and normalizing the far-right: A view from Australia. In O. Feldman (Ed.), *When politicians talk: The cultural dynamics of public speaking*. Springer.
- Varošanec-Škarić, G., Bašić, I., & Šegvić, B. (2023). Comparative analysis of conversational strategy of interruption and disfluency in political interviews conducted in Croatian and English. *Suvremena Lingvistika*, 49(95), 81–107. <https://doi.org/10.22210/suvlin.2023.095.04>