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**Interactive Broadcast Programmes and Citizens' Participation in the
2015 General Elections: A Study of Audiences in Rivers State, South-
South Nigeria**

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Abstract

The liberalisation of the broadcast industry and the advancements in technology, especially the telecommunication industry, has thrown up opportunities for broadcast professionals and their audiences to interact in live programmes through phone-ins and social media platforms. During the build up to the 2015 general elections, the broadcast media (Radio and television) were awash with interactive programmes to sensitise their audiences and evoke a sense of responsibility on the voters. This study was, therefore, undertaken to establish the effect of such programmes on voters' participation in the elections. The study applied the survey research design, using a set of questionnaires to generate data from 384 respondents drawn from Port Harcourt metropolis. The data analysis indicated that majority of the respondents actually participated in the electoral process and that their participation was influenced to a very large extent by the interactive programmes. The study recommended among other things that interactive programmes should be monitored and moderated by the NBC to ensure that they are not used to cause disaffection among members of the society.

Key Words: Interactive Programmes, Broadcast Media, General Elections, Audiences, Citizen's Participation

Background to the Study

The liberalisation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria which came with the promulgation of Decree 38 of 1992 (Now Act of Parliament) that established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) removed government monopoly in the ownership and operation of broadcast stations and ushered in private broadcast stations. The core mandate of the NBC is to “regulate the broadcast industry and to process as well as make recommendations for granting broadcasting licenses to private investors.... The first batch of licences to establish and operate private television stations was released in June, 1993” (Asak, 2012, p. 91-91). This development, buoyed with the improvement in technology, especially the introduction of the Global System of Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) has, indeed, provided broadcast operators, producers and presenters the flexibility to incorporate various genre of programming and programmes, particularly audience participation programmes.

Interactive or audience participation programmes are those that are designed to encourage a two-way communication (dialogue) between the television/radio presenters and the audiences of the programmes. Such programmes provide the audiences with avenues to respond to, and seek clarifications on issues under discussion. These also provide the producers and presenter the opportunities to receive the feedback they require to gauge the audience feelings and attitudes towards their offerings which enable them to adjust their presentations. Broadcast programme producers and presenters in acknowledgement of the prospects provided for the instantaneous reportage of events by the radio and television for enlightenment and mobilisation, have capitalised on this characteristic to present programmes that stimulate audience participation.

Interactive programmes have been practiced from the early times of broadcasting. Usua (2008) observed that this genre of presentation started with letter writing and has evolved to today’s modes involving phone-ins; short message services (SMS), and vox-pop. Other avenues for participation in these programmes include e-mails, twitters, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, among other social media platforms. In describing interactive programmes Gleason (2009) asserted that:

The term interactive describes technological channel features or content elements that facilitate an active communication transaction in which these elements enable a participant to initiate a desired action (such as obtaining data, establishing a contact or exchanging information) and, in response, obtain desired immediate results or updated information (n. p.)

The increasing relevance of audience participation programme was informed by the perceived voters’ apathy towards the political process. This feeling cannot be separated from the intrigues— thuggery, rigging, politically-motivated killings, ballot snatching and stuffing, arson, among others vices, that characterise elections in Nigeria (Ochonogor & Ukaegbu, 2010). The situation above has instilled palpable fear in the electorates and engendered a belief that their votes do not count. The consequence is that Nigeria’s elections are discredited among the committee of nation. This prompted the former President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, to make the following declaration about the 2007 presidential election:

Although we took oath of office and the Supreme Court declared us winners, but each time one travelled abroad, people asked all kinds of questions that even got one angry. That was why I promised myself that if I have an opportunity to oversee

elections in Nigeria, no other president should suffer that kind of harassment and embarrassment by the international community (*Premium Times*, n. p.).

It has been observed that the mass media, especially the broadcast, wield enormous powers in moulding public opinion and mobilising the citizenry to participate in the electoral process. They are credited with the ability to create awareness, clarify and interpret issues and programmes, educate the people on their rights and civic obligations and motivate them to exercise those rights. Interactive programmes have the potential of fostering social cohesion and create a congenial atmosphere that permits the active involvement of the people in the public sphere. Citizens’ participation in the political process can be influenced by the quality of information available to them about the contestants, the voting procedure, their expected conduct during the elections and other sundry issues. As Akinfeleye put it, “The power of the mass media in the creation of awareness of the politician’s intention is well known and to set political agenda for campaigns is indisputable.”

The run up to the 2015 general elections in Nigeria threw up many issues that left many people wandering if Nigeria would exist beyond the elections. First was the merger of some political parties to form the All Progressive Congress (APC), ostensibly to wrest power from the then ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and second, the purported prediction by the United States of America that Nigeria would disintegrate by 2015. These coupled with the upsurge in insurgency in the north eastern part of the country, made the political atmosphere charged with journalist having the duty to report the intrigues (Ochonogor & Okon, 2015).

The need to create an atmosphere that would engender the conduct of free, fair, credible and globally acceptable electoral outcomes, and to meet the audience need for truthful and factual information, made many broadcast stations in South-South Region of Nigeria to conceive audience participation programmes in their schedules. The objectives were to place the voters at the centre of the democratic process by reinforcing the notion that elections and governance are about the people. Some of these programmes have experts political analysts, politicians and even voters a live studio broadcasts with the audiences provided with avenues such as phones, internet and many other platforms to make their contributions. Presented hereunder, is a tabular representation of some of the interactive political programmes of some stations in the region.

Table 1: Interactive Programmes of Stations in Rivers State

S/N	Station	Interactive Programme	Programme type	Day of broadcast	Mode of Participation	Time of broadcast
1	AIT (TV)	Focus Nigeria	Presenter/Live guest	Weekdays	e-mail	10-11 am
2	do	Kakaaki	Live guest	do	do	6-9am
3	Ray Power FM	Fact file	Presenters	do	Phone/SMS/Social media	8.30-9.00am
4	do	Political Platform	Presenter/Live guest	do	e-mail	9.15-9.45am
5	do	Dialogue	Presenter/Live guest	Wednesday	Phone/SMS/Social media	9.30am
6	do	The agenda	Presenter/Live guest	Tues., Thur. & Fri	Phone/SMS/Social media	12-12.30pm
7	NTA	Tuesday Live	Live guest	Tuesdays	Phone, e-mail	11pm

8	do	Platform	Live guest		Phone	
9	do	Encounter	Live guest	Friday	Phone	10am
10	do	Highlight	Live guest	Tuesday	Phone	5-5-30
11	Treasure FM	Let's talk about it	Presenter/Live guest	Tuesdays	Phone	9.30am
12	do	Democratic Platform	Presenters	Thurs.	Phone	11-12 noon
13	do	Politics Nationwide	Presenter/Live guest	Tues/Thur.	Phone/SMS/Social media	8-8.45am
14	do	Radio Link	Presenter/Live guest	Saturday s	Phone	8-10am
15	Nigeria Info	Morning Crossfire	Presenter/Live guest	Weekdays	Phone/SMS/Social media	6-10am
16	do	Mid-day dialogue	Presenter/Live guest	Weekdays	Phone/SMS/Social media	11am-1pm
17	do	Hard facts	Presenter/Live guest	Weekdays	Phone/SMS/Social media	8pm-10pm
18	Rythem	Viewpoint	Presenter/Live guest	Sat	Phone/SMS/Social media	8.15-10am
19	do		Presenter/Live guest	Tue/Thurs	Phone/SMS/Social media	9.9.45am
20	Love FM	Editors' Roundtable	Presenter/Live guest	Mondays	Phone/SMS/Social media	11-12 Noon
21	Radio Rivers	Morning Live	Presenter/Live guest		Phone	7.30-9 am
22	do	Nigeria Decides	Presenter/Live guest		Phone	9-10 am

Statement of the Problem

The general elections which were initially scheduled to hold on February 14, and 28, 2015 for the Presidential and National Assembly; and Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections respectively were rescheduled to March 28 and April 11. Results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), indicated massive turnout of voters across the country. In the South-South Region, the INEC declared millions of votes cast for the different candidates of the political parties in each of the election days which were sign posts of popular participation in the exercise. The question then is, was the massive turnout of voters in the state to exercise their franchise as a result of the interactive broadcast programmes they participated in? This was the motivation for this investigation which is to establish if the participation of the people in the electoral process were due to the interactive broadcast programmes they participated in.

Objectives

1. To find out the nature of Port Harcourt voters' participation in broadcast interactive programme
2. Establish the mode of Port Harcourt voter's participation in the interactive programmes
3. Find out the motivating factors for their participation in interactive programmes
4. Ascertain the outcomes of the voters' participation in relation to their involvement in the elections

5. Investigate the constraints to Port Harcourt voters' participation in interactive programmes for their participation in the electoral process
6. Find out if there intervening variables other than participation in interactive programmes that nudged audience involvement in the electoral process

Research Questions

1. What is Port Harcourt voters' participation in broadcast interactive programme?
2. What was the mode of voters' participation in the interactive programmes?
3. What motivated voters' participation in interactive programmes?
4. What was the outcome of the voters' participation in interactive programmes in relation to their involvement in the elections?
5. What are the constraints to Port Harcourt voters' participation in interactive programmes for their participation in the electoral process?
6. What intervening variables other than audience participation in interactive programmes motivated audience involvement in the electoral process

Hypotheses

- HO₁** There is no significant relationship between Port Harcourt voters' participation in interactive broadcast programme and their involvement in the 2015 general elections
- HO₂** There is no significant relationship between the lessons learnt in the interactive programmes and Port Harcourt voters' participation in the electoral process during the 2015 general elections
- HO₃** There is no significant relationship between the intervening variables other than audience participation in interactive programmes motivated audience involvement in the electoral process

Theoretical Foundations

This study was anchored on an amalgam of the Democratic Participant and the Technological Determinism media theories. The Democratic Participant Theory developed by Denis McQuail is hinged on the need for horizontal, rather than vertical communication in the society since the top-down form of communication seem to alienate the masses, the targets of development-oriented communication from the continuum. The tenet of the democratic participant theory is that every citizen has the right to access and be served by the mass media according to their needs. This theory emerged out of the criticism that the private media pay more attention to commercial goals at the expense of development-related issues and that publicly-owned media are more or less mere megaphones of any government in power. Apparently, the democratic participant theory came as a result of the reaction against commercialization and monopolization of the media by private investors on the one hand, and the centralization and bureaucratization of publicly owned media on the other.

The technological determinism theory developed by McLuhan stipulates that the advent of a new technology alters significantly the way people think, act and behave. The principle of the technological determinism is that technology is the major determinant of how things are done, especially the way media content are produced, consumed and responded to. It explains that when

a new system of technology is developed, the culture of the society is immediately altered to reflect the dictates of the new technology as the society will strive to adapt to the new technology. As Griffin (2000) puts it, “The new electronic media have radically altered the way people think, feel and act. We are in the middle of a revolution, yet most of us are yet to understand that the world will never be the same” (p. 313).

The relevance of the two theories is drawn from the fact that while the technological determinism theory makes it possible for the audience of broadcast station to react, to presentations, they also have the opportunity to express their views and contribute ideas on topical issues. Besides, it affords the people the opportunity to respond to issues in the news which makes for a somewhat immediate feedback. The relevance of the democratic participant media theory is predicated on the facts that interactive programmes give the audience access to the media to express their opinions on issues without any hindrances.

Conceptual Review

The term interactive, according to Gleason (2009), describes technological-enabled channel that facilitate an active communication transaction in which these elements enable a participant to initiate a desired action. These channels permit the exchanging of information and avails the participants the opportunity to obtain the desired immediate results or up-dated information. He stressed that, such interactive technology or content might be said to possess some level of “interactive functionality” (as determined by the sender) and thus embody the potential for interactivity (as recognized by the receiver).

Anolue, Onyebuchi, Ekwe, Daniel, Apeh and Oreh (2015) cited Ardo as saying that “Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) is the name associated with a particular form of education which is usually aired (radio) and whose emphasis is on the active participation of listeners be they adult or children (p. 27). Anorue and his colleagues said that interactive broadcast combines broadcast radio and other audio medium with an emphasis on active learning to improve educational quality. The stressed that “interactive radio instructions programmes serve as a guide to teachers or facilitators and the students Listeners are instructed on what to do, teachers and students are made to are made to partake in the programmes” (p. 26). In describing interactive radio instruction, Ihechu, Okugo and Dick (2015) admitted that the increased popularity and innovations of wireless and mobile technology has made connectivity to social and interactive networks a lot easier and more convenient and that it has contributed to increase in the number of social media users lately. Interactive programme according to Akpan and Nsikan (2012), is audience-based and not producer-centred. They stressed that the element should reflect the differing voices, images and opinions. To them, participants in interactive programmes should be people of different ages, a mix of gender, different languages and a variety of interactive methods. As they put it:

Interactivity excites audience members to contribute to the content of the programme. They give their comments; they raise questions; they give their opinions. Interactive programmes give room for user generated content, UGC (also known as audience generated content, AGC) – a wide variety of media content that is produced by the audiences as opposed to content made by the producer or presenter. User generated content enables the producer or presenter to access and tap into the expertise and experience of the audience members.

Akpan and Nsikan identified some problems of interactive programmes as on-air ethics, gate-keeping problem, technical deficiency, individuality on set, access and overrated and egoistic

experts. On-air ethics they say, is as a major challenge of interactive programmes because many presenters often assume the position of a boss, shout and abuse the callers when they missed the issue that is being discussed, rather than politely redirecting or reminding the caller to the issue on card.

Empirical Review

There are many extant studies on the use of interactive programmes to enhance audience participation in development initiatives, however, a few will suffice for this investigation. Anolue, Onyebuch, Ekwe, Daniel, Apeh, and Orekyeh, (2015) carried out a study to investigate the effectiveness of interactive radio instruction strategy in raising the literacy level of nomadic pupils in Plateau, Adamawa and Kaduna States in Northern Nigeria. The analysis of the data generated from 357 respondents show that the nomadic pupils were very enthusiastic about the programmes and participated actively. The findings also established a correlation between participation in the interactive instruction and increase in the students' knowledge level.

In another study, Ochonogor, Ohiagu and Nwammuo, (2015), attempted to investigate if the interactive social media networks are connecting or disconnecting Nigerian youths in real life offline relationships or not. The study focused on 450 students drawn from tertiary institutions in the South-South and South-East Zones of Nigeria. The data analysed for the study revealed that the majority of the students who are very active social network users are very conversant with emerging trends and have maintained more online friends than real life off-line relationships.

Methodology

Survey design was used because this study centred on gathering information about people, their thoughts and behaviour regarding a phenomenon that cannot be directly observed. Survey was adopted because it lends itself to a study that has a large population. It was chosen because it selects a sample from a population and whatever data is obtained is generalised back to the entire population.

The population of the research comprised people of voting age in Port Harcourt City. Port Harcourt city is made up of three local government areas, namely: Eleme, Obio-Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas. The number of voters registered for the 2015 general election in the three local government according to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), was 996,127 as follows: Eleme, 94,066 Obio-Akpor, 495, 347 and Port Harcourt City Local Government, 406, 714.

The sample for the study was 384 voters selected from Port Harcourt metropolis. This figure was arrived at following the prescription made by Keyton (2001). To get this figure, Port Harcourt City was divided into clusters and twelve (12) picked by ballot. The cluster were: Rumuola/Orazi, Rumukurushi, Choba, Mgbuoba, Ogale, Akpajo, Agbnoncha, Onne, Roroworukwo, D-line, and Borikiri, Amadiama/Abuloma Thirty-two (32) respondents were drawn from each cluster to add up to the 384 respondents used for the study.

The instrument employed for this research was a set of questionnaires. It consisted of series of items and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. The items were closed-ended to prevent digression, while simple sentences were used to avoid confusion. The instrument was self and others-administered to take care of some not so literate respondents.

The data presentation and analysis are based on the 363 completed copies of the questionnaire that were correctly filled and retrieved from the respondents, as 27 copies of the instrument were either

not returned or incorrectly filled. Data obtained from the retrieved copies of the questionnaire, show that the majority of the respondents (69%) are youths who were within the age range of 18 and 39, while those who were 40 years and above were (31%) This shows that all the respondents are of the constitutionally recognised voting age of 18 years and above. For the gender of the respondents, males constitute the majority of the respondents (67%) while females made up to (33%).

For the educational status of the respondents, data indicate that all the respondents had acquired education with the least educational attainment being the First School Leaving certificate. Similarly, the data show that the respondents are engaged in different kinds of occupation with the majority being civil servants while others are students, artisans and self-employed as well as those actively engaged in politics.

All respondents knew what interactive programmes were and could name some of them as well as the mode of participation. This is an indication that they actually understood what the interactive programmes on radio and television were. The data also show that all the respondents participated in the interactive programmes.

On the nature of their involvement in the interactive programmes, the data show that the majority of the respondents were audiences of interactive programmes as they only tuned in to listen on radio or view on television. The data also show that very few respondents participated as studio guest on live programmes. Table two provides details.

Table 2: Nature of respondent’s participation in interactive programmes

S/N	Nature of Participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Guests in live studio programmes on radio or television	29	8
2	Tuned in as listener/viewer	200	55
3	Participated radio phone-in programmes	94	26
4	Participated in television programmes	40	11
	TOTAL	363	100%

Invariably, the data indicate that all the respondents were very active in the interactive programmes, either as audience, guests and respondents to the programmes.

The modes of respondents’ participation in the interactive programmes according to the data, are that while the greatest number of respondents 45% participated through the social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and email, a total of 37% participated through telephone voice calls while (18%) of the respondents got involved via text messaging.

Table 3: Mode of respondent’s participation in interactive programmes

S/N	Mode of Participation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Telephone voice call	91	25
2	Text messaging.	66	18
3	WhatsApp	40	11
4	E-mail	61	17
5	Facebook	62	17
6	Twitter	43	12
	TOTAL	363	100%

From the data presented in table 3 above, it became evident that the most popular mode for respondent’s participation in the interactive programmes was through the social media platforms. Interestingly, voice calls on mobile phones had a strong showing as many of the respondents participated in the programmes using their mobile phones.

On the respondents’ motivation for participation in the interactive programmes, data reveal that most respondents (39%) participated in the programmes to seek for information and clarification on political matters. This is followed by (23%) who were involved because they needed to lend their voices to political issues in the news which have national outlook and another (21%) respondents who claimed that they were encouraged by their interest in national issues. Those respondents who participated because of the quest to seek for fun and the joy of being heard on air was (12%) while only (5%) respondents said they participated in the programmes out of the zeal to give information.

It is obvious from the data presented that the major motivating factors for respondents’ participation in the interactive programmes was the need to seek information and to lend their voices to topical national debate or political issues being discussed. This was affirmed by a majority of the respondent as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: Motivation for respondent participation in interactive programmes

S/N	Motivation for Participation in interactive programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Interest in national issues	76	21
2	Lend voices to political issues in the news	83	23
3	To seek information and clarification on political matters.	143	39
4	To give information	18	5
5	Fun and the joy of being heard on air	43	12
TOTAL		363	100%

From the data generated to address this research question, it became apparent that most respondents (35%) who participated in the interactive broadcast programmes learnt that Permanent Voters Cards (PCVs) and Card Reader Machines would be used and only holders of the card would vote. Those who learnt that there would be restriction of movement on election days was (28%), while those who learnt that their votes would count was 16%. Meanwhile, (15%) affirmed that they learnt that the election would be on the basis of one man one vote with (6%) respondents claiming that they learnt that the Army would not be involved in the polling units.

Table 5. Lessons respondents learnt from the interactive programmes

S/N	Lessons learnt from the interactive programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Votes would count	58	16
2	Use of PCVs and Card Reader Machines	127	35
3	Army would not be involved in the polling units	22	6
4	Election on the basis of one man one vote	51	15
5	Restriction of movement on election day	108	28
TOTAL		363	100%

As regarding the respondents' responses to the lessons learnt from their participation in the interactive broadcast programmes, the majority of the respondents represented by 94% indicated that they registered to vote with only (6%) respondents did not participate in the voters registration exercise. In the same vein, (90%) respondents, claimed to have followed political developments keenly as a result of the information they gleaned from the interactive programme. Interestingly 82% of the respondents who participated in the voters' registration exercise collected their PVCs, while 89% respondents who collected their PVCs actually voted during the elections.

Table 6: Respondents' actions resulting from their involvement in interactive programmes

S/N	Actions taken	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Registered to vote	341	94
	Did not register	22	6
	Total	363	100
2	monitored political developments keenly	308	90
	Did not monitor political developments	33	10
	Total	341	100
3	Collected PVCs	278	82
	Did not collect PVCs	63	18
	Total	341	100
4	Voted during the elections	247	72
	Did not vote	94	28
	Total	341	100

It is clear from the data presented above that the respondents actually took actions as a result of their participation in the interactive programme. The actions taken by the respondents were registration to vote, monitoring political development, collection of their PVCs and voting during the general election. The inference that can be drawn from the data presented above is that the respondents participated actively in the electoral process and that majority actually registered as voters.

Concerning the constraints to the effective utilisation of interactive broadcast programmes for political enlightenment and mobilization to ensure popular participation in the electoral process, most respondents (30%) observed that the congestions on the telephone lines as obstacles to their participation, while for 44 (12%) respondents the time allocated to the programmes were too short for a more meaningful impact. The member of respondents who say the attitude of the on-air personalities and presenters who are sometimes rude to participants, do not encourage participation in the programmes was (6%). A total of 65 (18%) respondents complained that often times, their contributions through social media and text messages were never acknowledged or read by the presenters while (22%) claimed that bias of some presenters in favour of political parties posed a problem to the programmes. For (13%) respondents, the interactive programmes heat up the polity unnecessarily.

Table 7 Constraints to effective use of interactive programmes for political mobilisation

S/N	Constraints to effective use interactive programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Congestion of lines	109	30
2	Short time allotted to programmes	44	12
3	Non acknowledgement of receipt of audience feedbacks	22	6
4	Attitude of presenters	65	18
5	Bias of presenters to political parties and candidates	76	21
6	Unnecessary heat up of the polity	47	13
TOTAL		363	100%

Apparently, the data presented in table seven indicate that there are several hindrances to the effective use of interactive broadcast programmes for political mobilisation. The most prevalent constraints according to the data, is congestion on the telephone lines and the attitude and biasness of the presenters who are accused of being rude and tilted discussions in favour of some political parties and candidates.

Table 8. Factors other than interactive programmes that encouraged respondents

Participation in the elections.

S/N	Variables other than interactive programmes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Political affiliation	54	15
2	Encouragements from friends and relations	174	48
3	Promises by candidates	62	17
4	Enthusiasm to participate in the electoral process	73	20
TOTAL		363	100%

It is obvious from table seven above that the most intervening variable other than audiences' involvement in the interactive programmes that encouraged their participation in the electoral process was encouragement from friends and relations. This is closely followed by the audiences' enthusiasm to participate in the electoral process. The least other intervening variables was political affiliation and promises by candidates.

Testing of hypotheses

HO₁ There is no significant relationship between Port Harcourt voters' participation in interactive broadcast programme and their involvement in the 2015 general elections

	Observed	Expected	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$
11	76	72.6	3.4	11.56	0.15922865
12	83	72.6	10.4	108.16	1.48980716
13	142	72.6	69.4	4816.36	66.3410468
14	44	72.6	-28.6	817.96	11.2666667
15	18	72.6	-54.6	2981.16	41.0628099
	363				120.319559

Obtained value for $X^2 = 120.319559$

$X^2_{1-\alpha, K-1}$ is $X^2_{0.95, 9.49}$

DF – 4

The X^2 tabulated is 9.49 at 5% level of significance on the degree of freedom of 4. From this test, the calculated value X^2 is greater than the table X^2 , therefore, H_0 is rejected and the alternative H_1 is supported. This implies that there is a significant relationship between audience participation in interactive broadcast programme and their involvement in the 2015 general elections

HO₂ There is no significant relationship between the lessons learnt in the interactive programmes and Port Harcourt voters' participation in the electoral process during the 2015 general elections

	Observed (o)	Expected (e)	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{\Sigma(O-E)^2}{E}$
21	58	72.6	-14.6	213.16	2.93608815
22	47	72.6	-25.6	655.36	9.02699725
23	22	72.6	-50.6	2560.36	35.1666667
24	54	72.6	-18.6	345.96	4.76528926
25	80	72.6	7.4	54.76	0.75426997
26	102	72.6	29.4	864.36	11.9057851
27	363				64.6550967

The obtained value for $X^2 = 64.6550967$

$X^2 = 1 - x, K - 1$ is $X^2 = 0.95 - 11.07$

DF – 5

The X^2 tabulated is 11.07 at 5% level of significance on the degree of freedom of 5. From this test, the calculated value X^2 is greater than the table X^2 , therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative H_1 is supported. This implies that significant relationship between the lessons learnt in the interactive programmes and Port Harcourt voters' participation in the electoral process during the 2015 general elections.

HO₃ There is no significant relationship between the intervening variables other than audience participation in interactive programmes motivated audience involvement in the electoral process

	Observed (o)	Expected (e)	O-E	(O-E) ²	$\frac{\Sigma(O-E)^2}{E}$
Political affiliation	54	90.7	-36.7	1346.89	14.8499449
Encouragements from friends and relations	174	90.7	83.3	6938.89	76.5
Promises from candidates	62	90.7	-29.7	823.69	9.0814774
Enthusiasm to participate in the electoral process	73	90.7	-18.7	313.26	3.45413451
TOTAL	80	72.6	7.4	54.76	0.75426997
	102	72.6	29.4	864.36	11.9057851
	363				103.885557

The obtained value for $X^2 = 103.885557$

$X^2 = 1 - x, K - 1$ is $X^2 = 0.95 = 7.81$

DF = 3

The X^2 tabulated is 7.81 at 5% level of significance on the degree of freedom of 3. From this test, the calculated value X^2 is greater than the table X^2 , therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative H_1 is supported. This implies that significant relationship between the intervening variables other than audience participation in interactive programmes motivated audience involvement in the electoral process

Discussion

From the data collected for the study, it is clear that all the respondents knew what interactive programmes were and could name some of them as well as the mode of participation. This is an indication that they actually understood what the interactive programmes on radio and television were. It can also be deduced from the data that all the respondents participated in interactive programmes as audience, guests and respondents. Also evident from the data is the fact that the most popular mode for respondent's participation in the interactive programmes was through voice calls on their mobile phone. Interestingly, the social media were very important platforms for participating in the programmes using the social media platforms. The social interactions help audiences to build identity with the programmes culminating in social bonding which have influences on the individual. The adoption of and use of phones and social media networks, stimulated the awareness, interest and participation in the interactions.

Obviously, this finding, is in consonant with what Griffin (2000) said when he notes that: "The new electronic media have radically altered the way people think, feel and act. We are in the middle of a revolution, yet most of us are yet to understand that the world will never be the same" (P, 313). The submission above also supports the tenets of the Technological Determinism Media Theory adopted for the study. This also validated the Democratic participant media theory as the interactive nature of the programmes and the devices deployed gave all participant the opportunity to participate in the programmes using gadgets such as mobile phones and the social media platforms.

It is apparent from the data presented that the major motivating factors for respondents participation in the interactive programmes was the need to seek information and contribute to national debate. This was affirmed by a majority of the respondent as shown in table four above.

It is also clear from the data that the respondents actually took actions as a result of their involvement in the interactive programme. The actions taken by the respondents were registration to vote, following political development, collection of their PVCs and voting during the general election. The inference that can be drawn from the data presented above is that there is a correlation between active participated in interactive programme and the involvement in the electoral process as the majority actually registered as voters. This finding is also in agreement with an earlier study by Anolue, Onyebuchi, Ekwe, Daniel, Apeh, and Orekyeh, (2015) who investigated the effectiveness of interactive radio instruction strategy in raising the literacy level of nomadic pupils in Plateau, Adamawa and Kaduna States and established a correlation between participation in the interactive instruction and increase in the students' knowledge level.

Similarly, this is in line with the findings of a study by Ochonogor, Ohiagu and Nwammuo, (2015), who attempted to investigate if the interactive social media networks are connecting or disconnecting Nigerian youths in real life offline relationships or not. The result revealed that

the majority of the students who are very active social network users are very conversant with emerging trends and have maintained more online friends than real life off-line relationships.

The data presented in table seven indicate that there are several hindrances to the effective use of interactive broadcast programmes for political mobilisation. The most prevalent constraints according to the data is congestion on the telephone lines and the attitude and biasness of the presenters who are accused of being rude and tilted discussions in favour of some political parties and candidates.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concluded that:

- The majority of the respondents were audience of interactive programmes as they only tuned in to listen on radio or view on television but only a few of them participated as studio guest on live programmes.
- The most popular modes for respondent's participation in the interactive programmes was through voice calls on their mobile phone and social media platform.
- That the motivating factors for respondents' participation in the interactive programmes were the need to seek information and contribute to national debate
- That respondents registered to vote, followed political development, collection of their PVCs and voted during the general election as a result of their involvement in the interactive programme.
- We also conclude that there is a correlation between active participated in interactive programme and the involvement in the political process. This inference became electoral process as the majority actually registered as voters.
- The most prevalent constraints according to the data is congestion on the telephone lines and the attitude and biasness of the presenters

Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations.

1. That broadcast stations should train and retrain their staff, especially presenters of interactive programmes to be civil and polite as they relate with participants.
2. The national broadcasting Commission should monitor the broadcast stations to ensure that interactive programmes are not exploited to cause disaffection among the people and heat up the polity.
3. The Independent National Electoral Commission should initiate interactive programmes to take advantage of the innate ability of the broadcast media to present issues instantly to the audience to clarify topical issues, provide guidelines and enlightenment and gauge the electorates' ideas and reactions.

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