

INFLUENCE OF RADIO PROGRAMMES ON THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of radio programmes on the political development of Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives were: to ascertain the extent of exposure of Akwa Ibom citizens to radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM; and to find out if radio programmes have influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. The study adopted the survey research design where 390 respondents were drawn as sample size from the population of 7,200,000 being the 2023 projected population of Akwa Ibom State from the 2006 National Population Commission figure. Findings from the study revealed among other things that majority of the citizens of Akwa Ibom State were exposed to radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM; and that radio programmes have influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. The study then concluded that there is a direct correlation between citizens' exposure to radio programmes and citizens' participation in the politics in Akwa Ibom State, and that there is a significant relationship between radio programmes and government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. It recommended therefore that development programmes should be given priority on the radio to encourage audience members to participate in order to make their voices heard and the political representatives should take advantage that radio

provides to enlighten the citizens on the government's plans and opportunities they can avail themselves of, in order to benefit from government policies and programmes.

KEYWORDS: Development, Influence, Political Participation, Programmes, Radio

INTRODUCTION

The influence of radio programmes on the political development of a region or state can be attributed to the popularity of radio among its different listeners. Radio has a unique ability to reach a wide audience and disseminate information, making it a powerful tool for shaping public opinions and influencing political discourse. As compared to other organs of mass communication like newspapers, magazines and books, broadcasting is an entirely electronic means of communication because it uses electronic technology to encode, distribute and decode messages. Chioma (2013) states that following the deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria in 1992 allowing for private ownership of both radio and television stations, the National Broadcasting Decree 38 was signed into law. This law established and empowered the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to regulate the broadcast industry; through issuance of broadcast licenses to qualified private broadcast media, regulating broadcast operations, and ensuring compliance to the stipulation of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code. One of the most important areas of the Code for which broadcast organisations must comply is the area of what programming (broadcast contents) should be. The NBC Code clearly states that broadcasting in Nigeria should be a conscious effort towards the realisation of the cultural objectives for which the industry was established to fulfill in Section 1.5.2 of the Code which reads thus: **broadcasting shall, among others:**

- a. Seek, identify, preserve and promote Nigeria's diverse cultures;
- b. Select, critically, the positive aspects of foreign cultures for the purpose of enriching the Nigerian culture;
- c. Develop and promote the application of indigenous aesthetic values;
- d. Promote the development of a high level of intellectual and artistic creativity.
- e. Foster generally acceptable moral, ennobling and spiritual values (Nigeria Broadcasting Code, 2002 p.14).

Radio has the ability to serve both illiterate and literate people unlike the print media. Oyero (2003) cited in Anaeto and Anaeto (2010, p. 126) explains that "broadcasting is an ideal means of communication in the third world countries because it provides access to communication for a large number of

people – both literate and non-literate, and it is very cheap to own and maintain without dependency on electricity supply.” Radio has played major roles in greasing the wheels of the country’s political economy. It makes unbeatable contributions to the enhancement of the country’s growth as exemplified in its massive political education, enlightenment, awareness, and provision of fora for discussion, debates and presentations. These functions have manifested overtime during and after campaigns towards successful general elections in Nigeria. Radio programmes provide the electorate the opportunity to assess the manifestos and programmes of political parties with a view to helping them make mature choices during elections.

The broadcast media of which radio is an intrinsic part were designed to be a companion; sharing useful information that could help knit the fabric of society closer as well as promotes socio- cultural, economic cum political gains for the people. The broadcast media are seen as veritable tools required in the mobilisation of all members of the society to participate in their developmental process hence grassroots mobilisation and integration into the mainstream of governance. Where there exist programmes and policies that are aimed at improving the lot of the society, the broadcast media become indispensable.

Akwa Ibom State, located in the South-South region of Nigeria, has experienced significant political changes in recent years. As the state continues to evolve politically, it is crucial to assess the role of media, particularly radio, in shaping the political landscape. It is against this backdrop that this research investigated the impact of radio programmes on the political development of Akwa Ibom State, focusing on Inspiration 105.9 FM, Uyo and Tangsio 102.7 FM, Uyo. These radio stations are prominent radio stations known for their extensive political reporting and robust engagement with citizens.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The mass media are veritable tools of political communication used to promote participation of citizens in democratic governance through voters’ education, discussion on the protection of human rights, promotion of tolerance among various socio-political groups and exposure of malfeasance in governance (Bassey *et al.*, 2023). As agents of development, the media in discharging their surveillance function owe the society a duty to report on the implementation, failure and success of development agenda of government (Bassey, 2021). Baran (2013) lists the mass media of communication to include radio, television, books, magazines, newspapers, movies, sound recordings, cell phones, and computer networks. Also,

The deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria has paved way in the mass media industry for both government-owned and private radio stations to be

established in Akwa Ibom State. As at the time of this study, there were thirteen radio stations transmitting in Akwa Ibom State, out of which nine were privately owned, two were government owned while two were campus radio stations. With this development in the media industry, people have different choices to make when it comes to radio listenership. The accessible nature of radio has made it possible for people to listen to radio from the comfort of their homes, on the road, and even while on a transit from one location to another. This makes them to stay glued to radio programmes to obtain information, be educated and entertained. It has been observed that people tune to a particular radio station because of some captivating programmes produced by such station. The introduction of phone-in programmes gives listeners the opportunity to call and contribute to matters of public interests, thereby taking part in the political affairs of their state and nation at large. The mass media enhance democracy by educating voters, championing human rights, encouraging tolerance among diverse social groups and ensuring that the government and its functionaries are transparent and responsible to the people (Bassey *et al.*, 2023).

It was observed that all these radio stations aimed at producing news and programmes that are live-touching, seeking to bring development to the state as well as make profits through advertisement. Inspiration 105.9 FM, Uyo produces programmes such as Community Corner, Paper View, Talking Point, Political Conversation, Newspaper Headlines in Local Dialect, Sports and other programmes. TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo on the other hand, air programmes such as *Ukara Idung Achid*, *Mbuk Mkpo Ntippe*, *Idun Abadie*, *Ini Nneme*, among others, where issues of governance are been discussed and analysed in the local languages of the Akwa Ibom people. The aims and objectives of these programmes could be summarized in the assertion of Norris (2006) cited in Bassey *et al.* (2023, p. 147) that “the mass media play three key roles in democratization and good governance, which include: maintaining the watchdog role over the powerful, promoting accountability, transparency and public scrutiny; serving as a civic forum for political debate, facilitating informed electoral choices; and acting as an agenda setter for policy makers, strengthening government responsiveness to social problems.” Given the critical role that the media play in the politics of any society, it has been observed that radio can influence the political development of a state or nation. Therefore, it is on this note that this research sought to find out if radio programmes have influenced citizens participation in politics and government responsiveness to social problems (political development) in Akwa Ibom State, with specific focus on *Political Conversation*, a radio programme produced on Inspiration 105.9 FM, Uyo and *Ukara Idung Achid* produced on TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are the citizens of Akwa Ibom State exposed to radio programmes on 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM?
2. Have radio programmes facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State?
3. Have radio programmes on 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM created a forum for political debate and facilitate informed electoral choices?
4. Have radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Mass Media and Political Development

The political development of any state or nation is usually facilitated by the mass media that serve as the intermediary agent between the government and the people. McQuail (2010) cited in Bassey (2021, p.53) notes that "the mass media serve as agents of development through disseminating technical know-how; facilitating individual change and mobility; spreading democracy; promoting consumer demand; and assisting literacy, education, health and population control among others." Bassey (2021) further notes that the media are often seen as partners in the promotion of development by the leadership of each level of governance in the polity. Ngonso, Ataire, Bassey, William and Egielewa (2023, p. 179) assert "that the media inform and educate the electorate concerning democratic values and the citizens' rights and also promote equality."

Political development can simply be described as the mobilisation of the electorate to take active part in governance, have interest in the politics of their state or nation, holding their political leaders and office holders responsible in the discharge of their obligations and delivering the dividends of democracy to the people who they represent. Bassey (2020, p.148) notes that 'there is a critical link between the operation of mass media and the citizens' participation in democratic governance because the mass media provide information, access to information engenders political participation. Political development is said to take place when people who were hitherto not interested in the politics of their state, are now aware and are getting involved and interested in the policies and programmes of the government as well as taking part in the electoral processes to vote for the candidates of their choice to represent them in government at different levels.

For the electorate to participate in the democratic process, they must be well informed. Stiglitz (2002, p. 30) cited in Obot (2019, p. 213) emphasises that "meaningful participation in democratic processes requires informed

participants. Secrecy reduces the information available to the citizenry, hobbling people's ability to participate meaningfully." The mass media through their surveillance function undertake innovative coverage of socio-economic and political events in the society. They serve as the eyes and ears of the public. The mass media act as watchdogs of the society. Bassey (2016, p. 219) explains that "the press does the work of surveillance of environment through creative reportage of socio-economic and political events in the society."

The surveillance role of the mass media pertains largely to journalism, which is focused at delivering information on the processes, topics, events and other developments in society. The mass media fulfill this surveillance role through gathering, collating and disseminating of news (Bassey *et al.*, 2023). Valentine and Nardis (2013) in Bassey *et al.* (2023, p. 148) believe that the mass media may change political results by influencing the public's attention to significant topics of the day, encouraging individuals to learn new knowledge, changing attitudes about projects in the political word and mobilising or demobilising political activity. The mass media play vital role in creating democratic citizens need to pay attention to problems of public affairs and governance and also keep their elected officials responsible in the business of governance (Bassey *et al.*, 2023).

With the deregulation of broadcasting in Nigeria and the springing up of radio stations in different states of the federation, people are getting more exposed to information about government and governance from different radio stations as well as other media of communication. The electorates are better informed in such a way that they can ask critical questions and can hold their elected officials accountable in governance. Obot (2019, p. 213) notes that "in a free and democratic society, the press as a whole is the market place of political thought. The broadcast media exist to serve the information needs of the citizenry. Editors, commentators, anchormen and newsmen as a whole work on the principle that the public is entitled to all the facts in political situation and that on the basis of those facts; it can make its own decision." Obot (2023) further stresses that democracy presupposes that popular or mass participation by the citizenry in public affairs and access to public institutions is necessary for the sustenance of democracy. Democracy, even in its fledging stage as obtained in Nigeria, should offer a participatory form of governance in which all the constituent-groups in a given society enjoy the rights to self-determination, equal representation at all levels of government, right to expression of views, equal opportunity to socio-economic and political advancement as well as equal right and access to leadership position at all levels.

It has been observed especially in AkwaIbom State that more people are now getting involved in the politics of the state as a result of their

exposure to radio programmes. The last general elections of 2023 witnessed a good number of people turning up at different polling units to vote for the candidates of their choice to occupy different positions in government. On campaign rally grounds, we saw many youth and women coming out in their numbers to support their parties and candidates in the elections.

At the state government level, the governorship contest between the three most popular political parties in Akwa Ibom State in the 2023 election and their candidates, Pastor Umo Eno of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Mr. Akan Udofia of the All Progressive Congress (APC), and Obong Bassey Albert (OBA) of the Young Progressives Party got many Akwa Ibom electorate involved in the electoral process. The mass media were open for the candidates to reel out their campaign promises to the people in order to gain more votes. Electorate also had the opportunity to ask the candidates some pertinent questions during the governorship debate. They could ask questions about the credibility of the candidates, their antecedents as well as their capacity to lead.

This shows that citizens are now speaking out their minds and contributing to issues affecting their political well-being. They are more involved in political activities in recent times than in time past. This development could be attributed to the introduction of modern technologies into our electoral system and citizens' exposure to the mass media. According to Hjarvard (2013) in Bassey *et al.* (2023), the media and politics have grown mutually interconnected in today's mediatised society, and when a political system runs well, there must be active engagement of the public and active involvement of citizens in political matters includes mobilization.

Radio establishes its place very fast in the minds of listeners. Heavy doses of infotainment including music, drama, talk shows, etc supplemented with news made radio popular overnight. Soon radio industry developed wide spreading networks and by the 1930's radio became prime mass medium. Radio is a powerful medium for disseminating information and shaping public opinion. Radio programmes can contribute to the political development of a given state or nation. The deregulation and liberalisation of broadcasting in Nigeria has brought tremendous changes in the media industry, as many privately-owned and government-owned radio stations have been established in Nigeria.

RADIO PROGRAMMES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Radio programmes serve as platforms for citizens to engage in political discussions, express their opinions, and criticize government policies. Through call-in shows, interviews, and public debates, radio programmes bridge the gap between citizens and political leaders, allowing for the exchange of different perspectives and constructive dialogue. This

engagement enhances citizen participation, strengthens accountability, and holds political leaders responsible for their actions.

Radio broadcasting is fast becoming ever more interactive, unlike in the past, writes Etineagbedia (2014). The authors note that in most parts of the world, it is thought that it serves as a means of disseminating information and as a platform for citizens to express their opinions on issues of public concern. According to Anang *et al.*, (2023), radio is one of the most important mass media of the 20th century and still exists today for the delivery of information, entertainment and education. As part of the mass media which is known as the pillar of a democratic country, radio contributes as an information provider to support national development (Ibrahim & Wahab, 2020). Radio has the ability to influence people's thinking, hence it can also be used as a means of political communication between interested parties. The media transmit political communication originating from various media themselves and outside parties, as well as distribute political messages constructed by journalists (McNair, 2013).

In a democratic era, the media become a public sphere that facilitates the people involved in the political process. Akpan and Bassey (2018, p. 39) posit that "as purveyors of information, the media have the sacred duty of informing, educating and interpreting government policy to the people."

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is anchored on two theories of mass communication namely: the Agenda Setting Theory and the Democratic Participant Theory. Agenda Setting describes a very powerful influence of the media – the ability to tell us what issues are important. Baran and Davis (2012) note that Agenda Setting Theory has its root in writing of Bernard Cohen and the works of McCombs and Shaw in 1972. Bassey (2019, p.223) posits that under the agenda setting theory, "the mass media do more than just purveyor of information." The two basic assumptions of the theory, according to Akpan (2017) are that: the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it, and media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. Udou and Bassey (2011, p.43) assert that "agenda setting occurs when the press becomes selective in reporting the news." The agenda setting theory suggests that media content has an influence on public acceptance and perception of the importance of issues. This theory is relevant to this study in the sense that radio stations can prioritise those issues that affect the development of the state to the public, thereby setting agenda for discussion on such issues and proffering solutions to the problems raised.

The Democratic Participant Media theory was propounded by Denis McQuail in 1987. According to Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso (2008), this

theory came into being following agitations that all potential users and consumers did not have access to the media. Baran and Davis 2012 note that unlike social responsibility theory, which assumes that the media should be used to stimulate and empower pluralistic groups, democratic participant theory calls for development of innovative ‘small’ media that can be directly controlled by group members. It proposes that the media should propagate, support and promote the views and opinions of individuals in respect of governance, leadership and stewardship of leaders in public governance. It emphasized the need for equal and unhindered access regardless of their status, wealth and position. The theory also holds that participation in societal decision making and involvement in communication activities should not be the exclusive preserve of the rich but of all citizens. Government is required to identify, train and fund small media outfits. Bassey (2019, p.224) asserts that the theory seeks to democratize communication through dismantling of over-centralised big, commercial media in favour of a horizontal, rural based media houses that can cater for the needs of the common people.”

The democratic participant theory holds that the interests of mainstream media, media owners, media professionals, advertisers and other commercial organisations run against those of local people in communities that are largely unheard of. Often, mainstream media are unable to accommodate minorities, especially people in far flung communities. Thus there is the need to encourage participation in the media and interaction among people who are often ignored in the scheme of things. This theory is relevant to this study because democratization of radio stations and programmes can support and promote the views and opinions of the masses in by the development of the state and nation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a survey research design in which copies of questionnaire were administered on the residents of Akwa Ibom State. The population of this research was based on the National Population Commission census figure of 2006 projected to 2023. The projected population stood at 7,200,000. The sample size for this study was Four Hundred (400) residents of Akwa Ibom State and was determined using the Taro Yamane Sample size determination formula.

The formula states thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where :

1 is Constant

n is Sample Size

N is population Size

e is level of significant of tolerance error, which is taken at 0.05

Therefore $N =$

$$e = 0.05$$

Substituting the above formula

$$n = \frac{7200000}{1 + 7200000 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{7200000}{7200001 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{7200000}{7200001 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{7200000}{18,000.0025}$$

$$n = 399.99$$

Therefore, $n = 400$.

From the above calculation, the sample size of 400 respondents was drawn for this study. The study employed the multi-stage sampling technique to select respondents from the three Senatorial District of the State. The state is made up of 31 local government areas with AkwaIbom North East Senatorial District having 9 local government areas; AkwaIbom North West Senatorial District having 10 local government areas; and AkwaIbom South Senatorial District having 12 local government areas. Using simple proportion, a total of 118 respondents representing 29.5% were drawn from AkwaIbom North East Senatorial District; a total of 127 respondents (31.7%) were polled from AkwaIbom North West Senatorial District, while a total of 155 respondents representing 38.7% were drawn from AkwaIbom South Senatorial District. The major instrument for gathering data was the administration of questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised a total of 20 structured items. The questionnaire instrument was divided into two sections (A & B). Section 'A' deals with the demographic characteristics of the respondents while section 'B' dwells on the main issues which the study investigated.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data collected for this study were computed and analysed in tables using simple percentages and weighted mean score (WMS) based on a 5-point Likert Scale. The responses were weighted as follows: Strongly Agreed (SA)

= 5 points; Agree (A) = 4 points; Undecided (U) = 3 points; Disagree (D) = 2 points; Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1 point. From the computation, WMS is calculated thus: $5+4+3+2+1 \div 5 = 3.00$. The mean score of 3.00 was used as the basis for decision on the responses to each item. Any mean score which is equal to or more than 3.00 is positive and accepted while any mean score that is less than 3.00 is considered negative and rejected. Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 390 were completed correctly and returned while 10 copies could not be retrieved. The return rate was 97.5%. The computation was done on the basis of 390 returned copies of the questionnaire.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

S/N	Variable	Groups	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Gender	Male	201	51.5
		Female	189	48.5
		Total	390	100
	Age Distribution	18-25 years	97	24.9
		26-34 years	152	39
		35-45 years	98	25.1
		46 years and above	43	11.0
		Total	390	100
	Educational Attainment	FSLC	9	2.3
		SSCE	26	6.7
		ND/NCE	98	25.1
		BA/B.SC/HND	200	51.3
		MA/MSc	45	11.5
		Others	12	3.1
	Total	390	100	
	Occupation	Civil Servant	13	3.3
		Public Servant	125	31.7
		Business	76	19.3
		Self-employed	156	40
		Student	20	5.1
		Total	390	100
	Marital Status	Married	224	57.4
		Single	130	33.3
		Divorced	10	2.6
		Separated	11	2.8
		Widowed	15	3.8
		Total	390	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 above revealed that 201 respondents representing 51.5% were male while total of 189 respondents (48.5%) were female; age bracket 18-25 recorded 97 respondents at 24.9%; a total of 152 respondents representing 39% were within the age bracket of 26-34, the age bracket 34-45 recorded 98

respondents representing 25.1%, while a total of 43 respondents representing 11.0% were within the age bracket 46 and above. A total of 9 respondents representing 2.3% said they had FSLC qualification, 26 respondents representing 6.7% said they had SSCE, 98 respondents (25.1%) said they had ND/NCE; a total of 200 respondents representing 51.3% were holders of BA/B.SC or HND; 45 respondents (11.5%) said they had MA/MSc, while 12 respondents representing 3.1% said they had other qualifications outside the ones mentioned.

The table also revealed the occupation of the respondents which showed that 156 respondents representing 40% were self-employed, 125 (31.7%) were public servants; a total of 76 respondents (19.3%) were businessmen/women, while 20 respondents representing 5.1% were students and 13 respondents (3.3%) were civil servants. A total of 224 respondents representing 57.4% were married, 130 respondents representing 33.3% were single; 15 respondents representing 3.8% were widowed, 11 (2.8%) respondents were separated, while 10 respondents representing 2.6% were divorced.

RQ1: To what extent are the citizens of Akwa Ibom State exposed to radio programmes on 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM?

Table 2: Extent of exposure of Akwa Ibom citizens to radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very often	128	32.8
Often	177	45.4
Sometimes	50	12.8
Can't tell	6	1.5
Not at all	29	7.4
Total	390	100

Table 2 indicated that 128 respondents representing 32.8% said that they were exposed to radio programmes very often, a total of 177 respondents representing 45.4%, 50 respondents representing 12.8% said that they exposed to radio programmes on Inspiration FM and TangSio FM sometimes. 1.5% said they cannot tell whether they were exposed to radio programmes or not, while 29 respondents representing 7.4% said they were not exposed to radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM at all. The responses from the respondents infer that the respondents were exposed to radio programmes in Akwa Ibom State.

RQ2: Have radio programmes facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 3: If radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM have facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State

Item	Questionnaire Statements	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Total Score	N	WMS (3.0)	DECISION
6	Radio programmes have encouraged me to participate actively in the politics of Akwa Ibom State.	148	104	28	76	34	1,426	390	3.6	Positive /Accepted
7	Radio programmes have encouraged me to get involved in the political process of Akwa Ibom State.	90	189	35	26	50	1,413	390	3.6	Positive /Accepted
8	Radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM have given me a voice in the democratic process in Akwa Ibom State.	122	149	58	45	16	1,486	390	3.8	Positive /Accepted
9	I was motivated to join politics because of the political radio programmes I usually listen to.	77	65	11	76	141	971	390	2.5	Negative/ Rejected
10	I usually go out to vote for my representatives during elections because of the motivation I get from information on political radio programmes.	98	120	44	112	16	1,342	390	3.6	Positive/ Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024 Average Weighted Mean Score = 3.42

The data presented in Table 3 revealed if radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM have facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State. Out of the five questionnaire statements put forward for responses, four were accepted and one was rejected with an average weighted mean score of 3.42. The responses from the respondents infer that although the respondents were not motivated to join politics because of the political radio programmes they usually listened to; radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo still facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State.

RQ3: Have radio programmes on 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM created a forum for political debate and facilitate informed electoral choices?

Table 4: If radio programmes have created a forum for political debate and facilitated informed electoral choices.

Item	Questionnaire Statements	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Total Score	N	WMS (3.0)	DECISION
11	Radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM are good platforms for me to ask my political office holders some pertinent questions on government policies and programmes concerning us as citizens of the state.	153	129	20	45	43	1,474	390	3.8	Positive /Accepted
12	Radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM have educated me on govt. policies, plans and projects.	111	205	12	22	40	1,495	390	3.8	Positive /Accepted
13	The information I get from radio	146	20	19	10	10	1,637	39	4.2	Positive

	programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM about governance and political activities have influenced my political decisions		5					0		/Accepted
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Source: Field Survey, 2024 Average Weighted Mean Score = 3.9

Table 4 revealed how radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM have created a forum for political debate and facilitated informed electoral choices. The three questionnaire statements put forward for responses were accepted with an average weighted mean score of 3.9. The responses from the respondents infer that radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo have created a forum for political debate and facilitated informed electoral choices.

RQ4: Have radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in AkwaIbom State?

Table 5: If radio programmes have influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in AkwaIbom State

Item	Questionnaire Statements	SA 5	A 4	U 3	D 2	SD 1	Total Score	N	WMS	DECISIO N
14	Socio-political problems in AkwaIbom State are usually discussed on the radio as they affect the citizens of the state.	153	129	20	45	43	1,474	390	3.8	Positive /Accepted
15	Audience reactions on radio programmes have influenced government	111	205	12	22	40	1,495	390	3.8	Positive /Accepted

	policies									
16	The governments have been responding to some of the issues raised by the citizens on radio programmes in Akwa Ibom State.	114	167	33	35	41	1,448	390	3.7	Positive /Accepted
17	Radio programmes have helped strengthen government responsiveness to the socio-political problems of the people.	146	205	19	10	10	1,637	390	4.2	Positive /Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2024 Average Weighted Mean Score = 3.9

Tables 5 showed if radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM have influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. The four questionnaire statements put forward for responses were accepted with an average weighted mean score of 3.9. The responses from the respondents infer that radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo have influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the study were discussed and interpreted based on the research questions raised in chapter one as follows:

RQ1: To what extent are the citizens of Akwa Ibom State exposed to radio programmes on 105.9 FM, Uyo and TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo?

The computation in Table 2 indicated that that 128 respondents representing 32.8% said that they were exposed to radio programmes very often, a total of 177 respondents representing 45.4%, 50 respondents representing 12.8% said that they exposed to radio programmes on Inspiration FM and TangSio FM sometimes. Those who were undecided accounted for 1.5% while 29 respondents representing 7.4% said they were

not exposed to radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM at all. The implication of this finding is that a total of 78.2% of the respondents were exposed to radio programmes on the two stations.

The findings showed that the citizens of Akwa Ibom State were exposed to radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 Fm Uyo and TangSio 102.7 Fm, Uyo. These findings corroborate earlier studies by Ezaka (2017) and Bassey (2019) that citizens' exposure to different radio programmes was high.

RQ2: Have radio programmes facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State?

The data presented in Table 3 revealed that out of the five questionnaire statements put forward for responses, four were accepted and one was rejected with an average weighted mean score of 3.42. The results revealed that whereas the respondents said that they were not motivated to join politics because of the political radio programmes they usually listened to; radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and *TangSio* 102.7 FM, Uyo have facilitated citizens' participation in politics in Akwa Ibom State with an average weighted mean score of 3.42. The findings of this study corroborate earlier studies that found that there is a strong association between radio broadcast liberalisation and citizens' participation in democratic governance in Akwa Ibom State (Bassey, 2019; Sanni, 2013; Arede & Orji, 2022).

RQ 3: Have radio programmes on 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM created a forum for political debate and facilitate informed electoral choices?

Table 4 revealed that the three questionnaire statements put forward for responses were accepted with an average weighted mean score of 3.9. The responses from the respondents infer that radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM, Uyo have created a forum for political debate and facilitated informed electoral choices. This finding corroborates earlier study by Akpan and Bassey (2018) that media have responsibility to focus attention on issues of human development and create awareness on role expectations of citizens.

RQ 4: Have radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and TangSio 102.7 FM influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State?

The results in Table 5 revealed a high positive weighted mean score of 3.9 on the influence of radio programmes on government policies and strengthening government responsiveness to socio-political problems in

Akwa Ibom State. The responses from the respondents infer that radio programmes on Inspiration 105.9 FM and Tang Sio 102.7 FM, Uyo have influenced government policies and strengthen government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. The implication here is that radio programmes have significant influence of 78% on government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. This finding corroborates earlier study by Bassey and Iwok (2019, p.45) that “the media set agenda for public discuss and governance.”

CONCLUSION

This study has brought to the fore that there is a direct correlation between citizens' exposure to radio programmes and citizens' participation in the politics in Akwa Ibom State, and that there is a significant relationship between radio programmes and government responsiveness to socio-political problems in Akwa Ibom State. It therefore infers that radio programmes have created a forum for political debate and facilitated informed electoral choices and that there is a positive connection between radio programmes and political development in Akwa Ibom State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- (i) More development programmes should be given priority on the radio to encourage audience members to participate in order to make their voices heard.
- (ii) The government of Akwa Ibom State and also the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should sponsor and promote political programmes on radio and other mass media organs that will enlighten the people and aid political development in the state in line with the Democratic Participant Theory enunciated in this study.
- (iii) The political representatives should take advantage that radio provides to enlighten the citizens on the government's plans and opportunities they can avail themselves of, in order to benefit from government policies and programmes.

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