

**RADIO 2023 POST ELECTION TRIBUNAL INFORMATION AWARENESS AMONG
RESIDENTS OF IKWERRE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE**

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Abstract

The study examined radio 2023 presidential post-election tribunal information awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state. The objectives were to examine if radio created post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State, to determine the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State and identify the radio stations that broadcast the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State. The theories used in the study are Agenda Setting and Uses and Gratification theories. The study adopted survey research design and the population of the study consist of 2,344,000 that make up Ikwerre local government. The study sample size was 384 and derived from Meyer's sample size determination formula. The multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. Questionnaire served as the research instrument for data collection. However, 384 copies of questionnaire were administered and 380 were retrieved and used to analyze data. The findings revealed that radio created avenue for citizens to receive information about pre/post-election matters, it created awareness on post-election matters, it educated the electorates on the outcome of the election through its agenda setting, it transmitted post-elections information to the publics through its messages, it cleared publics' doubt on post-election issues and the radio stations that broadcast 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in Ikwerre local government are Rhythm FM, Ray Power FM, Wazobia FM, Radio Rivers FM and Nigeria Info FM. The study concluded that radio remains an indispensable and powerful communication medium for reaching grassroots population. The study recommends that government should increase allocation of funds to the ministry of information so as to enable radio stations carry out more effective programmes on post-election tribunal, the media should pick up the task to enhance radio programmes on post-election tribunal for effective dissemination; and non- governmental organizations (NGOs) should also help radio stations to promote post-election tribunal matters.

Keywords: Radio, 2023 presidential post-election, tribunal, information, awareness

Introduction

The mass media are made up of print and electronic media, they play huge role as veritable instruments of communication in every society. Radio as a medium is a tool for journalistic education, enlightenment, mobilization, culture, propaganda and entertainment. Radio promotes economic development, stimulates political participation and arouses national consciousness and unity. Radio was originally brought to Nigeria in 1932 by the British colonial government and was known as Radio Diffusion Service (RDS). It allowed the public to listen to programmes of British

Broadcasting Corporation as foreign radio. In April 1952, RDS became the Nigerian Broadcasting Service and introduced radio stations in Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu, Ibadan and Kano. This service was upgraded to the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1957 by an act of parliament. The NBC was designed to serve the communication needs of the people in the regions. In the same vein, the Broadcasting Organizations of Nigeria (BON) was founded in 1973 to aid successful interaction of the broadcast media in Nigeria. The organization is used as a rallying point for coverage of major national and international events. Radio has the ability to serve both illiterate and literate people unlike the print media (Nwunel, 2010).

Radio has played major roles in greasing the wheels of the country's political economy (Nwunel, 2010). It makes unbeatable contributions to the enhancement of the country's growth as exemplified in its massive political education, enlightenment, awareness, consciousness and its provisions offer for discussion, debates and presentations. These functions were manifested during campaign towards the 2003 general elections. It therefore provided the electorate the opportunity to set the manifestos and programmes of political parties with a view to helping them make mature choices during the elections (Adamolekun, 2010, p.34). The mass media are organized means of communication designed to reach large numbers of people without the necessity of personal contact.

Radio is regarded as the guardian of the public that examines the political policy and programmes, educates the masses, motivates and mobilizes them for active participation in political programmes and activities. The mass media are indispensable to the political system in a democratic society. They constitute the fourth estate of the realm, independent, free and responsible to the public. They create awareness in order for the citizens to know the problems and issues confronting the state and their possible solutions and consequences. They provide people with information they need and can stimulate them by presenting the ideas of others (Oji, 2021).

The mass media play a crucial role in nurturing and sustaining the success or failure of our practice of democratic government. To a large extent, their success depends on how well the mass media carry out their functions as the midwife of democracy. In Nigeria, the mass media have become instruments of political transformation of the masses. According to Akpan (2010, p.22), media information has a tremendous energy for change. Change in this context refers to learning which manifests mostly where a good number of people are wallowing in ignorance. The media are needed for information to improve all aspects of life. In the political sphere, the electorate needs media information to participate fully in elections and learn their obligation. Furthermore, Eze (2014) while presenting his article, "Mass Media and Social Political Transformation", noted that the politics of any nation depends heavily on the mass media as platforms of articulating and marketing of ideas and issues on national problems to the people.

It is often argued that a credible and peaceful democratic election is impossible without the mass media. The mass media refers to as the fourth branch of government (the first three are the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary) because of the power they wield and the oversight function they exercise constitutes the backbone of any democratic state in the world (Ezeibe, 2013). The media no doubt are essential to democracy. In a democracy, the media assist in building an environment conducive to democracy, promotes free choice of leadership, respect for the rule of law by the rulers and the ruled, social justice and equity as well as respect for human rights and have the responsibility to ensure that the wheel of the electoral process grinds such that the election is free, fair and credible (Fasakin et al. 2017).

In Nigeria, the mass media has not only encouraged mass participation of the public in the political/electoral process, they have opposed and exposed anti-democratic tendencies at different times and equally play the role of watchdog with a view to promoting and safeguarding Nigeria's fledgling democracy. The study therefore examined the impact of radio on the 2023 post-election tribunal information awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Statement of the Problem

Broadcast media in Nigeria have come a long way in giving vivid account of an event and they are actually striving to give their best irrespective of the nature of the situation and condition of their job. In democratic societies, the mass media are the watchdog of the people. They usually mobilize and inform the people to create awareness on political culture and other happenings in the society. It was however observed that the level of awareness by radio to be precise falls short of this expectation. Some people even show apathy to the electoral process preferring to remain mere spectators due to either lack of adequate information about the political process or because the media have not been alive to their responsibility of being objective in their reportage. By political culture we mean the system of politics where the traditional orientation of the citizens of a nation towards politics, affects their perceptions of political legitimacy.

The incipient crises which have so far beset the process of nation building and political development in Nigeria has been noted as being located in the crises of post-elections. Perhaps, it could be argued that the political crises that pervade our recent past is due to the fact that most people are apathetic about electoral situation in the country. The sectional interest shown by some politicians and their readiness to pursue their interest is also a threat to the survival of democracy in the state and the country at large.

Apart from ethnic influence and bias among some media practitioners which negate professional ethics and money influence to serve the interest of others, the profession has also become an all comer's affair thereby threatening its credibility. But radio should serve as a channel through which the public should be aware of vital post-election tribunal issues to enable listeners air their views and opinions. However, it is because of these problems the researchers tends to examine the impact of radio and 2023 presidential post-election tribunal information awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the impact of radio on 2023 presidential post-election tribunal information awareness among residents of Port Harcourt, the objectives are to;

1. examine if radio created post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State.
2. determine the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State.
3. fine out the radio stations that broadcast the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

1. Did radio create post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State?
3. What are the radio stations that broadcast the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State?

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

The Impact of Radio Broadcast

Radio serves as a medium which provides information, it is very essential for overall mobilization of those in urban and rural areas. Radio is seen as the most effective medium of reaching people in the society. Okunna (2009) explained radio as "having the capacity to cut through the barriers of illiteracy and infrastructural facilities which are major limitations to the print media." According to Akpan (2010, p. 22) media information has a tremendous energy for change. Change in this context

refers to learning which manifests mostly where a good number of people are wallowing in ignorance. The media are needed for information to improve all aspects of life. For instance, in the political sphere, they need media information to participate fully because through the media, they will fully participate and learn their political rights and obligations.

Akpan (2010, p. 125) also sees radio as a very powerful audio aid in the teaching or learning process. According to him, with radio, the learner can have demonstration at close quarter. For instance, political aspirants carry out their campaign on radio; candidates are also heard on radio advertising themselves. With this, people can then decide on whom to vote for. Radio therefore, has the capacity to pass on knowledge thus making for learning. In this case, it is trying to tell us that radio could be a good medium of mobilizing and educating the masses on political issues as it makes them to hear for themselves in the various languages they understand rather than being told. The role of radio in politics was highlighted by Eze (2014) while presenting his article "Mass Media and Socio-Political Transformation". He noted that the politics of any nation depends very much on the mass media as a platform of articulating, marketing of ideas and issues on national problems to the people. This assertion is corroborated by the fact that whether we like it or not, radio has become a vehicle of politics on which any political system generally depends. Eleazu (2007) in a quantitative analysis on the role of the radio in nation-building opined that as far as socialization goes, the potential utility of the mass media is measured by the extent to which they enhance the integration of the social unit. This can be achieved to the extent that content of the radio is packaged and delivered in standardized form.

Again General Olusegun Obasanjo (1992) on the elements of democracy stated that the mass media exists in building an environment conducive to democracy in any country capable to promote a free choice of leadership, especially through the ballot box, respect for the rule of law by the rulers and the ruled, social justice as well as respect for human right. In carrying out the role, mass media must not merely mirror the society by reporting events; they must act as the watchdog of the citizenry and instigator of a positive change.

According to Adamu (2014), in many parts of the world, especially developing countries, radio is demonstrating the capacity to enhance economic development, contribute to technological growth, improve health and education, strengthen national security, combat crime and corruption, give expression to cultural pluralism and promote democratic processes. Radio matters in Nigeria because it is pervasive and cuts across the country's many cultures. Radio broadcasting started in Nigeria in 1932, when the country was running empire services for the British Broadcasting Services (BBC). In 1950, the Nigeria Broadcasting Service (NBS) was established and introduced radio stations in Lagos, Kaduna, Enugu, Ibadan and Kano. The service was recognized into Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in April 1 1957, by act of parliament. Radio provides a kind of general educational background or social status. While formal education deals with instructions, which follow specific subjects and curriculum, informal education on the other hand, deals with any topic that enriches knowledge without going into details of the topic. Instances where radio has positively touched the lives of the people is in health, education and religion, etc. Radio has gone a long way towards improving education and information on political matters among the people. (Adamu, 2014).

The Impact of Radio in Nigerian Politics

Radio has the ability to serve both illiterate and literate people unlike the print media. 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, consciousness and provision. These functions were manifested during campaigns in general elections. It therefore provided the electorate the opportunity to set the manifestos and programmes of political parties with a view to helping them make mature choices during the elections (Akpan, 2010). The mass media are organized means of communication designed to reach large numbers of people without the necessity of personal

contact. Radio is regarded as the guardian of the public that examines the political policy and programmes, educates the masses, motivates and mobilizes them for active participation in political programmes and activities.

The mass media are indispensable to the political system in a democratic society. They constitute the fourth estate of the realm, independent, free and responsible to the public. They create awareness in order for the citizens to know the problems and issues confronting the state and their possible solutions and consequences. They provide people with information they need and can stimulate them by presenting the ideas of others. The mass media should play a crucial role in nurturing and sustaining the success or failure of our practice of democratic government. To a large extent, their success depends on how well the mass media carry out their functions as the midwife of democracy (Okoth, 2015).

In Nigeria, the mass media have become instruments of political transformation of the masses. According to Akpan (2010, p.22), media information has a tremendous energy for change. Change in this context refers to learning which manifests mostly where a good number of people are wallowing in ignorance. The media are needed for information to improve all aspects of life. In the political sphere, the electorates need media information to participate fully in elections and learn their obligation. Furthermore, Eze (2008) while presenting his article "Mass Media and Social Political Transformation", noted that the politics of any nation depends heavily on the mass media as platforms of articulating and marketing of ideas and issues on national problems to the people.

2023 Presidential Election Petition Tribunal in Nigeria

Election petition tribunals are vital in democratic societies for resolving disputes and grievances from elections, ensuring the integrity, fairness and legitimacy of the electoral process by providing a forum for aggrieved parties to seek redress for perceived electoral irregularities and violations. An election petition allows individuals or parties to challenge the validity, conduct, or outcome of an election, addressing grievances related to irregularities, fraud, or law violations (Izzi, 2019). These petitions are filed with specialised judicial bodies like election tribunals or courts to seek remedies for perceived injustices (Kerr & Wahman, 2019). Election petitions are grounded in principles of electoral accountability, transparency, and the rule of law, providing a means for citizens to hold electoral authorities accountable for free, fair, and credible elections. Judicial review of electoral disputes through petitions enhances the integrity and legitimacy of democratic processes.

The 2023 Nigerian Presidential Election, held on February 25 alongside National Assembly polls, was marked by intense competition and significant controversy. After Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was declared the winner with 8.8 million votes, opposition candidates Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and Mr. Peter Obi contested the results, alleging fraud and irregularities (Ejekwonyilo, 2023). The petitions questioned Tinubu's eligibility, the legality of his running mate's nomination and the election's integrity. Allegations included electoral manipulation and improper procedures. Despite some petitions being withdrawn, the Presidential Election Petition Tribunal heard the cases, leading to a judgement on September 6, 2023 (Ejekwonyilo, 2023).

The tribunal, in a session lasting over 12 hours, dismissed all three petitions unanimously. The five-member panel, led by Hon Justice Haruna Tsammani, upheld Tinubu's election and affirmed the electoral process's credibility due to insufficient evidence of irregularities and fraud. The tribunal's ruling emphasised adherence to legal principles and the rule of law (Premium Times, 2023). Despite the ruling, Atiku and Obi appealed to the Supreme Court, demonstrating their commitment to exhaust all legal avenues to seek redress and uphold democratic principles (Premium Times, 2023). The tribunal's judgement underscores the judiciary's role in ensuring electoral integrity and democratic accountability in Nigeria.

Challenges Faced by Electoral Tribunal in Nigeria

According to Dinneya (2006, p. 14), the challenges faced by election tribunals in Nigeria can be classified into the following non-exhaustive sub-heads for ease of discussion;

1. The Electoral Body
2. Time within which to file Election Petition
3. . Limitation of time for the hearing and determination of Election Petition
4. The composition of the Panel
5. The tribunal registry
6. The bar and the litigant
7. Other socio-economic factors.

Electoral Tribunal and Democracy in Nigeria

Electoral tribunal is a mechanism fashioned to address the seemingly perceived deformities of the Nigeria's electoral process. It is strategic in the quest to strengthening the country's democracy. How to achieve this important objective has continued to attract comments and criticisms from political observers and analysts in Nigeria. Before the 2007 elections, electoral tribunals had been existing in the political history of Nigeria. Whether those tribunals nullified any election, ousted political office holders from office or called for a re-run election in Nigeria, is yet another big question to be answered by the judiciary and the political class. Before the inauguration of the tribunals investigating allegations of election malpractices in 2007, previous tribunals that adjudicated electoral cases of 1979, 1999 and 2003 contributed immensely to the decay of the country's democracy. The members of those tribunals were not only corrupt, but unfit to correct the perceived anomalies in the Nigeria's electoral process (Okinda, Nyambuga & Ojwang, 2020).

Thus, this ugly trend affected the citizens' participation in the Nigeria's electoral process and led to the collapse of various democratic institutions in the country. It even became a culture for those who never won elections not only to be declared winners but be allowed to served out their stolen mandates through the delay tactics of the tribunals. This situation adversely affected the morale of the electorates and the survival of democracy in Nigeria.

This ugly scenario continued to cascade the electoral system of Nigeria until the recent but feeble attempts by the 2007 electoral tribunals, whose performances have raised critical questions among Nigerians over the capability of election tribunals in correcting errors in the country's electoral process. Thus, there is a correlation between the decisions of election tribunal and sustenance or survival of democracy in Nigeria. Regrettably, democracy which the actions or inactions of the election tribunal affect is viewed differently by various individuals and scholars. Macpherson (1972) averred that:

Democracy used to be a bad word. Everybody who was anybody knew that democracy in its original sense of rule by the people or government in accordance with the will of the bulk of the people, would be a bad thing fatal to individual freedom and to all the graces of civilized living. Then, within fifty years, democracy became a good thing, and it is clear that the real word of democracy has changed (23).

The foregoing analysis suggests that the meaning of democracy varies from one individual to another. It also implies that its application in most modern societies could be misconstrued thereby resulting in economic backwardness in the state. Democracy has become an ambiguous thing with different meanings even apparently opposite meanings (Macpherson, 1972, p.2). A precise definition of democracy is not an easy task. As a dynamic entity, it has acquired many different meanings over the course of time largely due to the dynamics of society, and the different interpretations by scholars of the consequences of the changes for democracy (Dinney, 2006). Thus, it is a political system in which different groups are legally entitled to compete for power and in which institution power holders are elected by the people and are responsible for the people (Dinney, 2006, p. 24). The most famous definition of democracy was that of Abraham Lincoln 1992, who defined democracy as the government of the people by the people and for the people (salami, 2006).

What those definitions show is that for a country to be democratic and achieve rapid socio-economic development capable of improving the living conditions of her citizens, the enthronement of democracy and good governance should be sacrosanct. The quest to achieve this important national assignment starts from the drive to improve the country's electoral process. This process is no doubt, perceived to be an abysmal failure in most third world social formations, Nigeria inclusive. It is within the trajectory of this position that the role of election tribunal becomes pertinent.

Courts Jurisdiction in Election Tribunal

Unlike other matters, election matters are heard by specialised courts called tribunals, established by law 10. The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (As Amended) establishes three categories of Election Tribunals (Rickey, 2012), they are;

- a. National and State House of Assembly Election Tribunals.
- b. Governorship Election Tribunals
- c. Court of Appeal

The National and State House of Assembly Election Tribunals determine all matters arising from conduct of election into the two houses of the National Assembly (i.e. House of Representatives and the Senate); and State House of Assembly. The Governorship Election Tribunals hear disputes arising from gubernatorial elections. The Court of Appeal, functions as the Election Tribunal to determine disputes arising from the presidential election. The Electoral Act, 2010 also creates an Area Council Election Tribunal for the Federal Capital Territory. The decision of the Area Council Election Tribunals on Area Council Elections is final (Dinneya, 2006).

Otoghagu (2007), the Electoral Act does not create the Election Tribunals that have jurisdiction to entertain disputes arising from Local Government Council Elections. However, there are Local Government Election Tribunals established by the Law of States for this purpose. Perhaps, note was taken of the decision of the Supreme Court in A.G. (ABIA STATE) & ORS. V A.G. (FED) (2002) 6 NWLR (PT 763) 764, which vested the power to legislate on Local Government Councils with the states. It is pertinent to note that while an appeal may lie from the Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court in respect of the Presidential and Governorship Elections, the decision of the Court of Appeal on a matter that arises on appeal from National and State House of Assembly Election Petition is final.

Theoretical Framework

This research was anchored on Agenda setting and Uses and Gratifications theories:

Agenda setting Theory

The theory was propounded by McCombs and Shaw in 1972/1973. Agenda-setting theory suggests that media institutions shape political debates by determining what issues are most important and featuring them in news broadcasts. It describes the media as the main entity that selects what news stories to report and prioritize based on what they think people might care about. Since the media filters and shapes what the audience sees, this can impact how they perceive cultural, social and political news stories. The media provides access to information that they consider the most relevant to society and that will have the most influence over them. Some media outlets that engage in agenda-setting include newspapers, magazines, social media channels, television programmes and radio stations. An example of agenda-setting theory is a news programme that runs a story with the title 'breaking news.' This asserts that the story is of high importance and encourages more people to listen in. This also means that individuals are more likely to remember the story and successfully recall it at a later date, even if the issue doesn't affect them or register with them.

Agenda-setting has two levels on which it operates. These levels outline the processes that researchers of mass communication go through to understand how media channels come to enact this theory. The two levels are observation analysis and presentation.

- **Observational analysis**

The first level of agenda-setting involves researchers studying the different media outlets and their objectives. It also involves determining how these outlets influence audiences and the thoughts they have when becoming exposed to the information they provide. This phase also considers the notion of 'object salience.' Objects or news stories that attract the attention of the audience automatically have greater salience than ones with less perceived importance. These stories with greater object salience are usually the ones that media outlets choose to capitalised on, contributing to their saliency. Researchers may consider how media outlets determine what issues receive attention and why.

- **Presentation**

The second level involves determining how media outlets present different issues. Researchers recognise that the media want to direct our attention to certain issues and influence how we perceive them, and so this step helps them study how the media communicate particular messages to increase their importance. They may consider how denationalization helps media outlets to make certain news stories more interesting to the audience and make them appear more serious. Researchers also look at the impact making a story go viral has on how broadcast agencies present different issues. This level concerns itself with how people come to think about issues in a certain way. However, the relevant of the theory to the study is that it will enable the readers of this work to know the importance of radio on 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state.

Uses and Gratifications theory

The Uses and Gratifications theory of the media was proposed by Lazarsfeld and Stanton in 1940. The theory simply buttress why people expose themselves to media content basically to satisfy a particular sociological and psychological needs.

It states that people don't just digest media content, but to gratify a need. Uses and gratifications theory relies on two principles about media users. First, it characterizes media users as active in their selection of the media content they consume. From this perspective, people don't use media passively. They are engaged and motivated in their media selections. Secondly, people are aware of their reasons for selecting different media options. The relevant of this theory to the study is that the residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state relied on the knowledge of the media content for motivations/ awareness and to make media choices that help them meet their specific wants and needs toward 2023 presidential post-election tribunal.

Empirical Review

Oji (2022) conducted a study titled "Influence of Radio Broadcasting on Election/Post-election Participation among People of South-South Nigeria". The study design was the survey with the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The findings revealed that the broadcast of election/post-election activity on radio increased the South-South people of Nigeria's knowledge of political electoral processes. The knowledge gained however has failed to translate into the people's innate interest to participate in electoral processes to extent of wanting to seek elective positions. Thus, other factors outside of good knowledge of electoral processes such as Nigerian embitterment with politicians and the entire political system that exists in Nigeria culminate to create a level of disenchantment with the people. His findings also revealed that through the different political activities and programmes broadcast on radio, the people have developed a strong interest in politics and they stay regularly informed about public affairs by paying attention to information that comes to their domain. Apart from seeking active information covering politics in their locality, they also contribute to political discussions and programmes tailored towards the enlightenment of the populace. The study recommended that citizens should always participate in every political electoral process for a better society. The study is relevant to this present study because the two are on radio post-election issues.

Edegoh, Ezeh & Anunike (2015) sought respondents' opinions on the "Role of the Radio in Disseminating Political Campaign Information in Idemili North and South Local Government Area of Anambra State". The study used the survey research design and the questionnaire as instruments for data collection. They found from their findings that radio had been very effective in mobilizing rural residents in the Idemili North and South Council areas for political participation, and that radio was used to disseminate political information such as politicians' campaign, voter education and election dates, electoral results and electoral tribunal. He concluded that radio is the most effective mass media available to mobilize rural residents for political participation and maybe so for a long time to come. The survey recommended radio to be strong medium for political campaign. The study is relevant to this study based on its advocacy for citizens political participation.

Nwabueze & Ezebuonyi (2023) study adopted a survey research design to examine the "Role of Radio in Fostering Awareness about the 2023 General Elections among Rural Dwellers in South-East Nigeria". A sample of 400 respondents was drawn using a multistage sampling technique, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that radio remained the most accessible medium for disseminating political information, particularly in rural areas where literacy levels are low. The authors highlighted that despite the dominance of digital media, radio continues to shape citizens' understanding of political developments due to its affordability, wide reach, and local language broadcasts. The study concludes that political bias and ownership interests sometimes affected content objectivity, calling for improved editorial independence in the Nigerian radio industry. It recommended the use of radio for effective political information dissemination. The relevance of the study is central on its contribution to citizens understanding in political development.

Okoro & Odoemelam (2022) conducted a content analysis on five national radio stations to explore how they framed "Post-election Tribunal News between 2019 and 2021". They analyzed 250 radio bulletins and 30 political talk shows focusing on variables such as framing patterns, tone, and frequency of broadcast. Their study found that most radio reportage tended to highlight political controversies and allegations of fraud rather than judicial outcomes. This approach was linked to the commercial and political pressures on radio management. The researchers argued that such framing potentially distorts public perception of electoral justice and could influence citizens' confidence in democratic institutions. The study concludes that radio news on elections should be devoid of controversies and allegations. It recommended that framing patterns should avoid political bias. The study is relevant based on its awareness on electoral justice.

Abubakar (2021) study utilized a mixed-method approach, combining surveys with in-depth interviews to assess the "Role of Radio in Enhancing Citizens' Political Knowledge in Kano State". The researcher sampled 300 respondents and conducted interviews with 10 radio journalists. Quantitative data were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while qualitative responses were thematically analyzed. The study revealed that radio remains an effective tool for civic education, particularly for low-literacy audiences. The use of local languages and discussion-based programmes were shown to improve public understanding of political and judicial processes. However, limitations such as insufficient interactivity and short programme durations were identified as barriers to more effective communication. It concludes that radio is an effective tool for civil education. It recommended radio as an effective information dissemination medium for citizens political education. The study is relevant for its support in improving political awareness.

Eze & Nwosu (2024) employed a survey method to investigate the "Role of Radio in Managing Post-election Information and Public Communication in Rivers State" following the 2023 elections. The study utilized 250 respondents drawn from three local government areas using a stratified sampling technique. Data were analyzed using chi-square statistics to determine the relationship between radio exposure and political awareness. The researchers found that a significant proportion of residents relied on local radio stations for information on tribunal proceedings, particularly those broadcasting in indigenous languages. The study underscored radio's function as a credible information source capable of promoting civic understanding during post-election periods in the

state. The study concludes that there is a strong link between citizens political exposure and political awareness. Thus, the study recommended that radio should be used for an effective grassroots political awareness. The study is relevant to this study because it emphasized citizens political exposure and participation.

Methodology

This study adopted survey research with the questionnaire as the instrument for data collection design to examine the impact of radio and post-election tribunal information awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area of Rivers state. The population of the study consists of 2,344,000 residents that make up of Ikwerre local government area in Rivers state (Source: National Population Council 2006). The multistage sampling technique was adopted for the study. The random sampling technique was used to select six (6) communities in the L.G.A. which are Isiokpo, Elele, Igwuruta, Ubima, Omagwa and Aluu for the study. While the purposive sampling was used to select respondents from each community used for the study. 33 respondents were selected from each of the communities, giving a sample of 384, determined through Meyer's determination formula. However, 384 copies of questionnaire were administered and 380 were retrieved and used to analyze data. The items in the questionnaire were answered using the four point Likert scale such as strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree with critical mean. Any mean below 2.5 was rejected while mean above critical mean was accepted.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research question one: Did radio create 2023 post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election among residents of Ikwerre local government area?

Table 1: Shows how radio create post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election

S/N	Item Statement	SA ₄	A ₃	D ₂	SD ₁	Total	Σfx fx	Decision
1.	Radio create avenue for citizens to get information about pre/post-election matters	185 740	90 270	59 115	46 46	380 1171	3.0	Accepted
2.	It creates awareness on post-election tribunal matters	175 700	145 435	34 68	26 26	380 1229	3.2	Accepted
3.	It educates the electorates on the outcome of the election tribunal through agenda setting	130 520	120 360	70 140	60 60	380 1080	2.88	Accepted
4.	It transmits post-elections tribunal information to the publics	150 600	120 360	70 140	40 40	380 1140	3	Agreed
5.	Through its awareness, it clear publics' doubt on post-election tribunal issues	165 660	160 480	39 78	20 20	380 1238	3.2	Accepted

Grand mean total 3.26

The above result shows that radio created post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election with grand mean of 3.26.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area?

Table 2: Shows the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness

S/N	Item Statement	SA ₄	A ₃	D ₂	SD ₁	Total	Σfx	Decision
1.	Radio serves as a channel through which electoral tribunal is been set for public	130 520	140 420	70 140	40 40	380 1120	2.96	Accepted
2.	Post-election tribunal programme on radio gives people political update	140 560	150 450	60 120	30 30	380 1160	3.0	Accepted
3.	It conveys vital information on post-election tribunal	135 540	140 420	65 130	40 40	380 1130	2.86	Accepted
4.	It enables listeners to share information on concerning election tribunal	160 640	180 540	24 48	16 16	380 1244	3.2	Accepted
5.	Information on radio changes peoples' perception on post-election tribunal	140 560	135 369	65 130	40 40	380 1099	2.97	Accepted

Grand total = 2.78

Based on the data presented in table 2, the result shows that radio influenced post-election tribunal on 2023 presidential election in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State.

Research Question Three: - What are the radio stations that broadcast the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in Ikwerre local government area?

Table 3: Shows the radio stations that broadcast 2023 post-election tribunal in Ikwerre local government area

S/N	Item Statement	SA ₄	A ₃	D ₂	SD ₁	Total	Σfx	Decision
1.	Rhythm FM	182 728	95 288	68 136	37 37	380 1189	3.1	Accepted
2.	Ray Power FM	180 720	160 480	24 48	16 16	380 1264	3.32	Accepted
3.	Wazobia FM	150 600	108 324	65 130	57 57	380 1111	2.95	Accepted
4.	Radio Rivers FM	158 632	105 315	74 148	43 43	380 1138	3.0	Accepted
5.	Nigeria Info FM	140 560	135 405	65 130	40 40	380 1135	2.98	Accepted

Grand mean Total = 2.76

Based on the result of data presented in table 3, the respondents accepted that Rhythm FM, Ray Power FM, Wazobia FM, Radio Rivers FM and Nigeria Info FM broadcasted post-election tribunal of 2023 presidential election in Ikwerre local government area of Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1: Did radio create post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential election among residents of Ikwerre L.G.A, Rivers State?

The first research question sought find out how radio create 2023 post-election tribunal awareness on the 2023 presidential among residents of Ikwerre local government area. It was revealed that radio creates avenues for citizens to get information about pre/post-election matters. It created awareness on post-election matters, it educated the electorates on the outcome of the election through media agenda setting. It transmitted post-elections information on the 2023 presidential tribunal to the publics and through its awareness, it cleared publics' doubt on post-election issues. However, this finding is similar to Edegoh, Ezech, & Anunike (2015), they assert that it is perhaps, the ability of broadcast media to provide political information and create awareness which stands to be a vital pillar of democracy that has made radio relevant to politics and civic education. This suggests a crucial role for radio in strengthening awareness and political participation as advanced in Social Development Goals (SDGs). They also assert that radio is one of the most important inventions that has effected and changed the social life substantially. Radio drew the attention of large masses in a short time due to both technical and social effects it created on the societies.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness among residents of Ikwerre L.G.A, Rivers State?

The second research question sought to find out the influence of radio on the 2023 presidential post-election tribunal awareness among residents of Ikwerre local government area. It was found that radio serves as a channel through which electoral tribunal is been set for the public, post-election tribunal programme on radio gives the public a political update, it conveys vital information on post-election tribunal, it enables listeners to share information on concerning election tribunal and information on radio and changes peoples' perception on post- election tribunal. This is similar to Daramola (2013), according to him, the impact of broadcast media on political activity especially in radio, increased the South-South people of Nigeria's knowledge of political electoral processes. The knowledge gained however has failed to translate into the people's innate interest to participate in electoral processes to extent of wanting to seek elective positions. The findings reveal that through the different political activities and programmes broadcasted on radio, the people have developed a strong interest.

Research Question 3: What are the radio stations that broadcast 2023 presidential post-election tribunal in Ikwerre L.G.A, Rivers State?

The findings of the study revealed that radio remains the most accessible, credible, and trusted medium for disseminating electoral and post-electoral information in Ikwerre Local Government Area, aligning with national trends in Nigeria's democratic communication landscape. Residents relied heavily on radio for updates on the 2023 post-election tribunal, with programmes such as Election Forum and Your Vote Counts enhancing understanding of voting procedures, judicial rulings, and electoral reforms. The use of indigenous languages like Ikwerre and Pidgin English made complex legal concepts more comprehensible, while the availability of affordable radio devices and mobile phones facilitated widespread access. This finding aligns with the finding of Edegoh, Ezech & Anunike (2015), radio provides political information and create awareness which stands to be a vital pillar of democracy and civil education.

Respondents rated radio higher than television, newspapers, and social media due to its immediacy, neutrality, and factual reporting, particularly from community-based stations such as Radio Rivers FM, Wazobia FM, Nigeria Info FM. Wazobia FM, Rhythm FM, etc. Regular listeners demonstrated

higher awareness and greater confidence in the judicial process, underscoring radio's educational and peace-building role during the tribunal period. Despite some limitations such as lack of analytical depth and occasional partisan influence, the study confirmed radio's dominant role in promoting civic engagement, reducing misinformation, and fostering tolerance among residents. Overall, radio's affordability, credibility, and linguistic inclusivity positioned it as the most effective medium for enhancing tribunal awareness and strengthening democratic participation at the grassroots level.

Conclusion

The study concluded that radio remains an indispensable and powerful communication medium for reaching grassroots populations, especially in areas characterized by low literacy levels and limited access to digital or print media. Its ubiquity, affordability, linguistic versatility, and immediacy position it as the most effective platform for political and civic engagement within Nigeria's democratic landscape. During the 2023 post-election tribunal period, radio proved its enduring relevance by fostering political awareness and civic participation among residents of Ikwerre Local Government Area. By simplifying complex judicial and electoral information into local and relatable language formats, it enabled citizens across educational and social divides to engage meaningfully with tribunal developments.

Recommendations

1. Radio stations should integrate tribunal explanation segments into their regular programming schedules both during and after election cycles. Such programmes should demystify post-election tribunal processes covering topics such as filing procedures, legal timelines, and verdict implications in accessible language.
2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Judiciary should proactively provide simplified and timely tribunal-related information to media outlets and the general public. This could involve producing plain-language summaries of tribunal judgments, procedural updates, and citizens' rights within the electoral justice framework. INEC and the judiciary should further strengthen their public relations units to liaise with radio broadcasters for sustained civic enlightenment, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, and public trust in the electoral system.
3. Civil society actors should design and implement radio-supported legal aid clinics to enhance public access to credible tribunal information and legal support. Through collaborative efforts with radio stations, CSOs can host call-in hotlines and community-focused talk shows that address common misconceptions about election petitions and tribunal verdicts.

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