



AUDIENCE EVALUATION OF INEC HALF HOUR PROGRAMME ON AIT AND VOTER EDUCATION: FOCUS ON THE 2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT: *The correlation between media and voter education is undeniable, with television emerging as a significant platform for disseminating political discourse aimed at fostering civic engagement within societies. This research endeavours to scrutinise the audience's perception of the INEC HALF Hour Programme broadcasted on AIT concerning voter education, specifically concentrating on the dynamics of the 2023 general elections. Employing a survey research design, data were collected from residents residing in Lafia metropolis, constituting the target population. The study operated within the conceptual framework of the Cognitive Mobilisation Theory of Political Literacy and Participation. The findings underscored the substantial viewership of the INEC HALF Hour Programme on AIT, illuminating its vital role in educating residents about various aspects pertinent to electoral participation. These include procedural guidelines on voting, discouragement of electoral violence, voter registration procedures, elucidation of citizens' rights and responsibilities, protocols for reporting electoral malpractices, candidates' profiles alongside their manifestos, and insights into past electoral pitfalls with corresponding strategies for avoidance. In light of these observations, it is evident that the INEC HALF Hour Programme wielded considerable influence in galvanising the participation of Lafia residents during the 2023 general elections. Consequently, it is imperative to acknowledge and harness the achievements in voter education accomplished through AIT's INEC HALF Hour Programme as a cornerstone for sustained endeavours in this domain.*

KEYWORDS: Voter, Education, INEC, Perception, Election, Civic engagement.



INTRODUCTION

Television has emerged as a potent medium for disseminating information to a wide audience, rendering it an optimal platform for voter education initiatives. The portrayal of voter education issues on television can significantly influence viewers' comprehension, attitudes, and behaviours related to the electoral process (Wanta & Golan, 2018). Voter education plays a significant role in fostering democratic participation and ensuring informed decision-making during elections. The significance of voter education programs on television has burgeoned in recent years due to their potential to inform and engage citizens in the democratic process.

The "INEC Half-Hour" is a 30-minute civic and voter education program on AIT that airs every Monday during the election period. This program boasts international coverage, enabling viewers both within and outside the shores of Nigeria to access it. The INEC HALF-HOUR Program on AIT provides dedicated airtime furnishing informative content concerning the electoral process, political parties, voter registration, and the importance of civic participation. Employing various formats such as interviews, debates, and public service announcements, the program aims to engage viewers and enrich their understanding of voter education issues (AIT, 2023). Nevertheless, there exists a dearth of research concerning the audience's perception and evaluation of such programs within the Nigerian setting.

Produced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the INEC Half-Hour Program on AIT is tailored to educate viewers on electoral processes, voter's rights, and civic responsibilities. While the program endeavours to empower citizens through knowledge dissemination, it is imperative to assess whether it effectively achieves its objectives and resonates with the target audience. The INEC HALF-HOUR Program on AIT harbours immense potential for augmenting voter education in Nigeria, given the expansive reach and influence of television as a mass medium. Television programs possess the capacity to reach diverse audiences across varying socio-economic backgrounds, age groups, and geographical locations, rendering them invaluable for disseminating information about the electoral process (Rice & Atkin, 2013). Comprehending how audiences perceive and engage with the INEC HALF-HOUR Program is indispensable for maximising its impact and ensuring that it effectively addresses the specific needs and concerns of Nigerian voters. Hence, the crux of this study lies in evaluating audience perception of the INEC HALF-hour program on AIT and voter education, with a focus on the 2023 general elections.

Statement of the Problem

The perceived significant influence wielded by the mass media in its capacity to persuade, sensitise, motivate, and mobilise the citizenry towards engagement in matters of public interest has garnered the attention of numerous scholars and progressive thinkers, prompting investigations into its multifaceted impact (Adejumo, 2014; Akintayo & Akinreti, 2016; Babatunde, 2011; Biset, 2014; Hassan & Daniya, 2013; Huang et al., 2010; Husseinsat, 2015). Recognising its significant role in the public sphere, the mass media has directed considerable energy and resources towards voter education to foster increased participation in elections, particularly through the ballot box. The crux of the problem lies in comprehending the audience's assessment of the INEC Half-Hour Program on AIT, focusing on their perceptions, attitudes, and engagement.



Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To investigate the awareness level of the sampled population regarding the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT;
2. To determine the extent of viewership of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT among the sampled population;
3. To identify and evaluate the specific voter education issues portrayed in the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT;
4. To assess the perception of the sampled audience regarding the effectiveness of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT in disseminating voter education; and
5. To explore the challenges encountered by individuals in accessing the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Perception

Perception is a complex and wide concept in the field of psychology which has gained so much application in divers' field towards understanding how humans make meaning of events, things and variables in their environment. Perception according to Webster (2010) is the cognitive or mental process in which we make meaning of things through the senses. Perception in this perspective therefore refers to the process of using the senses of smell, touch, taste, sight and hearing (the five senses) in understanding our surroundings. It is a cognitive process by which sensory experience is organised and given meaning or worth. Perception can be viewed as a mental process that transforms sensory impulses into recognisable entities (Defleur & Dennis, 1994, as cited in Aigbovbioise, 2007). Its occurrence often transpires effortlessly and subconsciously, with many individuals unaware of its unfolding (Obaje, 2008). Scholars suggest that perception involves the intricate interplay of physiological, cognitive, and cultural processes inherent in individuals and groups (Mohammed, 2008). The manner in which individuals perceive various stimuli profoundly influences their subsequent actions or interactions with the perceived entities. For instance, one's perception of an individual significantly shapes their communication and interaction with that person (Pearson, 2005, as cited in Mohammed, 2008). Additionally, perception exerts a substantial impact on self-concept, self-efficacy, and the presentation of one's identity (Mohammed, 2008).

Sahoo (2017) highlights the selective nature of human perception, wherein individuals possess the capacity to prioritise certain stimuli while systematically disregarding others. This selectivity serves to maintain internal consistency in beliefs, attitudes, or values held by individuals. Although perception is inherently individualistic, Aigbovbioise (2007) clarifies that different individuals may express similar perceptions of phenomena, indicating the existence and potentiality of group perception. Within the context of this study, perception denotes the process through which individuals interpret a situation, condition, idea, action, object, or personality.



Voter Education

Voter education is a process aimed at familiarising individuals with the intricacies of the electoral process, including voter registration, voting procedures, and other pertinent aspects of elections. It serves as a form of informal public education designed to empower voters by fostering a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the electoral framework (Interim Independent Electoral Commission [IIEC], 2011). Expanding upon this notion, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI, 1999) characterises voter education as the dissemination of knowledge regarding the specifics and mechanics of the electoral process, while also nurturing a sense of civic duty among citizens to engage in the electoral process and uphold the outcomes of legitimate elections. Okon (2010) defines voter education as the provision of information, materials, and programmes tailored to inform electorates about the particulars and mechanisms of the voting process for a given election.

Analysing these definitions collectively, it becomes evident that the primary focus of voter education lies in educating individuals on how to vote, rather than influencing their voting preferences. Its essence lies in supplying voters with the necessary information to enable them to responsibly exercise their franchise, thereby facilitating the casting of valid votes in elections. Ultimately, this process aims to ensure that the leaders elected into positions of power are a true reflection of the collective will of the majority.

The Roles of Mass Media in Politics

The role of the media in society has been a subject of discourse among scholars, institutions, and the public, with various perspectives regarding its responsibilities. For instance, Awake (2006) emphasises that the mass media facilitates audience understanding of multiple societal issues, particularly in education, politics, history, current affairs, security, medicine, and culture. It is evident that the scope of media application in society is multifaceted, with a specific focus in this context on politics. In addition to its primary responsibilities of providing information, education, and entertainment, the roles of the mass media in society are crucial. Particularly in political contexts, it has been argued that peaceful and credible elections would be unattainable without the press. Moliki and Dauda (2016) assert that the functions of the mass media during elections encompass a three-tier operational framework: the pre-election period, the election period, and the post-election period. Drawing on Nigeria as a case study, the scholars suggest that the media's impact has been significant since the onset of the Fourth Republic, notably during the 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 general elections. The mass media played critical roles in ensuring that the 2019 elections were conducted realistically, without violence, and in a credible manner. Various mass communication channels served as watchdog institutions before, during, and after the elections. One significant area where political actors invest resources to reach their target audience, the electorate, is through political advertising.

McNair (2002) defines political advertising as the purchase and usage of advertising space to convey political messages to a wide audience. Channels used for this purpose may include radio, television, cinema, and billboards, among others. Present-day political advertising serves as a vital means of informing the general public about candidates and their policy offerings. Hallin and Mancini (2004) observe a shift in the information landscape, with the mass media increasingly dominating information dissemination once monopolised by political parties. Instead of obtaining election-related information solely from campaign rallies or party



supporters, the mass media has become the primary source of campaign information. Political parties are redirecting their focus towards campaigning through mass media channels, reducing investments in neighbourhood canvassing, rallies, and direct contact activities with their target audience. The rise of electronic media, particularly television, has somewhat diminished the traditional roles of political parties. Antonoff (2008) attributes this shift to the widespread reach and influence of television as a form of communication. He argues that television enables individuals to experience events such as encountering prominent figures, witnessing global phenomena like space travel, or observing conflicts, all through its audio-visual capabilities.

Another key function of the media in politics is to serve as an agency of representation. According to Curran (1991), representation should be structured in a manner that enables diverse social groups and organisations to articulate alternative viewpoints. This role of the Nigerian mass media was evident during the widely watched presidential debate of the 2015 general elections, where candidates from various political parties were afforded equitable opportunities to present their platforms to the Nigerian populace. The use of personalities to convey issues and events is facilitated through the mass media. Swanson (2004) observes that instead of, or in addition to, traditional campaign methods such as rallies, political parties and candidates increasingly relied on the sophisticated use of mass media to persuade voters, the "consumers" of political communication, to support them during elections. Campaigns often featured the charismatic personalities of party leaders.

Television serves as an aesthetically appealing platform for the dissemination of political advertising and campaign messages. Norris (2004) emphasises the importance of equal access to airwaves for candidates, groups, and opposition parties to ensure a fair and viable election process. He argues that public television or state-owned stations should provide a forum for a plurality of viewpoints during campaigns, without showing bias towards the party in power. Supporting this perspective, Swanson (2004) contends that freedom from censorship, government oversight, and editorial independence fosters a democratic society. The scholar further asserts that the mass media should assist community organisations in garnering support, serve as a mouthpiece for their constituents, aid in registering effective protests, and promote alternative viewpoints. These assertions emphasise the representational role of the media including creating a conducive environment where opposing viewpoints and perspectives are fully articulated.

Review of Empirical Studies

Aririguzoh (2013) conducted a study on the "The Role of Television Broadcasts on Voters' Participation in Nigeria's Presidential Election." One of its primary objectives was to examine how television encourages voters' decision to participate more in elections by either joining political parties or encouraging others to do so. The study revealed that exposure to television broadcasts influences audience decisions to engage in the electoral process, such as registering with the electoral body and ultimately voting. It was observed that television broadcasts not only motivate audiences to join political parties but also prompt them to encourage others to join as well.

The National Electoral Commission, INEC, and the Nigeria office of the Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung (FES) (July, 2011) conducted a study titled "Voter Apathy and the 2011 Elections in Nigeria: A Research Report." The survey was conducted from March to April 2011 on a nationally representative sample of 1200 respondents. Individuals of voting age were randomly



selected and interviewed across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Nasarawa State was chosen as representative of the North Central geo-Political zone. INEC and FES assessed voter apathy based on respondents' intention to vote in the 2011 elections due to the "absence of data on voter registration, voting age population and actual voting" (8). The study found that over 80% of respondents from the six geopolitical zones expressed interest in voting in the 2011 elections. Specifically, interest rates were as follows: North Central 86%, North East 95%, North West 98%, South West 88%, South-South 88%, and South East 91%. Regarding factors contributing to voter apathy in Nigeria, respondents identified violence and electoral fraud as the most significant. The study revealed that politicians were primarily responsible for voter apathy, followed by the government and INEC.

Bappayo, Abubakar, and Kirfi (2021) conducted a study on "The Impact of Mass Media on Political Mobilisation Process in Plateau State Radio Television Corporation, Jos (PRTVC), Nigeria." The study aimed to explore the extent of government intrusion into PRTVC and its implications on the political mobilisation process. Using a survey research design, the study sought to uncover the dynamics of government influence on PRTVC and its subsequent impact on political mobilisation. The findings underscored the significant role of a robust mass media in realising government policies and programs, particularly in a democratic nation like Nigeria. The study recommended that, for political mobilisation through the mass media to be effective, efficient, and impartial, media outlets should be allowed to operate in accordance with their constitutional mandate.

Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by the Cognitive Mobilisation Theory of Political Literacy and Participation, which was pioneered by John Dalton in 1984. This theory posits that political engagement and education have a significant impact on individuals, mobilising their cognitive capacities in navigating the realm of politics. Dalton (1984), supported by Tan Cho (1999), argues that the theory revolves around how individuals engage in profound cognitive deliberations before making decisions related to political activities, such as participating in elections. Central to this theory is the assertion that political engagement and enlightenment prompt individuals to mobilise their intellectual resources, enabling them to comprehend complex political issues and fortifying their sense of civic responsibility (Denny & Doyle, 2008 as cited in Odionye et al., 2023).

This perspective emphasises the crucial role of political sensitisation, enlightenment, or education in deepening individuals' political consciousness, empowering their knowledge base, and facilitating their understanding of intricate political matters. This is consistent with the notion that political education significantly impacts people, reducing the costs and enhancing the benefits associated with participating in various political activities. Education serves as an initial step in enhancing the cognitive abilities necessary for grasping political concepts, while it also correlates with increased satisfaction among those with higher education levels. Tan Cho (1999) further argues that achieving a higher level of education is not the sole driver of political education leading to electoral participation; other socialisation agents, such as the mass media, play a substantial role in this milieu.

The selected theory is pertinent to this study, anticipating that the voter enlightenment initiative titled "INEC HALF-HOUR" on AIT during the 2023 general elections will elevate the political consciousness of electorates in Lafia metropolis. The adoption of the Cognitive Mobilisation

Theory provides a robust framework for understanding the cognitive processes underlying political engagement and education, enriching the comprehension of the dynamics influencing voter awareness and involvement in the context of this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey research design, chosen for its appropriateness in capturing individuals' perspectives on their behaviours and potential reactions in specific situations (Osuala, 2001, p. 56). Surveys, classified as behavioural-oriented research, seek to "describe or explain people's current attitudes, opinions, thoughts, and perhaps reports of behaviour surrounding an issue or event" (Rubin, Rubin & Haridakis, 2010). Asemah (2010) suggests that survey design investigates phenomena in their natural settings and seeks generalisation to the broader defined population. Similarly, Babbie (2001) contends that surveys are perhaps the best method for social researchers interested in collecting original data to describe a population too large to observe directly. The population of the study comprises residents of Lafia metropolis aged 18 years and above. Although there is no precise statistical data on the total number of individuals aged 18 years and above in the city, the researcher purposely selected 400 respondents for effective data handling. Purposive sampling technique was deemed appropriate for the study as it targets individuals aged 18 years and above residing in Lafia city during the 2023 presidential elections and familiar with the programme "INEC Half Hour" on AIT.

A five-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, Disagree to Don't Know was employed, where a criterion mean of 4 points and above indicated an accepted result, while 2 points indicated a rejected result. Data analysis was conducted using frequency and percentage charts and tables.

Data Presentation and Analysis

A total of four hundred (400) copies of the questionnaire were distributed. Of this figure, 379 were retrieved, sorted and found valid for analysis as illustrated in the Figure below:

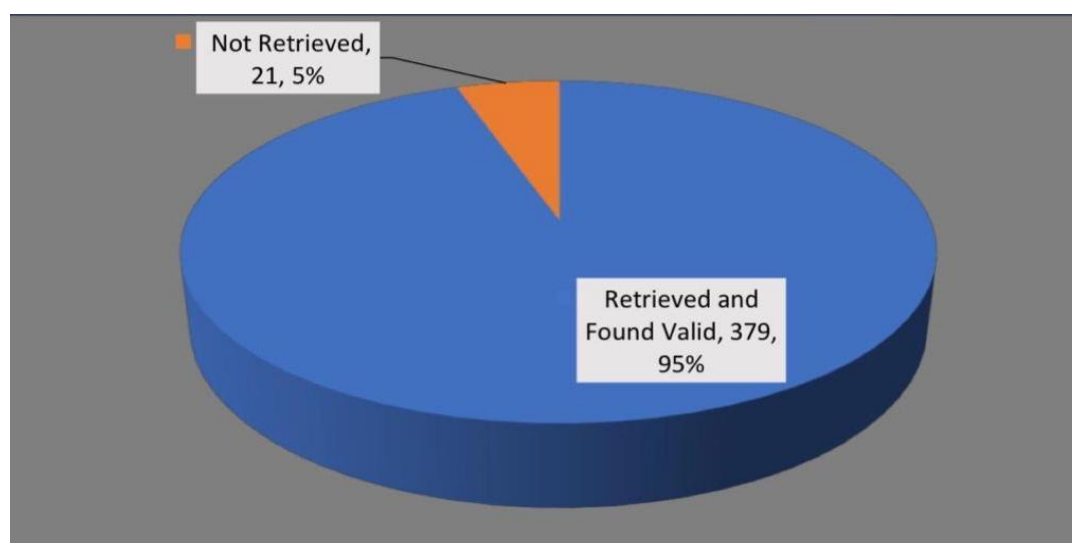


Figure 1: Analysis of Response Rate

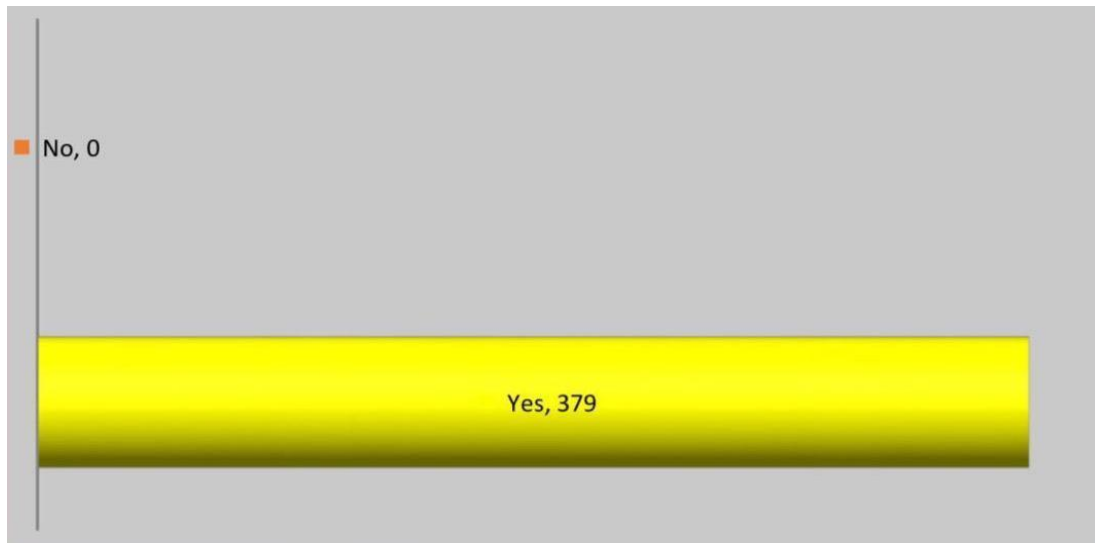


Figure 2: Awareness of INEC HALF-HOUR Programme on AIT

This finding holds significant importance to the research objectives as it indicates that every participant is familiar with the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT, thereby aligning closely with the study's overarching goal.

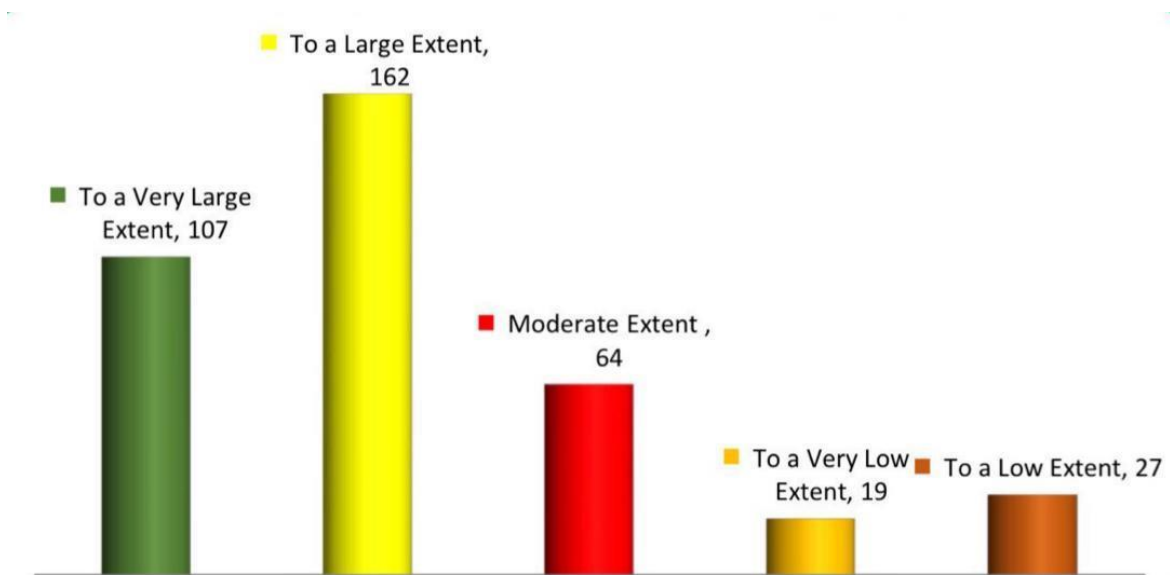


Figure 3: Extent of Viewership of INEC HALF-HOUR Programme on AIT

It can be inferred that given the substantial viewership of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT; the implication is that the programme would have an impact on the Nigerian electorate.



Table 1: Voter Education Issues Portrayed in the INEC HALF-HOUR Programme on AIT

Options	SA	A	SD	D	UD	Mean Rating	Decision
Matters on the age requirement for voting	267	105	5	2	0	4.6	Accepted
Issues regarding the time and venue for voter card registration	264	87	11	14	3	4.5	Accepted
Issues on the dates, time and what to do to collect your voter card	255	111	8	5	0	4.6	Accepted
The way and manner to go about voting was explained	307	72	0	0	0	4.8	Accepted
Matters on the need to shun violence and other anti-voting activities	273	99	5	0	2	4.6	Accepted
Your rights and responsibilities as a citizen during the 2023 elections were communicated through INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT	260	119	0	0	0	4.6	Accepted
Issues about various candidates, their parties and manifestoes	189	181	0	0	0	4.4	Accepted
Issues regarding negative experiences of past elections and how to avoid them	259	107	7	4	2	4.6	Accepted
Matters on how and where to report anti-election activities through the INEC HALF-HOUR programme	96	268	3	12	0	4.1	Accepted

It can be inferred that the INEC HALF-HOUR programme served as an effective platform for voter education and enlightenment during the 2023 general elections in Nigeria.

**Table 2: Effect of INEC HALF-HOUR Programmes on AIT**

Options	SA	A	SD	D	U	Mean Rating	Decision
INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT influenced the way I took part in voter registration and collection of Permanent Voter Card (PVC)	211	168	0	0	0	4.5	Accepted
Through the programmes, I was able to know the different aspirants and contestants and how to dissect these aspirants and contestants' manifestos	282	94	0	3	0	4.7	Accepted
INEC's HALF-HOUR voter education programme on AIT motivated me to take active part in the 2023 general elections	113	226	9	0	11	3.9	Accepted
The programme encouraged me to shun violence before, during and after the elections	264	98	6	2	9	4.5	Accepted
INEC's HALF-HOUR voter education programme on AIT was a good mean through which the Nigerian government and relevant stakeholders educated the people on their political rights	257	110	0	0	12	4.5	Accepted
Through INEC's HALF-HOUR voter education programme on AIT, I was able to motivate my friends, neighbours, relatives, worshipping community members to participate in the 2023 general elections	313	57	9	0	0	4.8	Accepted
Through INEC's HALF-HOUR voter education programme on AIT, I became knowledgeable on how to cast and protect my vote	294	85	0	0	0	4.7	Accepted

The data presented in the aforementioned table serves as evidence indicating that the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT has a positive impact on the respondents' engagement in the 2023 general elections.

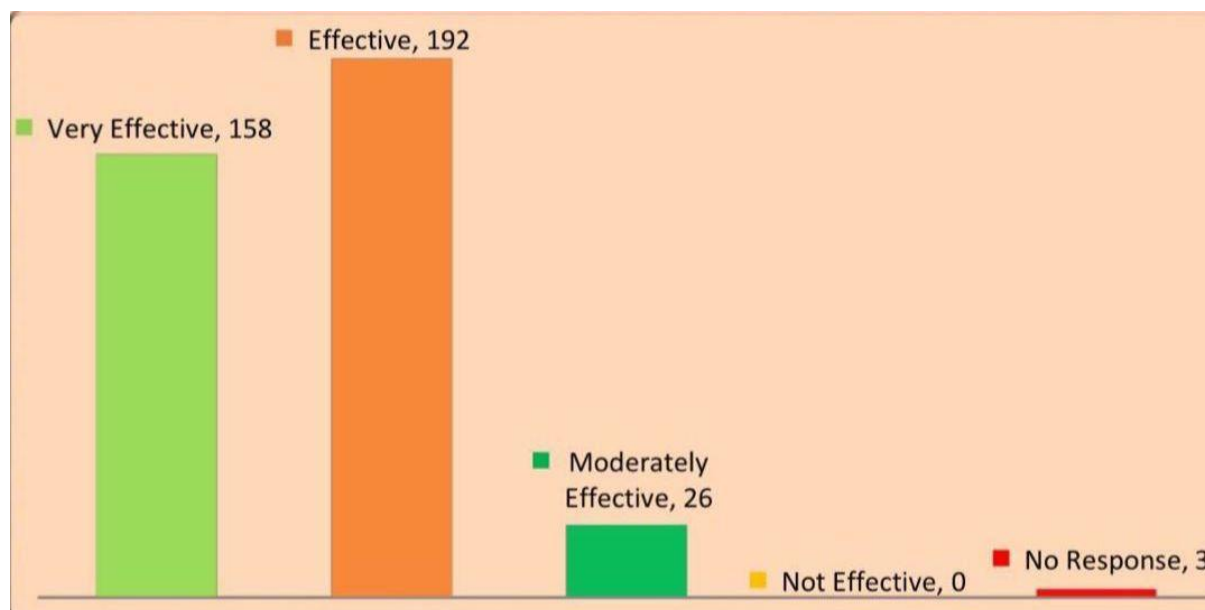


Figure 4: Rating the Effectiveness of INEC’s HALF-HOUR Voter Education Programme on AIT

The aforementioned data suggests that the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT contributed to an augmentation in the respondents' understanding regarding the 2023 general elections.

Table 3: Challenges of Accessing INEC HALF-HOUR Programme on AIT

Options	SA	A	S	D	UD	Mean Rating	Decision
Epileptic power supply is a hindrance to fully view the programme/bad network and poor signals	140	216	3	11	9	4.2	Accepted
Time of broadcast of INEC HALF-HOUR is not favourable	22	18	54	176	109	2.1	Rejected
The presenters decide which call to pick and which message to read	88	221	23	16	31	3.8	Accepted
Cost of DStv, GOtv etc subscription and data to effectively follow the programme	158	179	14	22	6	4.2	Accepted

The data presented in Table 3 suggests that the population within the study area faces challenges in effectively accessing the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT. This observation could be attributed to the prevailing level of infrastructural decay in the country.



DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of findings is structured according to the research objectives. Research objective one aimed to determine the awareness level of the sampled population regarding the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT. The results revealed that all respondents were indeed aware of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT, as depicted in Figure 2. This widespread awareness can be attributed to the electorate's need to be well-informed about the election guidelines in the country, thus fostering active participation. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Bappayo, Abubakar, and Kirfi (2021), who found that media consumers tend to closely follow media stations and organisations to stay informed about various issues they address.

Research objective two focused on assessing the extent of viewership of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT. The respondents were asked to rate their viewership on a scale ranging from very high extent to very low extent. The findings indicated that the respondents were heavy viewers of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT. This suggests that the programme likely had a significant impact on the Nigerian electorate. This finding is supported by Odionye et al. (2023), who concluded that NTA's voter enlightenment programmes effectively educated the populace and encouraged active participation in election-related matters in Nigeria.

The research objective three aimed to identify and evaluate specific issues of voter education portrayed in the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT. Nine variables were measured, including matters related to the age requirement for voting, voter card registration procedures, voting logistics, candidates' profiles and manifestos, and strategies to prevent electoral malpractices. The findings revealed that most participants accepted all the variables, with mean ratings ranging from 4.6 to 4.8. This indicates that participants highly agreed that AIT's HALF-HOUR programme on INEC during the 2023 general elections effectively addressed crucial voter education issues. This finding is consistent with Adepoju's (2022) assertion that voter education and enlightenment programmes on media platforms aim to address issues that enhance the credibility and effective participation of eligible citizens.

Research Objective four aimed to explore the perception of the sampled audience regarding the effectiveness of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT in conveying voter education. The study revealed that the programme influenced respondents in various ways, including their participation in voter registration and the collection of Permanent Voter Cards (PVCs), their knowledge of different aspirants and contestants and their manifestos, their inclination to reject violence before, during, and after elections, and their understanding of their political rights through government and stakeholder education. The programme motivated respondents to encourage their friends, neighbours, relatives, and community members to participate in the 2023 general elections, and it provided them with knowledge on how to cast and protect their votes. This finding suggests that exposure to voter enlightenment issues through television, radio, and other mass media channels contributes significantly to people's understanding of democratic principles, particularly in countries like Nigeria. It implies that citizens' involvement in election-related matters is strengthened through continuous participation in political discourse disseminated by the mass media.

This finding aligns with a study by Odionye et al. (2023), which observed active participation in the 2023 general elections among residents of Ughelli South LGA, Delta State, Nigeria, due



to their exposure to voter education programmes on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Similarly, Adepoju's (2022) research in Ekiti demonstrated a similar trend, where residents benefited from political programmes on local radio stations. These outcomes resonate with the principles of the Cognitive Mobilisation Theory of Political Literacy and Participation, one of the theoretical frameworks guiding this study. This theory suggests that political engagement and enlightenment stimulate individuals to harness their intellectual resources, enabling them to effectively address and manage political issues within their communities. In essence, the findings underpin the tangible impact of AIT's voter enlightenment programme (INEC HALF-HOUR) in fostering informed and actively engaged citizens during the 2023 general elections.

The final research objective investigated the challenges of accessing the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT. The findings identified various obstacles, including power supply, poor network connectivity, signal issues, broadcast timing, and the cost of subscription to satellite television services like DStv and GOtv. This finding corroborates the work of Kente and Lucas (2021), who highlighted similar challenges hindering audience participation in specific television programmes.

CONCLUSION

It is evident that the mass media plays a significant role in voter education and enlightenment. Media programmes focusing on political matters have the potential to shape the electorate's perceptions towards specific candidates and encourage active participation in electoral processes. This study firmly concludes that the extensive viewership of the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT has effectively educated residents on various crucial aspects, including voting procedures, the importance of abstaining from electoral violence, voter registration locations, citizens' rights and responsibilities, avenues for reporting electoral misconduct, details about candidates and their platforms, and insights into mitigating negative experiences from past elections.

Furthermore, it is concluded that the INEC HALF-HOUR programme on AIT significantly influenced the participation of Lafia residents in the 2023 general elections. The programme served as a valuable tool in empowering citizens with essential knowledge that foster their active engagement in the electoral process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Building upon the findings of this study, it strongly recommended that the commendable progress made in voter education during the 2023 general elections through AIT's INEC HALF-HOUR programme should be regarded as a foundational achievement warranting continued efforts. To sustain the positive influence on civic engagement, it is advisable for AIT, alongside other mass media platforms, to persist in delivering comprehensive voter education initiatives. Maintaining this ongoing dedication to enlightening the public on electoral processes is essential for nurturing an informed and actively engaged citizenry, which contributes to the advancement of democratic practices within Nigeria. This recommendation resonates with the broader discourse emphasising the significant role of the media in fostering civic awareness and participatory democracy.



2. In order to enhance election outcomes in Nigeria, it is imperative to bolster political enlightenment initiatives spearheaded by local, state, and federal governments.
3. Addressing the challenges identified in accessing media programmes, as highlighted in this study, should be a priority for the government. Measures should be taken to mitigate issues such as power supply interruptions, poor network coverage, signal disruptions, and the affordability of subscription services like DSTv and GOtv, that ensures a broader and more equitable access to voter education initiatives through mass media channels.

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