

Audience Perception of Public Affairs Programme on Nigeria Democracy: A Case Study of *Politics Today* on Channels Television

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Abstract

Given the nature of public affairs programme, they ought to hold the government accountable and canvass issues that are of interest to the political and economic development of the nation. This study investigated the audience perception of public affairs programme (politics today on channels television) on Nigeria's Democracy. The study became necessary to find out the contribution of politics today on channels television to the development of Nigeria's Democracy. Ascertain the public perception of the issue frequently discussed on the program (politics today). The study was anchored on political economy theory and media accountability theory. Survey design was employed with the aid of 13-table questionnaire. The data obtained from questionnaire administered were analysed and presented using four point Likert scale, frequency table, simple percentage and mean score. The sample size of 400 was derived using Taro Yamane formula through sample random and purposive sampling techniques to reflect and represent all the residents in 12 wards of OREDO Local government area of Edo State.. The result shows that politics today on channels television has contributed significantly to the development of Nigeria's democracy through the dissemination of information, education of audience about political issues. Finding also shows that the public perception of the issues frequently discussed on politics today on channels television are considered favourable, highly positive and signifies acceptance, respondents perceive the issues discussed on politics today as capable of contributing to a healthy and sustainable political climate in Nigeria. Also it was revealed from the findings that the programme provides a framework for the government to be responsible to the people. This study concluded that the time allocated to the programme is inadequate to effectively explore the various issues raise in the programme. Based on findings of this study, the researcher recommended that more time should be allotted to the programme and the media as the fourth estate of the realm should be given free hand to operate and function as the watchdog of the society.

Keywords: Audience, Perception: Public affairs, Democracy, Politics, And Television.

Introduction

Programme is the heartbeat of broadcasting. The Audience is able to relate to television because of the program/content. Therefore, it forms the true essence of the existence of broadcast media. Everything about broadcasting is predicated on programmes. Hence Ikhazuagbe (2009), stated that Programmes are the packages or materials produced and transmitted by broadcast station as it service. Television programmes are produced using such personnel's as producers, directors, presenters, talent/key players and music. It is an established fact that broadcasting does not exist in isolation; it happens and exist with the active connivance and participation of the society. Programmes are the content or services that broadcast stations offer their audience/viewers. There are various types of programmes such as news, entertainment, children, public affairs programmes etc with specific targeted audience. All programmes is for the consumption of the broadcast audience.

Broadcast media messages are presented to targeted audience through programmes. Therefore, a programme is a message which the broadcast media offers her publics (heterogeneous audience) to communicate ideas or feelings. These programmes including public affairs programmes are not an end in themselves, rather it allows the targeted audience to make informed decision and cope with their environment. Public affairs broadcast programs such as *Politics today* on Channels are function of what happens in the society. Each public affairs program just like "*Politics today*" on *Channels TV* has effects of educating, informing, awareness creation and entertaining as its main purpose and objectives, the programs are produce for the consumption of targeted audience

Nevertheless, public affairs programme like *Politics today on Channels Television* ensures national cohesion in the process of nation building should contribute to the development of national unity and strive for continuing expression of the Nigeria identity. Among other things it political objectives should primarily be to create and promote political awareness among the citizens in a democratic society, identify and promote civil responsibility amongst the citizenry, mobilize the people towards achieving national goals and promote social justice based on the fright and responsibilities of the individual in the society.

Since inception in 1999, the Nigerian democracy has experience difference lots of set-back due to the political atmosphere and abuse of power and injustice to the fundamental human right, hence this study is undertaken to examine audience perception of public affair programmes on the Nigeria democracy.

A public affair program offers TV audience with new and interesting perspective on Nigeria's democracy. Yet, there is a paucity of record looking at audience perception of public affair program on Nigeria democracy. The problem with mass communication is that the audience judges the information they receive from the media, it therefore becomes imperative to find out the contribution of *Politics today on channel television* to the development of the Nigeria democracy.

Given the nature of public affairs programme, they ought to hold the government accountable and canvass issues that are of interest to the political and economic development of the nation. It is not certain whether these issues are frequently canvassed on *Channels Television Public affairs programme, Politics today*.

The question this study seeks to answer is: What is the perception of Oredo residents of *Politics today* on channels Television? The study tends to ascertain relevant objectives such to find out the contribution of *Politics today* to the development of Nigeria, to ascertain the public perception of the issues frequently discussed on the programme as well as to find out the accountability issues promoted on the programme. Based on the stated objectives, research questions and hypotheses were derived in line with the independent and dependent variable of the study. The study will be beneficial to the Nigeria government with its numerous parastatals and relevant agencies such as Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the viewers. Furthermore, the findings of this study would serve as reference material and add to the body of knowledge for researchers, broadcasters, Journalists, students and lecturers among others who wish to work on similar area. The geographical scope of the study is Oredo local government of Edo State, the content scope is on audience perception of *Channels Television* most celebrated program; *Politics today*. The unit scope who formed the respondents were audience who are viewers of the Television programme of the study area.

The Concept of Public Affairs Broadcasting

Public Affairs broadcasting is a broadcast that lays emphasizes on public policies and politics for the benefit of broadcast audience and recommended by the government regulations.

In broadcasting, public affairs radio or television programs focus on matters of politics and public policy. Among commercial broadcasters, such programs are often only to satisfy National Broadcasting Commission regulatory expectations and are not scheduled in prime time. According to Orjiakor, et al (2015) Public affairs broadcasting can be referred to as a form of broadcasting where the public exercises right to expression; right to know the things happening within and outside their environment; right to seek and disseminate information and also right to information disseminated. Succinctly, public affair broadcasting is the social responsibility of the broadcast media to the public. The nucleus of Public affairs programme is on matters of public policies and politics that are informational, educational, cultural and entertaining.

Public affairs broadcast schedule involves following guidelines for providing the public with relevant, issue-oriented programming and information to meet their legal obligation to address public issues. Public Affairs programme may be a special unit, separate from the news department, dedicated to producing long-form public-affairs programming. These programmes can be in form of: Voxpop Documentaries, News Magazine, Public Panel, Human Interest events, Interviews, Talks, Drama etc. (Orjiakor, 2015). Therefore, Public affairs TV and radio programming is broadcast media that addresses matters of public policy and interest. Educational, informative, cultural, and appropriate for all listeners of a station, this programming covers a wide range of topics important to the nation.

Hence the broadcast stations act as public trustees. Public affairs program entails the development and production of sustaining programmes by a media house. Numerous public affairs programs like "*Politics today*" on *channels TV* are carried out to ensure the audience has access to vital information that pertains to the wellbeing of the nation. Such significant programs aired related to community issues, aka public affairs, attract the largest proportion of listeners, news and public affairs provision is a core function of a broadcast station, and garners enormous trust ratings yet it's a feature that is in short supply in participatory news media. Simply put public affairs program is for public good. Since the broadcast media is watchdog of the society and a public trustee, therefore it's required to serve the "public interest, convenience, and necessity.

Concept of Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the people have the authority to deliberate and decide legislation ("direct democracy") or to choose governing officials to do so ("representative democracy")

The Role of Public Affairs Programme in a Democracy

The nucleus of Public affairs programme is on matters of public policies and politics that are informational, educational, and entertaining. Simply put, it's for public good. The broadcast media in Nigeria performs the role of a virile press; nevertheless, the Nigerian constitution bestows a larger role to the broadcast stations. One of such is to uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people. This responsibility therefore demands of the media to play a major role in the socio-political development of Nigeria. According to UNDP, Public service broadcasting has a key role to play in strengthening democracy and democratic governance as well as poverty reduction efforts by ensuring that marginalized and disempowered groups (those with neither political nor economic influence nor power) have access to information and provide a voice. Chima, (2015) States that public affairs programme covers development across the country in the areas of politics, current affairs, commerce, industry and infrastructure, sport, lifestyle, entertainment. Ace (2012) in the encyclopedia titled "Media and Election" asserted that media informs the public about matters of public interest and act as a watchdog over the government.

Thinking about how media can be used, and to what specific ends, has nevertheless shifted significantly over the years. In the early days, many in the field understood media mainly as a top-down tool for the dissemination of information. The challenge was to convey development "messages" on diverse subjects such as health awareness, disease prevention, agricultural practice, water management, or environmental responsibility. Recently, the emphasis has shifted to the empowering potential of media as a bottom-up means for promoting participation in society and political life, especially in marginalized communities.

From these perspective citizens require not only access to information but also the ability to consult, respond, and engage with leaders and opinion makers—to have voice. Citizens need access to the means of communication and voice in order, also, to be able to speak with one another, to discuss their conditions and aspirations, and to develop the capacity for engagement and for action to improve access to services and rights under the law. The approach values local knowledge, it respects local cultures, and it puts people in control

It is specifically concerned with how policy frameworks can most effectively enable media to hold authorities to account in the public interest, provide fora for informed and inclusive public debate, and help underpin effective governance.

The Challenges of Broadcast Commercialization on Public Affairs Broadcasting

Government control of print and broadcast media in many African countries leave little scope for dissenting opinions and, therefore, public debate. Such are the obstacles to media freedom. He who pays the piper dictates the tune, government owned media will never speak bad of the government even when she brings obnoxious policies, in the same vain some private media commercialize news just to make ends meet

In the Nigerian context Orjiakor (2015), highlighted some challenges that characterize public affairs broadcasting in Nigeria.

These include:

1. Bias in Topic Selection: public affairs broadcasting originated through educational programmes to educate, entertain and inform the public, but today most public affairs programmes focus on matters of politics and public polices at the near exclusion of educational programmes.
2. Funding: In Nigeria, the issue of creating an act that will incorporate public broadcasters, producers of programmes, individual public television and radio stations in the disbursement of federal budgetary allocation, which is obtainable in the United Staten of America, is a non –existence factor as far as public broadcasting is concerned in the country. This poses a strong challenge to public broadcasting in Nigeria.
3. High Cost of Production: Local production will cost more money, hence, funding presents barrier to moving public broadcasting towards local issues.
4. Imbalance Flow: New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) came about owing to qualitative and quantitative imbalance in the flow of news programme. In Nigeria media stations are not to be blamed for national programmes and /or foreign programmes, as they are cheaper than producing local programmes.
5. Graveyard Slot: Most public affairs programmes are most times slotted when few listeners/viewers tune in or are not even available. For example Christian programmes slotted between 5 – 6am on Sunday; 12 mid night programmes etc.

6. Recycling: This entails the exclusion of new and more diverse programmes because of loyalty to dedicated audience on old programmes.

7. Partiality: Most public affairs programmes aired in government-owned stations in Nigeria are perceived by the audience to be partial because all that is being aired is towards the interest and favour of the government in power.

8. Technological Innovation: Well seasoned journalists are not technologically compliant. This poses a great challenge when they occupy sensitive position like the Director of programmes, Producers etc. Also, recent technological innovation in New Media is overshadowing the old Media through the use of internet and satellite technology.

"Government-owned television has always been used for the interest of repressive regimes in Egypt, where the boundary between public service broadcasting (PSB) and state television has been blurry. This has been observed in the case study of the Egyptian Radio and Television Union (ERTU), which has posed itself as public service media, despite its allegiance to the state rather than the people (Abdulla, 2016)."

Historical Development of *Politics today* on Channels TV

Before we talk about the program *Politics today* on channels let us quickly know about channels television. **Channels Television** is a Nigerian independent 24-hour news and media television channel based in Lagos, Nigeria. The parent company, Channels Incorporated, was founded in 1992, a year before the Nigerian government deregulated the broadcast media. It began broadcasting in 1995. Its primary focus is producing news and current affairs programs on Nigerian domestic issues. The Channels mission is to act as a watchdog on governmental policies and activities. Operating in Nigeria's popular broadcast media market, *Channels Television* is the first and only thriving national TV brand, dedicated solely to the dissemination of news. It is the first Nigerian broadcaster to stream its television programming live for 24 hours. According to chanelstv.com, *Channels Television* was established by Nigerian veteran broadcasters and business moguls: John Momoh and Sola Momoh. The Company commenced operations in Lagos, south western Nigeria and has since grown to include three other Stations in Abuja, Edo and Kano states. The Company also has bureaus in almost every state in Nigeria, including stringers and affiliates in other parts in Africa. *Channels TV* was established with the aim of cultivating and upholding fairness, as well as satisfying the right of the individual to be informed. The company was licensed in June 1993 and allocated a frequency on uhf (channel 39). , "channels television", and now broadcasts to a well discerning audience of over 20 million people. The station has earned a reputation as an aggressive news outlet, which provides a balanced account of news coverage. The establishment of *Channels Television* as a news station was in response to the yearning of Nigerians for a TV station that will among other things: Give an alternative medium of communication to the government and its policies, and hold public officers accountable to the people;

- Accommodate opposing views;
- Inform and educate the general public on how they are governed, as well as educate them on their civic responsibilities to the state;
- Uphold the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to be informed.
- Committed to presenting the news with proven facts
- Airing divergent views, irrespective of differences and circumstances.
- Airing news that affects Nigerians.
- Ensuring we give the people a voice

Channels TV takes enormous pride in its role of an unbiased, candid observer of events in Nigeria, and its indisputable position today, as market leader, in its chosen but exclusive sphere, is an eloquent testimony to its unceasing innovativeness and remarkable evolution. The company is home to award-winning and outstanding broadcasters who have remained one of its key strengths. As Channels already enjoys wide popularity for its English-language content and operates a professional news organization with a nationwide reporting network, it is positioned to extend its franchise into northern Nigeria in Hausa and subsequently into Southern Nigeria in Yoruba and Ibo languages. Its flagship programs, *Politics today*, News at Ten and Sunrise Daily are the most popular and most watched television programmes in the Country. However *Politics today* is one of the most celebrated programs on *channels TV*. '*Politics today*' is aired for one hour every week, this is political show on *Channels Television* that seeks to bring a broader, more in depth perspective to issues in the political realm. It is also aimed at bringing viewers analysis from all the angles for a better understanding. We understand politics may be a complex business and the activities of the players may sometime appear complicated to comprehend; that's why we bring you the players themselves. *Politics today* is a show that x-rays recent significant development and activities in the world of politics in and around Nigeria. Political perspective of national issues are captured and

analyzed in each edition. The program is anchored/ presented by Seun Akinbaloye. Politics today has a facebook page for its fans and followers. Anyone can like a page to become connected with it and get News Feed updates. The rapid spread of information and the immediate feedback on social media platforms like Facebook have made it an essential tool for news dissemination. Often, news stories are shared on Facebook before they are broadcasted on traditional media outlets, making it a potent source of firsthand information. As Ekhatu Emmanuel Zelinjo (2019, p. 17 & 20) observes, 'Facebook is a portal for social networking sites because the users are constantly participating in the production and consumption of news through this medium.

Emperical Review of Related Study

A number of researchers have conducted empirical research on the Appraisal of Audience perception of public affair program on Nigeria's democracy. This section reviews works of such scholars as they relate to this current study. The empirical works reviewed are:

Nsikan-Abasi S. Nkana & Duruson, M. C. (2016). Audience participation in and perception of AIT's current affairs program "Focus Nigeria." *International Journal of Science Arts and Commerce*, 1(10), 78–82.

The study of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam investigated the perception of audience and their participation in current affairs programmes, with a spotlight on African Independent Television's (AIT) "Focus Nigeria". The study employed the survey research design to investigate how each variable influence the extent to which members of the audience participate in interactive programmes, as well as how they perceive the programmes they participate in. In this study, it was found that the programme is more elitist than general in its approach which greatly influences the caliber of people who can participate in the programme. The elitist approach of the programme naturally screens the non-literate from participating, considering the language and nature of discussions. It also shows the inconsistency in audience participation as majority of the audience rarely participate in the programme. This implies that most people just watch the programme without airing their views

The findings/ result of this study revealed that despite the importance of feedback in a democracy, and opportunity created for audience participation in current affairs programmes, the audience failed to maximize the opportunity. It was also discovered that the programme has not sufficiently provided the opportunity for meaningful dialogue due to the political nature of issues, media screening of participants as well as timing. Most respondents also perceive the programme as too political in concept and content. It was therefore recommended that better audience enlightenment should be carried out for better participation, and other issues than politics incorporated into it.

This study of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) is related to this research in that both studies used the survey design research method. While the work of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) looks at the Audience Participation in and perception of AIT's current affairs programme "Focus Nigeria" this study streamlined its scope by examining only the audience perception of public affairs programmes on Nigeria democracy. A case study of *Politics today on channels TV*. However the study of Nsikan-Abasi and Mirriam (2016) was anchored on the Democratic Participant theory. While this current study is anchored on political economy theory and media accountability theory.

Theoretical FrameWork.

(a) Political economy theory

Political economy is an interdisciplinary branch of the social sciences that focuses on the interrelationships among individuals, governments, and public policy. Political economists study how economic theories such as capitalism, socialism, and communism work in the real world.²⁵ Feb 2021

The roots of political economy as we know it today go back to the 18th century. Scholars during the period studied how wealth was distributed and administered between people. Some of the earlier works that examined this phenomenon included those by Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill.

But the term is probably best ascribed to the French writer and economist, Antoine de Montchrestien. He wrote a book called "Traité de l'économiepolitique" in 1615, in which he examined the need for production and wealth to be distributed on an entirely larger scale—not in the household as Aristotle suggested. The book also analyzed how economics and politics are interrelated.

Smith was a philosopher, economist, and writer who is commonly referred to as the father of economics and of the political economy. He wrote about the function of a self-regulating free market in his first book, which was called "The Theory of Moral Sentiments." His most famous work, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (or "The Wealth of Nations") helped shape classical economic theory. It was also used as the foundation for future economists.

Mill combined economics with philosophy. He believed in utilitarianism—that actions that lead to people's goodwill are right and that those that lead to suffering are wrong.⁸ In essence, he believed that economic theory

and philosophy were needed, along with social awareness in politics in order to make better decisions for the good of the people. Some of his work, including "Principles of Political Economy," "Utilitarianism," and "A System of Logic" led him to become one of the most important figures in politics and economics.

Political economy became an academic discipline of its own in recent years. Many major institutions offer the study as part of their political science, economics, and/or sociology departments.

Research by political economists is conducted in order to determine how public policy influences behavior, productivity, and trade. Much of their study helps them establish how money and power are distributed between people and different groups.⁹ They may do this through the study of specific fields such as law, bureaucratic politics, legislative behavior, the intersection of government and business, and regulation.

(b) Media accountability theory

Another theory that relates to this work is the Media accountability theory, according to Neil Nemeth's (2000) starting point is that media accountability is essentially very simple, and it occurs all the time whether or not it is supported by theory or formalized systems: "Whenever someone asks a news organization to explain or justify one of its decisions, the media accountability process has been set into motion", he writes (p 42). Nemeth uses the phrase, "media accountability process", and that view of accountability imbues the anthology (Pritchard 2000) in which Nemeth's article appears. Editor Pritchard, for his part, defines media accountability as "the process by which media organizations may be expected or obliged to render an account of their activities to their constituents" (p 2).

The "constituents" are *Politics today* audience in Oredo local government area, Benin City of Edo state, individuals, groups and organizations (TV viewers, readers, advertisers, news sources, media colleagues and regulatory agencies). Borrowing terminology from the Law, Pritchard refers to the stages in the process as naming (a constituent identifies a media problem), blaming (the constituent holds a media organization responsible for the problem), and claiming (the constituent demands some form of reaction on the part of the media organization; these may range from an explanation of the rationale behind a decision to publish to economic compensation for the damage or trauma that publication caused). Although Pritchard mentions several different kinds of constituents, it is clear that he mainly has the private citizen in mind. "Ultimately, media accountability depends on citizen participation. The same, of course, is true of democracy" (p 192). The current interest in greater accountability is not confined to the media sector. It is prevalent in many different sectors of society. It may be seen as a function of globalization. As companies grow and consolidate on a global scale, we find that codes of conduct and 'social governance' become more common. Meanwhile, it has become easier to communicate and interact via the web, both for those who wish to exact an admission of responsibility from firms and organizations, and for firms and organizations who wish to respond and explain themselves.

Research methodology

The survey design was used for this study. The population of the study is drawn from residents of Oredo local government area of Edo State. The researcher randomly selected Oredo out of other local government areas in Edo states. The selected Oredo local government area (Edo South), population is 374,515. The population a total of Oredo (Edo south), 374,515, (Population Density, 2016).

The sample size for this work is 400, which is drawn from residents of Oredo Local Government Areas. This figure was derived using Taro Yamene Formula. The sample size of 400 was also deduced from the sample size determination formula proposed by Taro Yamane.

The sampling techniques employed in the collection of data were the simple random sampling and the purposive techniques. The simple random technique was adopted to allow the researcher give all respondents in the defined population equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample.

The research instrument for collecting data for this study is the questionnaire.

The instrument for this study was administered to 400 (four hundred) residence of oredo local government area, with benin city as the head quarter. Oredo local government area is made up of 12 (twelve) wards. The wards in oredo are: gra./oko, ogba, ogbe,ogida, uselu, new benin, ogbeson, etete, ologbo, irimwinhin, ugbekun and oka To reach the populace, the researcher distributed the 400 copies of questionnaires among the 12 (twelve) wards in oredo local government.

The researcher with the aid of one research assistant gave 33 copies of the questionnaires to 33 respondents in gra./oko ward, ogbe 33 copies, ogida 33 copies, uselu 33 copies, new benin 33 copies, ogbeson 33 copies, etete 33 copies, ologbo 33 copies, irimwinhin 33 copies, ugbekun 33 copies, and oka 33 copies, with a total of 396 questionnaire. The remaining 4 copies of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to 4 residences in any of the ward. The research study covered all the wards in oredo local government area. The completed copies of the questionnaires were collected on the spot upon completion.

The method employed by the researcher for the collection of this study data, was the person – to – person approach with the aid of one (1) research assistant to reach out to the 400 respondents in the 12 wards of Oredo local government area in Benin, Edo state. In effect, the completed questionnaire was retrieved on the spot. This enabled the researcher to collect the entire questionnaire administered without losing any. It also afforded the researcher the opportunity to clarify issues before the respondents within the confines of research ethics. The method used by the researcher in analyzing data which were collected from respondents was the simple percentage method.

Data Presentation and Analysis

SECTION A: BIO DATA

Table 1: Showing Gender of respondents

Gender of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
Male	256	64 %
Female	144	36 %
Total	400	100 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

From the data collected, majority of the respondents are males. This is because the male are 256 representing 64% of the total respondents, the number of female are 144 representing 36% of the total number of respondents.

Table 2: Showing the Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
18-22 years	12	3
23-29 years	24	6
30-36 years	164	41
37 years and above	200	50
Total	400	100

Source: Field survey, 2024

Data collected from the field revealed that majority of the respondents are those who fall under 37 years and above as they are 200 representing 50% of the total number of respondents. Respondents who fall under the age range of between 18 – 22 years representing 3% of the total numbers of respondents are the least as they were only 12 of them.

Table 3: Showing the Marital Distribution of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
Single	10	2.5 %
Married	360	90 %
Separated	20	5%
Divorced	10	2.5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Among the respondents, the married are more. They are 360 representing 90% of the total number of respondents. While the singles and divorced are ten (10) respondents each representing 2.5% each, those that are separated are twenty (20) representing 5% of the total number of respondents.

Table 4: Showing the Religion Distribution of Respondents

Religion of Respondents	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response (%)
African Traditional religion ATR	16	4 %
Christian	360	90%
Muslim	24	6 %
Total	--	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Majority of the respondents surveyed are Christians as 360 of them representing 90% of the total number of respondents identify with the religion. While 24 respondents representing 6% of respondents are Muslims, only 16 respondents representing 4% of the total number of respondents practice African traditional religion.

Table 5: Showing Distribution of Respondents per wards

Wards	Frequency of Response	Percentage of Response
GRA./OKO ward	33	8.5
OGBE	33	8.5
OGBA	33	8.5

OGIDA	33	8.5
USELU	33	8.5
NEW BENIN	33	8.5
OGBESON	33	8.5
ETETE	33	8.5
OLOGBO	33	8.5
IRIMWINHIN	33	8.5
UGBEKUN	33	8.5
OKA	33	8.5
Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The above table gives a breakdown of the population of OREDO local government area in Benin City, Edo State.

Table 6: Showing the Extent to Which Respondents Watch Politics Today

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Large Extent	384	96%
Low Extent	10	2.5%
Not Exposed	06	2.5%
Total	400	100%

Source: Field Survey; 2024

Majority of respondents agreed that they are exposed to the programme titled politics today on channel television.

Table 7: Showing the extent Politics today on channels TV contribute to political communication and development of audience (Nigerians)

Item	Extent of Contribution	SA	A	D	SD	Total	*	Decision
		Values	3	2	1			
i.	Politic today has contributed significantly to political communication	380 1520 95%	20 60 5%	0 0 0%	0 0 0%	400 1520/400 100%	3.95	Accepted
ii.	<i>Politics today on channels TV</i> Has not contributed significantly to political communication and Nigeria democracy	0 0 0	0 0 0%	40 80 10%	360 360 90%	400 440/400 100%	1.1	Rejected
iii.	The programme has contributed to the development of Nigerians democracy (audience)	250 1000 62.5%	150 450 37.5%	0 0 0%	0 0 0%	400 1550/400 100%	4.6	Accepted
iv.	<i>Politics today on channels TV has help in sustaining Nigeria democracy</i> by widely disseminating the kind of information people need?	250 1000 62.5%	98 294 24.5%	48 96 12%	4 4 1%	400 1394/400 100%	3.48	Accepted

Source: Field Survey; 2024

From the data collected as indicated above, respondents are of the view that the programme, politics today, on channels television has contributed significantly to political communication and the political development of the

target audience who are mainly Nigerians. More so politics today on channels TV has help in sustaining Nigeria democracy by widely disseminating the kind of information people need (audience)

They rejected the view that the programme has not contributed significantly to political communication and by implication the political development of Nigerians

Table 8: Showing the Contribution of politic today to the development of Nigeria’s democracy

Item	Contribution	SA	A	D	SD	Total	*	Decision
	Values	4	3	2	1			
i.	Information Dissemination	380	20	0	0	400	3.95	Accepted
		1520	60	0	0	1580/400		
		95%	5%	0%	0%	100%		
ii.	Education of audience	240	60	30	70	400	3.17	Accepted
		960	180	60	70	1270/400		
		60%	15%	7.5%	17.5%	100%		
iii.	Audience Enlightenment	280	40	45	35	400	3.41	Accepted
		1120	120	90	35	1365/400		
		70%	10%	11.25%	8.75%	100%		
iv.	Subtle Mobilization of electorate	280	20	50	50	400	3.32	Accepted
		1120	60	100	50	1330/400		
		70%	5%	12.5%	12.5%	100%		
v.	Sensitization	270	100	30	0	400	3.6	Accepted
		1080	300	60	0	1440/400		
		67.5%	25%	7.5%	0%	100%		
vi.	Advocacy	180	140	60	81	400	3.35	Accepted
		720	420	120	81	1341/400		
		45%	35%	15%	5%	100%		
vii.	Politics today on channels TV help masses to make informed political decisions	200	100	90	10	400	3.22	Accepted
		800	300	180	10	1290/400		
		50%	25%	22.5%	2.5%	100%		
viii.	Program Politics today on channels TV increase the level of awareness on national issues	240	60	70	30	400	3.27	Accepted
		960	180	140	30	1310/400		
		60%	15%	17.5%	7.5%	100%		
Ix	The program provide a forum and political parties to debates their qualification for office before the audience	380	15	5	0	400	3.9	Accepted
		1520	45	10	0	1575/400		
		95%	3.75%	1.25%	0%	100%		

Criterion mean 3.0 Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table above shows that politics today has contributed to the development of Nigeria. The data collected revealed that the programme has contributed to the development of Nigerians democracy through the dissemination of information, education of the audience about political issues, enlightenment of the audience who are the potential electorates, media advocacy, subtle mobilization of the electorates and general sensitization of the media audience who are potential voters in elections.

Politics today on channels TV help masses to make informed political decisions. The Program Politics today on channels TV increase the level of awareness on national issues. And more so the program provides a forum and political parties to debates their qualification for office before the audience.

Public perception of the issues frequently discussed on the program

Table 9: Showing how respondents perceived political issues that are discussed on the programme

Item	Perception	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Decision
	Values	4	3	2	1			
i.	Favourably	250 1000 62.5%	100 300 25%	30 60 7.5%	20 20 5%	400 1380/400 100%	3.45	Accepted
ii.	Non-favourably	03 12 0.75%	04 12 1%	183 366 45.75%	210 210 52.5%	400 600/400 100%	1.5	Rejected
iii.	Neutral	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
iv.	Indifferent	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Criterion mean 3.0: Source Survey, 2024

Most of the respondents strongly agreed that the issues that are frequently discussed in politics today on channel television are favourable.

Out of the 400 respondents, the mean score of those who are in the affirmative is 3.45. This signifies acceptance. No respondents were neutral and indifferent on their choice of perception of respondents on the programme.

Discussion of findings

R Q 1: What is the contribution of politics today to the development of Nigeria democracy?

From the various data presented as shown on the various tables establishes the fact that the contributions of politics today on channels TV are enormous. From the data collected from the field as shown in table 6, show that large extent of Oredo respondents are exposed to politics today on channels TV, respondents have access and are exposed to the programme politics today. Hence it encourages residents of Oredo local government participation in Nigeria's democracy, which is a clear indication that the public affairs programme titled politics today on channels TV contributes and continues to contribute positively to development of democracy in Nigeria. This finding is closely related and supported by the empirical study of akoja M. I (2016), who employed the development media theory to drive home the watch dog role the programme play weekly. Finding reveal that the media just like politics today on channels TV encourages national development

Politics today as shown from the data collected from the field as presented in table (7) seven reveals that majority of respondents. Strongly agreed that issues discussed on politics today could and would contribute to a healthy political climate in Nigeria. This is because politics today channels television is provide various shades of enlightenment on political issues and stories as they unfold in Nigeria. The programme also provide a platform for various political perceptive through interviews, debates and responses. This is just as it provides an opportunity for political actors and actresses (Political Key Player) to air their view. And more so the programme provide a forum and political parties to debates their qualification for office before the audience. Ojogbo (2002)sitting akakwandu (2016) frowns against elitist and democracy that detaches itself from the grass root.

Politics today has contributed to the political enlightenment of the audience (see table 7,8, & 9), The tables shows that politics today has contributed to the development of Nigeria. The data collected revealed that the programme has contributed to the development of Nigerians democracy through the dissemination of information, education of the audience about political issues, enlightenment of the audience who are the potential electorates, media advocacy, subtle mobilization of the electorates and general sensitization of the media audience who are potential voters in elections.

Politics today on channels TV help masses to make informed political decisions. The Program Politics today on channels TV increase the level of awareness on national issues. Bearing in mind the 2023 general election and the high level of awareness and participation among eligible voters

RQ2: How has the public perceived the issues frequently discussed on the programme?

The answer to this question can be proffered from Table 8. Which shows that the Oredo audience is favourably disposed to the issues that are discussed on politics today. This is because they see the issues are timely, controversial, highly challenging and debatable. Therefore the public perceptions of the issues frequently discussed in the programme politics today on channels TV is highly favourable more so Table 10 also provide a framework for the question from the data gathered and presented issues highlighted on the programme could and would contribute to a healthy political climate in Nigeria. Respondents are also of the view that the programme sharpener and shape political thoughts of audience and is capable of making or influencing them to take informed political decision in the future elections especially in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria. Data collected from

the field as shown in the table 11 above, the respondents strongly agreed that politics today on channels television gives detailed political news. And Respondents perceive the presenter as not biased and they agreed that political analysis/question are not one sided [table 13] which conforms to the social responsibility theory and agenda setting theory as evident in the empirical study on audience perception of television magazine programme sunrise daily on channels television towards democratic development. Orewere(2006) sitting Asemah (2011) sees agenda setting as the ability of the mass media to influence the public, awareness of issues frequently aired as against the audience knowledge of the issue;

Table 13 shows that respondent strongly agrees that politics today Uphold the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to be informed, The programme is Committed to presenting the news with proven facts

RQ3: What is the accountability issues promoted in the programme.

Various accountability issues that revolve around the political sphere are presented and promoted on the programme, these issues are corruption, due processes during elections, attacks on INEC Offices, general accountability are responsibility of government to the people, media advocacy, political education and debates and critical analysis of basic responsibility of the government to the people. Hence media accountability theory becomes the theoretical bases for this study. Owing the fact that majority of respondents strongly agrees that politics today on channels TV provides a frame work that could make the Nigerian government accountable and responsible to the people'

Findings from this study in table 12 reveals that respondents strongly agrees that Politics today on channels TV encourage stewardship report to the masses from key political players in the political scene. It upholds the ideals of balanced reporting, objectivity, fairness and the right of the individual to be informed. The programme is committed to presenting the news with proven facts. *Politics today on channels TV* continues to inform and educate the general public on how they are governed, as well as educate them on their civic responsibilities to the state and give the people a voice. This in turn may raise the level of media literacy and the legitimacy for media organizations as watchdogs (Plaisance, 2000; Glasser & Ettema, 2008). These finding agrees with the empirical study of Olusegun Wehinse Ojomo and Emmanuel Akpoveta (2019) which dwell on how media ethical practice can help sustain democracy in Africa. Olusegun and Akpoveta study concluded that media should ensure that government does what will make the citizens recognize and participate in democracy.

Conclusion

Politics today on Channels Television has witness a tremendous audience acceptance especially those that are political oriented. Hence, the study examines the perception of Oredo Local Government residents on the impact of the programme. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that *politics today* on Channels TV is not only generally accepted by residents in Oredo Local Government area of Edo State, it is making significant contribution to political communication, political development and media political advocacy in Nigeria.

Additionally, the researcher also concluded that the programme generally sensitize, educate, inform, mobilize, enlighten and persuade audience to take an informed political decision in future elections in Nigeria. Moreover it is the conclusion of the researcher that the programme is faced with two major challenges of inadequate time, and inconsistent and epileptic power supply and outage that has disrupted the audience from effectively participating during the programme

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study and arising from the conclusion from the study, the researcher recommended as follows

The time allotted or the programme should be increased by at least one hour. Thus will enable the programme enough time to effectively handle issues that bothered on politics in Nigeria. This more so that politics determine all other sphere of economic, cultural, technological and other aspect of human Endeavour and survival.

i. Relevant stakeholders in the media industry and political key players should be encouraged to adequately participate in political affairs, discourse and debates on political issue, should be encourage among media practitioners and operators.

ii. The media as the fourth estate of the realm and the watch dog of the society should be given more free hands to carry out their tripartite role which is reporting the government to the society and the society to the government. More so the masses who are the audience should be allowed to have a say in the way thier country is been governed, in the same vain those who governed the country should do so in accordance to the law of the country.

iii. Audience should be given opportunity of immediate feedback system and participation by random phone in by audience

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