

Influence of Radio on Political Participation among People with Disabilities in Ijebu North Local Government Area, Ogun State

Lukman Adegboyega Abioye & Adebisi Kazeem Aro

Abstract

This study examines the influence of radio on political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North Local Government Area, Ogun State. The research aims to assess the level of exposure to radio, evaluate its role as a source of political information, identify effective radio programmes, and gauge the extent of political participation within this group. The study is anchored on Social Learning Theory and Accessibility Theory, providing a framework for understanding how radio can shape political engagement. A survey method was employed, using a questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection from 377 respondents. The findings reveal that while radio is a widely used medium, accessibility remains a significant challenge. Radio serves as an important source of political information, yet its effectiveness varies, particularly concerning content relevance and engagement. The study concludes that while radio has the potential to enhance political participation among people with disabilities, addressing accessibility barriers and fostering more inclusive content is essential. It recommends improved radio accessibility and content inclusivity.

Keywords: Radio, Political Participation, Disabilities, Accessibility, Nigeria

Background to the Study

Political participation is vital to democracy, but for people with disabilities, engaging in the political process is often challenging. Disabilities in this context refer to physical impairments affecting mobility, dexterity, or sensory abilities. In Nigeria, radio is an essential medium for sharing information, especially in rural areas like Ijebu North. This study explores the role of radio in influencing the political participation of people with disabilities in Ijebu North Local Government Area, Ogun State.

People with disabilities face barriers to political participation, including limited access to information and physical obstacles to voting. Radio, being widely accessible and especially useful for those with visual impairments, offers an opportunity to overcome these challenges. Programs that discuss political issues and feature political figures can influence listeners' views and motivate them to participate in elections and other activities (Agboola & Oyeyemi, 2020). However, radio stations in Nigeria often fail to tailor content for people with disabilities, and representation in political discussions is lacking (Ogunleye, Awolowo, & Alade, 2021).

This study seeks to fill the gap in research by examining how radio affects the political participation of people with disabilities in Ijebu North. It will explore the effectiveness of radio programs, the barriers people with disabilities face in accessing information, and the overall impact on their political engagement. The findings could help inform strategies to improve inclusivity in radio programming and promote greater political participation among people with disabilities in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Political participation is a fundamental right for all citizens, yet people with disabilities often find themselves excluded from this crucial aspect of democracy. In Nigeria, barriers such as limited access to information, physical challenges, and social discrimination hinder the ability of people with disabilities to engage in political activities. Despite the widespread use of radio as a means of communication in Nigeria, there is insufficient understanding of how effectively it serves the needs of people with disabilities in fostering their political participation.

In Ijebu North Local Government Area, Ogun State, radio is a primary source of information for many residents, including those with disabilities. However, there is a lack of targeted radio content that addresses the specific needs and concerns of people with disabilities, which may limit their ability to participate fully in political processes. This gap in accessibility and representation raises critical questions about the role of radio in promoting inclusivity and ensuring that people with disabilities can exercise their political rights.

The problem this study seeks to address is the apparent disconnect between the potential of radio as a tool for political participation and its actual impact on people with disabilities in Ijebu North. By examining how radio influences their political engagement, this study aims to identify the challenges and opportunities in using radio to enhance the political participation of people with disabilities in this region.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of exposure of people with disabilities to radio in Ijebu North Local Government Area.
2. To examine the extent to which radio serves as a source of political information for people with disabilities in Ijebu North.
3. To identify the types of radio programmes that are most effective in engaging people with disabilities in political discussions.
4. To evaluate the level of political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of exposure of people with disabilities to radio in Ijebu North Local Government Area?
2. To what extent does radio serve as a source of political information for people with disabilities in Ijebu North?
3. What is the level of political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North?
4. What role does radio play in shaping the political opinions of people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

Literature Review

Media Influence on Political Engagement

Media plays a huge role in shaping how we engage with politics. It informs us, frames issues, and influences what we think about political matters, whether through TV, radio, newspapers, or social media. Studies show that media can both encourage and discourage political involvement. For example, when people are exposed to political content, it can increase their interest and participation, as seen in research by Olorunsola, Akinola, and Oyebola (2021). Media can also motivate people to vote or get involved in civic activities by presenting issues in a compelling way.

How media affects us also depends on the platform. Traditional media, like TV and radio, still reach large audiences, especially in rural areas, while digital media is growing in influence, especially among younger people (Adebayo, Olayiwola, and Adepoju, 2022). In countries like Nigeria, where media literacy varies widely, teaching people how to critically engage with media is crucial for informed decision-making (Makanjuola and Ojo, 2023). In short, media has a powerful impact on political engagement by shaping our opinions and encouraging civic participation. Understanding how it works is key to making sure media helps, rather than hinders, democracy.

Role of Radio in Information Dissemination

Radio is a powerful and accessible tool for sharing news, education, and entertainment, especially in areas with limited access to other media (Olufemi, Akinbode, & Olorunsola, 2022). Its affordability and wide reach make it invaluable in connecting with people in both urban and rural settings, particularly where internet and television are scarce.

Radio excels at reaching diverse audiences. It penetrates remote areas with limited infrastructure, providing timely information to those who might otherwise be left out (Adebayo, Akinmoladun, & Oloyede, 2021). This makes it a lifeline for communities that lack access to other information sources.

Beyond news delivery, radio fosters political awareness and civic engagement. Through talk shows and interviews, it educates people about their rights, policy changes, and elections, helping to create a more informed and active public (Nwafor, Ogundele, & Akinola, 2022).

In Nigeria's culturally and linguistically diverse society, radio stands out by offering programs in local languages that resonate with different communities (Ogunleye & Ilesanmi, 2023). This localization ensures that information is not only accessible but meaningful to its audience.

Radio continues to be a key medium for informing and engaging the public. Its impact depends on the relevance and quality of its content and its ability to address the needs of its listeners.

Accessibility of Media for People with Disabilities

Accessible media is essential for ensuring that people with disabilities can engage with information and participate fully in society. It involves designing platforms like television, radio, and digital media to meet the needs of individuals with visual, auditory, or mobility impairments (Adebayo, Akintoye, & Ojo, 2023). By prioritizing accessibility, media can foster inclusivity and equal opportunities for all. Key features that enhance media accessibility include audio descriptions for visual content, transcripts for audio programs, and interfaces compatible with screen readers or adaptive technologies (Makanjuola & Ojo, 2022). These adaptations make it possible for everyone, regardless of their disability, to access and benefit from media content. However, barriers remain. Many media platforms fail to meet accessibility standards, leaving people with disabilities excluded from vital information. For example, a lack of closed captions on TV programs or poor optimization for screen readers on websites creates gaps in accessibility (Olufemi, Akinbode, & Olorunsola, 2023).

In Nigeria, these challenges are compounded by economic and infrastructural issues. Smaller media outlets often find accessibility measures costly or technically demanding, while limited awareness among media professionals further slows progress (Adebayo, Oloyede, & Akinmoladun, 2021). Overcoming these barriers requires action on multiple fronts. Awareness and training for media professionals are vital, as is enforcing accessibility regulations to encourage inclusive practices (Nwafor, Ogundele, & Akinola, 2022). Government and advocacy groups play a crucial role by setting standards and supporting media organisations in implementing accessibility measures. Accessible media is a cornerstone of inclusivity. By addressing barriers and adopting effective measures, society can ensure that people with disabilities are equally informed and empowered to participate in all aspects of life.

Disability and Media Representation

How disabilities are portrayed in the media significantly influences societal attitudes and public perceptions. Media can either reinforce stereotypes or foster empathy and understanding by offering accurate representations of disability experiences (Adebayo, Oloyede, & Akinmoladun, 2022). Historically, media has often depicted disabilities negatively, focusing on limitations rather than abilities. Such portrayals perpetuate stereotypes and frame disabilities as personal tragedies rather than a natural part of human diversity, reinforcing marginalization (Makanjuola & Ojo, 2023). More recently, there's been a shift toward positive and realistic representations. Inclusive practices now highlight the achievements and diverse experiences of individuals with disabilities, challenging traditional stereotypes (Olufemi, Akinbode, & Olorunsola, 2023). However, these improvements are inconsistent, particularly across different regions and media outlets. In Nigeria, outdated and stereotypical depictions still dominate, despite some efforts to improve representation. These portrayals can perpetuate harmful attitudes and hinder societal inclusion (Adebayo, Akintoye, & Ojo, 2023).

Media representation impacts not only public perception but also advocacy and policy. Positive portrayals can support disability rights and drive policy changes, while negative ones can undermine these efforts (Nwafor, Ogundele, & Akinola, 2022). Improving media representation of disability is crucial for fostering inclusivity, challenging stereotypes, and promoting equity. Advocacy and reform are essential to ensure that portrayals reflect the diverse experiences and contributions of people with disabilities.

Inclusivity of the Disables in Media Programming

Inclusive media ensures that content reflects and serves diverse audiences, including people with disabilities. It creates a space where everyone can see themselves represented and access information and entertainment equally (Adebayo, Oloyede, & Akinmoladun, 2022).

This involves accurate representation, portraying people with disabilities as multifaceted individuals, not stereotypes. Highlighting their roles in diverse contexts helps challenge biases and foster understanding (Makanjuola & Ojo, 2023). Accessibility is another key aspect, such as adding captions for the deaf, audio descriptions for the blind, and user-friendly platforms for those with physical disabilities (Olufemi, Akinbode, & Olorunsola, 2023).

In Nigeria, progress has been made, but many media outlets still struggle with full inclusivity due to limited resources and awareness (Adebayo, Akintoye, & Ojo, 2023). True inclusivity goes further by involving people with disabilities in creating media. Their input ensures authenticity and makes media more relevant to their needs (Nwafor, Ogundele, & Akinola, 2022). Inclusive programming means everyone has a voice and equal access, making the media a tool for unity and representation.

Theoretical Review

In pursuit of the study's objectives, this study is anchored on Social Learning Theory and Accessibility Theory as essential components

Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory explains how people learn behaviors and attitudes by observing others, modeling their actions, and experiencing consequences (Bandura, 1977). Learning happens in social settings, shaped by interactions between individuals and their environment. People imitate what they see in their surroundings, including media like radio.

For this study on how radio influences political participation among disabled individuals, the theory is highly relevant. Radio, as a mass communication tool, spreads information and shapes perceptions. By featuring relatable role models and political discussions, it can inspire disabled listeners to engage in political activities (Adebayo, Oloyede, & Akinmoladun, 2022).

The theory also emphasizes that observed behaviors are more likely to be adopted when they are positively reinforced. If radio highlights successful disabled individuals participating in politics, it can motivate others to follow suit (Nwafor, Ogundele, & Akinola, 2022). Conversely, neglecting these portrayals may discourage participation. Credible and relatable role models enhance learning. Radio programs featuring disabled politicians or activists can make political engagement seem achievable, encouraging listeners to get involved (Olufemi, Akinbode, & Olorunsola, 2023).

Social Learning Theory shows how radio can shape political behaviors and attitudes through observation, reinforcement, and relatable role models. This framework supports the study's focus on how radio fosters political participation among disabled individuals, demonstrating its potential for driving positive change.

Accessibility Theory

Accessibility Theory emphasizes designing media and communication systems that are usable by everyone, including people with disabilities (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012). It focuses on inclusive design principles, ensuring systems and environments accommodate diverse abilities.

In studying radio's influence on political participation among disabled individuals, this theory is key. For radio to be effective, its content must be accessible to all. This includes clear speech, quality sound, and auditory cues tailored to listeners' needs. These adjustments can significantly enhance disabled individuals' engagement with political content (Makanjuola & Ojo, 2023).

The theory also advocates providing alternative formats and accommodations for various disabilities. For instance, descriptive audio or supplementary online materials can make content more accessible to visually impaired individuals. These practices align with the study's goal of ensuring equal access to political information for all listeners (Olufemi, Akinbode, & Olorunsola, 2023). Inclusive practices in media production are another focus of the theory. Training broadcasters on disability awareness and using technology to enhance accessibility can help radio stations better serve diverse audiences. These efforts create a more inclusive platform, fostering greater political engagement among disabled listeners (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012).

Accessibility Theory underscores the importance of designing accessible and inclusive media. By addressing barriers and adopting inclusive practices, radio can be a powerful tool for encouraging political participation among disabled individuals. This framework supports the study's exploration of accessible radio programming and its role in promoting engagement

Research Methodology

Research Design

For this study, a survey research design has been adopted. This design involves gathering information from a large group of people through questionnaires to understand their opinions, behaviours, or experiences. In this case, the survey will focus on how disabled individuals in Ijebu North Local Government Area engage with radio and its impact on their political participation. By using a survey, we can collect data from a broad sample of respondents, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. This method is effective for identifying trends and patterns in how radio influences political involvement among disabled individuals.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprises the people with any form of disabilities residing in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. However, due to the unavailability of a database or recent studies providing the total number of people with any form of disabilities residing in Ijebu North Local Government Area, the population size remains unknown.

Sample Size

A total number of Three Hundred and Eighty-Four (384) respondents were sampled for this research using Cochran Formula as shown below:

$$n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where n = the unknown Sample Size

z = 1.96 (derived from Z – value on the four-figure table)

p = 0.5

q = 1 – P (0.5)

e = the desired Margin of Error which is at 0.05

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{(3.8416)(0.25)}{0.0025}$$

$$n_0 = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} \quad n_0 = 384.16$$

Therefore, the sample size required for the study is approximately 384 participants.

Sampling Technique

The study adopted purposive sampling technique to select participants from the population of people with disabilities residing in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. This approach ensures that the sample is representative of the target population and enables researchers to gather in-depth insights into the influence of radio on political participation among disabled individuals in the region.

Research Instrument

The study used a questionnaire to collect data, which allowed researchers to gather insights on radio usage, political participation, and disability status in an organized and efficient way. This approach was flexible, making it possible to reach a wide range of participants with disabilities, either through remote or in-person methods, across Ijebu North Local Government Area in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

This study sought to assess the influence of radio on political participation among disabled in Ijebu North Local Government Area, Ogun State.

Data collected were presented, analysed and interpreted using frequencies and percentages. A total of Three Hundred and Seventy-Seven (377) out of the Three Hundred and Eighty-Four (384) copies of questionnaires copies distributed were retrieved and analyzed. All data presented and analyzed stem from the Three Hundred and Seventy-Seven (377) copies retrieved while Seven (7) questionnaire copies were misplaced during the research process.

Research Question 1: What is the level of exposure of people with disabilities to radio in Ijebu North Local Government Area?

Table 1: Level of exposure of people with disabilities to radio in Ijebu North Local Government Area

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1. Do you regularly listen to the radio?	Yes	279	74%
	No	58	15%
	Not sure	40	11%
2. I have access to a radio at home.	Strongly Agree	121	32%
	Agree	102	27%
	Neutral	19	5%
	Disagree	64	17%
	Strongly Disagree	68	18%
3. I find it easy to listen to radio programmes that are relevant to me.	Strongly Agree	117	31%
	Agree	129	34%
	Neutral	14	4%
	Disagree	44	12%
	Strongly Disagree	73	19%
4. Radio is an important source of information for me.	Strongly Agree	113	30%
	Agree	138	37%
	Neutral	12	3%
	Disagree	54	14%
	Strongly Disagree	60	16%

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 1 shows how often people with disabilities in Ijebu North listen to the radio and their views on it. Most (74%) listen regularly, but only 59% have easy access at home. While many (65%) find it easy to listen to relevant programs, opinions on radio as an important information source are mixed (67% agree). These findings suggest that while radio is common among people with disabilities in the area, improvements are needed in accessibility and relevance.

Research Question 2: To what extent does radio serve as a source of political information for people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

Table 2: Extent to which radio serve as a source of political information for people with disabilities in Ijebu North

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
5. Does the radio provide you with political news and updates?	Yes	232	62%
	No	86	23%
	Not sure	59	16%
6. I often hear about political events and candidates through the radio.	Strongly Agree	94	25%
	Agree	174	46%
	Neutral	29	8%
	Disagree	33	9%
	Strongly Disagree	47	12%
7. I find the political information on the radio to be useful and relevant to me.	Strongly Agree	108	29%
	Agree	159	42%
	Neutral	13	3%
	Disagree	58	15%
	Strongly Disagree	39	10%
8. The radio helps me stay informed about political issues and elections.	Strongly Agree	94	25%
	Agree	179	47%
	Neutral	10	3%
	Disagree	73	19%
	Strongly Disagree	21	6%

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 2 shows how people with disabilities in Ijebu North receive political information from the radio. Most (62%) get political news, and 67% hear about political events through it. However, opinions on its usefulness are mixed, with 42% finding it helpful and 15% disagreeing. About 47% say radio keeps them informed about political issues, but 19% disagree. This indicates that while radio is a common source of political information, its effectiveness and relevance vary among people with disabilities in the area.

Research Question 3: What is the level of political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

Table 3: Level of political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
9. Have you ever voted in an election?	Yes	237	63%
	No	74	20%
	Not sure	66	18%
10. I participate in discussions about political issues with others.	Strongly Agree	108	29%
	Agree	159	42%
	Neutral	13	3%
	Disagree	58	15%
	Strongly Disagree	39	10%
11. I am actively involved in local political events or meetings.	Strongly Agree	124	33%
	Agree	103	27%
	Neutral	19	5%
	Disagree	64	17%
	Strongly Disagree	68	18%
12. I keep up with political campaigns and activities in my area.	Strongly Agree	114	30%
	Agree	137	36%
	Neutral	14	4%
	Disagree	36	10%
	Strongly Disagree	76	20%

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 3 shows the political participation of people with disabilities in Ijebu North. While 63% have voted, 18% are unsure. Many (71%) discuss politics with others, but fewer (50%) are actively involved in local events. Although 86% follow political campaigns, 40% don't strongly agree with this. This indicates some political participation but highlights a need for greater active involvement and engagement in local politics.

Research Question 4: What role does radio play in shaping the political opinions of people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

Table 4: Roles of radio in shaping the political opinions of people with disabilities in Ijebu North

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
13. Do the political programmes on the radio influence your political opinions?	Yes	262	69%
	No	74	20%
	Not sure	41	11%
14. I feel that radio programmes help me form my views on political issues.	Strongly Agree	122	32%
	Agree	118	31%
	Neutral	31	8%
	Disagree	54	14%
	Strongly Disagree	52	14%
15. Listening to political discussions on the radio affects how I vote.	Strongly Agree	134	36%
	Agree	149	40%
	Neutral	9	2%
	Disagree	49	13%
	Strongly Disagree	36	10%
16. Radio provides valuable information that helps me understand political candidates and their policies.	Strongly Agree	128	34%
	Agree	134	36%
	Neutral	19	5%
	Disagree	54	14%
	Strongly Disagree	41	11%

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4 shows that radio significantly influences the political opinions of people with disabilities in Ijebu North, with 69% stating it affects their views and 64% agreeing it helps form their opinions. Additionally, 76% believe it influences their voting decisions, though 17% disagree. Most (70%) find radio provides helpful information about political candidates, highlighting radio's role in shaping political views, but indicating room for improvement in influencing voting behaviour.

Discussion of Findings

RQ 1: Level of exposure of people with disabilities to radio in Ijebu North Local Government Area?

The findings show that radio is a widely used medium among people with disabilities in Ijebu North, with 74% of respondents listening regularly. However, only 59% reported easy access to radio at home, indicating barriers still exist. While 65% find it easy to listen to relevant programs, the mixed response (67%) on its importance as an information source suggests room for improvement in accessibility and relevance. These results align with studies by Akinwale and Olubunmi (2023) and Ojo and Nwankwo (2022), which highlight radio's popularity but note access issues, especially for those with hearing impairments, due to a lack of inclusive design features. In conclusion, while radio is valuable for people with disabilities in Ijebu North, improving accessibility and tailoring programming to their needs is essential. Collaboration between broadcasters, disability organizations, and the disabled community is needed to develop more inclusive and accessible content.

RQ 2: Extent of radio service as a source of political information for people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

The findings show that radio is a key source of political information for people with disabilities in Ijebu North, with 62% receiving political news and 67% learning about political events through this medium. However, its effectiveness varies: 42% found the information useful, while 15% disagreed, and 47% felt informed about political issues, with 19% disagreeing. These results align with studies by Akinwale and Olubunmi (2023) and Ojo and Nwankwo (2022), which highlight radio's role in political engagement but note access barriers and the lack of inclusive design for disabled individuals. Overall, while radio is valuable for political information, addressing accessibility challenges and tailoring content to the needs of people with disabilities is crucial. Collaboration between broadcasters, disability organizations, and the disabled community can help create more inclusive and impactful programming.

RQ3: Level of political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

The findings reveal a mixed picture of political participation among people with disabilities in Ijebu North. While most respondents (63%) have voted before, a notable 18% are unsure about their voting history, hinting at potential barriers to electoral participation. Many respondents (71%) discuss politics with others, showing political awareness, but only half (50%) actively participate in local events, pointing to a gap between awareness and engagement. Additionally, although 86% follow political campaigns, 40% are less confident about their engagement, suggesting a disconnect between staying informed and taking action. These results reflect broader challenges highlighted in studies like Ojo and Nwankwo (2022) and Peters and Okoye (2022), which underscore barriers that limit political participation for disabled individuals. While there is some engagement, more work is needed to bridge the gap between awareness and active participation. Removing barriers, increasing civic education, and fostering inclusive political spaces are key steps to empower people with disabilities in the political process.

RQ 4: What role does radio play in shaping the political opinions of people with disabilities in Ijebu North?

The findings show that radio plays a key role in shaping the political views of people with disabilities in Ijebu North. A significant majority (69%) said radio programs influence their political opinions, and 64% agreed that radio helps them form their views. This highlights radio as an important source of political information for this group. The data also shows that radio impacts voting decisions, with 76% of respondents believing political discussions on the radio affect their choices. However, 17% disagreed, suggesting that while radio influences many, it doesn't have the same effect on everyone. Additionally, 70% of respondents found radio helpful in

learning about political candidates and their plans, underscoring its role in political decision-making. These results align with studies by Akinwale and Olubunmi (2023) and Faruk and Olayinka (2023), which highlighted radio's influence on political opinions and behaviors among disabled individuals. Overall, the findings suggest that radio is a powerful tool for shaping political opinions among people with disabilities in Ijebu North. However, its impact varies, and further research is needed to explore what influences its effect on voting decisions. Improving the quality and accessibility of political content could strengthen radio's role in encouraging informed political participation,

Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how radio influences the political participation of people with disabilities in Ijebu North. The findings show that radio is a commonly used medium, but accessibility remains a challenge. It serves as a significant source of political information, yet its effectiveness varies. While people with disabilities participate in elections, their involvement in other political activities is lower. Radio plays a crucial role in shaping political opinions and influencing voting decisions. These findings highlight the potential of radio as a tool for political engagement among people with disabilities but also reveal areas for improvement. Addressing accessibility issues, enhancing content relevance, and fostering active participation are essential steps to maximize the impact of radio.

Recommendations

- Radio should improve accessibility and relevance to better serve people with disabilities.
- Radio stations need to tailor political content to the specific needs of people with disabilities.
- To increase political participation, barriers should be addressed, and inclusive spaces created.
- Radio programming should provide diverse and accessible content to shape the political opinions of people with disabilities.

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Lukman Adegboyega Abioye is a Professor from the Department of Mass Communication and Media Technology, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State; Email: abioye.lukman@lcu.edu.ng, Phone: +2348023318934

Adebisi Kazeem Aro, Department of Mass Communication, Abraham Adesanya Polytechnic, Ijebu-Igbo, Ogun State; Email: aroadebisi@aapoly.edu.ng ; Phone: +2348052173735