



INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION IN CREATING AWARENESS OF VOTERS IN OSHIMILI SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at how television helps to create voter awareness in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. A survey design was used, and data were used to collected with an online questionnaire with set questions. The planned sample size was 399 respondents using Yamane formula, and this was rounded up to 400 for the online survey. However, because people were free to take part or not, 220 complete and usable responses were finally used for analysis. The data were analysed with Python through frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and percentage mean scores. The results showed that respondents had a moderate level of television exposure, with an exposure index of 48.95 percent. News bulletins, political talk shows, and debates were the political programmes watched most. Television helped respondents at a moderate level to know candidates, political parties, and main election issues, with a mean score of 3.16 out of 5, or 63.2 percent. It also helped them understand voting procedures at a moderate level, with a mean score of 3.06 out of 5, or 61.2 percent. Still, respondents did not have strong trust in television political messages because many felt that some stations were biased. The study concluded that television creates voter awareness in Oshimili South, although the effect is moderate and depends on message quality, trust, clearness, and access. It recommends that television stations and election bodies should give more practical, fair, and repeated voter education messages.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Influence, Television, Oshimili. Politics, Participation, Voters.

INTRODUCTION

For many Nigerians, television is still one of the main places where election information comes from. Because it shows moving pictures and sound, it can make hard political issues easier to follow, even for people who are busy with work, business, school, or family duties. Duke-Sunny (2025) bring election periods, many citizens watch news, political programmes, and campaign messages so that they can know candidates, parties, and what may happen on election day In that way, television can affect how voters see leaders, public plans, and the part they play in democracy. (Adewale & Ogunsakin, 2025).

In Nigeria, elections are important because they help citizens choose leaders and make those leaders answer for their work. Yet, elections also do face many problems, like low voting turnout, wrong information, and lack of interest among voters. That's to say that voter education helps people know their rights, their duties, and the value of their

vote for the country. When citizens understand elections better, they are more likely to take part in the process peacefully and often (Adewale & Ogunsakin, 2025). The mass media are often used for this teaching, as they explain voting steps, support peaceful conduct, and show why fair elections are needed for development (Ijeh et al., 2024). Television has also been shown to help voter education and the push for participation during Nigerian elections. (Najeem & Agboluaje, 2023) assertion on NTA voter education programmes found that many viewers watched the programmes often, and that the programmes carried many useful voter education messages. Exposure to the television content was linked with more election participation, including voter registration and coming out to vote during the 2019 general elections. Another study found that a television voter education programme called INEC Half Hour on AIT helped people understand registration, Permanent Voter Card collection, electoral

violence, voter rights, and the need to encourage others to vote during the 2023 elections (Andrew, 2024).

Apart from single programmes, many voters see the mass media as important actors in election reform and in the call for cleaner elections. Ijeh et al stated that media groups help citizens notice weaknesses in the election system and also raise political awareness about the need for change. Because of this, media do not only report election events; they also help people ask for better systems that show the true wishes of voters (Ijeh et al., 2024). When television stations use their channels to explain election rules, past errors, and possible ways to improve, they can make voters more alert and more willing to take part.

Still, research also shows that mass media content may sometimes be used in ways that confuse voters or lead them wrongly. In some cases, media outlets carry one-sided political messages that mainly serve the interests of strong political actors Duke-Sunny (2025). A study in Oyo State found that mass media were often used to spread political propaganda, and that such messages could contribute to bad leadership and social problems when they overshadow fair news work (Ojo et al., 2021). Another study on multimedia in Nigerian elections explained that television, radio, and online platforms strongly shape how voters see candidates and issues, but that biased content or content made to shock people can lead to wrong views and reduce trust in the electoral process (Inobemhe et al., 2024). These results show that while television can build awareness, the quality and honesty of its messages are very important for good democracy.

In many Nigerian communities, including communities in Delta State, people depend on media for election information because official voter education is often not enough.

The study can add to the wider discussion in Nigeria and Africa on media, democracy, and political participation by bringing clear evidence from a specific local community. Through this, it can help scholars, people who make policies, and practitioners understand how television can be better used to promote informed, peaceful, and active participation in elections.

The study's three objectives are: ;To find out the types of political programmes that voters in Oshimili South are exposed to. ;To assess how television exposure creates political awareness among voters in Oshimili South. ; To examine the influence of television on voters' understanding of electoral procedures

Research Questions: What are the types of political programmes that voters in Oshimili South are exposed to? ;How does television exposure create awareness among voters in Oshimili South? ;What is the influence of television on voters' understanding of electoral procedures, such as voter registration, the voting process, and rules guiding elections in Oshimili South?

LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mass media are ways of sending the same message to many people at the same time. Romanyuk and Kovalenko stated that mass media include tools like radio, television, cinema, and the internet that share information widely to the public (Romanyuk & Kovalenko, 2021). These tools carry news, ideas and pictures from a small group of people sending messages to very many people in different places. Mass media help people to know what is happening in their own country and in other countries; they also help leaders and citizens to talk to each other in public life.

Television is one very important part of mass media. It uses moving pictures and sound together. This makes messages feel more real and closer to daily life than only printed words. In political activity, audiovisual media such as television are used because they reach many people quickly and can touch both their thinking and their feelings (Romanyuk & Kovalenko, 2021). The screen shows faces, places, and events, and the sound carries voices, music, and noise. When these two are joined, television can explain complex events in a simple way that many people can understand, even when they are tired or busy.

Television overtime, has become the most influential medium in political communication because of the power of the image and the small effort needed from the viewer to receive information (Obradović, 2023). People can sit in their homes and receive information about politics, education, and public issues without travelling or reading long texts. In many countries, television remains a main source of news about politics and world events. Even when new media such as social media and online platforms grow, many citizens still turn on the television to know what is happening around them (Muisse et al., 2022).

In simple terms, mass media form the wider group of channels through which public messages are shared, while television is a strong part of this system that uses pictures and sound to inform, teach, and sometimes persuade large groups of people in their daily lives.

Concept of Political Awareness / Voter Awareness

Political awareness means how much a person understands the way a country is ruled and how decisions are made, which also includes knowing basic rights and duties, such

as the right to vote and be voted for, and understanding key political bodies like parliament and the constitution, which is the main law of a country (Badaru & Adu, 2021). A politically aware person knows who the main leaders are, what the major political parties stand for, and what important issues are being debated in the country.

Voter awareness is a more specific part of political awareness. It focuses on how much citizens know about elections and their role as voters. Voter awareness covers knowledge about when elections will hold, where and how to register, how to vote correctly, and why voting matters for the future of the community. It also involves knowing basic facts about candidates, their parties and their promises. In South Africa, for example, nearly all of the university students in one study showed high awareness of their right to vote and the importance of the constitution, even though their actual voting levels were lower (Badaru & Adu, 2021). This result shows that awareness is first about knowledge and understanding, while participation is about action.

For a democracy to be strong, many citizens need a basic level of political and voter awareness. This awareness helps them to judge messages from leaders and media, to ask questions and to make more thoughtful choices during election periods. With this, political and voter awareness support better representation and stronger accountability for actions between leaders and the people they serve (Badaru & Adu, 2021).

Television as a Source of Political Information

Television plays a central role in giving citizens political information. Political information here means facts and explanations about public issues, such as elections, government policies, conflicts, and international events. Television news programmes, political talk shows, debates, interviews and special reports all help to form what scholars call the political information space, which is the supply of news and public issues content available to citizens each day (Cushion, 2021). When this environment is rich in clear and serious political stories, people have more chances to learn about their leaders and about public issue. The public service television news in the United Kingdom gives citizens many stories about politics, public issues and international issues compared to more profit driven channels that show more entertainment and celebrity stories (Cushion, 2021). This type of television content can help citizens understand hard topics such as the economy, healthcare and foreign policy in simple language, using images, charts and interviews. By watching such programmes often, viewers can slowly build a body of knowledge that supports political awareness and more informed voting.

Television is not only about news bulletins. Romanyuk and Kovalenko note that audio visual media have advantages such as easy access and strong emotional impact, which make them widely used in political activity and propaganda (Romanyuk & Kovalenko, 2021). Political actors use campaign adverts, documentaries, live showing of rallies and political talk shows on television to explain their messages and to try to persuade voters. These programmes shape how people see political figures and events. When a channel chooses which events to show and which voices to invite, it is helping to place issues in front of people in the minds of viewers, guiding them toward certain topics as more important than others.

Media Effects on Voter Attitudes and Behaviour

Media affect how voters think, feel and act during election periods. In simple terms, voter views are the thoughts and feelings that people have about politics, such as how they see candidates, parties, issues and the whole election process Duke-Sunny (2025). Voter behaviour means what people really do, such as whether they vote, whom they vote for, and how early or late they decide. Sides and colleagues stated that media messages, especially television campaign adverts, can shift how people see candidates and can change their voting choices through persuasion (Sides et al., 2021).

Television and other media give repeated messages about who is leading in the race, what problems are most serious and which candidates are strong or weak. When people keep seeing the same messages, their views can slowly move in the same direction as the messages. adverts changed share of votes more strongly in smaller elections such as governor and local contests than in presidential races, showing that media can be very powerful where people know less and pay less attention on their own (Sides et al., 2021). This shows that when voters have little private knowledge, media have more room to shape views.

Media also shape behaviour by influencing how important an election feels. Tiwari notes that a high level of exposure to television and social media election coverage can increase voter turnout by making the campaign feel close, near and serious to citizens (Tiwari, 2025). When people see constant reminders of the election, hear calls to come out and vote and watch other people talking about participating, they are more likely to decide that voting is part of their duty as citizens. In this, media not only talk about democracy but also help people to join in it.

At the same time, media do more than just encourage people to vote. They can push voters toward some candidates and away from others. Tiwari explained that when election news and polls are reported as a horse race story, which means focusing on who is ahead and who is behind, some voters may be drawn to the candidate that is

presented as leading, while others may feel discouraged if their preferred candidate is always shown as losing (Tiware, 2025). This horse race style can therefore change preferences and also affect how strongly people support or abandon a candidate during a campaign.

Media effects also interact with the kind of content that dominates screens. Sahu explains that different media types, such as television, print and social media, do not work with the same strength in shaping opinions and preferences, because they reach different groups and are used in different ways (Sahu, 2025). For example, older people may watch more television news, while younger voters may rely more on online platforms. When these groups are exposed to different messages, their views may move apart, which can make divisions deeper in society. By this way, media use patterns are linked with political polarisation and with who supports which side.

Television, Agenda Setting, Framing and Priming in Elections

Television does not only tell people what has happened. It also helps to shape what people think about and how they think about it. Three important ideas help to explain this role. They are agenda setting, framing and priming. These ideas show how television can shape the minds of voters in very quiet but strong ways.

Agenda setting happens when television gives more time and space to some issues than to others. Tabis stated that the media can influence voters by making some topics easier to see and by keeping them in the news for a long time (Tabis, 2024).

In Nigeria, agenda setting can be seen in how certain programmes focus on specific national issues. Bebenimibo's study of the AIT Focus Nigeria programme shows that through its regular discussion of democratic issues and national problems, the show helped shape the political agenda by drawing public and attention from leaders to chosen topics like answering for actions, justice and equality (Bebenimibo, 2023). When a political talk show keeps returning to an issue, politicians may feel pressure to respond, and citizens may begin to demand solutions. The programme in this way acted as a space where media, leaders and citizens met around a shared list of issues.

Media content in growing democracies can have special challenges. Political interests sometimes try to shape television messages to favour certain parties or candidates. citizens see mass media as important in exposing problems in the electoral system and in calling for reforms that make elections more transparent and credible (Ijeh et al., 2024). This means that many viewers in Nigeria do not just receive information passively. They also judge whether television is playing its watchdog, meaning a body that watches

leaders and bodies closely role and are aware that strong media help protect their rights as voters.

Television voter education is not only about national politics. It can also speak to groups that have not been well represented.

Television and Voter Awareness in Developing Democracies / Nigeria

Television plays a major role in helping people understand elections in many growing democracies. In countries where many citizens still face challenges like low income, low literacy level and poor internet access, television often becomes a major place where they learn about politics and elections. many Nigerian voters see the mass media as important actors in raising political awareness and in explaining why changes that can make elections better are important for trusted elections (Ijeh et al., 2024). This shows that when people sit in front of their television sets, they are not only receiving entertainment; they are also learning how their democracy works.

In Nigeria, several studies show that television is used directly to teach voters. Najeem and Agboluaje studied the NTA programme called Political Update and found that it contained many voter education messages before the 2019 general elections (Najeem & Agboluaje, 2023). Week by week, the programme explained simple but important things. One week focused on how to register as a voter and why early registration matters. Another week taught voters how to behave before election day, such as avoiding acts that may create tension in their communities. Other weeks explained how to act at the polling unit, what to do with the permanent voter card, and how to handle the ballot paper respectfully (Najeem & Agboluaje, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

The study used the survey research design. The survey design was suitable because the study collected views and experiences from respondents through a questionnaire with set questions. This design also made it possible to describe how voters in Oshimili South Local Government Area use television during election periods and how television messages relate to their level of voter awareness.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised adult residents and eligible voters in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. The study used the official voter population of the area as its guide because voter education through television is directed at people who are expected to take part in elections. According to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2023), Oshimili South Local Government Area had 194,468 registered voters during the 2023 general elections. Voter registration status was also

included in the questionnaire so that the study could know the proportion of respondents who were already registered and those who were not yet registered.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was worked out with the Yamane sample size formula. The formula was suitable because the population of registered voters in Oshimili South Local Government Area was known and large. The formula is shown below:

$$n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$$

Where n is the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the allowed sampling error. The population of the study was 194,468, while the allowed sampling error was set at 0.05, or 5 percent.

Substituting the values into the formula gives:

$$n = 194,468 / [1 + 194,468(0.05)^2]$$

$$n = 194,468 / [1 + 194,468(0.0025)]$$

$$n = 194,468 / [1 + 486.17]$$

$$n = 194,468 / 487.17$$

$$n = 399.17$$

Because of this, the calculated planned sample size was approximately 399 respondents, which was rounded to 400 respondents for the online survey. This shows that the study originally planned to obtain 400 responses through the online questionnaire. Even so, 220 responses were later found complete, valid, and usable after data cleaning. This

reduction occurred because the survey was administered online and participation was voluntary.

Credibility and usefulness of television political messages, as well as the challenges that limit television in creating voter awareness.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analysed with Python. To start with, the raw data were cleaned, and 220 valid responses were kept for the final analysis; frequencies and percentages were used to present demographic characteristics and responses to questions with answer groups. Means and standard deviations were used to summarise Likert scale items. To make the mean scores clearer, the means were also converted to percentage mean scores using the formula: mean score divided by the maximum scale point, multiplied by 100. This helped the results to be understood in percentage terms as well as in mean scores.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

For Likert scale items, percentage mean was calculated by dividing the mean score by the maximum possible scale score and multiplying by 100. Therefore, a mean of 3.00 on a 5-point scale is understood as 60.0 percent, while a mean of 2.50 on a 4-point scale is understood as 62.5 percent.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex: Male	120	54.5
Sex: Female	100	45.5
Age: 18-25 years	78	35.5
Age: 26-35 years	83	37.7
Age: 36-45 years	59	26.8
Education: Secondary	98	44.5
Education: Tertiary	122	55.5
Registered voter: Yes	104	47.3
Registered voter: No	116	52.7

Source: Online Survey, 2026.

Objective One: Types of Political and Electoral Programmes Respondents Watched

The objective was to find out the types of political and electoral programmes that voters most frequently watch on television. The result shows that television news bulletins were the most watched, with 54 respondents, or 24.5 percent. Political talk shows and debates followed closely with 52 respondents, or 23.6 percent. Voter education programmes had 36 respondents, or 16.4 percent. This shows that normal news and discussion-based programmes are more common sources of election information than direct voter education programmes.

Table 4.1: Political Programmes Frequently Watched by Respondents

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Programme type most frequently watched	Television news bulletins	54	24.5
Programme type most frequently watched	Political talk shows and debates	52	23.6
Programme type most frequently watched	News bulletins	41	18.6

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Programme type most frequently watched	Candidate campaign adverts	37	16.8
Programme type most frequently watched	Voter education programmes	36	16.4
Televised debates	Rarely	79	35.9
Televised debates	Often	72	32.7
Televised debates	Very often	69	31.4
Voter education programmes	Often	83	37.7
Voter education programmes	Rarely	70	31.8
Voter education programmes	Very often	67	30.5
Campaign rally coverage	Often	79	35.9
Campaign rally coverage	Very often	72	32.7
Campaign rally coverage	Rarely	69	31.4

Source: Online Survey, 2026.

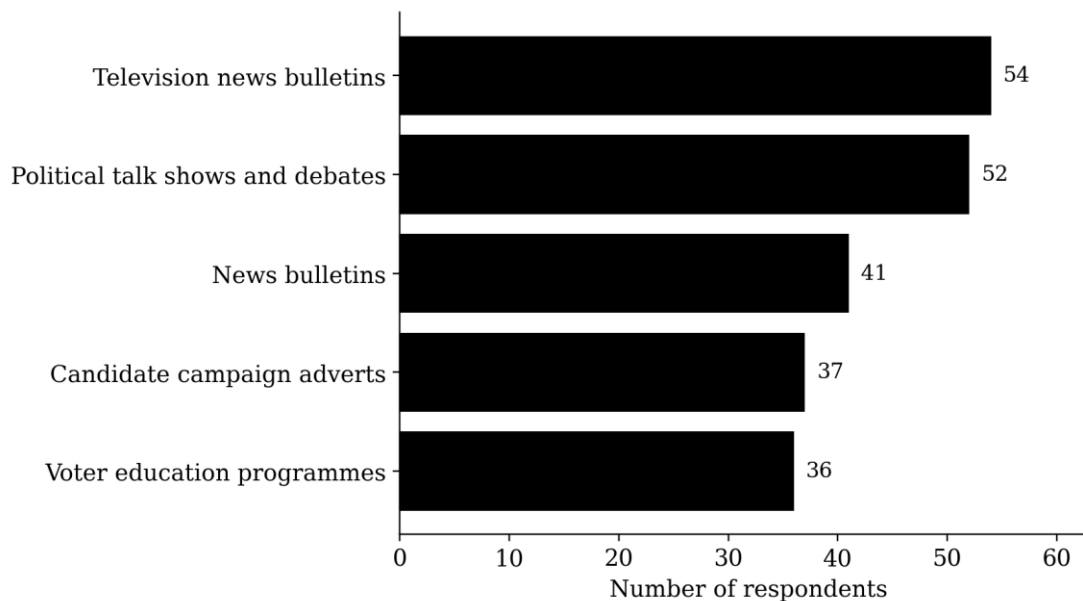


Figure 4.1: 2: Most Frequently Watched political Programmes

Source: Online Survey, 2026.

The chart makes the programme preference easier to see. News bulletins and political talk shows were the leading programme types, while voter education programmes were watched by fewer respondents.

Objective Two: Television Exposure and Awareness of Candidates, Parties and Election Issues

The objective examined how television exposure creates awareness of candidates, political parties and key election issues. The result shows moderate agreement across all the items under this objective. The overall mean for candidate, party and issue awareness was 3.16 on a 5-point scale. This shows that respondents generally accepted that television helped them understand candidates, parties and election issues, but the influence was not very strong.

The highest mean under this section was 3.35 for the statement that television helped respondents compare the promises and programmes of different candidates. This suggests that television is especially useful when voters want to compare political actors. Another important result was that respondents felt more informed after watching political programmes on television, with a mean of 3.23.

Table 2.2: Television and Awareness of Candidates, Parties and Election Issues

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean (%)
Television helped respondents know candidates and their backgrounds.	3.11	1.48	Moderate agreement	62.2
Television helped respondents understand what parties stand for.	3.18	1.43	Moderate agreement	63.6

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean (%)
Television helped respondents learn key election issues.	3.15	1.38	Moderate agreement	63.0
Television increased interest in following political developments.	3.0	1.33	Moderate agreement	60.0
Without television, respondents would know little about candidates and parties.	3.13	1.4	Moderate agreement	62.6
Television helped respondents compare candidate promises and programmes.	3.35	1.4	Moderate agreement	67.0
Respondents felt more informed after watching political programmes on television.	3.23	1.39	Moderate agreement	64.6

Source: Online Survey, 2026.

Object Three: Influence of Television on voters' Understanding of Electoral Procedures

The third objective examined the influence of television on voters' understanding of electoral procedures such as voter registration, PVC use, voting process and election rules. The overall mean for electoral procedure awareness was 3.06 on a 5-point scale. This shows moderate agreement; respondents generally accepted that television helped them understand electoral procedures, but again the influence was not very strong.

The strongest item in this section was the statement that television helped respondents learn INEC rules and regulations, with a mean of 3.20. The lowest item was voting confidence, with a mean of 2.96. This suggests that even when television gives information, it may not be enough to make people feel confident about participating in voting.

Table 4.3: Television Influence on voters' Understanding of Electoral Procedures

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark	Mean (%)
Television helped respondents understand voter registration with INEC.	3.06	1.4	Moderate agreement	61.2
Television helped respondents understand correct PVC use.	3.03	1.49	Moderate agreement	60.6
Television taught respondents election-day steps at the polling unit.	3.11	1.39	Moderate agreement	62.2
Television created awareness of electoral offences.	3.03	1.42	Moderate agreement	60.6
Television helped respondents understand voter rights under Nigerian law.	3.02	1.38	Moderate agreement	60.4
Television helped respondents learn INEC rules and regulations.	3.2	1.38	Moderate agreement	64.0
Television made respondents more confident about voting.	2.96	1.39	Moderate agreement	59.2

Source: Online Survey, 2026.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first objective was to identify the types of programmes watched. The study found that television news bulletins and political talk shows and debates were the most watched programme types. Direct voter education programmes were watched by fewer respondents. This suggests that many respondents learn about elections indirectly through news and discussions rather than through formal voter education programmes.

This result agrees with the position of Andrew (2024), who showed that voter education programmes such as INEC Half Hour can teach citizens about registration, voting steps, citizens' rights and peaceful participation. Still, this

study shows that such voter education programmes may not be the first choice for many viewers; it means that election bodies and television stations should not depend only on special voter education programmes. They should also put voter education messages inside news bulletins, talk shows, debates and interviews because those are the programmes many people really watch.

This also supports the agenda-setting argument discussed by Weaver (2025). If television repeatedly gives attention to voter registration, PVC use, peaceful voting, candidate comparison and election rules inside popular programmes, viewers are more likely to see those issues as important. In

other words, the programme type matters because it determines whether the message will reach people.

Television Exposure and Awareness of Candidates, Parties and Election Issues

The second objective examined whether television exposure creates awareness of candidates, political parties and key election issues. The study found moderate awareness, and respondents moderately agreed that television helped them know candidates, understand parties, follow key issues and compare promises. The strongest item was the ability to compare candidate promises and programmes, with a mean of 3.35.

This result agrees with Sides, Vavreck, and Warshaw (2022), who found that televised campaign advertising can influence how voters understand and evaluate candidates, especially in elections where voters have less information about the candidates. Although their study was done in the United States, the logic still helps this Nigerian study. Where local voters do not have deep personal knowledge of all candidates, television can provide names, faces, promises and party positions.

The finding also agrees with Odionye et al (2023), who found that NTA voter education programmes increased residents' political awareness in Delta State. However, this study found only moderate influence, not very strong influence. This difference may be because the respondents in this study watched different types of television content, not only a dedicated voter education programme. Some may have watched news, campaign adverts or entertainment-heavy channels, and this can weaken the depth of awareness gained.

Influence of Television on voters' Understanding of Electoral Procedures

The third objective examined the influence of television on voters' understanding of electoral procedures. The study found that television helped respondents at a moderate level to understand voter registration, PVC use, election-day steps, electoral offences, voter rights and INEC rules. Even so, the mean scores were not high. The lowest was confidence in voting, with a mean of 2.96.

This result agrees with Andrew (2024), who reported that INEC Half Hour on AIT helped viewers learn about voting steps, voter registration, citizens' rights and reporting of electoral offences. It also agrees with the INEC position that voter education is necessary for meaningful participation in elections. Yet the present result shows that knowledge does not always become confidence. A person may know the steps and still feel unsure because of fear, distrust, violence, crowding, past bad experiences or doubts about whether the vote will count.

This shows that voter education through television should go beyond telling people what to do. It should also explain why the process is safe, why their vote matters, what protection exists at polling units and what to do when problems happen. When television only gives instructions without building trust, awareness may improve but confidence may remain weak.

The challenge of bias is also serious. If respondents believe that television stations favour certain parties or candidates, the usefulness of television for voter awareness becomes weaker. This supports the idea that responsible and balanced reporting is not just a professional issue for journalists. It is also a voter education issue because biased reporting can reduce trust and make voters doubt the information they receive.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The results show that respondents had a moderate level of television exposure; news bulletins and political talk shows were the major programme types watched during election periods. Television moderately helped respondents know candidates, parties and election issues, and it also moderately helped them understand electoral procedures. Generally, the descriptive results show that television creates voter awareness, but the level of influence is moderate rather than very strong.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To start with, television stations should include more voter education messages inside news bulletins, political talk shows, and debates because these are the programmes many respondents watch most. Voter education should not be left only for special programmes because some viewers may not watch those programmes regularly.

Also, INEC and other election bodies should work more closely with television stations before and during election periods. They should provide simple, repeated, and practical messages on registration, PVC use, voting steps, electoral offences and voters' rights. These messages should be short enough for ordinary viewers to understand, but clear enough to reduce confusion.

Most importantly, future voter education should target both registered and unregistered residents. Since more than half of the respondents in this study were not registered voters.

Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies can compare television with radio and social media in Oshimili South to know which one creates stronger voter awareness.

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