The Role of Mass Media in Promoting Lifelong Learning Among Adult Learners in Nigeria

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Abstract:

Lifelong learning has become an essential strategy for social inclusion, economic participation, and sustainable development, particularly in developing countries where adult literacy and skills gaps persist. Adult education serves as a major pathway for promoting lifelong learning, while mass media provides wide-reaching platforms capable of enhancing awareness, motivation, and participation among adult learners. This study examines the role of mass media in promoting lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, combining a questionnaire survey of adult learners with in-depth interviews involving adult education facilitators and media practitioners. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The findings reveal that radio remains the most accessible and effective medium for adult learning, followed by television, while digital media offers emerging opportunities constrained by infrastructural and skills-related challenges. Mass media was found to significantly influence awareness of learning opportunities, motivation to enroll, and sustained participation in adult education programmes. However, challenges such as poor electricity supply, high cost of internet services, limited access to digital devices, and low media literacy hinder optimal utilization. The study concludes that mass media plays a critical role in fostering lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria and recommends an integrated media strategy that prioritizes accessibility, cultural relevance, and policy coordination to enhance adult education outcomes.

Keywords: adult education; mass media; lifelong learning; media accessibility; adult learners

I. INTRODUCTION

Lifelong learning has become a central paradigm in contemporary educational discourse, reflecting the need for continuous knowledge acquisition and skills development throughout the lifespan. Rapid technological advancement, globalization, and changing labour market demands have rendered initial formal education insufficient for sustained socio-economic participation [1], [2]. Consequently, adult education has assumed increased importance as a structured mechanism for enabling individuals to update competencies, enhance employability, and participate effectively in civic and social life [3]. In developing countries such as Nigeria, the relevance of lifelong learning is further amplified by persistent challenges including adult illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and social exclusion. According to UNESCO, adult education constitutes a critical pillar of lifelong learning, encompassing literacy education, continuing education, vocational training, and community development programmes [4]. These learning opportunities are particularly vital for adults who were unable to complete formal schooling or whose skills have become obsolete due to economic and technological changes [5].

Mass media plays a significant role in shaping public knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour. Beyond its traditional entertainment and information functions, mass media serves as a powerful instrument for education and development communication [6]. Radio, television, newspapers, and digital media platforms have been widely employed to disseminate educational content, promote public awareness, and support behavioural change initiatives [7]. In the context of adult education, mass media offers flexible, wide-reaching, and cost-effective channels for promoting lifelong learning, particularly among populations constrained by time, geography, or socio-economic factors [8].

In Nigeria, mass media has historically contributed to national development through literacy campaigns, health education, agricultural extension services, and civic enlightenment programmes [9]. Radio, in particular, remains the most accessible medium due to its affordability, portability, and ability to broadcast in local languages, making it especially suitable for adult learners in rural and semi-urban areas [10]. Television and print media have also supported adult learning initiatives, while the rapid expansion of digital media and mobile technologies has introduced new opportunities for informal and non-formal adult learning [11]. The increasing penetration of social media and online platforms has further transformed the landscape of adult learning by enabling peer interaction, self-directed learning, and access to diverse educational resources [12]. However, disparities in access to digital infrastructure, media literacy, and electricity supply continue to limit the equitable utilization of these platforms for adult education in Nigeria [13]. These structural challenges raise important questions about the effectiveness and inclusiveness of media-driven lifelong learning strategies. Despite the recognized potential of mass media in promoting adult education, empirical research focusing specifically on its role in fostering lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria remains limited. Existing studies tend to emphasize formal education or youth-oriented media use, with insufficient attention given to adult learners' media engagement patterns and learning outcomes [14], [15]. This study therefore seeks to examine the role of mass media in promoting lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria, with particular attention to media accessibility, effectiveness, and associated challenges.

II. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL BACKGROUND

A. Conceptual Foundations of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning

Adult education is broadly understood as a structured process of learning activities designed for individuals who have completed or interrupted formal schooling, with the purpose of improving knowledge, skills, competencies, and social participation [16], [17]. Unlike formal education, adult education is characterized by flexibility, learner-centeredness, and responsiveness to social and economic realities [18]. It encompasses literacy education, continuing professional education, vocational training, civic education, and community development initiatives [19]. The concept of lifelong learning extends adult education by integrating learning across the entire life course, including formal, non-formal, and informal learning contexts [20]. Lifelong learning emphasizes continuity, adaptability, and inclusiveness, recognizing learning as a permanent feature of human existence rather than a time-bound activity [21]. International organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and the World Bank have consistently framed lifelong learning as a cornerstone of sustainable development and human capital formation [22], [23]. Jarvis argues that adult learning is fundamentally experiential, shaped by social interaction, work environments, and media exposure [24]. This perspective positions adult learners not as passive recipients of knowledge but as active agents who construct meaning through lived experience [25]. Similarly, Knowles' andragogical theory emphasizes adults' need for self-direction, relevance, and immediate applicability of learning [26].

In developing countries, lifelong learning is closely linked to poverty reduction, employability, social inclusion, and democratic participation [27]. In Nigeria, adult education has historically been used to address mass illiteracy, civic disengagement, and economic marginalization [28]. National policy frameworks recognize adult education as a mechanism for empowering citizens to participate effectively in national development [29]. However, scholars observe that institutional adult education alone is insufficient to meet the growing learning needs of adult populations [30]. This limitation has led to increased attention to alternative learning environments, including media-based and technology-mediated learning spaces [31]. Lifelong learning, therefore, increasingly relies on communication systems that transcend physical classrooms and formal institutions [32].

B. Mass Media and Development Communication

Mass media refers to organized channels of communication capable of reaching large and diverse audiences simultaneously [33]. Traditionally, mass media includes radio, television, newspapers, and magazines; however, contemporary scholarship expands this definition to include digital and networked media platforms [34]. Mass media performs several core social functions, including information dissemination, education, socialization, and cultural transmission [35]. Development communication theory conceptualizes mass media as a strategic instrument for promoting social change and national development [36]. According to this framework, media institutions in developing societies are expected to support development priorities such as education, health, economic empowerment, and civic participation [37]. Servaes emphasizes that development communication is most effective when media content is participatory, culturally relevant, and locally grounded [38]. Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory further explains how mass media accelerates the spread of new ideas, practices, and knowledge within social systems [39]. Media exposure increases awareness and interest, while interpersonal communication reinforces adoption and sustained use [40]. In adult education contexts, this process is critical for motivating learners to engage in lifelong learning opportunities [41]. Empirical studies demonstrate that mass media has played a significant role in literacy campaigns, agricultural extension, public health education, and civic awareness programmes across Africa and other developing regions [42], [43]. Radio-based education, in particular, has been identified as a cost-effective and scalable approach to adult learning [44]. Television and print media have also contributed to educational development by providing structured learning content and reinforcing public enlightenment [45].

Critically, scholars caution that media-driven development is not inherently transformative unless aligned with local needs and participatory pedagogies [46]. Top-down media messaging may raise awareness but fail to produce meaningful learning outcomes without learner engagement [47]. This insight underscores the importance of integrating adult education principles into media content design [48].

C. Media Use in Adult Education

The use of mass media in adult education has a long and well-documented history. Educational radio programmes have been widely used to support adult literacy, numeracy, agricultural education, and civic learning [49]. Research consistently shows that radio is particularly effective in reaching adult learners with limited formal education due to its oral nature and use of local languages [50], [51]. Television-based adult education has also gained prominence, especially for vocational training and skills acquisition [52]. Visual demonstration enhances comprehension and retention, making television suitable for teaching practical skills [53]. Studies indicate that adults exposed to instructional television programmes demonstrate improved learning motivation and behavioural change [54]. Print media, though declining in influence, continues to support adult education through newspapers, instructional manuals, pamphlets, and self-learning materials [55]. Print resources are particularly useful for reinforcing concepts introduced through broadcast media [56]. The rapid expansion of digital media has significantly transformed adult learning environments. Online platforms, mobile applications, and social media networks enable self-directed learning, peer collaboration, and access to global knowledge resources [57]. Siemens' theory of connectivism highlights how digital media facilitates learning through networks rather than linear instruction [58]. Social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube have emerged as informal learning spaces where adults exchange information, acquire skills, and participate in learning communities [59], [60]. Studies show that digital media supports flexibility and learner autonomy, key principles of adult education [61]. However, digital learning effectiveness depends on access, digital literacy, and socio-economic conditions [62].

In Nigeria, media use in adult education reflects broader structural inequalities. While radio remains widely accessible, digital media use is unevenly distributed across age, income, and geographic location [63], [64]. Older adults and rural learners are more likely to experience digital exclusion, limiting the reach of online lifelong learning initiatives [65]. Scholars argue that an integrated media approach combining traditional and digital platforms offers the most effective strategy for promoting adult lifelong learning [66], [67]. Such integration allows adult learners to transition from awareness to sustained engagement across multiple learning environments [68].

D. Media Accessibility and Adult Learning in Nigeria

Media accessibility is a decisive factor in determining the effectiveness of mass media interventions in adult education and lifelong learning. Accessibility encompasses physical access to media devices, affordability of media services, availability of infrastructure, linguistic inclusiveness, and users' media literacy competencies [32], [35]. In adult education contexts, accessibility directly influences awareness, participation, and continuity of learning engagement [24], [26]. In Nigeria, radio remains the most accessible mass medium, particularly among adult learners in rural and semi-urban areas [43], [49]. Its affordability, portability, and capacity for local-language broadcasting make it suitable for adult learners with limited formal education [50]. Studies indicate that radio-based adult education programmes have been effective in promoting literacy, civic awareness, and health education, especially where face-to-face instruction is constrained [42], [44]. Television access, by contrast, is more prevalent in urban areas and among higher-income households [51]. While television offers strong pedagogical advantages through visual demonstration and structured programming [48], its effectiveness for adult learning in Nigeria is limited by unstable electricity supply and high operational costs [55]. Consequently, television-based adult education initiatives often fail to reach the most marginalized learners [41]. Digital media accessibility in Nigeria reflects broader socio-economic inequalities. Although mobile phone penetration has increased significantly, access to internet-enabled devices and reliable connectivity remains uneven [51], [55]. Younger adults and urban residents are more likely to engage with digital platforms for learning, while older adults and rural populations experience digital exclusion [53], [64]. This divide has implications for equitable lifelong learning opportunities [27].

Language accessibility further shapes media effectiveness. Adult learners demonstrate higher engagement when educational content is delivered in indigenous languages rather than exclusively in English [43], [50]. Scholars argue that culturally and linguistically relevant media content enhances comprehension, motivation, and retention among adult learners [38], [46]. However, many national media programmes remain urban- and elite-oriented, limiting their impact on adult education outcomes [37].

E. Challenges in Media-Driven Adult Education

Despite the recognized potential of mass media to promote adult education and lifelong learning, numerous structural and institutional challenges limit its effectiveness. One major constraint is inadequate infrastructure, including unreliable electricity supply, limited broadcast coverage, and poor internet connectivity [51], [55]. These deficiencies disproportionately affect rural communities, where adult education needs are often greatest [27], [43]. Low levels of media and digital literacy among adult learners constitute another significant barrier [32], [62]. Many adults lack the skills required to critically interpret media messages or effectively utilize digital platforms for learning [38]. This challenge is particularly pronounced among older adults, who may experience anxiety or resistance toward new media technologies [26], [53]. Policy fragmentation further undermines media-driven adult education initiatives. Scholars observe weak coordination between education ministries, media regulatory bodies, and broadcasting organizations [29], [37]. As a result, educational media programmes are often inconsistent, short-lived, or poorly aligned with adult education curricula [48]. Commercial pressures within media institutions also reduce the prioritization of educational content in favor of entertainment-driven programming [47], [49].

Funding constraints represent an additional challenge. Sustainable educational broadcasting requires investment in content development, training, and distribution [42], [44]. However, adult education programmes frequently receive limited financial support compared to formal education initiatives [22], [28]. This funding gap constrains innovation and scalability in media-based adult learning [30].

Pedagogical limitations also affect media-based adult education. Freire cautions that top-down communication models may reinforce passivity rather than critical engagement [46]. Media programmes that fail to incorporate adult learning principles such as dialogue, relevance, and learner participation are unlikely to produce transformative learning outcomes [25], [26].

F. Empirical Studies and Identified Research Gaps

Empirical research across Africa and other developing regions provides substantial evidence that mass media positively influences adult learning awareness, motivation, and participation [42], [49], [50]. Studies on community radio initiatives demonstrate improvements in literacy acquisition, civic engagement, and social empowerment among adult learners [50], [51]. Similarly, television-based instructional programmes have been associated with enhanced vocational skills and behavioural change [45], [48]. Digital media studies indicate that online platforms and social media support informal and self-directed adult learning by enabling peer interaction and flexible access to information [31], [58], [59]. However, these benefits are unevenly distributed due to digital access disparities [53], [55]. Research consistently shows that digital learning adoption among adults is influenced by age, education level, income, and prior media exposure [26], [62]. Despite these insights, significant research gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature focuses on youth, formal education, or isolated media interventions rather than adult learners' holistic lifelong learning trajectories [52], [54]. Second, few studies adopt an integrative perspective that examines the combined influence of traditional and digital media on adult education outcomes [31], [66]. In the Nigerian context, empirical studies specifically examining adult learners' media usage patterns and sustained learning engagement are limited [28], [54]. Existing research often emphasizes policy analysis or descriptive accounts without robust empirical validation [29], [41]. There is also limited

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attention to adult learners' perspectives on media relevance, accessibility, and pedagogical effectiveness [24], [38].

This study addresses these gaps by empirically examining the role of mass media in promoting lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on accessibility, effectiveness, and contextual challenges across multiple media platforms.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the role of mass media in promoting lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria. The mixed-methods design was considered appropriate because it allows for a comprehensive analysis of media exposure patterns while also capturing the lived experiences and perceptions of adult learners and practitioners. The integration of both approaches enhanced data triangulation and strengthened the validity of the findings. The quantitative component focused on measuring levels of media access, frequency of media use, and perceived influence of mass media on participation in adult education programmes. The qualitative component provided in-depth insights into how media-based adult education initiatives are designed, implemented, and constrained in practice.

B. Area of the Study

The study was conducted in selected urban and semi-urban areas in Nigeria. These locations were purposively chosen to reflect variations in media infrastructure, access to adult education centres, and socio-economic conditions. The selected areas provided a suitable context for examining differences in exposure to radio, television, and digital media among adult learners.

C. Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of adult learners enrolled in adult and non-formal education centres within the study areas. Adult learners were defined as individuals aged eighteen years and above participating in literacy, continuing education, vocational, or community education programmes. In addition, adult education facilitators and media practitioners involved in educational programming formed part of the study population for the qualitative component.

D. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample size of 250 adult learners was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was based on gender, age group, and type of adult education programme to ensure adequate representation and reduce sampling bias. This approach enhanced the generalizability of the quantitative findings. For the qualitative aspect, ten adult education facilitators and five media practitioners were selected using purposive sampling. Selection was based on participants' professional experience and involvement in adult education or educational media production.

E. Instruments for Data Collection

Two main instruments were used for data collection:

i. Structured Questionnaire: The questionnaire comprised closed-ended items designed to measure media access, frequency of media use, preferred media platforms, and perceived influence of mass media on learning motivation and participation. The items were structured in simple language to accommodate varying literacy levels among respondents.

ii. Semi-Structured Interview Guide: The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions aimed at eliciting detailed perspectives from facilitators and media practitioners on media-based adult education programmes, their effectiveness, and associated challenges.

F. Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The validity of the questionnaire was established through expert review by specialists in adult education and mass communication. Their feedback informed revisions to improve clarity and relevance. A pilot study involving twenty adult learners was conducted to test the reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the questionnaire yielded a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.81, indicating acceptable reliability.

G. Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through face-to-face administration of questionnaires to ensure high response rates and to assist respondents who required clarification. Research assistants were trained to explain questionnaire items in simple terms and, where necessary, in local languages. Interviews with facilitators and media practitioners were conducted in person and audio-recorded with participants' consent.

H. Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Regression analysis was further employed to examine the relationship between mass media exposure and adult learners' participation in lifelong learning activities. Qualitative data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved coding interview responses, identifying recurring themes, and interpreting findings in relation to the research objectives.

I. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and their voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, and confidentiality of respondents' identities was assured. Data collected were used solely for academic purposes.

IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A. Response Rate and Demographic Characteristics

Out of the 250 questionnaires administered to adult learners, 232 were validly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 92.8%. This high response rate was achieved through direct administration and follow-up.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 232)

Variable	Category	Freq.	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	101	43.5
	Female	131	56.5
Age (years)	18–24	23	9.9
	25–34	79	34.1
	35–44	63	27.1
	45 and above	67	28.9
Programme Type	Adult literacy	111	47.8
	Vocational/skills	73	31.5
	Continuing education	48	20.7

Analysis: The demographic distribution indicates a higher participation of females in adult education programmes. Most respondents fall within the economically productive age range (25–44 years), suggesting that adult education is closely linked to employment and livelihood needs.

B. Accessibility of Mass Media Platforms

Respondents were asked to indicate their access to different mass media platforms.

Table 2: Accessibility of Mass Media Platforms

Media Platform	Accessible (Yes)	Percentage (%)
Radio	195	84.1
Television	145	62.5
Digital media (internet/smartphone)	112	48.3
Print media	76	32.8

Analysis: Radio emerged as the most accessible medium among adult learners, followed by television. Digital media access remains below 50%, reflecting infrastructural and economic constraints, particularly among rural and low-income learners.
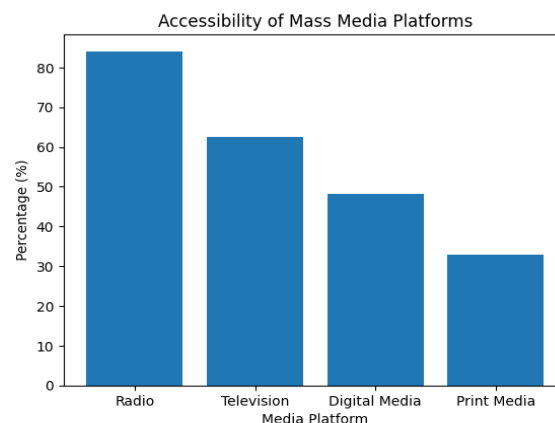

Fig. 1. Accessibility of Mass Media Platforms among Adult Learners

Figure 1 illustrates the level of access to different mass media platforms among adult learners. Radio shows the highest level of accessibility, followed by television and digital media, while print media remains the least accessible.

C. Frequency of Media Use for Learning Purposes

Respondents indicated how frequently they used media platforms specifically for learning-related activities.

Table 3: Frequency of Media Use for Learning

Media Platform	Freq. (%)	Occasionally (%)	Rarely (%)
Radio	71.6	19.4	9.0
Television	45.7	31.0	23.3
Digital media	39.2	27.6	33.2

Analysis: Radio remains the most frequently used learning medium, reinforcing its relevance in adult education. Digital media shows growing use, though irregular engagement suggests barriers related to cost, skills, and connectivity.

D. Influence of Mass Media on Lifelong Learning Participation

Respondents assessed the extent to which mass media influenced their awareness and participation in adult education programmes.

Table 4: Influence of Mass Media on Learning Participation

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Media informed me about learning opportunities	68.5	17.7	13.8
Media motivated me to enroll in adult education	64.2	20.3	15.5
Media encouraged me to continue learning	61.2	22.8	16.0

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Analysis: A majority of respondents acknowledged the

Challenge	Freque ncy	Percentage (%)
Poor electricity supply	161	69.4
High cost of internet/data	127	54.7
Limited access to devices	113	48.9
Language barriers	98	42.3
Low media/digital skills	91	39.2

positive role of mass media in promoting awareness, motivation, and continuity in lifelong learning, highlighting media's function beyond information dissemination.

E. Perceived Effectiveness of Media Platforms

Respondents rated the effectiveness of different media platforms in supporting their learning.

Table 5: Perceived Effectiveness of Media Platforms

Media Platform	Highly Effective (%)	Moderately Effective (%)	Not Effective (%)
Radio	72.8	18.5	8.7
Television	49.1	30.6	20.3
Digital media	35.8	33.6	30.6

Analysis: Radio was rated as the most effective medium, largely due to ease of access, local language use, and relevance of content. Digital media received mixed evaluations, reflecting both its potential and persistent access challenges.
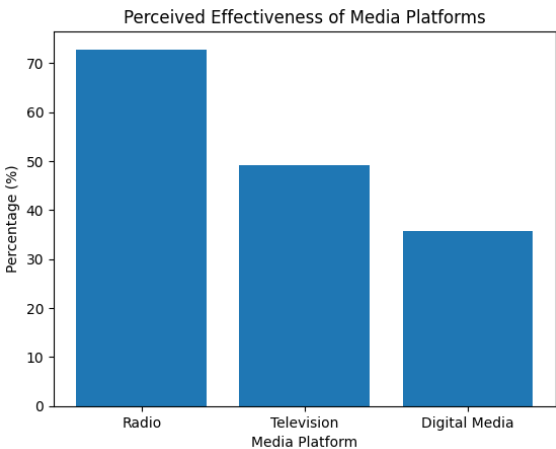

Fig. 2. Perceived Effectiveness of Media Platforms for Adult Learning

Figure 2 shows respondents' perceptions of the effectiveness of mass media platforms in supporting learning. Radio is rated as the most effective medium, while digital media exhibits moderate effectiveness due to access and skill constraints.

F. Challenges Affecting Media-Based Adult Learning

Respondents identified major constraints limiting effective use of mass media for learning.

Table 6: Challenges Affecting Media-Based Adult Learning

Analysis: Infrastructure-related challenges remain the most significant barriers. These constraints disproportionately affect older adults and rural learners, limiting the inclusive potential of media-based lifelong learning.
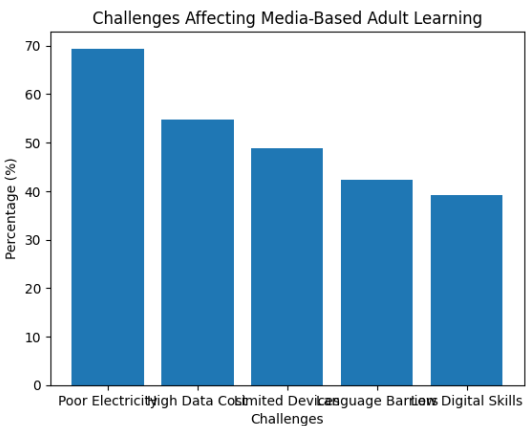

Fig. 3. Challenges Affecting Media-Based Adult Learning

Figure 3 highlights the major challenges limiting the use of mass media for adult learning. Poor electricity supply and high internet costs emerge as the most significant constraints.

G. Analysis of Media Exposure and Lifelong Learning Participation

To examine the influence of mass media on lifelong learning participation, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. Media exposure served as the independent variable, while adult learners' participation in lifelong learning activities served as the dependent variable.

Table 7: Regression Analysis of Media Exposure and Lifelong Learning Participation

Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error
1	0.61	0.37	0.36	0.48

Analysis: The regression results show a moderate positive relationship between media exposure and lifelong learning participation (R = 0.61). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.37) indicates that approximately 37% of the variation in adult learners' participation in lifelong learning can be explained by their exposure to mass media. This suggests that mass media

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plays a substantial role in influencing adult learning engagement, though other factors also contribute.

H. Contribution of Individual Media Platforms

To further understand the relative contribution of different media platforms, standardized beta coefficients were examined.

Table 8: Relative Contribution of Media Platforms

Media Platform	Beta (β)	Significance
Radio	0.43	Significant
Television	0.29	Significant
Digital media	0.18	Moderate

Analysis: Radio emerged as the strongest predictor of lifelong learning participation, followed by television. Digital media showed a weaker but still positive contribution. This result confirms that accessibility and familiarity significantly influence the effectiveness of media platforms in adult education.

I. Analysis of Challenges Affecting Media-Based Learning

Mean score analysis was conducted to determine the severity of challenges affecting media-based adult learning.

Table 9: Mean Scores of Challenges Affecting Media-Based Adult Learning

Challenge	Mean	Interpretation
Poor electricity supply	3.72	High
High cost of internet/data	3.41	High
Limited access to devices	3.26	Moderate
Language barriers	3.11	Moderate
Low media/digital skills	3.04	Moderate

(Scale: 1 = Very Low, 4 = Very High)

Analysis: Poor electricity supply was identified as the most severe constraint, followed by high internet costs. These infrastructural barriers significantly reduce the effectiveness of both traditional and digital media in promoting lifelong learning. Skill-related challenges, while moderate, indicate the need for media and digital literacy interventions within adult education programmes.

J. Qualitative Findings from Interviews

Interviews with adult education facilitators and media practitioners revealed that mass media is viewed as an essential complement to face-to-face instruction. Participants emphasized that learning outcomes improve when media content is practical, culturally relevant, and delivered in familiar languages. However, inconsistent funding and weak institutional collaboration were identified as major limitations.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the research objectives, existing literature, and the theoretical perspectives underpinning the study. The discussion focuses on media accessibility, patterns of media use, the influence of mass media on lifelong learning participation, and the challenges affecting media-driven adult education in Nigeria.

A. Media Accessibility and Adult Learning

The findings reveal that radio remains the most accessible mass media platform among adult learners, followed by television and digital media. This outcome reflects the enduring relevance of traditional media in adult education, particularly in contexts characterized by infrastructural limitations. The dominance of radio can be attributed to its affordability, portability, and ability to broadcast in local languages, which aligns with core principles of adult education that emphasize accessibility and relevance. The relatively lower access to digital media highlights persistent structural inequalities in access to internet services and digital devices. Although digital platforms offer significant potential for flexible and self-directed learning, their effectiveness in promoting lifelong learning among adults remains constrained by socio-economic and infrastructural barriers. This finding supports the argument that media-based adult education in developing countries must adopt an inclusive approach that prioritizes widely accessible platforms.

B. Patterns of Media Use for Learning Purposes

The results indicate that adult learners predominantly use radio for learning-related activities, while television and digital media are used less frequently. This pattern suggests that adult learners tend to engage with media platforms that require minimal technical skills and align with their daily routines. Radio programmes, especially those focusing on public enlightenment and skills development, provide learning opportunities that are flexible and compatible with adult responsibilities such as work and family obligations. The moderate use of digital media for learning reflects a transitional stage in adult learning practices. While younger adult learners increasingly utilize online platforms and social media for informal learning, irregular usage indicates ongoing challenges related to digital literacy, cost of internet access, and limited institutional support. This finding underscores the need for gradual integration of digital media into adult education frameworks rather than abrupt substitution of traditional media.

C. Influence of Mass Media on Lifelong Learning Participation

A major finding of the study is the significant influence of mass media on adult learners' awareness and participation in lifelong learning programmes. The results demonstrate that mass media serves as a critical entry point into adult education by informing learners about available opportunities and motivating enrollment and sustained participation. This supports the premise of development communication theory, which emphasizes the role of media in facilitating social change and educational development. The positive relationship

between media exposure and learning participation further indicates that consistent engagement with educational media content reinforces learning motivation. Radio's strong predictive influence suggests that media platforms embedded in everyday life are more effective in sustaining lifelong learning engagement. This finding reinforces the view that lifelong learning is not limited to formal educational settings but is deeply intertwined with everyday media consumption.

D. Perceived Effectiveness of Media Platforms

The high effectiveness rating of radio confirms its pedagogical value in adult education. Adult learners' preference for radio-based learning can be linked to its conversational style, simplicity, and cultural familiarity. Television's moderate effectiveness reflects its strength in demonstrating practical skills, particularly in vocational education, while also highlighting access-related limitations. Digital media received mixed evaluations, reflecting both its learning potential and its exclusionary tendencies. While digital platforms enable interactive and self-directed learning, their effectiveness depends heavily on learners' digital competence and access to infrastructure. This finding suggests that digital media should complement rather than replace traditional media in adult education strategies.

E. Challenges in Media-Based Adult Education

The study identified infrastructure-related challenges, particularly poor electricity supply and high internet costs, as the most significant barriers to effective media-based adult learning. These challenges constrain both traditional and digital media use and disproportionately affect rural and low-income learners. Language barriers and low media literacy further limit comprehension and meaningful engagement with educational content. Institutional challenges, including inadequate funding and weak collaboration between media organizations and adult education providers, also emerged as critical constraints. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of mass media in promoting lifelong learning depends not only on access but also on supportive policy and institutional frameworks.

F. Implications for Adult Education and Mass Communication

The findings of this study highlight the need for a coordinated approach to adult education and mass communication. Media strategies for lifelong learning must prioritize inclusivity, cultural relevance, and learner engagement. Traditional media, particularly radio, should remain central to adult education initiatives, while digital media should be gradually integrated through capacity-building and infrastructure development. By aligning media content with adult learning principles and national development goals, mass media can serve as a powerful catalyst for lifelong learning in Nigeria.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of mass media in promoting lifelong learning among adult learners in Nigeria. The findings demonstrate that mass media remains a critical tool for

enhancing awareness, participation, and continuity in adult education programmes. Among the various media platforms examined, radio emerged as the most accessible and effective medium, owing to its affordability, wide reach, and capacity for local-language communication. Television and digital media also contributed to adult learning, though their impact was constrained by infrastructural, economic, and skills-related barriers.

The study further revealed that exposure to educational media content positively influences adult learners' motivation to enroll in and sustain participation in lifelong learning activities. However, persistent challenges such as unreliable electricity supply, high internet costs, limited access to digital devices, and low media literacy continue to restrict the full potential of media-based adult education. These findings underscore the need for a balanced and inclusive media strategy that integrates traditional and digital platforms within adult education frameworks. The study confirms that mass media is not merely a supplementary channel but a central component of lifelong learning promotion in developing contexts. When strategically aligned with adult education principles and supported by enabling infrastructure and policies, mass media can significantly contribute to human capital development and social inclusion.

VII.. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

i. Strengthen Educational Broadcasting: Government and educational agencies should collaborate with media organizations to develop and sustain adult-focused educational programmes, particularly on radio and television, using local languages and contextually relevant content.

ii. Expand Community Radio Initiatives: Community radio stations should be supported and expanded to reach rural and marginalized adult learners, as they provide accessible platforms for localized lifelong learning.

iii. Promote Digital Inclusion: Targeted interventions should be implemented to improve access to digital devices, affordable internet services, and electricity, especially in rural areas, to enhance the reach of digital learning platforms.

iv. Enhance Media and Digital Literacy: Adult education programmes should incorporate media and digital literacy training to enable learners to effectively utilize media platforms for learning and critical engagement.

v. Improve Policy Coordination: Stronger coordination between adult education authorities, media regulatory bodies, and broadcasting organizations is necessary to ensure policy coherence and sustainability of media-based adult education initiatives.

vi. Future studies may adopt longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of media exposure on adult learning outcomes. Comparative studies across regions or countries would also provide deeper

insights into contextual variations in media-based lifelong learning.

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