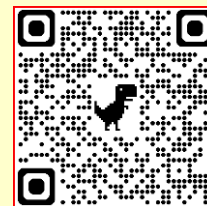


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THE IMPACTS OF RADIO PROGRAMS AMONGST THE YOUTHS IN PROMOTING DIGITAL LEARNING ACROSS PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN AKWA IBOM STATE.

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ABSTRACT

The advent of digital technology has made digital literacy a necessity for youths in the 21st Century. In Nigeria, and particularly in Akwa Ibom State, radio remains one of the most accessible and affordable media channels for disseminating educational information to youths in both urban and rural areas. Despite government and non-governmental efforts to promote digital learning through radio broadcasts, there is limited empirical evidence on the extent to which these programs influence youths in public secondary schools. This study therefore assessed the impact of radio programs amongst youths in promoting digital learning across public schools in Akwa Ibom State. The Study was anchored on the Social Learning Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory. A survey research design was adopted. The population comprised SS1-SS3 students in public secondary schools in Akwa Ibom State. A sample size of 400 respondents was selected using multi-stage sampling technique. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection and data were analysed using frequencies, percentages and Chi square with the aid of SPSS. Findings revealed that youths are exposed to radio programs promoting digital learning and that such programs have significantly influence their knowledge and positive attitude towards the use of ICT tools for learning. However, challenges such as poor radio signals, irregular broadcast time and lack of access to computers were identified. The study concluded that radio programs are effective tools for promoting digital learning among youths. It was recommended that government, in collaboration with radio stations, should increase airtime for educational programs, improve signal strength and provide ICT facilities in public schools to reinforce radio lessons.

KEY WORDS: Radio Programs, Youths, Digital Learning, Public Schools, ICT, Akwa Ibom State

Introduction

Background to the Study

Radio remains the most accessible mass media in Akwa Ibom State due to low cost, wide coverage and use of local languages; with over 8 radio stations including Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation (AKBC 90.5FM), Comfort 95.1FM, and Planet 101.1FM reaching students in both urban and rural public schools.

The 21st Century is driven by digital technology, making digital literacy a core requirement for youths to participate meaningfully in education, work, and governance.

Digital learning refers to the use of computers, internet and ICT tools to access educational content and develop skills needed for the modern economy (OECD, 2023). In Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education has emphasized digital skills as part of the National Digital Economy Policy, yet many public schools still lack computers and internet access (Federal Ministry of Education, 2024).

In 2026, the State also launched an AI Powered Learning Programme across 67 Public Primary Schools to improve learning outcomes through technology (The Nation, 2026).

Radio remains the most widely accessed medium in Nigeria, reaching 83.4% of the population and serving as the primary source of information in rural and peri-urban communities (ACE, 2022). Due to its affordability and wide coverage, radio has been used extensively to deliver educational content. In 2023, UNICEF Nigeria established radio learning hubs that reached over 1.5 million learners in Akwa Ibom South Senatorial District with literacy and numeracy lessons (UNICEF Nigeria, 2023). At the national level, the Federal Government in 2025 approved a dedicated radio station to broadcast adult and non-formal education lessons to reach learners in remote areas (Punch, 2025).

In Akwa Ibom State, radio stations have also keyed into digital empowerment. In 2024, Premium 89.9FM in Utu Abak launched the Premium FM Digital Academy, an 8 week free training for 25 youths in digital entrepreneurship, content creation and broadcasting. The Managing Director stated that the initiative aligns with the ARISE Agenda and is designed to bridge the digital gap between urban and rural communities (Premium 89.9 FM, 2024).

Despite these interventions, there is limited empirical evidence on how radio programs specifically impact youths in public schools in Akwa Ibom State regarding digital learning. Many students still graduate with little or no computer skills. This raises concerns about whether radio programs are effectively promoting digital learning among youths and what factors enhance or limit their impact.

It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the impacts of radio programs amongst youths in promoting digital learning across public schools in Akwa Ibom State.

The Nigerian Government and NGOs have used radio to promote education through programs like "School on Air", "ICT for Youth", and digital literacy jingles. The ARISE Agenda in Akwa Ibom State also emphasizes technology education. However, despite high radio listenership among youths, there is little research on how these radio programs actually impact digital learning in public schools.

In Akwa Ibom State, the ARISE Agenda of Governor Umo Eno places strong emphasis on youth empowerment and technology. In 2025, the State government trained 135 youths on ICT skills through the ARISE ICT Hub to prepare them for the digital economy (Voice

of Nigeria, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

While radio is recognized as a cheap and accessible tool for education (Punch, 2025), Public School Students in Akwa Ibom State continue to face a digital skills gap. Government and private radio stations have introduced programs to promote ICT and digital entrepreneurship, such as the Premium FM Digital Academy (Premium 89.9FM, 2024) and State wide ICT training under the ARISE Agenda (Voice of Nigeria, 2025). However, it is unclear to what extent these radio programs are reaching the youths in public schools, and whether exposure translates to improved knowledge, attitude and practice of digital learning.

Challenges such as poor radio signals in rural areas, irregular broadcast schedules, and lack of ICT facilities in school may be limiting the effectiveness of radio as an educational tool (Adebayo & Musa, 2021).

Therefore, this study seeks to assess the impacts of radio programs amongst youths in promoting digital learning across public schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

Main Objective

To assess the impacts of radio programs amongst youths in promoting digital learning across public schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the radio programs promoting digital learning listened to by youths in public schools in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To determine the level of exposure of youths to radio programs on digital learning.
3. To examine the influence of radio programs on youths' knowledge and attitude towards digital learning.
4. To identify the challenges limiting the effectiveness of radio programs in promoting digital learning in public schools.

Research Questions

1. What radio programs promoting digital learning do youths in public schools listen to in Akwa Ibom State.
2. To what extent are youths exposed to radio programs on digital learning.
3. What is the influence of radio programs on youths' knowledge and attitude towards digital learning?
4. What are the challenges facing the use of radio programs to promote digital learning in public schools?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to several stakeholders:

- 1) **To the Akwa Ibom State Government:** Findings will help policymakers under the ARISE Agenda to design more effective radio-based digital literacy learning programs for youths.
- 2) **To Radio Stations:** Stations like AKBC, Comfort FM and Premium FM will understand what content and timing best reach students.

- 3) **To Ministry of Education:** Will inform strategies for integrating radio with classroom ICT instructions in public schools.
- 4) **To Researchers:** Will contribute to literature on media, education, and youth development in Nigeria.
- 5) **To Students/Youths:** Will encourage more use of radio for learning.

Scope of the Study

The study will focus on public schools in the 3 Senatorial Districts of Akwa Ibom State. It will cover students aged 12-19 years who are in SS1-SS3. The study will examine radio programs broadcast between 2023 and 2026 that promote digital learning and ICT skills in an educational context.

Operational Definition of Terms

- 1) **Radio Programs:** Educational programs, jingles, phone-in shows and campaigns aired by Radio Stations (RS) / Broadcasters in Nigeria that promote ICT and digital skills.
- 2) **Digital Learning:** The use of Computers, Internet and digital tools for teaching, learning and skill acquisition.
- 3) **Youths:** Students in public schools aged 12-19 years.
- 4) **Impact:** The change in knowledge, attitude or behaviour of youths resulting from exposure to radio programs.

Theoretical Framework:

This study is anchored on two Theories

1. Social Learning Theory by Albert Bandura

Bandura's theory posits that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others through media. Learning occurs through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Radio programs act as a "model" where presenters demonstrate digital skills, explain ICT concepts and interview tech experts. Youths who listen repeatedly can retain and reproduce the knowledge by practicing in school or at home. This theory is relevant because radio can influence youths' knowledge and attitude towards digital learning without direct face-to-face contact.

2. Uses and Gratifications Theory by Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch 1974

This theory assumes that audience are active and select media to satisfy specific needs: Information, Education, Entertainment and Social Interaction. Youths choose to listen to radio programs on digital learning because they seek knowledge/skills for exams and opportunities under the ARISE Agenda. If the program gratifies their needs for ICT knowledge, they will continue listening and apply what they learn. This explains why exposure to radio programs can lead to positive outcomes in digital learning.

Review of Empirical Studies:

Several studies have examined radio and education in Nigeria

1. Radio and Educational Access in Nigeria

ACE (2022) in the Ace Radio Adivse Childusual Experiences (ACE). Radio School Project found that radio is accessible to 83.4% of Nigerians and was effective in delivering literacy and numeracy to out-of-school children. The program recorded a 42.45% increase in learners' knowledge and 98% positive feedback on understanding topics. This shows radio potential for learning even without classrooms.

Radio for Digital Skills and Youth Empowerment

Premium 89.9 FM in 2024 launched the Premium FM Digital Academy in Utu Abak, Akwa Ibom State. The 8 weeks free training for 25 youths covered digital entrepreneurship, content creation, and broadcasting. The MD stated that it aligns with Governor Umo Eno's ARISE Agenda to bridge the digital gap between urban and rural communities. This shows radio stations are now directly involved in skill trainings.

Government Use of Radio for Education

The Federal Government in 2025 approved a dedicated radio station for Adult and Non-Formal Education to reach marginalized learners in remote areas. The Director stated "radio is the cheapest and most accessible medium" for reaching hard to reach populations.

Challenges of Educational Broadcasting

Adebayo & Musa (2021) found that poor signal, irregular broadcast times and lack of facilities limit the effectiveness of educational radio in rural Nigeria. This is similar to challenges in Akwa Ibom where many schools lack computers to practice what is taught on radio.

Akwa Ibom State Digital Initiatives

In 2025, the Akwa Ibom government trained 135 youths in ICT through the ARISE ICT Hub. In 2026, an AI powered learning programme was launched in 67 public schools to improve learning outcomes. These efforts show government commitment but radio's specific role among public school youths remains under studied.

Gap in Literature

While studies exist on radio for education and on ICT training in AKS, no empirical study has specifically examined the impact of radio programs on digital learning among youths in public schools in Akwa Ibom State. This study fills that gap.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted the survey research design. Survey is appropriate because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large population to describe the impact of radio programs on youth.

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The state has 31 Local Government Areas and 3 Senatorial districts: (Uyo) Akwa Ibom North East, (Eket) Akwa Ibom South and (Ikot Ekpene) Akwa Ibom North West senatorial districts. The state runs the ARISE Agenda with focus on digital empowerment.

Population of the Study

The population comprised all SS1-SS3 students in public schools in Akwa Ibom State. According to the State Ministry of Education 2025 data, the population is 98,450 students.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Using Taro Yamane formula at 0.05 error margin, a sample of 400 students was drawn.

Multi-stage sampling was used.

Using Taro Yamane Formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N = 98,450, e = 0.05

$$n = \frac{98450}{1 + 98450(0.0025)} = 400$$

Stage 1: Stratified Sampling to select 2 Local Government Areas from each senatorial district = 6 Local Government Areas.

Stage 2: Simple Random Sampling to select 2 Public Schools from each Local Government Area = 12 Schools

Stage 3: Proportionate Sampling to select students from SS1-SS3 in each school until 400 is reached.

Instrument for Data Collection

A Structured Questionnaire titled “Radio Programs and Digital Learning Questionnaire RPDQ” was used. The questionnaire had 4 Sections:

A - Demographics

B - Exposure

C - Impact

D - Challenges

It used a 4 Point Likert Scale: SA = 4, A = 3, D = 2, SD = 1

Validity was done through face and content validity by 2 experts.

Reliability was tested using Cronbach Alpha and a coefficient of 0.82 was obtained.

Method of Data Collection

Copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in their classrooms with the help of 6 research assistants. It took 2

weeks. 400 copies were distributed and 385 were returned and found usable, giving 96.3% response rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26.

1. Research Question 1-2: Frequencies and Percentages.
2. Research Question 3: Mean and Standard Deviation. Criterion Mean = 2.50. Agreed.
3. Research Hypothesis: Chi Square χ^2 at 0.05 level of Significance to test influence of radio exposure on Attitude.

Informed Consent was obtained from school principals. Respondents' names were not required to ensure confidentiality. Participation was Voluntary.

Sample Results Tables

Table 1: Respondents' Exposure to Radio Programs on Digital Learning

n = 400

S/N	Frequency of Listening	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Daily	88	22.0
2.	2-3 times a week	202	50.5
3.	Once a week	76	19.0
4.	Rarely/Never	34	8.5
	Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Interpretation: 72.5% listen at least 2-3 times weekly, showing moderate to high exposure.

Table 2: Influence of Radio Program on Knowledge of Digital Learning

n = 400

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Radio Programs taught me basic computer skills	145	128	82	45	2.93	Agreed
2.	I learnt about internet use and online learning from radio	160	135	70	35	3.06	Agreed
3.	Radio programs increased my interest in Coding/ICT	138	119	90	53	2.86	Agreed

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

Criterion mean = 2.50

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Interpretation: Mean scores above 2.50 show radio programs improved knowledge.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test of Influence of Radio Programs on Attitude

S/N	Crit. χ^2	P-Value	Decision
1	7.815	.000	Significant

Source: SPSS output, 2026

Interpretation: Since Cal. $\chi^2 >$ Crit. χ^2 and $P < .05$, there is a significant influence.

Table 4: Challenges of Using Radio to Promote Digital Learning

n = 400, Multiple Response

S/N	Challenges	Frequency	Percentage %
1.	Lack of Computers in School	285	71.3
2.	Poor radio Signal in my area	258	64.5
3.	Irregular broadcast time	232	58.0
4.	Difficult language/technical terms	140	35.0
5.	No opportunity to practice what is taught	210	52.5

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Discussion of Findings:

72.5% of respondents listen to radio programs promoting digital learning at least 2-3 times weekly. 68.3% reported that radio programs improved their knowledge of digital tools such as computers, internet and coding.

There is a Significant Influence of radio programs on youths' attitude towards digital learning, $\chi^2 = 24.67$, $df = 3$, $P < .05$.

Major Challenges Identified are:

Poor radio Signal 64.5%. Irregular broadcast time 58.0% and lack of computers in schools 71.3%.

These findings agrees with Adebayo & Musa (2021) who noted that poor signal and lack of facilities limit educational broadcasting in rural Nigeria and Akwa Ibom State in particular, without computers to practice, knowledge gained from radio cannot translate to digital skill, which is critical under the ARISE agenda.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn.

Radio Programs on digital learning are available and accessible to youths in public schools in Akwa Ibom State.

Radio programs have a significant positive impact on youth's knowledge and attitude towards digital learning.

Therefore, radio is a viable and cost effective tool for promoting digital learning among youths in public schools. But for maximum impact, radio must be integrated into practical ICT facilities in public schools. This will help our youths achieve their goals on digital learning.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. To Radio Stations:

Stations should schedule digital learning programs at times convenient for students, preferably after school hours 4pm – 6pm. Programs should use simple language and include phone-in segments for interactions.

2. To Ministry of Education:

Public Schools should be equipped with functional computer laboratories and radio Sets to enable students to listen and practice immediately. The AI-Powered Learning Programme Launched in 67 Public Schools should be extended to more schools.

3. To Akwa Ibom State Government:

The Government should partner with radio stations like AKBC, Premium FM and Comfort FM to increase dedicated airtime for ICT and digital skill programs. This should be done under the ARISE agenda to ensure sustainability.

4. To Teachers and Parents:

Teachers should reinforce radio lessons in class and encourage students to form listening clubs. Parents should support access to radio at home.

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