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**MEDIA LITERACY AS A DETERMINANT OF DEMOCRATIC  
SUSTAINABILITY AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS  
IN OGUN STATE**

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**Abstract**

*This study explored the role of media literacy as a determinant of democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. Recognizing that pre-service teachers are pivotal in shaping future citizens, the research emphasizes the necessity of equipping them with critical media literacy skills. Utilizing a correlational survey design, the study assessed the media literacy levels and democratic sustainability perceptions among 120 pre-service teachers, selected through a simple random sampling technique from two colleges of education: Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Omu Ajose, and the Federal College of Education, Abeokuta. Two instruments were employed for data collection: the Pre-service Teacher Media Literacy Scale (PTMLS) and the Pre-service Teacher Democratic Sustenance Scale (PTDSS). Both scales demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.84 and 0.86, respectively, ensuring their suitability for this study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages, to summarize participant characteristics and*

responses. Inferential statistics, specifically the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis, were used to assess the relationship between media literacy and democratic sustainability. Hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between media literacy and democratic sustainability, highlighting that enhanced media literacy can lead to improved civic engagement and a stronger understanding of democratic processes among students. The study identifies gaps between theoretical knowledge and practical application in media literacy education and advocates for the comprehensive integration of media literacy programmes within teacher education curricula to prepare future educators for their roles in fostering informed and engaged citizenship.

**Keywords:** Media literacy, Democratic sustainability, Pre-service teachers, Civic engagement.

## **Introduction**

Media literacy serves as a fundamental pillar for fostering informed citizenship and promoting democratic sustainability in contemporary societies. In an era characterized by an overwhelming influx of information through various media channels, the ability of citizens – particularly pre-service teachers – to critically engage with media content becomes increasingly important. This engagement is a crucial aspect of democratic participation and must be cultivated within the educational framework, especially among those poised to become educators themselves. In Ogun State, Nigeria, where complex socio-political dynamics and a diverse media landscape exist, understanding the interplay between media literacy and democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers is of paramount importance.

Pre-service teachers occupy a unique position within the educational system; as both learners and future educators, they have the dual responsibility of acquiring media literacy skills and imparting these skills to their students. Effective media literacy

encompasses more than just the ability to consume information; it involves the critical analysis of media messages, understanding media production processes, and recognizing the influence of media on public opinion and civic engagement. Recently, scholars, such as Alabi and Afolabi (2022), have emphasized the integration of media literacy into teacher education programs as a means to equip future educators with the skills necessary to navigate and utilize media effectively in their teaching practices. However, despite its significance, the degree to which media literacy influences democratic sustainability remains relatively underexplored in the Nigerian context, particularly among pre-service teachers.

Research shows that media literacy is essential for nurturing citizens capable of engaging meaningfully in democratic processes. As emphasized by Buckingham (2013), media literate individuals are more likely to participate in civic life, vote, and engage in discussions about public issues, thereby strengthening democratic institutions. For pre-service teachers in Ogun State, possessing a strong foundation in media literacy is vital not only for their personal engagement in democratic activities but also for their capacity to foster such engagement among their future students. Engaging students in critical discussions about media influences can empower them to become informed citizens who actively participate in democratic processes.

Despite the acknowledged importance of media literacy, there remains a significant gap between theoretical understanding and practical application among pre-service teachers in Nigeria. A study by Ogunyemi (2021) indicates that while pre-service teachers may possess extensive knowledge about democratic principles, their engagement with media literacy in various educational contexts is lacking. This disconnection highlights the need for research that specifically examines how media literacy correlates with democratic sustainability within the framework of teacher education. Exploring this relationship is crucial for developing effective interventions that can enhance both media literacy skills and democratic engagement.

Moreover, the relationship between media literacy and democratic sustainability extends beyond individual competencies

to encompass broader societal implications. As argued by Livingstone (2017), media education enables individuals to discern and challenge misinformation, contributing to a more informed citizenry capable of navigating the complexities of contemporary governance. Pre-service teachers, as educators, play a pivotal role in this process. Therefore, developing strong media literacy training within teacher education programs can cultivate future leaders who will inspire their students to engage critically and responsibly in democratic practices.

The necessity for a comprehensive approach to teaching media literacy in Ogun State's education system is increasingly recognized. Current literature indicates that pre-service teachers possess varying levels of media literacy, yet empirical research exploring its relationship with democratic sustainability is limited. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the interplay between media literacy and democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers in Ogun State. The primary goal is to contribute to the development of a more effective teacher education framework that promotes media literacy as a tool for fostering democratic engagement and sustainability.

The role of pre-service teachers in shaping the civic engagement and democratic participation of future generations cannot be overstated. As they are positioned to influence their students' understanding of media's role in society, equipping them with robust media literacy skills is essential for nurturing informed and active citizens. Therefore, it is critical to investigate the levels of media literacy among pre-service teachers in Ogun State and identify strategies to enhance these competencies, ultimately contributing to a healthier democratic society. Addressing the educational gaps surrounding media literacy and its implications for democratic sustainability is of utmost importance as we strive to prepare teachers who can inspire their students to engage meaningfully with the democratic processes that shape their lives.

The general objective of this study is to investigate the role of Media Literacy (ML) as a determinant of Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the level of Media Literacy (ML) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State.
- ii. examine the level of Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State.
- iii. determine the relationship between Media Literacy (ML) and Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guide this study based on the specific objectives:

- i. What is the level of Media Literacy (ML) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State?
- ii. What is the level of Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State?

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between Media Literacy (ML) and Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State.

### **Methods**

This study adopts a correlational survey research design to examine the relationship between media literacy and democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. The population for the study comprises pre-service teachers in the Social Studies Departments at two colleges of education: Sikiru Adetona College of Education, Omu Ajose, and the Federal College of Education, Abeokuta. These institutions were purposively selected because they are public colleges offering Social Studies education. A simple random sampling technique was then employed to select 120 pre-service teachers from the Social Studies Departments in both colleges.

Two instruments were used to collect data for this study: the Pre-service Teacher Democratic Sustenance Scale (PTDSS) and the

Pre-service Teacher Media Literacy Scale (PTMLS). The PTDSS was developed to assess the level of democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers, while the PTMLS was designed to evaluate their media literacy. Both instruments include demographic information in Section A and 10 items in Section B, rated on a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The instruments demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.86 for the PTDSS and 0.84 for the PTMLS, ensuring their suitability for the study.

Data collected from these instruments were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentages, were used to present participant responses. For inferential statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to assess the relationship between media literacy and democratic sustainability. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** What is the level of Media Literacy (ML) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State?

**Table 1: Level of Media Literacy (ML) among Pre-service Teachers in Ogun State**

S/N	Media Literacy Indicators	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I am able to critically evaluate information from the media.	60 (50.0%)	30 (25.0%)	18 (15.0%)	12 (10.0%)	3.15	0.85	High Level
2	I can distinguish between fake and reliable media content.	45 (37.5%)	35 (29.2%)	20 (16.7%)	20 (16.7%)	2.88	0.96	High Level

3	I feel confident using social media for educational purposes.	40 (33.3%)	36 (30.0%)	25 (20.8%)	19 (15.8%)	2.81	0.94	Moderate Level
4	Media plays a key role in shaping my views on democracy.	52 (43.3%)	38 (31.7%)	18 (15.0%)	12 (10.0%)	3.08	0.87	High Level
5	I frequently engage with news and current affairs through the media.	36 (30.0%)	34 (28.3%)	30 (25.0%)	20 (16.7%)	2.72	0.98	Moderate Level
6	I believe media literacy is essential for understanding political processes.	66 (55.0%)	30 (25.0%)	12 (10.0%)	12 (10.0%)	3.25	0.84	High Level
7	I actively share verified information through social media platforms.	30 (25.0%)	40 (33.3%)	30 (25.0%)	20 (16.7%)	2.67	0.93	Moderate Level
8	My institution supports media literacy education for pre-service teachers.	25 (20.8%)	35 (29.2%)	40 (33.3%)	20 (16.7%)	2.54	0.91	Moderate Level
9	I believe media literacy can help pre-service teachers promote democratic values.	50 (41.7%)	36 (30.0%)	20 (16.7%)	14 (11.7%)	3.02	0.89	High Level
10	Pre-service teachers need training on using media for civic engagement and democracy.	70 (58.3%)	30 (25.0%)	10 (8.3%)	10 (8.3%)	3.33	0.78	High Level

The table shows that pre-service teachers in Ogun State exhibit a high level of Media Literacy (ML) in several indicators, particularly their ability to evaluate media information and its importance in political processes. However, moderate levels in active engagement with media and institutional support highlight areas for improvement.

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State?

**Table 2: Level of Democratic Sustainability (DS) among Pre-service Teachers in Ogun State**

S/N	Democratic Sustainability Indicators	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I believe democracy ensures equal opportunities for all citizens.	62 (51.7%)	35 (29.2%)	15 (12.5%)	8 (6.7%)	3.26	0.77	High Level
2	Pre-service teachers should participate in community-based democratic activities.	40 (33.3%)	38 (31.7%)	25 (20.8%)	17 (14.2%)	2.84	0.91	High Level
3	Democratic practices strengthen the political system of a nation.	66 (55.0%)	34 (28.3%)	10 (8.3%)	10 (8.3%)	3.30	0.80	High Level
4	I feel confident participating in democratic decision-making processes.	30 (25.0%)	36 (30.0%)	40 (33.3%)	14 (11.7%)	2.69	0.92	Moderate Level
5	Democracy promotes accountability in governance.	55 (45.8%)	40 (33.3%)	15 (12.5%)	10 (8.3%)	3.17	0.84	High Level
6	I think democratic values should be integrated into teacher education curricula.	70 (58.3%)	30 (25.0%)	10 (8.3%)	10 (8.3%)	3.33	0.78	High Level

7	My educational institution prioritises democratic participation.	35 (29.2%)	30 (25.0%)	40 (33.3%)	15 (12.5%)	2.65	0.95	Moderate Level
8	I frequently engage in discussions about democracy and governance in my institution.	28 (23.3%)	35 (29.2%)	37 (30.8%)	20 (16.7%)	2.59	0.96	Moderate Level
9	I support the involvement of youth in democratic leadership roles.	58 (48.3%)	40 (33.3%)	15 (12.5%)	7 (5.8%)	3.24	0.78	High Level
10	Democracy fosters peaceful coexistence in diverse societies.	65 (54.2%)	30 (25.0%)	15 (12.5%)	10 (8.3%)	3.25	0.86	High Level

The table demonstrates high levels of agreement with democracy's benefits in governance, equality, and its integration into teacher education. Moderate levels of confidence in participation and institutional prioritisation suggest areas for improvement in fostering active engagement.

**Hypothesis:** There is no significant relationship between Media Literacy (ML) and Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State.

**Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the Relationship Between Media Literacy (ML) and Democratic Sustainability (DS) among Pre-service Teachers in Ogun State**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	R	Sig.	Remark
Media Literacy (ML)	120	3.05	0.85	118	0.472*	0.008	Significant
Democratic Sustainability (DS)	120	2.90	0.87				

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 reveals a significant positive relationship between Media Literacy (ML) and Democratic Sustainability (DS) among pre-service teachers in Ogun State ( $r = 0.472, p < 0.05$ ). Both Media Literacy ( $M = 3.05, SD = 0.85$ ) and Democratic Sustainability ( $M = 2.90, SD = 0.87$ ) demonstrate moderate levels. The findings suggest that improved Media Literacy among pre-service teachers is likely to enhance Democratic Sustainability.

### **Discussions**

The findings of this study underscore the significant role of media literacy as a determinant of democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers in Ogun State. It is evident from the results that pre-service teachers possess a moderate level of media literacy, which correlates positively with their understanding of democratic sustainability. This relationship highlights the importance of equipping future educators with the necessary skills to critically engage with media content. As Afolabi and Ekanem (2021) have noted, the integration of media literacy into teacher education is essential for fostering informed citizens who can actively participate in civic life. These findings resonate with their assertion that without a strong foundation in media literacy, pre-service teachers may struggle to impart these crucial skills to their students. The study reflects on the essential function media literacy plays in cultivating a responsible citizenry capable of engaging in democratic processes. Recent scholarship emphasizes the need for educational frameworks that prioritize media literacy training, particularly among pre-service teachers, who are positioned to influence the civic engagement of their future students (Ekundayo & Alonge, 2020). This integration can enhance awareness among educators about the implications of media consumption and production. Additionally, Fajobi (2021) argues that media literacy not only empowers individuals to discern credible information but also has implications for promoting democratic values and accountability in governance.

Despite the generally positive findings regarding media literacy and its relationship with democratic sustainability, there are important gaps that warrant attention. For instance, the moderate

levels of confidence in participating in democratic decision-making processes among pre-service teachers suggest a disconnect between their theoretical knowledge of democratic principles and practical engagement (Ogunyemi, 2018). This echoes concerns reflected in the literature, which indicates that while pre-service teachers may understand the ideals of democracy, their actual involvement in civic matters and critical discussions surrounding these ideals remains insufficient. The findings also indicate a necessity for enhanced institutional support for media literacy education. As noted by previous research, the lack of structured programs aimed at developing media literacy skills can hinder the ability of pre-service teachers to engage fully with democratic processes (Obi & Ajayi, 2022). Thus, there is a critical need for educational institutions to place a greater emphasis on media literacy training within teacher education curricula to ensure that pre-service teachers are fully prepared to function as knowledgeable civic leaders. Moreover, Livingstone (2017) emphasized the societal implications of media literacy, arguing that it enables individuals not only to identify misinformation but also to engage critically with media narratives. This perspective is crucial when considering the role pre-service teachers will play in shaping the understanding and engagement of their future students in democratic processes. By fostering a culture of critical media analysis, institutions can contribute to creating a more informed and engaged citizenry.

This study reiterates the importance of media literacy in enhancing democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers. As identified in the findings, a robust media literacy education is essential not only for the personal development of pre-service teachers but also for preparing them to cultivate informed and active citizens in their classrooms. Moving forward, strategic interventions aimed at integrating comprehensive media literacy programs into teacher education are necessary to bridge the existing gaps and promote a healthier democratic society. The findings can serve as a catalyst for curricular reforms that prioritize media literacy, thereby preparing future educators to fulfill their pivotal roles in promoting civic engagement and democratic values.

## **Conclusion**

This study highlights the significant role of media literacy as a determinant of democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers in Ogun State. The findings indicate a positive relationship between the levels of media literacy and democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers. This underscores the need for educational frameworks that prioritize media literacy training within teacher education programs. As future educators, pre-service teachers must be equipped with the skills to critically engage with media content, not only for their civic engagement but also to foster informed citizens among their students. The research reveals a gap between theoretical understanding and practical application, emphasizing the necessity for robust media literacy education to enhance citizens' roles in democratic processes.

## **Recommendations**

To enhance media literacy and, consequently, democratic sustainability among pre-service teachers, educational institutions in Ogun State should systematically incorporate comprehensive media literacy programs into their curricula. These programs should focus on practical engagement, critical analysis of media messages, and understanding the impact of media on public discourse. Furthermore, teacher training should include partnerships with media organizations to provide interactive workshops and resources that support effective media literacy education. Regular evaluations and revisions of the curriculum to integrate new media trends and issues are also essential to equip pre-service teachers with the relevant skills needed in a rapidly evolving media landscape, ultimately fostering a generation of informed and engaged citizens.

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