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### ANALYSIS OF LEVEL AND DIMENSIONS OF NEWSPAPER POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS FOR THE 2019 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Different dimensions of electioneering political advertisements explore framing in attempts to win votes and newspapers are veritable channels, since they are important media for political mobilization in Nigeria. This study relied on framing theory to investigate the level of political advertising in newspapers for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria to ascertain which political parties advertised and the dimensions of their electioneering political advertisements. 136 issues of two leading national newspapers in Nigeria: *Guardian* and *Vanguard* were content analyzed. Findings show that only 10.42% of advertisements published during the campaigns were political advertising and less than 4% of political parties that participated in the elections advertised in the selected newspapers. The dimensions of the political advertisements were mainly direct advocacy and indirect positive portrayal while direct attack, direct contrast, indirect negative portrayal and direct opposition joint advocacy political advertisement were minimally engaged. The findings suggest that Nigerian politicians are shunning electioneering political advertising in newspapers and that this multiplicity of dimensions shows the peculiarities in Nigerian politics and attempts to explore different frames in the presentation of campaign messages to voters. The study recommends that researchers should investigate the reason for the continual decline in newspaper electioneering political advertisements in Nigeria while political advertisers should see winning the confidence of the public as more important than manipulating communication frames to win their votes.

## INTRODUCTION

Political advertising in newspapers is assumed to be common during electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. This is expected as politicians rely heavily on political advertising generally to attempt to convince the electorate to vote for them in elections (Edegoh and Ezeh, 2018). There is no doubt that political advertising has grown strong roots in many democratic countries worldwide as records abound on increases in political advertising expenditures in successive elections (Alemoh and Gambo, 2016; Odoemelan, Okorom and Okwudiogor, 2016).

Political advertising for election has been described as the planned application of marketing principles by politicians/political parties contesting elections to present their ideologies and manifestoes to voters in order to win votes (Ezegwu, Etukudo and Uwem, 2015). It is believed to be a primary means through which candidates in elections communicate their competences to the citizenry (Jamieson and Campbell, 2001). The contributions of the phenomenon to elections has been viewed from both sides of the coin. Odoemelan et al (2016) report that electioneering political advertisements in Nigeria improve knowledge and interest of voters in campaigns and sometimes persuade them to change their choices of candidates. On their part, Jamieson and Campbell (2001) argue that electioneering political advertising helps to guarantee the success of well-conceived campaign for elections. Contrarily, Obukoadata, Uduma. Akpan and Mbose (2016) observe that there is declining voters' trust in electioneering political advertisements in Nigeria as it is perceived to merely whip up sentiments, colour falsehood and assault the senses of target voters. Odoemelan et al (2016) also show that although electioneering political advertising truly enhances Nigerian voters' understanding of candidates' personalities, it hardly influences voting decisions. Perhaps the submission by Jamieson and Campbell (2001) that electioneering political advertising allows opposing candidates/parties to make cases and counter-cases and in the process nullifying the efforts on one another paints a clear picture of the problem associated with relying on political advertisements to win elections.

Expectedly, all media of mass communication are deployed to convey political advertisements to target audiences during elections in Nigeria but newspapers are significantly engaged. The newspaper medium was the first to be involved in politics in Nigeria and played very significant role in the agitation for political independence in the country (Anim, 2007). This marriage between newspapers and politics in Nigeria has waxed stronger and the former have become significant carriers of political mobilization messages during elections (Ijeh, 2015). This has made electioneering political advertisements in newspapers very popular in the country.

Advertisements (political advertising messages inclusive) come in many dimensions. This study adopts the classification presented by Jamieson and Campbell (2001) viz: advocacy advertisements; contrast advertisements and attack advertisements. Advocacy political advertisements solicits for votes for the candidate/party of interest and do not say anything about the opposition.

Contrast political advertisements urge the electorate to vote advertised candidates/parties and to refrain from voting opposing candidates/parties while attack political advertisements are preoccupied with giving target audiences reasons why they should not vote for particular candidates/parties without telling them who to vote for. This study examines how these dimensions of political advertising played out in the 2019 presidential electioneering advertisements in Nigerian newspapers.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Electioneering campaigns in Nigeria always engage political advertisements in newspapers. This reality has received appreciable research attention. In a study on newspapers involvement in the 2015 elections in Nigeria, Okpoko and Ngene (2016) note that Nigerian newspapers serve as veritable vehicles for conveying election-related messages and that politicians and political parties buy spaces in them to project their personalities and political ideologies. In another study on presidential primary political advertising in Nigeria, Obot and Batta (2012) point out that candidates purchase and use advertising spaces in newspapers (and other mass media) to transmit political messages to target audience in attempts to win votes and since success at the polls could be largely determined by the effectiveness of the political advertising campaigns, politician need to base their electioneering political advertisements on issues guided by higher values necessary for societal development and deepening of democracy. On his part, Ijeh (2011) reports that Nigerian newspapers have been involved in many ways in the political development of the country but that this involvement has been greatly felt in electioneering campaigns.

The studies above and many others provide valuable insights into the subject of electioneering political advertisements in Nigerian newspapers but not much seems to have been documented on the dimensions of political advertisements for the 2019 general elections in Nigerian newspapers. How much did newspapers feature political advertisements for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria and which political parties were advertised? What are the dimensions of the political advertising in Nigerian newspapers for the 2019 general elections? These questions indicate obvious gaps in knowledge that this assessment of dimension of political advertisements in newspapers for the 2019 general elections intends to fill.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

The objectives of the study are to:

- 1) determine the level of political advertising in newspapers for the 2019 general election in Nigeria,
- 2) determine the level of involvement of political parties in political advertising in newspaper for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria,
- 3) Examine the dimension of political advertisements in newspapers for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria.

### ***Research Questions***

The study was driven by search for answers to the research questions below:

- 1) What is the level of political advertising in newspapers during the 2019 general election campaigns in Nigeria?

- 2) Which political parties were involved in political advertising in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns in Nigeria?
- 3) What were the dimensions of political advertisements in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns in Nigeria?

#### ***Delimitation***

This study is delimited to Jamieson and Campbell (2001) dimensions of advertising viz: advocacy; contrast and attack. The scope of the study also covers only political advertisements for the 2019 general elections in selected Nigerian newspapers during the campaign period.

#### ***Political Advertising in Newspapers***

Newspapers have been described as prominent carriers of electioneering political advertisements in Nigeria. According to Ijeh (2011), this can be attributed to the perceived abilities of the newspaper medium and advertising to separately inform, create expectations and mould opinion of target audience. From another angle, Okpoko and Ngene (2016) argue that most candidates/parties contesting elections in Nigeria buy space in newspapers to project their personalities and ideologies to readers because newspapers serve as veritable vehicles for covering election-related issues in the country. That is not to say that newspapers always feature significant electioneering political advertisements as a study reveal a situation where only one page of political advertisement in a sample of 80 issues of selected newspapers representing 1.25% solicited votes from the electorate during campaigns for a particular election in Nigeria (Ijeh, 2011). In spite of the above instance, it is generally observed that Nigerian newspapers are usually awash with political advertisements during many electioneering campaigns in the country.

Advertising in newspapers for election has its potentials and limitations in Nigeria. One of the observed benefits of advertising in newspapers in the country is that it can be consumed without electricity unlike broadcast advertisements where access to electricity to power signal receivers is necessary to reach target audience. This means that the poor state of public electricity supply to many parts of Nigeria does not inhibit the reach of newspaper political advertisements. Advertising in newspapers also enjoy the benefits of being seen repeatedly by many members of the audience at no extra cost to the advertiser. With this, a reader who is not able to pay attention at first exposure can go back to the same advertisement later and even share it with others. This feature of newspaper advertisements is not possible in broadcasting where repeat advertisements attract extra costs for airtime.

On the other side, political advertisements in newspapers in Nigeria face the challenge of widespread poverty among members of the target audience. Regular purchase of newspapers is largely a preserve for the urban elites in Nigeria who are in minority. This suggests that political advertisements in newspapers in Nigeria would only be consumed by the minority urban elite class and those who are close to them. Even the “Free-Readers” phenomenon captured in Ijeh (2011) cannot accommodate significant proportions of the majority who reside in rural areas where newspapers are hardly available. In addition, newspaper advertisements cannot be consumed while being busy with other activities. Unlike radio advertisements for instance, members of the

target audience need to be detached from other activities and concentrate on the pages of the newspaper to grasp the advertisement message and this is not easy as many Nigerians are propelled by biting poverty to engage in socio-economic activities for a greater part of the day.

The above illustrations indicate that Nigerian politicians/parties have reasons both to and not to advertise in newspapers during electioneering campaigns. This study is therefore driven by the need to ascertain how much of newspaper advertising was engaged for the 2019 electioneering political advertisements in Nigeria and by which political parties.

### ***Dimensions of Electioneering Political Advertisements***

Political advertising in newspapers is not a random-occurring phenomenon in Nigeria. It is rule-governed as encapsulated in the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) code. Alemoh and Gambo (2016:205) present sections of the APCON Code relating to political advertising specifically viz:

- 1) Political advertisement shall not be deceptive or misleading in word, photograph, film or sound.
- 2) Political advertisements shall be issues-oriented and devoid of abusive statements or references. Furthermore, they should not employ fake, distorted or unsubstantiated claims or misrepresentations.
- 3) Every political advertisement must clearly identify the sponsoring organization or individual visually and/or orally. Anonymous sponsors like “Committee of Friends”; “Concerned Citizens” must be avoided.

Another mechanism regulating Nigerian electioneering political advertising (including in newspapers) is the Electoral Act 2010 where Section 95 (1 and 2) stipulate that no political campaign message should be tainted with abusive language directly or indirectly especially when it is likely to injure religious, ethnic, tribal or sectional feelings. Also, abusive, intemperate, slanderous, hate language, insinuation and innuendoes designed or likely to provoke violent reactions or emotions should be avoided in political campaigns (Ezinwa; Ngwu; Odii and Ekwe, 2016). These rules apply to all forms of political advertising in Nigeria (newspapers political advertisements for the 2019 general elections inclusive).

Political advertising scholars present perspectives on dimensions of electioneering political advertisement, two of which are examined here. While Jamieson and Campbell (2001) present three dimensions namely: Advocacy; Attack and Contrast, Trent; Friedenber and Denton (2010) extends them to four namely: Positive; Negative; Comparative and Responsive. A close look at the operationalization of these terms show that Advocacy and Positive political advertisements mean the same thing as they refer to situations where the advertisement is designed to make case(s) for the election of a particular candidate/party without reference to the opposition. Conversely, Attack and Negative political advertisements highlight only negative details about the opposition and calls on the electorate to refrain from voting for it. Contrast and Comparative political advertisements present both sides of the contest in that they emphasize the positive things about advertised candidates/parties that should entice the electorate to vote for them and the negative details about the opposition that should dissuade the electorate from voting for it. Responsive

political advertising messages skipped by Jamieson and Campbell (2001) but captured by Trent et al (2010) refers to situations where the sponsor(s) attempt to directly react to opposition claims presented in preceding advertisements.

A scrutiny of the above dimensions of electioneering political advertising, APCON Code and Electoral Act 2010 shows that the only dimension allowed in Nigeria is the Advocacy/Positive political advertisement. This is because it appears to be the only one likely to be “devoid of abusive statements/references” on the opposition. This scenario is not likely to have played out in the campaigns for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria as observations indicate that campaigns for the preceding 2015 general elections was inundated with abusive messages in rallies, advertisements and news reports (Ezinwa et al, 2016). This situation therefore compels this study to wonder whether the political advertisements in newspapers for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria were largely advocacy, attacks or contrasts.

### ***Theoretical Framework (Media Framing Theory)***

The Media Framing Theory (MFT) provides theoretical perspective to this study. The theory is said to have been first mooted by Sociologist Erving Goffman in his work *Frame Analysis* in 1974, where he postulated that human make sense of happenings, people and things around them through natural and social frames (Goffman 1974; Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwu-Uwaoma 2017; Mass Communication Theory 2020). According to him, while natural frameworks interpret phenomena literally without interference from social forces, the social frameworks perceive them as being influenced socially by the whims, goals and manipulations of social actors. This sociological background provided basis for the focus on MFT in later mass media studies.

The basic tenet of the theory in mass communication is that the media can influence how people in the society see people, things and happenings by selecting aspects of reality and projecting them as more salient through words, images, photographs, texts and other forms of presentation mechanism adopted in the packaging and presentation of the media contents (Olujimi and Adekunle 2010; Ogba 2017; Asemah et al 2017). This media function captured by MFT is likened to higher level agenda setting because while the Agenda Setting Theory postulates that the media tell the audience ‘what to think about’ MFT postulates that the media not only tell the audience ‘what to think about’ but go further to guide it ‘on how to think’ about the issues at stake (Olujimi and Adekunle 2010; Ogba 2017). The media is believed to possess the ability to guide the audience on how to think about the personalities and issues they present by selecting certain aspects of the subject-matter to elaborate and make more important than the excluded aspects. By this, they promote pre-determined definitions of realities among the audience with their choice of words/phrases, contextual references, pictures, videos clips, sound tracks, examples, languages, tone, timing and frequency of presentations among others (Nwabueze and Edegoh 2010; Asemah 2013; Dunu, Ukwueze and Ekwughu 2015).

The relationship between MFT and political advertising is very strong. Political advertisement is a vital mass media content that allows candidates for

elections to say what they want to say to the audience without interference from media gatekeepers (Ijeh ACTA). With this reality, MFT plays out in electioneering political advertisements as politicians frame speeches, events and actions with the sole intention of inducing voters' attitudes and behaviours positively in favour of their victories at the polls. In the context of this study therefore, MFT captures how media contents in electioneering political advertisements attempt to shape reality selectively by influencing political cognition, perception and behavior in a political process (Oriola 2017).

The strength of MFT in relation to this study lies in the submission by Dunu et al (2015) that the manner of presentation of issues greatly influence people's response. Also, framing in media contents is said to greatly determine public opinion and decision making and therefore the perceptions, opinions, attitudes and behaviours of individuals related to issues, event and personalities can be moulded or modified through interactions between frames in communication and frames in thought (Nwabueze and Edegoh 2010; Oriola 2017). This suggests that when MFT applies to political advertising for elections, concerned candidates stand chances to significantly influence how the electorate would respond to their messages.

On the other hand, framing in electioneering political advertisements in Nigeria may not be successful all the time. as observed by Obukoadata et al (2016), Nigerian voters tend to distrust politicians and this is expected to greatly affect how they would react to electioneering political advertisements. This reality in Nigeria exposes a weakness in media framing because, as it is widely believed, mass communication functions through a nexus of social variables. These are moderating factors serving as variables within the conscious control of the audience that can limit framing outcomes (Oriola 2017).

## METHODOLOGY

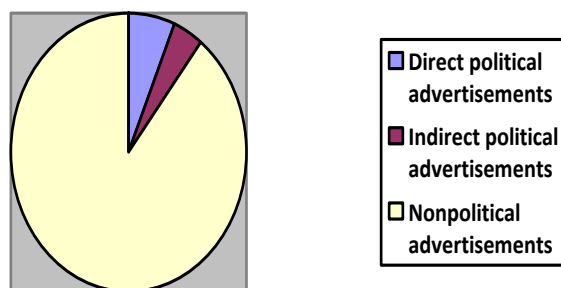
The study adopted content analysis of selected national newspapers published during the campaigns for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria. The campaigns lasted for 104 days (November 18, 2018 to March 1, 2019). Two national newspapers - *The Guardian* and *Vanguard* – were selected because of their national coverage, elite disposition and political orientation. The population of the study is 208 issues of the two newspapers out of which a sample of 136 (i.e. 68 issues per newspaper) was selected based on the Taro Yamane formula for sample size determination,  $n = N \div [1 + N(e)^2]$ , where  $n$  = sample size;  $N$  = study population and  $e$  = error margin. At 0.05 error margin calculated to the nearest multiple of 2,  $n = 208 \div [1 + 208(0.05)^2] = 208 \div [1 + 208(0.0025)] = 208 \div [1 + 0.52] = 208 \div 1.52 = 136$ . Selection of issues of the newspapers for content analysis was done randomly based on clustering and balloting. All issues of each selected newspaper were arranged sequentially by dates of publication and grouped into 34 clusters with 3 issues in each cluster (the first and last issues in the population were excluded to make the figure a multiple of 3 i.e.  $104 - 2 = 102$ ;  $102 \div 3 = 34$ ). Blind balloting was adopted to select 2 issues from each cluster for content analysis.

The content category examined was political advertisement for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria with Advocacy tone, Attack tone, Contrast tone, Neutral tone and Total advertisements placed in the newspapers (political and non-political) as units of analysis quantified in full pages. Data was presented and analyzed with descriptive statistics (i.e. simple percentages and charts.

#### ***Data Presentation and Analysis***

The nature of the data generated in the study necessitated the use of descriptive statistics. The data presentation and analysis hereunder relied on simple percentages and charts to answer the respective research questions guiding the study under relevant headings.

Level of Political Advertising in Newspapers During the 2019 General Elections Campaigns: Research Question 1 in this study sought to find out the level of political advertising in newspapers during the 2019 general election campaigns in Nigeria. To answer this research question, the study focused on how much of the total advertisements in (full pages) in the selected newspapers were political advertisements directly or indirectly related to canvassing for votes. Available data show a total of 1,392 full pages of advertisements within the campaigns period, out of which 88 full pages (6.32%) and 57 full pages (4.10%) were direct political advertisements (i.e. soliciting votes) and indirect political advertisements (i.e. not soliciting votes but attempting to portray candidates/political parties positively or negatively) respectively. The remaining 1,247 (89.58%) of the full page advertisements were nonpolitical. The data is illustrated in figure 1.



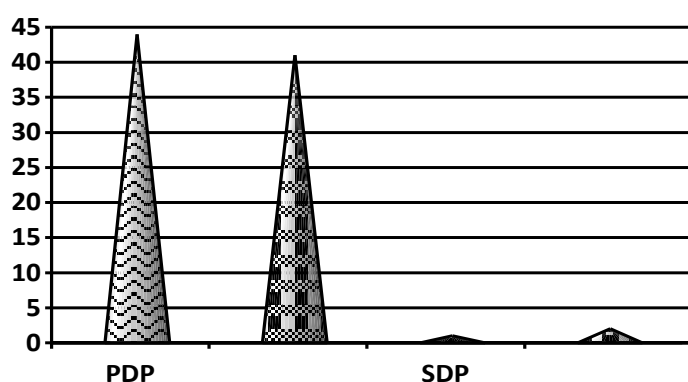
**Figure 1** Pie Chart Showing Level of Political Advertising in Newspapers during the 2019 General Election Campaigns in Nigeria (*Source – Field work 2020*)

The data above indicate that direct and indirect political advertisements in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns were very insignificant as they made up only about 10% of newspaper advertisements whereas nonpolitical advertisements made up about 90% within the period. Arising from the foregoing, the study submits that the level of political advertising in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns in Nigeria was very low.

Political Parties Involved in Political Advertising in Newspapers During the 2019 General Elections Campaigns: The second research question in this study focused on which political parties were involved in political advertising in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns in Nigeria. Data



emanating from content analysis in this regard show that the two major political parties in Nigeria during the 2019 general elections – the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) dominated direct political advertisements in newspapers within the campaigns period. Out of the total 88 full pages of political advertisements that solicited votes or gave reasons why the electorate should not vote particular candidates/parties, 44 (50%) were sponsored by PDP, while 41 (46.59%) were sponsored by APC. The only other political party that was observed to have advertised in newspapers during the campaigns was the Social Democratic Party (SPD) with 1 full page (1.14%). The remaining 2 full page newspaper direct political advertisements, representing 2.27% were sponsored by independent political interest group(s) that could not be identified with any political party openly. The data is illustrated in Figure 2.



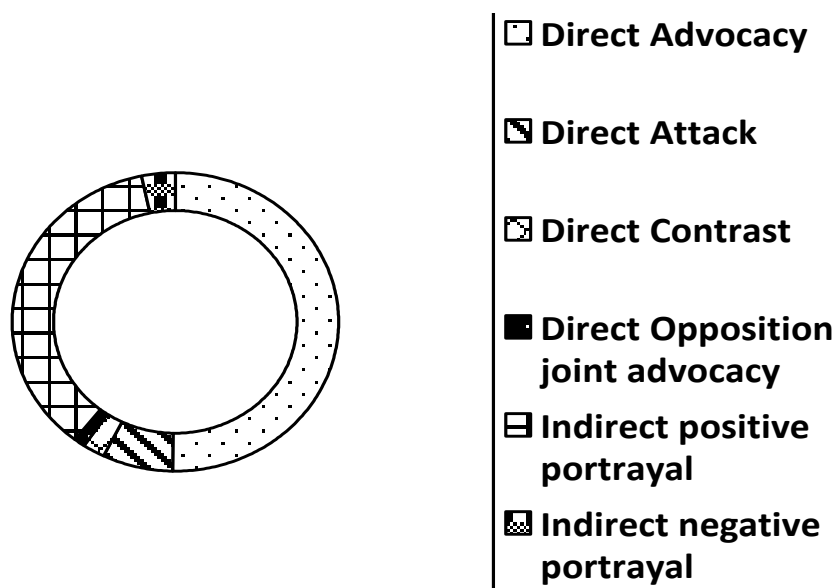
**Figure 2** Cones Showing Distribution of Political Advertisers During the 2019 General Elections Campaigns in Nigeria (*Source – Field work 2020*)

The above data analysis indicates that only 3 political parties out of over 70 that participated in the 2019 general elections advertised in the selected newspapers in this study. This represents less than 4% and is a further evidence that political advertising in newspapers were not significantly engaged for campaigns in the elections. Available data also show that PDP was the highest advertiser, followed by APC. Incidentally, these were the leading political parties during the election. The only other political party that advertised in newspapers was the SPD with only 1 full page. Other advertisers were independent individuals and groups that were not openly linked to any political party.

Dimensions of Political Advertising in Newspapers During the 2019 General Elections Campaigns: The research question of interest here is: “What were the dimensions of political advertisements in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns in Nigeria?” In generating data to answer this research question, the study focused on the messages of direct and indirect political advertisements in the selected newspapers during the campaigns and quantified them in newspaper full pages. A total of 145 full pages of political advertisements were observed in the sample (88 direct political advertisements and 57 indirect political advertisement). Available data indicate that 73 full pages of direct political advertisements (50.34%) only solicited votes from readers (i.e. Direct advocacy political advertisements). 10 of them (6.9%)

concentrated on attacking the oppositions with reasons why readers should not vote for them without recommending who to vote for in the alternative (i.e. Direct attack political advertisements), while 3 full pages (2.07%) contained reasons why readers should not vote for the oppositions as well as reasons why they should vote for identified candidates/parties instead (Direct contrast political advertisements). The remaining 2 full-page political advertisement representing 1.38% (*Vanguard, February 13, pages 26 and 27*) urged readers to vote for the candidates of the two leading opposition political parties vying for different positions – Muhammadu Buhari of the APC for President and Ifeanyi Arthur Okowa of the PDP for Governor of Delta State (Direct opposition joint advocacy political advertisements).

Furthermore, the study observed that 52 (35.86%) of the political advertisements in the sample did not ask readers to vote or refrain from voting for candidates/parties but contained messages designed to portray the personalities of particular candidates or images of political parties participating in the elections in positive lights (Indirect positive portrayal political advertisements). The remaining 5 (3.45%) observed were full-page newspaper advertisements that equally did not urge readers to vote or not to vote for any candidate/party but were tailored towards portraying certain candidates/parties contesting the elections negatively (Indirect negative portrayal political advertisements). The data is illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** Doughnut Chart Showing Dimensions of Political Advertising in Newspapers during the 2019 General Elections Campaigns (*Source – Field work 2020*)

The above analysis indicates that the most common dimensions of political advertising in newspapers for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria were direct advocacy political advertisements followed by indirect positive portrayal political advertisements. Available data suggests that politicians/parties only engaged in the different dimensions of negative political advertising for the elections (i.e. direct attack political advertisements, direct contrast political

advertisements and indirect negative portrayal political advertisements) minimally. Data analysis in this study also reveal a not too common dimension of political advertising for elections were an advertisement calls urges voters to vote for candidates from two leading opposition parties contesting different positions in the same election (i.e. Direct opposition joint advocacy political advertisement).

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Findings in the study show that direct and indirect political advertisements in newspapers during the 2019 general elections campaigns were very insignificant as they made up only about 10% of newspaper advertisements whereas nonpolitical advertisements made up about 90% within the period. Findings in the study also show that only 3 political parties out of over 70 that participated in the 2019 general elections (less than 4%) advertised in the selected newspapers, a further evidence that political advertising in newspapers were not significantly engaged for campaigns in the elections. These findings clearly disagree with the submission by Okpoko and Ngene (2016) that many candidates/political parties contesting elections in Nigeria advertise in newspapers because they consider them veritable channels for election-related matters in the country. This insignificant resort to electioneering political advertising in newspapers in Nigeria was observed in an earlier election in Delta State where only a page in a sample of 80 issues of a selected newspaper published within the campaign period carried electioneering political advertisement (Ijeh 2011). This development may not be unconnected to the submission of Obukoadata et al (2016) that there is declining voters' trust in electioneering political advertising in Nigeria as they perceive it as merely whipping up sentiments, colouring falsehood and insulting their sensibilities.

Another finding in this study is that the most common dimensions of political advertising in newspapers for the 2019 general elections in Nigeria were direct advocacy political advertisements followed by indirect positive portrayal political advertisements. Political advertisers within only engaged in the different dimensions of negative political advertising for the elections (i.e direct attack political advertisements, direct contrast political advertisements and indirect negative portrayal political advertisements) minimally. This shows that the advertisers complied considerably with the provisions of both the APCON Code and the Electoral Act of 2010. It is also an indication that the advertisers were conscious of the fact noted in Jamieson and Campbell (2001) that political advertising provides equal opportunities to opposing candidates/parties in an election to make claims and counter claims targeted at nullifying what the other has said or has to say and decided to stay away from mudslinging as much as possible in order not to force the opposition to throw muds at them in return. This study also reveals a not too common dimension of political advertising for elections were an advertisement urged voters to vote for candidates from two leading opposition parties contesting different positions in the same election. This is branded direct opposition joint advocacy political advertising. The dimensions of political advertising engaged in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria are clear departures from those presented in Jamieson and Campbell (2001) and Trent et al (2010) with the addition of indirect positive portrayal political advertisements, indirect negative portrayal

political advertisements and direct opposition joint advocacy political advertisements. These new dimensions of political advertisements that were engaged in the 2019 general elections in Nigeria are reflections of the peculiarities in the country's political terrain. In all, this multiplicity of dimensions of electioneering political advertising in newspapers in Nigeria is indicative of attempts by political advertisers in the country to explore different frames in the presentation of candidates to voters. Specifically, the indirect portrayals that did not ask for votes were attempts to create the impression that beyond elections, the politicians presented in the advertisement were either good (indirect positive portrayal) or bad (indirect negative portrayal) in line with the submission by Dunu et al (2015) that the manner of presentation of issues greatly influence people's response.

### CONCLUSION

This study finds the level of political advertising in newspapers for the 2019 general election in Nigeria as very low. This tends to suggest that Nigerian politicians/political parties appear to be shunning electioneering political advertising in newspapers. Could this be as a result of the submission of a study that there is declining voters' trust in electioneering political advertising, paucity of campaign funds or politicians have found more viable channels of electioneering political advertising in Nigeria?

The most common dimensions of political advertising in newspapers in Nigeria, according to this study, were direct advocacy political advertisements and indirect positive portrayal political advertisements. Other dimensions which were minimally engaged were direct attack political advertisements, direct contrast political advertisements, indirect negative portrayal political advertisements and direct opposition joint advocacy political advertisement. These multiplicity of dimensions is indicative of the peculiarities in Nigerian politics and an attempt to explore different frames in the presentation of campaign messages to voters.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends as follows:

- 1) Researchers should investigate the reason for the continual decline in the resort to newspaper channel for electioneering political advertising in Nigeria.
- 2) Political advertisers in Nigeria should avoid all forms of negative advertisements since they displease voters instead of persuading them (voters) to vote for them (advertisers).
- 3) Politicians in Nigeria should see winning the confidence of the public as more important than attempting than manipulating communication frames to win their votes.

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