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Journal of Peace, Security & Development

ISSN: 2360-9435

Volume 1, No. 4, 2015



University of Ilorin
Ilorin, Nigeria.

Journal of Peace, Security and Development

————— Volume 1, No. 4, 2015 —————



Centre for Peace & Strategic Studies
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

Published by:
Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria

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ISSN: 2360-9435

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Printed by:
UNILORIN PRESS

CONTENTS

Diversity, Security and Development in Nigeria: A Re-examination of the Language Factor <i>Elisabeth De Campos and Samson Olusola Olatunji</i>	1
Regionalisation and the New Security Challenges in West Africa: A Focus on Initiatives to Combat Human Trafficking (2000-2007) <i>Prof. Amadu Sesay and Dr. Kehinde Olayode</i>	19
Bioterrorism, Public Health and National Security <i>Oludairo O. O., Aiyedun, J. O. Olorunshola I. D.</i>	43
Correlates of Venue Security and Sporting Events at the Kwara State Stadium Complex Ilorin, Nigeria <i>Dr. Ibraheem, T.O., Olaoye, A.K., Ojo, V.O. and Ibraheem, M.O.</i>	55
Securing Weapons and Prioritising Health as a Catalyst for Human Security in Nigeria <i>Dr Mahfouz A. Adedimeji</i>	66
Exploring the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah for Effective Peace Negotiation Processes: A Lesson for Nigeria <i>Dr. Adebayo, Rafiu Ibrahim and Dr. Lateju, Fola</i>	84
Re-opening the NEPAD Debate from a Peace Perspective <i>Dr. Jean-Marie Kasonga Mbombo</i>	101
Traditional Institutions as Factors of Political Ascendancy in Kogi State, Nigeria: Implications for Peaceful Co-existence <i>Onile Femi Godwin</i>	120
* Media Coverage, Voting Behaviour and the 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Electorate at the University of Ilorin <i>Fatima I. Abubakre and Olusola O. Oyewo</i>	141
Multi-dimensional Gender-based Violence against Female Refugees in Africa: Agenda For Action <i>Dr. Ruth Abiola Adimula</i>	173
Corruption and National Development in Nigeria: African Traditional Values as a Panacea <i>Meleki, Adeniyi Oluwole Osaji, Olasupo Jacob Ajetomobi, Ph. D and Olumuyiwa Aduralere</i>	192
Female Gender in Post-conflict Governance and Peace-Building in Mano-River Region of West Africa (2000-2010) <i>Dr. Adedoyin Adedayo</i>	207

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Journal of Peace, Security and Development

The *Journal of Peace, Security and Development* (JPSD) is published by the Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies (CPSS), University of Ilorin, Ilorin Nigeria. It is dedicated to advancing knowledge, deepening understanding and disseminating research findings in all aspects of peace studies, conflict studies, security studies, strategic studies and development studies.

The journal places no restriction on the scope or dimensions that studies can cover but strongly expects prospective authors to show that their papers have academic and policy implications for peace, security and development in the world, in its microcosm or macrocosm. In essence, the articles of the Journal put issues, directly or indirectly connected with peace, security and development in perspectives in both theoretical and empirical models.

Though efforts will be made by the Editorial Board to ensure that no inaccurate or misleading data, opinion or statement appears in this journal, the data and opinions presented in the articles are the sole responsibility of the contributors concerned. Authors are thus strongly encouraged to duly verify the authenticity of their claims and adequately acknowledge the sources of their information.

Editorial Policy

Contributors should note that only original works are published after a multi-staged blind peer review process. Also, contributors have the responsibility to ensure that all copyrights are secured before submissions and any act of plagiarism discovered leads to the immediate stoppage of the publication process of the article concerned.

Submission of Manuscripts

Manuscripts should be submitted in English. They should be typewritten and double-spaced, with wide margins, using one side of the page only. Authors may submit papers for consideration in two possible ways. They may send the paper to any of the editors. Alternatively, authors should submit two hard copies of their papers, directly to the Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Peace, Security and Development*, Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Email: cpssjournal@gmail.com and cpss@unilorin.edu.ng.

Authors may also submit their manuscripts via e-mail, in MS Word. A cover sheet should be provided with the following details: an abstract of not more than 250 words, with a sequence of not more than six key words suitable for indexing and abstracting services; a brief biographical note about each author and each author's areas of specialisation.

Articles are expected to be between 6,000 and 8,000 words. All submissions are treated anonymously and material identifying the author(s) should only appear on the cover page.

Referencing

Manuscripts should conform as much as possible to the referencing guidelines of the recent edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual of instructions for authors. This involves published works being cited in the text according to the author/date system and listed alphabetically in the reference section at the end of the manuscript. Examples of appropriate format for chapters, articles and books appear below:

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Okosi-Simbine, A. (2003) "African Conflicts as an Albatross to Development: A Governance Perspective, *Nigerian Journal of International Affairs*, Volume 29, Number 1 and 2.

Turshen, M. and Twagiramariya (1998) *What Women do in Wartime*, London: Zed Books.

Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies

The Centre for Peace and Strategic Studies is the second to provide mainstream training in Peace Studies at Master's and Doctoral levels in Nigeria and the West African sub-region. The pioneer Director of the Centre is the face of Peace Studies in Africa, Professor Olawale Albert, succeeded by Professor F. A. O. Olaschinde-Williams, Dr. Joseph O. Fayeye and Dr. Mahfouz A. Adedimeji, who assumed office in 2013 as the current Director.

The Centre is indebted to Professor Is-haq O. Oloyede (OFR) during whose tenure as Vice-Chancellor the programme took off. His commitment to an intellectually led approach to the pursuit of Peace in a troubled country and world led to the smooth take-off of the programme and its first public convention of a stakeholders forum to pledge to a non-adversarial pursuit of peace and reconciliation from warring communities in Kwara State in 2012, among other laudable Peace initiatives.

Also, worthy of note is the unflinching support of Professor Abdul-Ganiyu Ambali (OON), the current Vice-Chancellor, whose tenure gave birth to this journal, previously known as the *African Journal of Peace and Security*, and other activities of the Centre.

The specific objectives of the Centre are to:

- (1) make the University of Ilorin a global Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security Studies;
- (2) make the University of Ilorin a Centre of Excellence in peace research and documentation;
- (3) train manpower in the field of Peace, Conflict, Security and Strategic Studies;
- (4) provide students with theoretical and practical skills in peace-making, peacebuilding, preventive diplomacy, strategic planning and management; and
- (5) contribute to security strategy and environmental sector management.

Academic Programmes

The Centre offers MA, MPhil and PhD degree courses in Peace and Development Studies as well as MA degree courses in Peace and Security Studies.

MA Peace and Development Studies

This programme is interdisciplinary. It consists of Compulsory and Required courses for each of the specialisations, as well as Elective courses. Each student's course of study is customised to his or her interest.

Students are offered the opportunity of specialising in any of the following three academic areas:

- (1) Governance and Peace (GP)
- (2) Security Studies (SS)
- (3) Peace and Environment (PE).

CFEAT and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Retreat

Towards ensuring that graduands of the Centre are well groomed, the Centre adapted the Community- Based Experience and Services (COBES) of Health Sciences of the University into one of the compulsory courses taught at the Centre - PDS 604 or Practical Skills in Conflict Management. This entails the identification of crisis-prone, post-conflict and negatively peaceful communities where students go to stay for empirical conflict analysis, collation of early warning signs and post-conflict impact assessment or peace building mechanisms depending on the phase of the conflict. This flows from Johan Galtung's description of Peace Studies as comparable to Medical Science which makes use of diagnosis, prognosis and therapy in restoring wellness to ill societies and relationships.

Also, one of the courses taught at the Centre is the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and in honing the skills of our students, a week-long retreat is held outside the Centre where practitioners are brought in to train students and to share experience with them in order to merge theory and practice.

Town-gown Engagements

One of the core activities of the Centre is its constant engagement with critical sectors and stakeholders in the polity across all levels on issues of Governance, Development, Peace and Security sectors. Such engagements have informed the staging of Distinguished Personality Lectures of which two have been presented by His Excellency, Governor Rotimi Amacchi of Rivers State and the Chief Servant of Niger State, His Excellency Governor Muazu Aliyu Babangida.

The Centre also organises Special Public Lectures and commemorates important international activities related to Peace and Development such as the International Peace Day on September 21st each year.



MEDIA COVERAGE, VOTING BEHAVIOUR AND THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE ELECTORATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of media coverage of the 2015 Nigerian presidential election with a case study of the voting behaviour of the University of Ilorin staff. It investigated the pattern of frames adopted by the Nigerian media with particular emphasis on two dailies; The Nation and the Nigerian Tribune, in their coverage of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives' Congress (APC), electioneering campaigns. Using content analysis, the study seeks to find out how the two newspapers framed campaign issues regarding the two main political parties (APC and PDP) during the election and a survey conducted to examine how the media coverage of the political campaigns influenced the voting behaviour of University staff. While findings from the study showed that the two newspapers framings guided the electorate to make informed choices in the election, it revealed that The Nation newspaper used Ineffective Governance and Corruption frames as leitmotif to negatively present the PDP. Contrastingly, Nigerian Tribune employed Democratic Profile frame to positively present Goodluck Jonathan, while emphasizing the dictatorship past of Muhammadu Buhari. This study also showed that fighting corruption was the strongest point of Muhammadu Buhari. The electorate's confidence in his ability to achieve if voted into power did swing a lot of votes to him and his party. Goodluck Jonathan justified his Democratic Profile frame by conceding defeat but was made to pay dearly for not fighting corruption. The research suggests that media framings though influenced the voting behaviour of the University staff to some degree; there were other contending variables such as political allegiance, religion and ethnicity which also bear upon their voting decisions. The study recommends that framing is a delicate media tool that must not be deployed to corral support for dictators nor encourage bad leadership.

Keywords: Framing, Election Campaigns, Voting Behaviour, Electorate, Political Party

Introduction

Elections serve an important function of building and maintaining support for a political system especially

the democratic process, which offers an opportunity for the citizens to choose and influence their political leaders. A free, fair and credible election is the foundation for the expression of core democratic

principles, such as the sovereignty of citizens, freedom, choice and accountability of political leaders. Thus, election can be regarded as an inevitable cornerstone in a democracy. The campaigns of the two major Nigerian political parties (Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and All Progressives' Congress (APC), and their presidential candidates, were the focus of intense media attention and coverage during the 2015 presidential election, just as the citizenry closely depended on the media for information about the two political parties and their candidates and the electoral processes.

Section 22 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) recognizes the important role that the mass media play in the Nigerian society. The Section provides that: "The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times, be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people" (FRN, 1999:8). The role of the media as an important social tool for shaping and sustaining the shared experiences of members of a society is indisputable as the mass media not only serve as powerful modes of communication but also are instruments for the propagation of valuable information among members of a given social group. One of the characteristics of mass media is the agenda setting function which is the ability to give salience, or ascribe prominence and importance to a given issue while simultaneously ignoring or deemphasizing others in the process of communication. Hence, the socio-political disposition of a society is closely related

to and interwoven with the quality and variety of media content provided by the mass media and to which members of the society are exposed.

The media serve as a filtering structure for propagating information to the citizenry and this is why Lippmann (1922) asserted that, news as provided by the mass media is not synonymous with the "truth." According to him, people in the society acquire political knowledge not through their own personal experiences but rather, through information from the media and the elites the media portray. Lippmann contended that the world that people "have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind" (Lippmann, 1922: 29). Mustapha, Ahmad and Abubakar (2014:115), also posited that "the centrality of information to governance at political, economic and social realms of the society confers on the providers the ability to manipulate desires, actions and the inactions of those at the receiving end." Media owners and providers include the government, individuals, and groups, corporate organizations with huge financial resources that use the media to further their interests which could be of public interests, political influence peddling and especially for commercial purposes.

It is therefore, apposite to aver that although the media idealistically exist to serve public interest by providing a platform for the people for critical debate on matters of public concern especially during electoral process, which, will then inform them to arrive at rational decisions and conclusions, the reality however, is that media activities during elections are one of strategic communications, that are designed to bring the views of the

different participants in the electoral process to news attention and to garner public support for their position. This informed the selection of the *Nigerian Tribune* and *The Nation* newspaper for this study.

During the 2015 electioneering campaigns, the media set a number of agenda to influencing the minds of voters in casting their votes for a particular political party. Consequently, various sources and techniques were used to communicate with electorates which include the members of staff of University of Ilorin. These sources of electoral news are the mainstream media of newspapers, radio and television and digital media platforms-such as internet, use of blogs and other social media platforms, and mobile messages. Through the media, political parties' messages and manifestoes were disseminated to a large, diversified, heterogeneous audience, using advertisements, banners, leaflets, billboards, campaign rallies and other avenues to convince voters and win public support for their position.

Statement of the Problem

Bagdikian (1997) stressed the ability of media providers and news sources to influence the perception of the public by arguing that, the mass media had "become the authority at any given moment for what is true and what is false, what is reality and what is fantasy, what is important and what is trivial. There is no greater force in shaping the public mind; even brute force triumphs only by creating an accepting attitude toward the brutes." This is especially true of and significant in African societies and among developing nations like Nigeria, many of whom, are

more vulnerable to the tendencies of sit-tight political leaders. It becomes apparent that political participants in the 2015 presidential election, who possessed huge economic power and influence, had effect on the opinion of news audiences, by determining their political behaviour on what they read, watched and ultimately perceive as the "truth." Consequently, excessive exhibition of these scenarios during the 2015 electioneering campaigns, can threaten the orderliness and peaceful co-existence among Nigerians as some opinion leaders within the society had examined the election campaigns not only from the political divide but also from the prism of ethnic and religious divides. For example, the wife of the then President who was seeking re-election, Patience Jonathan, an influential woman leader in her home state of Rivers, during the campaigns was quoted as saying at an electioneering rally in Calabar that, "Our people do not give birth to uncountable children. Our men don't give birth to children they dump in the streets. We are not like people from that part of the country (North)" Ogunwale (2015). A remark which was perceived as offensive and targeted at people of Northern extraction where there were many out of school children- who were possibly products of polygamous homes, who solicited alms in the name of religion. Taking cognizance of the foregoing, the study seeks to determine how the media coverage of the 2015 Presidential Election Campaigns shaped the voting behaviour of staff members of the University of Ilorin.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were to:

- a) To assess the frames the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper utilized more on electoral campaign issues regarding the two main political parties (APC and PDP) during the 2015 Presidential election than *The Nation* newspaper and vice-versa; and
- b) To examine how the media coverage of the political campaigns influenced the voting behaviour of members of staff of the University of Ilorin during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Research Questions

RQ1: Which frames did the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper utilize more on campaign issues regarding the two main political parties during the 2015 Presidential election than *The Nation* newspaper and vice versa?

RQ2: How did the information provided by the media influenced members of staff of the University of Ilorin on their voting choices during the 2015 Presidential election?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Framing theory. The concept of framing has become more popular in communication studies (Matthes, 2009), as highlighted by de Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko (2011:179) who held that, "news framing can exert a strong influence on public opinion." Framing, according to Entman (1993:52)

"essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation of the item described." Entman's definition of framing highlighted four functions of frames in the media which included defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies. "A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of them. And a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions" Entman (1993:52). In this light, the concept of Framing in Communication Studies and as a theory of media effect, is apposite given its description as "one of the most fertile areas of current research in journalism and mass communication" Riffe (2004:2).

Matthes (2012: 252) stresses that: "the key idea of framing is one of strategic communication: to bring one's views to news attention and to win public support for one's position. To observe this process, we have to track down substantive frames that are suggested by political elites, selected (and potentially reframed) by journalists, and incorporated into citizens' thoughts and issue evaluations." Matthes (2012:253) further advances four principles to describe the framing process which include- frame competition; frame selection and modification; frame dynamics, and frame consistency.

In frame competition, Matthes (2012) observed that the struggle to define

the dominant interpretation of an issue is usually marked by a competition of frames among the elite or strategic communicators. This means that "political issues are contested, open to several issue interpretations or frames." Regarding frame selection and modification, he noted that Journalists "are not forced to automatically transport the frames suggested by the political elite. They can select, shape, and reframe the arguments suggested by other communicators. They can also suggest their own frames. Similarly, the audience often frames issues in ways that are suggested neither by political elites nor by journalistic news content." As a dynamic process, Matthes noted that, "some frames are communicated by the political elite, they find their way in the news media and they are mirrored in public opinion data (e.g., polls). Subsequently, these framing effects are observed by other elites who can react by proposing counterframes." By frame consistency, Matthes, citing Entman et al., (2009) submitted that, "frames exert their power by repeatedly invoking the same pattern of consistent frame elements giving citizens a chance to notice, understand, and store the mental association for future applications." According to him, "Frames are not singular persuasive messages or assertions. Frames always refer to a pattern involving issue interpretation, attribution, and evaluation. Such frame elements are tied together in (logically) consistent ways." Reese (2007:150) regards frames as "structures that draw boundaries, set up categories, define some ideas as out and others in, and generally operate to snag related ideas in their net in an active process." Druckman and Parkin (2005:1030) opined that: "In covering a

campaign, news outlets make many choices. They highlight certain issues, frame events in particular ways, and portray candidates in varying lights. These choices affect voters. For example, voters often base their candidate evaluations on the issues emphasized in the news (priming), and they form their opinions about events in ways that correspond with how the news frames those events (framing)" Dimitrova and Connelly-Ahern (2007:155) describe a media frame as an "organizing mechanism for media content" which provides "immediate context to the recipient of the frame, through the selection, emphasis or exclusion of specific facts or ideas." They also contended that "framing has implications for the worldview of those exposed to it." Boydston, Gross and Resnik (2014:2) underscored the critical role language plays in framing studies despite the nuances of different conceptual definitions of the subject. They posited that, "Whether the aim is to study frames as memes, dimensions of debate, or specific arguments for or against something, all of these framing techniques can be identified and analyzed through language signals ranging from simple lexical clues to word clusters to choices of syntactic structure." Tankard (2001:101) highlights eleven ways for identifying frames in a news report. They are: headlines, subheads, photos, photo captions, leads, source selection, quotes selection, pull quotes, logos, statistics and charts, as well as concluding statements and paragraphs.

Literature Review

The coverage the media give elections conveys the notion that they are

important, and the media reinforce this notion with themes that run repeatedly through their accounts of campaigns and campaign events (Kelly, 2015). Media scholars across the globe have also engaged considerably on extensive research studies on the interface between mass media and the political process and they are unanimous in their submissions that the role of the media in the development of any society cannot be underestimated because mass media serve as an important social tool of political communication (Dennis and Merrill, 2002; Maarek and Wolfsfeld, 2003; Louw, 2005; Willis, 2007). According to Graber (2004: 46), political communication scholars study matters such as the salient characteristics of the originators of political messages, the backgrounds and attitudes that receivers bring to the interpretation of messages, the form and substance of messages, the impact that various types of communication channels leave on the messages that flow through their networks, and, ultimately, the impact of the messages on political processes at individual and societal levels. Dennis and Merrill (2002:76) also argued that: "Few people believe that the media conspire to control elections but their influence and power is almost universally recognized by ordinary citizens and political experts." While noting that the news media in Nigeria play a central role in governance, especially in the process of political transition, Olukotun (2000:33) submits that the media "are part of the apparatus for vetting and legitimizing elections."

Even though the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other international agencies, such as the United States Mission in Nigeria had

supported the Nigerian media industry in the coverage of the 2015 general elections by organizing media training workshops for journalists which held in cities across Nigeria that included Lagos, Port Harcourt, Ekiti, Abeokuta, Osogbo, Kaduna and Abuja, the symbiotic relationship that exists between the political class and the media, had made the mass media in Nigeria to be co-opted to propagate hate campaigns against political opponents and champion the denigration of dissenting voices, not only in the print media but especially, in the broadcast media. The cyberspace media like the internet, which had greatly enhanced the participation and increased the interactivity of the electorate in political discourse, was also not left out from this phenomenon in the run-up to the 2015 elections. Lamenting Nigerian newspapers' loss of Corporate Social Responsibility, Olateju (2015) asserted that "at this critical time in Nigeria's history, and given the rot and naked ambition of politicians, we expect newspapers to provide the content and context for the citizens to make decisions."

As contained in a report rendered by the Institute for War and Peace-sponsored Nigerian Election News Report (NENR, 2011), "analysis of media coverage in past Nigerian elections has been damning. The Commonwealth Observer Group said in its report on the 2007 elections that 'significant state ownership of the broadcast media negatively impacted on and influenced the coverage in favour of incumbents' political parties.' Nonetheless, Kofi Annan, a former Secretary-General of the United Nations, in an address delivered at the Fourth International Conference of

New and Restored Democracies, at Cotonou, Republic of Benin on December 4, 2000, asserted that, "nothing is more important for democracy than free and vigorous mass media. For an election to be truly fair, different parties and candidates should have equal access to the media. Neither state power nor the power of money should determine that one party gets a hearing while another is denied it. The media must actively seek out the truth on the public's behalf, and be free to tell it as they see it."

It is therefore, apposite to mention that although the media idealistically exist to serve the public interest by providing a platform for the people for critical debates on matters of public concern particularly on elections, which will then inform members (electorates) of the public to arrive at rational decisions and conclusions, the reality however, is that, the mass media are established to serve the interests of their paymasters. The ownership of the media has been focus of many studies and scholars and even philosophers which is especially anchored on the ideology and the political economy of the mass media. Critical scholars of the Marxist tradition such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer usually align themselves with the ideology of Karl Marx found in his famous quote that:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force in society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of

mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. (Marx and Engels, 1970, in Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 220).

We can relate this statement to media ownership; that those who own the means of production (Government/Private-owned corporations and conglomerates) also have control over the means of mental production (media and media content-which has also been described elsewhere by critical scholars as popular culture that are shaped by capitalistic rationality and are essentially variations of the same thing) and which, are used to dominate the ideas of the people (mass) who lack the means of mental production. The content of the mass media is influenced by political and economic factors which have direct implications on the electoral process. The political factor refers to the editorial independence and content of the media while the economic influence are the advertisers who constitute the economic force that also determines what should be and what can be the content of media messages. The ownership of the media is therefore, an economic imperative that influences not only the editorial independence of the media but also the generality of the content; including the selection of election news. Lichtenberg (2007:239) notes that, "the mass media do more than provide news; they are instrumental in shaping our worldview, and so play a role in our society much greater than that of their forerunners." Shoemaker and Reese

(1996:221) submitted that "ownership is considered the primary means through which the ruling class exerts control over media institutions. Ultimately, a-political economy approach leads-us to expect that capitalist-owned media decisions and content will tend to favour those with economic power" (1996: 221).

In Nigeria, the ownership of the mass media- print and broadcast and more recently, online media platforms, has different historical origins. From colonial era to independence period, to military interregnum, the Nigerian press had been overtly partisan. Nearly all newspapers in Nigeria started in association with political parties (Olayiwola: 1991). In his submissions, Adesoji (2010, p.29) observes that, media disposition to issues cannot be divorced from its inclination to politics. According to him:

As it was with the *Nigerian Tribune* from the 1950s to 1980s and *Concord* from the 1980 to 1990s, some section of the press became actively involved in partisan politics either by virtue of their ownership or the use to which they were put or both.

Presently however, the broadcast and print media appear to have a similar pattern of ownership that is, public or government ownership, as well as private ownership of the media. An example of Government ownership of print medium can be found in *The Herald* newspaper of Kwara State, and an example of private ownership can be found in the *National Pilot* newspaper, owned by Nigeria's Senate President, Bukola Saraki. For the broadcast media, there is the state-owned

radio station, Radio Kwara and privately-owned Royal Fm owned by an individual, Gbenga Adebayo among others. Ende (2013) corroborates Adesoji's assertion when he listed media owners with political interests such as Bola Ahmed Tinubu's *The Nation* and the Action Congress of Nigeria connection; *National Mirror* and *Newswatch Times* owned by a Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain, Jimoh Ibrahim. "There are many more with not very clear ownership links to politicians, yet with assumed partisan undertones-sectional, tribal and religious and which can easily be deployed for political purposes" (Ende 2013: 43). In essence, Lichtenberg (2007:239) further submits that: "it would be naïve to think that the economic and political interests of these institutions do not get reflected in their informational products. To the extent that they do get reflected, less powerful interests and perspectives get less than a fair hearing in the political forum."

Notwithstanding, Ladd (2010:567) stressed that, media distrust leads voters to discount campaign news and increasingly rely on their partisan predispositions as cues. The study suggests that, increasing aggregate levels of media distrust are an important source of greater partisan voting. Obijiofor (2011:2) cited in Ende (2013:37) lends credence to this that:

...limitations of the media in African countries...have contributed to growing public distrust of the media as pipelines of credible and reliable information; it is not surprising therefore, that, Africans are using new media to break free from the inadequacies of the media as

well as the constraint imposed on the media by market forces (e.g. advertising) and political leaders.

Jacobsmeier (2015:618) conducted a study on the race, perceptions of candidates' ideologies and voting behaviour in the U.S. House of Representatives elections which revealed that, indirect effects of race on voting decisions outweigh any direct effects of racial prejudice. Findings from the study show that, racial group membership affects how citizens evaluate candidates' ideologies, and that race-based misperception of candidates' ideologies hurts the electoral chances of black candidates. In other words, "a significant number of white voters will fail to vote for black candidates even if those black candidates are more ideologically similar to those voters than opposing white candidates."

Javaid & Elahi (2014:377) carried out a study on the influence of the media on the voting behaviour of populations in rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Findings from the study showed that majority of people in the rural population who rely on peer groups and family as a source of information voted on the basis of "biradari" (patrilineage) and personal affiliations and not due to the media. They posit that "...the personality and appearance of leader counts a lot for them and a little importance is placed over the media as mostly, people do not agree with the stance of media(if in access)". In contrast to this, majority of the urban population which possesses a high level of information through the media "tend to

vote on the basis of performance and policy."

In their study on gender stereotypes, information search and voting behaviour in political campaigns, Ditonto, Hamilton & Redlawsk (2013:335) found that, rather than directly influencing vote choice, candidate gender guides the amounts and types of information voters search for during a campaign. They held that: "subjects change their search based on a candidate's gender, seeking out more competence-related information about female candidates than they do for male candidates, as well as more information related to 'compassion issues'."

The significance of the conceptualization of the two-step flow theory also needs to be underscored. The theory explains that information from the media moves through two distinct processes. The first stage involves individuals, who were termed as "opinion leaders," who pay close attention to the media and the content received from the media, and which they (opinion leaders) in turn, interpret and pass on to other members of the public. Hence, the opinion leaders intervene between the messages coming indirectly from the media and the reaction of the audience to the message, (Baran and Davis, 2012). On the basis of this, the present study, apart from investigating the media coverage and influence on the voting behaviour of members of staff of the University of Ilorin, also examined factors such as political allegiance, family ties, friends/colleagues', mainstream media, social media influences on the voting decision of respondents in the study.

Methodology

The study adopted the triangulation method, using content analysis to examine the framing patterns of the media coverage in the 2015 presidential election campaigns and survey to determine the influence of such campaigns on the voting behaviour of staff members of the University of Ilorin. The triangulation method which is also referred to as mixed method, allows the researcher to use multiple approaches or perspectives in providing solutions to research problems. Wimmer and Dominick (2011:49) noted that triangulation helps researchers to understand the nature of a research problem. The Content Analysis and Survey research designs were chosen to guide the process of data collection.

Content Analysis of *The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune*

The data for the content analysis was obtained through a systematic random sampling method. The systematic random sampling method is a process of selecting the sample size in a way that the population is divided into intervals and the same number of unit is selected from each interval. The process of selection of sample drawn from *The Nation* newspaper began by dividing the total editions (90) published within three months (January, February and March 2015) of intensive electoral campaign into three intervals. From each of the interval which is equivalent to a month, twelve editions were selected randomly to make a total of 36 editions from *The Nation* newspaper for the study. Likewise, the process of selection of selecting the sample drawn

from the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper began by dividing the total editions (90) published within three months (January, February and March 2015) of intensive electoral campaign into three intervals. From each of the interval which is equivalent to a month, twelve editions were selected randomly to make a total of 36 editions from the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper for the study. This choice was made to give a fair representation of the population of study. Cumulatively, the sampling process produced a total sample of seventy-two editions out of the total population of study (180) editions of both newspapers. The seventy-two editions were later content analyzed for the study.

Survey on voting behaviour

The Survey method will assist in determining the effectiveness of media coverage and framing effect on the voting behaviour and voting decisions of members of staff of the University of Ilorin during the 2015 Presidential elections. The total number of members of staff of the University as at January 2015 stands at 3,574 according to records obtained from the Academic Planning unit of the Institution. In order to determine an appropriate sample size for the survey of the population, this study employed the formula provided by Yamane (1974) as cited by Evborokhai (2009). The formula is illustrated as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(0.05)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population

1 is constant

E= level of significance chosen
 Thus, to determine an appropriate sample size (n) for the study,

$$n = \frac{3,574}{1 + 3,574(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 9.99$$

 From the above formula, the sample size that was drawn from the population size

of staff members of the University was approximately, ten percent. It therefore means that, 358 members of staff constitute the sample size for this study and the instrument of data collection for the survey was through the use of questionnaire.

Data Presentation, Findings and Analysis

Table 1: Pattern of news framing of electioneering campaign issues in *The Nation*

Frame Categories	Sup p. Frames (AP C)	% within frame (+)	Anta g. Frames (AP C)	% within frame (-)	Supp. Frames (PDP)	% within frame (+)	Antag. Frames (PDP)	% with in fra me (-)	Total	% Overall
Certificate Controversy	6	40.0	0	0	0	0	9	60.0	15	3.0
Corruption	35	38.9	3	3.3	6	6.7	46	51.1	90	18.3
Democratic Profile	23	39.0	0	0	9	15.3	27	45.8	59	12.0
Economy	22	52.4	0	0	3	7.1	17	40.5	42	8.5
Effective Governance	16	29.6	0	0	10	18.5	28	51.9	54	11.0
Ethnicity	12	34.3	0	0	8	22.9	15	42.9	35	7.1
PVC/Election Shift	24	36.9	1	1.5	0	0	40	61.5	65	13.2
Ineffective Governance	33	28.4	3	2.6	11	9.5	69	59.5	116	23.6
Religion	5	31.2	0	0	3	18.8	8	50.0	16	3.3
Total	176		7		50		259		492	100
% Overall	(35.8%)		(1.4%)		(10.2%)		(52.6%)			

Source: Researcher's computation of data from content analysis of *The Nation*, 2015

Table 1 show that, there were a total of 492 frames used by the *The Nation* in the framing of electioneering campaigns from January to March 2015. Out of this, 90 representing (18.3%) was devoted to Corruption frame in its reportage of electoral issues. Religion frame 16 (3.3%); Ethnicity frame was 35 (7.1%); Economy frame was

42 (8.5%); Effective Governance frame was 54 (11%); Ineffective Governance frame 116 (23.6%); Democrat frame 59 (12%); Certificate Controversy frame 15 (3%); INEC PVC distribution/Election shift frame 65 (13.2%). It also indicates the distributive percentages within each frame category for positivity (+) and negativity (-).

It can be deduced from Table 1 that, the pattern of news framing in *The Nation* shows that, the newspaper published election news items with supportive frames for the PDP by 50 (10.2%), and it published election news items with antagonistic frames to the PDP by 259 (59.6%). During the same period, *The Nation* published election news items with supportive frames for the APC by 176 (35.8%), and it published only election news items with antagonistic frames to the APC by 7 (1.4%).

Table 2: Pattern of news framing of electioneering campaign issues in the *Nigerian Tribune*

Frame Categories	Supp. Frames (APC)	% within frame (+)	Antag. Frames (APC) (-)	% within frame	Supp. Frames (PDP)	% within frame (+)	Ant ag. Frames (PDP) (-)	% within frame (-)	Total	% Overall
Certificate Controversy	6	14.0	16	37.2	21	48.8	0	0	43	11.2
Corruption	6	17.6	9	26.5	19	55.9	0	0	34	8.9
Democratic Profile	3	4.4	21	30.9	44	64.7	0	0	68	17.7
Economy	8	21.6	9	24.3	18	48.6	2	5.4	37	9.6
Effective Governance	16	20.5	14	17.6	44	56.4	4	5.1	78	20.3
Ethnicity	4	9.3	15	34.9	22	51.2	2	4.7	43	11.2
PVC/Election Shift	5	16.7	6	20.0	16	53.3	3	10.0	30	7.8
Ineffective Governance	3	10.3	7	24.1	14	48.3	5	17.2	29	7.6
Religion	3	13.6	6	27.3	12	54.5	1	4.5	22	5.7
Total (%)	54 (14.1%)		103 (26.8%)		210 (54.7%)		17 (4.4%)		384	100

Source: Researcher's computation of data from content analysis of *Nigerian Tribune*, 2015

Table 2 shows that, there were a total of 384 frames used by the *Nigerian Tribune* in the framing of electoral campaigns from January to March 2015. Out of this, 34 representing (8.9%) was devoted to Corruption frame in its reportage of electoral issues. Religion frame 22 (5.7%); Ethnicity frame was 43 (11.2%); Economy frame

was 37 (9.6%); Effective Governance frame was 78 (20.3%); Ineffective Governance frame 29 (7.6%); Democratic Profile frame 68(17.7%); Certificate Controversy frame 43(11.2%); INEC PVC distribution and Election shift frame 30 (7.8%). It also indicates the distributive percentages within each frame category for positivity (+) and negativity (-).

It can be concluded from Table 2 that, the pattern of news framing in the *Nigerian Tribune* shows that, the newspaper published election news items with supportive frames for the PDP by 210(54.7%), and it published election news items with antagonistic frames to the PDP by 17 (4.4%). During the same period, the *Nigerian Tribune* published election news items with supportive frames for the APC by 54(14.1%), and it also published election news items with antagonistic frames to the APC by 103 (26.8%).

Chart 1 further illustrates the pattern of news framing of electoral campaigns between the PDP and the APC in *The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune*.

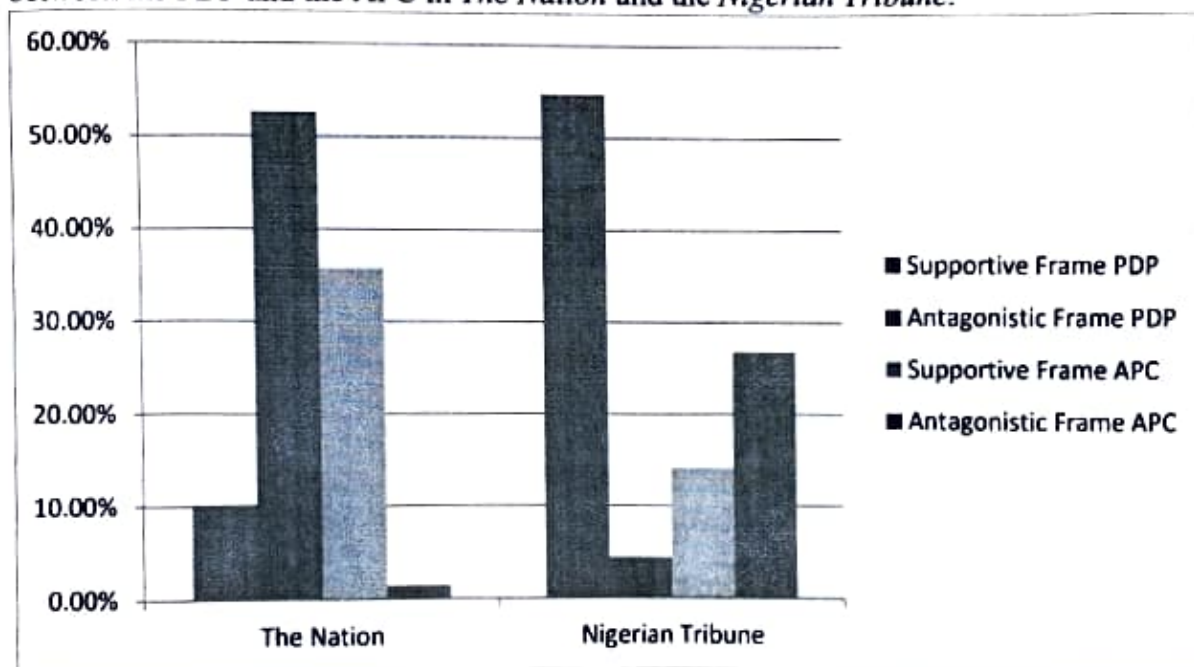


Chart 1: Pattern of news framing of electoral campaign issues in *The Nation* and *Nigerian Tribune*

Source: Researcher's computation of data from content analysis of *The Nation* & *Nigerian Tribune*, 2015

Chart 1 shows that *The Nation* used more supportive frames for the APC than for the PDP, while it used more of the antagonistic frame against the PDP than the APC. The *Nigerian Tribune* on its part used more supportive frames for the PDP than for the APC, while it used more of the antagonistic frame against the APC than for the PDP.

The reliability statistics for the pattern of news framing of electoral campaigns issues in *The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune* was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability test. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test for the pattern of framing

between *The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune* is .975, which is high and indicates internal consistency with the frame categories used.

RQ1: Which frames did the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper utilize more on campaign issues regarding the two main political parties in the 2015 Presidential elections than *The Nation* newspaper and vice versa?

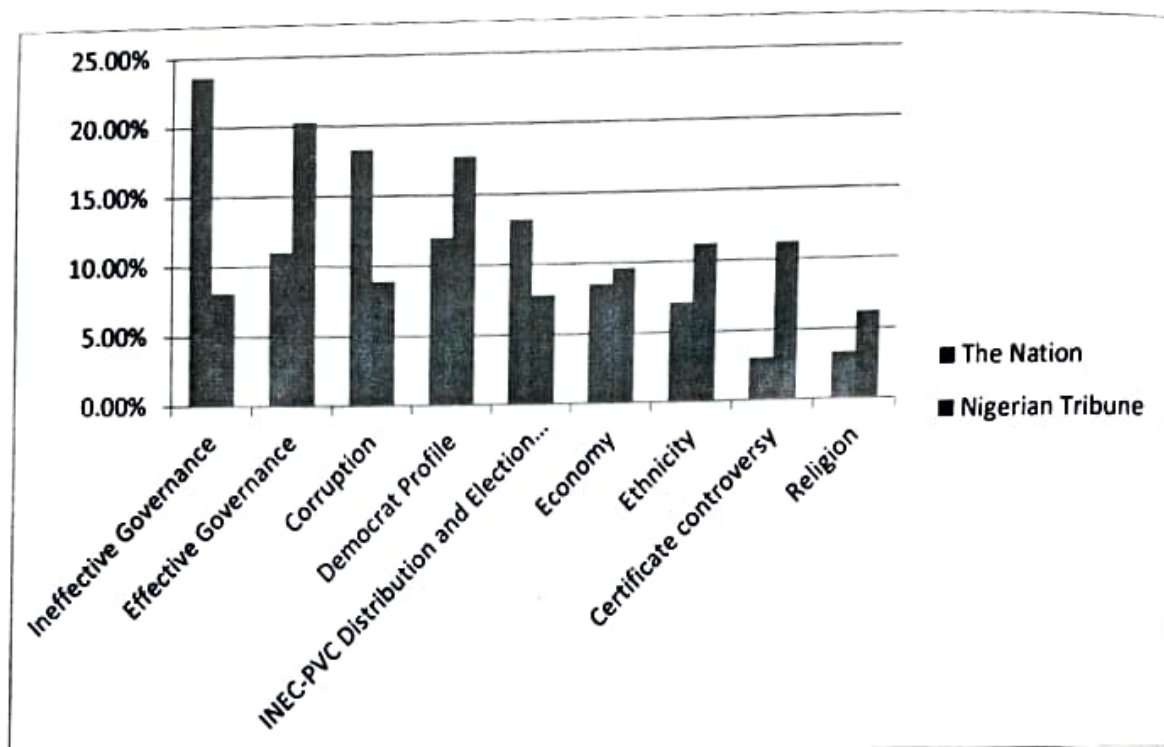


Chart 2: Prevalent frames in the coverage of electoral campaigns in the 2015 Presidential election

Source: Researcher's computation of data from content analysis of *The Nation & the Nigerian Tribune, 2015*

Chart 2 shows that, the *Nigerian Tribune* utilized the Effective Governance frame more than *The Nation*, while *The Nation* on its part, utilized the Ineffective Governance frame more than the *Nigerian Tribune*. *The Nation* also used the Corruption frame, INEC-PVC distribution/election shift frame more than the *Nigerian Tribune*. Table 1 also revealed the distributive percentages recorded within each frame category for positivity (+) and for negativity (-) in, under the Ineffective Governance frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 28.4% against 9.5% recorded for the PDP

while for the negativity theme, APC recorded 2.6% against PDP's 59.5%. With regard to the Corruption frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 38.9% against 6.7% recorded for the PDP while for the negativity theme, APC recorded 3.3% against PDP's 51.1%. Under the INEC PVC Distribution/Election shift frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 36.9% against 0% recorded for the PDP while for the negativity theme were more against the PDP and its candidate, Goodluck Jonathan, as the negativity theme recorded 1.5% for the APC and 61.5% for the PDP. These

clearly show that *The Nation* newspaper was quite critical of Goodluck Jonathan's administration and the former ruling political party. On the other hand, the *Nigerian Tribune* used more of the Democratic Profile frame, Certificate Controversy frame, and the Ethnicity frame more than *The Nation*.

Contrastingly, in Table 2, the distributive percentages recorded within each frame category for positivity (+) and for negativity (-) shows that the *Nigerian Tribune* gave more favourable coverage to the PDP as it published more electioneering news items favourable to the PDP and its presidential candidate than the APC and its presidential candidate. Under the Effective Governance frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 20.5% against 56.4% recorded for the PDP while for the negativity theme, APC recorded 17.6% against PDP's 5.1%. With regard to the Democratic Profile frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 4.4% against 64.7% recorded for the PDP while for the negativity theme, APC recorded 30.9% against PDP's 0%. Under the Certificate controversy frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 14.0% against 48.8% recorded for the PDP while for the negativity theme, APC recorded 37.2% against PDP's 0%. Furthermore, under the Ethnicity frame category, APC positivity theme recorded 9.3% against 51.2% recorded for the PDP while for the negativity theme, APC recorded 34.9% against PDP's 4.7%. The Effective Governance frame was used in favour of the PDP and its presidential candidate as it highlighted the achievements, commissioning of projects, and political endorsements of former President Jonathan.

RQ2: How did the information provided by the media influenced members of staff of the University of Ilorin on their voting choices in the Presidential election?

Out of the 358 questionnaires distributed, 287 were returned. This represents 80percent response rate. The response rate was calculated as follows: $(287/358) \times (100) = 80\%$. The remaining 71 questionnaires were not returned by the respondents. In addressing RQ2, an analysis of the demographic distribution of the respondents was first established. Four approaches were employed to determine how the information provided by the media influenced respondents voting choices. First, respondents were asked to rate issues perceived as important in the 2015 electoral campaigns. This was ascertained by asking the respondents to score the issues on a range of 9 to 1, (with 9 as the highest and 1 as lowest) to determine the issues that were considered to be important in the electoral campaign and were vital to electoral decision making. Secondly, respondents in the study were asked presidential candidates they cast their votes for in the 2015 presidential election. Third, respondents were also asked what influenced their voting decision in the 2015 presidential election among the listed variables of: Family ties, Friends/colleagues, Political allegiance, Mainstream media of newspaper, television and radio and the social media- Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Google Plus+, and Instagram. In the fourth place, respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the candidature of the presidential candidates put forward by the two main political parties, PDP and APC. The questions which were listed RQ2a,

RQ2b, RQ2c and RQ2d, were raised in order to explain the voting behaviour of members of staff of the University of Ilorin.

RQ2a. Issues respondents perceived as important during the 2015 presidential electoral campaigns.

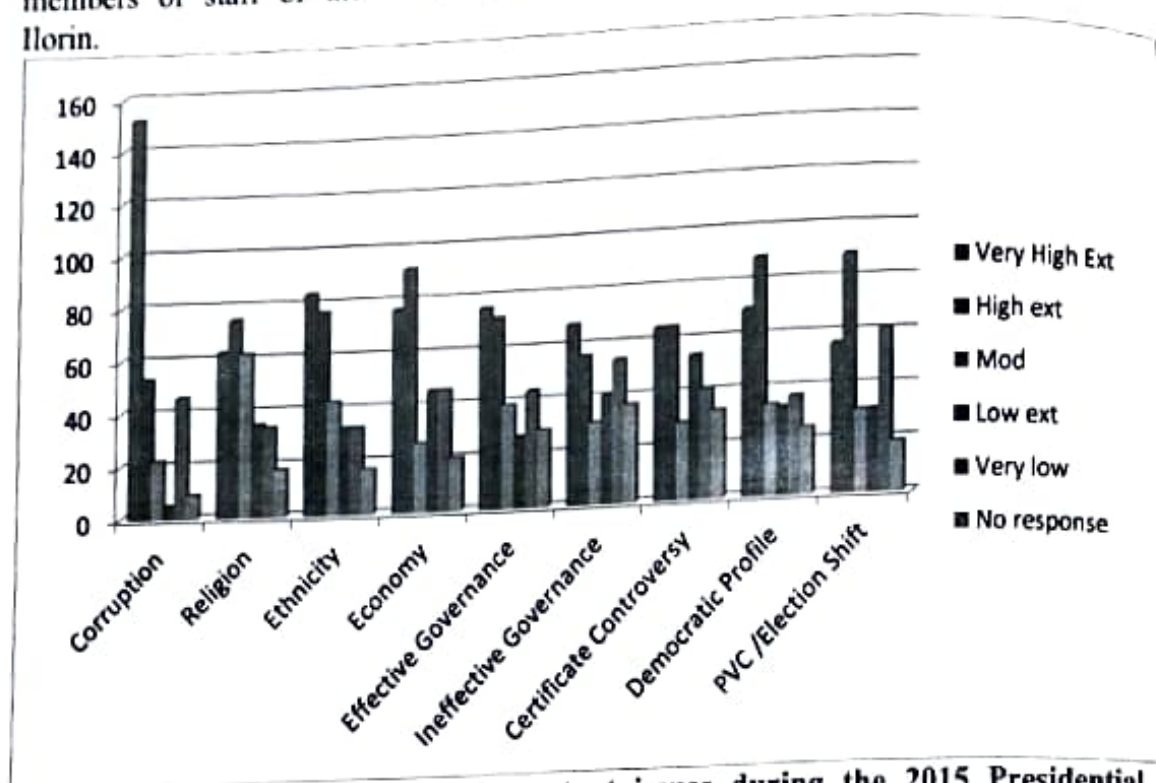


Chart 3: Ranking of the most important issues during the 2015 Presidential election by Respondents

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Chart 3 shows that more of the respondents in the study considered corruption; economy; democratic profile of a political party/candidate, permanent voter card distribution/election shift, ethnicity, effective governance, religion, ineffective governance, and Buhari's certificate controversy issues as the important issues in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election.

RQ2b: Candidate respondents voted for in the March 28, 2015 Presidential election?

Table 3: Candidate voted for in 2015 Presidential election

Presidential Candidate	Frequency	Percent
Goodluck Jonathan	35	12.2
Muhammadu Buhari	189	65.9
Other Presidential Candidate	7	2.4
I did not vote	41	14.3
No response indicated	15	5.2
Total	287	100.0

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

35 representing 12.2percent respondents voted for the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Goodluck Jonathan while 189 representing 65.9percent respondents voted for the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, MuhammaduBuhari. 7 representing 2.4percent respondents voted for other presidential candidates in the election; 41 representing 14.3percent of the respondents did not vote, while 15 representing 5.2percent of respondents failed to indicate whether they voted or not, or if they voted for candidate of their choice in the presidential election. The data gathered is further illustrated in the Chart 4.

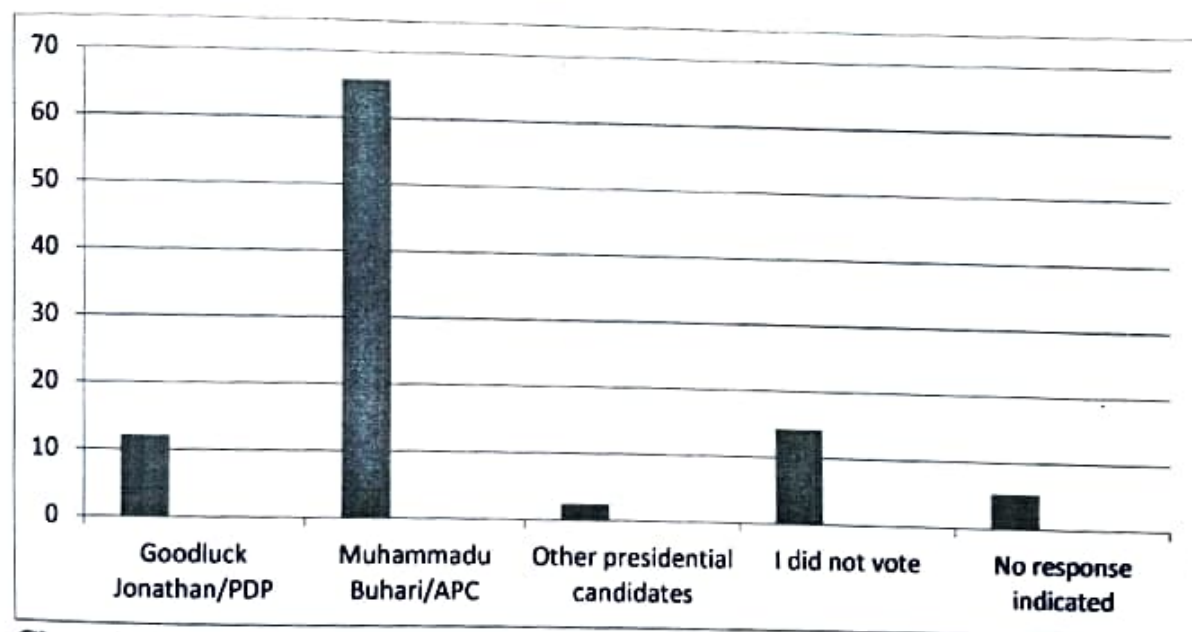


Chart 4: Candidate voted for in 2015 Presidential election

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Chart 3 shows that more of the respondents in the study considered corruption; economy; democratic profile of a political party/candidate, permanent voter card distribution/election shift, ethnicity, effective governance, religion, ineffective

governance, and Buhari's certificate controversy issues as the important issues in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election.

RQ2b: Candidate respondents voted for during the March 28, 2015 Presidential election

Table 3: Candidates voted for in the 2015 Presidential election

Presidential Candidate	Frequency	Percent
Goodluck Jonathan	35	12.2
Muhammadu Buhari	189	65.9
Other Presidential Candidates	7	2.4
I did not vote	41	14.3
No response indicated	15	5.2
Total	287	100.0

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Thirty-five representing 12.2% respondents voted for the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) candidate, Goodluck Jonathan while 189 representing 65.9% respondents voted for the All Progressives Congress (APC) presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari. Seven representing 2.4% respondents voted for other presidential candidates in the election; 41 representing 14.3% of the respondents did not vote, while 15 representing 5.2% of respondents failed to indicate whether they voted or not, or if they voted for candidates of their choice in the presidential election. The data gathered is further illustrated in the Chart 4.

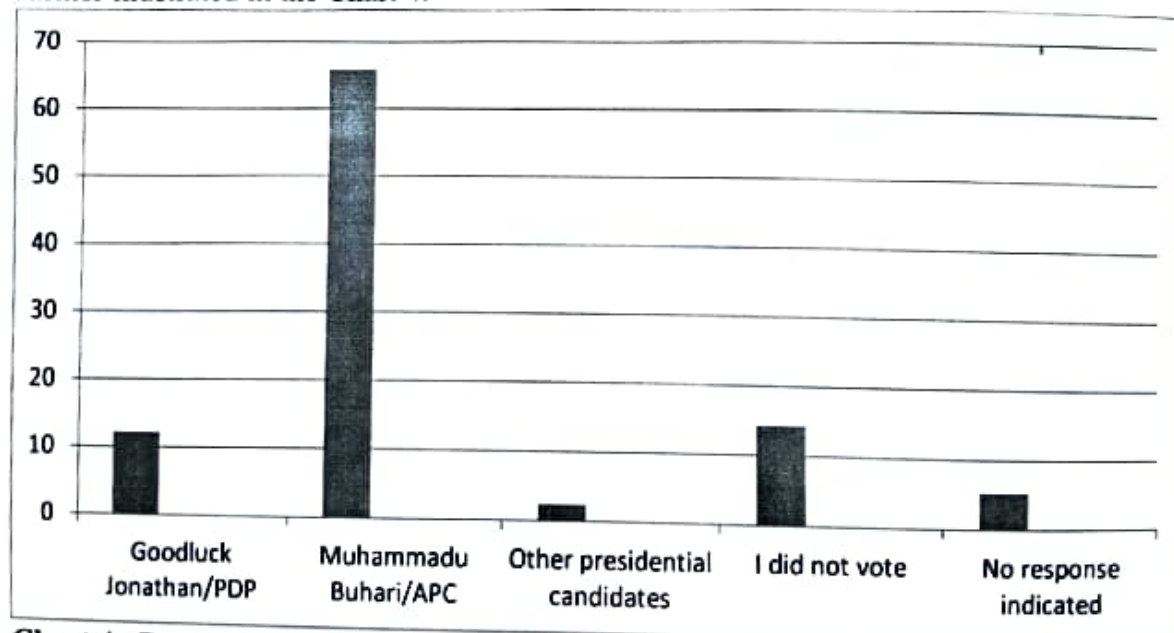


Chart 4: Candidates voted for in the 2015 Presidential election

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Chart 4 shows that members of staff of the University of Ilorin voted mostly for the APC Presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari in the March 28, 2015 Nigerian Presidential election.

RQ2c: Which of these would you say most influenced your voting decision?
Table 4: Influence on respondents voting decision

Influence	Frequency	Percent
Family	54	18.8
Friends/Colleagues	21	7.3
Political allegiance	85	29.6
Mainstream Media	63	22.0
Social media	18	6.3
No response	46	16.0
Total	287	100.0

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Table 4 shows the influence on the respondents voting decision in the March 28, 2015 Presidential elections. 54 representing 18.8% respondents were influenced by their family members to vote for a particular party and its candidate; 21 representing 7.3% of respondents said they were influenced by their friends and colleagues to vote for a particular party and its candidate; 85 representing 29.6% indicated that their political allegiance influenced them to vote for a particular party and its

candidate; 63 representing 22.0% identified the mainstream media of newspaper, television and radio as having influenced them to vote for a particular party and its candidate; 18 representing 6.3% indicated that the social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Google Plus and Instagram influenced them to vote for a particular party and its candidate while 46 representing 16.0percent of respondents did not indicate any response to the question.

The data gathered is further represented in the Chart 5.

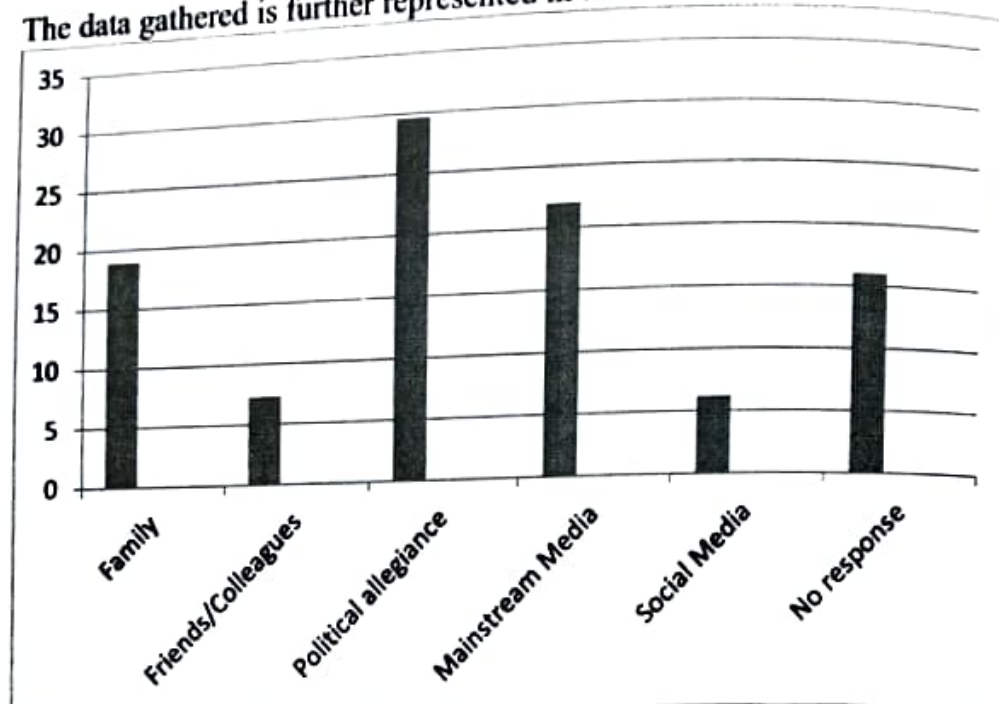


Chart 5: Influence on Respondents Voting Decision

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Chart 5 shows what influenced the respondents' voting decisions in the March 28, 2015 Presidential election. It reveals that, members of staff of the University of Ilorin were influenced mostly by their political allegiance on their voting decisions rather than the mainstream media or the social media platforms. This is because majority of the respondents 85, which constitutes 29.6%, indicated that their political allegiance influenced them to vote for a particular party and its candidate than 63 (22%) of the respondents who identified the mainstream media of newspaper, television and radio as the major source of influence to vote for a particular party and

its candidate. Fifty-four of the respondents constituting 18.8% stated that they were influenced by their family members to vote for a particular party and its candidate; 21 representing 7.3% of the respondents said they were influenced by their friends and colleagues to vote for a particular party and its candidate. Only 18 respondents (6.3%) indicated that the social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Google Plus and Instagram, influenced them to vote for a particular party and its candidate while 46 of the respondents, representing 16.0%, did not indicate any response to the question at all.

RQ2d: Respondents' level of satisfaction with the presidential candidates presented for election.

Table 5:

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
Yes	189	65.9
No	46	16.0
No response indicated	52	18.1
Total	287	100.0

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Table 5 shows the level of satisfaction with the choices of presidential candidates presented by the two political parties. This is illustrated further in Chart 6.

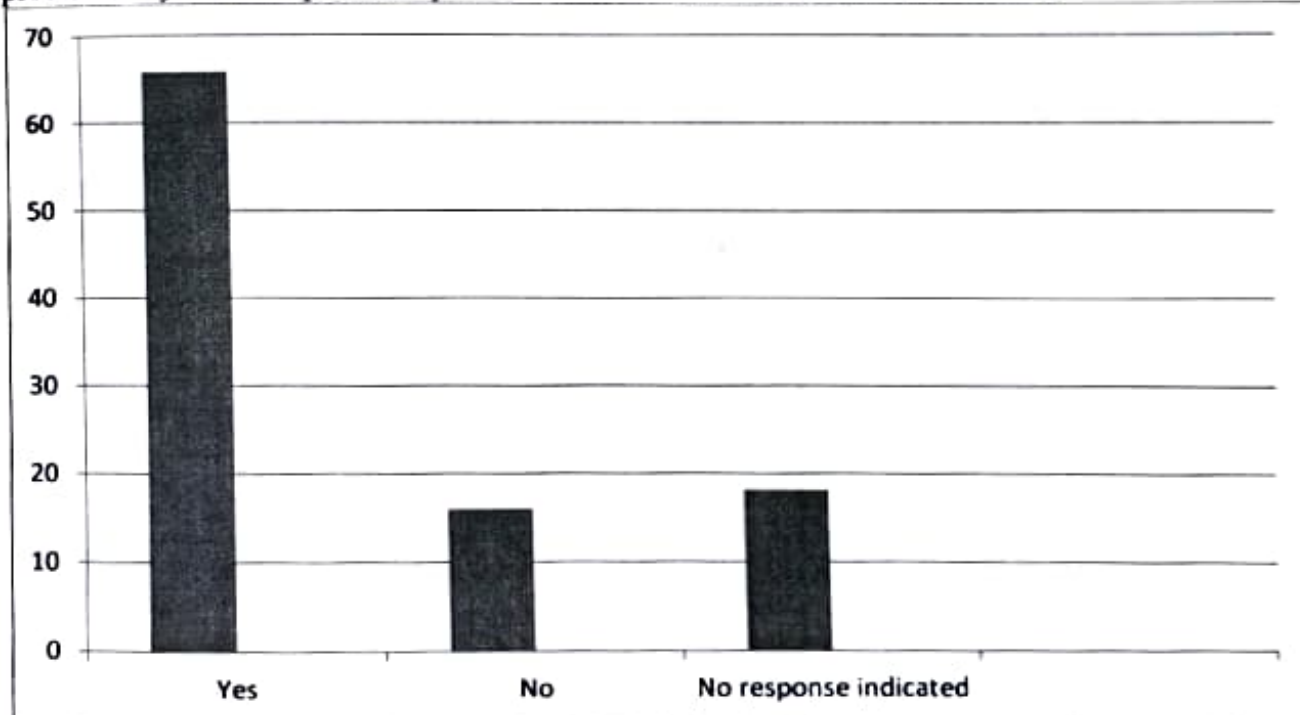


Chart 6: Level of satisfaction with presidential candidates presented for election

Source: Researcher's computation of data from administered questionnaire, 2015

Chart 6 shows that, majority (189) of members of staff of the University of Ilorin who were respondents in the study were satisfied with the choices of presidential candidates presented by the two main political parties (APC and PDP). This constituted 65.8%. In contrast, 46 representing 16% of respondents were dissatisfied with the choices of presidential candidates presented by the

political parties while 52 representing 18.1% of the respondents did not indicate their responses. However, some respondents explained why they were satisfied with the choices of presidential candidates presented by the two political parties. Six exemplars of reasons given were purposively selected and presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Reasons given by respondents for choice of presidential candidate

S/N	Textual Exemplars
1	Yes, because Buhari will fight corruption and he is the best candidate for the job
2	Yes, because Goodluck Jonathan has promised free and fair elections
3	No, the North wants power at all cost
4	No, because all of them are corrupt
5	Yes, because I like the APC candidate
6	Yes, the APC candidate has the spirit of leadership and he has charisma

Source: Researcher's Survey, 2015

Discussion of Findings

It was discovered from the study that, the information provided by the media enhanced the political awareness of the members of staff of the University of Ilorin during the 2015 Presidential election through the presentation of issues that were considered as most important in the 2015 electioneering campaigns. Furthermore, majority of the respondents in the study considered corruption; economy; democratic profile of a political party/candidate, permanent voter card distribution/election shift, ethnicity, effective governance, religion, ineffective governance, and Buhari's certificate controversy as important issues in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election. It is therefore, the submission of this study that the electioneering coverage through its framing of issues in varying lights during the presidential election campaigns and respondents ranking of those issues to: "a very high extent", or to "a high extent", or "moderate", or to "a low extent" or to "a very low extent" by the respondents (voters) was also vital in electoral decision making even though there was other contending variables such as primordial political allegiance. Findings from the study showed that, political allegiance

mostly influenced voting decisions. Next were the mainstream media, then the family, friends/ colleagues and the social media. Thus, the media coverage of the 2015 Presidential elections in Nigeria influenced the voting behaviour of members of staff of the University of Ilorin only to an extent albeit; there were other contending variables such as political allegiance, family ties, friends/colleagues as well as voter apathy because at least 41(14.3%) of the respondents did not vote, while 46 (16.0%) of the respondents, expressed dissatisfaction with the presidential candidates presented by the two main political parties

However, some pundits have argued that the political party-All Progressives Congress (APC) which won the 2015 presidential election was able to emerge victorious at the polls largely because the political party was able to "plug their campaign into the organic anger against the government that has been cooking in Nigeria's social media space for at least 4 years" (Omojuwa, 2015). Indeed, Owen and Usman (2015, p.459) argued that, "the PDP's failures in governance since the transition to electoral rule in 1999, especially with the six years of Jonathan's leadership,

provided sufficient ammunition to the opposition, but also turned the tide of public opinion against the government.”

The identification of the frames was achieved through hermeneutical textual analysis. For example, under the corruption frame category, articles identified in *The Nation* were usually critical of the PDP and its candidate, Goodluck Jonathan, while it emphasized the zero-tolerance approach to corruption position of the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari. A selected coverage chosen as an example for the purpose of identification of frames consists of two news stories about the purported acquisition of a large expanse of land for farming by ex-president Goodluck Jonathan, published on February 22, 2015 and March 5, 2015, in *The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune* respectively. The two news accounts ranged from approximately from 263 to 748 words and provided significant coverage of the issue and reactions to it. The article in *The Nation* which was a front page major story opened with the headline and narrative:

“Jonathan in trouble over Abuja farm deal”

Despite moves to improve his sliding campaign fortunes, President Jonathan is battling to explain all he knows about a multi-billion dollar farm which a non-governmental organization (NGO) says belongs to him in alleged violation of the 1999 Constitution.

The article had quoted extensively, the non-governmental organization-

Purpose Driven Initiative (PDI) on the acquisition of the land by the former President, saying the action had put the ex-President in a position where his personal interests conflicted with his duties and responsibilities, stating: “Do we need any more evidence of how the Jonathan administration has been fighting or will fight corruption?”. Nonetheless, the final section of the piece was devoted to a statement of defense by a pro-Jonathan group, New Generation Coalition, that the Nigerian constitution allows a public officer to engage in farming while alleging that former President Olusegun Obasanjo during his tenure, was also a beneficiary of such. A presidency source was quoted as saying: “Let them reveal more, we will also expose more. Whoever lives in a glass house must not throw stones. The battle line is drawn, no one can rubbish or stain President Goodluck Jonathan, we have records of personal demands by these so-called anti-corruption saints in the country.” What is significant in this article is the theme of corruption in reportage of the story. Note the prominent use of the phrase “Jonathan in trouble” in the headline.

On the other hand, the *Nigerian Tribune* reported the same issue in the following manner:

“Abuja natives flay APC over media attack on Jonathan”

Original inhabitants of Abuja have condemned the All Progressives Congress (APC) over media attack on President Goodluck Jonathan, following his

ownership of a farm land in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) which has thrown up controversies...The indigenes described APC's kick against the allocation of the land as cheap blackmail, while affirming that the acquisition of the farm land by President Jonathan was to boost employment and address food security in the country.

The article, which quoted only the statement of the Secretary-General of the Abuja Original Inhabitants Youth Organisation (AOIYO) Yunusa Yusuf, throughout the report, was slanted against the APC. In the final section of the article, the AOIYO scribe reportedly stated that in spite of the "cheap political blackmail by the opposition, the indigenes of the territory would vote overwhelmingly for President Jonathan in the forthcoming election." The *Nigerian Tribune* also, under the corruption category, emphasized news items that indicated that chieftains within the APC were no saint either. An example of this is taken from a 20-page-coloured advertorial disguised as a political news story, published on the front page of the *Nigerian Tribune* of Thursday March 19, 2015, pp. 21-40, with the following headline: "Corruption can't fight corruption-Kashamu." Findings from the present study also lend support to the outcome of a research carried out by Nwammuo et al (2015:87), that *The Nation* newspaper gave higher coverage to the APC which is the party of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, its financier.

The framing theory on which this study is anchored was established, as a

survey on the voting behaviour of respondents (members of staff of the University of Ilorin), confirmed that majority of the respondents considered corruption issue as important to a very high extent. This position aligns with the submissions of de Vreese, Boomgaarden and Semetko (2011, p.179) that "News framing can exert a strong influence on public opinion." Corruption is not only about money but essentially about moral rectitude. This also confirms one of the functions of frames as advanced by Entman (1993, p.52) in his description of framing as the "...causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation of the item described." In other words, it can be said that the framing of corruption news in the media made respondents to make causal interpretation and moral evaluation as well as the treatment recommendation. The treatment recommendation in this case will not only be the voting behaviour but also the voting decision actioned by the respondents. The study showed that corruption issue is the highest point of the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari. It is the belief and confidence of the people in his ability to fight corruption that swung a lot of votes to him and his party. That Goodluck Jonathan though not visibly seen as being corrupt as a person was vilified for his inability to fight corruption. It is instructive to note that this scenario abnegates other would-have been negative sides of Buhari especially for his poor antecedents in democratic profile.

The Nation newspaper which was quite critical of the former President Goodluck Jonathan's administration and the then ruling PDP, played up the perceived anti-corruption posture of Buhari to the hilt by constantly

emphasizing news items that depict the Jonathan (then incumbent) administration as corrupt and ineffective through the corruption frame and ineffective governance frame, while simultaneously downplaying the poor democratic credentials of the APC candidate as a dictator, by highlighting news items that depicted the Jonathan administration as one characterized by impunity. *The Nation* newspaper also did not play up the Buhari certificate controversy as it accounts for only 3% of the total frames used by the newspaper; but where it did, the news reports was to vehemently counter the accusations the PDP leveled against the APC presidential candidate Muhammadu Buhari. *The Nation* also used the INEC PVC Distribution/Election shift frame against the PDP and its candidate, Goodluck Jonathan. It is apposite to mention here that, respondents in the study rated the Permanent Voter Card Distribution/Election Shift issue to a high extent in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election as an important issue. Rumours of election postponement were rife in the print media prior to February 14, 2015. The PDP which was the proponent of shift of election were worked behind the scene as if it was the joker for its winning the 2015 election. The APC on the other hand was bent on ensuring that the election be held on February 14 and 28 respectively.

The *Nigerian Tribune* on its part used more of the Effective Governance frame than any other frame. The Effective Governance frame was more in favour of the PDP and its candidate, former President Jonathan as it highlighted his achievements, commissioning of projects, and political endorsements among others. Next was the Democratic Profile frame

which the newspaper used to portray the PDP candidate as a true democrat, while emphasizing the dictatorship past of his main opponent, the APC candidate, General Muhammadu Buhari. The *Nigerian Tribune* covered both presidential candidates and their parties considerably but findings indicate that the newspaper showed considerable bias for the PDP candidate, Goodluck Jonathan, by consistently framing him in a positive light and as a democrat. For instance, in its editorial of March 27, 2015, entitled 'For a peaceful, fair presidential election' a day before the presidential election was scheduled to hold, the medium emphasized the dictatorship past of Buhari, stating that the APC's candidate past 'as a military dictator continues to cast a large shadow' while in a previous editorial of February 6, 2015, titled 'The ex-militants' threat', the paper tried to insulate Jonathan's bid from the Niger Delta militants who had threatened to go to war should Jonathan fail to win his re-election bid, stating that:

President Jonathan whose interest the ex-militants claim to be serving is fully conscious of the fact that he is operating in a democratic environment. This is why he has been on the hustings with messages of hope for a better future. He has not been intimidating the people to get their votes. In keeping with democratic principle and necessity, he has been courting them.

It is worthy of note here that, the *Nigerian Tribune* which consistently

framed the former President Jonathan as a democrat was justified later by his action as he conceded defeat to his opponent even before the announcement of the official results of the March 28, 2015 elections.

Religious issue was also a very important factor during the 2015 presidential election as majority of the respondents rated religious issue to a very high extent in the election. While the PDP presidential candidate is a Christian, the APC presidential candidate is a Muslim. It is obvious that religion played a role in pulling some voters towards the PDP candidate as well as voters towards the APC candidate. With the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari emerging the winner of the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election, it was clear that Christian voters ignored his religion to cast their votes for him. Owen and Usman (2015:467) noted that, "the APC's win by 53.2 percent of votes cast in Benue, a predominantly Christian and historically PDP-leaning state, was a surprising upset to those unaware of the dissatisfaction with the PDP that had been growing there since before 2011." Muslim voters, who voted for the PDP presidential candidate Goodluck Jonathan, likewise ignored his faith as a Christian to cast their votes for him.

The ethnicity issue frame in the *Nigerian Tribune* was viewed mostly from the prism of the North wanting power back at all costs through the unwritten law of "zoning" while denying the South-South- "the goose that lay the golden eggs," so to speak, the opportunity from holding power at the centre for at least two terms in the history of Nigeria. Daramola (2013:50) argued that though ethnic bias in political reports is against

the principles of journalism, he states that this consideration "may not be easy to remove in Nigeria because ethnicity has been seriously entrenched in our psyche and it dictates our views of politics and reporters." Nonetheless, despite differences in religion and culture, voting patterns in previous elections held in the country before 2015 showed that the North was not less a heterogeneous society than other places because the it had hitherto voted for former President Obasanjo for two terms and Jonathan for one term and some elites from that region believed that former President Jonathan was economical with the truth when he disclaimed the one-term agreement he had with them in 2011. All these were a pointer to the frames and counter-frames as suggested by the elites in the society during the 2015 electioneering campaigns. And as Owen and Usman (2015, p.458) puts it: "The deep-rooted Nigerian political establishment, with its strong tendency towards conservatism, shifted towards considering the APC as a possible party of government when former President Obasanjo, who had already publicly undermined Jonathan in a public letter-writing fallout in December 2013, publicly tore up his PDP party card in front of journalists at his Ota home just weeks before the polls." The treatment/recommendation of the news framing by respondents in this study was determined by ascertaining who they cast their votes for in the March 28, 2015 Nigerian presidential election. Findings showed that majority of the respondents (65.8%) voted for the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari than the PDP presidential candidate, Goodluck Jonathan with (12.2%). Only 2.4% of the respondents voted for other presidential

candidates in the election while 14.3% of the respondents did not vote and 5.3% of respondents did not indicate any response. It is clear from the foregoing that this study aligns itself with the submission advanced by Dimitrova and Connelly-Ahern (2007:155) who posited that "framing has implications for the worldview of those exposed to it."

The role of journalists, who covered the electioneering campaigns of the PDP and the APC, as well as other political parties in the Nigerian 2015 elections, was also highly significant.

This is because in treating the campaign as news, the media organization usually depended largely on the perspectives of journalists who covered any electioneering campaigns. The implication of this is in tandem with the submission of Dennis and Merrill (2002:73) who stressed that the media simply represent (or reflect) the bias of their reporters and editors. While pointing out that "the bias may be unintentional but it is still bias; it may be subconsciously woven into the fabric of the story, but it is still bias. Bias is natural. It permeates the media-even the news stories."

Conclusion

The study has revealed that media framing of issues in varying lights during the presidential election campaigns and which were considered as important to a very high extent, or to a high extent, or moderate, or to a low extent or to a very low extent by the respondents (voters) was vital in electoral decision making. Hence, the media coverage of the 2015 Presidential elections in Nigeria influenced the voting behaviour of the members of staff of the University of

Ilorin only to an extent, albeit, there were other contending variables such as political allegiance, family ties, friends/colleagues as well as voter apathy because at least 41 respondents constituting 14.3% of respondents did not vote while 46 respondents representing 16% equally expressed dissatisfaction with the presidential candidates presented by the two political parties.

This study has highlighted the contributions of the media to Nigeria's democratic process and political discourse within the scope of media studies. On the basis of the research questions which were formulated to guide the study, campaign issues in the 2015 Nigerian Presidential election, covered by *The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune*, were framed along effective governance, ineffective governance, corruption, democratic profile of political party/candidate, Buhari's certificate controversy, economy, ethnicity, religion, and INEC permanent voters' card (PVC) distribution/election shift. The study demonstrated that there were differences in the manner the two newspapers (*The Nation* and the *Nigerian Tribune*) framed election issues in the electoral campaigns by the PDP and the APC, revealing the political leanings of the media as captured by the dialectical hermeneutics style of textual analysis. Some aspects of a frame were continually emphasized, while other aspects were simultaneously ignored or deemphasized.

Recommendations

Given the significant role played by the mass media in entrenching a democratic society, it has become imperative for them to provide and present accurate and reliable coverage of events in

a socially-responsible and ethical manner because members of the society, particularly the electorate, depend on the media for information about current events about their environment. Therefore, the Nigerian media professionals are enjoined be nationalistic in their coverage of electioneering campaigns by ensuring that they are anchored on public interest. Thus, they are enjoined to refrain from ethnicising political issues and campaigns and advocate religious tolerance among the people and not emphasize the supposed division between Christians and Muslims as such is borne out of ignorance even if the editorial policy and philosophy are meant to protect particular interests.

Public support is often a necessary precondition for the implementation of policies, therefore, media content and its presentation becomes a critical component of public and political interactions. Since the central idea of framing is one of strategic communication that is, to bring one's views to news attention and to win public support for one's position, framing is therefore a delicate media tool that must not be deployed to corral support for dictators nor encourage bad leadership. It is hoped that this study will spur more Communication scholars to embark on further research studies and production of more literature on media framing of issues in developing African nations like Nigeria, many of which are more vulnerable to the tendencies of sit-tight political leaders. Furthermore, framing would allow media practitioners to assess and realize the effectiveness/impact of media messages on audiences and electorate not only during elections but also in the domain of Public Relations,

Advertising, Marketing, Health choices and much more.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire on Media Coverage and Influence of 2015 Presidential Election Campaigns on the Voting Behaviour of Staff Members of the University of Ilorin

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this important survey which examines the influence of the media on the voting behaviour of staff members of the University of Ilorin. Your answers, which will be used for survey purposes only, would assist towards enhancing media performance during potential electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. Please be assured that all the answers you will provide will be kept in the strictest confidentiality.

Section A

1. What do you think is/are the most important issue(s) in 2015 Nigerian Presidential election? (Please score your choice(s) in order of importance (9-1) against the issue)

[illegible]

Certificate Controversy									
Democratic Profile (of political parties /candidate)									
Permanent Voter Card Distribution/Election Shift									

2. Which of these issues stated in the last question would you say influenced your voting behaviour in voting your preferred choice of Presidential candidate in the 2015 general elections?

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3. Who did you vote for in the March 2015 Presidential election?

1. Goodluck Jonathan
2. MuhammaduBuhari
3. Other Presidential candidates
4. I did not vote

4. Are you happy with the choices of Presidential candidates presented by the political parties?

If Yes, why?.....

If No, why?.....

5. Which of these would you say most influenced your voting decision?

1. My Family
2. My friends/colleagues
3. My political allegiance
4. The mainstream media –TV, Radio and Newspaper
5. The social media- Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Flickr, Google Plus+, Instagram

Section B

Demography (please tick as appropriate)

1. Gender ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-33 ☐ 34-41 ☐ 42- 48 ☐ 49 and above

3. Staff category and educational qualification:

☐ Academic ☐ PhD ☐ M.Sc./M.Ed./M.A ☐ B.Sc./ B.Ed. /B.A

☐ Non-Academic ☐ PhD ☐ M.Sc./M.Ed./M.A ☐ B.Sc./ B.Ed./B.A/HND ☐ OND/SSCE

4. What is your ethnic origin? ☐ Yoruba ☐ Igbo ☐ Hausa/Fulani ☐ Other

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME