An Analysis of 2011 Presidential Campaign Advertisements in Nigerian National Press

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Abstract

Political campaigns have remained an indispensable means of garnering support for candidates and their political parties. Though primaries are internal affairs of political parties, aspirants engage in or take their campaign for support and votes beyond the confines of their political parties and their membership roll. This is buttressed by placement of advertorials in newspapers and other mass media by various presidential candidates. In the 2011 presidential election in Nigeria, various presidential candidates across many political parties used newspapers to sell their aspirations/candidacy to the electorate for their support/votes in the general elections. This study investigated the forms, volume and contents of the political campaigns sponsored by the political parties in the selected national dailies. The study found out that eight forms or "message types" were used by the four major political parties/candidates. These included: general campaign information/itinerary, direct appeal for support/votes, testimonial/endorsements and story-telling/dialogue. Others include attack on opponents, indirect/subliminal political advertisement by proxy, dramatization/humour and policy thrust/progress report. 124 political advertisements were sponsored by the four political parties. Good governance attracted greatest concern of all the political parties. The study recommends that political parties should develop strategic communication plan to market their manifestoes and candidates. This is necessary because a large segment, who are not members of any political party, have to be either won over or persuaded to form positive political opinion with the resultant decision to vote.

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Introduction

Political campaigns are an integral part of party politics. Though political rallies and campaigns provide political parties and their candidates the opportunity to present their manifestoes to their supporters, their reach is always limited to those who attend such rallies. Therefore, to expand their support-base and eventually attract support from people outside the campaign grounds, political parties and their candidates embark on advertisement in the mass media, including newspapers. Consequently, newspaper advertisements have remained a regular aspect of electioneering of various political parties and candidates. In order to garner support or enlarge support-base, presidential candidates utilize various forms of political advertisements and adopt various issues to solicit support and votes from the electorate.

Theoretical Framework

The Agenda-setting theory provides the basis for this paper. Quoting Donald Shaw and Maxwell McComb, LittleJohn and Foss (2008) state that:

> *The ability to effect cognitive change among individuals, to structure their thinking – has been labeled the agenda-setting function of mass communication... In short, the mass media may not be successful in telling us what to think, but they are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about. (p. 293)*

Little-John and Foss assert that agenda–setting establishes the salient issues or images in the minds of the public. This role of the media is clearly seen in political advertising and in this case presidential campaign advertising in Nigerian National

Newspapers where political parties and candidates are presenting themselves to the electorate as the best option to choose.

Mass Media and Democracy: Mutually Strengthening

The mass media occupy a very important place in governance. This is because the mass media to a large extent are used in the process of selecting political leaders. After the political leaders have been selected or elected, the mass media remain indispensable in providing legitimacy for those in power. This is as a result of what Gurevitch and Blumler (1977) call, "three sources of media power. These are: structural, psychological and normative" (p. 274).

According to Gurevitch and Blumler, "the structural root of the power of the mass media, "springs from their unique capacity to deliver to the politician an audience, which in size and composition, is unavailable to him by any other means" (p. 274). In their opinion, "the relationships of credibility and trust that different media organizations have succeeded in developing (albeit to different degrees) with members of their audiences constitutes the psychological power" (p. 275). They further point out that "it is the combined influence of these structural and psychological sources of strength that enable the media to interpose themselves between politicians and the audience and to "intervene" in other political processes as well" (p. 275). This interposition, according to them, is expressed in the way in which the mass media are capable of restructuring the timing and character of political events (conventions, demonstrations, leader appearance, etc.) defining crisis situations to which politicians are obliged to react, requiring comment on issues that media personnel have emphasized as

important, injecting new personalities into the political dialogue (such as television interviews) and stimulating the growth of new communication agencies (such as public relations firms, opinion poll agencies, and political advertising and campaign management specialists).

Gurevitch and Blumler further claim that the normative root of media power stems from the respect that is accorded in competitive democracies to such tenets of liberal philosophy as freedom of expression and the need for specialized organs to safeguard citizens against possible abuses of political authority. From the foregoing, the mass media occupy a strategic place in the polity.

Besley, Burgess and Prat (2002) argue that "a free or non-captured media can affect political outcomes through three routes, namely: sorting, discipline and policy salience" (p. 49). In their explanation, sorting refers to the process by which politicians are selected to hold office. The kind of information the media provide can be important to voters who are deciding who to put in charge. This includes information about candidate's previous tract records. Their actions while in office may also be an important source of information about their underlying motivation or competence. By publishing stories or advertisements that responsibly cast light on this, the media can be a powerful force. The role of the media in achieving discipline is most relevant in situations of hidden action. This involves exposure of activities which perpetrators do not want the public to know. The media can also affect which issues are salient to voters. This would be made possible or easier through political communication or political advertisements.

Islam (2002) notes that the media industry, whether public or private plays an important role in any economy by garnering support or opposition for those who govern, by highlighting or failing to do so the views and/or sins of industry, by providing a voice for the people or not doing so and by simply spreading economic information. The mass media not only carry information about the economy, but also messages about the social, political and religious lives of the people. In the opinion of Wolfensohn (2002):

A free press is not a luxury. It is at the core of equitable development. The media can expose corruption. They can keep a check on government action. They let people voice diverse opinions on governance and reform, help build public consensus to bring about change. (p. v)

It can be deduced from Wolfesohn's opinion that easy and equitable access to the mass media as well as diversity of views in media contents are not only indispensable, but are crucial for the emergence of a democratic society and the attainment of development.

According to Obot (2013), democracy thrives on the principle of informed electorate making responsible choices and decisions. The mass media are not only key avenues for providing the required information; they also determine what is available in the public domain. The mass media enrich democracy, while democracy provides a conductive environment for an efficient functioning of the mass media. It is almost impossible to have a democratic society without the full complement of a robust mass media system.

In the opinion of Curran and Gurevitch (1991) a, democratic function of the media system is to act as an agency of representation. It should be organized in a way that enables diverse social groups and organizations to express alternative viewpoints. This goes beyond, however, simply disseminating diverse opinions in the public domain. Part of the media system should function in a way that invigorates the civil society. It should also assist collective organizations to mobilize support; help them to operate as representative vehicles for the views of their supporters, and aid them to register effective protests and develop and promulgate alternatives. In other words, the representational role of the media includes helping to create the condition in which alternative viewpoints and perspectives are brought fully into play.

Curran and Gurevitch further explain that mass media would discharge their democratic function if they assist in the realization of the common objectives of society through agreement or compromise between conflicting interests. The media should contribute to this process by facilitating democratic procedure for resolving conflict and defining collectively agreed aims. For example, the media should brief the electorate about the political choices involved in elections, and so help to constitute elections as defining moments for collective decision about the public direction of society. The media system should also facilitate organized representations by giving due publicity to the activities, programs and thinking of organized groups in addition to the formal processes of government and opposition party. However, the media system is itself an important mechanism for collective self-

reflection. By staging a public dialogue in which diverse interests participate, the media should also play a direct role in assisting the search for areas of common agreement and compromise. It should also provide an adequate way in which people can engage in a wider public discourse that can result in the modification of social attitudes affecting social relationships between individuals and groups.

Obot and Batta (2012) assert that "it is impossible to have a democratic society without an efficient mass media system. A political system that lays claim to democracy without a virile mass media would certainly be a 'malnourished' and 'still-birth' political contraption" (p. 165). That is why McNair (2002, p. 11) has aptly pointed out that, "in democratic, political systems, the media function both as transmitters of political communication which originates outside the media organization itself and as senders of political messages constructed by journalists". McNair (2002, p. 11) lists five functions of the mass media in a democratic society to include the following:

1. Firstly, they must inform citizens of what is happening around them (what we may call the 'surveillance' or 'monitoring' functions of the media).

2. Secondly, they must educate as to the meaning and significance of the 'facts' (the importance of this function explains the seriousness with which journalists protect their objectives, since their value as educators presume a professional detachment from the issues being analyzed).

3. Thirdly, the media must provide a platform for public political

discourse, facilitating the formation of 'public opinion', and feeding that opinion back to the public from whence it came. This must include the provision of space for the expression of dissent without which the notion of democratic consensus would be meaningless.

4. The media's fourth function is to give publicity to government and political institutions – the 'watchdog' role of journalism, exemplified by the performance of the United States media during the Watergate episode and, more recently, the British Guardian's coverage of the cash-for-questions scandal, in which investigative journalists exposed the practice of members of parliament accepting payment for the asking of parliamentary question. Quoting Bibbio, McNair (2002) assert that 'Public opinion' can only matter … to the extent that the acts of whoever holds supreme power are made available for public scrutiny, meaning how far they are visible, ascertainable, accessible, and hence accountable. There must be, to use Mikhail Gorbachev famous formulation, a degree of 'openness' surrounding the activities of the political class if the 'public opinions' of the people are to have any bearing on decision making.

5. Finally, the media in democratic societies serve as a channel for the advocacy of political viewpoints. Parties require an outlet for the articulation of their policies and programs to a mass audience, and thus the media must be open to them. Furthermore, some media in the print sector will actively endorse one or other of the parties at sensitive times such as elections. In this latter sense, the media's advocacy function may

also be viewed as one of persuasion.

McNair (2002, p. 42) points out that democracy presumes, "an open state in which people are allowed to participate in decision-making, and are given access to the media, and other information networks through which advocacy occurs". Democracy is also sustainable where the electorate/audience is sufficiently educated and knowledgeable to make rational and effective use of the information circulating in the public sphere.

In the opinion of Hallin and Mancini (2004): *In political markets, electors need information to judge the record of government and to select among alternative candidates and parties. If citizens are poorly informed, if they lack practical knowledge, they may cast ballot that fail to reflect their real interests. Moreover, policy makers need accurate information about citizens, to respond to public concerns, to deliver effective services meeting real human needs, and also, in democracies to maximize popular electoral support to be returned to office.* (p. 118)

According to Obot (2013), "*Information in the political market place comes from two primary sources. Personal interactions commonly include informal face-to-face political conversations with friends, family and colleagues, traditional campaign rallies, community forums and grassroots meetings. These information resources remain important, especially for election campaigns in poorer democracies, and the growth of e-mail and online discussion groups may revive the importance of personal political communications.*" (p. 177)

Mass media and political advertising: Taking political messages beyond campaign grounds

A major area where political actors spend money to disseminate messages to their 'consumers' (electorate) is in the area of political

advertising. According to McNair (2002), political advertising refers to the purchase and use of advertising, in order to transmit political messages to a mass audience. The media used for this purpose may include cinema, billboards, the press, radio and television... Contemporary political advertising can be seen as an important means of informing citizens about who is standing, and what they are offering the citizenry in policy terms. (p. 17)

Swanson (2004) notes that in place of or in addition to traditional campaign practices such as rallies of the Party faithful, political parties and candidates relied on the sophisticated use of mass media to persuade voters – the "consumers" of political communication – to support them at election time, and they offered campaign that feature the appealing personalities of party leaders.

Since true democracy involves the participation of an informed and rational electorate, all legitimate measures and strategies should be exploited to make it possible for the citizenry to have the required information or alternatives to act on. Hallin and Mancini (2004) note that, "the mass media are assuming much of the information functions that political parties once controlled. Instead of learning about an election at a campaign rally or from party canvassers, the mass media have become the primary source of campaign information.. There has been a tendency for political parties to decrease their investments in neighborhood canvassing, rallies and other direct contact activities, and devote more attention to campaigning through the media." (p. 32)

The code of advertising practice of the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) makes the following provisions for

political advertising in Nigeria.

i. **Truth**: Political ads shall not be deceptive or misleading in word, photography, film or sound.

ii. **False Claims:** Political advertisements shall be issue-oriented and devoid of abusive statements of references. Furthermore, they should not employ fake, distorted or unsubstantiated claims or misrepresentations.

iii. **Advertiser's Identity:** Every political advertisement must clearly identify the sponsoring organisation or individual, visually and orally. Anonymous sponsors like "Committee of Friends" must be avoided.

iv. **Sectional Interest:** Political advertisement shall not explicitly or implicitly exploit ethnicity, religion or any other sectional interest not strictly related to political issues under discussion.

v. **Agency Conduct:** Agencies engaged in political advertising must not produce or use any material that is capable of bringing the advertising profession into disrepute.

vi. **Equal Opportunity:** Political candidates must be given equal opportunity to buy space and/or air time. "Equal opportunity" means that each competing candidate must have equal access to comparable space and/or air time, generally on the basis of first come, first served.

vii. **Compliance:** Media houses, agencies, political parties, politicians and their agents must ensure that political advertisements are in consonance with the provisions of the code. When in doubt, they should seek immediate

clarification from APCON Secretariat.

Adherence to the APCON code in political advertising in Nigeria is difficult to ascertain as information on enforcement by APCON is not widely publicised. Citing Diamond and Bates, McNair (2002, p. 107) identifies four phases of a typical US political advertising campaign:

Firstly, the basic identity of the candidate must be established as a foundation on which to build subsequent information. In this phase, positive biographical details are highlighted, such as a distinguished war record (a tactic used by John F. Kennedy and George Bush in their presidential campaigns), or an outstanding business success.

Secondly, the candidate's policies are established in broad terms with the minimum of extraneous detail, and with emotional charge (such as Bush's "Read my Lips! No new Taxes!" slogan or Bill Clinton's "It's the Economy, Stupid.").

Thirdly, the opponent should be attacked using negatives.

And finally, the candidate must be endowed with positive meaning in the context of the values and aspirations of the electorate. In this phase, the campaign will seek to synthesise and integrate the candidate's positive features, allowing him or her to acquire resonance in the minds of the voters. Thus, Ronald Reagan comes to stand for the reassertion of traditional American Values, Bill Clinton for 'Change' in 1992, and 'continuity' in 1996. Political advertisements in Nigeria may either be consciously or unconsciously patterned after the US political advertising typology.

Research Questions

The study had the following research questions:

i. What were the forms of political advertisements employed by the presidential candidates/political parties?

ii. Which political party/presidential candidate had the most strategies in its/his political advertisements in the selected newspapers?

iii. What were the contents/crux of newspaper advertisements by the political parties/presidential candidates?

iv. Which newspaper enjoyed greatest patronage by political parties/presidential candidates?

v. Which presidential candidates/political party was most issue-based in his/its newspaper political advertisements?

Methodology

This study adopted the content analysis method. Three national newspapers – The Guardian, Punch and 'The Nation' were content analysed. The period of the study covered March 1 and April 15, 2011 (a day before Presidential Election) during which 93 editions of the newspapers were examined.

The content categories of the study were: development issues (such as economy, oil and gas, agriculture, security, corruption issues, employment/skills acquisition, good governance, power/industrialization, education, housing, transportation, health, youth and sports). The following constituted the units of analysis for the study: general campaign information/itinerary, direct appeal for support/votes, testimonial/endorsement, story - telling/dialogue, attack on opponent(s), policy thrust/progress

report and indirect/subliminal political advertisements by proxy.

Data Presentation

<div align="center">**Table I**</div>

<div align="center">*Volume of Political Advertisements in the Three Newspapers*</div>

Newspapers	Political Parties/Candidates				Total
	ACN	ANPP	CPC	PDP	39
The Guardian	4	1	8	26	39
The Punch	21	Nil	12	6	39
The Nation	35	3	2	6	46
Total	60	4	22	38	124

The four leading political parties which fielded presidential candidates were: Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). As shown in the above table, ACN had the greatest number of political advertisements in the three newspapers (60) most of which (35) were in The Nation' Newspaper. ACN was the main opposition political party, while the ruling political party, the PDP had 38 political advertisements.

Table II

Contents of Newspaper Political Advertisements by Political Parties

Contents of Newspapers Political Advertisement	Political Candidates	Parties/			
	ACN	ANPP	CPC	PDP	Total
Economy	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2
Oil/Gas	2	Nil	Nil	2	4
Agriculture	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2
Security	4	Nil	Nil	Nil	4
Corruption issues	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	-
Employment/Skills Acquisition	2	Nil	Nil	3	5
Power/Industrialization	2	Nil	6	2	10
Good Governance	23	3	3	2	31
Education	7	Nil	3	1	11
Housing	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2
Youths/Sports	1	Nil	1	1	3
Health	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	5
Infrastructure/Transportation	1	Nil	2	1	4
Total	53	3	15	12	83

Table II shows that ACN had the greatest number of political advertisements (53). Twenty-three (23) of the advertisements focused on good governance. Good governance enjoyed the greatest concern of all the political parties/candidates with 31 out of the 83 political advertisements focusing on it.

Table III

Forms of Political Ads by Political Parties/ Candidates

Newspaper	Forms of Political Advertisements	Political Parties/Candidates				Total
		ACN	ANPP	CPC	PDP	
The Guardian	Gen. Campaign Info/Itinerary	1	Nil	Nil	8	9
	Dir. appeal for Support/Votes	Nil	Nil	1	3	4
	Testimonial Endorsements	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1
	Story Telling Dialogue	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	-
	Attack on Opponents	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	2
	Indirect Subliminal Political Advertisements by Proxy	Nil	Nil	6	6	12
	Dramatization/Humorous	Nil	Nil	Nil	5	5
	Policy Thrust Progress Report	Nil	1	Nil	3	4
	Total	**3**	**12**	**7**	**26**	**37**
The Punch	Gen. Campaign Info/Itinerary	1	Nil	3	1	5
	Dir. appeal for Support/Votes	3	Nil	1	3	7
	Testimonial Endorsements	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	1
	Story Telling Dialogue	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Attack on Opponents	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Indirect Subliminal Political Advertisements by Proxy	2	2	2	26	32
	Dramatization/Humorous	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Policy Thrust Progress Report	19	Nil	6	4	29
	Total	**25**	**2**	**13**	**34**	**74**
The Nation	Gen. Campaign Info/Itinerary	8	Nil	Nil	6	14
	Dir. appeal for Support/Votes	1	Nil	Nil	1	2
	Testimonial Endorsements	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Story Telling Dialogue	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Attack on Opponents	1	1	Nil	1	3
	Indirect Subliminal Political Advertisements by Proxy	Nil	1	2	20	23
	Dramatization/Humorous	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Policy Thrust Progress Report	21	Nil	Nil	Nil	21
	Total	**31**	**2**	**2**	**28**	**63**

Table III shows that PDP had the highest number of political

advertisements in 'The Guardian' Newspaper, out of which eight were general campaign information and itinerary. The Party also had the highest number of political advertisements in 'The Punch' Newspaper, out of which 26 were indirect/subliminal political advertisement by proxy (individuals or organizations with or without direct/official link with the Party). The People's Democratic Party (PDP) came second (28) in the number of Political Advertisements in 'The Nation' Newspaper. Out of this number, 20 were indirect/subliminal political advertisements by proxy.

The Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) had the highest number of political advertisements in 'The Nation' Newspaper (31), out of this number, 31 centred on the policy thrust/progress report of the party. The All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) had the least number of political advertisements in 'The Guardian' and 'The Punch' newspapers. It shared the same position with the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) with two political advertisements each in 'The Nation' Newspaper.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study would be discussed under the following research questions:

RQ1: What were the forms of political advertisements employed by the political parties/candidates?

Table III shows that eight forms or "message styles" were used by the four major political parties/candidates. These included: General Campaign Information/Itinerary, Direct Appeal for Support/Votes, Testimonial/Endorsements and Story Telling/Dialogue. Others are: Attack on Opponents,

Indirect/Subliminal Political Advertisements by Proxy, Dramatisation/Humour and Policy Thrust/Progress Report. Of all the eight forms of political advertisements which constituted the units of analysis for this study, indirect/subliminal political advertisements by proxy was most preferred by all the four leading political parties/candidates. This is vindicated by the fact that out of 174 political advertisements, 67(39%) of them were indirect/subliminal advertisements by proxy. This form of political advertisement or "message style" might have been adopted to show wide acceptability of the political party/candidate.

RQ2: Which political party/candidate had the most strategies in its/his political advertisements in the selected newspapers?

Data in Table 1 shows that The People's Democratic utilized greatest number of strategies - six in its political advertisements, namely: General Campaign Information/Itinerary (15), Direct Appeal for Support/Votes (7) and Testimonial/Endorsements (1). Others were: Indirect/Subliminal Political 'Advertisements by Proxy' (52), Dramatization/Humor (5), Policy Thrust/Progress Report (7) and Attack on Opponent (1). This robust political advertisement strategies confirm Swanson's (2004) assertion that in place of or in addition to the traditional campaign practices such as rallies of the party faithful, political parties and candidates relied on the sophisticated use of the mass media to persuade voters – the 'consumers" of political communication to support them at election time, and they offered campaigns that feature the appealing personalities of party leaders. The forms of political advertisements or in the words of Franch, Albiol and Rutherford (2013, p. 101)

"message styles" used by the PDP were mostly indirect and subliminal political advertisements by proxy (52) – a situation whereby individuals or organizations with or without obvious direct /official link with the Party sponsored political advertisements for or on behalf of the Party. The second "message type" largely used by the PDP was general campaign information/itinerary, with 15 political advertisements. This robust political advertisement strategies vindicates the agenda setting theory which forms the basis of the study.

RQ3: What were the contents/crux of newspaper advertisements by political parties/presidential candidates?

Table II shows that political parties/candidates built their manifestoes around twelve issues, namely: economy, oil/gas, agriculture, security, employment/skills acquisition and power/industrialization. Others were: good governance, education, housing, youths/sports, health and infrastructure/transportation. Incidentally, no political party/candidate included war against corruption among its manifesto, the ACN was the only political party whose manifesto covered all the contents categories. Its highest number of political advertisements (23) were on good governance while youths/sports and infrastructure/transportation had one advertisement each on them. The ruling PDP had its highest number of political advertisements (31) focusing on good governance. PDP, ANPP and CPC had no political advertisement on the economy, agriculture, Security, Housing and Health. The ANPP and CPC had no advertisement on oil/gas which has been the main stay of Nigeria's economy for many decades now.

Moreover, ANPP was the only political party whose manifesto did not include power/industrialization and infrastructure/transportation. The contents/crux of newspaper advertisements by political parties/presidential candidates were indicative of the policy thrust of their administration if voted into power. The non-inclusion or absence of advertisements on certain sectors of the economy may have been either due to weak political communication strategy or low premium placed on such issues. This could be very costly to either the political parties/candidates at the polls or to the citizenry when/if such political party/candidate wins election. This is because manifestoes of political party/candidate provide the only moral basis for the electorate to hold elected officers to account. The finding also corroborates McNair's (2002, p. 95) assertion that "contemporary advertising can be seen as an important means of informing citizens about who is standing, what they are offering the citizenry in policy terms". This buttresses the agenda-setting theory on which this study is based.

RQ4: Which newspaper enjoyed greatest patronage by political parties/presidential candidates?

Table one show that 'The Nation' newspaper enjoyed the greatest patronage by political parties/candidates. It recoded 46 (37%) out of the 124 political advertisements placed by the four major political parties/candidates. 'The Guardian' and 'The Punch' Newspapers had equal number of advertisements (39). This finding suggests that either the advertisement rate of the newspaper was most considerate or that the newspaper gave all the political parties/candidates equal playing-ground in its coverage of all the

political parties, thereby attracting reciprocal patronage by the political parties/candidates. The finding may also suggest that the readership of 'The Nation' newspaper constituted a vital part of the electorate targeted by all the political parties/candidates.

RQ5: Which political party/presidential candidate was most issue-based in its newspaper political advertisements?

Table III shows that the ACN was the most-issue based, that is: (policy thrust/progress report) in its political advertisements. Out of the 54 political advertisements on policy thrust/progress report by political parties/presidential candidates, the ACN had 40(75%) of them. It is instructive that despite the fact that the Party was the most-issue based in its political advertisements, it did not win the 2011 Presidential election. The implication of this finding is that a political party/candidate may need more than 'playing by the rules' to win election in certain democracies.

Conclusion

Political advertisements have always remained a major part of political communication, particularly during electioneering period. Sometimes, how a political party/candidate fared in this regard may determine how it/he/she performs at the polls. Therefore, political parties/candidate should design effective marketing/ communication strategies to sell their manifestoes/candidacy.

For many; if not most, of the electorate, most of the information they would need to make voting decision comes from the political advertisements they are exposed to. This requires choice of appropriate media /advertisement mix by the political parties/candidates in order to reach the needed segment of the

electorate.

Recommendations

The study revealed gaps in the utilization of political advertising by most of the political parties. Therefore, it is recommended that politicians, political parties/candidates should design strategic communication plan to market their manifestoes and candidacy.

This is because, those who attend political campaign rallies are already 'converted' and they constitute a small percentage of the electorate. The rest/larger segment have to be either won over or persuaded to form favorable/positive political opinion with the resultant decision to vote. This would be made possible by effective political communication/advertising, which political parties/candidates should/cannot take for granted, in view of the political apathy and/or sophistication of the electorate in many societies.

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