

Mass media, Political propaganda and political campaign messages in Nigerian societies: assessment of Political Stakeholders Perceptions in Selected Local Government Areas of Oyo State, Southwest Zone, Nigeria

Dr. Titiloye Oyeyinka Ojo¹, Dr. Yetunde. O. Ayoboluis², Onaopepo, Bamidele Ibrahim MSc³

¹Department of Mass Communication, Kola Daisi University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

²Department of Mass Communication, Kola Daisi University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

³Public Relations and Advertising practitioner residing in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract: The study examined the Nigerian Mass media use of political propaganda messages and the assessment of stakeholders' perceptions concerning the messages in selected Local Government Areas of Oyo State. The study employed survey and structured interview methods with the use of questionnaire and interview guide as instruments. 250 questionnaires were distributed while 210 copies were returned and validated for final analysis Simple random sampling technique was adopted for the drawing of the sample size from the universe population. Descriptive Statistics was adopted for the data analysis. Responses obtained from the interviewees were transcribed and qualitative analysis carried out in line with the research questions. Pearson Moment Products Correlation was utilized for the test of hypothesis formulated in the study. The study found out that Nigerian Mass media are always used as tool for promoting political propaganda messages(46.5%) and that filtering of propaganda messages have overshadowed their media responsible activities (55.3%).It revealed that the consequence of the propaganda messages are negative which result to maladministration, socio-economic problems, and moral decadence. The study concluded that Nigerian mass media compromised corrupt practices that negate media ethical conducts and professionalism. In addition, Nigerian media has often been hijacked by political office holders to manipulate elections. The study recommended that mass media should desist from propaganda messages and try to set agendas for politicians and political parties. Moreover, they should avert contents of deceit capable of heating up polity. Also, voters should be firm in their choice of office seekers and finally, government should step up actions on media regulations.

Keywords: Mass media, Political propaganda, Stakeholders' perceptions, Assessment, Electorates

I. INTRODUCTION

Propaganda became more popular in political arenas especially messages that have to do with public information campaigns by government and politicians in a bid to produce an emotional rather than rational response to the information that is presented. In the twentieth century, the

term propaganda has been associated with a manipulative approach, but propaganda was an ancient neutral descriptive term (Diggs-Brown, 201??). Mass media are used for conveying propaganda messages using loaded languages to change people's emotions, attitudes and behaviours towards elections and government policies. *Studies* revealed that political campaigns have moved from within the politicians to the media while the campaigners are no longer in a face-to-face contact with the potential voters. Political campaigns in the media rely mostly on propaganda as tool for making their message to their target persuasive. Ajala (1991), notes that the mass media encourage and ginger people to achieve the goals of the society. They stimulate and foster the aspirations and activities of individuals and communities to achieve such goals.

This means that the media constitute the brain box of democracy and also help in the supply of the required political information that electorates would base their decision. They are the watchdog for uncovering errors and wrong doings by those in powers (Fog, 2004). Today, there is a growing concern about the mass media that they are not fulfilling some functions properly to enhance democratic ideals. The critics have claimed that the mass media have sold themselves out to politicians by propagating their political propaganda agenda, even if they disseminate news, the news is more of parties, politician or government interest rather than the people oriented demands. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this study attempts to examine the relationship between the mass media and the political propaganda as entrenched by the political class with a focus to seek the opinion of selected political stakeholders such as the politicians, voters, media practitioners, political analysts and members of the selection umpire in the five selected local government areas of Oyo State.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Review of Literatures and conceptualization of terms Mass media and the Nigerian society

There is a symbiotic link between the mass media and the society. The society established institutions that usually in turn provides the information network for the growth and sustenance of the society. Originally, the mass media outfit provides information daily to enhance free flow of information for rapid development of the society vis-à-vis socio-economic and political development. Such an aspect of information network that is majorly committed to the sustenance of societal development is tagged as communication for development. Therefore, development communication is the application of the processes of communication for development (Moeemeka, 1989). This kind of communication should always form an intellectual lens that Nigerian mass media should have at the gourd of their minds while reporting national issues of public interests.

According to Odey (2007), the basic goal of the media is to serve society by informing the public, scrutinizing the way power, stimulating democratic debates, and in these ways aiding political, economic, social and cultural development of the society. However, the mass media are expected to constantly educate and re-educate the society of the need to consciously evolve and sustain a people-oriented democracy that is r in the principles of the rule of law. Egbon (1995), posits that the media are like double edged sword that can be used to facilitate development and also use to demote development. The scholar also explained that the mass media systems can oil and ease the economic wheels of a country or completely bring a society to a halt in terms of development.

In essence, mass media can be used to maintain social equilibrium, facilitate change and solicit for radical alternatives. Section 22 of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states 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 (Nigerian Constitution, 1999). The contributions of the mass media to national integration remained an age-long acceptance of the pivotal position of the mass media as the fourth Estate of the realm. Historically, three classes of the state- Nobility, Clergy and City merchants- were vested with political powers and also represented the first, second and third estates of the realm but with the inception of democracy today, new names such as Executive, Legislature and Judiciary were attached to the latter, while the critical role of the mass media as the Fourth Estate remained unchanged.

In other words, the mass media continue to promote government policy and ensuring that those in government are accountable to governed. The mass media is the only source through which the people could exercise their rights (Idemudia, 2008). Sovereignty belongs to the people of

Nigeria from whom government, through this constitution derives all its powers and authority (Nigerian Constitution, 1999). Mass media must not permit sensationalism in news coverage particularly when such reports has the propensity to deter the nation's national interest. Meanwhile, development concept describes systems in which government and media work together to ensure that the mass media promote the planned beneficial development of a given nation. Media in this form must not be part of the pull-down syndrome nor should they abstain from constructive criticisms of government programmes (Baran et al, 2003).

Generally speaking, the attitudes of many practicing journalists suggest that they are not yet show sufficient understanding of complexities of the environment which they cover, this account for while the members of the media are so good at pointing out failures and poor at suggesting viable options. It is glaring today that most of the avoidable crises that we had suffered in Nigeria were not necessarily premised upon the nature of the events but the manner in which most of the events were reported (sobowale, 1995). In other words, the mass media are better understood as a public sphere which provides a space that mediates between civil society and the realm of power. Mass media do not ordinarily serve as a significant cause of audience effects but rather function through a nexus of mediating into conflicts.

Propaganda: Origin, Definition and its synergy to political campaigns

The historical background of the term propaganda may be traced to the 17th century when people were vacating churches especially during the reign of Pope Gregory XV in 1622. It was during this time that a critic and writer, Galileo was convicted of heresy because of his thesis that the earth was round. Based on this scholar's research work, church then was trying to standardize its teachings and beliefs in light of the emerging reformation periods. Within a century, the concept was used to condemn clandestine organization that attempted to undermine foreign affairs. The concept was not used in the communication media until 20th century (Robert, 2002). It always behoved on someone personal political, social and economic beliefs as to whether a given propaganda campaign is acceptable or not.

The term came to Africa rather too late as compared to other industrialized nations. It emanated from Europe where rulers were engaging in what appeared to be constant war propaganda which was utilized to recruit large military personnel for fighting in World War I. After this war, communication researchers such as Harold Laswell pioneered the study of propaganda techniques. The scholar, however suggested manipulation as tool for propaganda in managing individuals in democratic societies. Charry (2004), notes that propaganda is a phenomenon of media discourse guidance that is not usually see as pernicious. The year 1937 witnessed the creation of the institute for propaganda, this was headed by Edward Fillence and designated to educate Americans

about propaganda techniques especially on the danger and persuasiveness of political propaganda. The Institute later released a series of books titled “The Fine Art of Propaganda” edited by Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee in 1939.

The term propaganda is defined in different perspectives by different scholars which depends majorly on the varied circumstances. According to Jefkins (2003), propaganda is an original strategy for information, communication, education and persuasion. The scholar explained that the beauty of the term became polluted and bastardized when politicians and war mongers such as Adolf Hitler started using the concept wrongly in order to manipulate people’s opinions. Ngoa (2011), observes that propaganda indicates communication designed either to directly or indirectly influence the opinions, emotions, and behaviours of a target groups usually for the achievement of desired institutional objectives or organizational goals. Onu (2010), argues that propaganda is the rational use of argument as well as sound emotional appeals to influence behaviours and thought either for good or bad.

Laswell (1980), posts that propaganda is any technique be it writing, speech, music, film, association, plan and activities for the spread of principles and opinions to effect change, reforms or attempt to influence public opinions or encourage mass actions as in popular support of a policy or programmes. In other words, scholars’ ideas of the term indicate a technique for persuading and influencing people for negative or public action plans. Kamalipour (2001), contends that the term propaganda is not simple to define but the purpose of it is to persuade and convert by using intentionally selective and biased information. In the same vein, Nelson (1996), defines it as a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions and actions of specified target audience for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the control transmission of one-sided messages which may or may not be factual via mass or direct media channels.

To politicians, propaganda is a legitimate tool which may be employed to advance the interest which he sees concise with that of the ordinary people when this is not so (Nneji, Bassey-Duke & Brown, 2014). Based on the above premise, it could also be summed up that thorough understanding of the term “Propaganda” hinges on the context in which it is applied but it uses the weapon of communication, it is sentimental, biased, appeals to emotions and it has desperate intents to change audience(s) decisions and attitudes.

The interface between propaganda and politics developed to what is termed as political propaganda. This term is referred to the utilization of essential mechanisms to change people’s minds about the viability of an idea, policy, party, candidates, project or cause. Schulze (2000), avers that propaganda is only meaningful and believable when it can show positive results. He further explains that it is the proclaimer of an idea,

it undermines the positions of the enemy with all the means and forces at its disposal, it stands in the middle of life, in the middle of events and draws the necessary consequences. The tasks of propaganda are to explain to the people new ways and ideas, to interest the masses in events and to win their co-operation (Briant, 2015). According to Balfour (1979), Propaganda may be known through false statement made in the genuine belief that they true, deliberate lies, the suppression of truth, the suggestion of falsehood and the slanting of news. From the foregoing, it is evident that propaganda can distort truth in a bid to convince and persuade audience. The success of the propagandist in getting his goals achieved usually depends on the ability to exploit the right things and sentiment (Oputa, 2002).

The purpose of political campaigns is to sensitize electorates or voter about candidate, manifestoes, their political party and programmes. Politicians embark on all these actions in order to appeal to election voters’ emotions by persuading them to vote for their campaigners. Hence, political campaigners resort to propaganda with persuasive techniques such as intimidation, blackmail, distortion of facts and telling the truth with dubious intents (Ugwu, 2007). Political propaganda may be material in the form of stickers, flags, hair styles, dressing, music and others to achieve the target political objectives. Political propagandist deliberately presents a selection of facts, argument and displays of symbols in several ways that he thinks he can be effective (Szanto, 1978).

Politics and propaganda cannot be separated nor can they run parallel to each other, they are inextricably attached to each other, that is, without politics, there is no propaganda because credible politics always call for good propaganda since both have same direction, goal and motive (Victoria & Jowett, 2014). Political Propaganda refers essentially to communication activities employed by political actions with the intention to further the interest of political office holders or government. Of course, it is the means by which political governance is sustained (Hasan, 2010).

Political leaders understand the efficacy and potency of political propaganda use the concept with impunity. It seems to be a powerful tool in moulding the nature and behavior of electorates. Politics and leadership depend solely on intuitive propaganda in order to drive towards achieving the desired goals (Nneji, Bassey – Duke & Brown, 2014).

Mass media and the political propaganda

Propaganda is an ancient and old forms of communication technique employed for public opinion manipulations. It tends to be in use for decades and affects information flow both internally and externally. Advances in information technologies have made propaganda even more pervasive today. True democratic system involves active participation by its many members. Using communication media to manipulate or marginalize public involvement goes against the keystone upon which a democratic system is constructed (Gabner, 2000). The mass media are known to promote and

propagate political ideas often known as propaganda which is used as tool of political mobilization by different political parties.

The media are usually alive to its prime position as the vital source of information about elections in democracies and transition around the globe. Mass Media coverage of political events seem to be the lifeblood that shapes the perceptions that form the reality on which political actions is based. Media are the source of information about political activities as spelt out in section 22 of the 1999 Nigeria's constitution. Graber (2001), argues that the media and elections coverage are like siemese twins because it is through the mass media that the electorates get to know the minds of candidates. The media provides avenue for letting the people know what trends in terms of election periods, enlighten them to exercise their franchise, civil rights, to vote and also be voted for (Opena,2012).

Hasan (2010) states that political propaganda has an inherent emotion which is often used to create effect for negative purposes. It has ability to awaken passion by confusing the issues, it made the important issues seems trifling and keep the channels of communication full of exciting which keeps people bathing in the dark. However, government sometimes realizes the need to organize or sustain systematic and coherent morale of the people using sentimentality. Politics depends on intuitive propaganda of the political leadership which manipulate human psychology and perception for their selfish desired goals.

It is significant to note that mass media political campaign messages are instrumental in influencing the way a voter thinks, decides and makes choice in his quest to participate in elections in Nigeria (Abagen, 2009). Through coverage and presentation of information,, figures , facts and other analytical pieces about major political issues, the media exert considerable influence on the creation of awareness and consciousness in the process. Thus, it is clearly understood that voters rely on media with which they had contact to make their decisions (Oriavwote, 2000).

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on two relevant theories, these are the value Change Theory and Agenda-setting Theory.

Value Change Theory

Value Change Theory has same assumption with the Psychodynamic Model which jointly assumed that for a persuasive message to be effective and received by the recipients as intended by the information source, this message according to te proponents must be able to alter psychological balance of the target audience in such a way that the person would respond to the direction of the message with the model of behavior desired by the source. According to Folarin (2002), Value Change Theory is of the idea that one should not over-estimate the worth of a message value system until one is able to determine the comparative advantage that one

value system has over other related values. The scholar observed that a change in value will lead to corresponding changes in attitudes and behaviours, hence, individual must have clear information on the ranking of his present values.

The theory is preaching against political lie, extortion, deception, dishonesty and lack of integrity as criteria for assessing the true worth of a person or nation. These kinds of attitude cannot sustain development but doom since they are premised on wrong sense of value. The theorist argued that the Nigerian mass media should stress on the need for attitude and behavioural change for genuine development. If people can change their orientation against corruption or misplaced priority occasioned by wrong value systems, there would be positive societal transformation.

It is the opinion of the theorist that the Mass media should move away from political propaganda news contents and presentation but perfect at pointing out failures and suggest viable options (Sobowale, 1995). Finally, media should not support pull-down syndrome nor should they forbid constructive criticisms of political programmes and campaign messages, so long the reports have the capacity to advance the political and socio-economic benefits.

Agenda- Setting Theory

This theory was originated by Maxwell McCombs and Donald. L. Shaw in 1993. The theory proposes that the facts which people know about public issues tend to be those which the mass media presents to them. The significance ascribe to such issues seems to be proportionate to the degree of attention given to the same issues in the media. The theory assumed that the media sets the agenda for our general discussion. Although, we have the liberty to think what we want to think but we tend to think in line with the media pronounce as important.

Folarin (1998), argues that the mass media institution is seen as responsible for raising issues they considered as vital to the platform of public discourse and draw public attention to it. The scholar established that the media do this via the frequency of reporting by given prominence to important items of the news. Ugboajah (1987), observes that the relation between media coverage and public thinking influence what people learn about their society. The theory, however, postulated that the media must serve the political system objectively by making information, discussion and consideration of public affairs accessible.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The area of study comprises four Local Government areas in Oyo state- Ogbomoso North, Oyo West, Ibadan South –East, Iseyin and Ibarapa East- respectively. According to Ayozie (2011), opinion research is more relevant to political propaganda. Example of opinion research is ad-Hoc survey, which is adopted for this study because it was found to be most adequate for political research study. A total of two hundred and fifty(250) respondents were drawn from the

selected five (5) local government areas using simple random and quota sampling methods. Through the quota sampling technique, fifty (50) respondents were selected and allotted for fifty (50) questionnaires. The questionnaire questions consisted open-ended, close-ended, contingency questions and the typical Likert Scale response style. A total of *two hundred and ten (210)* copies of the *questionnaire* were returned and validated for final analysis, making up 94 percent return rate. Data collection was carried out through administration of the research instruments (Questionnaire and Interview guide) designed for the study. Descriptive statistics was employed for the data analysis using frequencies, percentages, tables and value counts. Descriptive statistics according to Tejumaiye (2003), provides the mathematical method for organizing, summarizing and analyzing data that have been collected and measured. In-depth Interview method was also used while interview guide was utilized as instrument for responses obtained from the interviewees that spread across the politicians, voters, media practitioners, political analysts and members of the Nigerian election umpire, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Information collected was transcribed from the recorded tape and qualitative analysis carried out in line with the research questions. Pearson Moment Methods Correlation was employed for the test of hypothesis formulated in the study.

V. DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND RESULTS

Introduction

This section deals mainly with the presentation of data. These data were gathered from the questionnaire and interview guide duly answered by respondents and interviewees. Detailed analysis collected during the research is presented in a suitable and comprehensive form so as to aid understanding of data and results arrived at. The researcher utilized descriptive statistics with simple percentage, frequency, table value for the analysis of the questionnaire data analysis and Pearson Moment Methods Correlation for the testing of the hypothesis.

Presentation and analysis of data

This data presented in this section are those related to the demographic characteristics of the respondents involved in the survey and those that need to do with the research questions and the test of hypothesis.

Tabular Analysis of the Respondents Answers to the Questionnaire

Table1: Respondents distribution by sex

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Male	1	70	54.0%
Female	2	60	46.1%
		210	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

The table above indicates that 70 respondents with 54.0% were male while 60 respondents with 41.0% were female that responded to the study.

Table 2: Mass media are used as tool for promoting political propaganda in Nigeria

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	60	46.1%
Agree	2	50	38.4%
Strongly Disagree	3	10	8.0%
Disagree	4	10	8.0%
		210	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

The table above indicates that 60 respondents with 46.1% ticked strongly agreed that Nigerian media are used for propaganda, 50 respondents with 38.4% agreed with the statement, 10 respondents with 8.0% were strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively.

Table 3: Filtering of propaganda has over shadowed other media responsible activities

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	72	55.3%
Agree	2	45	35.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	6	5.0%
Disagree	4	7	5.3%
		210	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

The table 3 indicates that 72 respondents with 55.3% strongly agreed that filtering of propaganda has overshadowed other responsible activities of Nigerian media, 45 respondents with 35.0% agreed, 6 respondents with 5.0% were strongly agreed while 7 respondents with 5.3% disagreed with the statement.

Table 4: In what ways do the media political propaganda messages affected Nigerian societies?

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Maladministration	1	51	24.3%
Socio-economic problems	2	39	19.0%
Unemployment	3	45	21.4%
Poor education standards	4	56	27.0%
Moral decadence		19	9.0%

		210	100%
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Source: Field survey, 2020

The table 4 above shows that 51 respondents with 24.3% picked Maladministration, 39 respondents with 19.0% agreed with Socio-economic, 45 respondents with 21.0% selected Unemployment, 56 respondents with 27.0% ticked Poor education standards while 19 respondents with 9.0% settled for Moral decadence respectively.

Table 5: What is your perception of the media political propaganda influence in your life?

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
It opens my eyes to deceits in government	1	50	24.0%
It changes my moral ideas about my society	2	47	22.4%
Its changes my perception about leadership	3	30	14.3%
It hinders development	4	53	25.2%
Other [specify]	5	30	14.3%
		210	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

The above table 5 shows that 50 respondents with 24.0% said it opens their eyes to 'deceits' in government, 47 respondents with 22.4% confirming that it changes their moral ideas about our society, 30 respondents with 14.3% concurred that it changes their perception about leadership, 53 respondents with 25.2% agreed that it hinders development while 30 respondents with 14.3% were in others specified.

Table 6: How do you assess the consequences of Mass media use of political propaganda on Nigerians?

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	1	60	29.0%
Negative	2	150	71.4%
		210	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

The table 6 above established that 150 respondents with 71.4% agreed that the consequences of Mass media political propaganda Messages on Nigerians were negative while 60 respondents with 29.0% said the consequences were positive

Table 7: How can the Mass media political propaganda influence be rectified?

Table value	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Education	1	70	33.3%
Public orientation	2	55	26.2%

Organizing relevant Programmes	3	50	24.0%
Application of government policies	4	15	7.1%
Direct sensitization	5	20	10.0%
		210	100%

Source: Field survey, 2020

The table above indicates that 70 respondents with 33.3% agreed that educating Nigerians on the negative effects of political propaganda, 55 respondents with 26.2% said public orientation could be used to correct the influences, 50 respondents with 24.0% adduced that organizing relevant programmes should be put in place to correct the anomalies, 15 respondents with 7.1% suggested that government should implement policies that can monitor media programmes' contents, 20 respondents with 10.0% agreed with putting up constants direct citizenry sensitization against this attitudes.

Test of hypothesis

This section deals with examination of the relationship that exist between the variables identified in the study as stated in the research objectives and test of the hypothesis. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Moment Products Correlation. The chosen alpha (a) at 5% significant level is 0.05.

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the Mass media and the effect of political propaganda.

Table 1: Pearson's Correlations for the significant Relationship between the Mass media and the effects of political propaganda messages.

		Mass media	Effect of Political propaganda messages
Mass media	Pearson's correlation	1	0.48
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.22
	N	210	210
	Pearson		
	Correlation	0.48	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.22	
	N	210	210

Source: Field survey, 2020

The result of the correlation test presented in the table 4.3.1 shows that the first null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This is because the probability value is less than the present value of significance [$r=0.48$, $p=0.022<0.05$]. This implies that the hypothesis is negated to mean that there is a significant relationship between the Mass media and the effect of political propaganda in Nigeria. The relationship indicate attitude of propaganda among Nigerian mass media messages.

Discussion of hypothesis findings

The above correlation table was output of SPSS Pearson Correlation statistical analysis. Pearson Correlation (r) showing the relationship between the Mass media and the effect of political propaganda messages. From the above table, Pearson correlation (r) is 0.982 which indicate a strong positive relationship and influence between the Mass media and the effect of political propaganda messages. The correlation is only significant at 0.05 or 5% level of Significance.

However, the decision rule states, accept the null hypothesis if the probability value [p -value] is greater than the alpha value which is 0.05 or 5% and fail to accept the null if otherwise. From the above table our P -value is 0.01 while the alpha value is 0.05 the p -value (0.001) < alpha value [0.05]. We, therefore, fail to accept the null hypothesis and concluded that there is relative significant between the Mass media and the effect of political propaganda messages which engendered unwholesome behaviours in the society.

Having examined the research hypotheses using the Pearson Moment Correlation, the results of hypothesis indicated that there is relative significant between Mass media and the effect of political propaganda messages towards governance in Nigeria. This is evident from the responses of the respondents to the survey and interview instruments.

VI. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

Research question one: Are the Mass media promote or used as tool for spreading political propaganda messages in Nigeria?

According to the findings of the questionnaire through the survey respondents, 60 respondents with 46.1% and 50 respondents with 38.4% were strongly agreed and agreed that the Nigerian Mass media used most of their time for disseminating political propaganda messages [Table 2]. Also, table 3 indicated that 72 respondents with 55.3% strongly agreed while 45 respondents with 35.0% agreed that the Nigerian Mass media used more of their precious time on political propaganda.

Research Question Two: How do the Mass media political propaganda messages affected Nigerian societies?

The table 8 indicated that 80 respondents with 62.0% were strongly disagree with the statement. The study also established that Table 9 shows that 73 respondents with

56.1% were strongly agreed that the Mass media political propaganda affects governance.

Research Question Three: What are the perceptions of the selected stakeholders on the Mass media political propaganda messages?

Table 5 reveals that 50 respondents with 24.0% confirmed that media political propaganda messages encourages criminality and 'lies' in governance. 47 respondents with 22.4% unanimously agreed that media political propaganda activities changes electorates moral ideas about their society, 30 respondents with 14.3% agreed that it changes their perceptions about Nigerian cunning leadership, 53 respondents with 25.2% established that Mass media political propaganda messages hinders development while 30 respondents with 14.3 fell within "others specify".

Research Question Four: What are the consequences of Mass media use of political propaganda messages on Nigerian society?

Table 6 indicates that 150 respondents with 71.4% described the Mass media political propaganda messages as negative while 60 respondents with 29.0% said it is positive.

Research Question Five: How could the Mass media political propaganda messages be corrected?

Table 7 shows 70 respondents with 33.3% suggesting that the anomalies of Mass media political propaganda messages could only be rectified via educating the general public on the negative implications of the act, 55 respondents with 26.2% agreed that it could be corrected through public orientation, 50 respondents with 24.0% concurred with the organization of relevant programmes, 15 respondents with 7.1% advised that application of government policies on the ethical conduct of the media through the relevant regulators, finally, 20 respondents with 10.0% unanimously agreed that direct sensitization of the public could curb the trend.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a desperate effort to brainwash the electorates or public, political propaganda strategies were employed to attract public sympathy. Since political campaigns have now moved from the field to the media and the political campaigners are no longer on one –on –one contact with the potential voters, there is a rising need for better creative approaches towards getting electorates convinced in terms of language, logics and strategies. This study revealed that the political campaigns in the Nigerian Mass media rely strongly on propaganda as weapon for making their messages transmitted to their various target voters. Propaganda strives to persuade through the manipulation of language via distortion and sometimes outright falsehood. It has been observed that Mass media political propaganda messages have turned out to be deciding factors in Nigeria's elections.

Today, truth seems to have been jettisoned while the politicians mostly robbed of their integrity, sincerity and

credibility using the mass media as conduit pipe to project their manipulation via political propaganda messages. The study established that mass media political propaganda messages could involve a process of perpetuating an existing government in power when it failed to fulfill her campaign promises to the people. The media as the watchdog of the three arms of government has often been hijacked by political office holders to manipulate elections in Nigerian societies. It is revealed that the consequence of the political propaganda messages is negative on the nation's democratic systems and development.

Another implication is that the media is drawn into a competition for power during any socio-political transition which usually made journalists compromising corrupt practices which negate media ethical conduct and professionalism. The role of the mass media in political communications, their upshot on election campaigns and national issues is disheartening due to their ineffectiveness in education, information and entertainment of the public as well as clarification of conflicting political issues. This has been the unfortunate situation in Nigeria where political propaganda messages have persisted with the mass media contributing to escalate unhealthy political situation. Orhewere and Kur (2001), argues that responsible media practices do not carry inaccuracies, distortions, confusion and errors of facts in their reportage.

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Mass media should try to set agendas for politicians and political parties and enlighten electorates to make appropriate electoral decisions.
2. Mass media should avert contents capable of distorting or heating up polity especially in a democratic system and improve on the quality of news dissemination in a way to sustain the nation's nascent democracy.
3. Voters should be firm in their decisions or choice of office seekers, this attitude would discourage their thirst for distortive political propaganda messages and manipulation.
4. Government should step up actions on media regulation with a view to prevent misuse by privileged few in the society.

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AUTHORS

Dr. Titiloye Oyeyinka Ojo teaches at the Department of Mass Communication, Kola Daisi University, Ibadan, Oyo State. He specializes in Broadcasting, International and Development Communication.

Dr. Yetunde. O. Ayoboluis of the Department of Mass Communication, Kola Daisi University, Ibadan, Oyo State. She specializes in Broadcasting and Development Communication.

Onaopepo, Bamidele Ibrahim MSc. is a Public Relations and Advertising practitioner residing in Abeokuta, Ogun State.