



ANALYSIS OF THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

Association of Communication
Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN),
North Dakota State University (NDSU), ORBICOM/UNESCO, and other Partners

Supported by FORD FOUNDATION

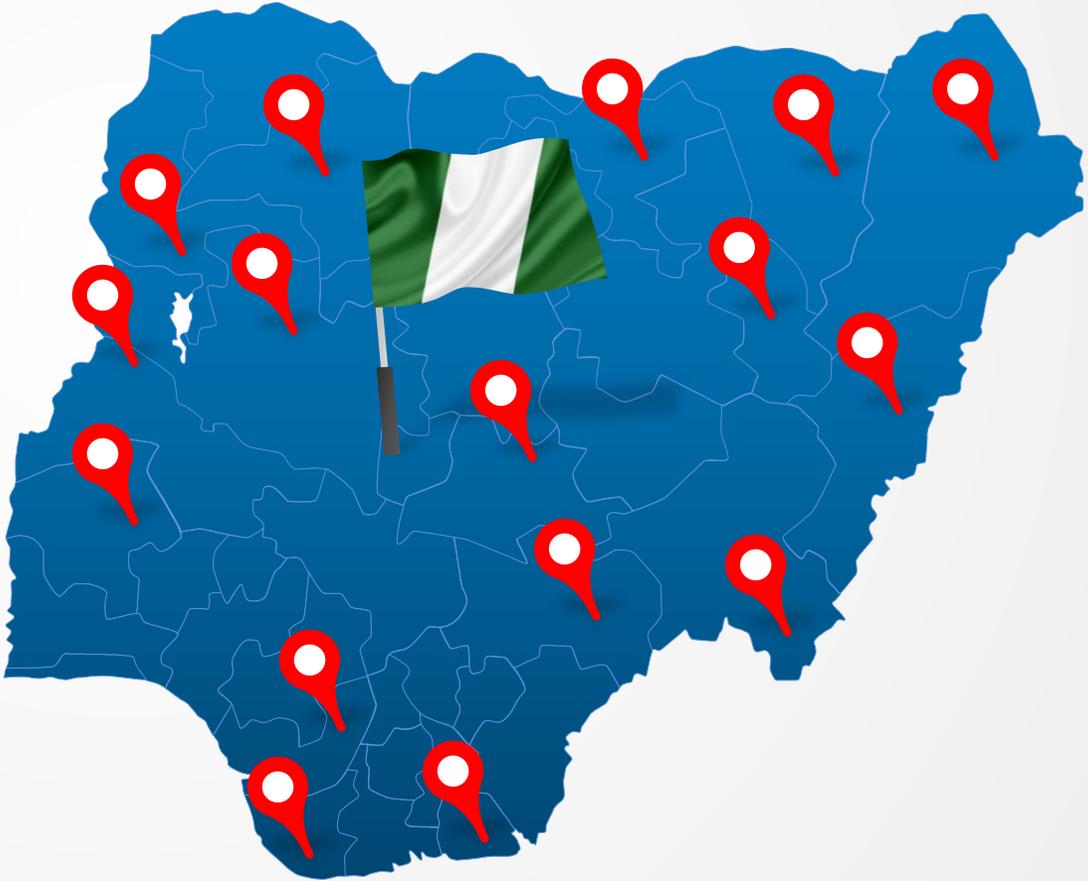
APRIL 2018

Understanding Nigeria Media & Elections Through Research

Nigeria



A Public Presentation



Preamble

This document presents the outcome of a research undertaken by the

- Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN) in association with North Dakota State University (NDSU), ORBICOM/UNESCO & The Advertising Practitioners' Council of Nigeria (APCON) and other partners.
- The research was funded by the Ford Foundation (West Africa office).

Background



Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) dominant party since 1999, won 4 presidential elections back-to-back (1999, 2003, 2007 & 2012)



All Progressives Party (APC) 2015 win of the Presidential Election an upset apple cart.

Result of Presidential Election in Nigeria(1999 – 2011)

Year	Party	Candidates	Result(%)	Winner
1999	PDP AD	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo Chief Olu Falae	62.78 37.22	✓
2003	PDP ANPP	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo Muhammadu Buhari	61.94 32.19	✓
2007	PDP ANPP	Umaru Yar'adua Muhammadu Buhari	69.82 18.72	✓
2011	PDP CPC	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan Muhammadu Buhari	58.89 31.98	✓

Scope of Research

The research investigated principally:

- Use of traditional and New Media
- Advertising and public relations messages during the presidential campaigns
- A perception survey of electorates on media campaign effectiveness
- Influences of hate campaign and messages on voting behaviors during the election.
- The level of involvement of local and foreign advertising agencies and public relations consultants
- The extent to which contents of political messages and media execution strategies conformed to existing ethical codes of political advertising.



Area of Study

This research was carried out in the following locations in Nigeria:

- Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja,
- Kano State (North-West zone)
- Maiduguri, Borno State (North-East zone)
- Kwara State (North-Central zone)
- Lagos and Ibadan (South West zone)
- Anambra State (South East zone)
- Warri, Calabar, and Port Harcourt (South-South zone)



Research Activities

Quantitative Content Analysis

In-depth Personal Interviews

Document Analysis

Surveys

Research Instruments Design

The Questionnaire

Interview Guide

Content Coding Sheet – Print Content Coding Sheet - TV

Social Media Coding Sheet

Results - Audience Perception

- The voting pattern skewed along the North-South dichotomy -data show that interviewees from the South-South and South East admitted to voting predominantly in support of then President GEJ; another majority from the North-West and North-Central zones claimed that they voted for the APC.
- The number in the South-West for the PDP and APC almost even.
- More than half of the respondents (55.30%) voted for GMB while 40.3% voted for GEJ in conformity with INEC results.
- Data suggests that influences of religion and ethnicity on voting decision in Nigeria are significant.

Analysis of 2015 Presidential Election Result on Geo-Political Zones

Geo-Political Zone	Voter Turn Out	APC/GMB	PDP/GEJ
North-East (NE)	3.68m	78%	22%
North-West (NW)	8.57m	83%	16%
North-Central (NC)	3.83m	59%	40%
South-South (SS)	5.17m	8%	91%
South-East (SE)	2.72	7%	91%
South-West (SW)	4.36m	56%	42%
FCT	306k	48%	51%
Total	29m	54% (15,424,921)	45% (12, 853, 162)

Source: Nigeria Election Watch (April 2015) Nigeria 2015 Presidential Election Results: africappractice-www.africappractice.com, accessed on 27/3/2018.

Results - Audience Perception (Cont'd)

- More than half of the respondents (58.50%) perceived the messages were personality focused.
- 53 per cent of the respondents considered much of the presidential campaign messages quite unwholesome and unethical.
- Respondents identified issues generated in the campaigns were: Housing and general infrastructure, Poor electricity supply, Missing Chibok Girls, and the Parlous state of the nation's economy.
- Whereas more than half of the respondents believed that the messages were more personality focused, about 48.7% of respondents claimed they voted for their preferred candidate because of the issues the candidates addressed in the campaign

Revealing Thematic analysis of qualitative data from Interview

A majority of our interviewees agreed that hate speech was pervasive during the 2015 presidential election; though opinion vary as regards the heavier between the two camps.



Interviewees agreed that hate speech is inimical to the growth and development of any democracy.



Interview subjects agreed that the over-concentration on negative speech and personality promotion robbed the electioneering campaign of the opportunity to disseminate or witness issue-based campaigns.



Questionnaire respondents and Interviewees admitted they accessed most of the campaign messages through the TV, followed by the social media. The APC had more presence on the social media than the PDP versus PDP's higher visibility on the TV.



Hate Speech a Definition

The Centre for Information Technology and Development (CITAD, 2016:17) defines hate speech as:

Any speech act that is aimed at inciting the audience to denigrate people on the basis of ethnicity, religion, gender, geography and any other socially conceived parameter with the purpose of marginalizing them or placing them at some disadvantage that is contrary to the provisions of the universal declaration on human rights as well as the international covenants on rights of the people.

Specific Examples

PDP against APC

- *The Real Buhari* a documentary aired on NTA and AIT -
Presented GMB as religion bigot
- Ayo Fayose's listing of GMB among leaders from the North that died in office

APC against PDP

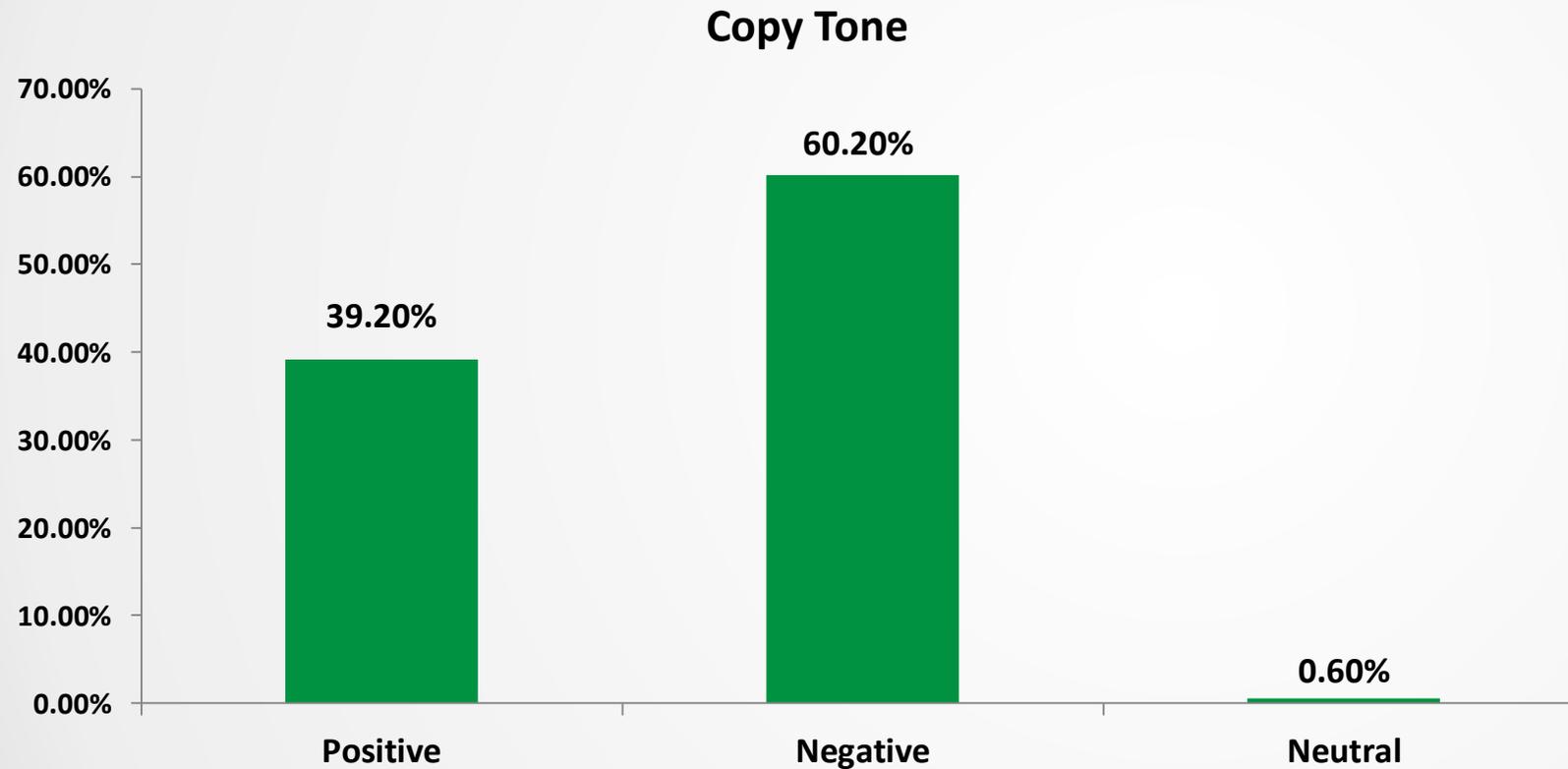
- Call by the Oba of Lagos to drive into the Lagoon all Igbos who refuse to vote for his candidate.
- Call by Rotimi Amaechi that APC would run a parallel government if PDP rigged the election

Content analysis of Newspaper Ads

- For both candidates (GEJ and GMB) more than two-thirds of the ads were personality-based.
- In all, about 6 in 10 ads had a negative tone.
- About two thirds of the ads were sponsored by interest groups (65.7%); 21 percent of the ads were sponsored by political parties, and the rest by unidentifiable persons or groups.
- For press ad. Almost all of the PDP and APC presidential campaign ads were published in full page - (93.2%).



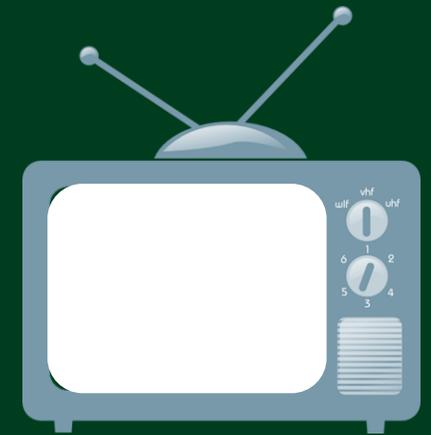
Tone of 2015 Presidential Election Campaign Ads



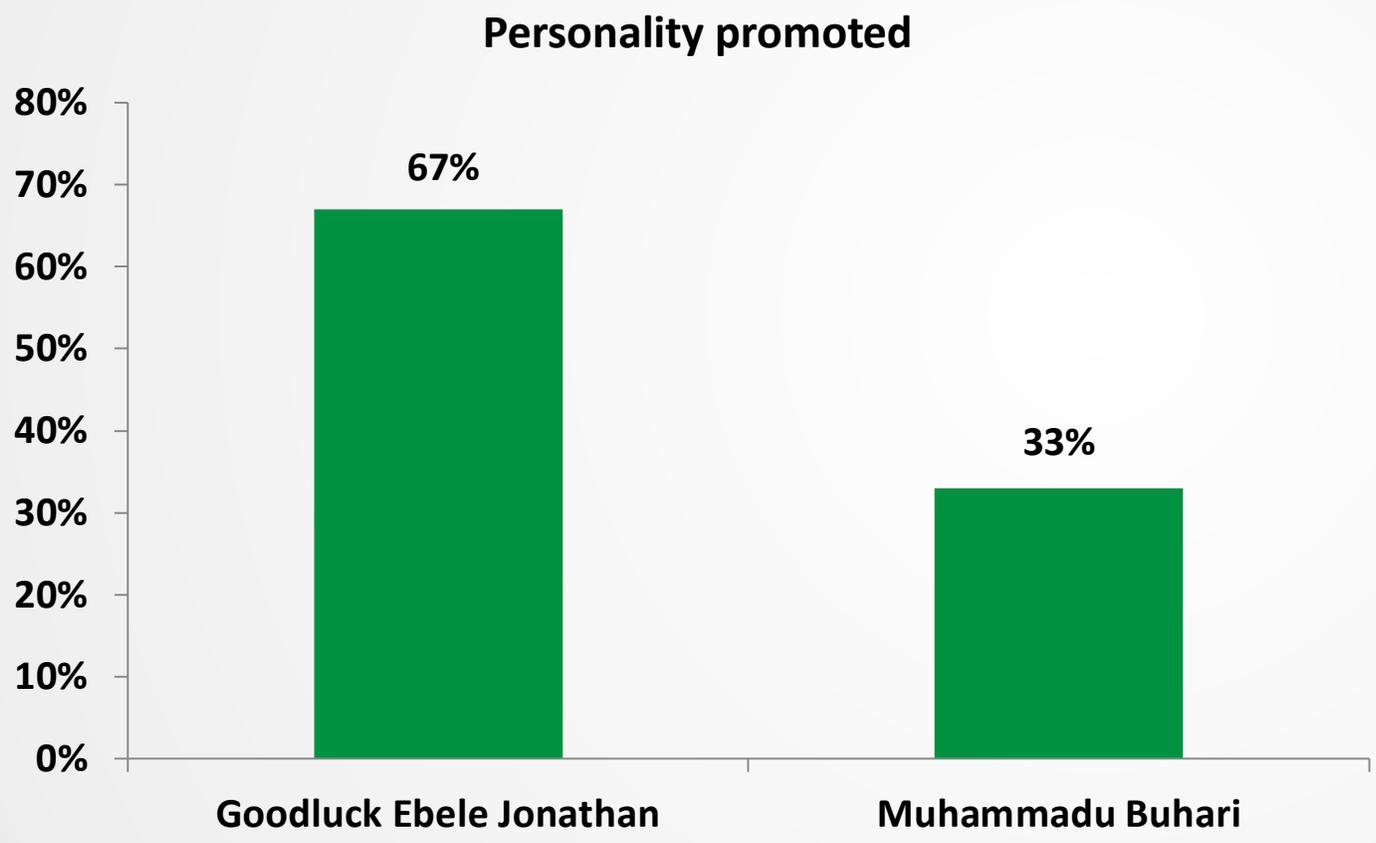
- The Chart shows that about 6 in 10 ads were in negative tone (60.2%);
- Ads with negative tone are essentially targeted at attacking the personality of opponents, or sometimes to lower the reputation of a candidate in the estimation of the publics;

Content analysis of Television Commercial / Radio Spots

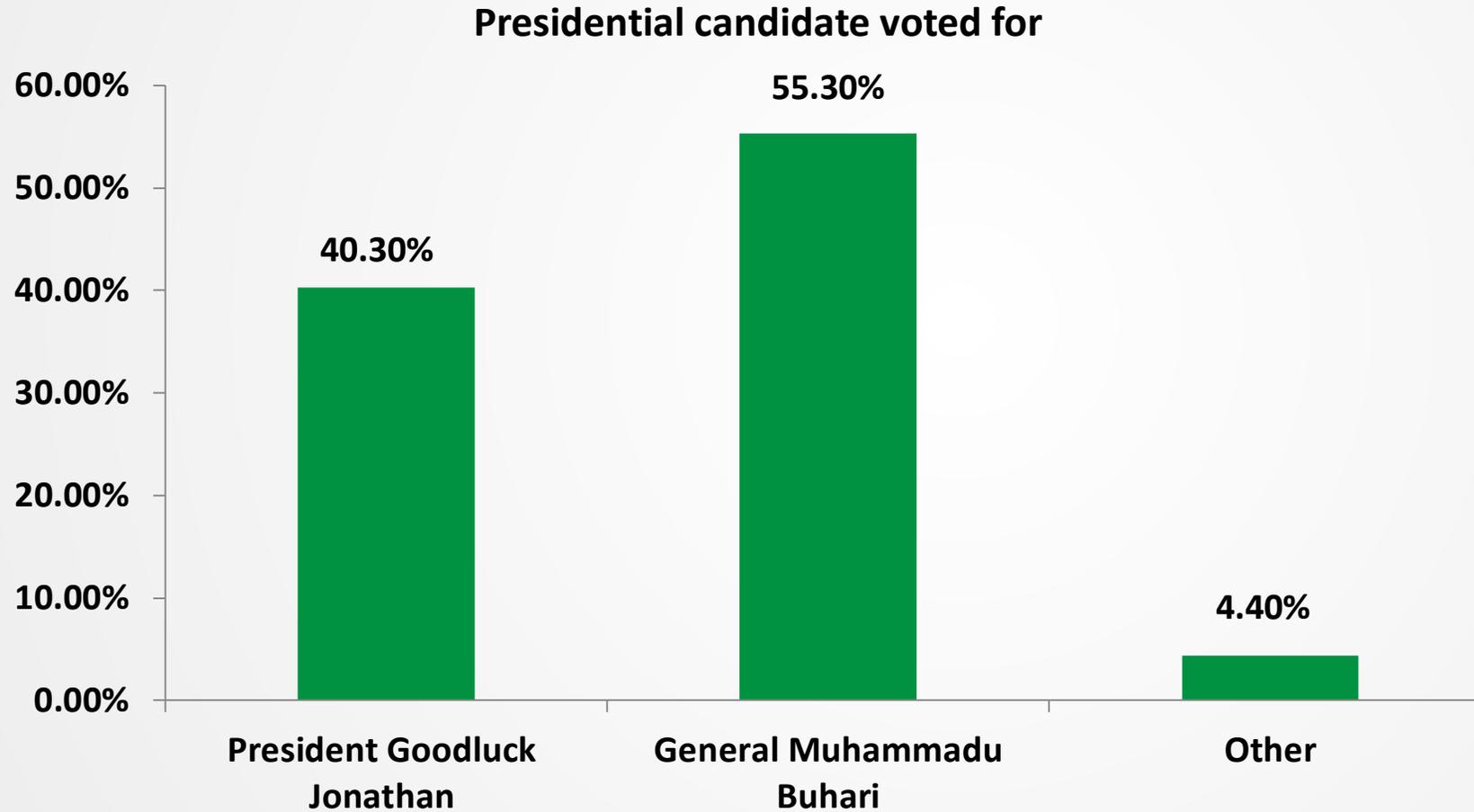
- 89 political advertisements collected on the two leading presidential candidates, 47 (52.8%) were radio jingles while 42 (47.19%) were TV commercials.
- APC had over two-thirds of all the commercials and jingles based on the materials the research team accessed through APCON (the advertising regulatory agency in Nigeria) and Media Monitoring Services Nigeria Limited.
- Majority of the political adverts (49.43%) were issue-based while 22.47% adverts were personality-based. APC had more issue-based adverts (40.44%) than the PDP (8.9%)
- The PDP sponsored more personality-based ads (14.6%) than the APC (7.86%).
- Multiple social/economic issues were often addressed in a single commercial viz: corruption, welfare, agriculture, infrastructure and unemployment.



Presidential Candidate with Higher Level of Personality Promotional Messages

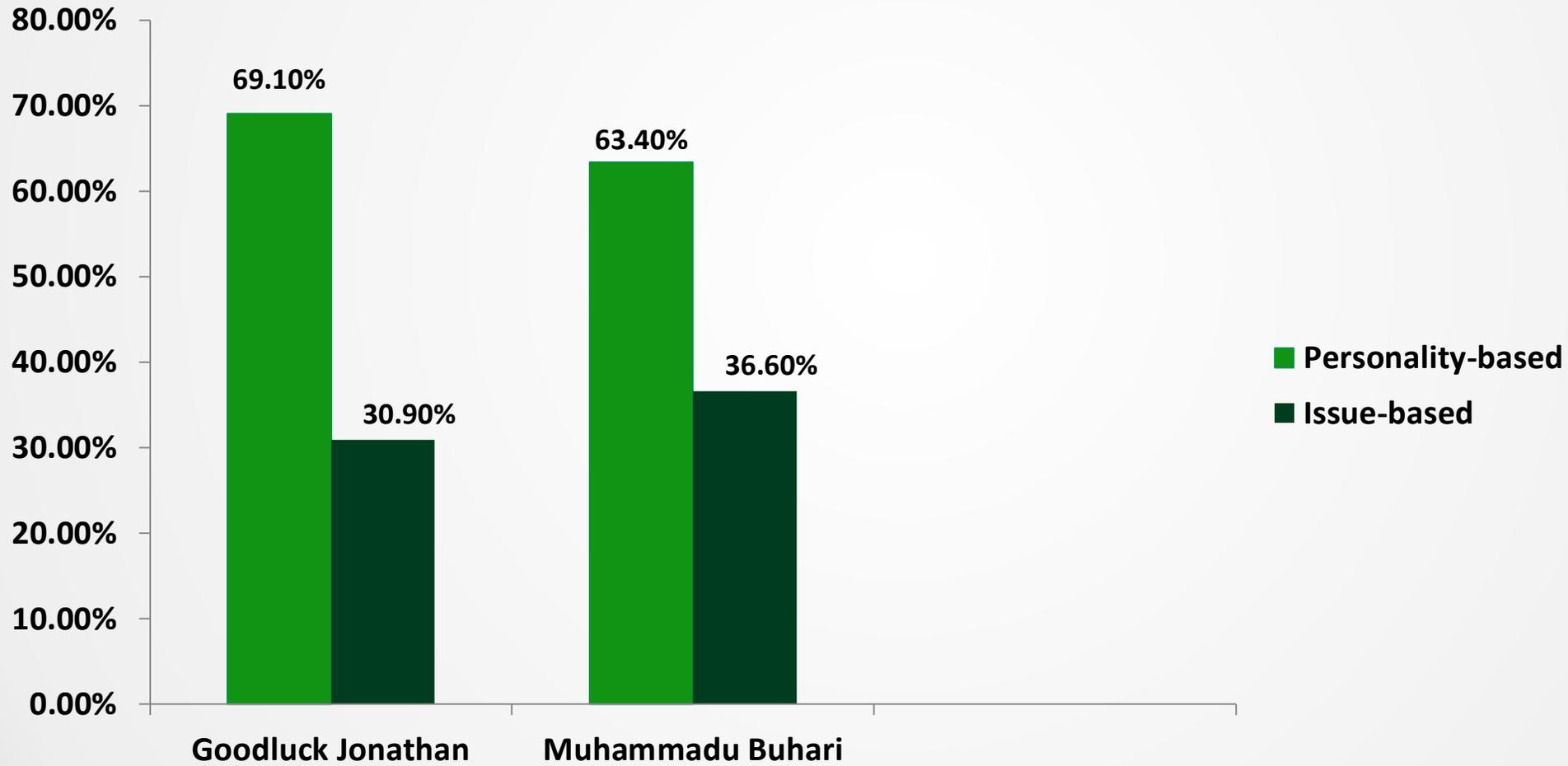


Presidential Candidate voted by Respondents



Type of Personality-promoted Ads Based on Presidential Candidates.

Type of ads and personality promoted



Social Media Messages



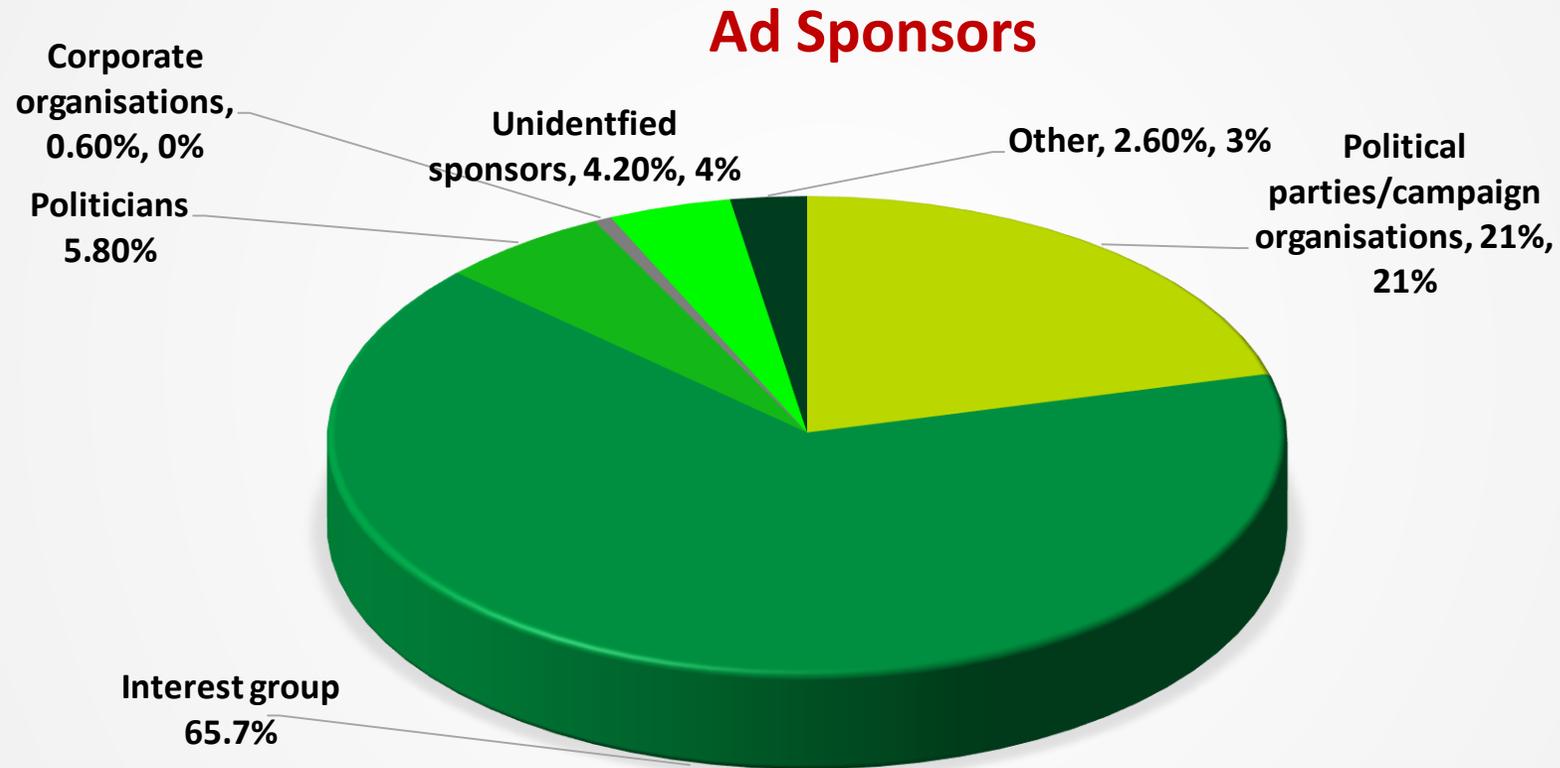
- Data demonstrate that the APC was more visible on Facebook, Twitter and Blog sites during the 2015 presidential election campaigns than the PDP.
- While General Muhammadu Buhari and Professor Yemi Osinbajo were already active on twitter by January 2015, the then President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan of the PDP became active on Twitter after the election. The former Vice-President, Namadi Sambo joined Twitter in February 2010.
- Religion was not a major campaign issue by the two political parties on the social media.
- Themes emerged from the social media posts of APC and PDP during the 2015 presidential election campaigns include education, election, electricity and general infrastructure. Others were: health, economy, unemployment, political party, poverty, presidential candidates, religion, security, terrorism and voter mobilization.

Involvement of Foreign Consultant



- Both local and foreign advertising and public relations firms were involved in the campaigns of the two presidential candidates during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. This study found out that the details of the engagement were often treated as trade secrets.
- AKPD Message and Media, founded by former Obama campaign manager David Axelrod, was hired by the APC while the PDP initially hired Levick Strategic Communications.

Dominant Sponsor of 2015 presidential Campaign Advertisement.



- About two thirds of the ads were sponsored by interest groups (65.7%);
 - 21% of the ads were sponsored by political parties;
- The Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN) and Concerned Professionals of Nigeria (CPN) were two of such interest groups that sponsored series of political advertisements before and during the 2015 presidential campaigns.

Role of Political Interest Groups

- Political Interest Groups played dominant role in terms of messaging during the presidential election campaign –the most visible being the Transformation Ambassadors of Nigeria (TAN) of the PDP.
- Both parties were highly supported by political interest groups.
- The volume / value of ads placed by interest groups was much more than those placed by the political parties.

ABUSE

- Presidential candidates used political interest groups to initiate election campaigns ahead of the stipulated 90 days before polling permitted by the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended).
- There were instances where the APC and the PDP in the states they control, intimidated OOH Operators to dismount the billboards of the opponent , although these OOH owners had subsisting contractual obligations ,
- Reported cases abound involving government use of OOH regulatory agencies to hound down OOH operators to get at the other political party. This cuts across both parties.
- Several political messages were exposed in the media (press & broadcast) without presenting them to the regulatory body for vetting/approvals.

Conclusion & Recommendation

Political parties and their supporters should concentrate more on issue-based campaign messages than hate campaign messages capable of demeaning personalities, religious/ethnic beliefs as well as ethnicity.

Political parties and their candidates should focus more on issue of importance to national development than mere image projection.

The Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), political parties, civil society groups and other stakeholders should promote media and information literacy to enable better deployment of user generated contents that foster democracy and the democratization process.

Political parties and candidates should optimize the numerous opportunities (of cost-effectiveness, reach, immediacy, citizens' engagement, etc.) offered by the rising popularity of new media

Conclusion & Recommendation

Continuous voter education is crucial for the citizens to be more critical in the electoral choices.

The federal government should put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that regulatory agencies do not fail in their responsibility to sanction electoral breach in the media.

The codes of regulatory agencies, such as APCON, National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and Press Council, should be reviewed to ensure that any sanction given to erring political party, individual or media organization is enforceable and that the fine contained in the codes should be such that it would reasonably serve as a deterrent to committing a breach.

There is a need to ensure that the operations of these regulatory agencies are insulated from unnecessary interference from the party in power.

Conclusion & Recommendation (Cont'd)

Electorate should be able to flag what they consider an offensive campaign material, and compel the relevant regulatory agency to act on the complaint within a given time space.

Creative approach to media planning of media campaigns could be better enhanced taking advantage of the plethora of today's communication channels..

Advertising agencies, public relations firms and political marketing firms should adhere to professional ethics in design and dissemination of media messages during elections.

APPRECIATION

- FORD FOUNDATION
- APCON
- NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY
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- ALL FIELD RESEARCH FELLOWS
- ALL SCHOLARS/PROFESSIONALS INVOLVED IN THE STANDARDIZATION PROCESSES
- PROF CHARLES OKIGBO
- REPORT WRITERSS
- ACSPN

GOD BLESS
NIGERIA

