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Chapter Five



Exploration of Uses of Framing and Spinning in the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria.

*Bolu John Folayan,
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Abstract

This paper explores the use of framing and spinning in political communications concerning the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria. The major objective of the study was to find the extent to which frames and spins were used in the elections. The impacts of such frames and spins were also assessed. Textual analysis of frames and spins were conducted in selected newspapers and the social media. This was complemented with a Focus Group Discussion moderated on the basis of the research questions. A total of 439 items (news stories,

advertisements, features, and interviews were analyzed. Emphasis frames and culturally-embeddd frames were displayed. Findings suggest that only few of the frames actually fundamentally impacted the political process. Politicians constructed most of the political frames and spins. The researchers concluded that frames and spins potentially have impact on the political process if communication experts were involved in the political communication process.

Keywords: Framing, Spinning, Presidential election

Introduction

Framing stands out as a potent tool used by political communicators across the world. Political strategists and communicators highlight certain events, direct focus on issues and place them within a particular context in order to sway the interpretation of their audience. (Iyenger, 1999). Since the 1970s the study of frames in communication research received unprecedented attention at global level. Much of framing research focuses on ways that politicians, issue advocates and stakeholders use journalists and news professionals to communicate their preferred meanings of events and issues.

Though their activities were not defined as frames, Nigerian politicians from pre-independence era, have used frames. Some of such popular frames include: “Mr. Twelve Two-Third”, “Marginalization” “Wild Wild West”, etc. Therefore, framing is not new in Nigeria's political communication lexicon. The “E mi lokan” spin was believed to have ignited the massive digital activism and also enlisted mammoth followership during

Nigeria's 2023 Presidential electioneering processes that was popularly credited to 'framing theory' (Daily Mail, 2022). That is, a spectacular and intrusive, albeit collaborative, course of information exchange involving the ranks of politicians, the news media outlets, and the citizenry; exploring the operational linkages among political actors occurred based on a statement by the eventual winner of the election, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. This is close to what Iyengar (1991) described as constructs made applicable to media-generated issues.

In the perspectives of mass communication, framing connotes the manner in which interpretation is given to reportage of issues, personality and events of political significance (Goffman 1994). Impliedly, media framing thus refers to the manners journalists highlight issues conveyed in their reports. Entman (1993 pg. 54) added that framing is the selection of "some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation for the item described." PR specialists who deploy spinning to frame issues and events are often referred to as "spin doctors".

Political communication often engage the use of spin doctors to refer to express political-significant issues in the media, especially those geared towards electioneering campaigns, as well as the press reportage of the grandiloquence (Norris, 2014). It also indicates that partisan messages, which have all the time been fundamental to the electoral and policy formulation procedure, are popular items in the public sphere. The medium, however, has been transformed by some landmark events, notably the fundamental leap in internet growth and adoption (Norris, 2014).

A related concept that political communication specialists often deploy to frame is “spinning”. A spin is actually a communication act crafted to change the way people perceive that communication act. Therefore, a spin is technically intended to mislead the audience in that it creates “another” meaning for a word or action or issue (Goffman, 1994). Many public relations professionals however would argue that a spin does not necessarily have to be deceptive. They stress that words have both connotative and denotative meanings and both meanings are valid, depending on the skills of the communicator.

According to techtarget.com, (2023) spin in PR Marketing may be defined as:

...propaganda in which something is to be communicated in a way that creates the opposite impression to what would naturally occur; (but) outright lies cannot be considered spin. However inconvenient but relevant, truths are often omitted in the process and less relevant but true details emphasized.

The stakes were very high during the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria. The All Progressives Congress (APC) had spent eight years in power and was believed not to have been outstandingly successful in changing the lives of Nigerians for better at least judging by the campaign promises of the then outgoing President, Muhammadu Buhari. The presidential ticket of the APC was highly contentious within the party and whoever won the ticket had to face the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and the Labour Party (LP) as leading contenders. Within the APC, a national leader of the party, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was tipped to win the ticket (and who eventually did) is a veteran political tactician and former democratic

crusader. The political parties appeared to have gained prominence in the media through the use of frames. A preliminary investigation by the researchers showed that all the parties and their candidates engaged in some forms of spinning and framing in their political communications. However, it is unclear what particular frames and spins were constructed and deployed as well as the extent to which they were effective in enhancing the success of candidates. The success of candidates has to be linked with their imperatives of framing in order to determine its effectiveness.

Often researchers over-concentrate on the social, economic, political, ethnic matters to the neglect of the all-important issues of communication. Indeed, a big issue which could cost a candidate victory in an election could be framed as unimportant and this could enhance the victory of the candidate. Thus politicians need to know how to construct frames. Understanding of how frames are deployed will also add to effectiveness of campaigns. The foregoing have not been adequately investigated in the communication literature in Nigeria, according to investigations by the present research.

Some other politicians could use spinning and framing to divert attention off contentious issues. Several issues were at stake prior to the 2023 election: fixing the economy in the face of soaring inflation and low revenue from declining oil sales; country-wide kidnapping and insecurity perpetuated by armed criminals, among others. Therefore, politicians and their communication managers need reliable data on the nexus between framing and their success during elections.

Objective and Research Questions of the Study.

The aim of this investigation is to examine the application of framing and spinning in the Nigeria's 2023 Presidential election, The study has the following research questions:

1. What were the frames and spins deployed during the electioneering process?
2. Who were the authors of the frames and spins constructed?
3. To what extent were the frames and spins effective in enhancing the success of candidates?

Literature Review

Reese (2001) defines frames as “organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world. A frame organizes central ideas on issues, thereby redefining the interpretative schema of the audience to make sense of and discuss those issues. When reporters frame stories, what they do is condense complex events into interesting and appealing reports. However, it is not only journalists who engage the use of frames. News sources (such as policy makers, spokespersons, politicians, and publicists) all communicate through framing.

Earliest conceptualizations of framing could, however, be found in the works of Goffman (1974), Tuchman (1978) and Entman (1991). Their works focused mainly on journalistic frames - how news is formulated or constructed. This perspective, known as “Constructionism” deals with the process in which individuals and groups actively create social reality through news gathering and news reporting. In other words, journalists presents layers of interpretation on the issues or events that they report in terms of how they frame their reports.

Sociologist, Erving Goffman, considered as the founding father of Framing Theory perceives framing as going beyond journalism. He saw the concept pervading interpretative designs in day-to-day experience to make sense of the events

around them. (Goffman 1994). Reese (2001), and Scheufele & Tewksbury (2006), included the notion of culture (culturally embedded frames) and the fact that the audience of mass communication also engages in framing. For instance, TV viewers use frames to decode information they view by using the 'frames' presented by the journalists to present information to them as 'windows' to view the world.

Framing theory explains how a communicator packages (i.e. frames) information and ideas thereby influencing what the audience make about such information and ideas. In the context of journalism, framing describes how the journalist constructs and presents news and information to the public for public consumption. It is commonly referred to in communication scholarship as “the second-level agenda setting”. (D'Agenlo, 2012).

There are four main types of frames: *culturally-embedded frame*, *cognitive frame* (Scheufele, 1999), *equivalency* and *emphasis frames* (Chong & Druckman, 2013). (Goffman 1994) also distinguished between *natural* and *social* frames. Below are the explanations for a few related concepts:

- **Culturally-embedded Frames'** are frames that express culturally shared notions with symbolic significance, such as stereotypes, values, archetypes, myths and narratives.
- **Values:** These are standards of behaviour a person holds as important. They are both personally derived and derived from society (norms).
- **Stereotypes:** Widely-held, often fixed and oversimplified opinion or idea about an issue, person or thing.
- **Archetypes:** In psychology, archetype is a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious.

- *Myths*: Widely-held beliefs or ideas which are generally false. Most myths are connected to early history of a people and built around their ancestry; hence are generally strongly-held.
- *Narratives*: Spoken or written accounts of events. In journalism, narratives are the analysis or interpretations of the stories or features written by the journalist. In linear narrative, the story is presented in the order in which they actually happened but non-linear narrative presents the events of the story in no particular order, giving the journalist the liberty to emphasize aspects he or she wishes to play up or play down. Quest narrative allows the journalist to tell the story with a particular goal in mind that drives the entire narrative. It is the commonly used in in-depth or investigative features. Viewpoint narrative is the subjective viewpoint of the journalist. His or her views, feelings, perspectives, even own life, reflects in the report he or she has written.
- *Virtue or Sin*: Behaviour showing high moral standards. Sin is an immoral act believed to be a transgression of divine order or law.
- *Metaphor*: Something commonly believed to represent something else.
- *Constructed Frames* ('Cognitive Schema'): Schema, represents a structured way of thinking. Unlike cultural frames which evolves naturally, these kinds of frames are constructed. Examples are:
- *Slogan/Jargon/Catch phrase*: To frame an object with a catchy phrase in order to make it more memorable and relate-able;

- *Contrast* expression(s) used to describe an object in terms of what it is not;
- Spin - presenting a concept in such a way as to convey a value judgment (positive or negative) that may not be immediately apparent or to create a deliberate bias in presentation issues or information. Systematic constructions such as the foregoing are structured in form of cognitive schemas in people (journalist and audience).
- *Cognitive schema* refers to units of understanding that can be hierarchically categorized as well as webbed into complex relationship with another. People and events can be schemed and the essence is to help take a short-cut to understand the issue. Scheufele notes:

A cognitive schema is a cognitive representation of an object or relation between objects...For instance, we all have schema for terrorist acts; that is, each of us has an idea of what a typical terrorist act looks like. Since the attacks of 9/11 most of us probably think of Islamist suicide attacks, significant civilian casualties, and so on. A terrorist schema, for instance, is a cognitive representation of terrorists with attributes like “Islamic background”, “anti-Western”, and “having military training.” This means many audience members usually connect these attributes to terrorists. (1999 pg.116)

The difference between *frames* and *schemas* is that schemas are subsets of frames and frames are not entirely built on schemas. Sometimes, media framing activates just one of several schemas held by the audience while at other times, several schemas are activated in form of 'cognitive networks' (Scheufele, 1999)

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2006), defined 'Equivalency frames' as logically equivalent phrases, which make recipients to alter their preferences. For example, reporting how a contestant as 'founding father of a state when he was governor' to suggest he would do well as president is equivalency framing. 'Emphasis frames' focuses on the reality on a subset of relevant aspects of a situation or issue. The communicator emphasizes aspects of a solution that encourage a certain context and discourage certain others. For instance, The Buhari Administration, in its first term, successfully framed the previous Jonathan Administration as inept and responsible for the relapse of the conomy into recession through 'Emphasis Framing'.

Method and Materials

The qualitative design was used to collect data because it is a good framework for studying phenomena in their natural setting, building holistic pictures formed with words, which this study set out to attain. According to Priest (1996 p.5) the qualitative approach “explores and asseses things that cannot easily be summarized numerically... relying on the interpretation and analysis of what people do and say without making heavy use of measurement and numerical analysis.”

Tijani-Adenle (2023 p.160) corroborates the foregoing assertion further:

The most preferred sampling technique in qualitative data gathering is purposive sampling. Random sampling is seldom preferred because the researcher's main concern is not necessarily to generalize the findings of the study but to maximize explorative discovery of patterns and themes that may occur in the particular context of the study.

Political news reports, opinions, feature articles and advertisements were selected from five (5) newspapers (*The Nation, The Sun, Guardian, Punch* and *Daily Trust*), national news broadcasts and interviews on five (5) radio stations (*Radio Nigeria Network News, Raypower FM Abuja, Lagos Talks, Lagos Info* and *Aso Radio*) and five (5) TV stations (*NTA, Channels Tv, AIT, Arise TV* and *TVC*) and 10 online newsfeeds (*Premium times, Ash News, Nigeriantribuneonline, Franktalknow.com, Saharareporters.com, starnews.com, sunshinereporters.com, platformsafruja, cinm, villagesquare.com* and *citiblognews.com*), from June 2022 to June 2023. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to pick the media that actively report politics where much of the frames would presumably be located and few of the newspapers were selected based on their relative popularity. The twelve-month study frame was to cover pre-election and post-election frames and spins (the election took place in February, 2023).

Table 1: Types of Contents Analyzed

SN	Description of text	Number of items	Frequency
1	Political news reports related to the 2023 presidential elections	206	46.9%
2	Opinion articles related to the 2023 elections	93	21.2%
3	Feature articles related to the 2023 election	45	10.2%
4	Interviews on the 2023 elections	35	7.9%
5	Photo captions on the 2023 elections	32	7.3%
6	Advertisements on the 2023 elections	28	6.4%
	Total	439	

Four hundred and thirty-nine textlets (excerpts or selected texts meant for textual analysis) were selected and examined manually from the sampled media. In order to understand the framing techniques deployed the researchers also conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on the objectives of the study. The FGD comprised five experts: an advertising expert; a PR expert; a political communication specialist; and three editors, one each from the Print, Broadcast and Online media. Convenient sampling was used to pick participants since the investigation was essentially explorative.

Findings

Nature and number of frames and spins

From the 439 media items analyzed, a total of 25 Frames and 18 spins were discovered. Table 2 and Table 3 present the frame and spins with their meanings:

Table 2: Frames in the 2023 electioneering in Nigeria

1	Articulate	Framed by the supporters of the PDP candidate Atiku Abubakar to portray their candidate as forthright. It was coined from his name 'Atiku'
2	Emi lokan	APC aspirant, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu expressed this frame at his Abeokuta (South West) rally. It was at the peak of him being denied the presidential ticket (allegedly) by the incumbent administration, despite belonging to the party in power. 'Emi lokan' in Yoruba means "It's my turn". Tinubu alluded to the fact that he had helped so many people to ascend the political ladder, including incumbent President Mohammadu Buhari and it was his turn to be President. The frame became very popular all through the electioneering.
3	Batified	The acronyms of the APC candidate is B.A.T. (Bola Ahmed Tinubu). His supporters framed those who support him as being 'batified'. This technically created a 'movement' of cult followership for him.
4	Obedient	Similar to being 'batified' is "Obedient". The frame is used to describe supporters of the LP Candidate, Mr. Gregory Peter Obi. The expression has additional connotative value of loyalty. It also encouraged cult followership for Obi.
5.	'Architect of Modern Lagos'/ 'Father of Modern Lagos'	The media and PR strategists of Tinubu created this frame to detach their principal from the shortcomings of the incumbent Buhari Administration. The frame was to create the impression that Tinubu was different from Buhari when it comes to governance and leadership and that he would do things differently as he did when and after he was Lagos State Governor. Of course the frame was contentious as Lateef Jakande and Raji Fashola were generally regarded as architects of modern Lagos.

6	Trader	Mr. Obi framed himself as a successful 'trader' to hit home his campaign that he would manage Nigeria's economy better.
7	Corrupt Contestant	The leading candidates in the election (Tinubu, Abubakar and Obi) framed "corruption" around one another, making counter accusations of the other being corrupt. Atiku originally was framed as "corrupt" but his publicists turned the tide against Tinubu and Tinubu's team turned the heat back at Atiku and Obi. The frame capsized and became a liability to all the three candidates as none was able to fully clear his name in the corruption framing.
8	Drug Baron	Both Obi and Atiku camps frame Tinubu as a former drug baron, capitalizing on an incident in which the latter was involved in a plea bargain related to drug. Without evidence that Tinubu was a drug baron, he was tenaciously framed a 'drug baron'
9	True Leader	Supporters of Tinubu framed him as a true leader, projecting his achievements in the democratic struggle against military administration in Nigeria, his tenure as governor and the fact that he literally bred leaders across Nigeria (Vice President, Senate president, Governors, Senators, Judges, Commissioners, etc.).
10	Stingy Leader	Obi's strategists presented him as a stingy leader to create the frame of being a prudent (and incorruptible) leader
11	O to ge	The expression originally emanated from Kwara State gubernatorial race when people protested the hegemony of the Saraki Political Dynasty. <i>O to ge</i> in Yoruba means "it is enough". While Tinubu supporters used this frame to push against sustained dominance of the North (especially Fulani) in the APC and root for Yoruba candidacy (Tinubu), LP and PDP used the expression to attack Tinubu's dominance in Lagos politics for over 30 years.

12	Serial liar	Anti-Obi supporters dubbed him a 'serial liar', especially in the social media.
13	Fit President	Both LP and PDP framed Tinubu as weak and unhealthy. They brought to the fore the importance of a President being healthy to do the job well.
15	Nepotist Administration	The Buhari Administration was framed as pro-North and pro-Fulani and that Buhari put his kinsmen in critical positions in public office.
16	Last Man Standing	This frame was projected to present Tinubu as the only democratic crusader who never compromised.
17	Muslim-Muslim	After Tinubu won the presidential ticket of the APC, the religious inclination of his Vice President became contentious. The tradition is to pick a Christian Vice President. The issue of Muslim-Muslim describes a muslim President and his Vice who is also a muslim. This led to a simmering debate on the appropriateness of Muslim-Muslim, Christian-Christian or Christian-Muslim, etc.
18	No Man's Land	Obi's followers in Lagos dubbed Lagos State "no man's land". This framing was to grant them legitimate democratic rights in the state.
19	Change the Change	The PDP and LP used this frame to canvass support, implying that the APC which promised change has failed and the change they brought needed to be changed.
20	Failed State	The Opposition (to Buhari regime) framed the government under Buhari as a failed state.
21	BVAS and I-Rev as game changers	To give credibility to the election massively mobilize voters, INEC tagged its equipment, (Bimodal Voter Accreditation System - BVAS) and I-Rev (INEC Results Viewing portal) as the new game changer in electoral elections in Nigeria. This frame was used to mobilize millions of voters who now had implicit confidence in the electoral process.

22	Production economy	Obi criticized the Buhari regime for running an economy that is import-dependence, producing nothing. Obi proposed to turn Nigeria into a vibrant production economy. He successfully used this schema to make the drive for an industrial-based economy.
23	Restructuring	Only the PDP candidate framed an intent to carry out restructuring of the country. Although 'restructuring' means different things to many people, this frame helped to position Atiku as a nationalistic candidate.
24	Zoning	Both the PDP and APC framed the nomination that processes for the presidential election should follow the characteristic diversity or 'federal character' of the country. The framing of zoning caused altercations with led five governors to work against the PDP and some experts believed this cost the PDP the presidential election. In the APC, zoning frame practically made the presidential ticket to come to the South.
25	FCT "as" or "like" a state	There was the controversy on the legal status of the Federal Capital Territory in terms of who wins the presidential election. The law states that the "President, in addition to having a majority of total lawful votes, must also score one-third of votes in two-thirds of the 36 states and the FCT". This led to different legal interpretations and frames. The most dominant frame was whether FCT should be taken "as a state: or "like a state".

Table 3: Spins in the 2023 Presidential elections and their meanings

1	Obi-tuary	A derogatory word, formed from "Obi" to derive Labour Party supporters as literally dead or useless
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2	A ti ku	Though Atiku is not a Yoruba word, its direct translation in Yoruba is “we are dead”. Like “obituary” it means supporters of Atiku are dead or in trouble.
3	People Deceiving People	A negative coinage to describe the People's Democratic Party.
4	Fulanization	A coinage to describe the alleged ethnic and nepotistic administration of Muhammadu Buhari
5	Lie Mohammed	The real name of the Information Minister under the Buhari Administration was Lai Mohammed. This was derogatorily spinned to “Lie” (same pronunciation with Lai) Mohammed to suggest the minister was fond of telling lies.
6	Criminal forfeiture	The court judgement given in the United States of America several decades ago as plea-bargain granted the APC candidate was given various derogatory spins by his opponents in the media. The most dominant was the spinning of the case as “criminal forfeiture” as against just “forfeiture”.
7	Serial contestant	The PDP candidate who contested every presidential primary or election from 1999 to 2023 was spinned “serial contestant”/ “serial loser”
8	Baba Bala Blu	The presidential candidate of the APC slipped while addressing a rally with the words “bla bala blue”. His publicists denied he ever said those words but his opponents went nationwide with the spins “Baba blu, bala blu”, some of them even suggesting it was a drug baron language, to spite him.
9	Kwankwasiyya	This was a constructive (positive) spin to describe the ideology and philosophy of Kano born presidential candidate, (also former governor of Kano state and Minister of Defence) Dr. Rabiu Kwankwaso.

10	Bubu	A derogatory appellation for President Muhammadu Buhari.
11	“Jibril”	A derogatory name for President Muhammadu Buhari by some of his opponents who alleged that the real Buhari had died and the a certain Jibril from Republic of Sudan, who looked like Buhari was serving as surrogate.
12	Kwarapshan	A tonal imitation of how President Muhammadu Buhari pronounced the word “corruption”. The spin was meant to deride his allegedly failed war against corruption.
13	Obidiots	Opponents of Peter Obi, spinned “Obedients” to mean “Obidiots”. In other words, those who support Obi should regard themselves as idiots.
14	Atikulated	Opponents of Atiku Abubakar compared him to a worn-out or broken down vehicle articulated.
15	Chicagogate	This was a derisive spin against the candidate of APC to suggest he did not have genuine certificate from the Chicago State University, which he claimed to have attended.
16	The Cabal	The term was used to refer to power brokers who allegedly controlled President Muhammadu Buhari and determined crucial decisions on behalf of the president. Although certain individuals were later mentioned as members of the “Cabal”, in the real sense, “the cabal” was largely an armopuous spin to indicate that Buhari was never in charge.
17	“Go to court”	The Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission, INEC, made that phrasal sentence at the time the PDP agents queried the presentation of the presidential results. Opponents turned it to a spin to drive “emphasis framing”. It was successfully turned into a derogatory expression: “rig and go to court”.

18	“Supreme Court Governor”	This was the appellation given the governor of Imo State. Though he validly won the gubernatorial contest of the state, his opponents believed he won in controversial or doubtful circumstances. They spinned “supreme court governor” to describe him, suggesting the people of Imo State never gave him mandate, but that the Supreme Court did.
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All the four main types of framing were deployed according to the textual analysis manually conducted. *Emphasis* and *Culturally-embedded frames* were more dominantly deployed, however.

Sources of frames and spins

In terms of *who* constructed the frames and spins, it was difficult to establish the sources of all the frames and spins. This was partly because most frames are the handiwork of publicists, communication strategists and backroom staffers of the politicians. Nevertheless, it was possible to identify the sources of some of the frames because they were obvious from the publications. For examples: Asiwaju Bola Tinubu (flagbearer of the APC) declared his “Emi Lokan” frame at a rally in Abeokuta; the presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Mr. Peter Obi granted numerous interviews projecting what he termed the need for Nigeria to foster a “Production Economy”. Analyses of textual data and outcomes of the FGD revealed that there were at least five sources of frames and spins in the period under review. These were: political leaders/politicians; political followers; journalists (including columnists, bloggers and anchors); PR advisors and Political strategists. It is significant to note that many of these frames and spins were not deliberately constructed. Many of them came up spontaneously.

Effectiveness of frames and spins

The present research, in the absence of tests to determine the effectiveness of the frames and spins deployed during the elections, relied on the opinions of the participants in the FGD to provide answer to Objective 3 extent of effectiveness of the frames and spins. The FGD participants agreed that the frames and spins affected the outcome of the primaries and the main elections directly and indirectly, although they concluded that further studies would be required to determine the extent of effectiveness of the spins. The discussants stressed that many of the frames and spins were not effective and made little or no impact, while a few of them made fundamental impacts. Among the 'ineffective and redundant frames' in the opinion of the FGD were: 'corrupt contestant', 'drug baron', 'trader', 'people deceiving people', 'father of Lagos', 'no man's land' and 'change the change'. On the other hand the following frames were very effective in the consideration of the FGD participants: "zoning", "emi lo kan", "articulate", "muslim-muslim", "obedient" they were effective frames which shaped the outcome of the primaries and election.

In terms of spins, the FGD participants picked 'obidiots', 'go to court', 'a ti ku', 'people deceiving people' and 'serial contestant' as the weakest spins while they considered "fulanization agenda", "bala blu", 'failed state', 'lie mohammed' and 'obituary' as very effective spins. (Daily Post, 2022).

Discussion

Findings to this study showed that frames and spins were massively deployed in the 2023 Presidential Elections in Nigeria. The deployment of political communication in the electioneering campaigns was supported and the spinning was reinforced through the social media. Instead of relying solely on traditional campaign rallies, online platforms were

preferred in order to break barriers between contestants and electorates in concise and entertaining manners. This effectively took the campaigns to Nigerians in the diaspora. Thus attracting unprecedented attention to the country from within and even digitally beyond its geographical borders. This is due to the presumed significance of the poll as a turning point for the country. With Nigerians around the world drawing vast financial resources for political campaigns lots of hope was also drawn to play. Several political contenders in the country's previous elections went all out to mobilize voters, leaving nothing to chance.

During the highly contested electioneering campaigns, candidates used a variety of techniques to encourage citizens to vote in their favor. To rally and inform voters about various candidates for the highest public offices. The social media sites became handy for online tirade because of their potentiality for viral and organic growth. The spins turned out to be effective propaganda tools, although this study did not generate sufficient information to determine the extent of effectiveness of the frames and spins and why they were effective.

Skit-makers and Influencers were at the forefront in projecting the frames and spins according to members of the FGD. The social networking sites became influential for information dissemination on the contest as the candidates swirled in acclaim. This may have been largely through the creative use of skits in short, engaging videos, capturing the attention of Nigerian electorates. Exploring popular platforms like *TikTok*, *Instagram* and *YouTube* to craft skits in humorous and shareable context that ricocheted across the electorate cadre. The skits also amplified the candidates' messages expanded the frames and propagated the spins. The FGD reveal that most of the frames were not tactically constructed and properly embedded. Most of them did not

emanate from the creative workshops of communication consultants of the political parties or the media team. Rather, the top politicians created most of them. This is not the case in most developed countries where framing and spinning have been integrated into the political communication systems.

Conclusion and and Recommendations

This study found that the use of frames and spins for political electioneering is still fledgling. Most frames and spins are produced by politicians and not professional communicators. This development may have a contributory factor to why framing and spins appeared not to be contributing effectively to the outcome of elections, especially with regard to the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria. On the other hand, if framing and spinning are professionally deployed, it would contribute to electoral success of candidates.

From the foregoing, it is recommended that PR specialists should be more involved in creating political frames and spins during presidential elections. For further studies, the potentials of the social media should be explored as channels for political framing and spinning. This is especially so now that social media are playing more roles in the electoral process. Specific impact-assessment studies are needed to determine the contributions of frames and spins to successes in elections.

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