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## Semiotic Analysis of the Political Advertisements of APC and PDP Presidential Candidates in the 2015 Elections in Nigeria

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### **Abstract:**

*Visual Artists have in the course of time, perfected the art of packaging politicians the way they (Visual Artists) package commodities. Such high-tech skills which included the manipulation of images and imageries in projecting political actors could be said to have reached a crescendo in the political advertisements of the presidential candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and her People's Democratic Party (PDP's) counterpart in the 2015 elections. Given that those packaging strategies not only constitute the main ligaments of the affected political advertisements, but also confer status and uniqueness on them; it becomes a research problem that requires a critical examination of the visual elements of the said political advertisements. Relying on the Action Assembly for theoretical guidance; the study undertook a semiotic analysis of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections. The objectives of the study were to: (i) determine the semiotic significations of the graphic elements of the political advertisements of APC and PDP presidential candidates in the politico-cultural context of the Nigerian society and (ii) ascertain if there is any difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections. Using the Equal Sample Allocation Method, the study arrived at a sample size of one hundred and thirty-two editions of four purposively-selected National Dailies viz: Guardian, Nation, Sun & Vanguard newspapers. The study found that the graphic elements in the political advertisements of APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections depicted more of negativity. Again, it confirmed the fact that there is significant difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP in the 2015 elections.*

**Keywords:** Creative strategies, electioneering, political advertising, presidential candidates, semiotic analysis

### **1. Introduction**

Over the years, scholars have pontificated on political advertising and its influence on elections. While some of the studies argue that political advertising is a strong determinant of success or failure of political candidates; others believe that it has minimal or no effect. For instance, Okigbo (1992. p.5) asserts that "elections are won and lost largely on the ability of the campaign managers to use communication effectively". Also, in their study of Brazilian governorship election campaigns, Silveira & Mello cited in Olujide, Adeyemi & Gbadeyan (2011, p.7) found that "TV exposure in gubernatorial election has a strong effect in election outcomes, both statistically and practically". They contend that advertising has a greater impact when voters are uneducated and have access to TV.

But Jowei and Dropp (2010) cited in Olujide, Adeyemi & Gbadeyan (2011) differ in the above claims. They argue that political advertisements generally, have a partisan tone and thus they can cause asymmetric partisan effects and turnout. They contend that the election that produced Barak Obama as the president of the United States of America was not strictly dependent on his heavy investment in advertising. According to them, "an Obama-funded ad will generally mobilize core Democrats, while demobilizing Republicans, so the net effect on the aggregate turnout across the entire electorate is nebulous" they maintain. The bottom line of this argument is that there is a possibility that individual turnout decisions in response to political advertisements may hinge on partisan considerations, and not on how persuasive it is. Notwithstanding the conflicting results of studies in political advertisement and its influence on voters' choice, the fact remains that political advertising has come to be an integral part of contemporary electioneering.

According to M'bayo, Amobi & Sunday (2014, p. 61), prior to the year 1963, political advertisement was almost non-existent in Nigeria, as political communications then were limited to rallies, soap box speeches and to some extent, editorial efforts. But in 1963, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, then leader of the defunct Action Group, went into the skies to send political messages during rallies, as noted by (Nzeribe 1991). For obvious political reasons, the 'skywriting' was neither sustained nor improved upon until the year 1990, when Nigerian politicians became aware of the power and effectiveness of political advertisements (Opeibi 2006). He observes that since 1990, Nigerian politicians have been using political advertisements as a major persuasive strategy in canvassing support during elections. The truth of the matter is that the

practice of political advertising has evolved overtime and better ways are now being adopted to reach the electorate at a faster and more impactful way (Ogunsanwo2003).

For the purpose of emphasis, it could be recalled that the present political dispensation in Nigeria dates back to May 29, 1999, when the then Military Head of State, General Abdusalami Abubakar handed over to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the democratically-elected president. At the expiration of the first four-year term, Obasanjo re-contested in 2003 and still won the presidency under the umbrella of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). On May 29, 2007, another PDP presidential candidate, in the person of Umaru Musa Yar'Adua took over the baton of leadership having been declared winner of that year's presidential election. Upon the death of Yar'Adua, three years into his administration, Goodluck Jonathan assumed the responsibility of leading the nation for the remaining period of Yar'Adua's constitutional four-year mandate. Consequent upon his stint as the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Jonathan presented himself for election as president in the April 16, 2011 presidential election on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). He emerged victorious in that election and of course, history recorded it that Jonathan was the first Nigerian president of the minority stock.

On January 25, 2014, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) set the ball for the 2015 general elections rolling through its release of the 2015 general elections time table [www.vanguardngr.com](http://www.vanguardngr.com) Having originally fixed 14<sup>th</sup> February 2015 for Presidential and National Assembly elections while that of Governorship and State Houses of Assembly was to be on the February 28, 2015; the tempo for political activities, including political advertising received a boost. Thus, it could be rightly argued that the release of the 2015 general election time table by INEC provided political actors with that much-needed opportunity to showcase themselves to the electorate. From intra party-activities that culminated to the emergence of the presidential flag-bearers of the political parties, all through to inter-party campaigns that sought to present one candidate as better qualified than the others; the parties and their candidates intensified their campaign strategies. Over and above the various strategies of engagement with the electorate; political advertising became the most feasible option for reaching and impacting on the largest number of voters within the available time for campaigns (Onuorah 2008, p.8). It has also become common knowledge that contemporary political processes have become so integrated with political advertising that it is now absolutely difficult to divorce one from the other. Interestingly, such in-separable relationship has been further consolidated by the media which complement the political mobilization and conscientisation role on the electorate.

Leveraging on the strategic importance of political advertising in elections; the presidential candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mohammadu Buhari and his People's Democratic Party (PDP's) counterpart, Goodluck Jonathan, deployed all available media of communication, such as: newspapers, magazines, radio, television, posters, billboards, social media, mobile communication devices among others to package and present themselves in ways they consider appropriate to satisfying their political communication needs. In the 2015 elections, there were all manner of political advertisements which clearly showed some level of manipulation of images and imageries geared towards persuading and swaying the electorate the way of the political parties and their candidates. Common as the strategies involved in the conception and packaging of those advertisements may appear to non-creative minds, the fact remains that they actually constitute the main substance of those advertisements. And because those strategies confer status and uniqueness on advertisements generally, they need regular and painstaking review

## 2. Statement of the Problem

There is no arguing the fact that the bottom-line of the business of advertising lies in the task of determining what to say (message), how to say it logically (message structure), how to say it symbolically (message format) and who should say it (message source). Put the other way, it simply means that the business of advertising involves creative and strategic skills. Thus, for any piece of advertisement (political, product or service) to pass the creativity test, it must be able to say the right thing to the right market (audience) in the right context, tone and manner, using appropriate channels (Belch and Belch, 2007).

Going by available research findings, including those of Ijeh, (2010); Olujide, Adeyemi & Gbadeyan (2011); Udende (2011); Liu & Jeffres, (2012) etc. a couple of studies have been conducted on the effects of political advertisements on election outcomes. Agreed that such effects-studies are equally important in the field of political communication, but suffice it to say that a concept that has rapidly become a part and parcel of our political culture, and which impact on the society has for a long time remained an issue of debate, deserves much more than a linear study. In the 2015 elections, copywriters deployed all manner of creative strategies in their bid to get the target market (electorate) to do the advertisers bidding. Common as those strategies of the copywriters may seem to the layman; they are undoubtedly the main ingredients of those advertisements. As a matter of fact, it is those strategies that confer status on the advertisements and make them unique. Consequent upon that, there is a great need to critically examine the graphic elements in the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections. That is with a view to determining their semiotic significations in the politico-cultural context of the Nigerian society.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to take a critical look at how Visual Artists applied their creative ingenuity in packaging and presenting to the electorate, the presidential candidates of the APC and PDP in the 2015 elections. Specifically, the study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- To determine the semiotic significations of the graphic elements in the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections.
- To ascertain if there is any difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections.

#### 4. Research Questions

- What are the semiotic significations of the graphic elements in the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections?
- Is there any difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections?

#### 5. Review of Literature

Scholars have actually pontificated on political advertisements and its channels. For example, (Elebute, 2013) investigated the role of visual media in marketing Nigerian politicians. He argues that in packaging contemporary politicians, the creative strategists require full knowledge of the electorate and aspirants in order to provide both parties with the best information on electoral matters. The study which focused on the visual media used in political advertisements in Nigeria from 1963 to date, posits that "Visual artists have become active stakeholders in the business of packaging Nigeria politicians like commodities" (p.257).

The Researcher observed that in packaging worthwhile election materials for political aspirants, that there are three distinctive techniques involved. These according to him are: Persuasion, propaganda and hard-hitting. In the first place, he conceded that visuals developed for political advertising in Nigeria mostly possess a measure of persuasive messages that attract the affection of voters and invariably convince them to accept a candidate seeking elective position. That is persuasion, which in Nigerian political parlance is a "planned and deliberate attempt made to get a point of view accepted by eligible voters" (Elebute 2013, p.262).

Secondly, the study showed that propaganda technique is equally another viable ingredient in Nigeria's political campaigns. It continued by describing propaganda as the process used by most Nigerian advertising experts in studying and classifying voters; and to a reasonable extent, in positioning political candidates to meeting the needs of the electorate. The third technique pointed out by Elebute as being involved in packaging worthwhile election materials for political aspirants is hard-hitting otherwise referred to as "attack advertising" strategy. The researcher presented the hard-hitting or attack strategy as the most prevalent in Nigeria's political landscape. He made reference to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN's) "knocking" *30 seconds candle light commercial* beamed on the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) network during the 1983 political campaigns. That hard-hitting' candle light advertisement was designed by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) to make the electorate believe that the opposition Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) had lost its bearing and had run out of steam.

In conclusion, the Researcher submitted that the visual concepts adopted by visual artists to market Nigerian politicians have successfully educated the entire Nigerian citizenry on the democratic process. And that the myriads of media techniques adopted by visual artists have delivered Nigeria's electorate from the bondage of ignorance and illiteracy.

In another study entitled "Voter Perception of Unique Selling Proposition in Nigeria's Presidential Political Advertisements", Owuamalam (2015) evaluated voters' disposition to their choice of presidential candidates in the 2015 election. The study which used three South/East states of Abia, Anambra and Imo were conducted to determine Unique Selling Propositions of the presidential candidates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and its People's Democratic Party (PDP's) counterpart as presented in television commercials.

The study argues that what to present in political advertisement contents in order to influence positive voter behaviour has been a problem in political communication, especially in selecting a candidate for election. It further argues that the translation of manifestoes as public declaration of intentions has always failed to generate the expected results where the message provided is not properly crafted around a specific idea. In other words, the researcher is saying that if the Unique Selling Proposition is blurred, that the implied meaning will eventually obliterate reasoning as a rational justification for participation in an election.

The research objectives were:

To ascertain if voters are able to differentiate Jonathan's proposal from that of Buhari in their respective political advertisements on television

To find out how voters relate the proposals to their need satisfaction

To understand if there is any significant relationship between the presented proposals and voter's propensity for candidate selection

Using a sample of three hundred and seventy-seven (377) respondents purposively drawn from Abia, Anambra and Imo states on the basis of differences in party leadership/control; the study found out that the respondents were able to differentiate the proposals made by Jonathan and Buhari respectively, through their respective Unique Selling Propositions. The study also found out that while Jonathan offered "continuity", Buhari offered "anti-corruption" as their respective unique selling propositions in their 2015 political advertisements. The respondents were equally found to relate the respective proposals to their different situations and were able to select their preferred proposal. It however found out that there was no significant relationship between the selected proposal and voter propensity to select a candidate based on the presented Unique Selling Proposition.

The study concludes that political communication contents should be well-focused in order to attract audience attention, retain their interest and elicit the desired response. Invariably, political communication must be persuasive enough to generate zeal in achieving the communication objective. That is so because, it is only when the message-consumer is able to be moved by the presented Unique Selling Proposition that the selection and choice of alternatives can be assured, given that the Unique Selling Proposition serves as the differentiating element in political advertisements. The researcher then recommended that the Unique Selling Proposition of political candidates should be crafted with a sound knowledge of "performance environment and audience expectation". That he argued, is the only way the Unique Selling Propositions (USP's) can be made more efficacious as catalysts for behavioural change in political communication.

Amifor (2015) investigated political advertising design in Nigeria between 1960-2007. In that study, he employed the historical analysis method of qualitative research through which it was found out that the 1964 general elections in Nigeria witnessed/experienced enormous use of posters, flyers and pamphlets. The Researcher further found that the above-mentioned items were circulated in conjunction with recorded video messages that extolled the virtues of the presidential candidates of the then National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC)- Nnamdi Azikiwe and that of his Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) counterpart - Ahmadu Bello. The researcher however found that the then presidential candidate of the Action Group (AG), Obafemi Awolowo deployed skywriting and trail signs for promotional differentiation. Something different from the ordinary, one would say!

In a study entitled "Multi-modal Discourse Analysis of some Newspaper Political Campaign Advertisements for Nigeria's 2015 Elections; Ademilokun cited in Olalekan & Sam (2018, p.15) analysed patterns of verbal and non-verbal meaning-making in nine selected political advertisements of Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP and Muhammadu Buhari of the APC. Using the semiotic approach of Gunther Kress as analytical tool; the Researcher found that "producers of political advertisements creatively constructed verbal and visual resources to project political aspirants for acceptance by the Nigerian electorate". According to the study, the emphasis on "change" served as useful rhetorical appeal in the discourse, upon which the multi-modal resources were anchored, and which eventually allowed for their effective interpretation. The study also revealed the existence of other discursive tropes such as "counter discourse" and "brand association".

Batta, Batta & Mboho (2015) conducted a study on political advertising and electioneering in Nigeria, and analysed the 2015 general election newspaper advertisements in the country. The study did a content analysis of two prominent newspapers, namely the *Guardian* and *Punch*. In that study which had a total of 240 editions of the said newspapers, covering the period of January to March 2015; it was found that 63% of the political advertisements dealt with non-political issues. Out of the non-political issues advertisements analysed by the Researcher, neutral messages were as high as 44.42% whereas personal attacks amounted to 41.04%. The study also recorded a 33.6% incidence of non-compliance with APCON's Code of Advertising Practice, which it blamed on non-conformist attitude of third-party sponsors who constitute up to 46.56% of political advertisement sponsorship in Nigeria.

## 6. Theoretical Framework

This study is set within the framework of the *Action Assembly Theory* which was developed by John Green to explain communication action. The theory is designed to examine how human beings organize their knowledge and how they use such knowledge in communication. The theory posits that human beings have (i) content knowledge and (ii) procedural knowledge. According to it, content knowledge refers to man's knowledge about things, while procedural knowledge refers to man's knowledge of how to do things. It argues that man's procedural knowledge consists of an awareness of the consequences of the various actions in different situations we face. It submits that "overall procedural knowledge consists of a large number of procedural records, each of which is composed of knowledge about an action, its outcome and situation in which it is appropriate" (Littlejohn 1999). The theory contends that for communication to be effective, the communicator must consult his procedural memory to select the most appropriate actions and arrange same in a sequence that befits the communication situation. The implication of this is that, for any communicative act to bear the needed fruit, the cognitive system has to coordinate the different levels of representation/behaviour in a single action comprising: The interactional representation (overall objective of the communication), Ideational representation (idea to be expressed in the communication), Utterance representation (*appropriate language*) and Sensory motor representation (*sentence structure*).

Put differently, it means that every action implicates other actions in one way or another, and invariably, communicative actions become integrated into a hierarchy of knowledge in which each piece of knowledge in the overall routine is a representation of something that needs to be done. By implication, this theory suggests the fact that communicators must consult their procedural memory with a view to selecting the most appropriate actions and arranging such in a sequence that befits the communication situation. By that token, designers of political advertisements are expected to be very careful in their choice of images and imageries, so as to be able to arrange them in the most appropriate manner that is capable of swaying the electorate the way of the politicians. There lies the theoretical relevance of this theory to the present research.

## 7. Method of Study

The study adopted the semiotic analysis technique to examine the portrayals and representations of the political advertisements as they appeared in the selected newspapers. That was done within the ambits of signs, symbols and images; including the signification and communication of such signs, symbols and images, with particular reference to how meaning is constructed, interpreted and understood. The study therefore looked at the obvious and subliminal signs,



symbols and images in the political advertisements of the two presidential candidates in the chosen newspapers, with specific reference to their denotative and connotative meanings in the politico-cultural context of the Nigeria society. The population of this study comprised the twenty-five (25) National Dailies in circulation in Nigeria within the campaign period of the election under investigation (see appendix A) *Names of accessible Nigerian newspapers in circulation within the campaign period of the election under investigation.*

The campaign period was determined using the time-frame statutorily provided for by the Electoral Act 2010 as amended in 2014. The Act provides for presidential campaigns to stretch from the 16<sup>th</sup> day of November 2014 up to the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March 2015 i.e. twenty-four hours preceding presidential election. Therefore, the actual population of this study is five hundred and twenty-four (524) editions of the newspapers.

The sample size of the study was 132 editions of the four purposively-selected National Dailies, and that was arrived at using the Equal Sample Allocation method. The systematic sampling technique was also employed in selecting the particular dates/editions of the newspapers to be studied (see Appendix B) *Dates/editions of the chosen newspapers sampled.*

## 8. Data Presentation and Analysis

The data generated for this study are in two folds: pictographic and statistics. First, the pictographic data were used to analyse question number one which was thematically done under eight sub-heads, taking into cognizance the manifest and latent meanings of the pictographic elements within the politico-cultural context of the Nigerian society. Secondly, the statistical data were used to analyse question number two, using the descriptive statistics tool.

### 8.1. Research Question Number One

*What are the semiotic significations of the graphic elements in the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections?*

The graphic elements in the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections were analysed thematically under the following sub-heads.

*Graphic illustrations that portray hardship in the polity*

*Graphic illustrations that depict insincerity of candidates*

*Graphic illustrations that suggest the existence of godfatherism*

*Graphic illustrations that connote retrogression*

*Graphic illustrations that imply extremism on the side of candidate/supporters*

*Graphic illustrations that showcase inconsistency on the side of candidates*

*Graphic illustrations that show insecurity in the country.*

### 8.2. Graphic illustrations that Portray Hardship in the Polity

In the *Nation* newspaper of Tuesday January 6, 2015 (p.20) a typical Nigerian citizen was graphically portrayed as being weighed-down by loads of insecurity, blackout and poverty.

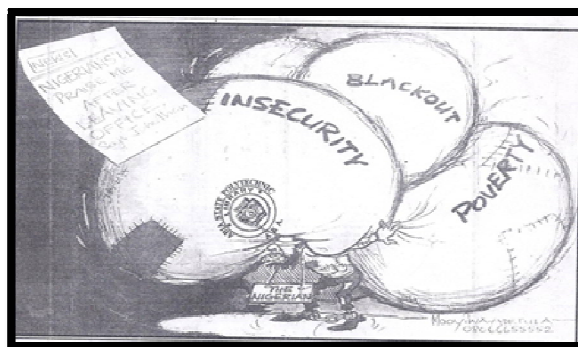


Figure 1

Similarly, the *Nation* newspaper of Thursday January 22, 2015 (p.18) presented life in Nigeria to be akin to endless mountain-climbing which requires exceptional energy and the grace of God to be able to glide through the rough mountains of naira devaluation, insecurity, corruption among other ills of the society.

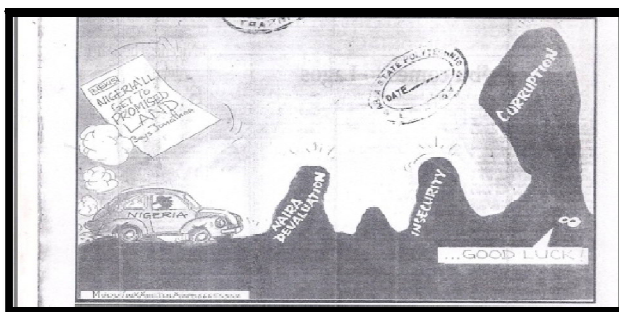


Figure 2

Such line of presentation was also captured in the Saturday edition of the *Sun* newspaper of February 7, 2015 (p.16). In the said edition of the newspaper, a pictograph of the multitude of jobless Nigerians who went for the 2014 Nigerian Immigration Service Recruitment exercise was shown



Figure 3

The pictograph above was further supported with the following statistics-laden texts.

According to Nigeria's Minister of Finance and coordinating Minister of the Economy, 5.3 million Nigerian youths are jobless. In a paper delivered during the 2014 environmental Day programmes, Special Adviser to the President on Sustainable Banking (Central Bank of Nigeria), Dr. Aisha Mahmood said:

80% of Nigerian youths are either unemployed or underemployed. The National Population Commission (also) reported that unemployment in Nigeria rose from 21.1% in 2010 to 23.9% in 2011.

Despite Government's claim of Nigeria becoming the biggest economy in Africa, over 1million graduates turned up to fill a mere 5000 job vacancy during the fatal Nigeria Immigration Service recruitment exercise where 18 persons lost their lives and several others were injured in a stampede.

### 8.3. Graphic illustrations that Depict Insincerity of Candidate/s

The *Vanguard* newspaper of Wednesday February 11, 2015 (p.51) graphically presented the then Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Professor Attahiru Jega in an experimental mood, presumably to act the script of his masters by deliberately allowing some loopholes that can be manipulated in favour of his paymasters.



Figure 4

That graphic work was supported with the following lines of text which are rhetorical in nature:

*Why have the Resident Electoral Commissioners (REC's) not printed the Voters Registers?*

- Who supplied the REC's with fake printing inks?
- When do you plan to train the 700,000 ad-hoc staff and the presiding officers?
- When will the training manuals for the election staff be ready?
- When will the PVC's being printed abroad be delivered?

- When will the full complement of the ballot boxes be available?
- When will all required Card Readers be available and functional?

The advertisement pays off with an appeal and an ultimatum which reads:

*Dear Prof... please do not sabotage the elections. Get up, answer the above questions and address these issues in the national interest before March 28, 2015 or resign.* Interpretatively, it meant that the Chairman of the electoral body in Nigeria was not sincere in his handling of the processes leading to the 2015 elections. Little wonder then why the addendum "Let's not repeat the mess of April 2011".

There was also this graphic illustration in the *Guardian* newspaper of Tuesday March 23, 2015 (p.78) in which the presidential candidates were presented as footballers. In that advertisement, one person promised to support the two candidates in the same election and for the same position. Such a promise is not only worrisome but smacks of insincerity on the side of the politician who made the promise. The truth of the matter is that it is practically impossible for anybody to do so, because no man serves God and mammon at the same time!



Figure 5

On the side of one of the presidential candidates, the dialogue contained in the *Guardian* newspaper of Monday March 23, 2015 edition (p.78) connotes insincerity. That is because there is no way the candidate in question does not know whether he completed the Ordinary Level (O/Level) or whether the result is with the Military Board.

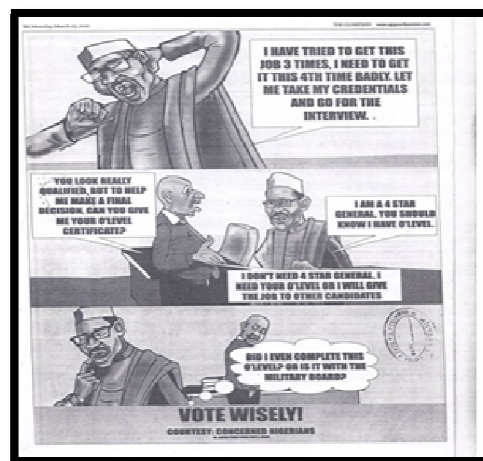


Figure 6

To further buttress the insincerity in the candidates' claim of not knowing whether he completed the programme or where the result is; the *Guardian* newspaper of Thursday March 26, 2015 (p.77) came up with the following lines of text:

*This is all about integrity  
General Buhari, show your certificate  
And prove "detractors" wrong  
Not having a CERTIFICATE is not the issue,  
LYING about it, is!*

The advertisement rounded off by reminding Buhari that it is criminal to lie under oath, and then urged the Civil Society Organizations CSO's to wake up to their responsibility.

#### 8.4. Graphic Illustrations That Suggest the Existence of Godfatherism

“Show us your friend and we will tell you who you are” is the bold caption of the political advertisement of the Monday January 26, 2015 edition of the *Vanguard* newspaper, (p.45). The advertisement showed the National Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Alhaji Ahmed Bola Tinubu and his ill-acquired wealth as a shelter for the presidential candidate of the party (Buhari) and his running mate, (Osinbanjo). In that art work, Tinubu who appeared larger than real was seen placing his hands on the diminutive Buhari, apparently to bless/endorse his candidature, which will eventually be funded by the ill-acquired wealth of Tinubu. In that same advertisement, Buhari’s running mate was presented as an over-grown kid who is completely ignorant of what is happening. To further buttress his naivety, the advertisement portrayed Osinbajo in the traditional way of dressing kids after each round of bath, that is (wrapped in pampers while the rest of his body, from head to foot is uncovered). The Veepee’s naivety was further demonstrated by the way he held tenaciously to his feeding bottle.



Figure 7

The *Vanguard* newspaper of Wednesday February 11, 2015 (p.3) also presented a graphic illustration of the same National Leader of the All Progressives Congress, Tinubu, casting his ballot. In that graphic work, the ballot was made to interpretatively represent the generality of Lagos State electorate, whereas the ballot box is designed as a fattened pig. Deductively, it means that Lagosians will cast their votes into dirty container that would only serve the selfish needs of one individual (Tinubu). The advertisement raps up by charging Nigerians to shine their eyes, as a vote for the APC presidential candidates will only enrich his godfather at the expense of the generality of Lagos electorate.

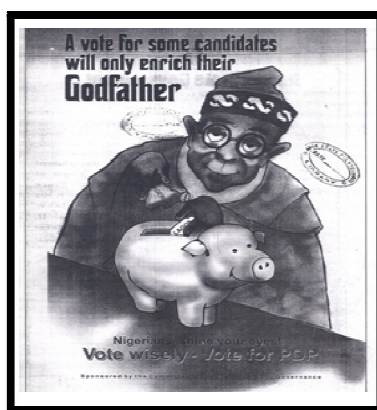


Figure 8

#### 8.5. Graphic Illustrations That Connote Retrogression

In the political advertisement of Sunday January 18, 2015 edition of the *Guardian* newspaper (p.35), Nigeria was graphically presented as a big animal which has been completely demobilized by the forces of violence and greed. At the point where the big animal (representing Nigeria) lies prostrate, is a road sign pointing the routes to progress and ruin. Comfortably seated on the throne is Buhari with tow rope in his right hand and horse whip in his left hand. By implication, that cartoon simply means that Buhari’s presidency will not only be retrogressive but will also be dictatorial. This submission is drawn from the graphic presentation in which the animal (Nigeria) is captured as heading the route to ruin; whereas the tow rope and horse whip are metaphorically used to denote dictatorship.

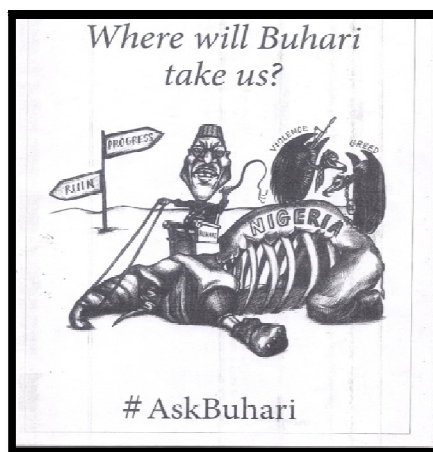


Figure 9

In another advertisement on the *Guardian* newspaper of Friday, January 30, 2015 (p.57), the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress; Buhari is presented in complete academic regalia in which he is seen marching happily in the reverse direction. That is indeed a clear sign of retrogression, an indication that Buhari's leadership will take Nigeria so many steps backward. In fact, that advertisement was a subtle way of reminding Nigerians about the atrocious deeds of Buhari during his days as military Head of State.



Figure 10

#### 8.6. Graphic Illustrations That Imply Extremism on the Side of Candidates/Supporters

The graphic presentation in the *Daily Sun* newspaper of Tuesday, February 3, 2015 (p.22) shows the All Progressives Congress' presidential candidate, General Buhari, as a man who can go to unnecessary extent in punishing any perceived offender.



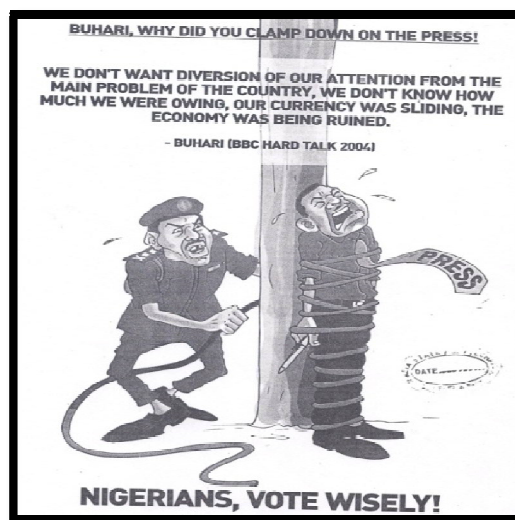


Figure 11

The textual corollary to Buhari's extremism could be culled from the *Daily Sun* newspaper of Friday, January 30, 2015 (p.43) in which Ibrahim Babangida advanced reasons for the over throw of Buhari's government. The reasons state interalia

... Regrettably, it turned out the Major General Muhammadu Buhari was too rigid and uncompromising in his attitude to issues of national significance. Effort to make him understand that a diverse polity like Nigeria required recognition and appreciation of differences in both cultural and individual perceptions, only served to aggravate this attitude.

On the side of Buhari's supporters; there is this graphic presentation of placard and stick-carrying political thugs presumed to have been so brainwashed by their principals that they appear ever-ready to unleash mayhem anytime and anywhere, just at the snap of their benefactors' fingers.



Figure 12

There were also these lines of quotes from Muhammadu Buhari's strong supporters that portray extremism: If the 2015 elections are rigged, our party would not seek redress in court but would rather carryout civil disobedience, as well as form a parallel government. What is the essence of going to court when the Federal Government doesn't obey the law. That is why the APC has said we won't go to court any longer. If you rig us out, we would rig ourselves in; which means if you can rig us out in 2015, we will form our own government. We have met on that and we have agreed on that. We will install our government and there would be two governments.

-Rotimi Amaechi

"The next election is likely to be violent and many people are likely going to die. And the only alternative left to get power is to take it by force, this is the reality on ground".

Nasiru El-Rufai

#### 8.7. Graphic Illustrations That Showcase Inconsistency on the Side of Candidates

There are these pictorial presentations that portrayed the presidential candidate of the APC in the 2015 elections as an inconsistent fellow. In the first picture, presumably during campaigns for the 2011 elections, Jonathan held the People's Democratic Party (PDP) logo which is the umbrella, while Buhari flew the flag of CPC in 2011. In the second instance (2015 election), Jonathan was also seen to be flying PDP's flag while Buhari was not featured in the second picture. The absence of Buhari in the second picture is tacitly suggestive of inconsistency. The point of note here is that the candidate in question (Buhari) lacks moral philosophy and clearly-defined political ideology. That accounts for why he could junket from one party to the other within the shortest possible time.

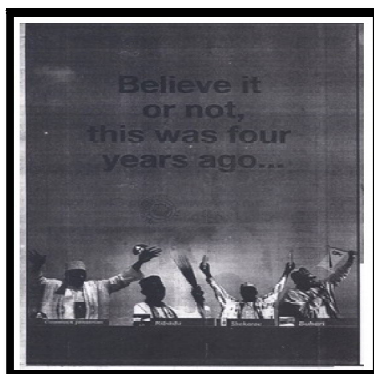


Figure 13

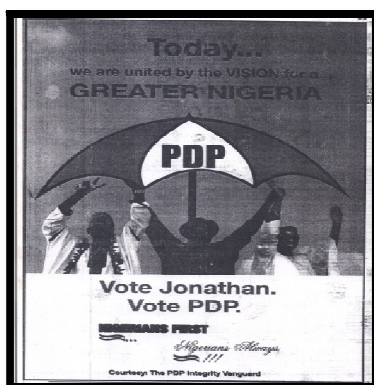


Figure 14

#### 8.8. Graphic illustrations that show Insecurity in the Country

The *Daily Sun* newspaper of Thursday, January 22, 2015 (p.A3) captured the mood of insecurity in the land. The picture cast a thick cloud over the head of some Nigerians assumed to be mourning the loss of their beloved ones who lost their lives in the numerous attacks perpetrated by the Boko Haram insurgents.

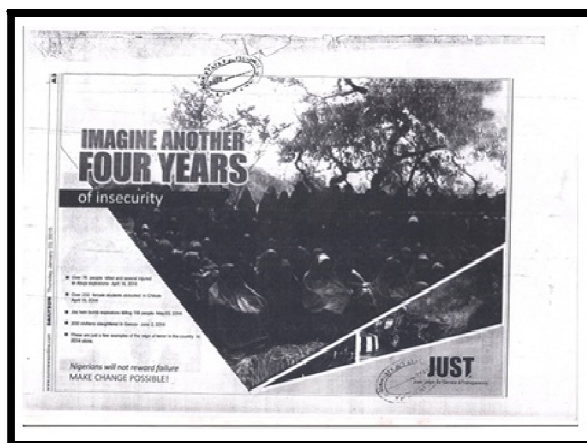


Figure 15

That pictorial presentation was textually supported with the following lines.

*Over 76 people killed and several injured in Abuja explosion – April 14, 2014.*

*Over 200 female students abducted in Chibok-April 15, 2014.*

*Jos twin bomb explosions killing 118 people – May 20, 2014*

*200 civilians slaughtered in Gwoza – June 2, 2014*

*These are just a few of the reign of terror in the country in 2014 alone.*

The advertisement ended up on a declarative note that Nigerians will not reward failure.

Research Question Number Two

*Is there any difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections?*

The answer to this question is determined through the application of descriptive statistics as shown the tables below:

Descriptive Statistics							
	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Imageries	4	31.00	12.00	43.00	91.00	22.7500	7.08725
Images	4	36.00	28.00	64.00	168.00	42.0000	7.87401
Valid N (listwise)	4						
Descriptive Statistics							
	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	
Imageries	14.17451	200.917	1.496	1.014	1.972	2.619	
Images	15.74802	248.000	1.262	1.014	1.500	2.619	
Valid N (listwise)							

Table 1: Showing the Descriptive Statistics

The regression analysis was calculated to examine if there is significant difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections. It is important to note here that different strategies of advertisements contribute their quotas individually across the factors. The essence of subjecting the data to descriptive statistics in this study is basically to highlight the level of variability or dispersion of the data and also to understand the co-movement of the selected data sets. Based on the result of the descriptive statistics on Table 1 above, the Imageries and Images have maximum value of 43 and 64 respectively and minimum value of 12 and 28 respectively, in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections. This shows a fair degree of difference in the range of the data collected, which also imply that the activities of these political parties within the year of study varied minimally, thereby making the choice of the selected parties appropriately for the study. The average of the imageries used is 22.75 with Standard Deviation of 14.18 while the average of the images 42 with Standard Deviation of 15.75. The Skewness and Kurtosis are 1.50 (SE = 1.01) and 1.97 (S.E = 2.62) for imageries and 1.26 (SE = 1.01) and 1.50 (S.E = 2.62) for images respectively.

Correlations			
		Imageries	Images
Pearson Correlation	Imageries	1.000	.995
	Images	.995	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Imageries	.	.003
	Images	.003	.

Table 2: Showing Correlation Matrix

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2
1	.995 <sup>a</sup>	.989	.984	1.81281	.989	181.413	1	2
Model Summary <sup>b</sup>								
Model	Change Statistics				Durbin-Watson			
	Sig. F Change							
1	.005 <sup>a</sup>				2.689			

Table 3: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

a. Predictors: (Constant), Party Logo, Thumb sign, Text, Others Signs, etc.

b. Dependent Variable: Rhetorical question, Vague utterances, Quotes, Analogies, etc.

Table 2 is the correlation matrix table and Table 3 is the model summary table, both of them show the correlation between imageries and images to be 99.5% while the Correlation coefficient of determination is 98.9%. The adjusted correlation coefficient of determination is 98.4%. This correlation indicates that, a strategic method of the political



advertisements affects other strategic methods in APC and PDP presidential candidates' elections in the year 2015. Therefore, the use of imageries and images has strong positive relationship between one another. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.689, thereby showing no effect of autocorrelation in the data used in this study.

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	596.177	1	596.177	181.413	.005 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.573	2	3.286		
	Total	602.750	3			

Table 4: Shows the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Table

- a. Dependent Variable: Rhetorical question, Vague utterances, Quotes, Analogies, etc.  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Party Logo, Thumb sign, Text, Others Signs, etc.

Table 4 is the ANOVA table, the sum of squares due to regression, residual and total are 596.18, 6.57 and 602.75 respectively. The mean squares due to regression and residual are 596.18, 6.57 and 3.29 respectively. The F-ratio statistic is 181.41 and significance at 0.5, attributing a P-value of 0.005. Therefore, since the P-value of 0.005 < 0.05, therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that, there is significant difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 election.

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order
1	(Constant)	-14.847	2.935		-5.059	.037	
	Images	.895	.066	.995	13.469	.005	.995
Coefficients <sup>a</sup>							
Model		Correlations		Collinearity Statistics			
		Partial	Part	Tolerance		VIF	
1	(Constant)						
	Images	.995	.995	1.000	1.000		

Table 5: shows the Coefficients of the Regression Models

Collinearity Diagnostics <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions	
				(Constant)	Images
1	1	1.951	1.000	.02	.02
	2	.049	6.317	.98	.98

Table 6: Shows Residuals Statistics

Residuals Statistics <sup>a</sup>					
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	10.2177	42.4436	22.7500	14.09701	4
Std. Predicted Value	-.889	1.397	.000	1.000	4
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.906	1.720	1.244	.356	4
Adj. Pred. Value	8.3370	37.4054	21.2838	12.30709	4
Residual	-1.58871	1.78226	.00000	1.48016	4
Std. Residual	-.876	.983	.000	.816	4
Stud. Residual	-1.076	1.409	.207	1.176	4
Deleted Residual	-2.39271	5.59459	1.46622	3.77901	4
Stud. Deleted Residual	-1.171	12.153	2.893	6.235	4
Mahal. Distance	.000	1.952	.750	.866	4
Cook's Distance	.038	4.288	1.417	1.962	4
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.651	.250	.289	4

Table 7

In the Table 5 above, Unstandardized Coefficients of Beta is -14.847 (SE = 2.94) for Constant and Beta is 0.895 (SE = 0.07) for Images. The Standardized Coefficients of Beta is 0.995, with a t-statistic of -5.06 and 13.47 for constant and

images respectively. The constant and images are significant at 0.04 and 0.005, all less than 0.05 respectively. The correlation of Zero-order is at 99.5%, the Partial correlation and Part correlation at both at 99.5% attributing a strong positive relationship between the political advertisement strategies in the APC and PDP Presidential candidates' election in the year 2015. The Collinearity Statistics of Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor are 1.00 for both statistics. The model for this regression analysis is  $Y = -14.85 + 0.90(x)$ . The Collinearity Diagnostics Eigenvalue is 1.95 and its condition index is 1.00. The pattern in Table 6 shows that, there is no problem with the assumption at the residuals and also indicated a normal distribution of the images and constant in variance across levels of imageries.

## 9. Conclusion

Going by data generated in the course of this investigation, it is concluded that a preponderance of the graphic elements in the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections depicted negativity. They were used to paint pictures of the existence of hardship, insincerity, insecurity, godfatherism among other ills in the society. It also concluded that there is significant difference in the strategies of the political advertisements of the APC and PDP presidential candidates in the 2015 elections.

## 10. Recommendations

In view of the findings of this research, it is recommended as follows:

- That the graphic elements of political advertisements be made to create positive images in the minds of the electorate. So, instead of creating an impression of a completely rotten political system, the Visual Artists are encouraged to seek ways of balancing the negative with the positive aspects of our political life.
- Media and regulatory agencies, such as the Nigerian Press Council (NPC) and Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) should be more proactive in controlling political advertisements that run counter to the Code of Advertising Practice. On their own part, media owners, in this instance, the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN) should also take it upon themselves to ensure that all political advertisements adhere strictly to the provisions of the Code of Advertising Practice.
- Nigerian Visual Artists and creators of political advertisement handlers should evolve, adopt and perfect a peculiar or home-grown strategy of packaging her political actors.

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### Appendix : A

Newspaper	Publisher	Place of Publication	Date of First Edition
Business Day	Frank Aigbogun	Lagos	2005
Business Hallmark	Prince Emeka Obasi	Lagos	
Compass	Gbenga Daniel	Abeokuta	2008
Daily Champion	Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu	Lagos	
Daily Times	Folio Communications	Lagos	1925 (9 <sup>th</sup> June)
Guardian	Guardian Newspapers	Lagos	1983
Independent	Independent Newspapers	Lagos	2001
Leadership	Leadership Newspaper Group	Abuja	
Mirror	Global Media Mirror Ltd		2006
Nation	Vintage Press	Lagos	2006
News-watch	Global Media Mirror Ltd.	Lagos	1985 (20 <sup>th</sup> Jan.)
Next	Timbuktu Media Group	Lagos	2004
Observer	Bendel Newspapers Company.	Benin City	1968
Osun Defender	Moremi Publishing House Ltd.	Osogbo	
P.M. News	Independent Comms. Network Ltd.	Lagos	1994
People's Daily	Peoples Media Ltd.	Abuja	2008 (30 <sup>th</sup> Nov.)
Port-Harcourt Telegraph	Prince Ogbonna Nwuke	Port Harcourt	1991
Punch	Ajibola Ogunsola	Lagos	1971
Sun	The Sun Publishing Ltd.	Lagos	2001
Tell Magazine	Tell Comm. Ltd	Lagos	1991
This Day	Leaders & Company	Lagos	1975
Tribune	African Newspapers of Nigeria	Ibadan	1949
Triumph	Triumph Publishing	Kano	1980
Trust	Media Trust	Abuja	2001
Vanguard	Vanguard Media	Lagos	1983

Table 8: Names of the Accessible Nigerian Newspapers in Circulation Within the Campaign Period of the Election Under Investigation  
Source: [Www.Nigeriannewspapersinnigeria.Com](http://Www.Nigeriannewspapersinnigeria.Com)

<b>NOV 2014</b>	<b>DEC 2014</b>	<b>JAN 2015</b>	<b>FEB 2015</b>	<b>MARCH 2015</b>
16	1*	1	1	1
17	2	2*	2	2
18	3	3	3*	3*
19*	4	4	4	4
20	5*	5	5	5
21	6	6*	6	6
22	7	7	7*	7*
23*	8	8	8	8
24	9*	9	9	9
25	10	10*	10	10
26	11	11	11*	11*
27*	12	12	12	12
28	13*	13	13	13
29	14	14*	14	14
30	15	15	15*	15*
	16	16	16	16
	17*	17	17	17
	18	18*	18	18
	19	19	19*	19*
	20	20	20	20
	21*	21	21	21
	22	22*	22	22
	23	23	23*	23*
	24	24	24	24
	25*	25	25	25
	26	26*	26	26*
	27	27	27*	
	28	28	28	
	29*	29		
	30	30*		
	31	31		
<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

*Table 9: Dates/Editions of the Chosen Newspapers Sampled*