



Issue-Based Campaign Messages as a Public Relations Tool Among Selected Political Parties During the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria

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Abstract: Political parties and politicians are driven to gain acceptance from the electorates and so they use different means such as political campaigns. Although, preparations for the conduct of Nigeria's 2023 presidential election have brought a rise in the use of Issue-based campaign messages, however, many of the running candidates still make use of bashing and even personality attacks on their opponents. It is this tendency of the political parties to highlight certain issues or non-issues that molds the perception and opinions that are formed by the electorates. The objective of this research is to examine the use of issues-based campaign messages as a political public relations tool among selected political parties during the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Building on the theories the political communication and rhetoric theory. Using survey as a research method. This resulted in a sample size of 438 population resident of Kosofe local Government. It was found that the selected political parties focused more on restructuring of the Nigerian economy, followed by the state of security in the country. Also, analysis showed that the selected political parties were not just focused on the developmental issues but also on non-developmental issues in their campaigns, with Hate speech being the most reoccurring non-issue-based campaign message by all three selected parties.

Keywords: Issue-based campaign messages, non-issue-based campaign messages, Political parties, Campaign messages.

Introduction

In recent years, political campaigns have become increasingly important in shaping public opinion and influencing electoral outcomes. As Nigeria prepared for its 2023 presidential election, political parties were expected to employ various communication strategies to promote their candidates and sway voters in their favor. One of the critical tools in political public relations is the use of issue-based campaign messages. These are messages that focus on specific policy areas or societal concerns, aiming to demonstrate a party's stance and vision on important issues. Owuamalam, (2014) explained that Political campaigns are an integral part of democratic processes worldwide. They serve as a medium for political parties to communicate their ideologies, policies, and vision to the electorate. One crucial aspect of political campaigns is the messaging strategy adopted by political parties. In recent years, political parties have caressingly relied on issues-based campaign messages as a political public relations tool.

In the context of the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria, campaign messages that are issue-based can be considered a vital tool in political public relations for selected political parties. These messages focus on highlighting specific policy positions, addressing pressing social, economic, and political issues, and engaging with the electorate in a substantive and informative manner. Background research on the need of the voters plays a crucial role in crafting effective issue-based campaign messages. It involves analyzing public opinion, conducting surveys and polls, studying the needs and concerns of the target audience, and examining the

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prevailing socio-political climate. This background research enables political parties to identify the most relevant and impactful issues that resonate with the electorate (Olajide, and Igbekele, 2017)

Gentzkow, and Shapiro, (2018) declared that effective issue-based campaign messages aim to provide solutions to problems faced by the nation and its citizens. They often revolve around key areas such as healthcare, education, economy, infrastructure, security, corruption, social welfare, and governance. By conducting comprehensive research on these issues, political parties can develop well-informed and credible messages that appeal to the concerns and aspirations of the electorate (Uzochukwu, Ugwoke, and Obi, 2016). The utilization of issue-based campaign messages allows political parties to differentiate themselves from their opponents by presenting their policies and positions as favorable solutions to pressing problems. Such messages help build credibility and trust among voters, as they demonstrate a commitment to addressing substantive issues rather than relying solely on political rhetoric. Political campaign also enables political parties to target specific demographic groups or regions with tailored campaign messages. This approach recognizes the diversity of the electorate, their varying needs, and the importance of localized issues. By understanding the specific concerns of different segments of the population, parties can develop messages that resonate with their respective target audiences.

Furthermore, research provides political parties with valuable insights into the effectiveness of their campaign messages. By analyzing public response and feedback, parties can gauge the impact and relevance of their issue-based messages. This feedback loop allows for adjustments, refinements, and enhancements to the campaign messages as needed, ensuring their effectiveness throughout the election cycle Ibrahim, and Adamu, (2021). In essence, background research plays a pivotal role in developing and implementing issue-based campaign messages during the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria. It allows political parties to identify and address the concerns of the electorate in a substantive manner, build credibility, and tailor their messages to specific demographic groups or regional contexts. Through effective research and messaging, political parties can enhance their public relations efforts and connect with voters on a deeper level.

Statement of the problem

This study aims to investigate the use of issues-based campaign messages as a political public relations tool among selected political parties during the 2023 Presidential election in Nigeria. The problem lies in understanding how political parties utilize issue-focused messaging to influence public opinion, garner support, and shape the electoral landscape. This study delved into the strategies employed by political parties and analyze the impact of issues-based campaign messages on voter behavior and decision-making. The objective is to provide insights into the effectiveness and implications of this communication approach in the context of Nigerian politics and contribute to the understanding of political public relations dynamics during election campaigns (Obukoadata, Akpan, and Mboso, 2016)

While issue-based campaign messages have the potential to enhance political discourse and inform voters, there are several challenges and concerns associated with their use among selected political parties during the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. Some of these problems include: Lack of clarity and specificity: Issue-based campaign messages often fall short in providing clear and concise information about a party's proposed solutions to pressing problems. Voters may be left confused or unsure about the actual policies that will be implemented if a particular party is elected. Partisan bias and manipulation: Political parties may manipulate issue-based campaign messages to further their own agenda and gain a perceived advantage over their opponents. This can lead to misleading information and a distortion of the actual policy positions of the parties. Limited reach and impact: Despite the potential of issue-based campaign messages, there is a possibility that they may not effectively reach and resonate with a diverse range of voters. Certain groups may be left out or feel disconnected from the messaging, limiting the impact of these messages on their voting decisions.

The use of issues-based campaign messages as a political public relations tool by political parties has become a contentious issue in Nigeria. Despite the potential benefits of this approach, there is a lack of empirical evidence on its effectiveness in influencing the voting behavior of the electorate. Furthermore, there is a dearth of literature on the factors that affect the success of issues-based campaign messages among political parties in Nigeria.

Objective of the study

The objective of this research is to examine the use of issues-based campaign messages as a political public relations tool among selected political parties during the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of issues-based campaign messages in influencing the voting behavior of the electorate.
2. Identify the factors that affect the success of issues-based campaign messages among political parties in Nigeria.

Research question

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. How effective are issues-based campaign messages in influencing the voting behavior of the electorate during the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria?
2. What are the factors that affect the success of issues-based campaign messages among political parties in Nigeria?

Literature Review

Issue-based campaign messages are an essential aspect of modern political campaigns, particularly in Nigeria. These messages serve to convey a candidate's stance on specific policy issues, and they are designed to appeal to voters who care about those issues. In Nigeria, issue-based campaign messages have been used in recent elections to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance, which are key concerns for many voters. Research has shown that issue-based campaigns can be more effective than personal attacks or emotional appeals. One study in Nigeria found that issue-based campaigns were associated with higher levels of voter engagement and greater perceived accountability of elected officials (Ogundiya&Ogundipe, 2020). The study also found that issue-based campaigns were associated with greater trust in the electoral process and increased voters' turnout. Another study found that issue-based campaigns were more likely to increase voter turnout, especially among young people (Nwankwo&Ekeanyanwu, 2018). Issue-based campaign messages in the context of this study are also known as Developmental-issues and they refer to key topics and policy proposals that political parties and candidates prioritize during an election to address the nation's pressing challenges and foster development. In issue-based campaigns, parties typically present their policy positions and solutions on these critical matters to attract voter support. This study focused on particular developmental-issues which included Economy, Education, Security, Health, Social infrastructural development etc. Promoting economic growth and generating employment opportunities are crucial developmental goals. Economic growth is essential for increasing a nation's wealth and standard of living, while employment opportunities enable citizens to secure livelihoods and participate actively in the economy (Mankiw, Romer& Weil). Hanushek andWoessmann (2012) Access to quality education is a fundamental developmental issue that positively impacts human capital, productivity, and economic growth. Education empowers individuals, reduces poverty, and enhances social mobility, ensuring access to affordable and quality healthcare services is vital for improving health outcomes and enhancing the overall well-being of the population. These developmental issues represent core areas that governments and policymakers often prioritize to foster sustainable development and improve the welfare of their citizens.

Sunny and Uwem (2013) did a study on the topic "The Influence of Political Advertising on the Nigerian Electorate." This work examined the influence of political advertising messages on the choice of governorship candidates by the electorate in Imo State, Southeast Nigeria, in the 2011 governorship election in the state. In particular, the study sought to ascertain the extent to which the electorate in Imo State was exposed to political advertising, which demographic group was most exposed to political advertising, and the extent to which political advertising influenced the voting decisions of the electorate. To achieve this, the study used the survey method with the questionnaire as research instrument. Through multi-stage sampling, 120 respondents were selected in the three senatorial zones in the state and were administered the questionnaire. The findings indicated, among other things, that the electorate in Imo State was well exposed to political advertising; that radio was the most effective channel for political advertising; and that the respondents were influenced in their

choice of candidates to the extent that they perceived such messages to be credible. In the light of the findings, it was concluded that political advertising was an essential factor in the political decisions of the electorate in Imo State. Similarly, it was recommended that candidates should strive for credibility in their political messages, while the electorate should be critical of all political messages to decipher the truth.

Owuamalam (2014) conducted a study on the topic “Voter Perception of Unique Selling Propositions in Nigeria’s Presidential Political Advertisements”. This study evaluates voters’ disposition to select either Goodluck Jonathan of the PDP or MuhammaduBuhari of the APC, in the March, 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, based on voter-perception of their presented television commercials. A sample of 377 was purposively drawn from three states in South-East Nigeria, which have different political leadership. Abia State is PDP, Imo is APC while Anambra State is APGA, which has no presidential candidate from that party. It was found that voter disposition and behavior are based on how presented political messages related to voter expectation; that the choice of a unique selling proposition in political advertisements is not a major compelling force for candidate selection at election. It means that messages which contain no specific measurable item are weak in persuading positive patronage.

Daniel and Raymond (2015) did a study titled "Political Advertising and the Electorate’s Choice of Candidates in Nigeria’s 2015 General Election: A Study of Select Electorate in Anambra State." The study sought to determine the extent to which the electorate in Aguata L.G.A. was exposed to political advertising and the extent to which they were influenced by political advertising messages in their choice of candidates during the elections. The study was designed as a survey. The study used survey research and was designed to cover N = 398 electorate in Aguata L.G.A. The findings show that the electorate in Aguata L.G.A. were exposed to political advertising; radio was the main channel through which they were exposed to political advertising; and this electorate was somewhat influenced by the political advertising messages they were exposed to. The study concluded that political advertising remains a veritable tool for securing victory in Nigerian elections.

In a research work by Uzochukwu, Ugwoke and Obi (2016), titled: “Framing of the 2015 electoral campaign issues” The objective of the study was aimed at determining the campaign issues that received the most attention in the Nigerian media during the 2015 presidential election and examining the prominence given to the message elements in the media reports. The Agenda Setting theory, which explains how the media can create salience of issues, set agenda and form public opinion during elections, is the most pronounced theory in this study. The Priming, Framing and Social Responsibility theories are also relevant. In this study content analysis was adopted as the research design to specifically investigate the newspapers under the study, the findings of the study suggest that although the media did not prioritize critical national issues, such as the economy, education, health, and energy, the issues that dominated the campaign were capable of creating divisions among the people along ethnic, religious, and state lines.

Okpara, Anuforo, and Achorn (2016), conducted a research work titled “Effect of Political Advertising on Voters’ Choice of Candidate: Emphasis on the 2015 Governorship Election in Imo State, Nigeria” The study assessed the effect of political advertising on voters’ choice of candidate during the 2015 Governorship Election in Imo State, Nigeria. The paper adopted a descriptive research design and approached it through survey. The study was motivated by the tense political atmosphere that pervaded the political landscape in the state prior to the gubernatorial election due to the incumbent governor’s defection to an opposition party and the resolve of other candidates in that election to take over the reins of power from the incumbent governor. To solicit votes or win the support of the electorate, candidates used political advertising among other strategies to sell their personality and party manifestoes. Political advertising of two notable candidates in that election (RochasOkorochoa of the All-Progressives Congress, and Emekalhedioha of the People’s Democratic Party) were studied. the results showed that: there was significant relationship between voters’ exposure to political advertising and voters’ choice of candidate; voters’ choice of candidate in the 2015 gubernatorial election in Imo State was significantly influenced by unique selling propositions of candidates’ political advertising. Voters’ informed voting decision was significantly attributed to different message delivery patterns used. Also, the difference in message content of some of political advertising and the way they were relayed in different advertising media did not significantly affect voters’ choice of candidate in that election, meanwhile voters’ choice of candidate for an election significantly changed when presented

Meyer, Haselmayer and Wagner, (2017), also did a research work titled: “Who gets into the papers? party campaign messages and the media”. The goal of this article is to examine how different factors related to the content and sender of political party messages affect their likelihood of receiving media coverage. The study suggests that party messages are more likely to make it into the news if they address concerns that are already important to the media or other parties. This has implications for political fairness and representation, and sheds light on the potential success of party strategies. The study adds to a growing literature on the media success of individual messages such as parliamentary questions and party press releases. To investigate this, the authors conducted a content analysis of 1,613 party press releases and 6,512 media reports in the context of a parliamentary, multiparty system. The results highlight the importance of agenda-setting and gatekeeping, and their implications for political fairness and representation, the used a cross-sectional research design. Regarding data collection, the researchers used a survey to collect information from the participants. Surveys are a common method of data collection in research, where participants are asked to answer a set of standardized questions. In this study, the survey included questions about the participants' mental health, as well as their social media use and other demographic information.

Bischof and Senninger, (2017), also did a research work titled: “Simple politics for the people? Complexity in campaign messages and political knowledge”. The study investigates the relationship between the complexity of campaign messages and citizens' ability to position parties in the ideological space. The study hypothesizes that populist parties are more likely to use simple language in their campaign messages to distance themselves from mainstream competitors. The study uses a readability index to assess the language of manifestos in Austria and Germany from 1945 to 2013 and voter and expert survey data to provide a link between the complexity of campaign messages and political knowledge. The study finds that political parties use barely comprehensible language to communicate their policy positions, but populist parties employ significantly less complex language in their manifestos. It also finds that individuals are better able to place parties in the ideological space if parties use less complex campaign messages. The study highlights the importance of language complexity in political discourse and its implications for mass-elite linkages during election campaigns. The research design is a quantitative analysis of manifesto data using a readability index and voter and expert survey data.

Abdollahyan and Machika (2017) did a study on the topic “An Analysis of the Influence of Radio Political Campaign Messages on Voters' Electoral Behavior in Kano”. This study sought to ascertain the extent to which the electorates in Kano, Nigeria, were exposed to radio political campaign messages, as well as the extent to which such messages influenced their voting decisions. To achieve this, the paper used a survey method with the questionnaire as a research instrument. Through multi-stage sampling, 435 respondents were selected in the nine (9) local government areas, three (3) each from the three senatorial districts in Kano and administered the questionnaire. The findings further revealed that respondents (65.5%) were influenced by opinion leaders in their choice of political parties or candidates during elections, as they perceived their advice or instruction as credible. In light of the findings, it was concluded that political campaign messages aired by local radio stations were an essential factor in the political decisions of the electorate in Kano. Similarly, it was recommended that producers of political campaign messages should make optimum use of their right sense of judgment in packaging their messages to avoid deceiving voters. And that opinion leaders, while interpreting the messages to opinion followers, should always check the reality or otherwise of the messages produced by parties and candidates to avoid

In a research work by Isa and Abaya (2019), titled: “A critical discourse analysis of rhetorical devices in the campaign speeches of presidential candidate MuhammaduBuhari and President Goodluck Jonathan in the 2011 elections in Nigeria” explained that the pursuit, gain for and exercise of power is characterized by crafty use of language. Persuading and convincing the electorate to obtain their support and acceptance, manipulating the audience towards accepting a particular ideology depends to a large extent on the kind of language used by the politicians. The study focused on language as the main system of social interaction and one that makes all other activities probable. Hence, the study attempted to examine campaign speeches of presidential candidates in the 2011 elections in Nigeria, using the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA). This approach to political discourse aims at investigating the pattern of language in campaign speeches with the view to

determining the extent to which language works for politicians in controlling and wooing the electorate. Many presidential aspirants publicly declared their intentions to contest for the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the 2011 presidential elections but this study took on the campaign speeches of only two named GoodluckEbele Jonathan (PDP) and MuhammaduBuhari (APC) for Critical Discourse Analysis. The methodology adopted for the study was survey method and data were purposively collected based on the size of the text (campaign speech). This gave the researcher the opportunity to consider different patterns of language used in a particular campaign speech. The study concluded that campaign speeches by politicians are ideological and often invested with the propensity to obfuscate the manifestation of political power which motive is to persuade, dominate, and control the minds of the electorate.

Addy and Ofori (2020), in their research work titled: “Critical Discourse Analysis of the Campaign Speech of a Ghanaian Opposition Leader” Referred to politicians’ use of language to promote their ideologies before, during and after elections with the aim of persuading them to accept and support his ideas and ultimately vote for him as the most credible candidate for the position of President. The Theory adopted in this study was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and also Discourse-as-text. CDA is an approach that analyzes discourse structures involving the study of the way social or political power, domination, inequality, bias or resistance to such practices in society are mediated through the linguistic system. That means that the critical analysis of texts is important in explaining the relationship between language, ideology and identity. Also, using CDA as an analytical tool shows how individuals or a group of people in a particular society use language to achieve a particular aim. Discourse-as-text focuses on how the various propositions are arranged in a text. The arrangement of text simply means the choice to select the patterns in vocabulary such as wording and metaphor, grammar-transitivity and modality, cohesion device over another conjunction.

Ikpgegbu and Ihejirika (2020) titled “Newspaper Coverage of Issue-based Political Statements and Campaigns in Nigeria’s Electoral Process (November 2018 – February 2019)” examined newspaper coverage of issue-based political statements and campaigns in Nigeria’s 2019 electoral process. The study was both quantitative and qualitative, covering newspaper reports from two national dailies, Vanguard and The Punch. A total of 76 editions were studied using the content analysis research design, with quoted statements buttressing the argument. The data were presented with frequency tables and analyzed through simple percentages. There were 116 reports on the subject in the dailies. The paper found out that while there was coverage of some national issues like restructuring, security, corruption, economy, and electricity, the greater volume of political statements was not issue-based. There is a need for the press to pay less attention to matters that would not serve to educate voters adequately.

Beatrice (2021), in her research work titled: “Social Media and Political Campaign Communication in Ghana”. Explained how social media has proven to be an effective strategy in political communication and campaign and how it also generated interest in politics by the younger generation as political communication and campaigns have become more appealing to them. The study adopted purposive sampling to select participants from the NPP and the NDC which are the two major political parties in Ghana. The findings revealed that social media has been integrated into politics in Ghana and increased political stakeholder engagement. According to the study, politics and the media have always worked closely. The media derive stories from politics, while politicians rely on the coverage and promotion. The media is responsible for information dissemination, bridging the gap between policymakers and the people, transmitting political developments, educating the society, and raising awareness of issues of importance in the society. The theory used in this study was the participatory democratic theory. This review discussed participatory democracy in relation to social media in current democratic settings. In many African societies, the fundamental problem of participatory democratic theory is that the electorate has limited knowledge of the issues they face and the choices they have to make. This presents the modern-day politicians the avenue to provide the electorate with information at little or no cost compered to using traditional media which comes at a huge cost. The limitation of this research was the use of purely secondary data. Primary data sources would have been ideal to ascertain the real issues on the ground. The study recommended a more extensive study on the research topic. For the future, researchers should prioritize the use of primary data and an extended for this research topic.

After the review of other published journals for the empirical review of literature for this work the researcher observed that quite a number of research works have been done on campaign messages in general, few have talked on the need for issue-based campaign messages and the importance for the electorates. Therefore, the researcher attempts to analyze the forms of campaign messages used during the 2023 presidential elections and the need for issue-based campaign messages.

Rhetoric Theory

This theory was founded by the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle in the 4th century BCE. Rhetoric theory is the study of how language and communication can be used to persuade and influence people. It is one of the oldest branches of communication studies and has been studied for centuries by scholars from various fields, including philosophy, literature, and communication. Rhetoric theory is based on the idea that communication is not just about the transmission of information, but also about the manipulation of symbols and language to create meaning and influence the thoughts and actions of others. Rhetoric theory also includes the study of different types of discourse, including political discourse, religious discourse, and legal discourse.

The Rhetoric theory posits that communication is inherently persuasive and seeks to influence the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of an audience. It recognizes the power of language and symbolic expression in shaping thoughts and motivating action.

Rhetoric theory assumes that effective communication is tailored to the audience's values, beliefs, and interests. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the audience's perspectives, needs, and expectations in order to effectively persuade and communicate.

Rhetoric theory assumes that communication occurs within a public context and aims to address public issues, concerns, and controversies. It recognizes the role of rhetoric in shaping public opinion, fostering public deliberation, and influencing collective decision-making.

It also examines the role of new technologies and media in shaping rhetoric communication. Rhetoric theory is an important field of study for understanding the ways in which language and communication can be used to influence and persuade people. It can be applied to a wide range of fields, including politics, advertising, media, and education. It is also a useful tool for understanding how discourse and communication shape our perceptions of reality and how they shape our understanding of the world around us. This theory is relevant to my study as it describes the way and manner in which language is used and how it can influence and persuade electorates, this theory also explains that communication and political communication in general shape our perceptions of reality. Also, this theory says that communications and the languages used can manipulate individuals to influence their decisions.

Methodology

The study adopted the Quantitative research with survey as an approach, INEC registered residents of Kosofe local Government which amount to four hundred and thirty-eight (438) made up the population. This study adopted sampling technique for selecting the residents of Kosofe Local Government for this study. A formula developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is adopted in order to calculate this study's sample size. This formula has three distinct stages which help to refine and determine the sample size of a population based on minimum estimation, adjustment by population size and by estimating response rate. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula as follows. Therefore, the sample size for the content analysis part of this study is 311 (Three hundred and eleven electorate). The researcher employed a questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. Data collection was done one on one. The data was analyzed through the statistical data analysis which included: descriptive Analysis (simple percentages and frequency tables) and inferential analysis (ANOVA) through Statistical Products and Service Solutions (SPSS), version 21 for analysis

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4.9: Category of Developmental Issues

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Economy	52	20.8
	Security	33	13.2
	Anti-graft war	7	2.8

Education	13	5.2
Health	6	2.4
Social Infrastructural Development	24	9.6
Empowerment	26	10.4
Others	71	28.4
Not Applicable	18	7.2
Total	250	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2023

52 (20.8%) of the released news editions were about economic issues in the country, 33(13.2%) of the released news articles were on issues concerning security, while 7 (2.3%) published issues on anti-graft war, while 13 (5.2%) discussed issues on education. 6 (2.4%) predominantly published issues on health, while 24(9.6%) published issues mainly on social infrastructural development and 26 (9.6%) published issues based on empowerment and 18 (7.2%) mostly discussed issues others than the above listed categories.

Table 4.10 Cross sectional for Developmental Issues

	Economy	Security	Anti-graft war	Education	Health	Social Infrastructural Development	Empowerment
PDP	19	12	1	7	1	7	6
APC	17	13	0	6	4	13	16
LP	14	8	6	0	1	4	3
Others	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
	52	33	7	13	6	24	26

Table 4.10 depicts that;

The political party PDP focused the most on restructuring the economy than any other political party after which APC stood out to have focused on the economy, the table above shows clearly that LP focused the least on the country's economy.

The political party APC focused the most on providing security than any other party after which PDP stood out to have focused on security, the table above shows clearly that LP was the least party to have focused on security. LP according to the newspaper contents focused more on Anti-graft war than the two other parties, Peter Obi was fixated on fighting corruption largely in Nigeria. PDP on the other hand spoke briefly on it while APC had nothing to say on Anti-graft war.

The political party PDP focused the most on providing proper education than any other political party after which APC stood out to have focused on the educational sector, the table above shows clearly that LP focused the least on the country's educational sector. APC campaign focused more on the health sector than the two other parties after which PDP and LP followed suit.

The political party APC focused the most on social infrastructural development than any other party after which PDP also addressed it, the table above shows clearly that LP was the least party to have focused on social infrastructural development. The political party APC focused the most on empowerment, empowering the youths, women, traders etc. than any other party followed by PDP, the table above shows that LP slightly talked on empowerment in general.

**Table 4.11 Anova
ANOVA**

Category 8: Developmental issues

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.525	8	.941	1.251	.270

Within Groups	181.179	241	.752		
Total	188.704	249			

The outcome of ANOVA suggests no significant difference in developmental issues among the parties. This is expressed by sig value of 0.270.

Discussion of Findings

The study's objective is to investigate the issue-based campaign messages of selected political parties in the 2023 presidential elections. Results from the analysis revealed that the main format for campaign message presentation was the straight news format, while the All Progressive Congress (APC) were the major story actors in the campaign messages covered by responses gotten from the respondents.

The first objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of issues-based campaign messages in influencing the voting behavior of the electorate. Through the results of these study, it was discovered that straight news was the most prevailing format of presentation of campaign messages with 71.2% meanwhile column/opinion and advertisement had 7.6% and 8.4% respectively while the least used was others with 0.4%.

The second objective was to identify the factors that affect the success of issues-based campaign messages among political parties in Nigeria. Through the results of this study, it was discovered that reports/campaigns focused on the issue of economy with 20.8% released campaign messages while health issue were the least discussed developmental issues by the selected parties with 2.4%.

Research Summary

The research focused on investigating the use of issues-based campaign messages as a political public relations tool among selected political parties during the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria. The study aimed to explore the effectiveness of this approach in shaping public opinion, voter decision-making, and overall electoral outcome. The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with key political stakeholders, party officials, and campaign strategists, as well as quantitative surveys conducted among registered voters. Data analysis was conducted to identify themes, patterns, and correlations between campaign strategies and voter perceptions.

Result also revealed that the major story placement for these national newspaper houses were the inside page of the newspaper and the most salient attributes for discussion on issue-based campaign messages were issues concerning the economy, while the prominent discourses on the non-issue-based campaign messages were messages which were not applicable to the category.

Findings

The research findings revealed that issues-based campaign messages played a significant role in influencing public opinion and voter decision-making during the 2023 presidential election. Voters expressed a strong preference for political parties that addressed pressing national issues such as corruption, unemployment, infrastructure, and security.

Effective use of issues-based messaging was found to generate trust, credibility, and voter engagement. Parties that focused on providing concrete policy proposals, outlining achievable goals, and demonstrating a deep understanding of the challenges facing the country were more successful in garnering public support.

However, the research also identified certain challenges in the implementation of issues-based campaigns. Political parties often struggled with effectively communicating their messages to a diverse electorate, as well as countering negative narratives propagated by rival parties. Additionally, issues-based campaigns required significant resources and organizational capacity, which posed a barrier for smaller political parties with limited funding and infrastructure.

Recommendations:

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are made for political parties intending to utilize issues-based campaign messages during the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria:

1. Develop a comprehensive communication strategy: Political parties should invest in developing a well-structured communication plan that clearly articulates the party's stance on key issues, resonates with the

electorate, and effectively counters disinformation or negative messaging from opponents. Politician can as well leverage digital platforms: Utilize social media, online advertising, and other digital platforms to amplify the reach and impact of issues-based campaign messages. These channels offer cost-effective methods of engaging with a wider audience, particularly among younger voters who are more active online.

2. Engage in grassroots mobilization: While digital platforms are useful, parties should not neglect traditional campaign strategies. Engaging in grassroots mobilization through community outreach programs, town hall meetings, and door-to-door canvassing helps establish personal connections with voters and communicate key issues on a more localized level. Also in this direction the political and their political gladiator should align campaign messages with actionable policies: Voters respond positively to campaign messages that are backed by concrete policy proposals. Political parties should ensure that their issues-based messages are supported by actionable policies that outline the steps to be taken to address the identified challenges. However, continuous monitoring and feedback: Political parties should employ real-time monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the effectiveness of their issues-based campaign messages. Regular feedback from voters, opinion polls, and focus groups can provide valuable insights to refine messaging strategies and respond to evolving voter concerns.

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