

**PRESS COVERAGE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL  
ELECTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *DAILYTRUST* AND *VANGUARD*  
NEWSPAPERS.**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation entitled PRESS COVERAGE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *DAILYTRUST* AND *VANGUARD* NEWSPAPERS has been carried out by me in the department of mass communication, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The information derived from the literature has been duly acknowledged in the text and a list of references provided. No part of this was previously presented for another degree at this or any other institution

Jibril Nasir MOHAMMED

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*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Date*

## CERTIFICATION

This dissertation titled PRESS COVERAGE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE 2015 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF *DAILYTRUST* AND *VANGUARD* NEWSPAPERS by Jibril Nasir MOHAMMED meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Masters of Science in Mass Communication of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, and it is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my late Grandmother Mallama Khadijat Aliyu, may the Almighty God forgive and bless her gentle soul (Amin).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My special thanks goes to the almighty Allah, the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscience for his protection and guidance. Also, my cordial gratitude goes to my supervisors: Dr. John Okpoko, and Dr Adama Adamu and other lecturers of the department for all their efforts, indeed I am eternally grateful. Likewise, I am also grateful to the Ndakolo's family and my friends for their support and contribution in making this project a reality. Finally, I equally want to acknowledge my coders (research assistants) and all the authors whose works have been cited in this study.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AA	Action Alliance
AD	Alliance for Democracy
ACPN	Allied Congress Party of Nigeria
ADC	African Democratic Congress
APA	African Peoples Alliance
APC	All progressives congress
CPP	Citizens Popular Party
FRESH	Fresh Democratic Party
HDP	Hope Democratic Party
KP	Kowa Party
NCP	National Conscience Party
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
PPN	Peoples Party of Nigeria
UDP	United Democratic Party
UPP	United Progressive Party

## ABSTRACT

*This study was conducted to assess how newspapers covered political parties in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, by comparing the quantity of report between Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers, to find out the political party with the highest attention and most prominence and then the most common theme of coverage. The study adopted Agenda setting and political economy theory as the theoretical framework and content analysis as the research design. A census of all the 264 editions of the newspapers published within the five months period of election campaign—November, 2014 to March, 2015 was done. Data were collected with the aid of code sheet as the instrument of data collection. Afterward, the data from these newspapers were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that Vanguard newspaper gave more attention to the political parties during the 2015 presidential general election than the Daily Trust newspaper. Similarly, out of the 14 political parties that participated at the 2015 presidential election, People’s Democratic Party (PDP) had the highest attention on the selected papers with Vanguard newspaper according more frequency than Daily Trust newspaper. In addition, more prominence was given to All Progressives Congress party throughout the period of the election by selected newspaper with Daily Trust newspaper conferring than the Vanguard newspaper. Likewise, it was also found that, policy had the most common theme of coverage during the period of the presidential election on Daily Trust than the Vanguard newspaper. Based on the findings, it is recommended that Nigerian newspapers should endeavor to give equal preference to all political parties during and after election as enshrined in the constitution.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The mass media have been a very strong pillar in the Nigerian democratic system. They have played critical roles in the electoral process by acting as major sources of information, providing essentially costless and reliable details leading to a more balanced education and opinion formation among the voting public (Pate, 2015a). Specifically, during the election period, the media is shouldered with two major responsibilities of informing the public about what the politicians are promising and then in turn, they also tell the politicians what ordinary people want or do not want. These two major responsibilities performed by the media are to ensure that the polls are 'free and fair'.

The 2015 general election in Nigeria was the 5<sup>th</sup> election to be held since the end of military rule in 1999 by the General Abubakar Abdulsalam led military regime. This period also marked the beginning of the fourth republic of Nigeria. Above all, electioneering in Nigeria can, no doubt, be traced as far back to the Clifford's constitution of 1922. The constitution first introduced the elective principle into the Nigerian politics. Voting was introduced as a means of taking decisions in the legislative council. The aftermaths of these principles of election gave birth to political parties in the country. Buttressing this, Akinboye (1999) explains that the coming of political parties consequently stimulated political discussions amongst Nigerians and thereby led to the struggle against colonialism. Abagen (2009) clarifies that the last fifty years have seen an evolution of various political parties in Nigeria. Therefore, it is evident that these political parties

have played and are still playing a vital role in the realization of democratic objectives (Utor, 2000).

These rapid changes have paved ways for worldwide dynamic setting for a greater participation in Nigeria's politics and in public decision making. This has also become a reference criterion reflecting the democratic level attained by a society. According to Adeyanju (2014), participation in modern politics is the most central ingredient of democracy as it makes it easy for the populace to be abreast of the process of decision making, the decisions made and why they are made.

Similarly, Chilton and Schaffner (2004) opine that the only way to understand how politicians manage to influence the society and how they are able to put their opinions through to a large audience on a local, national, or even global level is to analyze their text and talk. Text and talk can only be effectively analyzed with the aid of media content analysis. This is probably why Made (2008), suggests that the media's key roles in a democratic society are to inform, educate, and perform the 'watchdog' function of keeping the public and private accountable to the interests of the general populace, as well as being an agent of change through informed, contextualized and accurate reporting of issues and events in a society.

Furthermore, Media coverage is considered important if one is to succeed in politics. This could be the reason why Thomas Jefferson, the third American President, as cited in Nwabueze and Ebeze (2013), state that 'where it is left for me to choose whether we should have a government without the press or a press without government, I shall not hesitate a moment to choose the latter'. This simply means that the power and prestige of what we call the mass media are as important as the branches of government. This is because they have a direct impact on each of

the arms of government: the executive, legislature and the judiciary (Okpoko, 2014). McQuail (2010) also confirms that there had always been an intimate connection between Mass Media and the conduct of politics in whatever kind of regime. Hence, this symbiotic relationship between politics and the fourth estate of the realm (media) cannot be over emphasized.

The fourth estate of the realm served as the link between the ruler and the ruled, the political parties and their electorates and among the electorates themselves (Adeyanju, 2014). No wonder Peter (2012) observed that, just few citizens personally attend campaign rallies and that most electorates depend on mass media for the messages about the candidates. They do so from the period of acquiring the voters' registration card, voting during elections, being informed on what voters should do and what they should expect from politicians (Okpoko, 2014). However, media coverage may benefit one party or the other. According to Baum and Gussin (2005), the extent to which some political parties receive more media emphasis on a particular issue during election campaigns, whether intended or not, appears to be a potential form of bias. By virtue of this form of bias, Foster (2010) observes that the press shapes the opinions and attitudes of people, especially in their capacity as voters. As such, everything about the press coverage of political parties in any general election campaign should serve to guide the electorates on what to do with their votes. Writing on this, Lou (1971) as cited in Chukuma (2010) posits that:

Campaign reporters should project the candidates' image by giving them ample press coverage (by the frequency and depth of the reports). They should also endeavour to highlight the candidate's potentials and shortcomings but with absolute detachment. In other words, they should do critical and objective analysis of the candidates with the aim of educating the electorate in this capacity (p. 2)

In the same vein, Agba (2006) advised that:

Everything about campaign reporting should serve to guide the electorate on what to do with their votes. Informing the electorate does

not mean telling them what the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) plans to do for them or what decisions the Action Congress (AC) reached in their last convention, but thorough voter's guidance should be in the heart of campaign reporting by the media (p. 200).

This view is also shared by Okunna (1999), who believes that the mass media coverage of issues during an election could prod the electorate into perceiving certain issues as being more important than others and could consequently influence audience decision about candidates, and according to Obot(2009), the audience gets to know about aspirants and candidates for various elective posts as well as the manifestos of political parties through the fourth estate of the realm. Curran (2005) adds that the 'media assist voters to make informed choices at election time. Through the use of the mass media vehicles, the mass media serve as primary agents of mobilization and campaign of political processes, thereby permitting active involvement in public life'(p. 129).

Equally, the coverage of elections is part of the surveillance function of the media. Through this, the citizens are educated on the quality of the individual candidates presenting themselves for elective offices. Likewise, the media also warn the society on any impending danger with regards to the process of electing its leaders (Pate, 2015a). Although on the contrary, the power of the media is generally symbolic and persuasive in the sense that the media primarily have the potential to control, to some extent, the minds of readers or viewers, it does not directly affect their actions (Van dijk, 1999).

This is why existing literature have shown that mass media is capable of influencing the voting habits of the electorate. This may not be far -fetched from why Lange and Ward (2004) state that the media election coverage in developing countries like Nigeria serves as the sole source of information for the candidates. This includes public meetings with the candidates and the use of

leaflets and posters, especially the incumbent administrations' achievement and its future plans for the betterment of the public, including the new issues under debate. Similarly, on the role of the media in Ghana's 2002 general election, Temin and Smith (2002) found out that the electoral process in the country was successfully and smoothly conducted with a large contribution from the media.

Based on the aforementioned views, Obeta (2007) offers a piece of advice that 'any person, group of persons, or even government that ignores the media in their life is courting danger' (p. 123). This hinges on the fact that media reportage on their political life alone is crucial to their survival and growth. Thus, without the use of the mass media, there cannot be a proper understanding of the activities inherent in a democratic state (Adeyanju, 2014).

It is in the light of these positions that the study examines how the Nigerian Press discharged their expected duties during the 2015 general election campaigns in the country within the period under review.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The media, as the fourth estate of the realm, have witnessed a series of elections in Nigeria since the country's return to democracy in 1999. According to Pate (2015a), the elections held in Nigeria so far have been characterized by numerous activities and excitement that involved the media in terms of coverage. This implies that enormous literature exists on the conduct of the media in Nigeria's elections at various times. Thus, reviewing these numerous existing literature, one might be fascinated to ask why the press gives more prominence to some political parties and ignores others. Who or what determines which issues are the most important during an election?

For instance, according to Ojo (2003), in the 2003 general election, there was a huge imbalance between the coverage received by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the other political parties. This is both in terms of the amount and quality of coverage which showed that the PDP and the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP) appeared to have received more coverage than all the other parties put together. Similarly, Chukwuma (2011) found that in the 2007 general election campaigns, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) had the highest coverage, most favourable news stories and most prominent news, compared to 25 parties that featured candidates during campaigns. Also, Pate (2015a), citing NBC (2011), UNDP (2011) and EU (2011) found unfair coverage among the various parties in the 2011 election, with the big political parties: the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and the Congress for Progress Change (CPC) receiving the most attention.

Thus, this study investigates how some influential newspapers in Nigeria: the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard*, reflected (attention and news placement) political parties in their coverage of the 2015 general election with a view to ascertaining the extent to which the media covered the Political parties.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the work is to find out the roles of national newspapers such as the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* in the coverage of political parties in the 2015 presidential election. The specific objectives are:

1. To determine the newspaper with the most quantity of report on the 2015 presidential election.

2. To identify the political party with the highest coverage among the selected newspapers during the 2015 presidential election.
3. To find out the political party with the most prominent placement in the 2015 presidential election between the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard* newspapers.
4. To determine the most common theme of coverage by the selected newspapers during the 2015 presidential election.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

Four research questions were formulated from the four objectives of the study as follows:

1. Which of the two newspapers gave more coverage to the 2015 presidential election?
2. Which of the political parties had the highest coverage among the selected newspapers in the 2015 presidential election?
3. Which of the parties had the most prominent placement between the selected newspapers during the presidential election?
4. What was the common theme of coverage of the election by the selected newspapers?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The present body of literature on the press coverage of political parties, reviewed by the researcher, shows that not many studies have been conducted in relation to the press coverage of political parties in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. The few ones available such as Obot (2013), Ojo (2003), Chukwuma (2011), Pate (2015a), among others, studied presidential elections in 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 respectively. This therefore indicates the gap in knowledge of the study.

The researcher embarked on this study because it is expected that the outcome may help make the government and political parties aware of the relevance of the print media as agents of wider publicity to the electorate and major stakeholders during election campaigns.

This study will, no doubt, also constitute a valuable document to the improvement of the political parties, the Nigeria electoral acts, the Independent National Electoral Commission, media organization, non-governmental organization, policy makers, and electorates. It will also serve as a reference point to other researchers working on the same topic or similar area.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study gives a brief description of the area of coverage of the study or area of concentration (Olatunji, Adeeko and Kasali, 2012). In this study, the scope is the press coverage of political parties in the 2015 presidential election campaign in Nigeria, with emphasis on two purposively selected national newspapers in the country namely: the *Daily Trust* and the *Vanguard*. The justifications for the purposive choice of the newspapers are as a result of circulation and regional affiliation/ partisanship which corroborates the findings of Adenyaju (2014), Okpoko (2014) and ADVAN, AAAN, and MIPAN (2015) that reveal that the *Vanguard* has regional affiliation to the south with more than 25,241 copies daily and the *Daily Trust* to the north with 11,672 copies daily.

In addition, content data was gathered from 19 weeks coverage of political parties by Nigerian newspapers beginning from 16th November, 2014 to 27th March, 2015. The reason for this duration of time is because it is when the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (2015) flagged off the process of the campaign, which is in line with the 2010 Electoral Act

Section 99 (1) (as amended) which provides that all political parties should submit their candidates and all campaigns must commence only 90 days to the general elections and all campaigns must end midnight preceding the general elections. Thus, due to some security hitches, the initial scheduled date (16th November, 2014 to 14th February, 2015) for the election was further postponed by 6 weeks (42 days). Also, all the publications within the duration of the study were reviewed (census). According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), Census method permits the testing or measuring of every element in the population.

### 1.7 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are those restrictions deliberately imposed in the study by the investigator himself (Olatunji, *et al* 2012). The time frame and the methodology adopted for the study was an obvious limitation to the research. That is because the researcher exclusively selected only the 2015 presidential election and two national newspapers (one located in the north; the *Daily Trust* and the other in the south; the *Vanguard*) from all the national newspapers in Nigeria because of the influx of stories on political parties encountered in the course of the research. Hence, this posed a serious threat to the generalization of the findings

### 1.8 Conceptual Clarification of Terms

**Prominence:** it is defined as the placement of political parties' stories on some strategic positions on the pages of the newspapers. Thus, prominence can be determined through the following formats:

1. Front page ( most prominent)
2. Back page (most prominent)
3. Inside page (less prominent)

***Theme of Coverage:*** this is defined as the subject matter of a newsstory by the media in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, which can either be:

1. Scandalous (financial and sex),
2. Policy(economic, unemployment and security),
3. Advocacy(campaign events, prediction, opinion poll and endorsement),
4. Character of the candidates and
5. Voting/voters' information.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the study. It starts with a review of some relevant concepts related to the topic, such as press coverage of election, general election and political parties. It also highlights the history of political parties and the electoral process in Nigeria, the roles of media in politics, press freedom in election, review of related empirical studies and finally, gives the theoretical framework within which analysis was carried out.

#### 2.2 PoliticalParty

Political parties' activities are very crucial in the evaluation of a democratic practice all over the world. The activities of the political parties are at the heart of examining the health of any form of democracy (Abubakar, 2014; Galadima, 2014; and Simbine, 2014). According to Anifowose and Enemu (2000) "a political party is a group bonded in policy and opinion in support of a general political cause, which essentially is to pursue, capture and retain for as long as there is a democratically feasible government and its office" (p. 195). To Jinadu (2011), a political party is any platform that presents the electorate with a choice of candidates and programmes from which to choose. In doing so, they help to decide which party or coalition of parties should govern for a fixed number of years. As Abutudu (2014) observes, if election is a means of choosing people to occupy positions of authority or, in other words, an expression of the people's sovereign will, then political parties provide the platform for articulating that will and selecting the people who want to exercise their fundamental human rights.

Political Parties provide the medium through which accountability of the executive and the legislators to the electorate is exercised, through periodic elections, under a multiparty electoral politics. Furthermore, Political parties perform functions such as recruiting political personnel, organizing political campaigns, mobilizing voters etc. (Galadima, 2014). However, all these goals listed above are geared towards winning election, but in order to achieve these goals, according to Galadima (2014), a group of people who hold certain fundamental principle and policies, as well as common political belief, must be united and determined to part take in the struggle for political power. Buttressing further on how important political parties are, Omotala (2009) claimed that political parties are the makers of democracy, that neither democracy nor democratic societies are thinkable without them. Therefore, the existence of vibrant political parties is sine-qua-non to democratic consolidation in any polity (Dode, 2010 as cited in Simbine, 2014).

In addition, the functions and responsibilities of Political Parties in Nigeria, according to Jinadu (2011) include:

- (i) recruitment or reproduction of the political class;
- (ii) membership recruitment;
- (iii) patronage disbursement;
- (iv) organization party bureaucracy;
- (v) involvement in policy formulation;
- (vi) voter education and mobilization; and
- (vii) Protecting and defending the country's constitution

In conclusion, a political party is more or less a permanent institution with the goal of aggregating interests, presenting candidates for election with the purpose of controlling governments and representing such interests in government.

### **2.3 General Election**

A general election is a democratic process through which people vote to choose a leader that will represent them (Elekwa, 2008, p. 30). The process of carrying out an election is called electoral process. According to Elekwa (ibid), the election process (electoral process) relates to the entire cycle ranging from the provision of voter education to the dissolution of the National Assembly. Similarly, election as defined by Osumah and Aghemelo (2010) is a process through which the people choose their leaders and indicate their policies and programmes preference and consequently invests a government with the authority to rule. In the same vein, Samuel, Felix, and Godwyns (2013) see election as one of the means by which a society may organize itself and make specified formal decisions.

Eya (2003) however, defines election as the selection of a person or persons for office by balloting and making choices as between alternatives. Ozor (2010) succinctly gives a more encompassing and comprehensive definition of election when he notes that the term connotes the procedure through which qualified adult voters elect their politically preferred representatives to parliament legislature of a county (or any other public positions) for the purpose of running the government of the country. Thus, Osumah and Aghemelo (2010), elucidate what the basic objective of election is which is to select the official decision makers who are supposed to represent the citizens-interest, thereby extending and enhancing the amount of popular participation in the political system.

Furthermore, in a modern democracy, supreme authority is exercised for the most part, by representatives elected by popular suffrage (Osakwe, 2011 cited in Galadima, 2014). Similarly, according to Gamji (2009), in a liberal democracy, elections enable the public to keep a check on the political leaders, as in the case of the 2008 United Kingdom Local Council elections, where the public used their votes to protest against Brown's administration, giving the *Conservative party* a majority vote. Similarly, elections have been seen as the major feature of democracy to the extent that not only is it impossible to imagine a democratic regime without elections (Nnadozie, 2007) but, also there is the risk of confusing the holding of regular, reasonably competitive and transparent elections with democracy (Hounkpe and Gueye, 2010). Undeniably, even in the direct democracy of ancient Greece, elections were used to take decisions in various fields (Samuel, *et al*2013).

Likewise, INEC (2006) highlighted the different phases of the electoral process in Nigeria as follows:

- (i) Delimitation of electoral boundaries
- (ii) Registration of voters
- (iii) Notice of elections
- (iv) Nomination of candidates
- (v) Election campaigns
- (vi) Announcement of results and completion of tribunal sittings
- (vii) Participation of other organizations
- (viii) Resolution of electoral conflicts resulting from the participation of other organizations, people, groups, etc.

The electoral process is therefore, a complex process that encompasses the good intentions and undesirable outcomes of election administration, particularly in emerging democracies where general elections are often marred by culturally hued electoral malpractices (Nnenna, 2014). Finally, Hounkpe and Gueye, (2010) concluded that in a representative democracy system, the entire population of a country need not to converge together to make a decision, but rather people are governed through their representatives, which can be best achieved through an election. This is why election remains the most appropriate widespread mechanism for selecting representatives who will be responsible for governing on behalf of the people (ibid).

#### **2.4. Overview of General Elections and Political Parties in Nigeria**

The history of the Nigerian general election/political parties can be captured in the following phrases namely:

- First Republic
- Second Republic
- Third Republic and
- Forth Republic

##### ***First Republic***

The history of electoral institutions in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era. The first electoral institution established to manage the administration and conduct of elections in Nigeria was the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) (NERDC, 2005,p. 12). The ECN administered and managed the conducts of the 1959 pre-independence general elections that heralded Nigeria's first republic. After independence ECN witnessed change as it was renamed the Federal Electoral Commission (FEC) by the administration of late Sir Tafawa Balewa. According to Olaniyi

(2005) the Federal Electoral Commission conducted the controversial and bungled general elections of 1964 and the Western Region election of 1965. He further states that this ineptitude shown by FEC in the conduct of the elections partly accounted for the collapse of the first republic.

The first republic began in 1960 when the country became a sovereign state on October 1, 1960. According to Akinboye (2005) Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa became the first Prime Minister and Sir (Dr.) Nnamdi Azikwe became the Governor-General of the country. He was also the president of the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). The party together with the Nigeria People's Congress (NPC) led by Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, joined to control the central government. While Chief Obafemi Awolowo's party was the third dominant party called the Action Group (AG) which later became the opposition party (Lukman, 2009). Thus, the three major parties that existed then were ethnic based: NPC (Nigeria People's Congress) was a Northern party; AG (Action Group) was a South-West party while, the NCNC (National Council of Nigerian Citizens) had its stronghold in the South-East (Olaniyi, 2005). Apart from the three aforementioned parties according to Ngou (1989) a total of fifteen others contested the election held in 1959, but they never really made any substantial impact on the domestic politics. However, the more prominent of the parties in this emergent multiparty system between 1922 and 1960 are as follows:

- The Nigerian National Democratic party(NNDP) (1923)
- Union of Young Nigerian (UYN) (1923)
- Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) (1937)
- National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon(NCNC) (1944)
- Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) (1950)

- United National Independence Party (UNIP) (1953)
- United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) (1955)
- Bornu Youth Movement (BYM) (1956)
- Dynamic Party (DP) (1955)

### ***Second Republic***

The first republic ended with the coup d'état led by Gen. Aguiyi Ironsi. Some year's later Gen. Obasanjo started the second republic by handing over to a civilian government (Olaniyi, 2005). The will to return the nation to participatory governance by the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo, necessitated the establishment of a new electoral institution (Akinboye, 2005). The new commission established in 1978 to conduct the transitional elections was named the Federal Electoral Commission of Nigeria (FEDECO). The commission, which conducted and managed the elections and electoral process of 1979 and 1983, was dissolved by the military authority that came to power as a result of the military coup of December 31, 1983 (Samuel, *et al* 2013).

The then Second republic in Nigeria adopted a presidential system of government. According to Olaniyi (2005) the Murtala/Obasanjo regime took certain measures to ensure that the civilians gained the control of the machinery of the state in 1979. Firstly, the Constitutional Drafting Committee was inaugurated in 1977, the Constituent Assembly was convened and the ban on political activities was consequently lifted. Power was handed over to Alhaji Aliyu Shehu Shagari on October 1, 1979 (Lukman, 2009). Furthermore, according to Akinboye (2005), the nation at that time practiced a multiparty democracy. The five parties that emerged were the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Nigeria's People Party

(NPP), Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). The NPN dominated the government during the second republic while the other parties controlled some of the state. The National Advanced Party (NAP) and Movement of the People Party (MPP) were registered in 1983, making the number of parties in Nigeria to have increased to seven by 1983(Yaqub, 2002).

### ***Third republic***

After FEDECO, comes the National Electoral Commission (NEC) established in 1987 by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. The commission was charged with the responsibility of managing the electoral process during the General Babangida transition process. Though NEC managed to conduct local, state and national assembly elections, the annulment of the presidential election in June 1993 rendered utterly useless NEC's efforts at conducting a free, fair and competitive election in the aborted third republic (Akinboye, 2005,p. 297; Olaniyi, 2005, p. 137).

Similarly, in the third republic (1985-1998), there was a change in the political system from a multiparty system to two-party system (Akinboye, 2005). Nigeria practiced a two-party system, with the government establishing the Social Democratic party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). The two parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) brought to an end the circle of ethnicity in party politics in Nigeria (Olaniyi, 2005). Chief M.K.O. Abiola was the Social Democratic party (SPD) presidential candidate while Alhaji Bashir Tofa emerged the National Republican Convention (NRC) flag bearer (Omotola, 2009). Under the umbrella of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) the June 12 1993 presidential election was won by the candidate Chief M.K.O. Abiola, which

was annulled by the military under the president Ibrahim Babangida administration. According to Yaqub (2002), under the Abacha's transition programme, eighteen political associations applied, for registration as political parties, out of which five were registered, thus:

- The Congress for National Consensus (CNC),
- Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN),
- The Grass-roots Democratic Movement (GDM),
- The National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN) and
- The United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP)

#### ***Fourth republic***

The regime of General Sani Abacha, which succeeded the Interim National Government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, established the National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) (Lukman, 2009). The erratic nature of the regime's transition process meant that the commission was rendered powerless and therefore ineffective as an independent electoral body. After the demise of General Sani Abacha, his successor, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, over-hauled the electoral commission and renamed it the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). The commission came into being via the enactment of Decree No. 17 of 1998 (now act of parliament). INEC's responsibility as contained in the Third Schedule of the 1999 Federal Constitution of Nigeria is to manage in its entirety, the electoral process in this republic. INEC successfully conducted the series of elections, which ushered in the nation's Fourth Republic in 1999 (INEC 2006,p. 40-41; NERDC 2005, p. 12-14). The commission also managed the conduct of the republic's second general elections of 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015.

The fourth republic led to the restoration of democratic government in 1999 which eventually led to a new approach to party politics in Nigeria. The procedure for registering political parties was

liberalized, thereby opening up the political space for mass participation in political activities in the country (NERDC, 2005). Eventually, some parties like the Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Peoples Party (APP), and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were all registered. Today, there are more than fifty registered political parties in Nigeria, even though only a few of them have been able to win an election. The Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP), which prides itself as Africa's largest political party took off from Group-34, a think-tank of progressive politicians opposed to the self-succession bid of late General Abacha (Lukman, 2009).

Political parties in the fourth republic from 1999 to 2013 are follows: Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Advanced Congress of Democrats (ACD), Alliance for Democracy (AD), All Progressives Congress (APC), African Democratic Congress (ADC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), All People's Party (APP), African Renaissance Party (ARP), Conscience People's Congress (CPC), Communist Party of Nigeria (CPN), Democratic Alternative (DA), Democratic People's Party (DPP), Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), Fresh Democratic Party (FDP), Labour Party (LP), Masses Movement of Nigeria (MMN), National Conscience Party (NCP), New Democrats (ND), National Democratic Party (NDP), People's Democratic Party (PDP), Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), People Progressive Party (PPP), People's Redemption Party (PRP), People's Salvation Party (PSP), Social Democratic Mega Party (SDMP), Socialist Party of Nigeria (SPN), United Nigeria People's Party (UNPP), United Progressive Party (UPP) and Mega People Political Party (MPPP).

Whereas, In the 2015 general election, 28 parties were the only ones accredited by INEC (2014) to participate in the election namely: Accord (A), Action Alliance (AA), Advanced Congress Of

Democrats (ACD) ,Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN), Alliance For Democracy(AD),African Democratic Congress (ADC), African Peoples Alliance(APA), All progressives congress(APC), All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Citizens Popular Party (CPP), Democratic People’s Party (DPP), fresh democratic party (FRESH), Hope democratic party (HDP), Independent democrats (ID), Kowa Party (KP), Labour Party (LP), Mega Progressive Peoples Party(MPPP), National Conscience Party (NCP), New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), People For Democratic Change (PDC), Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), Peoples Party of Nigeria (PPN), Social Democratic Party (SDP), United Democratic Party (UDP), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), United Progressive Party (UPP).

However, out of the 28 political parties accredited by the INEC to participate in the 2015 general election, only 14 political parties had presidential candidates’ during the election (see the table below).

*LIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND THEIR CANDIDATES*

S/N	NAME OF CANDIDATE	OFFICE	PARTY	GENDER	AGE	QUALIFICATION
1	JCI SEN. TUNDE ANIFOWOSE-KELANI	PRESIDENT	AA	M		BED
	COMRADE ISHAKA PAUL OFEMILE	VICE PRESIDENT	AA	M		HND
2	RAFIU SALAU	PRESIDENT	AD	M	58	SSCE
	AKUCHIE CLINTON CLIFF	VICE PRESIDENT	AD	M	64	B.SC
3	ALH. GANIYU O. GALADIMA	PRESIDENT	ACPN	M		HND
	OJENGBEDE OLUREMI FARIDA	VICE PRESIDENT	ACPN	F		PGD
4	DR. MANI IBRAHIM AHMAD	PRESIDENT	ADC	M		PHD
	OBIANUJU MURPHY-UZOHUE	VICE PRESIDENT	ADC	M		PHD
5	AYENI MUSA ADEBAYO	PRESIDENT	APA	M		B.SC (HONS)
	<b>ANTHONY FAITH OLOGBOSERE</b>	<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>	<b>APA</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>B.SC</b>
6	MUHAMMADU BUHARI	PRESIDENT	APC	M		WASC
	YEMI OSINBAJO	VICE PRESIDENT	APC	M		LLB, BL
7	CHIEF SAM EKE	PRESIDENT	CPP	M	44	PHD
	<b>HASSANA HASSAN</b>	<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>	<b>CPP</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>NURSING CERT &amp; MIDWIFERY</b>
8	HIGH CHIEF AMBROSE N. ALBERT OWURU	PRESIDENT	HOPE	M		LLB, BL, PGD
	ALHAJI HARUNA YAHAYA SHABA	VICE PRESIDENT	HOPE	M		HND
9	COMFORT OLUREMI SONAIYA	PRESIDENT	KOWA	F		PH.D
	ALH. SEIDU BOBBOI	VICE PRESIDENT	KOWA	M		B.A
10	CHIEF MARTIN ONOVO	PRESIDENT	NCP	M		MSC
	IBRAHIM MOHAMMED	VICE PRESIDENT	NCP	M		HND
11	GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN	PRESIDENT	PDP	M		PHD (ZOOLOGY)
	ARC. MOHAMMED NAMADI SAMBO	VICE PRESIDENT	PDP	M		M.SC (ARCH)
12	ALLAGOA KELVIN CHINEDU	PRESIDENT	PPN	M	46	B.SC
	ARABAMHEN MARY	VICE PRESIDENT	PPN	F	35	SSCE
13	GODSON MGBODILE OHAENYEM OKOYE	PRESIDENT	UDP	M		LLB, BL
	HARUNA ADAMU	VICE PRESIDENT	UDP	M		NCE
14	CHIEF (DR.) CHEKWAS OKORIE	PRESIDENT	UPP	M		PHD
	BARR. BELLO UMAR	VICE PRESIDENT	UPP	M		BA

Adopted from INEC, 2015

## 2.5 Media Coverage of Election

According to Opeibi (2005) in Udende (2011), Election periods in any nation generate a lot of interest among the political candidates in particular, and the civil society in general. This is because the destiny of the people and the nation rests squarely on the shoulders of the successful candidates at the polls. This is perhaps, why both political actors and their supporters deploy different persuasive strategies to elicit support and woo voters in order to gain and control power (Uwugiaren, 2015). Experience from several countries has shown that the media have been one of the most powerful influences on how an election is perceived in and outside a country (ibid).

The ‘media are essential to democracy , and a democratic election is impossible without the mediacoverage’ (Omenugha, 2015, p. 64). Media coverage, according to Daramola (2003) can be defined as a process of directing information or ideas to a large and diversified audience through the use of mass media vehicles such as radio, television, internet and other forms of the print media. In the same vein, Peter(2012) observed that most of the electorates depend on the mass media for the messages about the candidates and not directly from the candidates but from the news media.

According to Uwugiaren (2015) many experts have argued that, for an election to go well, it must be free and fair. And, the media have been listed as integral parts of good governance, vital in shaping governmental relationships. Additional study by Hallin and Paolo (2004) note that the mass media are assuming many of the functions that political party once controlled. Instead of learning about an election at a campaign rally or from party canvassers, the mass media have become the primary source of campaign information. As noted by Omenugha (2015), a free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote and the knowledge of how

to cast a vote, but also about a participatory process where voters engage in public debate and have adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself in order to make informed choices.

Meanwhile, the media cover elections because of its work, especially on the presentation and coverage of political contestants which can affect voter behavior and choice of candidate. The media are so recognized because they assume strategic roles in determining the character of the relationship of the state, citizens and other democratic institutions (Uwugiaren, 2015). Furthermore, the media act as a crucial watchdog to democratic elections, safeguarding the transparency of the process. Indeed, 'a democratic election with no media freedom, or stifled media freedom, would be a contradiction' (Adesina, 2015, p. 64). Also, Swanson (2004) notes that in place of or in addition to traditional campaign practices such as rallies of the party faithful, political parties and candidates, rely on the sophisticated use of the mass media to persuade voters to support them at election time.

Afterward, during the election process, as noted by Negrine (1996), political activity increases seriously as a result of which attention of the general public is geared towards the outcome of the election race. Also, a handful of empirical literature also concurs that the media have been very instrumental in informing the voters about the day to day activities of the election process regardless of what it is about (McCombs and Shaw, 1977; Obot, 2013; Zafar, 2013; Chris, 2002; D'Alessio and Allen, 2000; Abass, 2011).

This is why Patricia (n.d), cited by Made (2008), states that the 'media do not merely represent; they also recreate themselves and their vision of the world. What they reproduce is chosen, not random, neutral, and without consequences. The media, for better and frequently for worse,

constitute one of the major forces in shaping our national vision, a chief architect of a sense of identity. McQuail (2005) in this sense acknowledged that “in (such) democracy, the media “usually find their *raison d’être* in their service to their audience, to whom they provide information and education” (p. 523). In doing this, Curran (2005) adds that the media assist voters to make an informed choice at election time. Through the use of the mass media vehicles, the mass media serve as primary agents of mobilization and campaign of political process thereby permitting active involvement in public life.

In fact, Daramola (2003) notes that media serve as important agents of mobilization and socialization, even though the media, more or less, behaves like a political party, labour union and social club. Similarly, the media cover elections because it help create something that is acceptable, the truth and reality of the world around us, which politics is part of, and the media coverage of election can be attributed to its impact on the election results (Richards 2004, cited in Gamji, 2009). Also, Schramm (1964) in Chukuma (2007) notes that the media can widen horizon that is; the media can take a person to a hill and show him or her, the world and people he she never met. In this way Schramm argues, that the media are a liberating force because they can break the bonds of distance and isolation and transport people from a traditional to the great society.

Considering the role newspaper plays in the coverage of politics, Hollihan (2001) found that newspapers perform more successfully at informing voters than television news, candidate advertising radio. This is because “for national political news coverage, the most thorough, comprehensive, and substantive information regarding political campaigns, political issues, and public policies is available to readers of comprehensive large city through daily papers” (p.

79). This is probably why, White (2008) notes that newspapers provide a permanent and official record of current events. White further notes that because of the wider readership, newspaper coverage may have a wider potential to have a social influence. Furthermore, Nwosu (1994:118) succinctly concludes that the newspaper can work along with other forms of communication so as to influence people's development-oriented attitudes, actions and behaviours and thus help to bring about development in the society. But despite newspaper coverage, Findings showed that political issues were mostly tailored towards government's interests, unbalanced media coverage from two news organizations, ownership, political party affiliation, ideological differences and regional differences (Brown and Udomisor, 2015; Cumming, 2006; Fidelis, 2014; Chaudhary, 2001; Abass, 2011; Gamji, 2009; Galadima and Enighe, 2001).

Also, studies on agenda setting reveal that newspaper coverage of campaigns can be a significant source of issue knowledge for voters (Kiousis and McCombs, 2004). Brosius and Weimann (2002) point out that even though the media may not be very successful in telling us what opinions to hold, they are often quite effective in telling us what to have opinions on or what not to think about. While the news may not determine what the people should think, the news suggests which issue is salient and tells people that such an issue is something they should be thinking about (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).

Nonetheless, previous studies have found that the coverage of Africa by the Western media mainly remained focused on negative news, even though the continent has advanced educationally with a huge output of raw materials and a number of notable achievements in the sphere of arts and sport (Gamji, 2009). These roles of the media, according to Lerner (1958),

helped develop “empathy and psychic mobility” which he said, are fundamental qualities the people of a developing nation must have. In line with the foregoing, Pye (1962 and 1966) and Lauer (1977) highlighted the role of the press in national integration, national unity, national image credibility and social habit. Pye (1966) particularly discussed the role of the media in political modernization, administrative and legal development, political mobilization and participation as well as in building democracy.

On the role of the press in political development, Media Tenor’s research (2004) conducted in South Africa showed that from January 1 to April 14 2004 till the date of the presidential election in South Africa, political parties were, by and large, given proportional access to the media. Pye (1966) says:

The communication process thus gives form and structure to the political process by surrounding the politicians on the one hand with the constant reminder that political acts have consequences and that people can have insatiable expectations of politics, and on the other side with the warning that illusions of omnipotence are always dangerous, even among people who have a casual understanding of causality (p.156).

Hence, Overholser and Jamieson (2006) assert that,

In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in the news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues, that is, the media may set the agenda of the campaign (p. 45).

Thus, in examining the role of the mass media during the 2015 General Elections, what comes out clearly is the utter neglect of the cardinal principle of journalistic practice by all the stakeholders; the politicians and mass media institutions and their owners (Nuhu and Asma’u, 2015) . According to Uwugiaren (2015:10) ‘Political opponents from different parties were

engaged in sword fight from all angles, some with short daggers in their pockets looking for whom to stab or crack, just for political relevance and gains'(p. 10).In a more specific term, Kukah (2015) cited in Akubor (2015) posit:

The 2015 General elections have been turned into a theatre of hate speeches and campaigns coloured in a form that defies logic and common sense. Various politically motivated hate speeches about various candidates and especially the two leading Presidential candidates of the All Progressives Congress and the Peoples Democratic Party have been bandied. I am sure if experts should collate analyses of contents of the social media this year, Nigeria will rank top because arguably more than 40 million young Nigerians who have since graduated and have no means of livelihood have found solace in the various social media platforms and are busy churning out divergent messages. The use of HATE SPEECHES in Nigeria preparatory to the coming general elections has become notorious to an extent that you would think and feel that sooner rather than later Nigeria may witness genocidal killings similar to what occurred in Rwanda some years back between the Hutus and Tutsis (p. 7).

It is in line with this that Adibe (2015) describes hate speech as:

Speech that employs discriminatory epithets to insult and stigmatize others on the basis of their race, ethnicity, believe, gender, sexual orientation or other forms of group membership. It is any speech, gesture, conduct, writing, or display which could incite people to violence or prejudicial action. There are individuals and groups in this country who openly relish the freedom to rain insults and profile others by appropriating to themselves the role of ethnic and religious champions (p. 14).

To illustrate this, there is the need to enumerate some of the messages during the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. According to Nuhu and Asma'u (2015)and Akubor (2015) the following are some of the hate speeches:

- Buhari is brain dead (Patience Goodluck Jonathan)
- Buhari shall die in Office," (Governor of Ekiti State, Ayo Fayose)

- Buhari, who was around the same age with my mother, wears baby pampers“ as he no longer has control of his body system(Governor of Ekiti State, Ayo Fayose)
- Jonathan Administration is corrupt ( APC)
- Buhari is a bloody dictator (Dr. Ahmadu Ali, Director General of the President Goodluck Jonathan Presidential Campaign Organization)
- Goodluck Jonathan’s regime is a failed regime because of the threat to national security posed by the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast Region of the country (APC)
- The most Islamic Party in Nigeria is the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) because nobody can be more Muslim than myself, because the name *Namadi* is derived from *Namadina*, meaning someone from the Medina in Saudi Arabia(vice president Namadi Sambo).
- Buhari forged his secondary school certificate,” (Chief Femi Fani-Kayode)
- The First lady, Patience Goodluck Jonathan never gave birth to a biological child (Alhaji Lai Mohammed, APC chieftain)
- Buhari is low intellect (Chief Femi Fani Kayode).
- Vice president Namadi Sambo urged northern Muslims not to vote Buhari, because he associates with Christians.
- Osibanjo is alleged to have over 5000 Churches (vice president Namadi Sambo)
- APC flag bearer receiving funding from terrorist groups including the Boko Haram and ISIS (Chief Femi Fani Kayode).
- PDP-led government had security men specially trained as snipers to eliminate those opposed to President Goodluck Jonathan’s re-election bid (APC).

- President Goodluck Jonathan and his wife are planning to kill me over my criticism of the federal government and for his opposition to the president's re-election (Reverend Ejike Mbaka).

Finally, as noted by Mcnail (2011), in this contemporary time, political communication is now negative, and it attacks political figures for their policies and often for their character and behavior as well. This leads to counterattacks, which is now a dominant method in many campaigns. No wonder, Agba (2006) advised that everything about campaign reporting should serve to guide the electorate on what to do with their votes rather than otherwise.

## **2.6. The Roles of Media in Politics**

The roles of political communication are very enormous and it cannot be exhausted through this medium, however below are some of the roles:

The *function of Media status/social status* is as early as the 1940s; a renowned social researcher and media scholar by name Paul Lazarsfeld noted the power of the mass media to confer status on people and public activities by reporting them. No wonder Lang and Lang (n.d) cited in Aina (2003) believed that through this functions, the mass media force attention to certain issues. They build up public images of political figures by constantly presenting objects suggesting what individuals in the mass media should think about, know about and have feelings about. For example, according to Okunna (1999) print media can enhance or uplift the status of a political candidate in a number of ways thus:

- The media can give larger headlines to the favoured candidate.
- The media can feature more lead stories on the candidate.

- Through placement, the media can give more prominent position to articles on the candidate.
- The media can print more quotations from the candidates.
- Photographs and other prominence enhancing strategies can accompany stories on the candidates.
- The media can print more remarks praising the candidates.

Furthermore, a clear manifestation of this power took place in the British political election of 1964, and is still being cited as a typical example of the use and abuse of media political power in a democracy. Blumer and Mcquail (2010) assert that ‘the comparative success of the liberals in the election was largely attributed to the attention paid to them by the mass media, particularly television; the attention reassured the voters of liberal presence and viability and in the process enhanced the status of the party’ (p. 213). In the area of politics, accumulated research evidence has continued to point in this direction that the mass media are available and accessible. That is probably why McNair (2002) aptly points out that in democratic political systems, the media function both as transmitters of political communication which originates outside the media organization.

The second role of media in election is *Agenda status function*. Agenda status has to do with the power of determining the topics for political debate and discussion in the society. Media coverage of issues set an agenda on them and helps the audience to treat certain issues as also being more important than others. The agenda statusfunction consequently influences the attitudes or decisions of the audience towards the subjects on the agenda (Obot, 2013). In this regard, Brosius and Weimann (2002) in Obot (2013) point out that even though the media may

not be very successful in telling us what opinions to hold, they are often quite effective in telling us what to have opinions on or what not to think about. This is perhaps why a party or candidate that is loved by the populace and issues advocated by such a party or candidate automatically get on the media agenda as the key issues. This eventually determines the outcome of the election. Little wonder it has been argued that political communication coverage of issues during an election could prod the electorate into perceiving certain issues as being more important than others and could consequently influence people's decision about candidates based on how these candidates address themselves to those issues (Okunna, 1999).

Another function is that of *Motivation and mobilization*. Mobilization is when people have political awareness of certain ideas and objectives with a view to internalizing those ideas in the people. According to Gana (1996) cited in Oso (2002) mobilization is the process of pooling together, harnessing and actualizing potential human resources for the purpose of development. It is a process whereby human beings are made aware of the resources at their disposal, and are also motivated and energized to collectively utilize such resource for the improvement of the spiritual and material conditions of living.

The media functions of motivation and mobilization encourage and ginger people up, to achieve the aims or goals of the society. These objectives are numerous ranging from nationalism, freedom from oppression, domination and so on. Daramola (2003) notes that, political messages through the media serve as an important agent of mobilization and socialization. A good example of the mobilization function is the effort of the military president Ibrahim Babangida's Directorate for Mass Mobilization for Self-reliance, Social justice and Economic Recovery

(MAMSER). It was meant to initiate and internalize new instance such as new political culture devoid of bitterness, no to violence and tribalism in Nigeria (Daramola, 2003).

Furthermore, the next role of media in politics is that of *Infotainment function*. Infotainment function is the combination of two functions ‘information and entertainment function’ of media to the people. Hanxy and Maxcy (1999) said that entertainment refers to communication activities primarily considered amusing while, according to Daramola (2007) information simply means creating awareness for the audience. Informing citizens of what is happening around them; is what we may call the ‘surveillance’ or ‘monitoring’ functions of the media (Obot, 2013).The political parties engage in advert or marketing that is very informative and entertaining because they need to persuade the electorate to vote in their favour. For example this advert, by the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) can be considered as entertaining and informative:

I tire for this problem oh.I tire for this life oh. na so so palava.Ogini! No work, no food, no house, no light, the small water dey dey bring na so so dirty full am. The small money I dey get na so so transport dey finish am. Haba! too low. Hospital no work. I tire for this problem oh, i tire for this life oh! My brother wetin you dey think oh, my sister wetin you dey think oh, help done come, SDP, MKO, Kingibe, action, MKO, Kingibe, SDP, progress. Abiola na the luck ooo, SDP na the party to solve our problems and better our lives ooo, MKO, MKO,MKO, Action. Abiola! Abiola! Abiola! Progress. Na him be the luck for better tomorrow ooo (**Victolatv, 2015**).

Another function is that of *Integration*. According to Pate (2015b), integration means living together or fusing together. He further, states that integration entails the admission of the reality and submission to the collective spirits of oneness in a diverse national setting. For Churchill (1991), integration is the provision to all persons, group, and nations of access to the variety of messages which they need in order to know and understand each other, to appreciate other’s

living condition, viewpoints and aspirations. Integration is a function of media which is of particular importance in our country Nigeria. There are ethnic, religious and other diversities which divide people both nationally and internationally. Through the media, they converge in order to know, understand and appreciate each other. The role of the media in Nigeria's national integrations is inextricably linked to the political development of the nation (Pate, 2015b). In Nigeria for instance, media has integrated the north and south together, by making sure that each ethnic group is treated fairly. For example in FRSC/NTA news are broadcast in the three major ethnic groups (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba). Furthermore, programmes that are culturally inclined are always encouraged by state NTA. Also the media have promoted the issue of zoning; the two regions have been doing power rotation among themselves. The north produced a president while the south produce the vice etc.

According Daramola (2007), the communication of knowledge, values and social norms from one general to another or from members of a group to newcomers is referred to as the cultural function of the media. The *Promotion of culture* is another function which the media performs during election in our society. The media disseminate cultural and artistic products for the purpose of preserving the past heritage of the people. Jingles are written in local dialects, politician dress up in different cultural attires, party members or politicians use their local language to reach out to the electorate because not all of them can understand English. For instance, the then vice president, Namadi Sambo tried to communicate with the electorates in the northern part of the country in the Hausa language during their campaign as follows: *Buhari ya dauko pastor a matsayin mataimakinsa kun san coci nawa yake dashi? Yana da coci 5000, don haka karku zabe su* (Buhari has selected a pastor as his running mate. Do you know how many churches he has? He has 5000 churches, so based on that, don't vote for them).

Finally, the role of the media in elections is that of *Advertising function*. Advertising is a planned form of communication with the sole aim of captivating the interest of a consumer's behavior towards a particular product and service. According to Grace (2015:2) 'political parties and their candidates are becoming increasingly aware of the effectiveness of advertising and its role in getting the electorates to choose a particular candidate or party over the other by way of informing them' (p. 2). Stephen and Shanto (1995) believe that unlike most channels of communication, advertising allows candidates to reach uninterested and unmotivated citizens who ordinarily pay little attention to news reports, debates, and other campaign events. Electoral campaign is ultimately aimed at persuading voters to do what the person paying for the advertisements wants them to do, that is, to vote for a particular candidate, which means not voting for any other candidates (McNair, 2011).

For example, in one image, as reported by the *Daily Telegraph*, David Cameron of England was depicted as Freddie Mercury with the caption, 'I'm just a rich boy and nobody loves me. He's just a rich boy, from a rich family'. While in Nigeria, between the 2007, 2011 and the 2015 elections; the use of political advert campaigns have widened from mode of delivery, type of language used, to forms of media used to communicate these messages. Each candidate tried to outdo the other using political advert campaigns. They came up with various jingles such as: "...everybody loves Jimi Agbaje..." slogans like "...*Ekoonibaje* o" amongst others (Grace, 2015, p. 4). This is why advertising is very instrumental in the evaluation of the progress of the candidate. According to Denton and Woodward (1990) during the 1988 US presidential election found that 25 per cent of the voters claimed that political adverts had influenced their choice of candidates. No Wonder to McNair (2011), transmitting political messages through the format of

advertising has steadily grown out of proportion. In 1988, George Bush and Michael Dukakis spent between them some \$85 million on television advertising. During the 1992 presidential campaign George Bush's team spent upwards of \$60 million on television advertising alone. In 1996, the Clinton campaign spent more than \$50 million. In 2004, George W. Bush and Democratic challenger, John Kerry, spent a record \$600 million on TV and radio advertising. In the 2005, British general election campaign, a total of £42 million was spent by the parties.

## **2.7 Press Freedom in Election**

The role of the media, particularly during elections is immense. It provides voters with unbiased information regarding political parties and their candidates so that the society would empower politicians out of informed choices (Ndisika, 2015). Freedom of the press is one of the yardsticks to judge the maturity of democracy in many societies. According to Ndisika (2015), press freedom during elections in democratic settings affect everybody either directly or indirectly and the expectation is that whenever there is fair, balanced and inclusive participation of all people in the election of leaders without discrimination on the ground of sex or any other factor, the society will progress. Apparently, just few citizens personally attend political campaign rallies. Most of the electorates depend on the mass media for the messages about the candidates (Peter, 2012). According to McCombs and Shaw (1977) voters pay some attention to all the political news in the press, regardless of what it is about or whether it is originated to a favoured a political candidate.

A study of African countries with multiparty systems since the early 1990s till date showed a significantly positive relationship between media exposure and voter turnout and access to vital information (Kuenzi and Lambright, 2007).The contribution of press organisations to public

knowledge has been widely recognised. For example, few countries have a good record in terms of press freedom and members of the press in many countries including Nigeria are still struggling for full enjoyment of this right. On the global press freedom index, Benin Republic shared almost the same rank as the United Kingdom in 2005 and was ranked highest in Africa (World Bank, 2006 in Kuenzi and Lambright, 2007). The prevalence of free press organizations in Benin Republic was driven by highly motivated local agents of cultural change. According to Kohnert (2006) Private radio stations driven by cross-fertilization of foreign and indigenous ideas contributed immensely towards the entrenchment of press freedom and promotion of political innovation at the grassroots levels in Benin.

Similarly, community radio stations established in the Democratic Republic of Congo contributed tremendously towards the country's political transition, especially by disseminating necessary information to the public, including the relatively isolated people in conflict areas. In Côte d'Ivoire, irate citizens dislodged General Robert in October 2000 after he declared himself winner of an election he had in fact lost during the ballot count. In his interpretation of the Côte d'Ivoire situation, Bandura (2002) reasoned as follows: These macro-social applications of media ingenuity in translating social cognitive principles into social practice illustrate how a small collective effort can make a huge difference in an urgent global problem.

On the contrary, Akinwale (2010) believes that Nigeria is not yet a free and open society despite the availability of diverse viewpoints flowing from a remarkable abundance of press organizations in the country. However, several press organizations in Nigeria lack complete freedom due to censorship, multiple power centres and volatile political institutions (Agbaje, 1992). In spite of the proliferation of press organizations and constitutional provisions for press

freedom, yet it has not been fully enforced. The Military regimes and civilian administrations have in turn violated constitutional rights to press freedom in Nigeria. For example, several cases of arrested journalists were reported in Nigeria even during democratic dispensations; State restriction of freedom of expression and law enforcement personnel brutality were regular threats to members of the press. Police raided editorial offices and arrested employees of press organizations as a result of press publications considered critical of the Nigerian government. As such, the power of the press to check governance institutions has been curtailed, with grave implications for socio-economic development in Nigeria (Akinwale, 2010).

In Nigeria, according to Agbaje (1989) cited in Pate (2015b), 'the history of the early years of the press indicates an absence of ethnic motivations and calculations, regional coloration in the philosophy or establishment and operations of the Nigerian press' (p. 12). The attainment of political independence, the increase in the number of indigenous newspapers, national development and intellectual sophistication expanded the role in the country's quest for advancement and democratization. As noted by Pate (2015b), the ethnic tendencies commonly found in the content of the press are a latter development that sought to reflect in a relevant manner the various contentions that defined the politics of the nation.

Furthermore, according to Graham (1983), as cited in Onoja (2005), when independence was assured, further party newspapers appeared as it became clear that owning a newspaper was a necessary part of a successful political campaign. It was in the light of the foregoing scenario that as at 1959, the Owelle of Onitsha and first Governor General of Nigeria, Late Azikiwe and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens party (NCNC) controlled 10 newspapers while their political rival, the Action Group Party led by late Chief Obefemi Awolowo, controlled 14

newspapers. This is no doubt why, a veteran Nigerian journalist, Thompson (n.d) in Onoja (2005) categorized newspapers in Africa in three distinct groups:

- (a) privately-owned press by indigenous Nigerians
- (b) Press owned by political parties and groups, and
- (c) Press established and sponsored by the federal and state governments.

Furthermore, newspaper ownership in Nigeria is closely tied to ethnicity in political reporting. Newspapers that were published before and after the formation of the Nigerian union of journalists (NUJ) toed the line of their proprietors and remained partisans. History has it that the available newspapers took positions in the 1923 first election in Nigeria. This is because as pro-Nigerian National Democratic party (NNDP) or anti-NNDP and a few were neutral during political campaigns. Even when the election had been conducted, the newspapers took sides and beat the drum of division and each newspaper stood on the side of its owner and served as the mouthpiece of its owner's political party (Omu, 1978 cited in Onoja, 2005). Similarly, the *West African Pilot*, a newspaper established by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe which had remained non-partisan in the crusade against colonial domination, soon became partisan during the regional election in the 1950s. The newspaper originally had a national scope but as time will tell, the paper later served as the mouthpiece of the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), a political party led by Zik for two decades. In this vein, Onoja (2005) affirms that Ownership became and has continued to be a crucial factor in determining the nationalist orientation of newspapers.

According to Maduka (1997), cited in Onoja (ibid), during an election time, or run-up to an election, a broadcaster was once hauled before a top Nigerian government functionary for

allowing the opposition a hearing on the government-owned station even in normal times. For instance, in Nigeria, the role played by the mass media in the coverage of presidential elections in the second republic (1979-1983) has not been different. The mass media adopted a hegemonic political perspective, and confined itself to serving the interest of its owners and ethnic balancing. This they did without consideration for the geographical spread of the five major political parties in the 1979 general elections (NPN, UPN, GNPP, NPP and PRP), Newspapers owned by politicians believed that their masters must win the election.

Whereas, in the present dispensation, many news organizations end up endorsing a candidate or party in an election, with some maintaining a surreptitious bias in their selective reporting. Daramola (2013) admits this when he says virtually all information published by the media is suspect. To him, “Choosing what events to cover on the lead, involves a lot of subjective decisions”. He further pointed out that even those news sources that provide information to reporters do not do so out of genuine desire to make information available to the public. Sobowale (1994) concurs with this position when he said that owners’ interest greatly affect reportage. He affirms: “when interests such as pecuniary benefits, group and religious interests are involved, ownership plays a leading role particularly its directionality”. He further points out that government-owned press tends to give more favourable coverage than the privately-owned, if the image of the owner is affected; a case of who pays the piper dictates the tune. For instance, according to Okpoko, (2014) reportage of the presidential election in the third republic election that was annulled by the military government; the Northern part of the country newspapers (*New Nigerian* and *Daily Times*) was clearly in support of it, while their South West counterpart newspapers (*Guardian*, *the Punch*, *National Concord* and *Champion* )took the opposite axis. A few others whose interests were considered more paramount than political or regional allegiance

charted a more middle course. Ownership of the media thus confers control over the nature of the information disseminated.

Consequently, there is common agreement by political scientists and historians that political parties in Nigeria are formed along ethnic lines. These parties championed parochial and ethnic interests at the expense of national unity and a stable government. From the NCNC, AG, NPC of the pre-colonial days and the first republic (1951-1966), through the NAP, NPN, UPN, NPP, GNPP, PRP, (1979-1983) of the second and third republics to the NRC and SDP (1991-1993) of the botched third republic, political party formation has been an ethnic affair. No wonder according to Uzuegbunam (1997) cited in Daramola (2013) the first republic had the NCNC which began as a national party and ended as an Igbo party. Action group and the NPC were all regional, ethnic confraternities in political party garments. Regrettably, none of these parties could be said to qualify in the real sense of a national political organization.

Edogbo (1994) citing Grant (1991) in Daramola (2013) did a comprehensive study of the relationship between the press and the political system in Nigeria during the first republic and found out, among other things, that the character of political reporting and commentary in the print media was entirely dependent on media ownership structure and the owner's relationship with the political system. This concluded that most newspapers often spoke for one political party or one region against another, which meant that the press acted not as an impartial estate, but as the mouthpiece of the political division in Nigeria

As a result of this, Daramola (2013) concluded that Newspapers that were published before and after the formation of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) toed the line of their proprietors and remained partisan. One recalls here the role played by *The Record* (1891-1930) of

Thomas Horatio Jackson, *LagosDailyNews* of Herbert Macaulay (both men founded the first Nigeria political party, Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923 during the campaign for the first election in Nigeria' (p. 44). In the same vein, Koromah et al (1999) as cited by Agba (2006) observe that between 1979 and 1983, press partisanship was clearly manifested in political reporting in Nigeria. During the period the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) was in control of national government, the federal government owned media such as New Nigerian, Daily Times, NTA (television) and Radio Nigeria pulled along behind the NPN, acting as the organ of government propaganda. For instance, the Abiola media conglomerate- National Concord, African Concord and Community Concord- waged an all-out media war with the Kaduna-based press on the June 12, 1993 annulment.

In fact, electoral dirtiness and insincerity are most pronounced in electioneering campaigns. Most state governments today, own one newspaper or the other. The Federal Government, after its foray into *MorningPost* (1961-1966) *Daily Times* and *NewNigerian* newspapers (both now out of print) does not own a newspaper now. After all, politicians keep on establishing newspapers, radio and television stations even in the fourth republic (1999 till date). Among those newspapers is *TheNation* newspaper of Alhaji Ahmed Bola Tinubu, former governor of Lagos State and leader of All Progressive Congress (a political party), *TheSun* newspaper was established by Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, former governor of Abia State and the *Independent* newspaper which is being financed and controlled by Chief James Onaneve Ibori, former governor of Delta State. Like their old counterparts such as the *Nigerian Tribune*, *West African Pilot*, *Lagos Daily News*, *The Record*, *Morning Post*, *Sketch*, these new set of papers will in addition to profit making, act as the 'views papers' of their politician owners (Daramola, 2013).

In addition, Pate (2015b) notes that the ‘ownership, character, content and interest of the media are all clearly reflective of the interests of the dominant economic and political groups’ views reproduced by the media to the majority of the populace whose voices are subdued’ (p. 10). Oso (2014) in Pate (2015b) vividly captured the scenarios, thus:

All the groups want access to state power and as such, recruit the press in the hot contest for it. This has been both beneficial and inimical to the press in the country. While, it has given the press its strength to limit a centralist and authoritarian tendency in the polity, safe-guard some level of divergence or differences and it is also its Achilles heel. It has also been inimical in the sense that it has sometimes compromised the credibility of the press. It makes the press a captive instrument of parochial interest groups and a vehicle for the circulation and promotion of primordial cultural symbols antithetical to national ones. Thus, a project could easily be labeled as bias. This was the fate of the June 12 struggle which was a point of labeled a ‘Yoruba affair’. The recent anti petrol price increase protest was also presented as sectional by some shadowy groups. There are also commentators who see the media coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency along regional/religious divide (p. 11)

Furthermore, below are the list of some newspapers in Nigeria and their area of political communication support:

<b>S/N</b>	<b>PAPER TITLE</b>	<b>OWNER</b>	<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>YEAR</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>CHAMPION</b>	<b>CHIEF EMMANUEL IWUANYANWU</b>	<b>SOUTH EAST</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>DAILY TRUST</b>	<b>KABIRU ABDULLAHI YUSUF</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>GUARDIAN</b>	<b>LATE ALEX IBRU</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>1983</b>

<b>4</b>	LEADERSHIP	SAM NDA ISAIAH	NORTH	2004
<b>5</b>	THE NATION	BOLA AHMED TINUBU	SOUTH WEST	2006
<b>6</b>	PEOPLES DAILY	MALLAM WADA ABDULLAHI MAIDA	NORTH	2008
<b>7</b>	THE PUNCH	AJIBOLA OGUNSOLA	SOUTH WEST	1971
<b>8</b>	THIS DAY	NDUKA OBIAGBENA	SOUTH-SOUTH	1995
<b>9</b>	THE SUN	DR ORJI UZOR KALU	SOUTH EAST	2003
<b>10</b>	VANGUARD	MR SAM AMUKA PEMU	SOUTH	1983
<b>11</b>	THE NIGERIAN COMPASS	OTUNBA GBENGA DENIAL	SOUTH WEST	2008
<b>12</b>	BLUEPRINT	MUHAMMED IDRIS	NORTH	2011

Adopted from Adeyanju (2014)

In conclusion, the neglect of press freedom in Nigeria can also aggravate national disaster, as demonstrated by experience in South Africa. Danso and Macdonald (2001) assert that the print media's failure to check the veracity of government's statements on immigration in South Africa was partly responsible for some of the worst examples of xenophobic behaviour in that country.

## 2.8 Review of Related Studies

Manystudies have been carried out on the media coverage of elections and political parties. However, only a few that are closely related to the objectives of this study are reviewed.

Empirical studies carried out on the level of attention/frequency of the Newspapers coverage of election by Obot (2013); Zafar (2013); Chris (2002); D'Alessio and Allen (2000); Brown and Udomisor (2015); Cumming (2006); Fidelis (2014); Chaudhary (2001); Abass (2011); Gamji (2009) and Galadima and Enighe (2001); among others are reviewed as follows:

A study carried out by Obot (2013) titled *Mass Media Electioneering Campaign and Uyo (Nigeria) Voters' Decision during 2011 General Elections*, used the survey method of research design, multi stage sampling techniques (stratified and purposive sampling) and questionnaire as the instrument of data gathering. The study found that electorates in Nigeria considered mass media coverage of electioneering campaign during the 2011 general elections as averagely satisfactory and the majority of the respondents adjudged that the mass media were best in providing electioneering campaign information. The study also acknowledged that despite media coverage, other factors contribute to the choice of electorate. He found out that respondents voted for the political party and candidate of their choice because of geo-ethnic affiliation, monetary or material inducement, protest against the incumbent political party/candidate, general acceptability of the candidate, Party manifesto, and good antecedent of the candidate and attractiveness of the Party's media campaign messages.

Similarly, Zafar (2013) in a research titled *Comparative analysis of political parties' news and advertisement coverage of national Urdu dailies regarding election*, compared the *Daily Jang* and *Daily Express* newspapers in Pakistan, using content analysis as research method. The findings of the study revealed that newspapers in Pakistan had the same policy for different political parties in terms of space, frequency, placement, and more favourable slant. Correspondingly, Chris (2002) study entitled *Newspaper coverage of the 2000 election in Japan*, content analyzed three major newspapers in Japan; *Yomiuri*, *Asahi* and *Mainichi*. The study

shows that readers of the major quality newspapers in Japan are fairly well served in terms of being exposed to a considerable amount of substantive coverage of the election campaign. Additionally, D'Alessio and Allen (2000) in a study *Media bias in presidential elections: A meta-analysis* also used content analysis as a research method. Findings from the study indicated that newspapers, reporters, and editors may have their ideological bias in the coverage of presidential campaigns, but such bias has insignificant influence on the net coverage of candidates.

On the contrary, a research titled *Evaluation of Political News Reportage in Nigeria's Vanguard and The Guardian Newspapers* by Brown and Udomisor (2015) also adopted content analysis and stratified sampling method. The study findings shows that political issues were not given adequate attention in the newspapers, and were mostly tailored towards government's interests. Similarly, findings from a study conducted by Cumming (2006) with title *unbalanced media coverage and the 2004 presidential election: the New York Times vs. the Washington times*, Content analyzed *New York Times* and *the Washington Times*. The study found evidence of unbalanced media coverage from *The Washington Times* giving more unbalanced reporting than *The New York Times*, 64% to 36%. On the problems of the wide spread negative image of the media in electioneering campaigns in Nigeria's political history; Fidelis (2014) in a study titled *The Role of the Mass Media in the Nigerian Electoral Process*, used the comparative phenomenological analysis to examine the performances of the media in the Nigerian electoral process. This is with regard to its fundamental roles to inform, educate, entertain, and monitor in the electoral process. The study found that the greatest challenge of covering politics and election by the Nigerian media is posed by the proprietors of the media. They are mostly persons with political interests and discourage the media from adhering to the fundamental principles of

balance and objectivity. Also, Chaudhary (2001) conducted a study with the title “*International News Selection: A Comparative Analysis of Negative News in the Washington Post and the Daily Times of Nigeria*” adopting content analysis method. The researcher examined the slant of a week’s worth of news stories found in two newspapers, *The Washington Post* and *the Daily Times of Nigeria*. The findings ultimately concluded that the newspapers, *the Washington Post and the Daily Times of Nigeria*, both exhibited news that was about 30% positive and negative respectively.

Nonetheless, Abass (2011) in a research entitled *The Role of Print Media in Deepening Democracy in Nigeria: Content Analysis of Daily Trust and Vanguard Newspapers coverage of 2011 Presidential Election*, adopted simple random sampling and the cluster sampling techniques. Findings show that the Nigerian print media could be used as a veritable tool for electioneering. However, these functions of the media are hampered by some factors namely, ownership, political party affiliation, ideological and regional differences. In other words, stories that are considered favourable to Daily Trust may not be favourable to The Vanguard, based on the regional and political leanings. Likewise, a research by Gamji (2009) with the title “*coverage of the Nigeria 2007 presidential election by the British press*”, content analysed *The Times, The Sunday Times, The Telegraph, The Sunday Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian and The Observer* newspapers within a 21 day period from the 4th to the 25th April 2007. Findings from the study show that the coverage of the Nigeria 2007 presidential election by the British press was limited and that the period of most interest to the newspapers was the pre-election period. The study also reveals that foreign country assessment of the Nigeria 2007 presidential election by the British press coverage was unfavourable, describing the election process as chaotic and undemocratic.

However, Galadima and Enighe (2001) in a study titled *The Press in Nigerian politics: A historical analysis of issues and pattern of news coverage*. Analyzed the Nigerian press coverage of political issues and came up with the following conclusion: The Nigerian press is always used by their owners (both private and government) for the propagation of the interest of such owners, especially in the struggle to gain power or monopolize same. There is recklessness and partisanship on the part of the press during elections and transition to civil rule programmes instead of restraint and responsible reporting of events.

Similarly, a research by Grant (1991) in Edogbo (1994) cited by Daramola (2013) on the “*relationship between the press and the political system in Nigeria during the First Republic*”, reported that the character of political reporting and commentary in the print media was entirely dependent on media ownership structure and the owner’s relationship with the political system. As a result, he concluded that most newspapers often spoke for one political party or one region against another, which meant that the press acted not as an impartial estate, but as mouthpieces of the political divisions in Nigeria.

Furthermore, reviews on *Theme of Coverage* by newspapers during the period of election by Benoit, Stein and Hansen (2005); Peter (2012) among others found out the following:

A study titled *New York Times coverage of presidential campaigns from 1952-2000* by Benoit, Stein and Hansen (2005), employed analysis of categories consisting of policy, character, advocacy (instead of horse race), corruption, and voter’s election information. They found that the most common topic of campaign coverage was horse race (40%), followed by candidates’ character (31%), and then discussion of candidates’ policy positions (25%). A study by Peter (2012) titled *The Daily Graphic coverage of presidential campaigns in Ghana, 1992-2004*,

examined the coverage of general presidential campaigns by the Daily Graphic (a Ghanaian newspaper) concerning the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) from 1992-2004. The Content analysis revealed that advocacy was the most common topic of the campaign coverage. In essence discussion of candidates' policy positions receives more mention than discussion of their character.

A research titled *a functional analysis of 2004 Ukrainian presidential debates* by Beniot and Klyukovski (2006) analyzed televised Ukrainian presidential election in 2006. The research adopted content analysis as a methodology, with the aim of finding out the most common theme of coverage during the 2006 presidential election. The study revealed that policy was the most common theme of coverage more often than character. Earlier on, a study titled *Newspaper objectivity in the 1952 campaign* by Klein and Maccoby (1954) cited in Peter (2012) in a study *The Daily Graphic coverage of presidential campaigns in Ghana, 1992-2004* investigated newspaper coverage of the 1952 presidential contest and found that 60 percent of stories concerned policy, 16 percent devoted to candidate's personal qualities (character), and 15 percent was about scandals. According to a study by Peter (2012) citing Russonello and Wolf (1979) in a study titled *Newspaper coverage of the 1976 and 1968 presidential campaigns*. Findings indicated that 56 percent of newspaper coverage focused on the horse race, 22 percent was about policy, and 17 percent dealt with the candidate's character. Similarly, a study titled *over the wire and on TV: CBS and UPI in campaign 80*, by Robinson and Sheehan (1983) investigated news coverage of the 1980 United States' presidential campaign from January to October. It found that most of the space was devoted to horse race than to other issues. Likewise, Stovall (1982) in a study titled *Foreign policy issue coverage in the 1980 presidential*

*campaign*, which content analyzed the same campaign concluded that horse race made up 86 percent of newspaper coverage in 1980 and the remaining 14 percent was about other issues.

A research by Stempel and Windhauser (1991), with the title *Newspaper coverage of the 1984 and 1988 campaigns* analyzed the content of newspaper coverage of the 1984 and 1988 United States' presidential campaigns in 1984. Policy consisted of 39 percent of stories, followed by campaign events (35%), candidate character (21%), and horse race (5%). In 1988, policy declined to 22 percent, campaign events were 34 percent, character 27 percent, and horse race 7 percent. Likewise, Mantler and Whiteman (1995) in a research they conducted with the title *Attention to candidates and issues in newspaper coverage of 1992 presidential campaign* reported that in 1992, issues comprised 49.5 percent of newspaper coverage, followed by horse race at 41.4 percent and character at 9.1 percent. But Just, Crigler, and Buhr (1999) in a study *Voice, substance, and cynicism in presidential campaign media* found that 70 percent of newspaper campaign stories in 1992 concerned policy, 39 percent referred to horse race, and 34 percent of stories dealt with character. Sigelman and Bullock (1991) in a study titled *Candidates, issues, horse races, and hoopla: Presidential campaign coverage, 1888-1988* used content analysis method. They found that candidate's character maintained a somewhat steady coverage of about 10 percent, Policy issues comprised about 25 percent and campaign events accounted for about 40 percent of the stories.

Comparing news coverage of election campaigns in the Swedish and the United States newspapers Stromback and Dimitrova (2006) in Peter (2012) with the title *The Daily Graphic coverage of presidential campaigns in Ghana, 1992-2004*, found that the United States papers emphasized horse race more than political strategy frames. Obot (2013) in his work titled *Mass*

*Media Electioneering Campaign and Uyo (Nigeria) Voters' Decision during 2011 General Elections*, in which he used the survey method of research design, multi stage sampling techniques (stratified and purposive sampling) and the questionnaire as the instrument of data gathering, found out that in Nigeria the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) was mature and issue-oriented in its mass media electioneering campaign. This was followed by the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) respondents expressing satisfaction with it, while the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) came third. Moreover, a study titled *Newspaper coverage of the 2000 election in Japan*, content analyzing three major newspapers in Japan; *Yomiuri, Asahi and Mainichi* by Chris (2002) reveals that there was not much evidence of presidential-style election coverage and Parties. Policy received the lion's share of election coverage with party leaders assuming a minor role in the electoral system.

Additionally, reviews on *Political party/candidates coverage* by newspapers during the period of election conducted by CMPA (2004); Hajo, Rens and Claes (2012) among others discovered the following:

Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) (2004) in a study *Kerry gets best press ever* using content analysis, reported that in the 2004 Presidential Election, the Democratic Party (DP) received the most favourable network news coverage than any political parties since 1980. Similarly, a study titled *a Worldwide Presidential Election: The Impact of the Media on Candidate and Campaign Evaluations* by Hajo, Rens and Claes (2012), evaluated the 2008 U.S. Presidential election event. They assessed the media effects on candidate campaign evaluations and expectations and evaluated the impact of the media coverage of the Presidential candidates of Democratic Party (Obama) and Republican Party (McCain) on public opinion dynamics in the

Netherlands. The study found that media favourability increased positive evaluations of McCain, while being exposed to the campaign in general contributed to more favorable assessments of Obama.

Similarly in Nigeria, Chukuma (2010) in a thesis entitled, *Nigerian press coverage of 2007 presidential election campaigns*, content analyzed *Daily Independent, Guardian and Vanguard newspapers* coverage of the 2007 presidential election campaigns. The study found that the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, got the highest coverage of election campaigns in the press, with more than one-third of the entire news stories covered on her. The same party, PDP, got the most favourable news stories from the press as more than one-third of the entire favourable news stories were on the party compared to the 25 parties that featured presidential candidates during campaigns and five parties: PDP, AC, ANPP, AD and PPA got prominent news headlines in the front pages of the Nigerian press during the campaign period.

Likewise, Ojo (2003) in a study *Election Monitoring, the Media and 2003 Experience*, for which he adopted content analysis as his research design and used code sheet as his instrument of data gathering, observed that owing to the large number of political parties and candidates in the various elections, there was a legitimate logistic challenge to the media on how to fairly allocate time, regardless of this situation. However, it is difficult to excuse the overall lop-sidedness of the media coverage of the campaigns and elections. President Olusegun Obasanjo and his ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) dominated the media throughout the period of the campaigns and elections. He further states that there was a huge imbalance between the coverage received by the PDP/President Obasanjo and the other political parties and their candidates. This is both in terms of the amount of the coverage and the quality of coverage with the result that the PDP/President Obasanjo and the All Nigerian Peoples Party (ANPP), its presidential candidate,

Major-General Muhammadu Buhari, appeared to have received more coverage than all the other parties and candidates put together.

Correspondingly, a study titled *Media performance in Nigerian elections: lessons learned since 1999* by Pate (2015a) citing NBC (2011), on the audience survey by the National Broadcasting Commission on the Broadcast Media Coverage of the 2011 General Elections, showed that 64% of Nigerians adjudged the coverage as unfair among the various parties and candidates as against 34% that rated the performance fair. The coverage was characterized by partisanship in the public stations, high cost of media visibility and weak investigative and non-critical posture of the media output. Similarly, in the same study, citing UNPD (2011) on the media coverage of electoral issues in the 2011 elections in Nigeria, concluded that the three big political parties: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) dominated the media space. Also in the same work, citing EU (2011) on media coverage of the 2011 general election, whose findings revealed the lack of “balanced reports on the candidates and their parties, since 21 out of 63 parties contesting in the elections were mentioned during the NTA prime time, 80% of the coverage allocated to political actors was devoted to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), 5% to Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and Congress for Progressive Change (CPC). Likewise, African Independent Television (AIT) followed a scheme similar to that of Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) while Channels TV was the only one that offered the most equitable coverage of political parties and presidential aspirants”.

Equally, a study carried out by Blumler and McQuail (1968) titled *Television in Politics: its Uses and Influence* adopting the survey method of analysis showed that the comparative success of the

Liberals in the British political election of 1964 was largely attributed to the attention paid to them by the mass media. This attention, they asserted, reassured the voters of the Liberals' presence and viability and in the process enhanced the status of the party. In line with the findings of Blumler and McQuail (1968), Kiouisis and McCombs' (2004) in a study *Agenda-setting effects and attitude strength: Political figures during the 1996 presidential election*, in which they used the survey method of analysis, found correlations between polled approval ratings for politicians and the amount of coverage major newspapers allotted such politicians. Typically, a politician who received more media coverage had a higher approval rating when compared to a politician who received less media coverage.

## **2.9 Theoretical Frameworks**

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is the Agenda Setting Theory propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw and Political Economy Theory by Karl Marx. The theories shall be discussed in an attempt to explain the position of the media in Nigeria the reportage of political parties in the 2015 presidential election.

### **2.9.1 Agenda Setting Theory**

The genesis of Agenda Setting Theory can be traced far back to 1972, when two professors at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw published an article in *Public Opinion Quarterly* journal. That day proved to be the dawn of a new research tradition in the field of mass communication known as Agenda Setting Theory (Zhu and Blood, 1997). The concept of agenda setting was launched by McCombs and Shaw during the 1968 presidential election in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, that mass communication can influence audiences in ways only previously speculated using a simple but innovative methodology. As

described by Kwong, *et al* (2014) McCombs and Shaw first conducted a content analysis of both the press and television newscasts in order to identify what issues the media were emphasizing on during the 1968 presidential election and then surveyed 100 undecided voters in the Chapel Hill area to find out what issues they felt were the most important. The result showed that issues salience or what the public considered to be the most important issues of the day was being shaped by the mass media. Similarly, the notion of a media capable of determining what the people view as important is much older. No wonder, Miller (2005) citing Lippmann (1922) argued that the mass media create image of events in people's minds and warns of the serious responsibility of the press as purveyors and interpreters of events in the society.

Furthermore, Agenda-setting presupposes that the mass media pre-determine what issues are regarded as important to a given society at a given point in time. The theory does not ascribe to the media the power to determine what we actually think, but it does ascribe to them the power to determine what we are actually thinking about (Asemah and Yaroson, 2008). According to Zhu and Blood (1997) the media accomplish this agenda setting functions not by directly telling the public that one issue is more important than another (which has proven to be ineffective) instead, the media signal the importance of certain issues by giving them preferential treatment. This they did by giving more frequency coverage, more prominent position, weighting factor such as column inches for press stories, or amount of air time for television/radio, position in newspaper or program among others.

Thus, the media set the agenda for political campaigns: According to Folarin (2002), the following are some of the tools responsible for media agenda setting:

1. The quantity or frequency of reporting.

2. Prominence given to the reports-through headlines display, pictures and layout in newspapers, magazines, films, graphics, timing on radio and television.
3. The degree of conflict generated by the reports; and
4. The Cumulative media-specific effects over time.

On the other hand, Aneato, Onabajo, and Osifeso, (2012) and Daramola (2003) provide the following as the assumptions of the theory:

1. The mass media, such as the press, do not reflect social reality because news is filtered, chosen and shaped by the newsroom staff.
2. People get their news from limited sources because people do not pay attention to all outlets, thus they rest on the mass media.
3. Few media agenda which were chosen by professional gatekeepers lead people to perceive given issues as important
4. There is a relationship between news coverage and public perception of the importance of the issues.
5. Mass media attention to an issue will elevate such issue to high point of importance by the public

Also, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) posit that the theory of agenda setting by the media proposes that people's discussion is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicize. This means that if the press chooses to give most attention, space and prominence to political parties during the 2015 general elections, this issue will become the most important item on the audience minds. Similarly, Severin and Tankard (1997) as cited in Asemah and Yaroson

(2008) attempt to explain the agenda setting function of the press when they wrote that “the newspaper is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda. It has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are and what people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with”(p. 95). Also, explaining the agenda setting theory of the mass media, Asemah and Yaroson (2008) affirmed that “when the press seizes a great issue to thrust into the agenda of talk; it moves into action on its own” (p. 95).

Furthermore, according to Zhu and Blood (1997), the agenda setting theory hypothesis involves two concepts: media agenda and public agenda. The media agenda refers to a list of issues or events that receive news coverage. An issue, in this context, refers to a long or short term series of events that demand continual coverage such as the coverage of the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria among others, while, public agenda refers to the list of issues that are on the minds of the public. This can be ascertained through the survey of public responses towards an issue. McCombs and Shaw (1972) noted that media agenda setting is a content specific effect; that is matching what the media report on certain issues with what the public think about these issues.

The appropriate way to examine the AgendaSetting theory is by comparisons between media content over time and the subject most people are talking about. The greater the number of people discussing a subject, the more the agenda-setting role of the mass media is confirmed.

### **2.9.2 Justification for the theory**

Regardless of its constraints and criticisms, the agenda setting theory cannot be pushed aside immediately because it has some practical relevance in the way and manner in which newspapers set agenda for the electorates. For instance, Okpoko (2005) affirms that “information control has been practiced for centuries with the realization that knowledge is vital to social

power and that those who control the flow of the communication have the ability to exercise power over other people” (p. 31). This is perhaps not far from why Campo (2004) cited in Arokoyo (2010) concurs that without communication there can be no democracy.

An illustration justify the theory is McCombs and Shaw’s empirical research which dates back to 1972. It attempted to verify the agenda-setting function of the mass media, with the case study of the 1968 United States of America’s presidential election, among undecided voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Agenda Setting Theory, no doubt proved that there were substantial correlations between the political issues emphasized in the news media and what the voters regarded as the key issues in that election. The voters’ beliefs about the major issues facing the country were reflected in the composite of the press coverage even though the three presidential contenders in 1968 placed widely divergent emphasis on the issues. This suggested that voters pay some attention to all the political news in the press regardless of what it is about, whether it is original and who is the favoured political candidate.

Similarly, Overholser and Jamieson (2006) assert that in choosing and displaying news; editors, news room staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in the news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues, that is, the media may set the agenda of the campaign.

Also, Daramola (2003) states, that “the mass media easily elevates an issue to prominence just as they also play down on another significant issue”. In the words of Okunna (1999) the print media can enhance or uplift the status of a political party or candidate or even election in a number of

ways, through larger headlines to the favoured candidate, or more lead stories on the candidate. Through placement, the media can give more prominent position to article on the candidate. The media can print more quotations from the candidates and photographs and other prominence enhancing strategies can accompany stories on the candidates, the media can print more remarks praising the candidates among others.

### **2.9.2 Political Economy Theory**

The most popular slogan usually associated with the political economy theory is ‘he who pays/plays the piper dictate the tune’. History of modern political economy theory is trace back to the works of Adam Smith, Thomas Maltus and Dave Ricardo. They outlined a model in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century, which was centered on the developments of economic markets and the free trade. The model was based upon a labour theory of value, which suggested that the value of the goods and commodities produced is directly related to the amount of labour which goes into making that product (Sytaffel, 2013). In the mid-19th century, the works of Smith and Ricardo was later taken up by Karl Marx in the year 1818. Fourth nine years later, Marx published an article titled, Capital: Critique of Political Economy; which functioned as a critique of the emergent political economy of capitalism during the industrial revolution. And ever since then much credit towards the development of political economy theory has been attributed him.

The political economy theory, according to Graham (2010) studies how values of all kinds are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed (the economic); how power is produced, distributed, exchanged, and exercised (the political); and how these aspects of the social world are related at any given place and time in history. In the same vein, Marx (1849) cited in Sytaffel (2013) began by identifying commodity; a material entity which can be bought or sold, as the

basic unit on which capitalist economies are built, and then proceeds to distinguish between the use-value and exchange value of a commodity. The use-value relates to the value inherent in the way that a good is used, be it to feed someone, provide primary resources for manufacturing or provide information or entertainment to someone, Whereas, the exchange value refers to the fluctuating value which is attached to those goods.

Consequently, during industrial revolution, the longitudinal distribution of goods and markets, financial speculators were able to amass vast sums, by purchasing goods in one location and moving them to another location before selling them at greatly increased prices. Whilst the use-value of these goods remained constant, but their exchange-value varied considerably, allowing a particular wealthier class of people (those with the financial resources to buy large quantities of goods and transport them to another city) to exploit the productive labour of others (those who actually produced the goods in the first place) in order to further entrench their wealth. Marx and Engels (1976) cited in Sytaffel(2013)further explained that:

‘The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production (p. 44).

Narrowing political economy to media, Hamelink (1994) cited in Boyd-Barrett (2004) states that there are four key trends in the world of political economy of communication: Digitization, consolidation, deregulation and globalization. Explaining further, he sees the four processes as inter related. Digitalization referring to the upgrade of binary (analogue) language of computer communication to all electronic communication, which facilitates technological integration, consolidation processes enhance the drive to larger and larger conglomerates (globalization)

which in order to sustain their power and their rate of growth through acquisition and market penetration increase the pressure for national deregulation and privatization of the media.

On the concept for the application of political economy to media, Mosco (1995) cited in Boyd-Barrett (2004) offers three entry concepts for the application. The first is commodification; this is process of taking goods and services which are valued for their use and transforming them into commodities which are values they can earn in the market place. The Second is spatial; this is process of overcoming the constraints of space and time in social life. The last is structuration; which incorporates the ideas of agency, social process and social practice into the analysis of structure.

In the same vein, looking at the rise of the media industries in the 20th century, rapid privatization and deregulation of the communications environment, and the converging media environment, made scholars to take a close look at the political economic of the media; radio, television, film, newspapers among others, according to Chomsky and Herman (1988) the mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace, by amusing, entertaining, informing, and educating, so as to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. But these functions are short sighted in a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest struggling to fulfill their needs. No wonder, Mosco (2008) affirmed that theory is about survival and control, how societies are organized to produce what is necessary to survive, and how order is maintained to meet societal goals. In same vein, Andrea and David (2013) posit that it focused on the relationship between people and classes, not just about the relationship between commodities prices, supply and demand or power but is about people and

social relationships between them, about the owners of wealth and how they use it to exploit others about what is produced and how.

To this end, political economy emphasizes on media, information, and audiences as resources and charted the ways in which they are packaged into products for sale. Subsequent studies such as that of McQuail (2010), shows that Political-economic theory is a socially critical approach that focuses-primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media/industries and the ideological content of media. From this point of view, the media institution has to be considered as part of the economic system, with close links to the political system. Smythe (1981) also notes that the economic relationship which is the primary driver of media as an industry is one whereby audiences or more specifically the attentive capacities of audiences are sold to advertisers. The consequences are to be observed in the reduction of independent media sources, concentration on the largest markets, avoidance of risks, and reduced investment in less profitable media taste (such as investigative reporting and documentary filmmaking).

According to Mbah (2006), the following are the main focal points of political economy theory:

1. That there exist an antagonistic struggle between the two classes in the society i.e the class of the 'haves' and 'have not'. The class of the have try to maintain the status quo (existing order) while the class of the have not will someday try to overthrow the prevailing situation.
3. Economic control and logic is determinant
4. Mass media ownership is concentrated in the hands of a few.

5. Powerful interest controls the media.
6. Media content and audiences are commodities.
7. Public interest in communication is subordinated to private interests

However, According to Chomsky and Herman(2010) in delineating what we see, series of structural filters are designed through which ‘the powerful are able to fix the premise of discourse, to decide what the general populace is allowed to see, hear and think about.’ The first filter that influences media content is that ownership of the media is highly concentrated among a few dozen of the largest, for-profit corporations in the world. A look at the ownership structures in Nigeria shows that politicians and businessmen loyal to the government or region dominate the industry. For example, *DailyTrust* is owned by Kabiru Yusuf while *Vanguard* newspaper is owned by Mr Sam Amuka Pemu both of them businessmen. Thus, their needs for profit ultimately influence the news operations and overall content of the media. In other words, there is a clear conflict of interest when the media system upon which self-government rests is controlled by a handful of corporations and operated in their self-interest.

The second filter is that of advertising, which has colonized the Nigeria mass media and is responsible for most of the media’s income. The third filter is that of sourcing, where the mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and interchange of interest. The media rely heavily upon news provided them by corporate and government sources, which have themselves developed enormous bureaucracies to provide this material to the media. The corporate and government have developed great expertise at managing the media. In effect, these bureaucracies subsidize the media and he must be careful

not to antagonize such an important supplier. The last filter is the ability of financially or politically privileged actors to condemn and make negative responses to media coverage.

Above all, Boyd-Barrett (2004) suggested that the notion of the audience as a commodity is useful in conceptualizing the Political economy of media, as it further refines the boundaries of what can be understood as a commodity, but does so in a way which helps to explore exactly why and how a vast amount of contemporary media newspapers, television, radio, and websites amongst other modes are funded. These forms are typically free or very cheap at the point of access for the 'consumer,' but the economic cost of production is paid for by the insertion of advertising into the media being viewed. More so, Mosco (2008) believed that the media is thus not paid for by the audience (the cost of a printed newspaper comes nowhere near covering the costs of the paper, printing, journalists, designers, copy editors etc. that went into the production of the newspaper, and watching television or surfing the web is usually free) but is funded by the advertisers, who are purchasing the attention of an audience. Buying advertising time during peak hours, or in a more popular newspaper, costs proportionally more precisely because the number of eyeballs the advertising reaches is enlarged.

This is why the economic situation is also of critical relevance to the ideological context of media content. As the media is funded by commercial organizations, the materials which are produced by this system are highly unlikely to be overtly critical of corporate capitalism and consumerism (Khan, 2012). Indeed, commercial organizations have been in notable cases whereby advertisers have threatened to withdraw funding from television networks if particular programs are aired as they are concerned that this will negatively affect brand connotations (Mcquail, 2010).

The justification for the using the theory is in response to the ownership and commercialization of media contents, since most of the media organizations are owned by few individuals with alliance to the government or corporation. As result of this, the media may in turn serve as their mouth piece. This concurs with the works of Fidelis (2014), Abass (2011), Galadima and Enighe (2001) among others, they posit that the greatest challenges of the Nigerian media during election are factors such as, ownership, political party affiliation, ideological differences and regional differences.

Following the explanation above, the Agenda Setting and Political Economy theories allows the researcher to study the frequency of coverage, prominence of a news story, theme of coverage and the rationale for the press coverage of the 2015 presidential election. This is because; it is duty of the media to lead in ensuring adequate coverage of all political parties during election. However, how successful has the media been in the coverage of 2015 presidential election campaign, remains to be unknown?

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter elaborates on the research method adopted by the researcher for this study. It explained the research design, content universe, sample techniques, content sample size, unit of analysis, content categories, sampling frame, code sheet, inter-coder reliability and method of data analysis.

#### **3.2 ResearchDesign**

The study focused on the press coverage of political parties in the 2015 general election campaign in Nigeria. As such, the study adopted a cross sectional descriptive research design. Therefore, based on the nature of this study, content analysis (under the descriptive research design) was further adopted for the purpose of collecting data in order to achieve the various research questions raised in the study.

Content Analysis is most suitable for this study, because it is applied to examine any piece of writing or occurrence of recorded communication materials. According to Ike (2005), Content Analysis is a systematic way of determining the characteristics of a written material and examining it for patterns, frequency and bias. For Prasad (2008), Content Analysis is a method of studying content with reference to the meaning, contexts, and intentions contained in message.

### 3.3 Population

The word population according to Olatunji, *et al* (2012), can be defined as an ‘aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specifications’(p. 77), while to Ogbuoshi (2006) the word population refers to ‘all members of the target of research, people, institute, or things’(p. 82).

The population of the study consists of the entire population of *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. Hence, publications from November 16th, 2014 to March 27th 2015 constituted the population of this study.

### 3.4 CensusSize

The study adopted census. A census size is known as a complete enumeration, which means a complete count. It is a study of every unit, everyone, or everything, in a population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Similarly, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) refer to census as the process of examining every member in a population. Furthermore, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016), census provides a true measurement of the population (no sampling error) from which a benchmark data may be obtained for future studies, and detailed information about small sub-group within the population is more likely to be available.

Thus, the whole editions of the newspapers within this period (16th November, 2014 to 27th March, 2015) were studied (census). While, the motive to study the total editions (census), is based on the view expressed by Prasad (2008), who states that, if the period for the study is within a short period of time, the entire content could be studied so as to ensure reliability of data. Similarly, Wimmer and Dominick (2011:163) note that as a ‘general rule the larger the

sample, the better of course, if too few dates are selected for analysis, the possibility of an unrepresentative sample is increased' (p. 163). In other words, each element in the population was given the opportunity to be observed by the researcher.

The population for this study is 264 editions; with a census size of 132 from *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspaper respectively. Determining the census size for each newspaper:

$$264 \div 2 = 132 \text{ (census size for each daily).}$$

### 3.5 Content Sample Frame

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), sample frame is the complete list of all the members in the population. Consequently, below is the list of the sample frame of this study starting from 16th November, 2014 to 27th March, 2015.

2014/2015 CALENDAR MONTH										
November	December			January	February		March			
16	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	1	16	31	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	1	16
17	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>		2	<b>17</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>
18	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>		3	<b>18</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	3	18
19	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>		4	<b>19</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>
20	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>		5	<b>20</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	5	20
21	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>		6	<b>21</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>
22	<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>		7	<b>22</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>22</b>	7	22
23	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>		8	<b>23</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>23</b>
24	<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>		9	<b>24</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>24</b>	9	24
25	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>		10	<b>25</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>
26	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>		11	<b>26</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	11	26
27	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>		12	<b>27</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>27</b>
28	<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>		13	<b>28</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>28</b>	13	
29	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>		14	<b>29</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>14</b>	
30	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>		15	<b>30</b>		<b>15</b>		<b>15</b>	

### 3.6 Unit of Analysis

According to Prasad (2008), Unit of Analysis is the smallest unit of content that is coded into the content category. The unit of analysis varies with the nature of the data and the purpose of the research. Thus, the unit of analysis might be a single word, a letter, a symbol, a theme (a single assertion about one subject), a news story, a short story, a character, an entire article, or an entire film or a piece of programme (p. 13). Texas (1995) acknowledged that the most commonly used units of analysis are five in number namely: words, character, themes, item and space and time. But for this study, theme, Article and News were used, since it is the most appropriate for the dissertation research questions and objectives.

### 3.7 Content Categories

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011), content category is the heart and precise makeup of any content analysis system used in classifying media content which varies along with the topic under study. Content analysis is like “post office boxes or mail bags into which letters (content units) are sorted” (Ozohu-Suleiman, 2013, p. 83).

However, Berelson (1952), as cited in Ozohu-Suleiman (2013), points out that, “Some studies have been successful to the extent that the categories were clearly formulated and well adapted to the problem and the content” (p. 83). Ogbuoshi (2006) and Benoit, Stein, and Hansen (2005) content categorization scheme were adopted as follows:

1. Frequency; is the number of times a particular political party’s news story appeared on the newspaper (attention).

2. Prominence: is the placement of political parties' stories on some strategic positions on the pages of the newspapers. Thus, prominence can be verified through the following formats:
  - i. Front page (most prominent)
  - ii. Back page (most prominent)
  - iii. Inside page (less prominent)
3. Theme of coverage:
  - i. Scandal
  - ii. Character (image): Religion, Region and Educational background
  - iii. Advocacy: campaign events, prediction, opinion poll and endorsement.
  - iv. Policy: security, Unemployment and Economic.
  - v. Voting/voter's information.

### **3.8 Instrument**

The instrument to be used for this study is the code sheet. According to Ogbuoshi (2006), code sheet is used for content analysis in order to bring out the real manifest content in the subject of communication. The code sheet was constructed based on the Unit of Analysis and Content Categories. In addition, the code sheet was filled based on the coding instructions. The coding instructions are properly articulated in the content code sheet below to guide the coders in coding the contents of communication.

### **3.9 Content Coding Sheet**



- vi. Scandal C1
- vii. Character (image): Religion, Region and Educational background C2
- viii. Advocacy: campaign events, prediction, opinion poll and endorsement.C3
- ix. Policy: security, Unemployment and Economic. C4
- x. Voting information C5

### 3.10 Inter-Coder Reliability

According to Krippendorff (2004), Inter- Coder reliability simply means duplicating research efforts under various conditions and checking the similarities and differences in readings, interpretations, responses to, or uses of given texts or data. Inter-Coder Reliability is used in Content Analysis study to cross check whether error exist during the coding (Ogbuoshi, 2006).In order to assess the reliability of the coding, at least two different coders must code the same body of content (Niek and Diana, 2012).

The coding for this research work was carried out by two independent coders; the researcher himself and one research assistant. Furthermore, the researcher employed Cohen’s kappa for calculating the Inter Coder Reliability with the help of SPSS. Likewise, in order to maintain a consistent agreement, Landis and Koch (1977) benchmark for interpreting Cohen’s kappa was adopted:

Cohen’s kappa	Strength of Agreement
<0.00	Poor
0.00-0.20	Slight
0.21- 0.40	Fair
0.41-0.60	Moderate

0.61-0.80	Substantial
0.81-1.00	Almost Perfect

Furthermore, 5 percent of the sample size was used in testing the reliability of the instrument. Thus, the results of inter-coder reliability test across these variables are as follows:

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cohen's kappa</b>
<b>Frequency of political parties news</b>	.701 (Substantial)
<b>Prominence “</b>	.864 (Almost perfect)
<b>Theme of coverage</b>	.595 (Moderate)

### 3.11 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The method of data presentation and analysis was simple descriptive and inferential method of data analysis. Data were gathered and presented on tables and each variable was calculated using percentage scores, mean, independent t-test, two ways anova and cross tabulation with the support of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the findings from the content analysis of the two selected national newspapers in Nigeria. For the purpose of clarity, the data presentation was done on independent t-test, two way anova, tables, cross tabulation and simple percentage scores.

#### 4.2 Data Presentation

A total of 14 political parties participated in the 2015 Nigeria presidential election. A sum of 5,515 news genres were coded and analysed in this research work, drawn from the population of 264 (132 from each newspaper) dailies collected from the two newspapers (*Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers) between November 16th, 2014 and March 27th, 2015.

##### ***4.2.1 Comparison between Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers on the quantity of report in the 2015 presidential election.***

Comparison means the evaluation of the similarities and differences between two or more things.

A comparative analysis of the quantity of coverage devoted to political parties in the 2015 presidential election by *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers were carried out, so as to find out which newspaper paid more attention to the coverage of the 2015 election. By making use of

independent t-test, frequency, percentage, mean score and standard deviation (see appendix ii and vi).

Table 1. The total news genre covered by *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers

Newspaper	N (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Vanguard	2888(52.4)	8.83	2.555	.000
Daily Trust	2627(47.6)	8.46	2.566	
<b>Total</b>	5515(100)			

From the Table 1 presentation, a total of 5515 news stories were covered by *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers on political parties during the 2015 presidential election. *Vanguard* had the highest coverage with 2888 news genres representing 52.4 percent with a mean and standard deviation score of 8.83 and 2.555 respectively. Closely, followed by *DailyTrust* with 2627 news genres, representing 47.6 percent, mean score of 8.46 and standard deviation score of 2.566.

Thus, from this presentation, one can hypothetically say that *Vanguard* newspaper had more coverage than *DailyTrust* newspaper because most of the candidates are from the western part of the country where the newspaper is located. For instance, in the just concluded 2015 presidential election, according to INEC (2014) fourteen political parties participated in the 2015 election. Out of the 14 parties, southern part of the country had the most parties/candidates namely: Sen. Tunde Anifowose-Kelani (AA), Rafiu Salau (AD), Alh. Ganiyu O. Galadima (ACPN), Ayeni Musa Adebayo (APA), Chief Sam Eke (CPP), High Chief Ambrose N. Albert Owuru (HOPE),

Comfort Oluremi Sonaiya (KOWA), Chief Martin Onovo (NCP), Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (PDP), Allagoa Kelvin Chinedu (PPN), Godson Mgbodile Ohaenyem Okoye (UDP) and Chief (Dr.) Chekwas Okorie (UPP), while the northern part had only two candidates; Muhammadu Buhari (APC) and Dr. Mani Ibrahim Ahmad (ADC).

#### **4.2.2. Press coverage of Political party with the highest coverage in the 2015 presidential Election.**

To find out the political party with the highest coverage in the 2015 presidential election descriptive and inferential statistic were used. The first table is a cross tabulation of *DailyTrust's* newspaper months of coverage and political parties, while the second is *Vanguard's* newspaper months of coverage and political parties. Similarly, two way anova analyses were equally used to determine the difference between the political parties.

**Table 2:** *DailyTrust* newspaper cross tabulation between names of political parties and the months of coverage

		NAME OF POLITICAL PARTY														TOTAL
		AA	AD	ACPN	ADC	APA	APC	CPP	HOPE	KOWA	NCP	PDP	PPN	UDP	UPP	
<b>NOVEMBER 2014</b>	Frequency	0	1	2	0	0	160	0	0	0	1	165	0	1	2	332
	%	0.0%	0.3 %	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	48.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	49.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	100.0%
DECEMBER 2014	Frequency	0	0	0	0	0	247	1	0	0	2	389	1	1	0	641
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	38.5%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	60.7%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>JANUARY 2015</b>	Frequency	3	6	4	4	1	190	4	3	4	4	476	3	4	4	710
	%	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.1%	26.8%	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	67.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	100.0%
FEBRUARY 2015	Frequency	0	1	1	3	3	302	0	0	0	0	250	0	0	0	560
	%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	49.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	49.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>MARCH 2015</b>	Frequency	0	2	0	0	1	346	1	0	0	1	345	0	0	3	699
	%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	49.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	49.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	5	5	5	14	4	1283	3	2	6	4	1287	1	1	7	2627
	%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	45.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	52.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	100.0%

**Note:** the comparison between month of coverage and political parties using two way anova produced the p. value of .000 (see appendix iii)

The information provided in table 2 by *DailyTrust* newspaper, shows that the election campaign was conducted across five months, starting from November, 2014 to March, 2015. The month of November had 332 news stories, December had 641 news stories, January had 710 news stories, February had 576 news stories, and March got 629 news stories. A careful look at the trend shows that news stories coverage on political parties started at a slow pace, then went up between December and January and then started to decline in February (due to the unexpected shift in the polls) and later went up again in March (the month the election was held). Similarly, the two way anova table also shows that there was a significance difference between the political parties in terms of attention because the p. value was less than .05.

Furthermore, at end of the cross tabulation, People's Democratic Party (PDP) was accorded more attention than any other political party during the 2015 presidential election. This was connected to the fact that out of 2627 news stories from *DailyTrust* newspapers, People's Democratic Party (PDP) got 1287 representing 52.5%, hence making the former ruling political party (PDP) to have the most attention/volume of news during the 2015 presidential election. All Progressive Congress (APC) made the second position with 1283 representing 45.1% as against the other 12 opposition parties that got below 1% each.

However, an issue discovered in the analysis of the result was the fact that the ruling political party during the period of an election is always given more attention by the media. This concurs with Nwokeafor and Okunoye (2013) view that in recent years, the media has become completely prejudiced in favor of one political party or candidate, thereby neglecting the rest of the political parties with the exception of one or two parties as illustrated above.

**Table 3:** Vanguard newspaper cross tabulation between names of political parties and the months of coverage

		NAME OF POLITICAL PARTY														TOTAL
		AA	AD	ACPN	ADC	APA	APC	CPP	HOPE	KOWA	NCP	PDP	PPN	UDP	UPP	
<b>NOVEMBER 2014</b>	Frequency	2	0	0	2	0	112	2	1	2	0	127	1	0	0	249
	%	0.8%	0.0 %	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	45.0%	0.8%	0.4%	0.8%	0.0%	51.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
DECEMBER 2014	Frequency	3	1	2	4	0	256	0	1	2	1	321	0	1	2	594
	%	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	43.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	54.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	100.0%
<b>JANUARY 2015</b>	Frequency	0	1	2	5	0	267	0	0	2	2	244	0	0	2	525
	%	0.0%	0.2%	0.4%	1.0%	0.0%	50.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	46.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	100.0%
FEBRUARY 2015	Frequency	0	2	0	0	1	283	1	0	1	0	284	0	2	2	576
	%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	49.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	49.3%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	100.0%
<b>MARCH 2015</b>	Frequency	0	4	0	0	1	326	1	0	2	0	293	0	0	2	629
	%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	51.8%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	46.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	100.0%
Total	Frequency	3	13	6	4	3	1206	7	3	7	7	1607	4	8	10	2888
	%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	45.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	52.5%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	100.0%

**Note: the comparison between month of coverage and political parties using two way anova produced the p. value of .000 (see appendix iii)**

The information provided on table 3 by *Vanguard* newspaper, shows that the election campaign was conducted across five months, starting from November, 2014 to March, 2015. The month of November had 249 news stories, December had 594 news stories, January had 525 news stories, February had 560 news stories, and March got 699 news stories. A careful look at the trend shows that news stories coverage on political parties started at a slow pace, then went up between December and January and then started to decline in February (due to the unexpected shift in the polls) and later went up again in March (the month the election was held). Similarly, the two way anova table also shows that there is significance difference between the political parties in terms of attention because the p. value is less than .05.

Furthermore, based on the cross tabulation, People's Democratic Party (PDP) was accorded more attention than any other political party during the 2015 presidential election. This was associated to the fact that out of 2888 news stories from *Vanguard* newspapers. People's Democratic Party (PDP) got 1607 representing 52.5%. Thus make the former ruling political party (PDP) with the most attention/volume of news during the 2015 presidential election while, All Progressives Congress (APC) made the second position with 1206, representing 45.1% as against the other 12 opposition parties that got below 1% each.

However, an issue discovered in the analysis of the result is the fact that the ruling political party during the period of an election is always given more attention by the media.

#### **4.2.3. The Political party with the most prominent placement during the 2015 presidential election**

Prominence is the placement of political parties' stories on some strategic positions on the pages of the newspapers. This section contains three cross tabulated tables on the prominence attached to political parties during the 2015 presidential election by *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers in terms of story placement on the front, back and inside pages of the newspapers. Thus, stories placed on the front and back pages are regarded as more prominent than those ones placed on the inside pages of the newspapers.

**Table 4:** News Stories placed on the FrontPage of Vanguard and Daily Trust newspapers

PROMINENCE OF NEWS ON FRONT PAGE		NAME OF POLITICAL PARTY														Total
		AA	AD	ACPN	ADC	APA	APC	CPP	HOPE	KOWA	NCP	PDP	PPN	UDP	UPP	
Vanguard	Count						16					20				36
	%						44.4%					55.6%				100.0%
Daily Trust	Count						64					38				102
	%						62.7%					37.3%				100.0%
Total	Count						80					58				138
	%						58.0%					42.0%				100.0%

**Note:** the comparison between prominence and political parties using two way anova produced the p. value of .000 (see appendix iv)

Based on the data on table 4, the two way anova table also shows that there is a significant difference between the political parties in terms of prominence because the p. value is less than .05. A total of 138(100%) news stories were placed on the front pages of the two national newspapers analyzed. *DailyTrust* newspaper gave more prominence to political parties with 102 news stories. Similarly, All Progressive Congress (APC) had the highest coverage with 80 news stories. From this figure, 64 news stories representing 62.7 percent were on *Daily Trust* newspaper and 16 news stories representing 44.4 percent were on *Vanguard* newspaper while, the other political parties (12) namely; AA, AD, ACPN, APA, CPP, HOPE, KOWA, NCP, PPN, UDP, UPP, ADC recorded zero coverage on the front pages of the newspapers during the period of the campaign.

This implies that, less prominence was given to political parties because only few stories were allotted to political parties on the front pages during the 2015 presidential election. Similarly, the reason for All Progressives Congress (APC) possessing the highest prominence on the front page could be as a result of the party being most influential to the then ruling party (PDP).

**Table 5:** News Stories placed on the Back Pages of *Vanguard* and *DailyTrust* newspapers

PROMINENCE OF NEWS ON THE BACK PAGES	NAME OF POLITICAL PARTY														Total
	AA	AD	ACPN	ADC	APA	APC	CPP	HOPE	KOWA	NCP	PDP	PPN	UDP	UPP	
Vanguard		2				12			1		10			2	27
		7.4%				44.4%			3.8%		37.0%			7.4%	100.0%
Daily Trust		0		1		21			0		19			0	41
		0.0%		2.5%		51.2%			0.0%		46.3%			0.0%	100.0%
Total		2		1		33			1		29			2	68
		2.9%		1.5%		48.6%			1.4%		42.7%			2.9%	100.0%

Note: the comparison between prominence and political parties using two way anova produced the p. value of .000 (see appendix iv)

Furthermore, table 5 shows that, 68 news items were placed on the back pages of the two newspapers used in this research. Similarly, the two way anova table also shows that there is a significance difference between the political parties in terms of prominence because the p. value is less than .05.

*DailyTrust* newspaper gave more prominence to political parties with 33 news stories. All Progressives Congress (APC) had the highest coverage with 21 news stories, representing 52.1 percent on *Daily Trust* newspaper and 19 news stories representing 46.3 percent on *Vanguard* newspaper. The UPP, ADC, AD and Kowa had news stories representing 8.7 percent (summed up together). Likewise, the rest (AA, ACPN, APA, CPP, HOPE, NCP, PPN and UDP) parties recorded zero coverage on the back pages of the two newspapers during the period of the election.

This however shows that less prominence was given to political parties since only few stories were dedicated to them on the back pages of the newspapers during the 2015 presidential election. Equally, the reason for the All Progressives Congress (APC) having the highest prominence could be as a result of the party being the most influential to the then ruling party (PDP).

**Table 6:** News Stories placed on the insides Pages of Vanguard and Daily Trust newspapers

prominence of news on the insides Pages		NAME OF POLITICAL PARTY														Total
		AA	AD	ACPN	ADC	APA	APC	CPP	HOPE	KOWA	NCP	PDP	PPN	UDP	UPP	
Vanguard	frequency	3	12	6	4	3	1181	7	3	6	7	1572	4	8	9	2825
	%	0.1%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	41.8%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	55.6%	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	100.0%
Daily Trust	frequency	5	5	5	13	4	1198	3	2	6	4	1230	1	1	7	2484
	%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%	48.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	49.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	8	17	11	17	7	2379	10	5	12	11	2802	5	9	16	5309
	%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%	44.8%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	52.8%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	100.0%

Note: the comparison between prominence and political parties using two way anova produced the p. value of .000 (see appendix iv)

The information on table 6 shows that the bulk of news stories during the 2015 presidential election were buried in the inside pages of the newspapers. A total of 5309 news stories representing 96.2 percent, were placed on the inside pages of the two selected national newspapers. Hypothetically, this means that news stories on the 2015 general election were not given prominence because the majority of stories during election campaign were placed on the inside pages.

#### 4.2.4. The most common theme of coverage in the 2015 presidential election.

Theme of Coverage is defined as the central idea of newsstories by media in the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. This section will elaborate on the *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard's* newspapers theme of coverage during the 2015 presidential election, with emphases on policy, advocacy, scandal, candidate's image and voting information.

**Table 7: Theme of Coverage**

Name of Newspapers		Theme Of Coverage					Total
		Policy	Advocacy	Scandal	Candidate's Image	Voting Information	
<b>Daily Trust</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>2627</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>39.6%</b>	<b>26.6%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>7.9%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Vanguard	Frequency	973	703	459	560	193	2888
	%	33.7%	24.3%	15.9%	19.4%	6.7%	100%
Total	Frequency	2014	1401	800	900	400	5515
	%	36.5%	25.4%	14.5%	16.3%	7.3%	100%

**Note:** the comparison between themes of coverage using two way anova produced the p. value of .000 (see appendix v)

Table 7 indicates that, *Daily Trust* newspaper gave more coverage to policy and voting information while, *Vanguard* newspaper gave attention to advocacy, scandal and the image of candidate. Above all, the most common theme of coverage during the 2015 presidential election by the selected newspapers was Policy with 2,014 news stories, representing 36.5 percent, followed by Advocacy with 1,401, representing 25.4 percent, then Candidate's Image with 900, representing 16.3 percent, followed by Scandal with 800, representing 15.5 percent and finally Voting Information with 400, representing 7.3 percent.

Thus, the reason Policy is having the highest count may be as a result of horse race coverage/journalism by the selected newspapers on the economic crises, the high rate of unemployment and security challenges in country.

#### **4.3 Discussion**

This research was guided by four objectives from which four research questions were formulated.

##### ***Comparison between Daily Trust and Vanguard newspapers on quantity of report in the 2015 presidential election.***

Objective number onesought to compare the quantity of report on the 2015 presidential election between *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers and which subsequently answered research question one. From the findings of the study, it was observed that there was a significant difference in the level of attention devoted to the 2015 presidential general election between the *Vanguard* newspapers and *DailyTrust* newspapers. The analysis shows that the calculated t-value (<.000) is less than 0.05. This implies that there is a significant difference. The

*Vanguard* newspaper took the edge with the percentage and mean score of 52.4% and 8.83 while, *Daily Trust* newspaper had 48.6 percent and 8.46 mean score.

Therefore, the motive of a media organization giving more attention to certain issues in the society to the detriment of others conforms to the theoretical framework of this study; which are Agenda Setting and Political economy theories. McCombs and Shaw (1972) posit that the agenda setting theory can give attention to an issue in the society through quantity or frequency of reporting. This is corroborated by Chomsky and Hermen(2010) that the political economy theory influences media content since the ownership of the media is highly concentrated among a few dozen of the class of the 'haves' for commercialization.

This shows that one newspaper can give more attention to a particular issue than another. In line with this, Brown and Udomisor (2015) also show that *Vanguard* newspaper carried more political matters than the *Guardian* newspaper during the period under study. Similarly, a study by Cumming (2006) provides evidence of unbalanced media coverage from the *Washington Times* giving more unbalanced reporting than the *New York Times*. Again, previous findings indicated that electorates in Nigeria considered mass media coverage of electioneering campaigns during the 2011 general elections as averagely satisfactory and adjudged that mass media were best in providing electioneering campaign information (Obot, 2013).

This is corroborated by a report from Zafar (2013) who revealed that newspapers in Pakistan have the same policy for different political parties in terms of more space, frequency, placement and more favourable slant. Correspondingly, Chris (2002) study shows that in Japan, readers of the major quality newspapers are fairly well served in terms of being exposed to a considerable amount of substantive coverage of the election campaign. Additionally, D'Alessio and Allen

(2000) found that newspapers, reporters and editors may have their ideological bias in the coverage of presidential campaigns, but such bias has insignificant influence on the net coverage of candidates.

However, since the findings of this study acknowledged that in the 2015 presidential election there were disparities among the national newspapers in the coverage of politics, one might be quick to say that, it may be as result of what Fidelis (2014) posits that the greatest challenge of the Nigerian media during election are the proprietors who are mostly persons with political interests. As such, they could discourage the media from adhering to the fundamental principles of balance and objectivity. Also, Abass (2011) posits that media are hampered by some factors namely: ownership, political party affiliation, ideological differences and regional differences. Also, Galadima and Enighe (2001) observed that the Nigerian press is always used by their owners, both the private and government, for the propagation of the interest of such owners, especially in the struggle to gain power or monopoly. Similarly, Edogbo (1994:33) citing Grant (1991) in Daramola (2013), states that most newspapers often speak for one political party or one region against another, which means that the press acts not as an impartial estate, but as a mouthpiece of the political divisions in Nigeria. Likewise, Brown and Udomisor (2015) findings show that whenever the Nigerian media decides to report political issues, it is mostly tailored towards government's interests. As such, Fidelis (2013) believes that as a result of this aforementioned constraint, the media's social responsibility is curtailed during the coverage of politics and elections. No wonder, Ojo (2003) concluded that there were overall lop-sidedness of the media coverage of the campaigns and elections in the 2013 general election in Nigeria.

***Press coverage of Political party with the highest coverage in the 2015 presidential election.***

Research question two is about which political party had the highest coverage by the two selected newspapers in the 2015 presidential election. It was formulated to answer the research objective number two, which seeks to find out the political party with the highest coverage in the 2015 presidential election by the *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. A total of 14 political parties participated in the 2015 presidential election. To answer this question, a reference was made to tables 2 and 3 “cross tabulation between political parties and months of coverage”.

The tables show that the calculated Two way anova test ( $<.000$ ) is less than 0.05. This implies that there is a significant difference among the political parties in terms of coverage within the two newspapers. The cross tabulation also shows that, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) was accorded more attention by the *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers than any other political party during the 2015 presidential election with 2894 representing 52.5%. In the same vein, *Vanguard* newspaper accorded more attention to the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) during the 2015 presidential election with 1607 news stories representing 52.5 percent than *DailyTrust* newspapers, hence making the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) the only party with the highest volume of news as against the other 13 political parties in the 2015 presidential election.

Perhaps, the intention was for the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) to have more attention in the 2015 presidential election, as Evident in an earlier survey by the theoretical frameworks used in this study. According to Aneato, Onabajo, and Osifeso, (2012) the agenda setting theory posits that there is a relationship between news coverage and public perception of the importance of the

issues reported. Similarly, Asemah and Yaroson (2008) note that the Agenda-setting theory presupposes that the mass media pre-determines what issues are regarded as important to a given society at a given point in time. Likewise, the political economy theory, as pointed out by McQuail (2010) confirms that the media content and audiences are commodities whose economic cost of production are paid for by the insertion of news stories into the media. As such, a rich political party can get more attention than the others.

The findings corroborates those of an earlier survey carried out by Ojo (2003) in which he found that in the 2003 general election there was a huge imbalance between the coverage received by the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and other political parties throughout the period of the campaigns and elections. Correspondingly, Chukwuma (2011) found that in the 2007 general elections campaigns, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) had the highest coverage of news as compared to the other 25 parties that featured candidates during the campaigns.

In the same vein, the result regarding the negligible bias in the coverage of the political parties is similar to the finding of the theoretical framework of this study. Aneato, Onabajo and Osifeso (2012) and Daramola (2003) state that the press does not reflect social reality because news is filtered, chosen and shaped by the professional gatekeepers, leading the people to perceive given issues as important, with the aim that attention to an issue will elevate such an issue to a high point of importance by the public.

### **Most prominence in terms of story placement during the 2015 presidential election**

Research question three is formulated to answer the third objective of this study, which seeks to find out the political party given the most prominence in terms of story placement during the 2015

presidential election. To answer this question we refer to table 4, 5 and 6 “Crosstabulation between prominence of news and name of political party”

Tables 4, 5 and 6 show, that the calculated Two way anova test ( $<.000$ ) is less than 0.05, which implies that there is a significant difference among the political parties in terms of prominence. The cross tabulation also shows that, the All Progressive Congress (APC) had the most prominence by the selected papers, with *DailyTrust* newspaper according it more prominence than *Vanguard* newspaper during the 2015 presidential election.

This was evident in the fact that out of a total of 5515 news stories placed on the pages of the two national newspapers analyzed. The All Progressive Congress (APC) received the most prominence, representing 58 percent on the front pages and 48.6 percent on the back pages. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) came second with front pages representing 42 percent and back pages representing 42.7 percent. While, 4 political parties recorded less than 8 percent on the back pages (when summed up), remaining 8 parties recorded zero coverage on the front pages and back pages, with most of the stories buried on the inside pages.

In line with this finding, the Agenda setting theory as posited by McCombs and Shaw (1975), show that the media can give prominence to news stories through layout (front, back and inside pages) in newspapers and magazines. Similarly, the political economy theory by Marx (1818), in Chomsky and Herman (2010), asserts that ‘the powerful ones are able to fix the premise of discourse, by deciding what the general populace is allowed to see (on the front and back pages of the newspapers) hear and think about.

The result regarding prominence in the coverage of the parties in the 2015 election contradicts the findings of Chukuma (2010) who discovered that in the 2011 election, of the 25 parties that featured presidential candidates during campaigns, only five parties: PDP, AC, ANPP, AD and PPA got prominence in the front pages of the Nigerian newspapers, with PDP having the highest prominence during the campaign period. Likewise, Ojo (2003) found that President Olusegun Obasanjo and his ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were given the most prominence throughout the period of the campaigns and elections. Correspondingly, a report by Pate (2015) citing NBC (2011), UNDP (2011) and EU (2011) on media coverage of the 2011 general election confirmed the unfair coverage among the various parties, with the big three political parties (PDP, ACN and CPC) dominating the media space.

Therefore, if placement of stories at strategic areas on the newspaper can make one party more famous than another, Wimmer and Dominick (2011) might be right when they posit that the theory on agenda setting, proposes that people's discussion is powerfully shaped and directed by what the media choose to publicize.

#### ***The most common theme of coverage in the 2015 presidential election.***

Research question four was formulated to realize the fourth objective of this study, which seeks to determine the most common theme of coverage by the selected newspapers during the 2015 presidential election. To answer this question, we draw from our coding, theme of coverage consisting of policy, character, advocacy, corruption and voter's information as presented in table 7 by *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers. *Policy* was most common theme of coverage by the selected newspapers with *DailyTrust* newspaper giving more attention to it than *Vanguard* newspaper.

This is as observed on table 7 that, a sum of 5,515 news genres were coded and analysed in this research work by the selected newspapers. *Daily Trust* newspaper gave more coverage to policy and voting information while, *Vanguard* newspaper gave attention to advocacy, scandal and image of the candidate. Of this amount, *policy* was the most common theme of coverage with 2014 news stories representing 36.5 percent, followed by *advocacy* with 1401 representing 25.4 percent, then *candidate* with 900 representing 16.3 percent, followed by *scandal* with 800 representing 15.5 percent and finally *votinginformation* with 400 representing 7.3 percent.

The reason policy is the most common theme of coverage may be as a result of the reasons highlighted in the theoretical framework. The Political economy theory by Marx(1818) cited in Chomsky and Herman(2010) presupposes survival and control techniques. The corporate and government establishments have developed great expertise at managing the content of the media. Since, the media rely heavily upon news provided by them (corporate and government sources). In effect, these bureaucracies subsidize the media and the media must be careful not to antagonize such an important supplier. Whereas, on the part of the media organizations as a commercial institution, report to the audience what is necessary to survive. Likewise, Severin and Tankard (1997) as cited in Asemah and Yaroson (2008: 95) said, newspaper has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are and what people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with.

In line with the findings of this study, Beniot and Klyukovski (2006) in a study of the Ukrainian 2006 presidential election found that *policy* was the most common theme of coverage more often than *character*. Also, Klein and Maccoby (1954) cited in Peter (2012) investigated newspaper coverage of the 1952 presidential contest and found that 60 percent of stories concerned *policy*.

Stempel and Windhauser (1991) also analyzed the content of newspaper coverage of the 1984 United States' presidential campaigns in 1984. *Policy* had the highest consisting of 39 percent of stories. In the same vein, Mantler and Whiteman (1995) reported that in 1992, *policy* came first comprising of 49.5 percent of newspaper coverage. Similarly, Just, Crigler and Buhr (1999) found that 70 percent of newspaper campaign stories in 1992 concerned *policy*. Moreover, the study of Chris (2002) shows that *Policy* received the lion's share of election coverage in Japan.

However, the findings of this study disagree with Peter (2012) who revealed that *advocacy* was the most common topic of election coverage. Also, Benoit, Stein and Hansen (2005) found out that the most common theme of campaign coverage was *horse race* (40%) followed by *candidates' character* (31%) and then discussion of *candidates' policy positions* (25%). According to Peter (2012) citing Russonello and Wolf (1979) 56 percent of newspaper coverage focused on the *horse race*, 22 percent was about *policy*, and 17 percent dealt with the *candidate's character*. Similarly, Robinson and Sheehan (1983) investigated news coverage of the 1980 United States' presidential campaign from January to October and found over double more space devoted to *horse race* than to *issues*. Stovall (1982) analyzed the same campaign and concluded that *horse race* made up 86% of newspaper coverage in 1980 and the remaining 14% about *issues*. Sigelman and Bullock (1991) in their investigation of presidential campaign coverage of five newspapers, sampling every 20 years from 1888 to 1988, they found that *candidate's character* maintained a somewhat steady coverage of about 10 percent while *policy* issues comprised about 25 percent coverage. *Campaign events* accounted for about 40 percent of stories. Comparing news coverage of election campaigns in Swedish and United States newspapers, Stromback and Dimitrova (2006) found that the United States papers emphasized *horse race* more than political strategy frames. This perhaps is why Overholser and Jamieson (2006) asserted that the agenda setting theory plays

an important part in shaping political reality. This is because readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from its placement.

#### **4.4 Findings**

The findings of the study reveal that:

- The *Vanguard* newspaper gave more attention to the political parties during the 2015 presidential general election than the *DailyTrust* newspaper.
- Out of the 14 political parties that participated at the 2015 presidential election, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) had the highest attention in the *Vanguard* newspaper and *DailyTrust* newspaper.
- The *Vanguard* newspaper gave more attention to People's Democratic Party (PDP) than the *DailyTrust* newspaper.
- The All Progressives Congress party was accorded the highest prominence among the selected newspapers.
- The *DailyTrust* newspaper accorded more prominence to the All Progressives Congress party throughout the period of the election than the *Vanguard* newspaper did.
- It was also found that, policy had the highest frequency of coverage during the period of the presidential election in the *DailyTrust* than in the *Vanguard* newspaper.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings from the study. It subsequently suggests areas for further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study**

This study investigates the coverage of political parties during the 2015 election by some national newspapers in Nigeria. The scope of the study had four objectives as follows:

1. To compare the quantity of report on the 2015 presidential election between *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.
2. To identify the political party with the highest coverage among the selected newspapers during the 2015 presidential election.
3. To find out the political party with the most prominent placement in the 2015 presidential election between *Daily Trust* and *Vanguard* newspapers.
4. To determine the most common theme of coverage by the selected newspapers during the 2015 presidential election.

In addition, the study adopts the Agenda setting theory propounded by McCombs and Shaw in the year 1968 and political economy theory propounded by Karl Marx in 1818. The theories were found suitable for a reason not far from what Folarin (2002) and Graham (2010) posit that the agenda setting theory and political economy theory has some tools responsible for the media to set agenda for the audience, such as the quantity or frequency of reporting, prominence given to

reports through placement, commercialization of news content, ownership of the media, among others.

The study also adopted content analysis as the research design. Data were collected with the aid of code sheet as the research instrument. The whole editions of the population of *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers were used for the study (Census method), starting from 16th of November, 2014 to the 27th of March, 2015. The period was selected because news coverage on political parties and general election were more frequent, which is in line with the INEC electoral act as amended. It stipulates that all electoral activities shall only commence 90 days before election and stop 24 hours to the day of election. Thereafter, the data were gathered and analyzed with the aid of statistical software called Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Hence, the findings from the study revealed that a total of 5515 news stories were covered by *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers on political parties during the 2015 presidential election as seen in Table 1 presentation. *Vanguard* newspaper had the highest coverage with 2888 news genres representing 52.4 percent with a mean and standard deviation score of 8.83 and 2.555 respectively. Closely, followed by *DailyTrust* with 2627 news genres representing 47.6 percent, mean score of 8.46 and standard deviation score of 2.566.

In addition, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) got the highest frequency of news stories during the period of the presidential election. With *Vanguard* newspaper according more attention to People's Democratic Party (PDP) than *DailyTrust* newspaper as shown in table 2 and 3. This was connected to the fact that out of 5,515 news stories from the two national newspapers. People's Democratic Party (PDP) got 2894 representing 52.5%, hence making the former ruling political party (PDP) with the most attention/volume of news during the 2015 presidential election. While,

All Progressive Congress (APC) made the second position with 2489 representing 45.1% as against the other 12 opposition parties that got below 1% for each.

Furthermore, table 4 and 5 shows that All Progressive Congress (APC) party was given the most prominence during the election period, with *Daily Trust* newspaper according it more prominence than *Vanguard* newspaper. As shown on Table 4, a total of 138 (100%) news stories were placed at the front pages of the two national newspapers analyzed. The dailies placed 80 news items of the All Progressive Congress (APC) on their front pages to representing 58%. The same placed 58 news stories about the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) representing 42%, while, the other political parties (12) namely: AA, AD, ACPN, APA, CPP, HOPE, KOWA, NCP, PPN, UDP, UPP, ADC recorded zero coverage on the front page of the newspapers during the period of the election. Also, table 5 shows that, 62(100%) news items were placed on the back pages of the two newspapers used in this research, All Progressive Congress (APC) got the most back page placement with 33 news items representing 48.6% and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) came second with 29 news items representing 42.7%, while, 4 political parties recorded less than 5 percent on the back page and the remaining 8 political parties recorded zero coverage on the back page. Therefore, table 6 reveals that, the bulk of the stories representing 5309 news stories during the 2015 presidential election were buried in the inside pages of the newspapers.

Finally, table 7 indicates that *Daily Trust* newspaper gave more coverage to policy and voting information While, *Vanguard* newspaper gave attention to advocacy, scandal and image of candidate. The most common theme of coverage during the 2015 election was *policy* with 2014 news stories representing 36.5 percent, followed by *advocacy* with 1401 representing 25.4 percent,

then *candidate's image* with 900 representing 16.3 percent, and then *scandal* with 800 representing 15.5 percent and finally *voting information* with 400 representing 7.3 percent.

### 5.3 Conclusion

From the facts gathered so far in this study, it can be concluded that media organizations had different ways through which they covered political parties during the 2015 presidential elections and some political parties were more favoured than others. Findings from the study revealed that the *Vanguard* newspaper gave more attention to the coverage of the 2015 presidential election than the *Daily Trust* newspaper which corroborates the study carried out by Brown and Udomisor (2015). Similarly, out of the 14 political parties that participated in the 2015 presidential election, People's Democratic Party (PDP) had the highest attention during the period of the election, followed by All Progressive Congress party, while the other 12 parties got lesser attention. Likewise, this finding agreed with the previous studies of Ojo (2003) and Chukwuma (2011). In addition, All Progressive Congress party had the most prominence throughout the period of the election, followed by People's Democratic Party (PDP), Alliance for democracy (AD), African Democratic Congress (ADC), United Progress Party (UPP) and Kowa, while the other 7 parties got no prominence at all. This finding contradicts earlier studies by Ojo (2003) and Chukwuma (2011). Finally, the most common theme of coverage during the period of the 2015 presidential election was *Policy*, followed by *Advocacy*, then *Candidate Image*, *Corruption* and *Voting Information*. This findings agreed with the works of Beniot and Klyukovski (2006), Chris (2002) and equally disagreed with that of Peter (2012), Benoit, Stein and Hansen (2005).

#### **5.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

The contributions of the study ‘press coverage of political parties in the 2015 presidential election: A comparative analysis of *DailyTrust* and *Vanguard* newspapers’ to the existing body of knowledge, as shown that, newspapers in Nigeria have unequal preference to the coverage of political parties in the 2015 presidential election. In addition, factors such as proximity, ownership, economy, and regional affiliation can prompt newspapers’ attention towards a political party. Finally, the study will constitute a valuable document to the Journalist, INEC, non-governmental organization, policy makers, et cetera in formulating appropriate policies that will regulate the activities of the press coverage of political parties during an election.

#### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Newspapers in Nigeria should endeavour to give equal attention to all participating political parties during an election.
- ii. Emphasis should be given to other themes such as; voting information, image of the candidate, scandal and advocacy.
- iii. Prominence should be given to political parties through story placement/layout (in the front and back pages of the newspapers).

#### **5.6 Suggestions for further study**

Due to the duration of the study, not everything could be covered by the researcher. Hence, the researcher suggests the following areas for further study;

- i. This study was done with the newspaper alone; as such the findings of study may not be applicable for the other media outlets. Hence, a comparative analysis should be carried out between the print and the electronic media.
- ii. Similarly, further studies should be carried out on the correlation between media attention on political parties and the voting behaviour of the electorates during an election period.

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**APPENDIX i**

**CODE SHEET**

NEWSPAPER.....

DATE.....

S/N	PARTY	PROMINENCE				THEME				
		F.P	B.P	M.P	Total	CORPT	ADVO.	POLICY	CANDIDATE	VOTING INFOR.
1	AA									
2	AD									
3	ACPN									
4	ADC									
5	APA									
6	APC									
7	CPP									
8	HOPE									
9	KOWA									
10	NCP									
11	PDP									
12	PPN									
13	UDP									
14	UPP									
	<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>									

**KEY**

**PROMINENCE**

F.P = FRONT PAGE  
BP = BACK PAGE  
MP = MIDDLE PAGE

**THEME**

CORPT = CORRUPTION  
ADVO = ADVOCACY  
VOTING INFORM = VOTING INFORMATION

APPENDIX II  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST

**Group Statistics**

name of newspapers	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
vanguard	2888	3.18	1.311	.024
daily trust	2627	3.33	1.332	.026

**Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	10.460	.001	-4.112	5513	.000	-.146	.036	-.216	-.077
Equal variances not assumed			-4.109	5446.415	.000	-.146	.036	-.216	-.077

APPENDIX III  
TWO ANOVA TEST OF PARTY AND MONTH

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	44.241 <sup>a</sup>	57	.776	3.181	.000
Intercept	12020.338	1	12020.338	49266.906	.000
party	10.335	14	.795	3.258	.000
month	7.133	4	1.783	7.309	.000
<b>party * month</b>	<b>25.676</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>.642</b>	<b>2.631</b>	<b>.000</b>
Error	1331.421	5457	.244		
Total	13396.000	5515			
Corrected Total	1375.662	5514			

APPENDIX IV  
TWO WAY ANOVA TEST OF PARTY AND PROMINENCE

Dependent Variable: month of coverage

Source	Type II Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	396.720 <sup>a</sup>	17	23.336	13.857	.000
Intercept	58357.860	1	58357.860	34652.546	.000
Party	99.268	14	7.636	4.534	.000
Prominence	291.599	3	145.800	86.575	.000
party * prominence	19.447	2	9.723	5.774	.003
Error	9257.420	5497	1.684		
Total	68012.000	5515			
Corrected Total	9654.140	5514			

APPENDIX V

TWO WAY ANOVA TEST OF NEWSPAPER AND THEME OF COVERAGE

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: name of newspaper

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	15.409 <sup>a</sup>	4	3.852	15.604	.000
Intercept	9672.762	1	9672.762	39181.610	.000
theme	15.409	4	3.852	15.604	.000
Error	1360.253	5510	.247		
Total	14179.000	5515			
Corrected Total	1375.662	5514			