

INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS ON VOTER ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

BY

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**POST GRADUATE SCHOOL,
BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI**

APRIL, 2018.

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**BEING A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL, BENUE
STATE UNIVERSITY, MAKURDI IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MASS
COMMUNICATION**

APRIL, 2018.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis was written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been presented in any form whatsoever in any previous application for the award of a higher degree. All sources of information have been duly acknowledged.

Peter Iorper Ugondo

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DEDICATION

To the Lord Jesus Christ, the only one and true living God

CERTIFICATION

We certify that this thesis titled '*Influence of Newspaper Editorials on Voter Attitude towards the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria*' has been duly presented by Peter Iorper Ugondo (BSU/MAC/PhD/13/6971) of the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Social Sciences, Benue State University, Makurdi, and has been approved by the Examiners.

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Having met the stipulated requirements, the thesis has been accepted by Postgraduate School.

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Postgraduate School

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ABSTRACT

The study '*Influence of Newspaper Editorials on Voter Attitude towards the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria*' investigated themes, position and rhetoric of newspaper editorials on 2015 elections and the consequent influence on voter attitude. Content Analysis and the Survey methods were triangulated in the study. A sample size of 180 editorials and 384 registered voters were selected for the study. Stratified, random, proportionate, and purposive sampling techniques were used in selecting the subjects or respondents for the study. Coding sheet and structured questionnaire were used for data collection. The study found that the key issues which editorials entertained the most and were largely of one accord among the national dailies in Nigeria during the 2015 general election were security; the voter authentication machine (card reader); Permanent Voter's Card (PVC), negative campaigning. Epideictic, deliberative and forensic types of rhetoric were found to be used in the editorials. It was also found that 93.1% of the respondents anticipated violence during the polls; however, voting behaviour exhibited during accreditation, voting, collation and announcement of results by INEC was largely cordial and peaceful. Pearson Correlation coefficients of .983, .904, .959 and .981 showed high correlation between editorial stand on issues and voter attitude during the 2015 general elections. The study concluded that the selected newspapers: *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* demonstrated high sense of social responsibility and commitment to the society by participating in delivering a credible and peaceful election to Nigerians through high volume of incisive editorials. The editorials influenced the calmed behaviour voters had exhibited over the election outcome in 2015. The study recommended that INEC should scale up the use of media in voter education campaigns and particularly, employ social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter and blogs. Newspapers should also exploit the new or social media platforms such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, and twitter to enhance more access and reach of editorials.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Investigation of the effect of newspapers on political attitudes, behaviour, and subject knowledge of news events found that even short exposure to a daily newspaper appears to influence voter attitude and may affect turnout behaviour (Gerber, Karlan & Bergan, 2009). Media sources then may influence the public not only through the slant of a particular news report (DellaVigna & Kaplan, 2007) but also through editorial opinion. Voters therefore, learn much of politics and government from newspaper editorials (McNair, 1995, Franklin, 2008). The learning is necessary because the ability of the citizens to discuss socially significant matters depends on the availability of ideas, opinions and factual background data that contributes to knowing and making sense of the contingency from the most varied perspectives possible (Gronemeyer & Porath, 2015).

Editorials influence social values and community beliefs, attitudes and aspirations through the ideas, opinions and attitudes that they provide for public debate (Fuenzalida, 2005, Bandura, 1986). Through editorials, newspapers do not only act as neutral information agencies providing a forum for other actors but also, take an active role in the political process by selecting and structuring information, assigning relevance, interpreting and evaluating the stream of events continuously taking place (Eilders, 2000). Opinion journalism of this sort gives the media the power to set the dominant political agenda and establish the dominant interpretative frameworks within which on-going political events are made sense of (McNair, 2000). It is through the opinion pieces also that social reality is produced, negotiated and changed (Gnanaseelan, 2015).

As unsigned texts, published in spaces dedicated to opinion that represent the position of the media itself, the editorial facilitate awareness, reflection and analysis of current affairs

from a particular stance or point of view (Blanks, 2008; Ho & Quinn, 2009). Newspapers use the editorial to explain the meaning of the news and thus, influence public opinion; interprets, examines, contextualizes and judges key events, and on the whole, influence voting behaviour, modify government decisions, and strengthen (or discredit) political institutions. In short, editorials affect public opinion both as agenda-setting and in the way they influence social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action (González, 1991, van Dijks, 1995, Filippi, 1997).

Through interpretative, evaluative and potentially persuasive content, the editorial can provide orientation to the voters on election matters by the judgements made regarding policy, political actors and political decisions (Eilders, 2000). This helps the publications typical reader to be informed, educated, persuaded and influenced. Principally, editorials educate, provoke debate and offer enlightened judgments to their readers. Editorials help citizens obtain an adequate understanding of their context, including political preferences and the moral and value choices at stake (Schudson, 1995).

By their role in shaping public policy and igniting change, editorials can make the political messages of newspapers significantly associated with the substantive political attitudes of a national sample of their readers (Entman, 1989). When they exercise their opinion-making power in the form of candidate endorsements, editorials potentially intervene in the democratic process by influencing readers' voting decisions Meltzer (2007). Even though it may be difficult, if not impossible to quantify the impact of editorials on political leaders or presidential administrations, it is certainly the case that editorials have influence over the readers and the decisions they make (Tomasky, 2003).

Globally, newspaper editorials exerted much influence on social, political and economic issues including the abolishment of slave trade in the eighteenth century. *Washington Post* (2003) reported that the *New York Tribune* publisher made the newspaper a national voice

against slavery in the United States of America, Europe and Africa. The paper's editorial in 1862 'Prayer of Twenty Millions' implored United States President Lincoln to set slaves free. In the end, Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which abolished slave trade soon after. Also, during the civil rights movement, editorials played key roles to begin dialogue and encourage change.

Research shows that newspaper editorials had considerable impact on elections, public policy and relations among countries like United States and Britain. For instance, three American elite newspapers *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal* editorials from 1984 to 2004 using linguistic, stylistic, and argumentative manoeuvres, influenced public assumptions that Iran had a clandestine nuclear weapons programme (Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007). The editorial stance of British newspapers between the 1992 and 1997 United Kingdom (UK) general elections persuaded a considerable share of readers to vote for Labour (Ladd and Lenz 2009). Editorial criticisms of Barack Obama, in the month prior to the 2008 United States (US) presidential election, whether credible or not, produced more negative public evaluations of him when the race was salient (Pyszczynski, Henthorn, Motyl & Gerow, 2010). Editorial slant of newspapers also shaped candidate evaluations and vote choice during elections in America (Druckman & Parkin, 2005).

In Africa, Oyovbaire (2001) submits that newspaper editorials acquired a front seat and status as the mouthpiece of the masses for social struggle and change in the African continent, particularly in the fight against colonialism and apartheid. Editorials of newspapers like *West African Pilot*, *Lagos Weekly Record*, *Daily Times*, among others were a formidable force in the anti-colonial struggle mildly in the late 1920s and much more forcefully from about 1944 which culminated to Nigeria's independence in 1960. Besides the advocacy for independence, newspaper editorials were also the arrowhead of the liberation struggle of the African National Congress (ANC) against apartheid in South Africa (Ngara & Esebonu, 2012).

After Nigeria's independence, problems of high level of voter apathy, low voter turnout and electoral violence marred every attempt at conducting a free and fair election. For instance, the aftermath of the 2011 general elections was chaotic, lives and properties were lost (Bekoe 2011). Identified causes were negative mobilization by political leaders and negative voter attitude (Ibeanu & Mbah, 2012). Voter attitudes crucial for democratic consolidation and stability include among others increased voter turnout during elections, improved voter knowledge of new accreditation procedures based on the permanent voters' card, reduction in the number of invalid votes at elections, as well as encourage ethical voting (Jega, 2014). For that, during the 2015 general elections, collaboration and co-operation was solicited from the media to ensure a remarkably peaceful voter attitude (Ochonogor & Omego, 2012, Aminu, 2014).

Today, information and communication technologies, the World Wide Web and the internet have expanded the reach and access to newspaper editorials. Orosa, García, and Santorum (2013) maintained that the editorials also appear in the homepage of the online newspapers, and the online edition offers readers a couple of hyperlinks to documents that expand the editorial information, read them on various social media platforms and share the editorial as well. The new media now according to Owens-Ibie (2014) assures that the content of editorials can be everywhere simultaneously and readers also transcend geographical and political boundaries as newspapers now serve their communities and a wider constituency beyond the limits of areas of circulation/coverage. About 7.2 million Nigerians daily use the new media with 97% of them accessing the platform via mobile (Kazeem, 2016). By such adaptations, the expectation on newspaper editorials' influence on voter attitude is heightened as more voters would have more access to such editorials in print or online versions.

Since the newspaper editorial facilitated the abolishment of slave trade, rights movements globally, and independence of African countries, studying its contributions during

elections would be timely. What affects electoral integrity and security, voter turnout and apathy with a spiral effect of violence is the ignorance of voters (Holbrook, Krosnick, Visser, Gardner & Cacioppo, 2001). And editorials provide education by offering background information and interpretation that in the end shape public opinion and attitudes (Ciboh, 2014). Therefore, much political learning can be achieved by voters through editorials which identify issues as key concerns and make direct calls for action to political actors in a way that is purposively distinct from day-to-day objective news coverage in the rest of the newspaper (Firmstone, 2003).

Regrettably, of all its prominence and influence as opinion text, Ansary and Babaii (2005, p. 271) assert that ‘studies on print journalism opinion discourse has been and still is considered by many a neglected genre, especially if it is compared with the abundant existing work on other newspaper text types’. A very close study in Nigeria was conducted by Jimoh (2010) on the role of editorial cartoons in the democratic process in Nigeria. Also, Onyeka (2012) studied public perception of newspaper editorials in Enugu state Nigeria. Political communication theories of agenda-setting, priming and framing have been mostly applied to news reports at large, which include editorials, in order to establish the influence of media on voter attitudes.

But Le (2010) argues that editorials deserve to be studied as a genre on their own because they are the “most obvious and the most overt manifestations” of the media effects theories (p. 1). In spite of the influence newspaper editorials wade in democratic process, little is studied about them. Even though the study of voter attitudes and partisan alignments is one of the classical fields of political science inquiry, Lindberg and Morrison (2007) say it remains a notoriously an under-researched area in African politics. It is evident that much existing research (especially in Nigeria) fails to systematically investigate the content of newspaper editorials and its influence on voter attitude which scholars agree is a panacea to violent

elections, voter apathy and low turnout (Ibeanu 2014). It is this failing which has served as the motivation for the present study.

Newspaper editorials are best suited as the key subjects of investigation in this study for several reasons adduced by Orosa, García, and Santorum (2013). First, compared to other communication materials relevant to the campaign (political speeches, radio commentaries, etc.), the newspaper editorial is more readily available. Second, of these relevant materials, newspaper editorials are the only substantial source of independent political opinion. Thirdly, the newspaper editorial is most often used by the candidates themselves to gauge their relative appeal and progress throughout the campaign. More so, in terms of political learning, newspaper and newsmagazine use has positive effects that are stronger than the effects of television time (McLeod, 2000).

Newspapers with national spread such as *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, *The Nation*, *Daily Trust* and *Leadership* ably fits into the study. These newspapers are consistent in publication of editorials, very easy to access and affordable at the same price of one hundred and fifty Naira. Besides, they represent each geographical region in terms of staffing and location as the place of the publisher. Information on the websites of the newspapers show that, *Daily Trust* operates from the North (West and East) with Kabiru Abdullahi Yusuf as Chief Executive Officer, *Leadership* is located in North central region with Sam Nda Isaiah from Niger State as publisher, *Daily Sun* is Published by Orji Uzor Kalu from South East, *Vanguard* is owned by Sam Amuka, from Delta State, South South), *The Nation* is owned by Asiwaju Bola Tinibu, from Lagos, South West.

Since electoral activities and information dissemination heightens towards election dates, January to April, 2015 was apt as study period. Examining any period other than this would not yield valid results. This is because the period was an intense period of campaigns and preparations for the election. As such, much of education needed to be disseminated by election

management body – Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and party institutions and candidates for free, fair and peaceful elections.

Above all, there are definitely studies on mass media and elections in Nigeria especially since 1999 (Ugondo, 2011, Atim, 2010, George-Genyi, 2017) but this particular study is a focus on newspaper editorial comments and voter attitudes. Existing studies from political scientists (Arowolo & Lawal, 2009; Awopeju, 2011; Bamgbose, 2012, Chikwem, 2012, Casimir, Omeh, & Ike, 2013) have been preoccupied with the history of elections, issues of electoral violence, the legal framework for election, the role of security agencies, electoral bodies, and electoral reforms. On the other hand, those by communication scholars (Ugondo, 2011, Iwokwagh, & Ijwo, 2011, Oboh, 2015; Ojo, & Adebayo, 2013, Ugande & Chile, 2017) have focused on media coverage, the role of media, etc. thereby failing to empirically investigate the newspaper editorial contents and its influence on voter attitudes in an election. This study aspires to fill the void by undertaking an empirical study of newspaper editorials and voter attitude in the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nigerians have negative attitudes towards elections (Agaigbe, 2015; George-Genyi, 2015). This negative voter attitude is characterised by fear, insecurity, lack of confidence, low turnout, violence, expectations and political socialization (Ibrahim, Liman & Mato, 2015; Afro Barometer, 2015). Jega in *Vanguard* (2014) linked the hurdle of conducting the 2015 general elections in Nigeria to the attitude of both the electorate and political class. In the past, such attitude generated violence with colossal waste of human and material resources during and after the elections (Ibeanu & Mbah, 2012). The fundamental question then is: what can be done to reduce or change the apathetic attitude of voters towards elections in Nigeria?

What causes the apathetic voter attitude with a spiral effect of violence is the ignorance of voters (Holbrook, Krosnick, Visser, Gardner & Cacioppo, 2001, Ibeanu, 2014, Jega, 2014).

But how do voters acquire the information and knowledge necessary for them to use during elections? Definitely, they would need guidance as to how to interpret what they know. Since the early twentieth century, this has been fulfilled through the editorial. Therefore, employing newspaper texts like editorials will help offer background information and interpretation necessary to shape public opinion and attitudes (Ciboh, 2014).

In fact, editorials help citizens obtain an adequate understanding of their context, including political preferences and the moral and value choices at stake (Schudson, 1995). Readers turn to editorials for opinion, discussion, and interpretation covering those matters which are for the day, attracting attention. In their learning and judgment, readers take editorials as a sort of superior intellect, infallible teacher, a human encyclopedia, a seer and prophet. Through their stand point and interpretation, newspaper editorials do construct social reality and shape public attitudes (Fairclough, 1995). Also, the rhetorical nature of editorials is intended to influence public opinion or attitude on different issues that can even be critical to a community or a whole country (Elyazale, 2014).

If editorial stand point and interpretation could successfully facilitate the abolishment of slave trade (Washington post, 2003), influence candidate evaluations (Druckman & Parking, 2005, Pyszczynski, Henthorn, Motyl & Gerow, 2010), usher independence for countries (Ngara & Esebonu, 2012), shape policies and relations among countries (Izadi & Saghaye-Biria, 2007), this raises the question of whether newspaper editorials actually achieved their original objective of changing minds. If so, how did newspaper editorials changed the attitude of voters towards the 2015 general elections? In view of these conundrums, the study investigates the influence of newspaper editorials on voter attitudes towards the 2015 elections in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to assess the influence of newspaper editorials on voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks:

- i. To identify the themes or topics of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections.
- ii. To assess the position of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections.
- iii. To examine the rhetoric of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections.
- iv. To determine voters' attitude towards the 2015 general elections.
- v. To find out how the editorials influenced voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the study objectives, answers were sought on the following research questions

- i. What were the themes or topics of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections?
- ii. What was the position of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections?
- iii. How was the rhetoric of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections?
- iv. What was the attitude of voters towards the 2015 general elections?
- v. How did the editorials influence voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections?

1.5 Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated to test the relationship between editorials and of voter attitude.

- i. There is no correlation between the position of editorials and voter attitudes towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The work is significant in number of ways to editors, journalists, election monitors, civil society groups, Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, political communicators, researchers, legislature, the judiciary, politicians and voters in general. First, the study identified challenges, strategies and outcomes of voter education during the 2015 general

elections. Secondly, it has provided knowledge about the conduct of voter education and voter participation at the elections as well as underscore lessons that can be learnt from using the media for voter education, and based on that, proffer recommendations on how INEC and Nigeria at large can improve voter education.

The study made valuable contribution to literature on political communication and voter attitude in Nigeria. Newspaper editors on the other hand, can find the review of their activities and contributions in terms of the quality of editorials that they published towards stable democracy. This study is useful in achieving peaceful and transparent elections in Nigeria and around the world. It can as well stimulate the curiosity of researchers to undertake further studies on this fundamental element of democracy. The study has also provided an improved knowledge base to enable the Independent National Electoral Commission to achieve its objectives in voter education.

The study has stimulated reflection, not only in the research community, but also among policy makers concerned with designing programmes aimed at deepening shallow democracies by using different press genres for voter education. Students and researchers too can find this work helpful as a resource material for further studies on political communication and media effects.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to 2015 general elections. It covered the period of campaigns to the actual voting (January – April, 2015). Five national newspapers were selected for the study namely, *The Nation*, *Daily Trust*, *Daily Sun*, *Vanguard*, and *Leadership*. This sample of newspapers represented six geographic regions in Nigeria. Also, only unsigned newspaper editorials were studied. This is because such editorials are democracy in themselves as they are output of a consensus decision rather than an individual decision. However, literature reviewed cut across all the media. Except where stated otherwise, the term media and press were used

interchangeably. These papers had designated pages for the editorials. *Leadership* publishes its editorial on page 3, *Daily Sun* page 19, *The Nation* page 17, *Vanguard* page 18, while *Daily Trust* pages 29, 27, 30, and 38.

Again, not all editorial content was considered, but only those on the 2015 election, before, during and shortly after. These elections were presidential, national assembly, governorship and state assembly elections.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations were encountered in the study but surmounted. First was the difficulty in accessing all the selected newspapers. Even though National Library of Nigeria and Benue State University Library were used, not all the editions of the papers were available. It was clear that there is no consistency in collection of newspapers among libraries in Nigeria. The researcher therefore visited the Head Quarters of such newspapers particularly *Leadership* and *Daily Trust* as well as surfed the websites of the papers where those editions not found in the Libraries were retrieved.

Travelling around the country for administration of the questionnaire was not a mean task for the researcher. More so, talking to voters to take their time in filling out the questionnaire was initially, difficult to achieve. However, the saving grace for the researcher was the research assistants. The researcher assistants were chosen from the states which were their origin or that they have lived in for not less than ten years. Their ability to combine local dialect with English helped immensely in the administration of the questionnaire.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Key concepts of the study are hereby operationalized for this study.

Newspaper: a newspaper is an unbound publication published at least weekly, is produced by a mechanical printing process; is available (for a price) to people of all works of life; prints news

of general interest rather than items on specialised topics such as religion or business; is readable by people of ordinary literacy; is timely and is stable over time (Emery, 1972).

Editorial: it is an unsigned article published on the masthead of a newspaper page. It is the same as 'leader or lead article, in the print journalism genre of commentary, marked by its subjectivity, pungency, distinct typefaces and peculiar indentation' (Okoye, 2003, p.10). In short, it can be described as a piece of frequently reoccurring opinion journalism that expresses the ideological or political standpoint of the newspaper or tabloid. It is published in and is by tradition unsigned, contrary to debate articles or columns that are signed by specific individuals or named groups. It is produced by the editorial staff together to present the common opinion of that newspaper with the avowed intention of persuading the readers to accept that opinion (Le, 2002). The layout of the editorial page is visually less imposing and more text-heavy than the remainder of the newspaper, with small headlines and few photographs. Typically, the only photograph on the editorial page in most papers is editorial cartoon.

Editorial Theme: this is the topic or issue an editorial is centred on.

Editorial position: It is the stand, submission or decision taken in an editorial to condemn, commend and advise.

A Voter: A voter as provided by the Nigerian Electoral Act (2006), is a citizen who is 18 years old and above, and is duly registered to elect political office holders. The voter is essentially any qualified person who decides to go through all the formalities of voter registration and finally obtains an identity/ permanent voters card (PVC). This enables him/her to participate in any election in any polling station/ unit where he registered (Agboola, 2014).

Voter Attitude: This denotes the sum total of a voter's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about an election (Thurstone, 1928). It can either be before, during and after the election. Behaviours such as apathy, violence,

are an offspring of attitude. Voter attitude could be negative or positive, constructive or destructive.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews previous theoretical and empirical literature dealing with newspaper editorials and elections in general. It clarifies key concepts of the study such as newspaper, editorial, voter attitude and elections. It is structured under the following sub-titles: review of concepts, review of related literature, empirical studies, theoretical framework and a recap of the chapter.

2.1 Review of Concepts

Key concepts of the study are isolated for review. These are newspaper, editorial, voter attitude and election.

2.1.1 Newspaper

Newspapers are among the most accessible texts available to the vast majority of people – literate, illiterate, young and old, students, workers, elites and peasants – in any community. This is because all these categories of readers can find something they care about inside the newspaper's pages (Cheyney, 1992). However, the concept of newspaper is conceived differently by scholars. The definition of a newspaper by Emery (1972), a distinguished historian of journalism as captured in DeFleur and Dennis (1998, p. 68) is that a newspaper:

- i. Is published at least weekly
- ii. Is produced by a mechanical printing process
- iii. Is available (for a price) to people of all walks of life
- iv. Prints news of general interest rather than items on specialised topics such as religion or business
- v. Is readable by people of ordinary literacy
- vi. Is timely
- vii. Is stable over time.

Newspaper according to Cheyney (1992) is a book that provides up-to-date information on local, state, national, and world affairs; the most current analysis and criticism on executive and legislative decision-making; the latest in music, theatre, television, and the fine arts and even columns and comics to make people laugh. Academic American Encyclopaedia (1989) describes a newspaper in a broad sense as “an unbound publication issued at regular intervals that seeks to inform, analyse, influence and entertain” (p.171). Hynds (1975) provides nine criteria for classifying newspaper. Some of these are frequency of publication (a newspaper can be published at various intervals but usually appears weekly or daily); time of publication; purpose; circulation; geography; method of production and intended audience, etc.

Today’s newspapers use design elements – story placement, typeface, and graphics – to make information easily accessible to the reader. Important stories usually are placed at the top of a page. The most important stories have large bold headlines. Graphics appear next to related stories (Babalola, 2002). The universal format of a newspaper presents information in a predictable way. In a straight news story, the headline gives the reader the main idea of the story. The lead paragraph gives a summary of the story in capsule form, answering the important newspaper questions – who, what, when, where, why and how. The remainder of the news story provides additional details, with the least important information at the end of the story.

Newspapers have been found to be very important source of political communication. They educate people, and enlighten them not only about the specifics and mechanisms of the electoral process but also inform and empower them on their rights and responsibilities in the electoral process (Franklin, 2008). In addition, Babalola (2002, p.407) opines that ‘newspapers generally are published in order to disseminate diverse kinds of information that are of interest to the reading public, both young and old’. Atypical Nigerian newspaper contains varied topics of interest to a broad spectrum of the audience among who are school children, youths in their impressionable years, elites and educated adults, semi-illiterates and stark illiterates, etc.

History of Newspapers

The history of newspaper began with the Johannes Gutenberg printing press when printed descriptions of important news began to appear in form of brief documents. Defleur and Dennis (1998, p.62) call these brief documents as ‘forerunners of newspapers’ and identified the first true newspaper as the *Oxford Gazette* (later called the *London Gazette*) in 1665, while the first daily newspaper in English the *Daily Courant* (from *Coranto*), began publication in London on March 11, 1702.

In the United States, the *New York Sun* published by Benjamin Day started on September 3, 1883 (Defleur & Dennis 1998) but Hasan (2013, p.177) says ‘the first newspaper to fit the modern definition as a newspaper was the *New York Herald*, founded in 1835 and published by James Gordon Bennett. It was the first newspaper to have city staff covering regular beats and spot new, along with regular business and Wall Street coverage’. The paper also had the first foreign correspondent staff of six men in Europe and assigned domestic correspondents to key cities, including the first reporter to regularly cover Congress. The *New York Herald* added many features that became part of modern newspapers like the editorial comment (Defleur & Dennis, 1998).

In Africa, Duyile (1987) submits that newspaper publishing started in Sierra Leon 1801 with the *Royal Gazette* followed by the *Royal Gold Coast Gazette* 1822 in Ghana. Liberia the third country started publishing in 1826, Nigeria the fourth started with *Iwe Irohin* in 1859 and then Gambia in 1883. Duyile (1987) observes that although these were predominantly religious newspapers, ‘their focus was also to propagate political ideas, to fight colonial injustice, to seek and demand freedom, to protect the people’s interests, and to educate them about the present and the future’ (p.3).

The demise of ‘*Iwe Iroyin*’ later resulted to the emergence of other Newspapers like *Anglo-African*, *Lagos Time and Gold Coast Advertiser*, *Lagos Observer*, *The Eagle and Lagos*

Critic, The Mirror, The Nigerian Chronicle, The Lagos Standard, Lagos Weekly Record, African Messenger, The West African Pilot, Nigerian Tribune(Abati, 1998). However, the first newspaper ever published as a daily on the coast of West Africa was the *Lagos Daily News* in 1925 (Ciboh, 2007). Its editorials Duyile (1987, p.99) says ‘were pungent and majority of times vehemently critical of British rule in Nigeria’. On the whole, newspapers produced political education for the elite masses who in turn influenced their rural kinsmen about the new culture.

One of the historians of the Nigerian Press, Omu (1978) says, the early Nigerian press provided the most distinguished intellectual forum in Nigeria history. One in which the high standard of debate, discussion, the quality of thought and expression cannot fail to fascinate the modern reader. Corroborating this, Kukah (1994) states that journalism was the major vehicle through which the anti-colonial struggle in Nigeria was carried out. Many of the major figures in this struggle were Herbert Macaulay, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ernest Ikoli, Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Dutse Mohammed Ali, Mokwugo Okoye to name but a few who were newspaper publishers, journalists, commentators and or editors. Their newspapers served as platform for mobilising the people, spreading nationalist awareness and for opposing the worst manifestation of colonial subjugation and the racialism which is customary to them.

One obvious conclusion that can be made about the birth and proliferation of the early press up to and after independence according to Udoakah (2014) is that it was motivated by politics more than anything else and that ownership was dominated by the educated class with economic power. Today, numerous newspapers are published on weekly, daily and in local languages too.

Functions of Newspapers

Newspapers are regarded as multiple avenues through which societal needs are met. In the view of Aliyu (2010), the newspaper inform, educate, entertain, provoke or incite, challenge, store” (serving as reservoir of knowledge and current happenings), and reflect (serving as

indicator of the times). Thus, one of the key aims of setting up a newspaper is to inform and influence the communities in which it is domiciled or published. Newspapers also influence readers and try to get them involved in what is happening in their community, country and the world. It also points out the needs of a particular community to the appropriate authorities, serving as a watchdog for the downtrodden and those without a voice (Ciboh, 2016).

To Aliyu (2010), newspapers externalize viewpoints that are either provocative or challenging, thereby drawing readers to participate in the discourse or simply take a stand. This explains the universal aims of education, information and entertainment (Sambe & Nyitse, 2007). Berelson (1949) also delineates the various uses of the newspaper by the average reader.

- (i) To get information about, and interpretation of, public affairs (and also to develop public opinion).
- (ii) As tools for daily living (for example: advertising, announcements of births, deaths and weddings).
- (iii) For relaxation and escape (to unwind from stress and from the rigours of daily existence).
- (iv) For prestige (since newspaper content is raw material for conversation and arguments, it raises the social profile of the voracious reader who is well-versed in current affairs).
- (v) For social contact (stemming from human interest stories and advice columns).

Other functions of the newspaper that authors have explained include:

a. *Newspapers a Forum for Public Debate:*

Craig (2007) says that newspapers have been the traditional forum for public debate- the means by which ideas are disseminated and considered by a society. Newspapers provide an essential forum for public discussions and debates, thereby providing guidance for the society (Copeland, 2003). Newspapers are regarded as courtrooms, where judgements are passed against

societal ills through editorials. This has been so, because of the ability of the newspapers to cover a wider range of issues and to cover an individual news story in more depth than other news media. With the arrival of writing and literacy, news reports gained added reliability and, in advanced societies like that of Rome and China became more formal.

b. *To Support a Political :*

Defleur and Dennis (1998) point out that some of the early papers were published to express and support a particular political , while others were of interest to merchants and traders. But they established important traditions as guardians of the public interest and played a key role in spreading ideas that became important to establishing the new nation. Since their emergence in the 17th century (Weber, 2006; O'Malley, 2012), newspapers have consistently remained useful resources in the society. As a medium of mass communication, newspapers serve as tools for shaping thoughts, and means of controlling economic and political powers (Copeland, 2003).

c. *As Agent of Socialisation.*

The information, education and entertainment roles of newspapers further make them agents of socialisation (Stephens, 1988). Newspapers socialise members of the public by inculcating the values and norms of the society in them (Stephens, 1988). In fulfilling this basic function in the society, newspapers, like other channels of mass communication, have always devoted attention to the coverage of various aspects of human endeavours. These include, but not limited to, politics, education, sports, business and economy, religion, arts and culture, entertainment and health.

d. *Information Function.*

Newspapers as Alozie, (2009, p.3) puts it, 'carry information on a broad spectrum of issues which include: news, advertisement, politics, education, science and technology, religion, commerce etc.' The average daily newspaper contains far more news than available on radio, television or any other medium. The obligations of any newspaper to its community therefore,

are to strive for honest and comprehensive coverage of the news and courageous expression of editorial opinion in support of the basic principles of human liberty and social progress (Emery, 1962).

2.1.2 Editorial

Buller (2015) describes the editorial as the highest form of political punditry in press journalism. Editorial is a key component of daily newspaper through which voter education can be enhanced. It is widely shared among scholars (van Dijk, 1996; Le, 2004; Murphy, 2005 & Belmonte, 2008) that editorials play a definitive role in the formation and altering of public opinion, promoting social interaction among journalists, readers and the rest of participants in the language event, and influence social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action. In other words; editorials can provide knowledge to the reader to form or change an opinion and strengthen the interaction between the reader and the writer, in addition to giving the reader the opportunity to participate in decision making. Indeed, editorials help readers to make up their mind about the events of the world (van Dijk, 1995).

As one of the components of all major national newspapers in Nigeria and all over the world, the editorial is usually published on a distinct page called editorial page. Meltzer (2007) describes this page as a

section of the newspaper where the masthead and staff listing of the newspaper can be found, including the owner's name or company's name, one to four editorials, syndicated and local guest writers, political cartoons and letters to the editor. It is only here that openly acknowledged opinion as opposed to traditional 'neutral' reporting is published. (p. 83)

However, what is termed an editorial today is an offshoot of opinion journalism. This is why scholars see the editorial from different perspectives. Koubali (2007, p.31) says, 'an editorial include: leading articles, letters to the editor, and personal editorials'. Ekeanyanwu and

Olaitan (2009) construe editorial as the subjective opinion of the editorial board of a newspaper. It is that branch of journalism that conveys to the public the media organization's opinion on issues in the news, as well as issues of public interest. Meltzer (2007) believes that the editorial page is the outlets for the editorial board, the organizationally sanctioned mouthpiece of the newspaper, to collectively craft and publish its views on a wide range of topics. Such views could be endorsement of candidates, taking stances on issues, criticising official decisions and commenting on events.

An editorial is also an article that states the newspaper's ideas on an issue. It provokes debate and offer enlightened judgments to readers. Thus, an article that states the newspaper's stance on a particular issue is an editorial. Again, Ossai (2002, p.221) says "an editorial is a critical interpretation or evaluation of significant and usually contemporary events so that the publications typical reader will be informed, educated, influenced and persuaded". Basically, it is a persuasive essay that offers a solution to a problem. Okoro and Agbo (2003, p.125) considered editorial as 'a critical evaluation, interpretation and presentation of significant, contemporary events in such a way as to inform, educate, entertain and influence the reader'. Hoffman (2007, p.113) defines editorial as a statement of opinion from an editor or publisher about you and your business.

Although it is an opinion text, an editorial differs from others like column, letters to the editor, an article. Aman (2016) cited in Lemoine (2016) explains the differences on three categories that

The difference between signed and unsigned editorials is primarily that the signed texts provide a form where the author can express an “I”. It also gives more space to emphasize differently than would be possible in an unsigned editorial. So even though the writers are formally part of the editorial staff even when they write under their own names, there is a slightly greater degree of textual freedom in that form. Columns are not written by editorial writers, but by people who are more or less loosely tied to the editorial staff. They get to decide both the content and conclusions, so these may well differ from the views held by the editorial office.

(p. 4)

The core nature of editorials is to persuade readers to undertake a certain type of action, or to change their attitudes toward the topic being discussed. This persuasion O’Keefe (2002) asserts, involves changing persons’ mental states usually as precursors to behavioural change. It is an intentional effort at influencing another’s mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom. According to Richardson (2007, p.86), what characterizes editorials is that they are “opinion articles and... will never qualify as ‘objective reporting’”. That means, they always express an opinion. They are also described as “rhetorical” (Billing 1991 in Van Dijk, 1995), because they occur in interaction contexts. That is to say, their objective is to convince the recipient with the legitimacy or invalidity of ideas. Van Dijk (1996, p.23) categorizes them as “public-mass communicated types of opinion discourse par excellence”. Thus, editorials are newspaper texts expressing opinions directed to a large public and consequently, their aim is to persuade and convince.

Describing the editorial as a critical element in positioning the newspaper as a mediator between the people and the many contending forces and contemporary society, Anim and Sunday (2011) state that it was for this reason that newspapers set aside a clearly identified section called the Editorial Page or Opinion Pages for their opinion and editorial functions. The

study evaluated the perception of editors, selected from 15 national newspapers in Nigeria about the functions of editorials. It found out that the editorial as sacrosanct newspaper content was still alive as an item that leads public opinion.

According to Duyile (2005, p.63) editorial or leader is the —opinion of the newspaper simply written for the understanding of the readers, leading them to take decisions on the issues being discussed. Throwing more light on the issue of editorial or leader, the veteran journalist described it as the explanatory texts, the opinions of the newspaper on any topic. Duyile (2005) defines editorial as a comment or an argument in support of a particular policy, an action, or an idea whether expressed or latent. It can be an argument exhibiting the logical reasoning of the newspaper using the thoughts of the proprietor for the purpose of persuading the readers (audience) to kick against an idea, policy or an action based on facts available.

Editorial is regarded as the heart of the newspaper. It is the opinion of a particular newspaper on an issue and it is usually unsigned and appears on the Op-Ed pages in newspapers. An editorial (often leader or leading article in the newspaper) is a phrase or article by a news organization newspaper or magazine that expresses the opinion of the editor, editorial board, or publisher. Thus, an editorial seeks to inform or explain; persuade or convince and stimulate insight in an entertaining or humorous manner.

Editorials are also considered as the voice of the newspaper. As such, it should not be confused with Op-Eds or columnists articles (signed opinions). Editorials do not carry a by-line. This gives editorials a sort of ‘Voice of God’ quality, which veils the level of investigation and politics that go into the writing of an editorial. Galindo (2009) confirms this by holding that

by traditional journalistic conventions, newspaper articles report the facts along with any relevant background information surrounding an event or issue. In contrast, editorials are designed mainly to reflect their editorial boards' interpretations of an issue, themselves within the issue's potential policy relevance, and make policy recommendations. In performing this function, editorials not only inform readers of the various elements comprising the issue but more significantly educate if not persuade- On the merits of their point of view. (p.228)

Opinions expressed in editorials are not only addressed to the reading public but also to the social and political elite in keeping with the editorial function of influencing social policy through recommendations made in the editorials (Franklin, 2008). Ate (2007) posits that editorials in the print media especially newspaper have profound powers of bringing robust change in the society. The newspaper opinion function has made editorial writing a celebrated concept for serious-minded newspapers just as news commentary is to broadcast media. Although Editorials formulate and express opinions to the general public, they also "attack, defend, or give advice to the authorities" (van Dijk, 1991, p. 134).Ukonu (2005) describes editorial as the melting pot for all kinds of journalistic writings. According to him, investigative, interpretative and hard news reporting are incorporated into editorials. Objectivity, precision, specialism and advocacy are also styles adopted in treating editorial topics.

An editorial according to Stonecipher (1979) cited in Franklin (2008), may be thought of as a journalistic essay which either attempts:

- a) To inform or explain,
- b) To persuade or convince, or
- c) To stimulate insight in an entertaining or humorous manner.

In line with this definition, editorials can be classified into three categories: those that inform or explain editorials that try to convert, and editorials that amuse or amaze (p.43). In their opinion, Bonyadi and Samuel (2012, p.1) categorise editorials into: ‘criticism, attack, defence, endorsement, praise, appeal and entertainment’. They also define editorials of criticism as editorials that aim at criticizing policies and decisions that are considered as controversial by the newspaper staff. However, they also note that editorials of criticism are similar to editorials of attack, but fail to explain where the distinction is.

The editorial function in a newspaper has a very important and powerful role in shaping public opinion and this power lies solely with the writer or those who sit on editorial boards. Dewitt (1976) points out that:

what is expected from an editorial by the discerning reader is to provide leadership in recommending actions that should be taken, explain the significance of a trend or an action and interpret its causes and consequences, express appreciation for worthy services, point out weakness, excess, abuses of power and incompetence in the process of government, education, community relation and other human activities with recommendation for improvement and recognize those attributes and traditions worth preserving and fight for their strengthened support. (p .231)

In addition, Hutleng (1973, p.17) describes the various duties of the editorial writer as “a combination of philosopher, historian, advocate and educator”.

The editorial section is usually a page of the newspaper where the masthead and staff listing of the newspaper can be found, including the owner’s name or company’s name, one to four editorials, syndicated and local guest writers, political cartoons and letters to the editor. It is only here that openly acknowledged opinion as opposed to traditional _neutral ‘reporting is published (Meltzer, 2007). Rugar (2007, p.599) claims that ‘the editorial’s role is idiosyncratic:

while news informs, editorials assess'. This is echoed by Bonyadi and Samuel (2012, p.1), who posit that 'newspaper editorials as a kind of opinion texts are different from the other types of news discourse in that they are supposed to present evaluations and comments about the news events already reported in the newspapers'.

According to Ate (2007), there are three broad types of editorials namely, interpretative editorials, controversial editorials, and explanatory editorials. Interpretative editorials are chiefly written with a major mission to explain issues at stake by placing facts and figures at the door post of the readers for proper illumination of the day's intelligence. Interpretative editorials could be positive, negative or even neutral in approach or posture depending on the circumstances and the treatment of the subject matter by the editorial writers. These kinds of editorials are packaged with the particular mission or mandate to propagate a particular or specific point of view.

The focus of controversial editorials is to convince the reader on the desirability or inevitability of a particular issue while presenting or painting the opposite side in bad light. These kinds of editorials have no place for neutrality and can vehemently oppose a cause or out rightly support it.

Explanatory Editorials only present the vexing issues of the day for the judgment of the reader. These kinds of editorials only open-up thought- provoking issues of socio-political and economic interest for the attention of the readers and allow them to judge. Such editorials identify a problem, explain it and allow the reader to find solution to it. In an era when problem solving is the in-thing, explanatory editorials are seen by most media experts as no editorials because they only photo- copy problems as they appear and leave the entire headache to the reader. These kinds of editorials are gradually fading out of the mass media because of their structural deficiency of non-proffering of solutions to identified problems (Ate, 2007).

However, Krock (1968) identifies other types of editorials published by the newspapers as News, Policy, Tribute, Speculative, and Social Editorials.

- i. News editorials: These are editorials based on a news peg. They focus on issues already raised in the news of the day.
- ii. Policy editorials: These are editorials that focus on government policies.
- iii. Tribute editorials: These are editorials on important personalities who died in incidence of significance.
- iv. Speculative editorials: These are editorials that project into the future on certain issues of public interest.
- v. Social Editorials: These are editorials that focus on socio economic issues.

Irrespective of the newspaper organisation, editorials have a common structure. The first element of the editorial is the lead. This is the thesis statement for the article. The lead is intended to grab the attention of the reader. Directly following the lead is the editorial stand or the command's position. This is usually short and clear. The command is the nutshell paragraph for editorials. It functions as the bridge.

Next is the body of the story wherein facts and research are used to support the thesis. The body contains three counterarguments to the. The point is to acknowledge that counterarguments exist, not necessarily to argue them. Writers usually present the first counter argument, then, refute that counter argument with well-researched, fact-based information. Thereafter, credible sources and experts views are used to back up the command. This inoculates the audience to those counterarguments when they read them then present. The second counter argument is then presented and, once again, uses good, well-researched information to show your audience that the command is more valid than this counter argument. After the body, the command is restated to drive the main point home. Finally, an editorial is concluded with a call

to action. It has to be something the reader can actually do. The call to action is made short and memorable.

Editorials perform various functions in the society. Most crucial to the electoral process are the ones Ekeanyanwu and Olaitan (2009) enumerate as follows:

- a) To explain or interpret. Editors often use these editorials to explain the way the newspaper covered a sensitive or controversial subject.
- b) To criticize. This kind of editorial constructively criticizes actions, decisions or situations, while providing solutions to the problem identified. Its immediate purpose is to get readers to see the problem, not the solution.
- c) To persuade. Editorials of persuasion aim to immediately see the solution, not the problem. From the first paragraph, readers will be encouraged to take a specific positive action. Political endorsements are good examples of editorials of persuasion.
- d) To praise. These editorials commend people and organizations for something done well. They are not as common as the other three.
- e) Tribute. Sometime, the other type of editorial commonly found in Nigerian newspapers is tribute editorial which celebrates the lives of important personalities who died in incidence of significance. Tribute editorial is not a biography; rather it is an editorial that bothers on the achievements of the personality and how his demise has been a loss to the target audience or reader.

In a compendium of impact driven editorials, Okoro and Agbo (2003) say an editorial seeks to:

- i. Create and sustain a high culture for humanity.
- ii. Mobilize the populace to support a good cause.

- iii. Uncover inefficiency, maladministration and corruption in both public and private sectors of the economy.
- iv. Expose brutality by law enforcement agents or in mental institutions or home for juvenile delinquents or fight the evil of child abuse, drug, destitution, etc.
- v. Fight intolerance and make the nation a better place to live.
- vi. Support civic projects to build up a better citizenry.
- vii. Simplify the complexities of modern society. Help puzzled readers to find their way in the maze of complex economic developments and baffling statistics
- viii. Promote interactional goodwill, understanding and acceptance,
- ix. Instill a sense of patriotism/nationalism for the survival of nationhood
- x. Become the articulate voice of the populace
- xi. Be the vanguard for the formation and crystallization of public opinion
- xii. Promoting and sustaining good government

An editorial is a product of collective deliberations arrived at through the consensus of editorial board members (Ate, 2007). In most newspaper establishments, editorial writing is mainly the task of the editor but assisted by other members of the board while in other newspaper establishments, the writers are drawn from different professional and intellectual backgrounds. The board selects the topic and brainstorm on it before assigning it to an individual member or members to write (Ate, 2007).

History of Editorial

Globally, the editorial was born in the 18th century as a vehicle for the transmission of mainly political ideas in the press. Ate (2007, p.2) observes that ‘as far back as in 1830, the term editorial was used as a label to designate a statement of the editor’s opinion’. Quickly, its model was incorporated in other media and areas of public opinion. In 1941, the editorial was used for the first time in a radio station in Boston, in relation to the Mayflower issue, and after World

War II, in 1949, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) extended its use to radio and television stations (Jiménez, 1998). The emergence of editorial page is credited to Horace Greeley, who founded the *New York Tribune* in 1841 and invented the idea of segregating news reports from opinion writing, giving opinion its own page and labelling it the “Editorial Page”, and the idea caught on in American newspapers and continued to this day, even on websites, where the label is usually ‘OPINION’ (Gartner 2005). With Greeley’s innovation, came the “Editorial” a short essay or column which delivers each newspaper’s institutional statement of opinion. According to the *News History Gazette*, (2015), “In 1862, Greeley’s editorial, ‘Prayer of Twenty Millions’ implored President Lincoln to set slaves free. Lincoln was moved to answer personally”(para.3). During the civil rights movement, editorial writers played key roles to begin dialogue and encourage change. Editorials also take a stand on candidates.

By the early 1900s, newspapers around the world had designated a separate page – left hand page of the front section, for editorials and letters to the editor (Ate, 2007). Certain writers were also given special space in the paper often with their photo above it to signal to readers this was their opinion, not a news report or the position of the newspaper. Famous newspaper columns started with the likes of humorous poet Franklin P. Adams of the *New York Tribune* in the 1920s Walter Lippmann, David Lawrence, Raymond Clapper, Arthur Krock and H.L. Mencken in the 30s and 40s. Walter Winchell, a newspaper columnist active from the 1920s through the 1960s, was syndicated in 2,000 newspapers and read by up to 50 million people a day. Their by-lines were displayed prominently, generally on the right side of the editorial page (Ate, 2007).

Ossai (2002, p.222) provides reasons for the evolution of editorials or editorial page as follows:

- (1) The development of media systems
- (2) The controversial nature of news

- (3) The electronic media's competition with the print media
- (4) The emergence of elite classes that scramble for editorials
- (5) The need to use the media to support development provides a strong reason for persuading people through editorials to support national development.

Today, editorials offer a lot of benefits to a newspaper organisation. Apart from being a tradition, it gives prestige to a newspaper. Through the editorial, the newspaper has the opportunity to have a well-informed persuasive subjective opinion on national and global issues that concern the public. The editorial helps the newspaper to provide community leadership by reinforcing or clarifying opinions already held.

The same tradition of creating a distinct editorial page was held in Africa. Apart from the fact that the early newspaper publishers were either from the West or had their education from there, the quantum of impact editorials exerted during the civil rights movements, World War 2, and increased nationalist activities gave rise to emergence of editorial writing. Although Ekeanyanwu and Olaitan (2009, p.75) say 'there is really no history of the emergence of editorial writing in Nigeria as it is very difficult to ascertain precisely when editorials emerged. But Okoye (2003) argued that from time immemorial, editorials have been prominent features of Nigerian newspapers, 'early Nigerian secular newspapers could not come out without powerful editorials'(p.10).

Ample historical evidence also abounds that editorials emerged with the first newspaper in Nigeria, *Iwe Irohin* in 1859. Duyile (1987) confirms that *Iwe Irohin* regularly carried antislavery editorials. Again, 'Nigeria's number two newspaper, *The Anglo Africa* editorial columns were used in publishing critical appraisals of the problems of that period. The same was with *Lagos Times* and the *Gold Coast Advertiser*. The *Lagos Weekly Record* issue of 7 – 14 July, 1917 editorial on achievements of Indian Nationalism said "what India has been able to achieve in such an admirable degree, West Africa can emulate in less pretentious degree' (Duyile, 1987,

p.36). The *Lagos Weekly Record* usually had lengthy editorials with pungent criticisms (Omu 2000). Nigeria media history shows that Ernest Ikoli wrote *Daily Times* first editorial on June 1, 1926.

The consistency in maintaining the editorial page among newspapers world over connotes its relevance in the society and politics in particular. Numerous views have been expressed by newspaper industry leaders on the need for editorial page as captured by Ekeanyanwu and Olaitan (2009, pp.79 - 80). The first is from Barry Bingham, editor and editorial writer, Louisville Courier-Journal who says the editorial page is a natural source of thoughtful comment, of the calm analysis that puts the news in its proper perspective and keeps the reader adequately informed about topical issues. This is because; the average newspaper reader today is terribly short on time. The editorial writer can save time for him, and keep him well informed. He can do for readers what so few have a chance to do for themselves-research the background of news events, bring blurred facts into focus, weigh the value of news in the scales of sound judgment. That is exactly what intelligent readers' want done for them today.

In the second view, *The Rochester Times-Union*, in a 1951 two-column editorial, explains that in this complex age, a newspaper's service to its readers cannot end with the collection of facts. The bare facts are often so misleading as to be false when 'taken alone, and issues presented by the bare facts are often so complex that they require extensive examination to find their real meaning". Also, speaking before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1948, Roscoe Drummond, and the then Washington correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*, said the news of the world, even in the best newspapers, is like: The separate pieces of an immense jigsaw puzzle. The newspaper reader cannot normally put the pieces together and see the picture. He may be able to do so, on a few subjects about which he himself already knows a lot. But by and large, the news stories do not, and I think cannot, alone present an intelligible picture of events. If the picture is to be intelligible, what happened yesterday has to

be fitted in with what happened last week and long before that, and with what could happen, and what may happen tomorrow and in the future.

Ekeanyanwu and Olaitan (2009, p. 80) also captured the view of Felix McKnight, Managing Director, Dallas News, in the August, 1953, *Quill*, that "people are comment-hungry, world problems are so complex that the reader, hurried and confused, needs a page which interprets what's happening" and thus, the editorial page. From the perspective 'of Chapin Collins of the weekly Montesano (Washington) *Vidette*: "A man without a backbone and a country, a colonial house without shutters, a Christmas tree without tinsel - that's a newspaper without editorials.... Without an editorial page, a newspaper is French dressing without salt and pepper".

Today, modern newspapers have expanded, dignified and enriched the editorial page to an extent that they use the facing page for lengthier opinions by columnists and guest writers, while most newspapers too changed the tradition of using the page for sports stories to guests columns as well (Ate, 2007).

Editorials as Opinion Text

The editorial page is the only place in a newspaper where, 'according to the canons of good journalism, opinion is allowed to be expressed' (Meltzer 2007, p. 83). This opinion is expressed in various forms such as leading articles or mast head (unsigned) editorials, articles, opposite editorials (op-ed), columns and letters to the editor. Editorials are the means through which newspapers speak both for and to their audience. According to Santo (1994, p. 94), 'the most precise barometer of a newspaper's stand on political and social questions is assumed to reside on the editorial page – the heart, soul, and conscience of the newspaper'. This kind of opinion journalism McNair (2000, p. 30) notes, gives the media the 'power to set the dominant political agenda, ... In this capacity, the institutions of the press take the lead in establishing the dominant interpretative frameworks within which on-going political events are made sense of'.

Opinion journalism is valued by all media; it also takes a variety of forms that depend crucially on the nature of the medium. For newspapers, opinion can be found substantially in letters to the editor, articles, columns and editorial pages. In the broadcast, news analysis and commentaries, while blogging is an internet form of column writing.

The history of opinion journalism in the submission of Wahl-Jorgensen, (2008) is closely tied to the history of the press itself. The early newspapers were focused on information provision over opinion and interpretation. For instance, Barnhurst and Neronen (2001, p. 23) describe early American colonial newspapers as ‘short, stale, dull, unintelligible and unprofitable’. Nevertheless, Barnhurst and Neronen (2001) observe that printers quickly found that a more opinionated and interactive style of journalism won over readers. That is why when Thomas Fleet took over the Boston Weekly Rehearsal in the 1730s, he ‘solicited opinion writers by inviting “all Gentlemen of Leisure and Capacity ... to write anything of a political nature, that tends to enlighten and serve the public, to communicate their productions, provided they are not overlong’ (p. 111).

Later on, the information-oriented, commercial early press was transformed into a partisan journalism of opinion (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2008). In Britain, this shift occurred after the imposition of the Stamp Duty in 1712, while the US press changed its modus operandi towards the end of the eighteenth century (Schudson, 2001). The partisan press was born of commercial necessity, but was also centrally shaped by recognition of the political power of opinion writing. As Park (1923) in Wahl-Jorgensen (2008) wrote about partisan papers, the opinion that had formerly found expression in a broadside was now expressed in the form of editorial leading articles.

The net effect of this transformation was the departmentalisation of the newspaper contents. The remarks of Wahl-Jorgensen (2008) Daily News edition of December 2, 1918, shows that page 4 of the newspaper was devoted to editorials and letters about key issues in the

forthcoming election. This included an editorial which opened with the observation that the ‘past fortnight has seen a marked change in the temper of the electorate, of which those sensitive indications of the trend of public opinion, Lord Northcliffe’s newspapers, have given a faithful reflection’ (p. 93).

A look at National Dailies in Nigeria will show that most of them value, and mark out as distinctive, pages for various forms of opinion journalism. The back page usually used for sports stories (Sambe & Nyitse, 2007) is now taken over by opinion journalism. The papers also have specific pages devoted for their editorials. For example, Vanguard publishes editorials on page 19, Daily Sun, Page 18, The Guardian page 50, The Nation page 20, Daily Trust page 17 etc. All the papers have in common the commitment to designated spaces for opinion expression. Opinionated journalism including editorials, columns and letters to the editor appear in sections marked out with headings such as ‘Comment and Analysis’, ‘Comment and Debate’, and ‘Editorial & Opinion’. The layout of these sections is visually less imposing and more text-heavy than the remainder of the newspaper, with small headlines and few photographs. In some papers, photographs on the opinion pages are black-and-white thumbnail images of columnists. In addition, the editorial pages also usually feature editorial cartoons. Overall, the layout style of the opinion pages, which appears to be conventional and shared across publications, means that the debate pages strike a sombre and serious tone.

The style of opinion writing, and the mode of address that results from it, can vary within and between publications. As McNair (1995, p. 13) puts it: “Sometimes editorials are presented as the ‘voice of the reader’, and directed at policy-makers”. Alternatively, they may be constructed as the calm, authoritative voice of the editor, viewing the political scene from a detached distance. In both cases, the editorial is intended as a political intervention, and often read as such by a government or a party. McNair adds that it is in part on the basis of this type of journalism that the media can be seen to intervene in the political process. Of course, the

editorials are designed not merely to influence governments or parties, but also the newspapers' readers, who are presumed to draw on the information contained in the editorials for their political knowledge and judgements.

Another convention which blurs the line between information and opinion in tabloids is the separation of editorials, columns and letters: These appear on pages that are often far apart in the newspaper, with high profile members of the 'commentariat' scattered throughout the newspaper. For example, regular columnists appear elsewhere – Mohammed Haruna's column 'People and Politics', is on the back page of *Daily Trust* and *The Nation Newspaper*. The debate on the opinion pages– whether it comes in the forms of editorials, columns or letters – is dominated by elite voices.

By contrast, in newspapers, letters tend to be contributed by readers who are rarely identified by their title or expertise, but only by name and location. The separation of letters from other forms of opinion journalism constructs the letters section as a service for readers who want their voices to be heard by others, separate from the elite formation of public opinion (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2008).

Today, opinion journalism is being shape by the forces of technology and internet revolution. Wahl-Jorgensen (2008) concurs that online journalism and platform convergence are challenging conventional journalistic forms. This is particularly true for opinion journalism. Websites of national dailies often visually foreground interactive options that give readers the opportunity to participate in online discussion, respond to newspaper editorials or vote in online polls. Another influence is the rise of blogging and online publishing; though it was originally viewed as a transformative 'citizen journalism', empowering ordinary people to express political opinions (Lasica, 2003). Thus, by embracing the blogosphere, newspapers have transformed opinion journalism online, taking advantage of the medium's interactive possibilities. Blogging in the view of Wahl-Jorgensen (2008, p. 97) whether by journalists, other elites or simply

articulate ‘regular folks’ – is increasingly seen as an alternative to the public opinion formation of columns, letters and editorials. As newspapers are scrambling to adapt to the age of convergence, the styles and genres of opinion journalism may be among those most profoundly affected.

Editorials as Civic Forum for Pluralistic Debate

The concept of the news media as a civic forum is most closely associated with the work of Jurgen Habermas, who has been widely influential, although our argument does not depend upon his conceptualization. Habermas's ideal notion of a public sphere was predicated on the notion of widespread discussion about public affairs in civic society. A 'public sphere' represents a meeting place or debating forum mediating between citizens and the state, facilitating informed deliberation about the major issues of the day. According to Darren (2006), the public sphere is an abstract conception of the arena in which debate occurs. It is a hypothetical space which we all inhabit, generating and sharing ideas, where social knowledge is created and where public opinion is constructed. It is any place where people meet, share and discuss ideas and so influence one another.

Thus, the public sphere is best characterised as containing nothing but a collection of competing and contrasting voices. Social pluralism allows many voices into the public sphere. It is the members of society that choose which voices, or what noise, is allowed to permeate each individual's private sphere (Rodgers, 2003). This process Rodgers notes is largely subconscious; however, communication theory dictates that this is governed by credibility: of the source, of the message itself and of the medium which transmits the message. In a postmodern society, what is credible is based on individual's experiential knowledge and our own interactions with the public sphere throughout our sentient existence.

For a public sphere to be strong, Rodgers (2003), expresses hope that active and open, society must have:

- i. freedom of speech as a fundamental right;
- ii. a politically independent and pluralist media that is accessible;
- iii. high levels of literacy; including ICT skills;
- iv. open access to government documents.

Jurgen Habermas, a Marxist scholar, developed the concept of the public sphere, and explored it in depth in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas, 1992). Recognising the flaws in Karl Marx's notion that the society would automatically reform itself, through constant upheaval and the internal contradictions of capitalism, towards a more socialist and equal communist existence, Habermas attempted to construct a way to understand how the society could influence itself and the political system. Sharing Marx's belief in the inequalities in a representative democracy, he identifies that the public are able to construct alternative conceptions of the future and as these become popularised, so society shifts to suit. Habermas (1992) therefore, wrote of the public sphere as a network for communicating information and points of view. It allows the public to communicate with one another and so construct joint opinion.

The conception of the public sphere is most often applied within media studies. The media as Price (1995) argues, in the majority of democratic nations, act along democratic and representative lines. It is the media that advances pluralism into the public sphere by offering a voice to a range of actors and organisations. While these include political and corporate voices, they also include public voices; those who represent neither political nor corporate organisations. While there are contesting views on the media contribution to pluralism, clearly the media has a key role in contributing to the construction of the public sphere and influencing public opinion, regardless of debates on media effects (Dahlgren, 1995).

In ancient Roman cities, the forum was a public square or marketplace where people gathered for judicial activity and public business. The modern editorial page provides such a

place for discourse. The editorial stimulates debate and dialogue. It is the newspaper's participation in its community. Today, readers expect news articles to be free of opinion. Citizens, wanting to be informed, expect a fair presentation of the facts. If they want to know a point of view, readers go to the editorials in a separate section of the newspaper.

In the eighteenth century, Darren (2006) notes, a diverse range of intellectual journals and public affairs periodicals among fashionable society were regarded as providing the ideal media in this process, and there were meeting places in the political salons and coffee houses of London, Paris, and Vienna. In the late nineteenth century, changes in the nature of liberal democracy - particularly expansion of the franchise beyond the bourgeois elites, the growth of the popular press, and the increasing specialization and complexity of government - transformed the conditions that sustained the traditional channels of elite political discussion and enlarged the public sphere. Habermas deplored the effects of developments in the news media, including the growing role of the mass circulation popular press, the concentration of corporate ownership in large media groups, and the rising power of advertisers, a process that, he argued, would lead to a homogenization of political information and a shift from 'real' to 'virtual' political debate.

Despite those developments, Norris (2002) says, "today the ideal of the press as a civic forum for pluralistic debate, mediating between voters and government, remains highly influential". Traditional meeting places have been altered, but not beyond recognition: Venues such as newspapers ('oped' features, editorial columns, and letter pages), public affairs magazines, and newer outlets (talk-radio programmes, Commentaries, Channels Television's Sunrise and TVC's Hangout, among others) all provide regular opportunities for political debate among a network of politicians, government officials, journalistic commentators, advocacy-group spokespersons, think-tank analysts, and academic policy experts, in addition to providing opportunities for public input through phone-in or studio discussions.

Editorials represent the news organisations' active participation in public debate (Le & Lin, 2006). McNair (2000, p. 1) also argues that 'the study of democracy in contemporary society is a study of how the media report and interpret political events and issues'. So, the concept of public sphere is worth retaining. It should be open enough for all groups in the society to be fully represented and be in to see their aspirations being given attention (Golding & Murdock (2000).

Editorials as Watchdog for Civil and Political Liberties

In political coverage, the watchdog role implies that journalists and broadcasters should not simply report on political speeches, campaign rallies, or photo opportunities 'straight' or unfiltered from politicians to the public without also providing editorial comment, critical analysis, and interpretive evaluations of political messages to help readers and viewers place these events in context.

In their watchdog function, it has long been recognized that the news media should scrutinize those in authority, whether in government institutions, in non-profit organizations, or in the private sector, to hold officials accountable for their actions. Since the time of Edmund Burke, the 'fourth estate' has traditionally been regarded as one of the classic checks and balances in the division of powers. In this role, investigative reporters seek to expose official corruption, corporate scandals, and government failures. In the more popular notion, the press is seen as a champion of the people, guarding the public interest, taking up grievances, and challenging government authorities.

Olaiya, Apeloko, and Ayeni (2013) in a very recent study on the botched third term aspiration of the then Nigerian President, Gen Olusegun Obasanjo, found out that were it not for the voices from the press and ceaseless opinion articles that rented the white pages of our dailies, the ambition would have come to pass. They argue that the press lived up to its billing as the

watchdog of government by checkmating what was generally agreed as an unpopular law to be added to our value system.

Editorials as an Educator

Editorial educate readers concerning policies, individuals, organisations, and government. Vettehen, Hagemann and Snippenburg, (2004) note that a clear and positive relation exists between the frequency with which citizens consume political content from the mass media, and the amount of political knowledge they acquire from it.

Editorials succeed, if they encourage learning about politics and public affairs so that citizens can cast informed ballots, if they stimulate grassroots interest and discussion, and if they encourage the public to participate through the available channels of civic engagement, including voting turnout. For classical liberals, like John Stuart Mill in *Representative Government and Liberty*, one of the major reasons for extending the franchise to the working classes was to encourage civic education, because he believed that citizens could best learn about public affairs through active engagement with the democratic process.

To ascertain the effect of newspapers on voters' political knowledge and opinions in the United States, Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan (2009) establish in their study that voters learn about politics and government primarily from newspapers. This medium influences voters through the slant of a particular report and by choosing which stories to cover. By extension, editorials can influence voters to increase their support for one political party or the other.

Appreciating further the role of the media in the sustainable democracy, the *Farm House Dialogue* 15 (1991) states that the role of the mass media in a democracy must include the following:

- a. To convey information to the people with a view to let them know how the mandate they gave their representatives is being discharged.

- b. To provide a forum through which the governed could then react to government policies and activities.
- c. To provide such analysis as would enable the people to secure an adequate understanding and background to an event;
- d. To assist in the articulation and pursuit of the national interest;
- e. To help strengthen the economic, social and political fabric of the nation;
- f. To provide informed criticism and viable alternatives to public policies;
- g. To monitor the performance of government with a view to preventing their deviation from clearly stated objectives
- h. To provide the medium for transmitting knowledge and for educating the populace;
- i. To function as an agent of modernization

Editorials as Voice of the Newspaper

An editorial is seen as an institutional voice of a newspaper and for this reason it is in contrast to opinion columns, critical reviews, or news analysis type articles, which are usually published anonymously (Stonecipher, 1979). Most editorials are not signed for several reasons. The first reason is that even if written by one person, they generally represent something more than an individual's personal opinion, meaning they often directly reflect the policy set by the paper's owner or the publisher (Rystrom, 1983).

An editorial, so named to reflect its authorial source, allows an editor to communicate with the readers. While journalistic writing exemplifies many characteristics – accuracy, brevity, clarity, and factuality – an editorial combines these with a clear expression of opinion that distinguishes it from the theoretically “objective” writing expected in news stories (Meltzer, 2007). As the institutional voice of a newspaper, editorials provide leadership on issues important to the community. It is here, where the newspaper pronounces its own on what it considers the central political and cultural matters of the day (Conboy, 2010). This is the voice

of the editor, publisher, and/or owner seeking to inform, influence, stimulate, and motivate readers concerning important issues (Hynds & Martin 1977).

The opinion might be a general one worked out over time among writers on paper, or it might be worked out on a single issue during an editorial conference. In any case, the writer would be expressing a combination of ideas. Most editorials usually pass through an editor or publisher before they go into print. Since the editor or the publisher has the final say, the end product may be slightly or greatly different from the original version (Rystrom, 1983). Some defenders of unsigned institutional editorials posit that these editorials carry more weight with readers, because they are not just the personal opinion of an individual (Rystrom, 1983). As the institutional voice of a newspaper, editorials also provide leadership on national issues and they hold powerful institutions and elected leaders accountable (Sellar, 2007 in Hannon, 2012).

An editorial as a journalistic form expresses the newspaper's stand to an issue of public concern, while the call for common sense' in the name of the best for all' comes from the status of editorial as the newspaper's voice in public debate (Rupar, 2007). Having looked at this aspect, it can be deduced that the majority of scholarship is in agreement that views expressed in unsigned editorials are theoretically those of the newspaper as a whole (Stonecipher, 1979; MacDougall, 1973), Thus, suggesting that it provides protection for those criticising policies and people in power.

Editorials perform several critical purposes in a democratic society. They hold powerful institutions and elected leaders accountable, demand open court proceedings, fight obsessive secrecy, and unlock file cabinets and computer data bases in the public interest (Sellar, 2007). As self-appointed guardians of democracy and the public good, newspapers through their editorials influence government priorities, while at the same time provide feedback about the public's stand to policy initiatives (Siegel, 1996). In this way, newspapers, through their

editorials, reflect political and social viewpoints of the readers, but at the same time help to create or reinforce those values.

The organizational structure of newspapers influences the process used to develop the values and the beliefs promulgated in editorials. Publishing an opinion in its textual form indicates the editorial's inherent power since its use is restricted to a selected group of a newspaper's employees (Meltzer 2007). Only those designated as editorial writers, or authorized by the management, have access to the textual form of the editorial. The editorial is best described as the opinion of the newspaper as a corporate entity or organization (Rooney 2001; Hynds & Martin 1977). It does not reflect the opinion of the publisher as an individual (although it will rarely stray far from this person's views), nor does it represent only the opinion of the editor, editorial page editor, or the editorial writer, although they may coincide. Editorials reflect the opinions supported by a newspaper's editorial board, which is comprised of the editorial writers, the editorial page editor, and senior management such as the managing editor, editor-in-chief, and/or publisher (Rooney, 2001; Meltzer, 2007; Rugar, 2007).

Editorial boards as Meltzer (2007) states, meet regularly, usually daily, to discuss the latest news and determine which issues warrant editorial comment and what stand the newspaper should take. The group determines who will write the editorial that will reflect this consensus of opinion. To signal this "group thought," the editorial regularly uses the first-person plural pronoun "we." The writer or author is not acknowledged with a credit or by-line, as is the case in most other journalistic genres (Rugar, 2007; Meltzer, 2007). The newspaper, with this linguistic strategy, retains responsibility for the viewpoints, rather than assigning them to an individual writer, as with opinion articles known as columns. Constraints on resources, such as writers and space reserved for editorials, particularly in comparison to that allocated for news and other textual genres, restricts the number of editorials written and published, thus increasing their inherent value.

With a newspaper, the contents are divided between advertising (paid content) and “editorial copy” or textual features that are selected by the newspaper and its employees for inclusion (Bell, 1998). Editorial copy includes opinion articles, such as editorials and other forms of commentary, and news, differentiated between “hard news” to signal its “objective” factual basis and “soft news” such as features, which are more descriptive, less time-sensitive, but still factual (Conboy, 2010). An editorial differs from a news story in that it purposefully and explicitly conveys an opinion. Writers gather facts, usually from the paper’s own news stories with the goal of persuading readers to adopt an opinion or perform an action (Hynds & Martin 1977). Rugar (2007) maintains that while news informs, editorials assess; where the news explains what has happened, the editorial tells us why and how it could affect our lives. Editorials can fulfil their leadership role in several ways. The best editorials advance debate, lead a community, illuminate dark corners or inspire lofty thoughts (Sellar, 2007). Editorials also endorse candidates, take stances on issues, criticize official decisions and comment on events (Meltzer, 2007). An editorial with the primary purpose of advocacy may encourage readers to take a particular action or adopt a specific belief.

Analysing the contents of newspaper editorials on the outcome of 2015 general elections in Nigeria, Ugondo (2015) concluded that by condemning acts capable of uproar and truncating peaceful elections, the newspaper editorials greatly contributed to the peaceful manner Nigerians exhibited after the 2015 presidential poll. The editorials also help in reducing tension and suspicion by upholding virtues of a united society through commending Nigerians and actions that promote peaceful coexistence and concession of defeat among politicians. The attitude of the winner takes it all or politics is a do or die affair was nib to the bud by the type of editorials and stands newspapers published on the electoral outcome of 2015 presidential election in Nigeria.

Given the array of empirical evidence, Druckman and Parking (2005) opine that there is, therefore, good reason to expect that the type of coverage will impact voters' candidate perceptions and, ultimately, their vote choices. Newspaper coverage of an election campaigns will significantly influence voters' candidate evaluations, particularly among everyday readers.

Editorials as Rhetorical Arguments

Editorials utilize a variety of the argumentative strategies to create a persuasive text. This is because the manner in which arguments and information are presented can significantly influence the degree of reader receptivity. Opinions carried in an editorial are usually defended by a series of arguments, which means that editorials have an argumentative structure (van Dijk, 1988). The main objective of editorials is to influence the readers to accept their intended interpretation of the news events. Thus, editorials are considered important forms for the imbedding of rhetoric (Fartousi & Dumanig, 2012).

The use of rhetoric according to Hart and Daughton (2005) is as age-old as political communication and was seen by Aristotle in his discourses on ancient Greek democratic politics as a necessary means of bending the will of the people. Rhetorical speech is used in all our daily lives, as a means of persuading others, as much as it is a tool common in political communication. It is concerned with ensuring that the interpretation of our message is uniform, at least among a majority. It is central to campaigning, underpins propaganda and spin and is a central form of discourse within the sound bite culture of designer politics. Rhetorical conversation has a key role in a democratic society. It builds consensus by binding the people around ideas and issues.

Rhetoric as Richardson (2007, p. 154) puts, is a political facility whose function is not simply to succeed in persuading but rather to discover the persuasive facts in each case to present them in such a way that they convince an audience and thereby provoke them into an immediate or future course of action. Rhetoric involves the proper interpretation, construction,

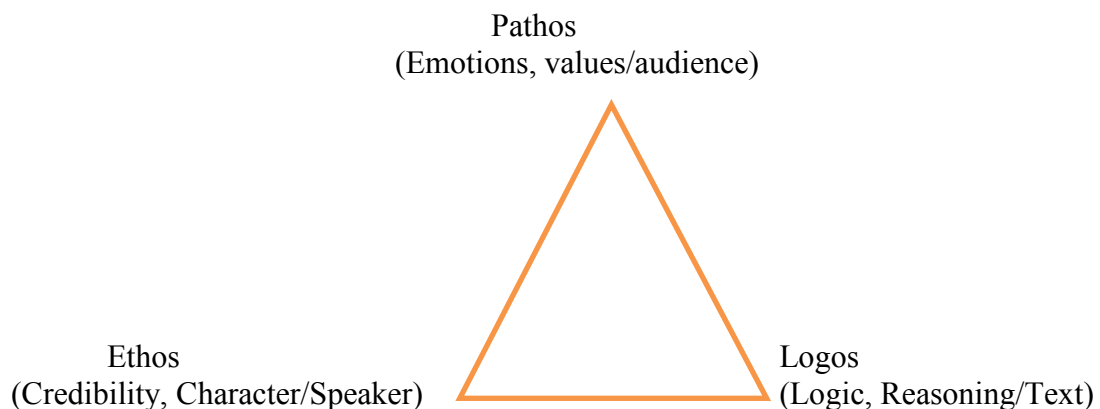
and use of supporting materials to back assertions and gain audience acceptance. With this in mind, perhaps, Kuypers (2009) defines rhetoric as the strategic use of communication, oral or written, to achieve specifiable goals.

Aristotle cited in Richardson (2007) identifies three varieties of rhetorical discourse

- a. Forensic or Legal rhetoric. This covers any form of argumentative discourse in which an arguer or rhetor condemns or defends someone's past actions. It concerns itself with the past and its means are accusation and defence. Attack or condemnatory editorials adopts this kind of rhetoric.
- b. Epideitic or Ceremonial Rhetoric. Here, the rhetor is concerned with proving someone or something worthy of admiration or disapproval. It focuses on the present and its means are praise and censure. This is exactly what praise editorials are meant for.
- c. Deliberative or Political Rhetoric. This kind of rhetoric is concerned with the future and its means are inducement and dissuasion. Deliberative rhetoric urges readers to do or not to do something based on the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action.

Each type of rhetoric employs the three elements of the rhetorical triangle, also called the Aristotelian Triad: ethos, pathos, and logos (Ford's Theatre, 2004). Newspaper editorials are therefore structured along these varieties of rhetorical discourse and could even combine them on one topic. Similarly, three modes of persuasion are also employed in editorials. Again, Aristotle cited in Richardson (2007, p. 159) says, "the first mode depends on the personal character of the speaker (Ethos); the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (Pathos); the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (Logos).

The idea of using ethotic argument is that readers are more likely to be convinced by someone of good character, someone with expertise or someone with first-hand experience. Editorials do this by using testimonials, referring to particular persons with distinguishable characters or referring to a sound system of democracy elsewhere in the world. Pathos is used in a rhetorical argument to move the audience from one emotional state to the other like to calm readers. It keeps the audience in a frame of mind to believe the submissions of an editorial. Readers can be persuaded too when an argument is supported by evidence and reasoning. This entails the use of premises and conclusions in argument. A text that is logical and easily understood is far more likely to sway the audience. The Rhetorical Triangle is typically represented by an equilateral triangle, suggesting that logos, ethos, and pathos should be balanced within a speech. However, which aspect(s) of the rhetorical triangle editorial writers favour in their editorials depends on both the audience and the purpose of that editorial. The triangle is as follows:



Source: Ford's Theatre Society, 2004.

However, the success or otherwise of rhetorical arguments is judged through their material impact on the audience (Richardson, 2007). It is in line with this assertion that the study combines content analysis to examine the arguments editorials raised on election matters and the survey to adjudge the success or otherwise of the arguments towards voter education in by sampling public opinion concerning the arguments editorials had raised.

Rhetorical and discursive resources are extensively used in newspaper editorials to moderate the participation of different voices through the use of reported speech, and by opening and closing different lines of argument using a range of resources, which include modal verbs, reporting verbs, attribution, attitude markers, graduation, and conjunctions and so on, and a variety of rhetorical strategies (Breeze, 2016). Central to such usage is the desire to examine different viewpoints and either accept or fend off possible counter-arguments, thereby guiding reader expectations along the lines preferred by the writer.

All editorials employ a common rhetorical structure. This include

- a) Thesis - The main idea expressed in an editorial
- b) Endorsement - the editorial's support or backing of an opinion or
- c) Call to action - an explicit directive or command to the reader, suggesting an action
- d) Time to act - the right or opportune time to do something
- e) Evidence - facts, reasons, and other forms of information used in the text as support for the thesis
- f) Refutation - Answering and countering either explicit or anticipated objections to an argument
- g) Context - The background knowledge necessary to understand the implication of a text

The manner in which the structure is arranged depends on the tradition or house style of the newspaper. Again, editorial writing is not just a mere rhetoric, but a representation of opinion statements embedded in argumentation that makes them more or less defensible, reasonable, justifiable or legitimate as conclusions (van Dijk, 1996). The success of rhetorical argumentation hinges on the use of rhetorical tropes, defined as a deviation from the ordinary and principal signification of a word (Corbett, 1990 in Richardson, 2007). It takes words and uses them to denote or connote something apart from their ordinary meaning. Richardson (2007,

p. 65) explains that such tropes are employed strategically as a way of describing things which makes them present to our mind and are non-obligatory additional structures in texts that may draw attention, and may therefore, indirectly emphasise specific meanings.

Although there are hundreds of tropes, only five are useful to the analysis of newspaper discourse. According to Richardson (2007) and these are: hyperbole, metaphor, metonym, neologism and puns. A metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated. According to Bonyadi and Samuel (2013), neologism refers to a recently created (or coined) word or an existing word or phrase that has been assigned a new meaning (Richardson, 2007). A pun refers to substitution based on accidental similarity, while a metaphor is a substitution based on underlying resemblance (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996). Rhetorical question is asking a question so as to make an assertion and hyperbole refers to exaggerated or extreme claim (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996).

Although researchers have studied journalism and editorials, work has generally originated from a communications theory perspective (Skinner, Gasher & Compton 2001; Meltzer 2007), other research considers the opinion-generating aspects of editorials from a discourse analysis perspective (Richardson, 2007). The rhetorical aspect of language use within the context of journalism, in particular editorials, has not received significant attention in academic studies to date.

Hart and Daughton (2005) provide the relevance of rhetoric as follows:

1. Rhetoric unburdens. People make rhetoric because they must get something off their chests, because the cause they champion overwhelms their natural reticence. Rhetors refuse to let history take its slow, evolutionary course and instead try to become part of history themselves. The history they make may be quite local in character (e.g., picketing a neighbourhood abortion clinic), but rhetorical people typically do not hang back. They sense that the world around them is not yet set

and so they approach it aggressively, often convince that they can make a difference, always convinced that they must try. In a sense, then, communication is a kind of presumptuous imposition on other people.

2. Rhetoric distracts. When speaking, a rhetor wants to have all, not just some, of our attention. To get that attention, the rhetor must so fill up our minds that we forget, temporarily at least, the other ideas, people, and policies important to us. Naturally, we do not give our attention freely, so it takes rhetoric at its best to side track us. One way of doing so is for the rhetor to control the premises of a discussion. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) demonstrated some years ago, the power of the mass media derives not so much from their ability to tell us what to think but what to think about. In some senses, modern persuaders are like the heralds of old. They move among us singing the siren song of change, asking us to consider a new solution to an old problem (or an old solution to a problem of which we were unaware). Rhetoric operates, then, like a kind of intellectual algebra, asking us to equate things we had never before considered equitable. Thus, for example, Adolf Hitler rose to fame (and infamy) by linking German nationalism with increased militarism and Germany's economic woes with Jewish clannishness. These were corrupt equations but for him, they were useful ones.

It becomes the persuader's task to demonstrate that any such alterations are a natural extension of thoughts and feelings that the audience already possesses and that any such new notions can be easily accommodated within the audience's existing repertoire of ideas. That is why rhetoric is called an art.

3. Rhetoric names. The naming function of rhetoric helps audiences become comfortable with new ideas and provides audiences with an acceptable vocabulary for talking about these ideas. Hart and Daughton (2005, p. 74) observe that "white

flight schools” are transformed into “independent academies”, “labour-baiting” becomes the “right-to-work”, a “foetus” is seen as an “unborn child”, “suicide” is replaced by “death with dignity”, and a vague assemblage of disconnected thoughts and random social trends is decried as “secular humanism”. A major challenge for the rhetorical critic, then, is to study how namers name things and how audiences respond to the names they hear.

4. Rhetoric empowers. Whom does it empower? Traditionally, the answer to this question has been “public speaker.” Those with the political power in their culture, have often tended to be already privileged in a variety of ways by virtue of being white, heterosexual, male, and economically secure. As a result, rhetoric (especially public address) has been blamed for the oppression of women and poor people of all races and men of colour as well.
5. Rhetoric elongates time. Time is the most precious of all substances, can be extended or, more accurately, seems to be extended – when rhetoric is put to use. Hart and Daughton (2005) gave this example of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. when he spoke at the march on Washington in 1963, King certainly knew that civil rights laws would not be enacted just because he mounted the public platform. But King succeeded in making the future seem to be the present because his appeals reached so deeply into people’s souls and because his futuristic images were painted so vividly: “I have a dream... that one day, right here in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today”.

Editorials and the Shaping of Political Agenda

Newspaper editorials have over time shaped the discourse agenda in ways that deepen the quality and content of Nigeria's burgeoning democracy. They are crucial to opinion

formation and to the eventual outcome of the events reported and highlighted. This goes to show that media outlets play a pivotal role in influencing policy because they regulate the flow of communication between policymakers and others in the political system.

To underline how editorials shape political agenda, *The Guardian* newspaper in its editorial comment of July 20, 1999 on certificate forgery of former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Salisu Buhari, entitled "Buhari: The Path of Honour" argued that:

The House of Representatives has a constitutional responsibility in the matter. The members should now rise up to the challenge by conducting a thorough investigation to ascertain the veracity of the allegations. It would be awkward for the embattled speaker to preside over the affairs of the House during the course of the investigation. He should vacate his office until the matter is over. This is the honourable thing to do. (*The Guardian*, July 20, 1999, p.18)

In the end, the speaker was removed from the office and sacked as member of the lower chamber of the law making body. Similarly, in spite of waving the ethnic card by rallying many Igbos behind him and making threatening calls to editors, Chuba Okadigbo had to vacate his office of Senate President, principally as a result of media advocacy. Editorials and columns condemned Okadigbo in strong terms, calling on him to quit office. One of them, Segun Adeniyi, editor of *This Day* on Saturday wrote in a representative article entitled "Just Go!" that:

Okadigbo allowed himself the indulgence of situating his power and responsibility within the number of contracts he could award to himself and his cronies – it was even more tragic that the man would lie so blatantly to the probe panel-If by now somebody has not surrendered his medal' (I did not say mace) then he should be told in clear terms that the market is over (*This Day*, 3 August, 2000, back page).

Editorials also shaped Nigerian government policy on fuel palaver during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. In unveiling the discursive strategies in Nigerian news magazines, Torwel (2008, p. 357) says, “the Nigerian newsmagazines such as *Newswatch* and *Tell* to have performed their democratic role by exposing the half-truths about the government’s fuel policy and its negative consequences for the people, and this contributed to decreased popular support and the reshaping of the policy in favour of the people.” Through their editorials, the news media rallied public opinion to support civil society organisations such as the labour unions against the issue of petrol prices. Torwel (2008) cited *Tell*’s editorial of June 28 2004 titled, “A Call to Reason” which argued that the government’s decision to hike fuel price was a gross lack of concern for the governed. The editorial postulated that, the government’s logic is a demonstration of the level of alienation of the ruling class from those they govern. It means that the authorities do not buy the submission of the NLC that the purchasing power of Nigerians was being overstretched. The public pressure therefore, brought former President Obasanjo to back down from attempts to override legislative assemblies and the judiciary, as well as shelve away the high fuel policy.

Political information is present in all sorts of media. However, scholarly studies pointed out that television and newspapers are most closely related to political attitudes, but that the sort of relation differs very much. According to Vettehen, Hagemann and van Snippenburg (2004), reading political articles in a newspaper has a higher correlation with political knowledge than has watching political television programmes.

Political communications research shows that newspaper editorials play an important role in the definition of the public agenda priorities (McCombs, 1997). The press, by the choice of news and emphasis on certain topics, determines the issues the public thinks and talks about (Severin & Tankard, 1992). Louw (2010, p. 17) posits that political elites pay attention to the mass media to monitor what coverage they (and their opponents) receive, and issues that

journalists place on the public agenda. So, if political elites monitor issues that journalists place on the public agenda, then editorials should be a popular read by those in authority, given that Van Dijk (1992, p. 244) claims that editorials ‘are usually not only, and even not primarily, directed at the common reader: rather they tend to directly or indirectly address influential news actors’.

2.1.3 Voter Attitude

The concept of voter attitude is important because the functioning of a healthy democracy requires an engaged and informed citizenry whose attitudes and preferences reflect careful consideration of a broad set of political information (Visser, Holbrook and Krosnick, 2007). The term, voter attitude means the sum total of a voter's inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, preconceived notions, ideas, fears, threats, and convictions about an election (Thurstone, 1928). An attitude is ‘a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols’ (Hogg, & Vaughan 2005, p. 150). It can either be before, during and after the election. Behaviours such as apathy, violence, are an offspring of attitude. Voter attitude could be negative or positive, constructive or destructive.

Attitudes as McQuail (2005) puts it, are underlying dispositions or mental sets towards some object that are generally measured in terms of verbal responses to evaluative statements. These responses are typically converted into a scale showing an individual’s direction and strength of leaning in respect of an object (for instance, a political party or leader or issue). Attitudes towards different objects are thought to be related such that a person has a structure of more or less consistent attitudes. Attitudes are primarily valuations and attributions made by individuals, although it is possible to speak of ‘public attitudes’ as an assessment of the predominant tendency in a group or aggregate (McQuail, 2005, p. 429).

Attitudes constitute valuable elements for the prediction of behaviour. Hence, the expressive form of voter attitude is voting behaviour. Attitudes determine whether people participate, how they participate and how they respond to the electoral outcome. The basic components of attitude according to mbaofficial.com (2017) are:

- a) Emotional: Emotional components include the feelings of a voter about an election. These feeling could be positive, negative or neutral.
- b) Informational: The beliefs and information that the voter has about an election are the informational component of attitude. Here it makes little difference if the information is correct or incorrect.
- c) Behavioural: This component of attitude consists of a tendency of an individual to behave in a particular way towards an election. Only this component of attitude is visible as the other two can only be inferred. It is for that reason that voter attitude in expressive form is called voting behaviour.

Attitudes can be changed through persuasion and an important domain of research on attitude change focuses on responses to communication (Fazio & Olson, 2003). McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997) claim that, by setting the agenda of importance for people, the media establishes a framework for voter thinking. Thus, the media have the ability to recognise certain important categories, such as permanent voters card, peaceful elections, in particular, and to inform the public of the steps or policies which confer or block these qualities. Therefore, the media's influence can be profound in changing voter attitude. To Van Dijk (1991) as cited in Dellinger (1995, p.7), "ideologies (agenda), viewed as interpretation frameworks which organize sets of attitudes about other elements of modern society, provide the cognitive foundation for the attitudes of various groups in societies, as well as the furtherance of their own goals and interests". McQuail (2005) opines that by publishing opinion poll results or by stating

editorially what the public view is on a given topic, media add another element of potential influence on voter attitude.

In Nigeria, Agaigbe (2015) says that the systemic voter turnout since 2007 is an indication that Nigerians have negative attitudes towards elections. ‘Statistics from the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC capture the trend in voter turnout in the country; 52.2% in 1999, 69.08% in 2003, 57.49% in 2007, 53.68% in 2011 and 43.65% in 2015’ (p.3). Thus, negative voter attitude have been a teething problem to election management in Nigeria. Jega in *Vanguard* (2014, May 17) lamented over the apathetic attitude of Nigerians towards elections. *The Eagle Online* (2017, March 17) reported that the Delta State Governor, Dr. Emmanuel Uduaghan, said the negative attitude of Nigerians towards the 2015 general elections was militating against Nigeria’s economic growth. According to Uduaghan, there was this erroneous impression that there will be violence after the elections and it affected the inflow of money from businessmen.

In a pre-election public opinion survey of voting-age citizens in Nigeria (18 years or older) covering 34 out of Nigeria’s 37 states (including the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja) from December 5 through December 18, 2014, The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (2014) found that majority of Nigerians (63%) say they are likely to vote in all four elections to be held in 2015, which include presidential elections, governorship elections, National Assembly elections, and State House of Assembly elections. However, those who are likely to vote cite their duty and right as a Nigerian as a driving factor, followed by the motivation to achieve change whether by ending corruption, improving the economy, or bringing general stability and security. Those who are not likely to vote mainly attribute this decision to a belief that their vote would not make a difference, that they are not interested in politics, that they don’t trust the election process, and that all politicians are corrupt.

On the contrary, Afro Barometer (2015) reported that 68% lack confidence in elections as a means to “enable voters to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want. Just one-fifth (23%) believed that elections are “often” or “always” determined by a fair count of votes, only 35% consider that there is “often” or “always” fair media coverage of campaigns, 57% say electoral bribery happens frequently and 50% fear electoral intimidation or violence, a dramatic increase from 34% two years ago. According to Ibrahim, Liman, and Mato (2015), some major factors that determine a paradigm shift in voter attitude particularly in Nigerians are fear, insecurity, expectations and political socialization.

Without doubt, positive voter attitude is bred through voter education. Ibeanu (2014, p. 13) sees voter education as focusing more specifically on the role of the citizen as a voter. This includes knowledge around several issues including the duties and obligations of a voter, voting procedure, political parties and candidates, electoral offences, counting procedures, the responsibilities of the election management body and mandate protection. Against this perhaps, Jega (2014), says the key outcomes that INEC aims to achieve through civic and voter education include among others increased voter turnout during elections, improved voter knowledge of new accreditation procedures based on the permanent voters’ card, reduction in the number of invalid votes at elections, as well as encouraging ethical voting. This shows that voter education is a critical factor in shaping voter behaviour or alliance. Claassen and Monson (2013) agree that improving civic education is tantamount to improving public awareness on political matters especially during elections.

Many economists and educators of diverse political beliefs favour public support for education on the premise that a more educated electorate enhances the quality of democracy (Milligan, Moretti, & Oreopoulos, 2003). The scholars made three pros that education increases citizens’ ability to select able leaders, understand the issues upon which they will vote, act as a check on the potential excesses of the government, and recognize corruption in leaders;

education improves citizens' interest and knowledge of political issues, their involvement in the political process and, ultimately, the effectiveness of their political participation; and better educated adults are more likely to follow election campaigns in the media, discuss politics with others, associate with a political group, and work on community issues. Chevalier and Doyle (2012, p.2) reiterate the view of Lipset (1959) that "education presumably broadens men's outlooks, enables them to understand the need for norms of tolerance, restrains them from adhering to extremist and monistic doctrines and increases their capacity to make rational electoral choices".

In Nigeria, there are internal and external factors that affect the voting decisions of citizens which in turn have implications on the overall outcome of elections. These are often the most crucial elements of elections in Nigeria because they are not limited to political parties, aspirants and the obligation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in conducting a free and fair election. Key findings from the Countdown to the 2015 Election poll conducted in the week of June 16th, NOIPolls (2014) revealed that the three main factors that influence voter attitude are "Political aspirants" (41%), "Political parties" (21%) and "Traditional media" (TV, radio & Newspapers)(19%). In addition, more female respondents are influenced by "political aspirants" (46%) and "Political parties" (23%), while more male respondents are influenced by the "Traditional media" (23%). More findings revealed that almost 4 in 10 Nigerians (38%) are willing to accept a gift from a political party or aspirant, if offered, and the majority (62%) would like to receive money as a gift. However, when asked, if the gift would influence their decisions, only 12% admitted that a gift would certainly affect their voting decisions. Furthermore, the willingness to accept a gift decreased with a progression in age since respondents aged between 18-21 years (65%) are most willing to accept a gift, and are also most likely to be influenced by a gift (43%) in their voting decisions.

Indeed, the history of voter attitude towards elections in Nigeria has been a scary one. George-Genyi (2015) observes that since the country's return to democratic rule in 1999, transitional elections in 2003, 2007 and 2011 were won and lost under conditions in which electoral malpractices, rigging and violence were pronounced. According to Bolaji (2015, p.53), 'the election years of 1999, 2003 and 2007 could arguably be described as bad, worse and the worst, respectively, in the annals of election administration in Nigeria'.

The credibility of these elections was further marred by a serious depreciation in civic culture by the political class, the militarization of politics with the use of violence as a means of gaining and maintaining political power, the unbridled influence of money in politics, an unprecedented level of corruption in the public and private sectors, and the weakness of the justice-administration system's response to the challenges, instrumentalized through badly flawed elections. By 2007, Bolaji (2015) maintains that electoral violence had become such a credible risk despite Nigeria's return to democracy that the mere threat of it was enough to keep large swathes of voters away from the polls, as in Rivers state, where violent threats contributed to low voter turnout. The situation destroyed public trust and confidence in stakeholders, particularly among candidates of the op parties, some of whom publicly expressed satisfaction with Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the state.

Describing the build up to 2015 general elections especially presidential election, Adamu, Ocheni and Ibrahim (2016, p. 94), "say the centre stage of political campaign was the emotional and sentimental appeal". According to them, social class, race, religion and region were all applied as means for seeking support for their party's candidate. The All Progressives Congress, (APC) threatened to sue the then first Lady, Mrs Patience Jonathan to the International Criminal Court (ICC) over her comments against the party's presidential candidate General Muhammadu Buhari. The comments were made in Edo, Kogi, Imo and other states during her visits and rallies to garner support for the re-election of her husband. She abused President Buhari as a

dead brain man, an Islamic extremist and urged all PDP supporters to stone whoever that dare shout APC's slogan "change".

Systematic measures were however, taken by INEC to build voter confidence and trust in the election management body and in the long run, promote peaceful voting behaviour among the electorates. Details on the actual preparations for the 2015 polls according to INEC (2015), began in earnest with the release on 25th January 2014, of the timetable and schedule of activities for the elections. The major innovation in the 2015 elections was the use of PVCs, which among other things, was to check the persistent challenge of fraudulent use of voters' cards by unscrupulous persons in the history of the Nigerian elections. Complementary to this innovation was the deployment of smart cards readers (SCRs), to verify the PVCs and authenticate intending voters as legitimate holders of the cards they present at the polling units. Ahead of the elections, the commission procured 182,000 units of SCRs, which were deployed in polling units and voting points across the 36 states and the FCT. The use of PVCs as well as smart card readers to verify the PVCs and authenticate voters was critical elements in the credibility and integrity of the 2015 elections. But as with all cases of change, there were pockets of opposition to the innovations being introduced ahead of the 2015 elections.

Since the Independent National Electoral Commission took drastic measures of using the permanent voters' card and smart card reader, the mass media was awash with views supporting or opposing the move of the commission. The first issue was the constitutionality or otherwise of using electronic card reader in the 2015 elections. Mike Ozekhome, a constitutional lawyer and human rights activist, holding the rank of a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in *The Opinion* (2015) observed that Section 153(2) of the Electoral Act merely expressly provides for the prohibition of 'voting machine.' The provision does not cover, nor does it affect, card readers which do not record or count votes. It is only used to verify PVCs and is not meant to record, register, count or publish votes. Consequently, the Electoral Act does not apply to PVCs.

accreditation and voting. Indeed, the card reader is merely meant to carry out accreditation of voters, which is a world different from the act of voting itself.

According to *The Opinion* (2015), Ozekhomemaintained that INEC has actually not engaged in electronic or e-voting, but in manual voting, through which a hard ballot paper will be used after accreditation. The card reader is merely to read and decode the special features and biometrics of the voter as embedded in the PVC (Permanent Voter Card) chip. In this wise, using a card reader for the purpose of accrediting voters will no doubt quicken the process of voting and generally reduce, if not totally, eliminate incidences of electoral malpractices. The pivotal role of a card reader will also probably enthrone a regime of free, fair, credible, respectable and peaceful elections that will meet international best practices.

The then INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega was summoned by the Senate after Senate Leader, Victor Ndoma-Egba on the allegation that the use of the card readers violates the electoral law. The Commission had come under heavy criticism especially from the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) over the use of card readers to accredit voters. However, Jega told the Senators that the use of the card readers was legal and that it would help check electoral fraud usually perpetrated by politicians in connivance with INEC staff at polling booths. The INEC boss cited relevant sections of the 1999 constitution (sections 78 and 118) and the Electoral Act 2010 (sections 49, 52 (2)), to buttress that INEC did not go outside of the law with the introduction of card readers for voter accreditation. The senators thereafter expressed satisfaction with the explanation of the card reader use (*Daily Trust*, Thursday, 19 February 2015, pp. 1 &2).

The *Leadership* newspaper (April 5, 2015, p. 5) reported that few days to the presidential election, the Abuja division of the Federal High Court declined to restrain the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from applying the card reading devices for the March, 28 election. In a ruling, Justice Ademola Adeniyi refused to issue an interim order of injunction

stopping INEC from employing the technology for the presidential poll. The decision of the court to reject the application which was filed by a senatorial candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Ogun State, Mr Waliyu Taiwo, gave INEC the green light on the usage of the device.

Vanguard (Editorial, January 26, 2015, p. 18) observed that the PVC and card reader are at the apogee of the electronic architecture for free and fair elections. To INEC, it was only those that nurtured plans to fraudulently manipulate the outcome of the elections that were crying foul over the introduction of the technology which could add credibility to the electoral process in the country. The card reader machines were meant to address electoral irregularities, starting from the accreditation of voters at all the polling units. There was no how the total number of votes cast at the polling unit could exceed the number of accredited persons. Such discrepancy in figures will be immediately spotted. The technology was also to make it impossible for any corrupt electoral officer to connive with any politician to pad-up results” since some dubious INEC officials in the past, usually delayed the entry of number of accredited voters until the end of voting so as to have the leeway to tamper with results.

The elections were originally scheduled to hold on the 14th February, 2015 for presidential and NASS and 28th February, 2015, for governorship and state assembly. However, as a result of security concerns in some parts of the country and following the council of the state meeting and wide consultations, the commission rescheduled the elections by six weeks to 28th March, and 11th April, 2015, respectively. After the rescheduling of the elections, the commission met, reviewed the situation and decided on how best to utilise the six-week extension to add value to the operational and logistical preparations for the elections. Fourteen political parties sponsored candidates for the presidential elections and 26 for the national assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) elections, out of the 28 registered political parties. The candidates presented emerged from primaries conducted by the parties earlier and

monitored by INEC. A total of 746 candidates contested for the 109 senatorial districts elections and 1,766 for the federal constituency elections.

INEC (2015) report says elections took place in all the 119, 973 polling units across the country. In order to facilitate voting, a total of 152,031 voting points (VPs) were created, each catering for not more than 750 voters. The number of voting points operated was 27 per cent higher than what was obtained in 2011. With four poll officials at each voting point and a corresponding increase in the number of supervisory presiding officers (SPOs) across board, the 2015 general elections witnessed the recruitment of over 700,000 ad-hoc staff.

In the end, George-Genyi (2015, p. 2), says, “for the first time, transition elections made it possible for power to change hands at the Federal level from the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressive Congress (APC), with the defeat of the incumbent, Goodluck Jonathan by Gen. Muhammadu Buhari (rtd)”. The APC presidential candidate scored a total of 15,424,921 votes to beat the PDP presidential candidate who scored 12,853,162 votes. The APC also won for the first time, majority seats in both Chambers of the National Assembly – House of Senate and House of Representatives to eclipse the PDPs sixteen years dominance.

The APC also won the Governorship election in sixteen States of the Federation, more than PDPs 13 States. In a display of statesmanship, the incumbent conceded defeat and congratulated the President-Elect (Jonathan, 2015; Soyinka, 2015). This helped to douse the tension that had gripped the nation before and during the elections thereby bringing to futility, the “hypothesis of political Armageddon” regarding the impending political instability and breakup of the country in 2015, with the elections serving as a primary catalyst.

In Benue State too, the same feat was achieved. The APC won the Governorship, Six (6) Federal Houses of Representative seats, and Two Senatorial seats, more than PDPs five (5) for House of Representatives and One (1) for the Senate. The result of the State House of Assembly

saw the PDP win fifteen seats, more than APC fourteen (14) seats with Labour party clinching one seat.

The major factor found to have been influential to voter attitude was the introduction of the Smart Card reader and permanent voters' card. For instance, Ugondo, Anwe and Achakpa-ikyo (2015) found that the use of permanent voter's card and smart card reader machine for accreditation of voters was a welcomed development. For their application in the 2015 general elections, voters' attitude towards voting and acceptance of results was fundamentally changed. Voting process was also made more transparent paving way for continued confidence in the umpire body as well as accepting results declared. Rigging was made difficult by the machines and the dictum of one man, one vote was exemplified during the polls. Apart from yielding a free and fair process, the PVC and card reader machine reduced voter apathy and the fuss that characterised past elections in Nigeria. The machine did not only speed up the voting process but also influenced voters' trust and acceptance of results declared by INEC in places that card readers were employed.

Although there are many factors influencing voter attitude, newspapers are one of the major ways voters receive education especially through the editorial page that stimulate positive behaviour in them. McLeod (2000) establishes that in terms of political learning, newspaper and newsmagazine use has positive effects that are stronger than the effects of television time. Corroborating this, Corrigan-Browna and Wilkes (2014) emphasize, though on a general note that the media are vital institution of democracy, operating as the central mechanism through which citizens learn about and engage with the democratic process. This is done directly through providing citizens with information about the political process and indirectly by fostering attitudes and values, such as trust, feelings of efficacy, and political knowledge that encourage engagement.

2.2.4 Elections

Election holds a central in a democratic government to the extent that any problem associated with the electoral process has direct impact on the political system. This makes free and fair elections which are unimpeded by violence and intimidation central to functional democracy (Oni, Chidozie & Agbude, 2013).

Election is defined by Osumah and Aghemelo (2010) as a process through which the people choose their leaders and indicate their policies and programme preference and consequently invest a government with authority to rule. They see election as one of the means by which a society may organize itself and make specified formal decisions, adding that where voting is free, it acts simultaneously as a system for making certain decisions regarding the power relations in a society, and a method for seeking political obedience with a minimum of sacrifice of the individual's freedom. Eya (2003) however, sees election as the selection of a person or persons for office as by ballot and making choice as between alternatives. Ozor (2009) 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 s) for the purpose of farming and 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 citizens-interest. Elections, according to him extend and enhance the amount of popular participation in the political system.

Historically, election as a democratic principle in Nigeria is traceable to the colonial period. But the history is a chequered one. The first election was conducted in 1923 – election into the legislative council. This precipitated the formation of the first political party in the country – the Nigerian National Democratic Party by Herbert Macaulay (Nnadozie, 2007, p.47). This development also led to the emergence of the press particularly the Lagos Daily News

founded by Herbert Macaulay, in 1925 and the Nigerian Daily Times founded by Richard Barrow in collaboration with other European businessmen and Adeyemo Alakija in 1926 (Oddih, 2007, p.155). The Lagos Youth Movement was formed in 1933 but later in 1937, was renamed Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). Of course, the introduction of the elective principle in Nigeria in 1922 by Sir Hugh Clifford not only quickened the emergence of political parties and the press but also electrified the political process in the country. Between 1923 and 1933, the NNDP monopolized the political landscape of Lagos with its candidates sweeping all the elections into the Lagos legislative council. And between 1938 and 1941 the NYM won all elections for the Lagos legislative council.

The second election in the country took place in 1947 following the introduction of Arthur Richards's constitution which established for the first time a central legislature for the country. Certain comments are germane at this point with regard to the emerging trends in the electoral activities in the country in particular and in the political arena in general. The first according to Nnadozie (2007) is that:

Ethnicity and its attendant parochialisation and regionalization of issues by members of the Nigerian emerging dominant class, particularly the leaders of the three major ethnic groups – the Igbo, Hausa – Fulani, and Yoruba – would appear to be in ascendance since the early forties ... politics especially electioneering campaigns and voting during elections were beginning to show features of ethnic sentiments and mudslinging. (p.49)

Waning interest and enthusiasm among both the electorates and the elected officials also surface in the electoral activities of the country. The initial enthusiasm and interest engendered by the introduction of the limited franchise soon began to wane when it became evident that the elected members would never be able to fulfil even the midst and modest of their election

promises. Nnadozie(2007, p.51) observed that‘election manifestoes became more and more subdued in language’.

It is pertinent to note that the first general election conducted in Nigeria was in 1954. The three major parties held sway in their regions which confirmed the politicization of ethnicity and the regionalization of politics noted earlier. The second general elections and the last before independence took place in 1959. On the political campaign and activities preceding the elections, Nnadozie (2007, p. 54) observes that the NCNC and AG while carrying out intensive mobilization of their respective ethnic homelands to ensure their monolithic support also campaigned vigorously in the minority ethnic areas in the regions under the rival political parties in order to break their monolithic support and at the same time widen their political base. On the other hand, the NPC confined its campaign and activities in the North believing presumably that a total control of its homeland is enough to ensure at least a fifty per cent control of the Federal House of Representatives. The result revealed the decisive role of ethnicity in Nigerian politics, particularly during elections.

After Independence in 1960, Nigeria staged her first General election in 1964. This election, witnessed a full glare of all the centrifugal forces (ethnicity and regionalization) which had reared their ugly heads in the forties and fifties. The result of the election in conjunction with other related issues set ablaze the first at democratic experiment in the country (Nnadozie, 2007, p.59). The political campaign was very bitter and acrimonious with each camp employing everything at its disposal and employing both orthodox and unorthodox means to eliminate its opponents or at least prevent their success at the poll. Ethnic differences and sentiments were not only exploited but made the major platforms of the campaign.

Held sway under military rule for many years, Nigeria transited into civil rule October 1, 1979 amidst deep entrenched apathy among the people. Just as Kiok-Greene and Rimmer (1981, pp. 31 – 45) states: In many states, public servants’ salaries were threatened to be paid on the

condition that voter's card is tendered. Benue State Government then employed the use of traditional media to spur the people to register. In spite of all the adjustment and mobilization towards the election, the vestiges of the past elections still characterized the election. Even with the constitutional breakup of the old region into nineteen states, politicization of ethnicity continued. The basis of party support still laid in the ethnic homeland of the party presidential flag bearers. Even with the stringent rules of FEDECO for registration of political parties geared towards giving the parties a national outlook, the parties were still a reincarnation of the old political parties and also headed by same political veterans of the 50s and 60s.

Consequently, political parties and leaders continued to play the only political tricks and campaigns, which they can easily muster and exploit for their individual and class interest-projecting themselves as champions of their respective ethnic homelands. In line with this, Nnadozie (2007) stated that campaign slogans were targeted at arousing ethnic sentiments with little or no emphasis on socio-economic and political issues concerning the development of the country. He cited an advertisement in the *Daily Star* Newspaper of August 8, 1979 in part thus:

The Yorubas are no fools to have voted Awolowo.

The Kanuris are no fools to have voted for Waziri.

The Kano people are no fools to have voted for Aminu Kano

The Anambra and Imo states should be wise enough to vote en mass for

Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe.

The same situation trailed the 1983 general elections. The electorates were simply voting for personalities, especially their ethnic ambassadors. Capitalizing on the power of incumbency, the NPN manipulated the electoral process in order to ensure that it retained power. Kyari (1986) describes the election thus:

It is very clear that the Nigerian election of 1983 is a sham election. It was massively rigged and nobody can honestly, truthfully and scientifically state that

Shagari and his lieutenants in the state capitals were democratically voted into office. A massive collusion involving the NPN, the FEDECO, the police and some sections of the judiciary had produced governments that could not claim legitimacy by dint of even the most rudimentary requirement of bourgeois democracy. (p.15).

The 2007 general elections was termed the worst in the political history of Nigeria. Examining the trend and what it portends for the political process, Falade and Olaitan (2008, p.23) posit that ‘never has Nigeria’s chequered electoral conduct attracted so much opprobrium as was witnessed in 2007. Never, also, has there been such a consensus in condemning the process and its results by both local and international observers’.

Exonerating himself, perhaps from opprobrium, the then chairman of the electoral commission Iwu (2009) averred that the greatest threat to 2007 elections and indeed the political stability of the nation about the time was the crisis in the ruling party which escalated into the unprecedented split in the presidency. The crisis did not only increase the political temperature of the nation but also rendered the work of the commission difficult. Virtually, all the political parties showed no respect for internal democracy. In many parties, there was no democratic selection of candidates. In some others the primaries were conducted but the results were thrown overboard as the party leaders whimsically picked those they liked as candidates, whether they won primaries or not (Iwu, 2009).

The peculiarity of this election also showed in the number of political parties that participated in the election. About 50 political parties contested in the elections. Ethnic sentiments were also fully entrenched. The Action Congress had Atiku Abubakar, ANPP Muhamadu Buhari, PDP had Umaru Musa Yar A’dua, APGA Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, FRESH Pastor Chris Okotie etc. Many of the electoral victories had to be ratified through legal battle. Yar A’dua however emerged as the president of the country.

Therefore, over the years, Nigeria continued to witness with growing disappointments and apprehension inability to conduct peaceful, free and fair, open elections, whose results were widely accepted and respected across the country(Igbuzor, 2010; Osumah & Aghemelo, 2010, Ekweremadu, 2011).The 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria’s democracy were not free from the activities of thugs, ballot box snatchers, armed robbers, kidnappers, assassins, confusionists and arsonists, who often have a field day during those elections (Hounkpe & Gueye, 2010; Omotola, 2010; Bekoe, 2011; National Democratic Institute, 2012). Election malpractices and violence have thus, become a recurring decimal in Nigeria’s political history and constitute enormous concern to the survival of Nigeria’s democracy (INEC, 2011).

Rather than being a political asset and a legitimate force, Yagub (1999) in Ugondo (2011) says, “Since independence, elections in Nigeria have become a political liability, a source of instability and decay” (p. 87). The various experiences with competitive electoral politics in Nigeria have brought the worst in political thuggery and brigandage, unmediated and unrestrained violence. Meanwhile, Akintude (2007) reports that electoral malpractices have been the bane of party politics in Nigeria, and are usually, the greatest challenge most politicians seeking elective office face. They spend more time seeking for ways to counter the rough electoral plans of their opponents than they do in actually campaigning for votes. Most painful is the fact that when an election is rigged, choices of the citizens are invariably annulled and the government that emerges cannot represent, protect, and affect the interest and aspirations of the people. A government that takes over power through fraudulent electoral processes cannot claim to be democratic or legitimate. The net effect of this development can lead to apathy, leadership crisis, political violence, assassination galore, poor political culture and insensitivity to the needs of the people (Oddih, 2007).

Of course, political and electoral violence dates back to the colonial days. Ogundiya and Baba (2007) affirms that political violence associated with election and electoral process in Nigeria started with 1959 federal elections designed by the British to facilitate transition from colonial rule to independence. The problem intensified with 1964 general elections. Even before elections were held, it was clear from the extreme s taken by the two major alliances of political groups, that is Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) that no matter which one of the two groups, won, the result will be hotly contested. In the First Republic, election crisis between Obafemi Awolowo, leader of the then Action Group and Samuel Akintola, his deputy led to a complete breakdown of law and order in the west which later snowballed into the famous “wild west” before a state of emergency was declared on the region by the federal authority (Akintude, 2007).

All the elections that have ever been conducted in Nigeria since independence have generated increasingly bitter controversies and grievances on a national scale because of the twin problems of mass violence and fraud that have become central elements of the history of elections and of the electoral process in the country (Gberie, 2011). Despite the marked improvement in the conduct of the 2011 elections, the process was not free from malpractices and violence (Bekoe, 2011;Gberie, 2011; National Democratic Institute, 2012).

2.2 Review of Related General Literature

Studies on the role of the media in democracy, particularly during elections are on the rise. Ciboh (2010, p. 64) noted that ‘more scholarly studies are being undertaken on the origin, growth, ownership and management structure, functions and influence of the media on the political system. Roles that the media play during elections according to Nwosu (2003, p.9) include mass mobilization of voters, education, promotion of civic duties and rights, creation of awareness and promotion of political participation. Corroborating, Ciboh (2010, p.65) emphasized that the mass media play a central role in enhancing responsiveness by providing

information that citizens need when deciding whom to vote for and in checking political excesses. More so, Ochonogor and Omego (2012, p. 18), explains the mobilization role that political mobilization means the role played by the mass media in creating awareness, interpretation of issues, personalities, programmes and educating the people purposely to ginger, encourage and motivate them to exercise their political rights and take informed political decision. Such decisions will basically include participating in elections.

The essence of media role during elections is underscored by the fact the citizens depend on the media to help them define issues, sort out complexities and participate meaningfully in democratic process as informed participants (Ciboh, 2010). It is in the light of this that McNair (2000, p.1) averred that

‘any study of democracy in contemporary conditions is therefore also a study of how the media report and interpret political events and issues; of how they facilitate the efforts of politicians to persuade their electorates of the correctness of policies and programmes; of how they themselves (i.e., editorial staff, management and proprietors) influence the political process and shape public opinion’.

In view of the role the media plays during elections, cross scrutiny of the function and effects is needed to keep the media on the right track. Nichols & McChesney (2013) also insisted that in a modern society with increasingly sophisticated communications, credible journalism is a necessary precondition for effective elections and for self-government. And what determines the quality of a press system during elections is how it prepares voters for elections (p. 213).

The most obvious mechanism linking newspapers and voter attitude is information (Gentzkow, Shapiro & Sinkinson, 2011). Newspapers may simply inform (or remind) people of the fact that an election is taking place. Newspapers also provide information about the issues at

stake and the candidates' characteristics and platforms. Most theories of voting predict that individuals will be more likely to vote when they are better informed (Feddersen 2004), and existing evidence supports this prediction (Matsusaka 1995; Lassen 2005). Newspapers could also affect turnout as a by-product of increasing social capital and general civic engagement (Putnam 2000).

The centrality of the media in politics and elections in particular, has occasioned what scholars refer to as mediatization (Livingstone, 2009; Stromback, 2017). According to this view, politics has increasingly “lost its autonomy, has become dependent in its central functions on mass media, and is continuously been shaped by interactions with mass media” (Mazzoleni & Schulz, 1999, p. 250). Meyer (2002, p. 50) also stressed that the media have colonized politics, and that “no longer can we think of policy-making in media democracy as an activity essentially external to the way the media communicate it”.

Mediatization according to Stromback (2017) is a multi-dimensional concept, where key dimensions are related to (a) the importance of the media as a source of political information, (b) the independence of the media from political institutions, (c) the degree to which media content is guided by news media logic as opposed to political logic, and (d) the degree to which political actors, organizations and institutions are guided by news media logic as opposed to political logic. Lippman (1997) emphasized that what matters most for people's opinions and attitudes is not reality per se, but rather the “pictures in our heads” and that those are mainly formed by information from the media. Through their daily reporting and our dependence on the media for information a “pseudo-environment” is created, and people's behavior and attitudes do not follow from what is actually true, but from this pseudo-environment created by the media.

From one standpoint, Gentzkow, Shapiro, and Sinkinson (2011) maintain that media texts such as editorials can be seen as key sites where basic social norms are articulated. The media give us pictures of social interaction and social institutions that, by their sheer repetition

on a daily basis, can play important roles in shaping broad social definitions. In essence, the accumulation of media images suggests what is “normal” and what is “deviant.” The authors stress that media images or pictures they create in our heads normalize specific social relations, making certain ways of behaving seem unexceptional. If media texts can normalize behaviors, they can also set limits on the range of acceptable ideas. The ideological work lies in the patterns within media texts. Ideas and attitudes that are routinely included in media become part of the legitimate public debate about issues. Ideas that are excluded from the popular media or appear in the media only to be ridiculed have little legitimacy. They are outside the range of acceptable ideas. The ideological influence of media can be seen in the absences and exclusions just as much as in the content of the messages.

The concept of mediatization offers a useful way by which media influence on politics or voter attitudes can be investigated. Thus, the cornerstone for any perspective on media influence or media effects in political communication is the fact that politics is mediated and that the media is the ‘most important source of information and channel of communication between the citizenry and political institutions and actors’ (Strömbäck 2008, p.236).

2.3 Review of Empirical Works

There is a mammoth number of news media in the world today, both printed and online, which write editorials as official statements on current happenings. As such, an editorial is taken as one of the widest circulated opinion discourses of society (Achugar, 2004). In view of that, vast studies on editorials are conducted and mostly employing discourse analysis method. Few studies however, considered the political function of editorials, shaping public opinion over democratic issues like voter education. It is this gap that the present study seeks to cover.

Bayode (2014) studied ideology and its workings in two Nigerian Newspapers: *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* using Modality as the analytical element. Modality as a property of language use is generally exploited by language users and its role in newspaper editorials is of

importance in that editorial writers tend to make use of it to establish either a positive comment or bias in a text to manipulate their readers' opinions. Through Critical Discourse Analysis of the selected editorials culled from *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust*, the study firstly aimed at identifying the linguistic manifestations of modality employed in the two newspapers and secondly embarking on some elaborate descriptions of the implications of the cited data. Modals such as "can", "could", "may", "must" and "should" were specifically isolated and fully characterised to account for the orientations of the newspapers.

An analysis of the two papers showed that modals were employed as ideological devices. Also, a comparison - in terms of how modals were employed - suggests that *The Guardian* made more use of modals of obligation and necessity, while *Daily Trust* preferred mainly predictive auxiliary modals to the other kinds of modals. The higher number of the predictive modals in *Daily Trust* thus suggests the idea that identifying what would happen in the future is the main concern of the editorial writers, while *The Guardian* is more concerned with strongly prescribing steps for the government to follow.

The study shaded light on the techniques editorial writers use in mobilising support for or against a policy but it does not directly show how newspaper editorials used such devices to influence voter attitude like the present study. The study also confirmed that ideological or rhetorical devices are embedded in editorials for the purpose of persuasion and influence.

In another study, Hannon (2012) examined the rhetorical underpinnings of endorsement editorials published in Canadian newspapers during the spring 2011 federal election campaign. The study first of all established that endorsement editorial expresses a newspaper's support of a party or candidate, and urging readers to support and vote in the recommended manner because newspapers speak directly to their readers (and indirectly to the political sphere) in editorials that reflect their beliefs and opinions as an institution.

As a specific instantiation of the editorial form, endorsement editorials are a significant area of study because they respond to a perceived exigency or need to address pressing issues by advising readers on their choice of a party or leader to govern the country. Endorsement editorials are usually published only during elections, whether federal, provincial, or municipal. As the voice of the newspaper, endorsement editorials employ a diverse range of argumentative strategies in their effort to convince readers to support the party or candidate preferred by the newspaper.

Based on Hannon's study, endorsement editorials combine elements of Aristotle's three forms or genres of texts: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. And the deliberative form, designed to derive the best possible solution, is the mainstay of editorials eliciting voter support in an election. Furthermore, the study found that every editorial assembles a combination of rhetorical appeals – logos, ethos, and pathos – to create a convincing case. However, the sample texts demonstrate that while logical appeals are significant, ethical and pathetic appeals, in varying combinations, are often the strongest and most persuasive.

The study included five editorials published in the final days of the 2011 federal election campaign in English-language daily newspapers: *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto Sun*. It also considered how the sample endorsement editorials structure their argument, identifying the placement of elements such as thesis, endorsement, call-to-action, kairos or time-to-act, evidence, refutation, and context. In the final analysis, the study found that editorials encouraged readers to support or vote for a candidate or party.

The approach of this study is similar to the present study in determining the influence of editorials on the voters. However, the present study differs in that it does not merely look at endorsement editorials but the overall influence that newspaper editorials will make towards positive voter attitude during elections in Nigeria.

Similarly, Onifade (2015) examined how Nigerian newspaper columnists (signed editorials) narrate the power relations within the country and how they reiterate and rearticulate historical and political events in their analysis of the balance of power with regard to the upcoming presidential election in March 2015. By analysing the writings of three columnists from three different newspapers, the study examined how ownership and the geographic environment in which a newspaper is published influence the narratives employed by columnists in their bid to set agenda and mould public opinion.

While doing so, triangulation of Teun Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to Critical Discourse Analysis and Norman Fairclough's textual, contextual and social analyses in the treatment of the subject were used. Hence, the texts of the columns were analysed within the socio-political contexts to understand their implications for the social behaviour of the readers as potential voters. Three newspapers were used to cater for the north/south political dichotomy and to give a representation to each region. The study, however, viewed the dichotomy differently, projecting it as a division between those who support the status quo and those who oppose it. The three newspapers used in the study were *Vanguard* (representing the pro status quo), *Daily Trust* (representing the anti-status quo), and *Nigerian Tribune* (providing a middle ground between the two camps).

The study concluded that the political and economic elites use their ownership and control of the newspapers to influence the narratives of their columnists. The columnists in turn use volatile concepts like religion, and ethnicity in their narratives to divide the public and move them towards taking political decisions that favour the political elites.

Onifade's study focused on the signed editorials whereas the present study looks at the leading or unsigned editorials and it does not care much on the factors affecting editorial writing as Onifade was concerned about.

Assuming that when editorials exercise their opinion-making power in the form of candidate endorsements, they potentially intervene in the democratic process by influencing readers' voting decisions, Kimberly (2007) examined American newspaper endorsements of political candidates from the point of view of editorial board members who were involved in endorsement processes during the 2002 and 2004 campaign seasons in Pennsylvania.

Through ethnographic observation and interviews with four newspaper editorial boards and sixteen editorial board members, the study established that the board members in this study were reflective about the opportunities and dilemmas granted to them by their positions. Overall, they did not seem to have false illusions as to the force of their endorsements on readers, but they acknowledged the influence they could potentially exert on certain types of voters.

Kimberly (2007) finding hints at the possible influence of editorials on voter attitude which this present study investigating. Using ethnographic and interview methods, Kimberly's study have shown that newspaper editorial board, during elections, purposively write editorials to influence readers towards set aims.

The study 'We got OBL? A Critical Discourse Analysis of US, UK and Spanish Newspaper Editorials on the Death of Bin Laden' by Breeze (2012) presented a critical discourse analysis of newspaper editorials that appeared in major US, UK and Spanish newspapers immediately after Osama Bin Laden's death on 2 and 3 May 2011. The aim of the study was to identify the ideological stance advanced and the degree of intensity in their expression. A mixed methodology was used based on engagement and appraisal theory, analysis of creative metaphor and critical epistemic analysis, which emphasizes the crucial role of culturally-embedded ideas in the formation of mental models that enable us to produce and understand discourse.

The study found that Spanish and British editorials expressed a much wider range of pros than the US editorials, reflecting broader public debate on the issues. Again, US editorials tended to convey only a limited number of arguments and rarely gave voice to alternative s.

However, British and US editorials were observed to have a higher emotional temperature, with more judgmental vocabulary and a wider range of metaphors. US editorials generally maintained a celebratory tone, whereas the British media employed emotive resources to emphasize a range of widely differing views, while Spanish editorials presented greater distance and plurality.

Like Breeze's study, the present study uses mix method approaches to properly assess the influence editorials have on voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections. Although discourse analysis was the method Breeze used, the present study used content analysis and survey.

In the study 'Editorials in the Leading English Press in Karachi: An Analysis of Their Representation', Razi (2014) explores the analysis on the editorials in the leading English dailies of Karachi as to whether they were serving their fundamental objectives. Qualitative research approach was used along with interviews and direct observation of content analysis. The study was limited to two leading English dailies of Karachi namely, Dawn and The News International.

The content analysis Razi used was done through direct observation based on analysing the fundamental purpose of editorials analysing the narration, arguments, language, word choice, and description, objective style of representation, topic choice and type of readership. The findings suggested that although the dailies appeared to fulfil their basic and principal purposes of informing, stimulating thinking and influencing the masses, yet they seem to waver to some extent from their objective slant in the matter of language and presentation of subject and ideas.

The study called for a mild and balanced word choice and tone along with the proper and practical solutions rather than clichéd repetition of statements in the editorials in order to serve the function of neutral and objective coverage and right guidance to the masses through balanced and unbiased information. Just like Razi's study, the present one also sought to examine how ideas were presented. But more than that, this study went further to assess how the editorials influenced readers' attitude towards elections.

Onyeka (2012) study examined audience perception of editorial page in Nigerian Newspapers using New Haven district Enugu as sample. The main purpose of the study was to find out the information appeal of the editorial page on the audience and the level of importance readers attach to the page.

The researcher used Selective Perception as the theoretical framework, employed survey method and used questionnaire as a tool to elicit information. The study found out that the audience has different perception of the editorial page. Some perceive it as educative, others exciting and it speaks the mind of the newspaper. The relevance of the editorials and the letters to the editor which is the newspaper's contribution to civic dialogue is not appreciated and taken advantage of. It was therefore recommended that there should be adequate awareness on the need for people to read newspapers including the editorials and avail themselves of the opportunity to use the editorial page.

The study revealed the educational value of editorials and hence, the need to need to study how they contribute to ushering positive voter attitudes in Nigeria.

Another study 'Meet the Press: How Voters and Politicians Respond to Newspaper Entry and Exit' was conducted by Dragoy, Nanniciniz and Sobbrino (2014) to evaluate the effects of newspaper entry and exit on electoral participation, political selection, and government efficiency. Exploiting discrete changes in the number of newspapers, the study showed that newspaper entry increases turnout in municipal elections, the re-election probability of the incumbent mayor, and the efficiency of the municipal government. The researchers did not find any effect on the selection of politicians.

The study established that competition plays a relevant role, as the effects are not limited to the rest newspaper entry. This suggests that news media play an important role in informing voters and keeping elected politicians accountable, that is, in shaping real" versus formal" accountability. The study also underscores the goal of the present study in ascertaining the

contributions editorials actually make in society in areas like influencing voter attitude through voter education.

Exploring the kind of textual and rhetorical strategies that newspapers employ for propagating their preferred ideologies was the focus of study on ‘Headlines in Newspaper Editorials: A Contrastive Study’ by Bonyadi and Samuel (2012). The method employed was a contrastive textual analysis of selected headlines, culled from the editorials of the English newspaper, *The New York Times*, and those of Persian newspaper, *Tehran Times*.

Adopting a non-random purposeful sampling, the study selected 40 editorial headlines, 20 culled from the electronic version of the Iranian English newspaper, *Tehran Times* and 20 editorial headlines culled from the electronic version of The English daily newspaper, *New York Times* out of a large pool of editorials published daily over a specific span of time (April to September, 2008). The two newspapers were among the top broadsheets in terms of readership as stated by the official websites of the papers. Also, the textual analysis was carried out using modality and also rhetorical strategies.

The results of the study revealed certain qualitative and quantitative similarities and differences between the English and Persian editorial headlines. In terms of verbal/non-verbal distinction, the study revealed that editorial writers in *Tehran Times* preferred to write the headlines mostly in a form of full sentences, while those of *New York Times* inclined to write the headlines in punchy and short phrases.

In general, the analysis of the headlines in the two papers revealed that the newspaper headlines not only introduce the topic of the editorials but also present the subjective attitude of the writers (newspapers) towards the topic aiming at influencing the readers understanding of the editorial text. This subjective presentation of the news events and the news actors were carried out through employing certain textual and persuasive strategies. Rhetorical questions and

metonymy were found to be the most prevalent rhetorical techniques employed in the two papers equally.

The study revealed that the editorial writers in both newspapers aimed at not only at informing the readers of the topic of the editorial but also expressing the preferred ideology of the papers which was accomplished through employing certain persuasive and rhetorical devices. Studies of this type reveal the discourse conventions of newspaper genres like editorials which the present study seeks to study.

Le (2009) explored how editorialists enact media roles through their use of language. Because of their specific function, editorials are prime objects for such an investigation. Indeed, through their content but also through their structure, they tell us what media “do” in the public sphere. With their (unsigned) editorials however, newspapers go further than (just) presenting others’s. They openly represent themselves by stating their own stand on issues that they deem of special importance. This was examined in the study.

The study also presented a methodological framework for the investigation of editorials’ genre(s). Indeed, text genres are the effects of the action of individual social agents acting both within the bounds of their history and the constraints of particular contexts, and with the knowledge of the existing generic types.

The study adopted a text-driven (as opposed to ethnographic) approach to the study of editorials’ genre. It employed Askehave and Swales (2001, p. 207) 5 steps of newspaper editorial analysis: (1) structure + style + content + ‘purpose’; (2) ‘genre’; (3) context; (4) repurposing the genre; (5) reviewing genre status. The use of scare-quotes for ‘purpose’ in step 1 and ‘genre’ in step 2 indicates their provisional status. The framework was applied to editorials published in the French elite daily, *Le Mond* comprising first, the provisional, i.e. official, purpose of editorials, the structure, i.e. complex speech act analysis based on a coherence analysis, style, examined with analyses in interpersonal discourse semantics that reveal the type

of arguments (i.e. rational vs. emotional) editorialists use (i.e. ATTITUDE component of the APPRAISAL system) and the professional roles they present themselves with (i.e. through personal markers) and finally, content which was taken care of with a specific corpus definition.

The study found that in its editorials, Le Monde constructs an argumentation with constatives that evaluate, mostly negatively, situations and people, before it tells specific addressees what to do. At the all-sentence level, the argumentation progresses in a balanced and nuanced manner, and relies on values that are part of the French common cultural ground. This apparent objectivity and appeal to feelings of national belonging aim to get readers to accept the editorial's conclusion as the natural, logical thing to do. It showed very clearly that Le Monde as a media is not only a place where some public sphere's interactions can take place, but also that Le Monde is a full participant in public spheres with its values and stand. The analysis also revealed the importance of socio-cultural values, but it did not focus on them. In the constructivist approach, identity is considered as being constructed through interactions.

In sum, the combined analyses conducted in the proposed methodological framework for the study of editorials' genre reveal Le Monde's editorials as: short argumentative texts that are developed by a media presenting itself as a national, European and international social actor. At the macro-level, editorials are generally composed of constatives, most often containing a negative evaluation in reference to socio-cultural codes of values, and are followed by a directive. Editorials are addressed to recognized institutional actors on the national, European and international levels both directly (by their directives) and indirectly (through the effects of the media persuasive skills on the general audience). It will help in the present study to know that the more salient the issue dealt with in the editorial, the more negative the evaluation appears.

In the study, 'Election 2013: editorial treatment of major political parties by daily Nawa-i-Waqt during the time period between March 1, 2013 to May 9, 2013', Madni, Nawaz, Hassan

and Abdullah (2014) used content analysis to analyse all the editorials and editorial notes published on the editorial pages of newspapers. The researchers selected all the papers published during the study's stipulated period for analysis. Overall, 70 newspapers were analysed.

The findings of the study indicate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published more favourable sentences for Pakistan Muslim League-N. Outcomes of the study also illustrate that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences in favour of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf also. It also published unfavourable sentences for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Results depict that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published nothing in favour of Pakistan People's Party as compared with Pakistan Muslim League-N and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. It portrays that Daily Nawa-i-Waqt published a huge amount of sentences against Pakistan People's Party.

The methodology employed in the Madni et al (2014) study is same with the present study only that this present study triangulated survey with content analysis. As such, there could be more far reaching findings in the present study than that of Madni et al. The present study will like what the researchers have done, seek to establish whether political parties were favoured in the editorials.

Holding firm that discourse constitutes power in constructing ideational, textual and interpersonal constructs, which are ideological, and can transmit and even legitimize power in the society, Gnanaseelan (2015) studied newspaper editorials with the view that during the peace talk time, the editorials are expected to develop constructive discourse on conflict intervention and resolution to make a positive impact on legislative changes but they display 'ethno-nationalist' tendencies. Hence, he studied *'The Metaphors on International Intervention: A Discourse Analysis of the Sri Lankan English Newspaper Editorials'* to establish whether the media has been a part of the problem or a part of the solution.

Since newspaper and editorial discourses are the constructions of journalists and editors of the elites, the biased ideologies are "hidden or subtle in expressions and often revealed in

mild forms. The study took up selected editorials of the Sri Lankan English newspapers which appeared mainly during the Memorandum of Understanding between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eezham during that period, to relate the discourse themes with rhetorical and metaphorical features.

The study found that the media appreciate when the International Community acts against the extremists and Tamil Diaspora internationally and criticize when the International Community intervenes in the ethnic conflict resolution and insists on refraining from the military approach. The editorials supported the governments and International Community in resolving the conflicts militarily or with the minimum solution which will not affect the majoritarian nationalist interests that they oppose when the International Community supports the minorities to win their political rights or maximum devolution. The media appreciate, when the international non-governmental organizations assist mainly the South in economic development and humanitarian services and when the international community criticizes only the Tamil nationalists.

The metaphorical editorial discourse constructions (of journalists and editors of the Sri Lankan elite media) hide or express their ideological and attitudinal s in subtle and mild forms. The media's failure in distinguishing "Sinhala people" from "Sri Lankan people" has alienated the minority communities to lose confidence in media's contribution to nation-building. Both the Sinhala and Tamil Press have played a negative role in sharpening the ethnic conflict. The discourse generally lacks the well-known (obligatory) Resolution category observed by Gamson (1992). The minority groups and the International Community are assumed to create all kinds of problems for the majority. The ideological value structure of such editorials emphasizes order, authority, and control: the Tamil community should be obedient, patriotic, and loyal, and if they do not obey the law, then they will have to suffer the 'inevitable actions' of the radical Sinhala

nationalists. The editorials reveal the ‘intent and content’, ‘insular and secular’ approaches, and ‘commands and demands’ of the dominant community.

The study claimed that since the genre of the editorial is dynamic and always in flux due to the change in the contexts, especially the editorial committees, the Sri Lankan English newspaper editorial discourse may have different positions in future. Hence, these findings need not be construed as fixed stand. The changing current political circumstances in this post-war, development-focused scenario may positively or negatively influence the ideological and attitudinal stand of the media elites in Sri Lanka.

This study has challenged long-held beliefs about the media’s engagement in constructing a positive atmosphere, especially amidst the intensive emotional and ideological historical conflict. The media seem to be inadequate in revealing the forces underlying ethnic violence in the context of political and economic dynamics of globalisation.

In another study, ‘Framing Political Communication in An African Context: A Comparative Analysis of Post-Election Newspaper Editorials and Parliamentary Speeches in Malawi’, Mchakulu (2011) examined parliamentary rhetoric against newspapers editorials in Malawi to establish whether or not there are parallels in the way political issues are presented in both arenas. The study intended to establish whether or not newspapers in Malawi provide critical and analytical voices for newspaper readers or whether or not they simply reflect the political stand of the owners’ political parties by reflecting those of political parties’ rhetoric in parliament.

The study used frame theory analysis as a theoretical and analytical tool. The four main components of a frame: Problem Definition, Causal Interpretation, Moral Evaluation and Treatment Recommendation are used to detect frames in the corpora. Data were coded in accordance with the grounded theory method.

The findings indicated that in 1994 and 1999, newspaper editorial writers framed political issues by reflecting the s of their owners. However, in the 2004 case study, while the newspapers framing of political issues did not differ from parliamentary framing, changes in ownership and owners political re-alignment affected framing. The newspapers no longer reflect the position of the political parties, there was no division along political party-lines, and they did not take cues from parliament

The study contributed to the study of political communication in Malawi by studying frames emerging from editorial and parliamentary discourse. Further, it contributed to a further understanding of linkages between issue-specific frames and generic frames in the African context.

Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) conducted a study on '*Framing Affirmative Action: The Influence of Race on Newspaper Editorial Responses to the University of Michigan Cases*' to examine framing of U.S. Supreme Court rulings on affirmative action at the University of Michigan. A quantitative content analysis of masthead editorials, that is, opinion pieces written by the newspaper's editorial staff and published without by-line, was performed. The unit of analysis was the first responsive masthead editorial appearing in each newspaper after June 23, 2003, the date Gratz and Grutter were decided.

The results showed that remedial action and no preferential treatment, frames dominating affirmative action discourse in news media from the 1960s through the mid-1990s, were overshadowed in 2003 newspaper editorials by diversity, a frame asserting that a mix of racially and ethnically different people serve to strengthen organizations and society. The Newsroom Diversity Index (the ratio of the proportion of minorities professionally employed by the newspaper to the proportion of minorities living in its market) was positively associated with choosing the diversity frame and negatively associated with choosing the no preferential treatment frame.

Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) were more concerned with gate keeping factors of editorial writing but this study seek to establish the kind of influence that occur through reading editorials among voters in Nigeria.

In the study, *'The Impact of Media Bias: How Editorial Slant Affects Voters'* by Druckman and Parkin (2005), the researchers investigated how editorial slant—defined as the quantity and tone of a newspaper's candidate coverage as influenced by its editorial —shapes candidate's evaluations and voting choice. By combining comprehensive content analyses of the papers with an Election Day exit poll, the researchers assessed the slant of campaign coverage and its effects on the voters.

The result found compelling evidence that editorial slant influences the voters' decisions, as well as raised serious questions about the media's place in the democratic processes.

The major focus of Ekeanyanwu and Olaitan (2009) study was to assess the role of editorials in the community conversation by analysing their stand on communal and national issues between January and December 2005. The study made use of content analysis to determine the content and treatment of Nigerian newspapers' editorial. Content categories or themes were identified such as: Politics, Education, Economy, Sports, Religion, Disasters, Science & Technology, Conflicts/War, Personality/People, Commerce/industry, Culture/Ethnicity, Health, Corruption, Crime, Foreign issues and others. These categories formed the units of analysis and measurement. The content categories were analysed to determine tile type of editorial mostly used by the newspapers, the quality of such editorials, the category or theme that is frequently reported and the stand of the newspapers on specific issues reported in the editorials.

The results of the analyses showed that editorials concentrate most of its themes on socio economic issues and news editorials are commonly used to present these issues. To maintain their role as a community's voice, it is recommended that professionalism, objectivity, ethical

considerations, fairness and sound journalism should constitute the hallmark of editorial policies and writings. In order to also ensure that these journalistic principles are not flagrantly abused, editorial independence is suggested. To enhance this independence, corporate or people ownership of newspaper organizations is advocated. This will curb the excesses of individual newspaper publishers who are hell bent on pursuing parochial, personal interests against communal and national goals.

In the study ‘The impact of the media on voters’ attitude toward Junichiro Koizumi and his policy’ Yamamura and Sabatini (2015) analysed the role of mass media in the formation of people’s support for political leaders and their economic agenda using the case of Koizumi, Japan’s longest-serving PM over the past 25 years. To test the hypotheses that media drew voters’ attention to Koizumi’s charming personal traits rather than to specific policy issues (allowing the PM to fully exploit the “superstar effect”), the researchers empirically assessed the association between exposure to TV and newspapers and voters’ political views.

Based on a survey conducted immediately after Koizumi’s land-slide electoral win in 2005, a bivariate probit model was used for the estimation. The major findings are as follows. First, results based on combined sample of men and women suggest that the frequency of exposure to mass media is positively related to the support for Koizumi. On the other hand, they are not significantly correlated with the most distinctive policy he proposed in the electoral campaign.

Second, the effect of watching TV on the support for Koizumi is more significant than that of reading newspapers. Third, after dividing the sample into men and women, the positive relation between watching TV and the support for Koizumi is only observed for females, whereas the positive relation between reading newspapers and the support for Koizumi is only observed for males. In contrast to his opponents’ case, Koizumi was not supported by the LDP’s

institutionalized factional system or by special interest groups. Thus, it was necessary for him to use the media to compete with his political rivals.

The results suggest that Koizumi used the medium of TV to develop a populist strategy and appeal directly to common people, overcoming the power structure of his own party and challenging the dominant views and practices of the Japanese political establishment. He repeatedly presented himself as the spokesperson of the masses in a struggle with the Japanese elite. From this point of view, Koizumi's political experience notably resembles the rise and success of former Italian PM Silvio Berlusconi (Sabatini, 2012). Koizumi's televised performances probably played a greater role than his principal policy in drawing electoral support from voters of the opposite sex. This case suggests that TV is a powerful amplifier of political leaders' appealing personal attributes, which may serve a fundamental function in electoral competitions.

The results also seem consistent with the argument that the mix of political news and TV entertainment encourages passive voters to vote in elections. This situation may help outsider candidates to counter balance the influence of special interest groups. On the other hand, the impact of newspapers seems to be less significant than that of TV. Newspapers can provide detailed information about policy issues, allowing citizens to support specific measures even when they are detrimental to special interest groups. However, exposure to newspapers per se does not seem to counteract the influence of special interest groups; on this regard, Koizumi's case teaches that the masterful use of TV is a key component of electoral success.

Overall, a couple of lessons can be derived. Candidates' personal attributes may work as important drivers of consensus, which may allow celebrities to overcome the opposition of small, special interest groups. At the same time, attention should be paid to the danger of populism. Since the advent of mass media, many charismatic political leaders have effectively used these

means of communication to increase voter support. This gives credence to the fact that newspaper editorials would influence voter attitude in Nigeria.

Ugande and Chile (2016) evaluated the role of radio Benue in electoral education in Benue state using a survey method. The authors argued that radio has been rated as one of the most effective medium of mass communication in any given society particularly the Third World such as Nigeria. For them, radio can 'be adopted in delivering relevant information and education on electoral matters particularly by enlightening the people about candidates contesting for various political positions, the dates and venues of elections and the manifestoes of various political parties and their candidates' (Ugande & Chile, 2016, p. 2).

The study found that radio Benue s such as 'Platform', 'News at 8pm', 'News at 5pm and public service announcements are the electoral education s, which the audience are exposed to on a regular basis. It is also found that provision of education on political parties' ideologies and their candidates' manifestoes, provision of information on time and venues of elections and education on how to go about the electoral process are the educational roles the station provides.

The study recommended, among other things, that Governments and managers of Radio Benue and such other stations should make and sustain more efforts toward ensuring that they upgrade their transmitters and other equipment that enhance the effective reception of broadcast signals of radio even in rural areas. The study by Ugande and Chile focused on radio in general, but it showed how the media through its contents can contribute to the cultivation of positive attitude towards elections in Nigeria.

Investigating cultural influence and the framing of fuel policy crisis in Nigeria, 1999 - 2007, Torwel (2016) underscores the fact that there exists hegemonic consensus in how journalists in different news organisations can frame the key actors in a crisis or policy positions. Building on that fact, he examined the context within which journalists, even though working in

and for different news organisations, defines the key actors in an event or policy options in similar hegemonic terms.

Depth interviews with the reporters who write stories were conducted to gain insight into the cultural/ideological environment in which the journalists produced their stories. The interviews were analyzed in an inter-textual analysis with the stories of the crisis to provide a context for understanding the influence of cultural/ideological environment on media content and behaviour of journalists.

The study found that opinions of journalists who write stories about issues or events are consistent with the ideological hegemony in news stories. Hence, ‘the interpretations journalists bring to news events are very often not influenced by their news organizations but are largely underwritten by the prevailing ideology within a cultural environment’ (Torwel, 2016, p. 5). Torwel’s study therefore forecloses any argument that editorial themes and topics of newspapers are predetermined by the proprietors. It shows that ownership influence does little to what editorials bring to public sphere and the interpretations offered on the agenda.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the Agenda Setting Theory and two other related theories which are Framing and Media-Dominant Ideology. The theories shows how newspaper editorials can shape the thought process of the voters, deepen their knowledge base on election matters and in the process influence voter attitude.

2.5.1 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting emerged from studies on media influence in politics and elections. The theory was propounded by McCombs and Shaw (1972), based on their community study of the media agenda in a United States (US) Presidential campaign which involved content analysis and cross-sectional survey data. The study was pioneering for providing evidence of a strong and significant correlation between the campaigns agenda in the media and in public opinion.

Although Cohen (1963) is generally credited for refining Lippmann's ideas into the theory of agenda-setting, he states that "The press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion, it may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. And it follows from this that the world looks different to different people, depending not only on their personal interests, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the editorials of the papers they read (Baran & Davies, 2003).

Baran and Davies(2003) explains that during the September and October of the 1968 presidential election, McCombs and Shaw interviewed one hundred registered voters who had not yet committed to either candidate (presumably these people would be more open to media messages). By asking each respondent to outline the key issues as he/she saw them, regardless of what the candidates might be saying at the moment, they were able to identify and rank by importance just what these people thought were the crucial issues facing them. They then compared these results with a ranking of the time and space accorded to various issues produced by a content analysis of the television news, newspapers, newsmagazines, and editorial pages available to the voters in the area where the study was conducted.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) results were that the media appear to have exerted a considerable impact on the voters' judgments of what they considered the major issues of the campaign. In short, the data suggest a very strong relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues in the newspaper editorials and the judgments of voters as to the salience and importance of various election topics (Baran & Davies, 2003).The core idea as stated by McQuail (2005, p.512) is that the news editorials indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues. The theory has the following postulations.

- Public debate is represented by a set of salient issues or editorial themes (an agenda for action).
- The agenda originates from public opinion and the proposals of political elites.
- Competing interests seek to promote the salience of their issues.
- Mass media news (editorials) selects issues for more or less attention according to several pressures, especially those from interested elites, public opinion and real world events.
- The outcome in the media (relative degree of prominence of issues) both gives the public recognition to the current agenda and has further effects on the opinion and the evaluation of the political scene.

Support for media agenda-setting effects has been found in hundreds of studies over the past few decades. In Bittner's (1998) expression, the media not only inform us but also influence us as to what is important to know. In other words, the media create an agenda for our thoughts and influence us in what seems important. That is, the editorial themes on election matters may help readers to perceive certain issues as being more important than others and consequently influence voter attitudes towards elections based on how they address themselves on those issues.

Laughey (2007) observe that empirical research findings to test out the agenda-setting approach found that four months was the optimum span of time between presentation of a media agenda and it having filtered across to the public realm. Perhaps a positive outcome of agenda setting, though, is the suggestion that news media can set the agenda in relation to political participation, 'raising the level of political interest among the general public above the threshold sufficient to assure reasonable learning about issues and candidates' (McCombs & Gilbert 1986, p. 11). Political apathy, McCombs and Gilbert (1986) argue, can be remedied by exposure to a political news agenda.

Simply put, the agenda-setting theory asserts that increased salience of an editorial topic or issue in the newspaper causes the salience of that topic or issue among the voters. In his own observation, Okolo (1994) says that the power of the media in setting the agenda has the implication of negative influences when journalists try to re-define reality by their presentation of the news events as more salient, based on nothing more than arbitrary rules. This has led some critics to argue that the media distort political reality. He adds that politicians and their handlers know that the media set the agenda for political discussion and public opinion. They, therefore, try to set the agenda for journalists' coverage of political affairs by directing their attention to selected issues that project a better image of specific politicians or political groups.

Agenda-setting, according to De Fleur and Ball-Rokeach (1982), is an interactional process. Topics are sorted by the media for presentation to the public. Information about those topics is selectively assembled and selectively disseminated. The public then sorts out their interest and concern with this information as a function of both their individual differences in personal make up and their location in societal strata and categories.

Similar to the study by McCombs and Shaw (1972) which measured what were topical issues for voters against contents of television news cast, this study however, intends to investigate what the contents of newspaper editorials offer towards enriching voters knowledge about election, and how did that influence the attitude of voters towards the 2015 general election. McCombs and Shaw's results indicates that newspaper editorials would be very instrumental in providing the required education for voters to make informed choices that foster the sustenance of democracy.

2.5.2 Framing Theory

Framing theory was put forth by Erving Goffman (1974). Its basis is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. In essence,

framing theory suggests that how something is presented to the audience (called “the frame”) influences the choices people make about how to process that information.

A frame in communication or a media frame refers to ‘the words, images, phrases, and presentation styles that a speaker (e.g., a politician, a media outlet) uses when relaying information about an issue or event to an audience’ (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 100). McQuail (2006, p. 379) defines framing as a ‘way of giving some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact’. To Gitlin (1980), frames are “principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (p. 6). Similarly, Gamson (1992) in Weaver (2007) sees framing in terms of a signature matrix that includes various condensing symbols (catch phrases, taglines, exemplars, metaphors, depictions, visual images) and reasoning devices (causes and consequences, appeals to principles or moral claims).

Researchers have linked framing to agenda setting. For instance, McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) in Scheufele (1999, p. 103) suggested that not only are agenda setting and framing effects related, framing is in fact, an extension of agenda setting. They used the term “second-level agenda setting” to describe the impact of the salience of characteristics of media coverage on audience’s interpretation of news stories. It is often understood as an extension of agenda setting (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). According to Ciboh (2010, p. 69), ‘the concept of framing expands the agenda setting research tradition by focusing on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on particular issue’. This form of agenda setting not only tells what to think about an issue, but also how to think about that issue.

The theory of framing as de-Vreese (2005, p.51) observes, has gained momentum in the communication disciplines, giving guidance to both investigations of media content and to studies of the relationship between media and public opinion. In fact, framing research, like agenda-setting research, focuses on the relationship between issues in the editorials and the

public perceptions of issues (Entman, 1993). Thus, framing involves processes of inclusion and exclusion as well as emphasis. Entman (1993) summarized the essence of framing processes with the following:

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames, then, define problems—determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits usually measured in terms of cultural values; diagnose causes—identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments—evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies, offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects. (p. 55)

Torwel (2015, p. 259) explains that ‘the above definition of framing describes two related procedures: selection and salience, and it suggests four functions of framing: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies’. He adds that media research has shown that news frames significantly influence audience perception of public issues. Thus, by defining problems and proffering solutions, making moral judgements and suggestions, the newspaper editorial can shape voter perception of election issues and change their attitude from destructive to constructive dimension.

Framing theory shows how a newspaper editorial presents its themes and positions, and how voters make sense of the themes and positions they read in the editorial. The way the media frame stories (what they highlight and what they leave out) leads people to interpret those themes or issues in a certain way (Gitlin, 1980). Framing relates to attitudes, and can be measured as the sum of positive and negative associations with a given issue (Chong & Druckman, 2007). These attitudes then influence how voters choose to talk about the issue.

This goes to show that by selecting topics like election security, campaign issues, collation processes, etc. newspapers through their editorials use catch phrases, taglines, exemplars, metaphors, depictions to influence readers to embrace some actions and shun others. In fact, the act of framing can be visibly seen in newspaper editorials as editorial board members decide on issues and persuade members using rhetorical strategies to tow their line of reasoning.

Besides a second level agenda setting, the theory of framing is akin to the media-dominant ideology theory discussed below. This is because frames perform ideological functions in news. The agenda presented in the editorials are the frames of society's dominant groups or consensus.

2.5.3 Media/Dominant Ideology Theory

The extant theory on media and voter attitude is the Media-Dominant Ideology Theory (Heywood 2002). It provides a graphic representation of voter attitude that suggests that voters are persuaded by dominant groups and institutions in the society, such as governments, political parties, media and business interest groups to accept an ideology that is sympathetic to the interests of those dominant groups and institutions, acting accordingly.

Associated mainly with the work of Patrick Dunleavy and Christopher Husbands (1985), the media-dominant ideology theorises that the dominant groups and institutions tend to use the mass media to communicate the dominant ideology, and are reliant on the mass media to be sympathetic to that dominant ideology. As such, voters will react to certain events or issues, but only on the issues which the media declares to be important as in agenda setting theory. Dunleavy and Husbands (1985) believe that media representation of choices through editorials can sway a great number of people.

Although, proponents of Media-Dominant Ideology theory do not necessarily describe themselves as Marxists but without doubt, the principal inspiration for the theory is the Marxist notion of dominant ideology that in every epoch the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class.

This ruling class in regards to this study means the newspaper editorial board members who decide on what to write, when to write, and how to write. Thus, the editorial themes and positions presented in a rhetorical manner represent the ideology of the newspaper organisation.

The key thing the theory of dominant ideology emphasizes is the role of the editorial in an electoral process particularly the education it provides in the process of self-identification of individuals in the social structure. Therefore, the theory focuses on ideological manipulation and control of individual preferences, where the voters are not only socially influenced in a manner that 'forge' or determine their attitude but also purposefully conditioned or 'indoctrinated' into having certain political opinions, or supporting certain positions or arguments.

According to Heywood (2002, p.244), this theory emphasises the manner in which newspaper organisations interpret election matters. This interpretation also depends on how they see and deliberate on matters in the society. Heywood (2002) adds that the media are capable of distorting the flow of political communications, by setting the agenda for debate and also by structuring or manipulating preferences as well as sympathies. Thus, editorials as opinion texts reflect on dominant ideologies which lead to political opinions and support being constructed in the minds of the electorate accordingly. With the media being a major source of communication, it serves to be the main source of information that determines voting behaviour among electorates. Hence, another determining factor of voting behaviour is the media and the role it plays in informing citizens and forming opinions.

Against this backdrop, Ball and Peters (2005, p.180) rightly states that 'the role of the mass media is a factor of increasing importance in the determination of voter attitude to election results'. Voters do rely on the media for information about politicians and their conduct. Furthermore, news media play a central role in democratic governance by, amongst others, shaping political opinions and electoral preferences through avenues like the editorials (signed or unsigned). Images and texts in the mass media are often used to form the public's views on

political leaders, parties etc. By exposing their audiences to certain texts conveying messages about political leaders, government performances, political conduct etc., and doing this on a regular basis, certain images are mentally constructed in the minds of the recipients, which can lead to political opinions being formed and political support decided and expressed accordingly (Grabe, 2009).

The biggest criticism of this theory is that the overemphasising of the process of social conditioning completely disregards individual determination and personal autonomy (Heywood 2002, p. 244). Nevertheless, the theory according to Strömberg (2004, p.265) affirms that ‘when it comes to voting and elections, the media provide most of the information used by the electorate’. Ladd (2010) also asserts that the media messages affect voting preferences through providing political information and direct persuasion, although creative research designs or unusual historical circumstances are necessary to attain that evidence. That is why Jankowski and Strate (1995, p.91) maintain that when greater attention is given to politics in the mass media, particularly the print media, political knowledge increases. Those who read the editorials during election period have different perceptions of electoral matters and are more likely to change their views or attitude (Ladd, 2010).

2.6 Synthesis of the Theories

According to what is indicated so far, there is no doubt that these theories complement each other. This means that not any of them covers the entire space of the media and voter attitude, rather each is concentrated only on a particular segment of this space. While the agenda setting theory holds that newspaper editorials present to the public what the main issues of the day are, the framing theory shows how the editorials shape or doctor public understanding of the issues and the media-dominant ideology, show how a desired political outcome or voter attitude is achieved by structuring or manipulating preferences as well as sympathies.

The agenda setting theory sees editorial themes as public agenda represented by a set of salient issues (an agenda for action). When newspapers select issues for more or less attention, the outcome in the media (relative degree of prominence of issues) both gives public recognition to the current agenda and has further effects on opinion and the evaluation of the political scene. The framing theory show that by selecting topics like election security, campaign issues, voter registration, collation processes, and electoral outcome, newspapers through their editorials use catch phrases, taglines, exemplars, metaphors, depictions to influence readers to embrace some actions and shun others. In the process, people conform to shared judgments (dominant ideologies) as presented in the editorials.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the concepts of newspaper, editorial, voter attitude and elections. In political affairs, newspapers have consistently remained useful resources in the society since their emergence in the 17th century (Tom, 2012; Weber, 2006). The review established a strong link between newspaper editorials and politics. Editorials are found to be a forum of public debate, a watchdog for civil and political rights, a mobilising agent, and the voice of the newspaper and as rhetorical arguments shaping political agenda. A newspaper's editorial is a courtroom where judgements are passed against societal ills and public perception is influenced. However, the impact of editorials on voter attitudes which is the premise of free and peaceful elections has not been examined. This study will therefore fill the gap.

The review has affirmed the relevance in several ways that the ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all. Also, democracy is not just a question of having a vote; it consists of strengthening each citizen's possibility and capacity to participate in the deliberations involved in life in the society. The key outcomes of positive voter attitude include among others increased voter turnout during elections, improved voter knowledge of new accreditation procedures based on the permanent voters' card, reduction in the number of invalid

votes at elections, as well as encourage ethical voting. All these are crucial for democratic consolidation and stability.

The agenda setting theory, framing theory, media-dominant ideology theory show how editorials can impact on voter attitude. The theories indicated appropriate research methods for this study which are content analysis was used to determine the frequency and persuasiveness of certain messages in the editorials and survey method to identify voter attitudes and how they were influenced by the editorials.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter explains the research design, population of the study, sample size determination, sampling techniques and procedures. It also describes the instruments for data collection, method of instrument administration and data collection, method of data analysis, validity and reliability of instruments.

Content analysis and the survey methods were employed in the study in an attempt to provide a solid foundation for answering the research questions raised in the study. This was because neither research method can singularly offer a sufficient knowledge to achieve the goals of this study (Creswell, 2003; Sobowale, 2008). Therefore, the methods of content analysis and survey were triangulated to enable the researcher to plan and examine critically the themes, stand, rhetoric and influence of newspaper editorials on voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Again, Gunter (2000), Neuendorf (2002) and Rubin, Haridaki and Rubin (2010) opine that studies designed to measure the impact of the media on audiences necessitate the merging of content analytic method with survey.

Content analysis was used to identify the structure and manifest content of newspaper editorials. Content analysis is an efficient alternative to public opinion research and political leanings (Krippendorff, 2004). Survey was used to measure readers' knowledge of election issues raised in the editorials, as well as their participation and attitudes towards elections. According to which Kothari(2004) survey is a technique of gathering information by questioning those individuals who are the object of the research, belonging to a representative sample, through a standardized questioning procedure, and with the aim of studying the relationships among the variables.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a three-stage research design. First, it focused on identifying themes covered in the editorials, second, editorial stance on the identified themes were analysed. At the third stage, rhetorical analysis was employed to establish tactics employed in the editorials to persuade and influence the attitude of voters towards the 2015 general election.

This study quantitatively employed close reading of sample texts to reveal the rhetorical strategies and appeals that editorial writers rely on to construct arguments that will increase the adherence of the readers to the opinions proposed. Texts were read at the levels of words, sentences, paragraphs, issues, examples, comparisons and rhetoric strategies. Editorial argumentation was qualitatively examined based on Aristotle's five canons of rhetoric, focusing on the assembling of the argument and the placement of key components such as the thesis, evidence, endorsement, and call-to-action as well as the use of rhetorical figures to enhance ethical, pathetic and logical appeals.

The study analysed systematically, newspaper editorials that appeared in major Nigerian national daily newspapers during campaigns from January 1, 2015 to the April 30, 2015 when all elections were concluded. The sample consisted of editorials from the *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *Vanguard* and *The Nation* newspapers. All the editorials from these newspapers which mentioned the 2015 election, or discussed any further ramifications of voter attitude, during the 121 days (from January to April), were collected and analysed.

The researcher actively accumulated the materials via newspaper monitoring and also searching the holdings of academic libraries as well as the search engines of the selected newspapers. The restriction to certain months and newspapers was for the purpose of manageability of the undertaking. Emergent coding was applied for developing the coding sheet. This technique as Wimmer and Dominick (2006, p.159) explain, 'establishes categories after a

preliminary examination of the data'. The resulting category system was constructed based on common factors or themes that emerge from the data themselves.

The newspaper editorial was selected as the unit of analysis in this study for several reasons. First of all, compared to other communication materials relevant to the campaign (political speeches, radio commentaries, et cetera), the newspaper editorial is more readily available. Also, of these relevant materials, newspaper editorials are the only substantial source of independent political opinion. Finally, the newspaper editorial was selected because it is often used by the candidates themselves to gauge their relative appeal and progress throughout the campaign.

Again, the design was meant to collate views of voters across the six geopolitical regions of the country to ascertain first of all, how much information they were able to gain from newspaper editorials; and secondly, how the information impacted on voter attitude during the 2015 general elections. The design was meant to unravel the kinds and amount of information that voters had concerning, candidates, parties, electoral procedures, voter registration, voting process, vote count, electoral authorities, and election results, among others. This could only be satisfactorily achieved through the use of a structured questionnaire.

Thus, a structured questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from the voters so as to ascertain the exact contributions that editorials had made in enriching their knowledge and stimulating their interest about the elections. It was carefully designed to collect data in accordance with specifications of the research questions. Apart from the cheapness and comfort ability of the questionnaire for the researcher and the respondents, it allowed more voters to be reached in the process. These voters were sampled from six states of the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria. The design also involved all the scales of measurement for precision such as attitudes, nominal, ordinal and interval scales.

3.2 Population of the Study

The study dealt with two populations: newspaper editorials and voters in six selected states of the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria.

3.2.1 Population for Content Analysis

All the editorials of *Vanguard*, *Daily Trust*, *The Nation*, *Leadership* and *Daily Sun* newspapers from January to April, 2015 comprised the population of the study for content analysis. The selected newspapers were national dailies, publishing consistently, always available and affordable within the study geographical area at the cost of one hundred and fifty naira each. Besides, they were chosen based on the geographical roots of their operation even as *Daily Trust* is from the North (North West and North East), *Leadership* from North Central, *Daily Sun* – South East, *The Nation* – South West, and *Vanguard* – South West and also South-South. Hence, the influence of the country's dichotomy and representation underscores the selection of the newspapers.

Since it is a norm for national dailies to be publishing editorials on daily basis, each of the selected newspapers published consecutively 121 editorials between January and April 2015 as shown below

Figure 1: Daily Sample of Newspaper of Editorials

Month	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Leadership	The Nation	Vanguard	Total
January	31	31	31	31	31	155
February	28	28	28	28	28	140
March	31	31	31	31	31	155
April	30	30	30	30	30	150
Totals	120	120	120	120	120	600

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

In all, the total population of newspaper editorials between January and April, 2015 is 600.

3.2.2 Population for Survey

The second population of the study was all the registered voters with permanent voters' card during the 2015 general elections in the six selected states of the six geopolitical regions of Nigeria. These were Akwa-Ibom – South-South, Benue – North Central, Enugu – South East, Gombe – North East, Kaduna – North West and Lagos – South West. According to Nwafor (2015), registered voters in the selected states were as follows

Figure 2: Number of Registered Voters across Selected States

S/No	Region	State	Number of Registered Voters
1	North Central	Benue	2,015,452
2	North East	Gombe	1,120,023
3.	North West	Kaduna	3,407,222
4.	South East	Enugu	1,429,221
5.	South West	Lagos	5,822,207
6.	South South	Akwa-Ibom	1,680,759
Total			15,474,884

INEC (2015)

The figure therefore represents the total population surveyed.

Thus, the 600 newspaper editorials and 15474884 registered voters were the populations of the study.

3.3 Sample Size

The sample sizes for the two populations were determined separately as follows.

3.3.1 Content Analysis

The essence of sampling is to limit the study to a manageable body of text especially when the universe of available body of text is too large to be examined as a whole. Since the total number of editorials within the study period was manageable for a quantitative content analysis, census sampling technique suggested by Krippendorff (2004) was used. A census means every unit in a population is included in the content analysis. Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) support the census technique that analysing all content units in a population eliminates sampling error because no such error exists in a census. Hence all the 600 editorials were the sample for content analysis. However, purposive sampling was then applied to pick only editorials that dealt with the 2015 general election and these were 180 editorials. In this manner, no element of chance was left and highest accuracy was obtained.

3.3.2 Survey

Since the total population of 15474884 registered voters was large, a statistical formula of was used in determining the sample size. For populations that are large, Daniel (1999) developed the formula that can yield a representative sample as follows

$$n = \frac{NZ^2PQ}{e^2(N-1) + Z^2PQ}$$

Where n = sample size

Z = level of confidence 95% (1.96)

P = estimate variance in the population 50% (0.5)

$Q = 1 - p$

N = Total Population (2,019,811)

$$n = \frac{15474884 \times (1.96)^2 \times 0.5 (1 - 0.5)}{(0.05)^2(15474884 - 1) + (1.96)^2 \times 0.5(1 - 0.5)}$$

$$n = \frac{15474884 \times 3.8416 \times 0.25}{0.0025 \times 15474884 + 3.8416 \times 0.25}$$

$$= \frac{15474884 \times 0.9604}{38687.21 + 0.9604}$$

$$= \frac{14862078.59}{38688.17}$$

$$n = 384$$

The sample size statistically determined for the registered voters in six states of the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria was 384

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedure

Sampling techniques and procedure as were employed under the two methodologies were explained in the following manner.

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques and Procedure for Content Analysis

Sampling in content analysis often takes place in more than one step (Gunter 2000). Therefore, several steps were taken to sample newspaper editorials. The first step was stratifying all the national dailies according to their geographical base of operation as well as that of the publisher. In that regard, five newspapers were selected: *Daily Trust* – North (West and East), *Leadership* – (Publisher, Nda Isaiah, Niger State, North Central), *Daily Sun* – (Publisher, Orji Uzor Kalu, South East), *Vanguard* (Publisher – Sam Amuka, Delta State, South South), *The Nation* (publisher – Asiwaju Bola Tinibu, Lagos, South West).

The second step focused on the selection of months using judgemental sampling technique. Four months were selected. These were January, February, March and April. These were months of intense campaigns, voter education, voting, collation and announcement of results for all states and federal elections. Attention of the press too was also presumed to be high on election matters during the period.

The third stage was to consecutively select newspaper editorials of the selected newspapers within the period. This entails selecting editorials on daily basis from Monday to Sunday. Where hard copies were difficult to come by, online archives of the papers were relied

upon to fill the gap. The selection showed that 31 editorials were selected from each newspaper in January, 28 in February, 31 in March and 30 in April. Covering the month of April helped in ascertain the stands of voters and editorials on the aftermath of the elections. Presidential election was held on March 28, while Governorship and national Assembly Elections were held on April 11.

At the fourth stage, purposive sampling technique was used. Only editorials whose contents were directly related to the elections were counted. Thus, editorials which had no mention of elections were not counted for coding.

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques and Procedure for Survey

Multi-stage sampling technique applied in the survey. At the first stage, random sampling technique was used in selecting the six states across the six geopolitical regions in Nigeria. The names of the states in each region were written pieces of papers. The papers were then folded and dropped in a basket. The researcher then brought someone who knew nothing about the research to pick one among the papers. When opened, the name of the state was taken. The process was done for each region. In the end, these states were randomly selected: Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Enugu, Gombe, Kaduna and Lagos.

At the second stage, proportional sampling technique was used as advised by Babbie. Babbie (2005, P. 220) advises that ‘whenever states sample are of greatly differing sizes, it is appropriate to use a modified sampling design called PPS (Probability Proportionate to Size). Therefore, each selected state was given a chance of selection proportionate to its size using the

formula as follows $\frac{n}{N} \times \frac{S}{1}$

Where:

n = population of each unit (Local government)

N = total population

s = total sample size

Consequently, respondents selected according to the states are

S/No	State	Population	Sample
1	Akwa-Ibom	1,680,759	42
2	Benue	2,015,452	50
3	Enugu	1,429,221	35
4	Gombe	1,120,023	28
5	Kaduna	3,407,222	85
6	Lagos	5,822,207	144
	Total	15,474,884	384

At the third stage, a purposive sampling technique was applied. The respondents were selected from the state capitals and local government headquarters in each state because of the media literacy level in urban areas and newspapers availability in offices and libraries. At the fourth stage, judgemental sampling technique was applied. Voters who could read and had a mean of reading newspaper editorials were selected. The voters as well, were those duly registered and had their voters card.

3.5 Research Instruments and Administration

Two instruments were designed to collect data for the study. Coding sheet was designed for content analysis, while a structured questionnaire was used for survey technique.

3.5.1 Context Units/Categories

After preliminary examination of the data, the following categories were selected for the study.

- A. Theme/Topic
- B. Type of Editorial
- C. Editorial
- D. Type of Rhetoric
- E. Rhetorical Devices
- F. Modes of Persuasion

3.5.1.1 Recording Units

Under each category, several variables were drawn for coding and analysis as follows

A. Theme/Topic

The topic or circumstance or event on which an editorial centred on. Its variables are:

1. Security
2. Card Reader
3. Permanent Voter Card
4. Negative Campaign
5. Qualification of Candidates
6. Election date
7. Defections
8. INEC readiness
9. Conduct at polls
10. Electoral outcome

B. Type of Editorial

This entails the functional classification of editorials. Variables to be recorded are

1. Attack
2. Praise
3. Persuasive
4. Explanatory

C. Editorial Position

This was the position of the editorial over an issue when it weighed all sides. Variable considered here are:

1. Condemn
2. Commend

3. Advise

D. Type of Rhetoric

This was the type of argument employed in the editorial. The variables are:

1. Forensic or Legal
2. Epideictic or ceremonial
3. Deliberative or Political

E. Rhetorical Devices

These were the devices such as figures of speech employed to strengthen an argument.

They were qualitatively determined from the reading of the texts.

F. Modes of Persuasion

The strategy employed to persuade a reader. The variables are:

1. Ethos
2. Pathos
3. Logos

3.5.1.2 Selection of Coders and Coding Procedure

Coding procedure followed two main phases: designing and refining the coding procedure and applying it. In the first phase, a tentative set of essentially aprioricategories and recording units were set up and arranged. These were then discussed, criticised and modified by researcher, supervisors, some consultants, research assistants and several professional colleagues.

Two coders were then selected in addition to the researcher to apply the recording units to a sample of editorials to be coded. The two coders were holders of a master's degree in English Language and Mass Communication. The reason is that these are presumed to be more knowledgeable and proficient enough to code properly. The process resulted in the deletion of some recording units, the rephrasing of others and the addition of a few new recording units. The researcher also tightened up categories and units in order to maximise mutual exclusiveness

as well as exhaustiveness of the recording units under each category. This was done to also make sure that the recording units did not overlap one another and were clear and unambiguous enough to assure that independent coder would have a high agreement in the final coding.

In the second phase, five fresh coders with sound academic background of at least a first degree were selected and trained. This was done as advised by Krippendorff, (2004, p. 131) that individuals who took part in the development of recording instructions should not be the ones who apply them, for they will have acquired an implicit consensus that new coder cannot have and that other scholars who may wish use the instructions cannot replicate.

To make coders comfortable and familiar with the definitions of categories and recording units, the codes were first trained to get familiar with content being analysed. This is to give them an idea of what to expect in the content and how much energy and attention is needed to comprehend it. The coders were briefed about the nature of the task. Thereafter, they worked by themselves, applying the written coding instructions. After coding for some time, comparison was made among the coders to enable them adapt to a standard interpretation of the instructions. In fact, similar results were yielded across the coders. The process did not only allowed the researcher to plot the increasing reliability of individual coders but also helped in deciding at the end of the training period which coders were suited to the task. This was because for most times, the training and categories could be good but stress or laziness of a coder will affect the reliability.

When actual coding of the sample began, the coders and the researcher met once in a week to discuss the progress of the coding and to ensure continued reliability. The coding of the data took four weeks to be completed. Discussion on the coding categories and instruction was encouraged among the coders so that each coder approached the content from similar or different frames of reference.

3.5.1.3 Units of Analysis

The units of analysis include words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, suggestions and arguments

3.5.1.4 Inter-Coder Reliability

The finalised instructions were tested for reliability with a fresh set of coders. Several coefficients for measuring agreement are available, but the study relied on Krippendorff's alpha (α) because it is the most general agreement measure with appropriate reliability interpretations in content analysis. It takes into account chance agreement and in addition, the magnitude of the misses, adjusting for whether the variable is measured as nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio. In its most general form,

$$\alpha = 1 - \frac{D_o}{D_e}$$

Where

D_o is a measure of the observed disagreement.

D_e is a measure of the expected disagreement

When alpha equals to 1, there is perfect reliability.

For easy running of Krippendorff's alpha (α) tests on SPSS, Hayes and Krippendorff (2007) developed a macro to make KALPHA calculation possible in SPSS and this software was relied upon for the calculation of the reliability. Inter-coder reliability was tested on all the six categories. The calculation showed that Krippendorff's alpha (α) yielded .94, .92, .90, .94, .89, .91 which indicated high reliability or agreement among the coders on the volume, theme or issues, editorial stand, types of rhetoric, rhetorical devices and mode of persuasion (see Appendix V).

3.5.2 Structured Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire titled "Newspaper Editorials and Voter Attitude towards Election in Nigeria (NEVAEN)" was used to ensure uniformity of respondents' answers. It had two sections: one and two. Section one sought to obtain information on demographic characteristics of the respondents, viz: age, sex, marital status, education qualification and

location. Section two was meant to elicit information from the respondents in relation to the variables in the research questions and objectives of the study. The items were close ended and mostly designed on a four Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SDA) and Disagree. Values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 were assigned to the scale respectively. As a psychometric scale, the Likert scale is commonly used in questionnaires, and is the most widely used scale in survey research.

Attitudinal scale was also built in the questionnaire to measure attitudes in terms of the extent to which the voters agree with the items, and so tapping into the cognitive and affective components of the voters' attitudes and behaviour. The items sought to find out if readership of editorials stimulated the voters' interest in knowing more about the political parties and contestants; increase their level of political participation; made them join political parties and campaign teams, and got others to join too. The questions indicated if voters strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed or disagreed with the items.

Seven research assistants were used in administering the questionnaire across the six selected states. Each was assigned to the state he/she was residing in. But for the size of Lagos, two research assistants were used. These were

Akwa-Ibom	Indiana Ubong
Benue	Dennis Abutu
Enugu	Kingsley Nnorom
Gombe	Noah Abanyam
Kaduna	Theophilus Aver
Lagos	Juliana Seyi/Samuel Ogaba

Brainstorming session was held with the research assistants after which, copies of the questionnaire were produced and given to them according to the size of each state. The distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire was completed in four weeks. The respondents

were requested to complete the questionnaire at the instance. After collection and collation, the completed copies of the questionnaire were subjected to computation and analysis.

The questionnaire was designed with close-ended questions because they are popular and provide greater uniformity in responses that are easy to quantify.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

Textual data for this research was collected using coding sheets for content analysis, while questionnaire was used to collect data from the survey. Election result and other statistics on the 2015 elections published by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) such as list of registered voters were also utilised for the study.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Numerical data was organized and analysed statistically. Tables, frequencies, charts, and descriptive statistics such as percentages were used in analysing the data. Computer which is faster and makes fewer computational mistakes was used even as Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005, p.93) insist that ‘any quantitative content analysis project of decent size should use computer for analysing data’. Thus the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS was therefore, used for the analysis.

On the whole, the Pearson Bivariate Two-Tailed Correlation tests measured the precise linear association between the independent variable i.e. editorial positions and the dependent variable voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

3.8 Validity

This study follows a rigorous adherence to procedure. The use of triangulation technique was first, to increase the degree of validity and reliability; and second, to achieve a quantitative depth through the provision of quantitative breadth. Also, because of the complex nature of this study, this researcher thought one individual method would be insufficient to render an adequate and comprehensive analysis of the findings. As such, a combination of methods, which supports

triangulation of findings, was adopted in order to mitigate the weaknesses in the individual methods and further to raise the degree of validity and reliability.

As part of the process of achieving a high level of validity, proper care was taken to ensure that samples were representative of the target populations; categories and the unit of analysis were not only well-formulated and well-defined, they were equally mutually exclusive, exhaustive and reliable.

3.9 Reliability

Pre-test of the established coding system, as Wimmer and Dominick (2006) have recommended, was undertaken and a pilot study was conducted. To prove the reliability of the instruments and methods in providing accurate and consistent results, mathematical calculations were done using coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) index, Guttman Split-Half and Spearman Coefficients. The computation on SPSS showed high reliability coefficients of .988 for Cronbach alpha, .990 for Split-Half and .994 for spearman coefficient (see Appendix VI).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The major focus of this study was to examine the themes, stand and rhetoric of newspaper editorials and their contribution towards voting behaviour during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Editorials of five selected national dailies in Nigeria were examined as well as the attitude of registered voters in the six regions of the country. Also considered was how newspaper editorials construct social reality and shape voter attitude during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

This chapter presents data from content analysis and survey; answers the study research questions; tests hypotheses and discusses key findings as obtained from the analysis. The results were presented in tables and charts. Analysis and interpretation of data was done using frequencies, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation computed from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS.

4.1 Data Presentation

Presentation of data in this study involved nominal, rating and interval scales. The study simply counted frequency of occurrence of units in each category. Opinions and behaviours of voters were rated using a Likert scale of strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree and disagree. Inferential statistics was used to test hypothesis.

Content analysis of textual data was first presented and then the data on voting behaviour was presented.

4.1.1 Presentation of Content Analysis Data

The volume of newspaper editorials was first determined to ascertain the frequency and interest of newspaper organizations towards the 2015 general elections. Thereafter, the topics or issues that the editorials were written on were presented.

4.1.1a Number of Newspaper Editorials Generated on the 2015 General Elections

The number of editorials on the 2015 general election was determined according to each sampled newspaper as well as per month. The essence is to assess the social responsibility of newspaper organizations towards a critical issue of public concern about the 2015 general elections. From January 1, to April 30, 2015, *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers as a tradition, were expected to publish 605 editorials. However, only 180 editorials which mentioned or had something to do with the 2015 general elections representing more than one-quarter(29.7%) were counted and presented in table 1 below. On the whole, the general elections dominated the editorial content of the selected newspapers within the study period.

Table 1: Percentage Editorials Generated on the 2015 General Elections

Newspapers	Months				Total	%
	January	February	March	April		
Daily Sun	7	7	6	8	29	16.1
Daily Trust	5	7	4	6	20	11.1
Leadership	9	15	10	11	45	25
The Nation	17	12	16	12	57	31.7
Vanguard	-	4	8	17	29	16.1
Total	36	46	44	54	180	100

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 1 shows a progression of frequency of editorials as election campaigns gathered momentum towards the election dates from 36 editorials in January to 54 in April. The initial date of the election which was February received more editorial attention than March when the election was postponed to March 28 and April 11. One-fifth (20%) of the editorials were generated in January, one-quarter (25.6%) were generated in February and March, while, more than one-quarter (30%) were generated in April. There were more editorials published on the election outcome (54 editorials) more than any month during the campaigns. This indicates that

managing the overflow of emotions into violence and perhaps recommending policy options for the winners were most paramount to the newspapers.

Out of the 180 editorials written on the 2015 general elections, two out of every ten (16.1%) was published by *Daily Sun* and *Vanguard* each, one out of every ten (11.1%) was from *Daily Trust*. One-quarter (25%) of the editorials were published by the *Leadership* newspaper, while about one-third (31.7%) were published by *The Nation*. Hence, *The Nation* newspaper tops in the number of editorials on the 2015 general elections followed by *Leadership*, then *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun*. *Daily Trust* had the least number of editorials. The result shows that the newspapers as a whole had served as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and a common carrier of the public expression during the 2015 general election. But the limit or extent to which these newspapers performed varied among them according to the frequency of their editorials.

4.1.1b Editorial Themes

The relative degree of prominence of issues or themes in editorials gives public recognition to the prevailing agenda and has further effects on voting behaviour and the evaluation of the political scene. This is so, because newspapers are significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is superbly successful in telling its readers what to think about. And it follows from this that the editorial themes on the 2015 general election would be what occupied the readers' thoughts during the election. Just as the world looks different to different people, depending not only on their personal interests, but also on the map that is drawn for them by the editorials of newspapers that they read, the attitude of voters during the time might also be based on what issues or themes that the editorials considered.

Prominent issues in the editorials were security of lives, election materials and the electoral process; the inclusion and used of voter authentication machine (card reader); the

replacement of temporary Voter’s Card (TVC) with Permanent Voter’s Card (PVC) as a penance for multiple voting, impersonation and election fraud. Negative campaigning which is characterised by blatant disregard for crucial issues and high concentration on character assassination and sentiment, is another theme as well as peaceful election, defections, election postponement, INEC readiness, conduct at the polls and the electoral outcome. These are presented in table 2 below.

Table 2: Editorial Themes on 2015 General Election

Theme	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Leadership	The Nation	Vanguard	Total	Percentage
Security	3	3	6	8	3	23	12.8
Card Reader	2	1	1	1	1	6	3.3
Permanent Voter Card	1	1	4	2	1	9	5
Negative Campaign	3	2	7	6	1	19	10.6
Peaceful Election	10	6	13	17	9	55	30.5
Election Date	1	1	3	2	1	8	4.4
Defections	1	2	1	1	1	6	3.3
INEC Readiness	2	1	3	5	3	14	7.8
Conduct at Polls	2	1	3	8	7	21	11.7
Electoral Outcome	4	2	4	7	2	19	10.6
Total	29	20	45	57	29	180	100

Source: Field Work, 2017.

Table 2 shows the themes covered by editorials during the 2015 general elections. Out of the 180 editorials sampled, 3.3% was devoted to the use of card reader and defections of people to other parties respectively. The card reader issue came up in editorials like ‘the card reader test’ (*Daily Sun*, March 20, p. 19), ‘2015: only dishonest politicians need fear card readers’ (*Daily Sun*, February 17), ‘card readers won’ (*The Nation* March 11, p. 17). Defection of stalwarts to other parties was contained in editorials like ‘our all season politicians’ by

Vanguard (April 15, p. 18), ‘Obasanjo’s dramatic exit from PDP’ (*Daily Sun*, February 20, p. 19), ‘mass defection and democracy’ (*Daily Trust* April 22, p. 28), among others.

Security of the elections was a serious concern shared by the selected newspapers as 12.8% of editorials were devoted to it. The editorials tackled the issue of security by charging the agencies to be up to the task or condemning acts capable of breaching public peace and thwarting free and fair elections. These editorials included ‘thugs well alive’ (*Vanguard* March 16, p. 18), ‘soldiers and election duties’ (*Daily Sun* March 6, p. 19), ‘the IGP should have acted earlier’ (*Daily Trust*, February 23, p. 30), ‘Mbu’s irresponsible threat’ (*Leadership* February 23, p. 3), ‘the threat by ex-militants’ (*Leadership* February 5, p. 3), ‘soldiers and polls’ (*The Nation* March 25, p. 17), ‘sack Mbu now’(*The Nation* March 4, p.17) ‘is Mbu above the law?’ (*The Nation* February 12, p. 17), ‘Mbu comes to Lagos’(*The Nation* January 22, p. 17), ‘arms and elections’ (*The Nation* January 19, p. 17), among others. Mbu was a commissioner of Police alleged to have been working in favour of President Goodluck Jonathan and the People’s Democratic Party (PDP).

Another issue that attracted editorial comment was the introduction of Permanent Voters Card in place of the Temporary Voters Card (TVC) used in the previous elections. Its use alongside the card reader machine was deemed to potent enough to make rigging difficult. Therefore, the distribution of the PVCs was no small worry for the selected newspapers. Out of the 180 editorials on the 2015 elections, 6.1% were on the issuance and distribution of the PVCs. *Leadership* newspaper had more editorials on PVCs than all the other newspapers. Editorial titles on the PVCs included ‘Why PVC Theft should Bother INEC’ (*Leadership* January 16, p. 3), ‘Resolving INEC’s Challenges with PVCs’(*Daily Sun* January 13, p. 19), ‘INEC and PVC Distribution’(*Daily Trust* February 3, p. 29), ‘Go Get your PVC’(*Leadership* February 4, p. 3), ‘Why INEC must Rethink PVCs’ (*Leadership* January 16, p. 3) ‘PVCs or Nothing’(*The Nation* February 16, p. 17), ‘No to TVC’(*The Nation* January 16, p. 17) etc.

A significant proportion of 10.6% of the editorials was on negative campaign or hate speech among stalwarts or politicians. In fact, negative campaigning was the third highest issue of editorial concern among the newspapers. The titles of these editorials were ‘Stop Destructive Political Campaigns’ (*Daily Sun* March 25, p. 30), ‘Sambo’s Admonition on Hate Preaching’ (*Daily Sun* February 20, p. 28), ‘The Attacks on Jonathan’s Campaign Convoys’ (*Daily Sun* January 30, p. 29), ‘Campaigns against Electoral Integrity’ (*Daily Sun* March 6, p. 30), ‘Politics and Profaning God’s Name’ (*Leadership* January 18, p. 3), ‘Inciting the People’ (*The Nation* January 15, p. 17), ‘Budget vs Campaign’ (*The Nation* February 4, p. 17) and others.

Meanwhile, three out of every ten the editorials (30.5%) were concerned with peaceful elections. Such editorial titles clearly mentioned peace or were suggestive of peaceful elections. *Vanguard* had such as ‘Let Peace Initiative Continue’ (March 30, p. 18) and ‘Peace Committee Herculean Task’ (March 11, p. 18). *Daily Sun* titles on peace were ‘Let Peace Reign in Ekiti’ (April 15, p. 19), ‘For Fair, Peaceful and Credible Polls’ (March 28, p. 19), ‘Presidential Candidates and the Proposed Peace Pact’ (February 27, p. 19) and ‘The Abuja Peace Accord’ (January 22, p. 19). *Daily Trust* editorials suggestive of peaceful elections were ‘Election Day: Let Nigeria Win’ (March 27, p. 28), ‘Learning from the Gbagbos’ (March 17, p. 29) and ‘The Chief Justice’s Timely Admonition’ (February 12, p. 28). For *Leadership*, the editorials were not only declarative about peaceful elections but also suggestive as their titles indicate like ‘States must ensure Peaceful Election’ (April 10, p. 3), ‘We must maintain peace’ (March 31, p. 3), ‘Use of troops inevitable for peaceful polls’ (March 2, p. 3), ‘It is politics, not war’ (February 3, p. 3), etc. Although *The Nation* editorials were not emphatically about peace in the editorial titles, some could suggest peaceful initiatives such as ‘Inciting the people’ (January 15, p. 17) and ‘Aliyu’s toxic sermon’ (January 8, p. 17).

Initially, elections were to be held on February 14 and 28 but the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) shifted the polls for March 28 and April 11 both for the

Presidential and National Assembly elections and the Governorship and State Assembly elections respectively. The change of the date was a serious public concern and generated heated arguments for or against the shift. For instance, *Daily Sun* wrote on ‘don’t postpone the polls’ (February 5, p. 19) and shifted polls: democracy on trial’ (February 13, p. 19), while *Leadership* considered titles like ‘don’t mess with February 14 date’ (January 26, p. 3), ‘is there still a tenure elongation agenda?’ (February 12, p. 3) and ‘poll shift, a blessing in disguise’ (February 13, p. 3). For *The Nation* newspaper, the titles were ‘again, no to polls shift’ (February 2, p. 17), ‘no to transition’ (January 6, p. 17), and ‘better be speculations’(February 17, p. 17). Apart from *Daily Sun*, *Leadership* and *The Nation* newspapers that were emphatic about the poll shift, others spoke passively on it. It could be seen that the newspapers construed the decision to shift the polls as an attempt for tenure elongation by the incumbent government. Though the newspapers could not stop the polls, they shifted ground when INEC postponed the polls to consider the benefits accruing from the shift.

The extent of readiness by INEC to conduct a free and fair election took 7.8% of the editorials written on the 2015 general election. As table 2 shows, the level of concern was almost common among the papers. Apart from *Daily Trust*, all the papers had at least two or more editorials talking of INEC readiness. Editorial titles bothering on INEC readiness included ‘INEC, 2015 polls, the future’ (*Vanguard* April 7, p. 18), ‘let’s ask more questions’(*Vanguard* April 6, p. 18), ‘as 2015 countdown begins’ (*Vanguard* March 25, p. 18), ‘is INEC truly ready for the 2015 polls?’ (*Daily Sun* January 20, p. 19), ‘elections in the liberated areas of the North East’(*Daily Sun* March 27, p. 19), S’East, S’South NASS polls: INEC would do the right thing’ (*Daily Sun* April 3, p. 19), ‘INEC and PVC distribution’ (*Daily Trust* February 3, p.30), ‘2015 polls, a shaky but steady start’ (*Leadership* March 30, p.3), ‘let Jega be’ (*Leadership* February 20, p.3), ‘disqualify under-aged electorates before polls’ (*Leadership* January 23, p.3) and ‘plug

the holes please' (*The Nation* April 10, p. 17), leave Jega alone', INEC inferno' (*The Nation* March 2, p. 17).

Table 2 also show that 11.7% of the editorials were on the conduct at the polls by the electorates, party agents, security personnel and electoral officials. The conduct at the polls also extends to collation, counting and announcing of results. It entails how the candidates, the voters and the election officials coordinated themselves at the polls. Editorials that reflected on the conduct at the polls were 'thanks Nigerians' (*Vanguard* March 31, p.18), 'winners are Nigerians' (*Vanguard* April 13, p.18), 'we the people' (*Vanguard* April 16, p.18) 'Very Nigerian Moment' (*Vanguard* April 2, p.18); 'Orubebe's antics' (*Daily Sun* April 14, p.19), 'Jonathan's Worthy Example' (*Daily Sun* April 9, p.19), '2015 Presidential Election: A post-Mortem' (*Daily Sun* April 6, p.19); 'to sack the police chief' (*Daily Trust* April 27, p. 29); 'Salute to President Jonathan and Prof Jega' (*Leadership* April 4, p. 3), 'we must maintain peace' (*Leadership* March 31, p. 3), 'the world awaits for Jonathan to concede' (*Leadership* March 30, p. 3); 'election for change' (*The Nation* April 2, p. 17), 'Orubebe's misconduct' (*The Nation* April 3, p. 17), 'condemnable impunity' (*The Nation* April 9, p. 17). While *Vanguard* was more concerned with the conduct of electorates collectively, the other newspapers singled out individuals to praise or condemn for their behaviour as the editorial titles suggest.

More so result in table 2 indicates that 10.6% of the editorials focused on the outcome of the election. Titles on the election outcome were 'our unique democracy' (*Vanguard* April 20, p. 18), 'change Nigerians want from Buhari' (*Vanguard* April 10, p. 18); 'let peace reign in Ekiti' (*Daily Sun* April 15, p. 19), 'S'East, S'South: need for a new democratic culture' (*Daily Sun* April 16, p. 19), 'change in police leadership' (*Daily Sun* April 27, p. 19), 'agenda for the Buhari' (*Daily Sun* April 7, p. 19); 'penalising electoral law violators' (*Daily Trust* April 29, p. 27) and 'Jonathan's 11th hour veto' (*Daily Trust* April 24, p. 30); 'gale of post-election defections' (*Leadership* April 12, p. 3), 'Jonathan: the beauty of finishing strong' (*Leadership*

April 21, p. 3), 'how times change' (*Leadership* April 20, p. 3), 'Buhari and the anti-corruption task' (*Leadership* April 22, p. 3); 'not yet uhuru' (*The Nation* April 20, p. 17), 'let the tribunals sit' (*The Nation* April 16, p. 17), 'RECs as election wrecks' (*The Nation* April 21, p. 17), 'law supports immunity' (*The Nation* April 26, p. 17), polls and investments' (*The Nation* April 15, p. 17) etc.

On the whole, the table shows that in order of priority, the dominant themes of the selected newspaper editorials were peaceful election, election outcome, negative campaigns, security, conduct at the polls, INEC readiness, permanent voters card, election date, card reader and defections among party members. These were considered key agenda for the public during the 2015 general elections as raised in the mast head editorials of *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers.

4.1.1c Type of Editorial

Most editorials fall into the category of "issue" (theme) editorials and are usually, closely related to the news. By function or purpose, editorials criticise or attack, praise or commend, persuade or convince, explain and entertain. Thus, what a newspaper seeks to achieve in an editorial is what defines the purpose or type of an editorial. In view of that, editorials of the selected newspapers were read and coded according to the type of attack editorial, Praise editorial, persuasive editorial, explanatory editorial and entertainment editorial. The result is displayed in table 3 below.

Table 3: Types of Editorials Generated on 2015 General Elections

Type of Editorial	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Leadership	The Nation	Vanguard	Total	%
Attack	6	5	12	28	7	58	32.2
Praise	3	3	7	4	6	23	12.8
Persuasive	6	5	9	6	6	32	17.8
Explanatory	14	7	17	19	10	67	37.2
Total	29	20	45	57	29	180	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017.

From table 3, about one-third (32.2%) of the editorials were editorials of attack or criticism. Attack editorials took issue with decisions, stands, policies or people concerning the election. Almost half of the attack editorials (48.3%) were published by *The Nation* such as ‘Orubebe’s Misconduct’ (April, 3, p. 17), ‘Condemnable Impunity’ (April, 9, p. 17), ‘REC’s as Election Wrecks’ (April, 21, p.17) etc. One-fifth (20.6%) was from *Leadership*. This included ‘Your Majesty, this cannot be true’ (April, 7, p.3), ‘Stop the Pre-Election Violence’ (March, 24, p.3), ‘Let’s Stop the Hate Speech’ (March, 15, p. 3), ‘Jonathan’s 11th Hour Ministers’ (February, 26, p.3). However, *Vanguard*, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* had less than one-fifth of the 58 editorials of attack.

Praise editorials constituted less than one-fifth of the total editorials (180) generated on the 2015 general election. However, among the newspapers, about one-third (30.4%) of the praise editorials were from *Leadership* such as ‘Jonathan’s Beauty of Finishing Strong’ (April, 21, p. 3), ‘Salute to President Jonathan and Prof. Jega’ (April, 4, p. 3), ‘NBC’s Charge to Electronic Media on Hate Adverts’ (February, 25, p. 3), ‘The Judiciary is also Ready for the Election’(February, 15, p. 3), among others. One-quarter (26.1%) of them were published by *Vanguard* (‘We the People’ April 16, p.18, ‘Winners are Nigerians’ April 13, p.18 while *The Nation*, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* published less than one-fifth of the praise editorials.

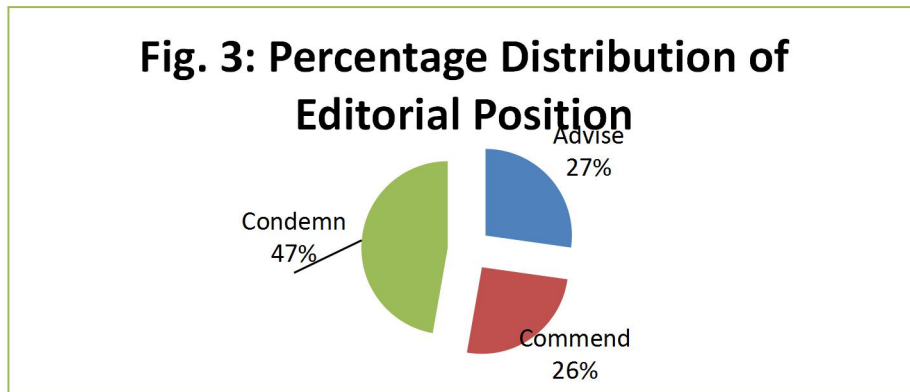
Out of the 180 editorials generated on the 2015 general elections, more than one-third (37.2%) was explanatory editorials. This editorial gave readers insight and facts and explain a complicated issue. Over one-quarter (28.4%) were published by *The Nation* among them were ‘Election for Change’ (April, 2, p.17), ‘Polls and Investments’ (April, 15, p. 17), ‘Not Yet Uhuru’ (April 20, p.17), ‘Can of Worms’ (March, 4, p.17), ‘Democracy Royalty’ (March 8, p. 17), ‘Young Democratic party’ (March, 13, p. 17), ‘Soldiers and Polls’ (March 25, p. 17). Another one-quarter (25.4%) was published by *Leadership* such as, IGP Suleiman Abba: What did he do wrong’ (April, 29, p.3), ‘Buhari and the Anti-Corruption Task’ (April, 22, p.3), ‘How times Change’ (April, 20, p. 3), ‘Buhari and Dwindling National; Revenue’ (April, 19, p.3).

Meanwhile, one-fifth (20.9%) of the explanatory editorials was from *Daily Trust*. They were, ‘Penalising Electoral Law Violators’ (April, 29, p.30), ‘To Sack the Police Chief’ (April, 27, p. 30), ‘The Soludo, Okonjo-Iweala Bout’ (February, 23, p.27), ‘Protection for the Courts’ (February, 10, p. 29), etc. *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun* had less than one-fifth of the explanatory editorials. Persuasive editorials which use facts and argument to persuade readers to think as the newspaper does on a particular issue, constituted little below one-fifth (17.8%) of the 180 editorials generated on 2015 general elections. *Leadership* newspaper had over one-quarter (28.1%) of the persuasive editorials like, ‘States Must Ensure a Peaceful Election’ (April, 10, p. 3), ‘The World Waits for Jonathan to Concede’ (March, 31, p.3), ‘We Must Maintain Peace’ (March, 31, p.3), among others. *The Nation*, *Vanguard*, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* constituted little below one-fifth each, of the persuasive editorials.

4.1.1d Editorial Position

The main substance of an editorial is the stand. This is where the newspaper takes an over an issue. Sometimes the title could suggest the. As numerous as were the issues that dominated editorial pages during the 2015 general elections the selected newspapers also took a

stand on those respective issues. The main areas of stand are commendation (Praise), condemnation (Attack) and advisory (persuasive). All the editorials of the selected newspapers, therefore, reacted on issues by commending, condemning or advising stakeholders on peaceful free and fair elections. The distribution of the editorials based on the stand is as follows



Source: Field work, 2017.

Figure 3 show that more than one-third of the editorial stands (47%) was condemnatory or attack, over one-quarter (27%) was advice (persuasive) while another one-quarter (26%) were praise or commendatory editorials. Thus on issues of peaceful election, election outcome, negative campaigns, security, conduct at the polls, INEC’s readiness, permanent voter card, election date, card reader and defections among party members, chunk of the editorials condemned stakeholders behaviour, policy and decisions. Among the dominant issues agenda in editorials, readers were advised on some decisions and policy options. For instance, on the outcome of the elections, *Leadership* (April 20, p.3) advised that

For PDP, we think this is the time for introspection, to take out time to ask itself what went wrong and to answer that question truthfully, it must admit that it betrayed the trust bestowed on it by the Nigerian people and promise never to toe that path again. The PDP must accept the challenge of winning back the confidence of Nigerians and admit that this is the time to rebuild on the potential of genuine party men and women. (para 5)

The paper's March 31, editorial also states that 'we are, therefore, compelled to remind troublemakers among the political class that Nigeria is bigger and greater than all of us put together and urge them to give peace a chance, as this is the only way that democracy can thrive and flourish and that their aspirations can be realised'. In a similar vein, *Vanguard* (March 30, p. 18) reacted thus 'Nigerians should realise that a peaceful atmosphere is important for the elected to implement s they canvassed before the polls. Without peace, our country is endangered. We need a country to engage in elections and democracy'.

Using Simone Gbagbo, wife of a former president of Ivory Coast who lost election but was not willing to hand over, *The Nation* editorial (March 13, p. 17, para 6) said hopefully, the downfall, trial and imprisonment of Mrs Gbagbo should provide Mrs Jonathan and other of her UK with an eye-opening view of the possibly punishment for the inculcated. Of course, this is only an optimistic viewpoint and may not necessarily be the case. However, the deterrent value of Mrs Gbagbo's discounted.

As regards sift of election date, *The Nation*(February 2, p. 17) says 'INEC must be wary of falling into the temptation, lest it be accused of bias even before the contest starts. The commission's Chairman, Attahiru Jega must understand that all eyes are on Nigeria and the way he handles the polls, particularly the calls for postponement, would go a long way in testing the commission's impartiality and independence. As we have always argued, rigging of election does not start on voting day; it starts with little details like the one under consideration'.

A good number of the editorials also commended or praised behaviours or decisions of stake holders during the 2015 general election. First among such options was the initiative for peaceful elections. The essence of such praise is to spur others even the electorates on good behaviour for the good of all, to place public interest above personal interest, common good rather than clannish motive. *Vanguard* (March 11, p. 18) reacted to the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between European Union and the Federal Government that 'it is

particularly gladdening that the EU has sent a delegation to the country to help in preparing the groundwork for a smooth and effective monitoring of the elections'. When the Abuja peace accord was signed by the key contenders for the presidential election, *Daily Sun* editorial (January 22, p. 19) hailed it saying

We wholeheartedly support this accord. The need for peace during and after the elections is paramount because as Kofi Annan said, Nigeria cannot be allowed to slide into chaos for the obvious reason that it would destabilise the entire region if not the whole continent (para 6).

On 'Soludo's Posers on 2015 Polls' *Daily Sun* (February 2, p.18) thanked Soludo for having the courage to the debate on this. It is certainly not enough for persons aspiring to political offices to make promises to the electorate. It is important for them to show the means by which such promises will be fulfilled when they are elected. Sambo's admonition on hate preaching was also appreciated and all clerics in the country, whether Muslim or Christian, were enjoined to adhere to it. The vice president and all other political stalwarts in the country were commended for preaching peace to religious leaders and their followers. Pastors, Imams and, indeed, all men of goodwill called upon to prevail on Nigerians to eschew violence before, during and after the 2015 elections (*Daily Sun* February 27, p. 19).

Similarly, INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega, Goodluck Jonathan and the electorates were commended for peaceful conduct and sportsmanship shown during the election. On Jonathan's worthy Example, *Daily Sun* (April 9, p. 19) said

We congratulate and praise President Jonathan on his stand to the outcome of this election. His selfless and mature response is a good lesson and a shining example for leaders at every level of government in the country, especially those of the incoming APC. It has unequivocally assured him a place in the pantheon of the nation's greatest patriots and heroes. Thank you, Mr. President (*Daily Sun*, April 9, 2015, Editorial).

In 'Salute to president Jonathan and Prof. Jega' *Leadership* (April 4, p.3) praised the duo and the masses that these two gentlemen and the Nigerian people are the true heroes of our democracy. With the combined effort of all, Nigeria has finally come of age. The people who queued up for hours on end to cast their votes and exercise their power to determine who rules them for the next four years must be saluted too. Hence across the newspapers, Prof. Attahiru Jega was commended for the calmness and maturity with which he handled Orubebe's misconduct at the collation of Presidential results. The entire INEC was also commended for going ahead to declare the Rivers State result and paving the way for those dissatisfied with it, or those of any other states, to do the proper thing of challenging them in court, rather than resorting to violence. Similarly, editorials commended President Goodluck Jonathan who, rather than taking a cue from Orubebe's misconduct, congratulated the winner.

However, chunk of the editorial stand was attacking or condemnatory particularly on issues such as use of military in elections, decisions against the use of PVCs and the Card Reader, shift in polls cum tenure elongation, negative campaigning or hate speech, conduct at polls by individuals and defections of party members. Editorials reacted negative on the involvement of military in politics. *Daily Sun* (March 6, p. 19) opines that if soldiers must be used for the elections, their neutrality must be guaranteed. When elections were postponed on grounds of insecurity, *The Nation* (February 10, p. 17) in its editorial 'Bow out now' condemned the military action saying that for agreeing to be so used by a section of the political

class and the presidency, the military chiefs have no basis to hold on to their s. They have been so shamelessly used against the national interest, and for subverting the electoral process. They should be relieved of their s and tried for treason. It is ironical that their action came at a point that some officers and soldiers were being tried and condemned to death for deserting the war front. Although the deployment became possible, newspaper editorials again attacked the heavy deployment of security forces that it would rather throw the electorates into panic. In the editorial titled ‘Too many cooks’ *The Nation* (January 26, p. 17) condemned the heavy deployment of security personnel noting that ‘plans by security agencies to deploy 300,000 men for the polls maybe counterproductive’.

Another issue that attracted editorial attacks during the elections was the move against use of voter authentication machine called the ‘Card Reader’. Unlike the TVCs, PVCs have a microchip containing machine-readable biometric data of each voter. The INEC planned to deploy card-reading machines to authenticate the cards that they issued and verify the identity of the voters through their fingerprints. This was expected to help prevent multiple voting, reduce incidents of card theft, and control vote-buying but others, particularly the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) taking advantage of stories of tardy INEC officials, protesting registrants, insufficient PVCs, stolen cards, and other irregularities, opposed the use of PVCs. However, editorials were unanimous in condemning the calls against the use of the technology affirming that the innovation was introduced to improve the credibility of the elections. It was the of the newspapers that stopping the use of card readers to determine the genuineness of PVCs will lay the elections open to manipulation by power hungry politicians, and Nigerians can no longer tolerate such wanton tampering with the electoral process. *Daily Sun* (March 20, p. 19) on ‘Card Readers won’ argued that the Card Reader is modern, progressive and credible; the PDP call to abandon it is an invitation for voting without authentication. That means rigging, and is that what PDP wants? Not Nigerians. *The Nation* (March 11, p. 17) adds that ‘there was

unanimity among all stakeholders that Nigeria must migrate from the old, unreliable, analogue and Temporary Voters' Card (TVC) to the vastly improved PVC. It is therefore troubling that the ruling party would begin to question the use of the PVC after it has secured an adjournment which gave INEC ample time to distribute the cards'. In another editorial, 'No to TVC', *The Nation* (February, 16, p. 17) maintains that it was better to pressure INEC on PVCs, and mobilise their supporters to cooperate, en route to credible polls, than to explore alternative routes, which may deliver TVCs but fail to guarantee free polls. *Daily Trust* (January 27, p. 29) concurred that

The insistence by INEC on the use of the PVC for voting is appropriate and should be sustained to guard against electoral malpractice because it cannot at this stage abandon the efforts it has made towards ensuring a hitch-free process and return to the use of temporary voters cards, which could open a chink in its system for dubious practices to take place (*Daily Trust* January 27, 2015, Editorial).

There was much opprobrium against destructive political campaigns. In unequivocal terms, *Daily Sun* (March, 25, p. 19) said 'while we acknowledge that op research is part of electioneering, focusing only on what could pull down the opponent and ignoring what could better the lot of the electorate is not only dangerous, but it also exposes the selfishness of public office seekers. It is an insult on the psyche and intelligence of the voters'. In that wise, the paper condemned attacks on Jonathan's convoys and the burning of his campaign vehicles in Jos, Plateau State, saying that 'We decry and strongly condemn these attacks. They are an affront to the entire country. The embarrassing development has ominous auguries for the imminent general elections. It is a dangerous signal which has underscored the possibility of serious electoral violence if nothing is done to stem it. Nigerians must guard against any form of violence before, during and after the polls'. The incident in Jos, Plateau State according to *Vanguard* (January 12, p. 18) underscored the need for vigilance as the country was progressing

towards the General Elections. This criminal behaviour, which was meant to intimidate others and deny them their freedom of choice, was roundly condemned.

Against the backdrop of hate speech, actions of party stalwarts and prominent personalities were condemned. Among them was the wife to the former President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan during her campaign trail in Rivers State. *Leadership* (March 7, p. 3) insisted that the campaigns of all parties and candidates must be issues based, with interest of the Nigerian people clearly represented at the centre. In the editorial ‘Let’s stop the hate speech’ *Leadership* (March 15, p. 3) called on Nigerians to shun those strewing hate speeches and take their destinies in their own hands by deploying the power vested in them by the ballot box. It is time we rescue our democracy, nurture it, develop and grow it on the promise of a strong foundation that allows the people a say. Babangida Aliyu, former governor of Niger State also came under the attack of the newspapers. In ‘Aliyu’s toxic sermon’ *The Nation* (January 8, p. 17) maintained that:

Given his low estimation of the role of positive values in politics. Aliyu could not certainly have taken the oath of office he swore to uphold as governor with any seriousness. For the oath presupposes a fidelity to moral values that he has shamelessly disallowed (*The Nation*, January 8, 2015, Editorial).

Similarly, *The Nation* (January 9) in the editorial, ‘Inciting the people’, condemned the speech of People’s Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate for Lagos State, Jimi Agbaje’. It held that the clear intent of Agbaje’s shallow analysis was to either cow Nigerians into voting for Jonathan out of fear or incite violence in the south-south if Jonathan had lost. A genuine democrat would rather be concerned about free, fair and credible polls that reflect the popular will since it is only those that make peaceful electoral change impossible that make violent change inevitable.

Allegations of politically motivated postponement of the elections, and gaps in electoral preparations, caused equally serious concerns to all and sundry. In response, editorials totally condemned the postponement of the general elections from February 14 and 28 to March 28 and April 11. Emphatically, *Daily Sun* (February 5, p. 19) titled the editorial ‘Don’t Postpone the elections’ saying that without prejudice to section 26 of the Electoral Act which empowers the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to postpone scheduled elections under certain conditions, we urge the electoral agency to press ahead with the presidential and gubernatorial elections as scheduled. *The Nation* (February 2, p. 17) stressed ‘Again, no to polls shift’ maintaining that INEC must be wary of falling into the temptation, lest it be accused of bias even before the contest starts. The commission’s chairman, Prof Attahiru Jega was charged to understand that all eyes are on Nigeria and the way he was handling the polls, particularly the call for postponement, would go a long way in testing the commission’s impartiality and independence. The editorial argued that rigging of election does not start on voting day. It starts with little details like postponement.

The postponement was underscored by further allegations of a planned tenure extension by the incumbent government. *Leadership* (February 12, p. 3) expressed such concern in its editorial ‘Is there still a Tenure Elongation Agenda?’ the newspaper opined that, a matter for utmost regret that Jonathan is allegedly, resorting to primordial sentiments to hold onto power’. Parallel to postponement was the alleged sack or retirement of INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega. In an editorial ‘Leave Jega alone’ *The Nation* (March 2, p. 17) discoursed that the cynical strategy to remove Jega was the well-worn path of sending him on a terminal leave. The conspirators knew that if they do that, they can settle on a plaintiff figure to conduct the elections in their favour. The newspaper identified two fundamental things that were wrong with that fiendish design. One, it was against the law. The president has no powers under the law to remove the INEC chief without the support of two-third majority in the senate. *The Nation*

disagreed with this standpoint, and also saw it as influenced not only by opportunism cloaking as principle but also anti-democratic in its impulse. It advised that all those who espoused such tendency to stop forthwith or else they would kindle the flame of subversion against the best system of popular persuasion known to humans (*The Nation* January 7, p. 17)

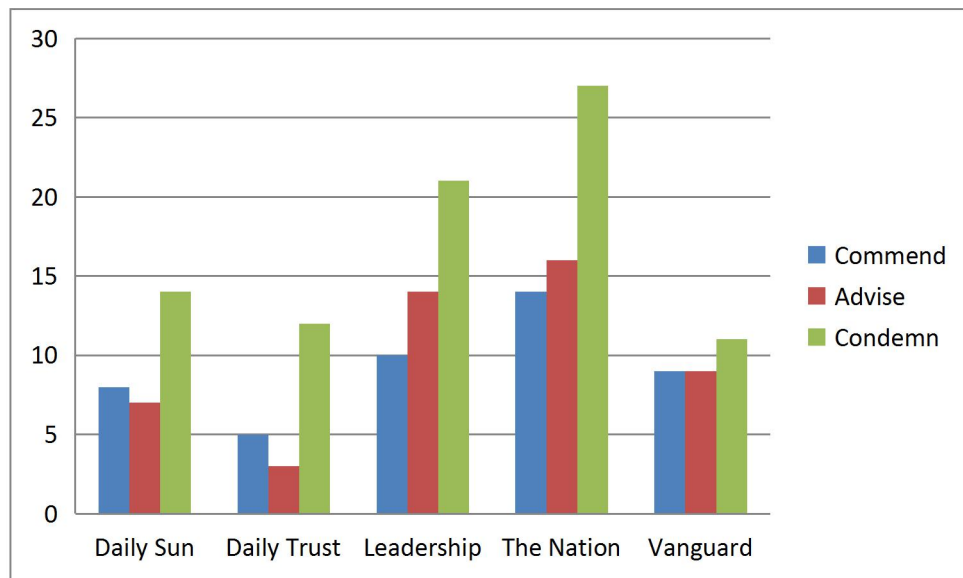
Editorials also took attacking stance against defections of elder statesmen to other political parties. For example, Obasanjo's dramatic exit from PDP attracted much criticism from the media. For *Daily Sun*, Obasanjo's handling of his exit from the party was quite unbecoming of one who intends to take on the role of a statesman. It was a conduct that ought not to have been displayed by one who has held the high office of president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and 'we are unequivocal in adding our voice to those of other well-meaning Nigerians who have condemned the action' (*Daily Sun* February 20, p. 19, 2015, Editorial).

Condemnations also trailed the involvement of security personnel during the electioneering campaign. Prominent among them was a Commissioner of Police, Mbu. 'Mbu's declaration that 'if they shoot you, shoot back in self-defence; anybody who fires you, fire him back in self-defence ...' is, to say the least, primitive (*Leadership* February 23, p. 3). *The Nation* (March 14, p. 17, 2015 Editorial) advocated for the sack of Mbu as the paper said, 'we consider as a sad commentary that the inspector general of police has not deemed it necessary to call Mbu to order'. The truth was that the likes of Mbu should not ever be in the force because he and his likes constitute a serious threat to the society. During the collation of Presidential election result, agent of PDP, Godswill Orubebe's misconduct also attracted editorial comment. *The Nation* (April 3, Editorial) believed that although the former minister had apologised, 'We must say he should never have contemplated what he did in the first place. If Prof Jega had not exhibited maturity and the exercise had been disrupted, will an apology be able to contain the consequences of such behaviour?' In addition, *The Nation* (March 31, Editorial) frowned that the credibility of the polls in Rivers and Akwa Ibom states was incurably taunted. It urged

Professor Attahiru Jega, the INEC Chairman, who has proven to be a man of integrity to see that the charade parade as elections in these states of any other one where such occurrences reported, are thoroughly investigated and urgent remedial measure taken to project electoral justice and integrity.

Besides the overall distribution of editorial s across the selected newspapers, the frequency within each newspaper is as follows

Fig. 4: Frequency Distribution of Editorial Stance among Selected Newspapers



Source: Field work, 2017.

Individually, figure 4 shows that *Daily Sun* had 8 stands for praise or commendation, 7 for commendation or persuasion and 14 for attack. *Daily Trust* had 5 praise editorials, 3persuasive editorials, and 12 attacks; *Leadership* had 10 stands that commended actions, 14 advised and 21 condemned on worthy courses of actions. In the same vein, *The Nation* had 14 stands that were commendable in nature, 16 advisory and 27 condemnatory. Meanwhile, *Vanguard* had 9 stands for commendable and advisory respectively and 11 others were condemnatory

The result connotes that *Daily Trust* had the least stands for advice and *Vanguard* had the least for condemnation. *The Nation's* editorials surpassed all the selected papers in praise, attack and advice followed by *Leadership* newspaper.

4.1.1e Rhetoric in Newspaper Editorials

The core nature of editorials is to persuade readers to undertake a certain type of action, or to change their attitudes toward the topic being discussed. They are “rhetorical” because they occur in interaction contexts. That is to say, their objective is to convince the recipient with the legitimacy or invalidity of ideas. Rhetoric involves the proper interpretation, construction, and

use of supporting materials to back assertions and gain audience acceptance. Rhetoric in newspaper editorials is classified into forensic or legal, epideictic or ceremonial and deliberative or political. It is forensic or legal when the editorial stand condemns or defends someone's past actions. It concerns itself with the past and its means are accusation and defence. Such editorials are also called attack or condemnatory editorials. An epideictic or ceremonial editorial stand is concerned with proving someone or something worthy of admiration or disapproval. It focuses on the present and its means are praise and censure. This is exactly what praise editorials are meant for. The third class of rhetoric in editorials is deliberative or Political. This kind of rhetoric is concerned with the future and its means are inducement and dissuasion. Deliberative rhetoric urges readers to do or not do something based on the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action.

These classes of rhetoric were identified in the selected editorials of *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers and presented in table 4 below. The essence of this evaluation is to determine the extent to which electorates were convinced over certain crucial matters of the election and in extension shaped their voting behaviour during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria. In addition, the class of rhetoric dominant among the editorials will be ascertained.

Table 4: Types of Rhetoric in Newspaper Editorials

Rhetoric	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Leadership	The Nation	Vanguard	Total	Percentage
Deliberative or Political	7	3	14	16	9	49	27.2
Epideictic or ceremonial	8	5	10	14	9	46	25.6
Forensic or Legal	14	12	21	27	11	85	47.2
Total	29	20	45	57	29	180	100

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 4 shows that out of the 180 editorials studied, over a quarter (27.2%) of them used deliberative or political rhetoric. Hence, newspapers are most concerned with the future and as such, use encouragement and persuasion to shape public behaviour towards an agenda. Such editorials urge readers to do or not do something based on the expediency or the harmfulness like persuading the public on the use of card readers and hate speech. One-quarter (25.6%) employed epideictic or ceremonial type of rhetoric and close to half (47.2%) of the editorials used predominantly forensic or legal type of rhetoric. This means that the most used type of rhetoric in newspaper editorials is forensic or legal rhetoric. Forensic or legal type of rhetoric was the second frequent type of rhetoric used in the selected editorials. It is used when the newspaper wants to condemn or defend someone's past actions like Orubebe's behaviour during collation, Babangida Aliyu's and Jimi Agbaje's inciting comments during the presidential campaigns.

Other editorials had epideictic or ceremonial rhetoric in them. The editorials mostly a praise editorial, commended some top personalities for their show of restraint and sportsmanship during the general elections. These included then INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega's emotional control and resilience in the face of provocation was commended alongside Nigeria for orderly conduct during voting and the then President, Goodluck Jonathan for conceding defeat and congratulating the winner, Muhammadu Buhari. By this, supporters and electorates could exercise control over little grievances and not to take the law into their hands, thereby breaching public peace and order. Apart from deliberative or political rhetoric, table 4 shows that *Leadership* and *The Nation* preferred epideictic or ceremonial type of rhetoric above forensic or legal rhetoric.

4.1.1f Rhetorical Devices in Editorials

The rhetorical aspect of language use within the context of opinion journalism is yet to receive significant attention in academic studies on mass media. However, rhetorical devices

abound in opinion texts such as editorials which the writers use to drive home a point in a more convincing manner. In fact, the success of rhetorical argumentation hinges on the use of rhetorical devices or tropes. They take words and use them to denote or connote something apart from their ordinary meaning. These devices are employed deliberately and strategically as a way of describing things which makes them present to our mind. They are also non-obligatory additional structures in texts that may draw attention, and may therefore, indirectly emphasise specific meanings. Therefore, from close examination of editorial texts, these devices were identified and were very common among the newspapers as presented below.

Table 5: Frequency of Rhetorical Devices in Newspaper Editorials

Rhetorical Device	Daily Sun	Daily Trust	Leadership	The Nation	Vanguard	Total	%
Pun				3	1	4	1.7
Simile	6	11	9	4	7	37	15.5
Metaphor	11	14	17	14	14	70	29.3
Parallelism					2	2	0.8
Paradox					2	2	0.8
Personification					4	4	1.7
Euphemism	1	1			1	3	1.3
Alliteration	2	1	2	2	3	10	4.2
Litotes					1	1	0.4
Neologism		5	3			8	3.3
Sarcasm		2	2			4	1.7
Rhetorical Question	7		4	1	3	15	6.3
Epigraph				2		2	0.8
Pull Quote				57		57	23.8
Allusion	5	2	1	1		9	3.8
Metonym				1		1	0.4
Hyperbole			5			5	2.1
Irony	3		2			5	2.1
Total	35	36	45	85	38	239	100

Source: Field work, 2017.

In table 5, 19 rhetorical devices were identified to be commonly used in newspaper editorials for 239 times. Out of the 19 devices, close to one-third (29.3%) was metaphor, over one-fifth (23.8%) was pull quote, 15.5% was for simile, while rhetorical question constituted

6.3%, alliteration 4.2% followed by allusion (3.8%) and neologism (3.3%). Pun, personification and sarcasm constitute 1.7% each while parallelism, paradox, personification, rhetorical question, hyperbole irony, epigraph and pull quote constitute 3% each. Irony and hyperbole also constituted 2.1% each. The least frequent devices were litotes (0.4%), epigraph, and paradox and parallelism 0.8% each. The table indicates that metaphor was the most used rhetorical device in writing editorials among newspapers. The most important function of rhetorical devices is to motivate the reader and produce a more positive or negative perspective or behaviour towards an issue.

Examples of rhetorical devices among the newspapers documented included but not limited to the following.

1. Daily Sun

S/No	Rhetorical Device	Expression	Date of Editorial
1.	Metaphor	The polity is overheated by political gladiators	15 th April,2015
2.	Metaphor	Fountain of knowledge	15 th April,2015
3.	Metaphor	Balance of terror	15 th April,2015
4.	Metaphor	Theatre of the absurd	15 th April,2015
5.	Irony	Incredible reports of manipulation	16 th April,2015
6.	Metaphor	Power of the ballot	16 th April,2015
7.	Metaphor	Banana peels that swept him from office	27 th April,2015
8.	Euphemism	Descending into the gutters to battle for political offices	25 th March,2015
9.	Rhetorical question	What manner of legacy are these leaders bequeathing to younger Nigerians? What lesson are they teaching our youth?	25 th March,2015

2. Daily Trust

S/No	Figures of Speech	Expression	Date of Editorial
1.	Neologism	'Good boy'	27 April, 2015
2.	Neologism	Abba's stature was reduced to ignominious level when he was shown on public television defaming that he did not recognise 'that man' meaning Tambuwal	27 April, 2015
3.	Metaphor	But the development exposes as lack of principles, even scruples, on the part of those now jumping the PDP ship.	22 April, 2015
4.	Euphemism	Mr Fayose's less than refined conduct	17 April, 2015
5.	Alliteration	To toe the path of peace	10 April, 2015
6.	Sarcasm	Nigerians have proved the doomsayers wrong by their comportment in the last election.	10 April, 2015
7.	Metaphor	Having long completed the ritual of voting and declaration of result as the rote was earlier fixed for February.	27 March, 2015
8.	Metaphor	General vigilance is the price of liberty	27 March, 2015
9.	Metaphor	The devil is in the details.	27 March, 2015
10.	Sarcasm	There are others who have described op party members as "cockroaches".	27 March, 2015

Source: Field work, 2017.

3. Leadership

S/No	Figures of Speech	Expression	Date of Editorial
1.	Hyperbole	Landmark twist	29 th April,2015
2.	Metaphor	Head of the core law enforcement Agency.	29 th April,2015
3.	Rhetorical Question	But where is he going to get this set of Nigerians with no whiff of corruption and no taint?	22 nd April,2015
4.	Metaphor	GMB rode to victory in the just concluded general elections on the crest of two issues: Security and corruption	22 nd April,2015
5.	Neologism	What has earned him the sobriquet mai Gaskiya	22 nd April,2015
6.	Metaphor	He has the moral power to rein in the corruption bull charging against us	22 nd April,2015
7.	Metaphor	...has witnessed major dislocation and oddities	21 st April,2015
8.	Sarcasm	Stomach politicians who will jump at any offer once the price is right	11 th April,2015
9.	Sarcasm/Irony	Apostles of fresh air that suffocated the populace	11 th April,2015
10.	Hyperbole	Nigerian voters will troop out in their numbers	10 th April,2015
11.	Neologism	Buhari Tsunami	8 th April,2015
12.	Paradox	He may have lost the vote, but ...he win the contest for a solid legacy	31 st March, 2015
13.	Metaphor	Air of tension hovering around the country	31 st March, 2015
14.	Alliteration	Beyond the ballot box	31 st March, 2015
15.	Alliteration	Shaky but steady start	30 th March, 2015
16.	Metaphor	Election periods took the form of carnivals	30 th March, 2015
17.	Metaphor	The people accepted to bake themselves in the sun.	30 th March, 2015

Source: Field work, 2017.

4. The Nation

S/No	Figures of Speech	Expression	Date of Editorial
1.	Pun	“Jonathan’s unproblematic surrender was a positive”	2 nd April, 2015 the Nation
2.	Epigraph	The ex-minister’s display at the collation of presidential election result is a classical example of how an elder should not behave in public.	3 rd April, 2015
3.	Pun	Nigerians were waiting with bated breath for its outcome.	3 rd April, 2015
4.	Rhetorical question	“Is it a crime to vend smart card readers to Independent National electoral commission?”	9 th April, 2015
5.	Metaphor	Politicisation of security taken to far	9 th April, 2015
6.	Metonymy	Plug the holes, phase.	10 th April, 2015
7.	Metaphor	Ugly past	10 th April, 2015
8.	Metaphor	We note that conducting elections is no rocket science or nuclear engineering.	10 th April, 2015
9.	Pull Quote	‘much as we agree that certain events could make calculations to change in countries at given periods, elections, particularly electoral violence, should not be one of them’	15 th April, 2015
10.	Alliteration	After many <u>t</u> wists and <u>t</u> urns	20 th April, 2015
11.	Alliteration	<u>R</u> ECs as election <u>w</u> recks	21 st April, 2015
12.	Allusion	Mr Abba’s police force became born again.	24 th April, 2015
13.	Epigraph	LEGALITY aids travesty to trump electoral sanity	26 th April, 2015
14.	Pull Quote	There is no evidence the elections in Rivers were flawed. Although allegations have been made there is no evidence to prove those allegations	26 th April, 2015
15.	Metaphor	Fire in the roof	26 th March, 2015
16.	Simile	It becomes as immaculate as snow	26 th March, 2015
17.	Metonymy	Clogs in the wheels	27 th March, 2015
19.	Pun	Presidential obscenity	1 st March, 2015

Source: Field work, 2017.

5. Vanguard

S/No	Figures of Speech	Expression	Date of Editorial
1.	Pun	The deep-seated issues	April 20,2015
2.	Simile	As if their impact would in a verve: wipe out	April 20,2015
3.	Metaphor	Save from being a ritual	April 20,2015
4.	Parallelism	Losers congratulating winners extending their hands of fellowship to losers	April 17,2015
5.	Paradox	Government have run for too long without the people.	April 17,2015
6.	Paradox	Politicians live for themselves	April 15,2015
7.	Parallelism	Now that they are losers	April 15,2015
8.	Personification	PDP often danced its way to favourable decisions on issues if pursued.	April 13,2015
9.	Euphemism	Held the nation hostage.	April 10,2015
10.	Metaphor	In the final hurdles	April 9,2015
11.	Alliteration	Most candidates bear the baggage of the predecessor	April 9,2015
12.	Personification	It was a sweeping Buhari Victory	April 2,2015
13.	Litotes	Worthy opponent	April 2,2015
14.	Metaphor	Spirited campaign	April 2,2015
15.	Metaphor	Nigerian spirit is too obvious to ignore.	March, 31,2015

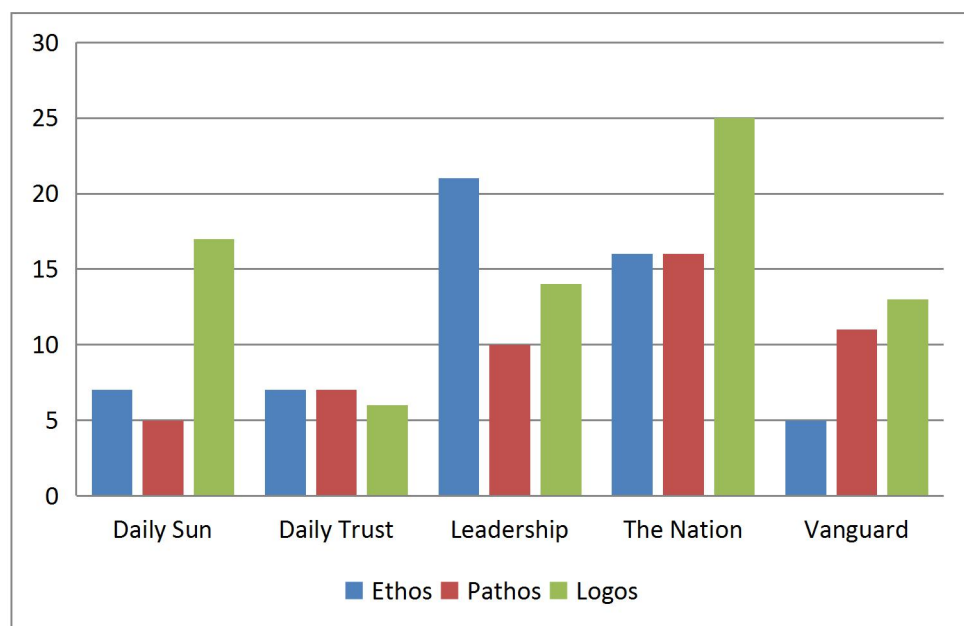
Source: Field work, 2017.

4.1.1g Modes of Persuasion in Editorials

Each type of rhetoric used in an editorial employs the three elements of the rhetorical triangle, also called the Aristotelian Triad: ethos, pathos, and logos. Newspaper editorials are therefore, structured along these varieties of rhetorical discourse and could even combine them on one topic. The first mode depends on the personal character of the speaker (Ethos); the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (Pathos); the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (Logos).

The idea of using ethotic argument is that readers are more likely to be convinced by someone of good character, someone with expertise or someone with first-hand experience. Editorials do this by using testimonials, referring to particular persons with distinguishable characters or referring to a sound system of democracy elsewhere in the world. Pathos is used in a rhetorical argument to move the audience from one emotional state to the other like to calm readers. It keeps the audience in a frame of mind to believe the submissions of an editorial. Readers can be persuaded too when an argument is supported by evidence and reasoning. Hence, editorials under investigation were carefully examined to excavate this Aristotelian triad of pathos, ethos and logos so that inferences could be drawn on level of persuasiveness of the editorials over the issues raised during the 2015 elections. The rhetorical triangle will also provide the basis for determining the possibility of the editorials influencing voting behaviour through sound education on key matters of the election. It will also provide more understanding on how newspaper texts like editorials are deliberately structured to create a reality that moulds and doctor public agenda, public perception and voting behaviour.

Fig.5: Frequency Distribution of Editorial Mode of Persuasion



Source: Field work, 2017.

Figure 5 shows that the logos mode of persuasion (75) was very common among the newspaper editorials, followed by ethos (56) and pathos (49). In terms of priority, *Daily Sun* considered the logos (17) mode most while ethos (7) and pathos (5) follow. *Daily Trust* provided equal chances for ethos and pathos (7) modes of persuasion while logos (6) mode was least considered. For *Leadership*, ethos (21) was top most mode of persuasion followed by logos (14) and pathos (10). *The Nation* pulled 25 for logos mode of persuasion, 16 each for pathos and ethos. Similarly, *Vanguard* had 13 for logos, 11 for pathos and 5 for ethos.

Across board, *Leadership* newspaper had the highest frequency for ethos while *Vanguard* had the least. As for pathos mode, *The Nation* had the highest frequency (16) while the least was from *Daily Sun* (5). Finally, *The Nation* had over all frequency for logos to be (25) meanwhile, *Daily Trust* was the least with 6.

By implication, the high use of logos showed that editorials were more concerned with the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself so as to convince the reader. The use of ethotic mode of persuasion is that readers are more likely to be convinced by someone of good character, someone with expertise or someone with first-hand experience. In the editorials, testimonials were used, distinguishable character of some individuals in the society were referred to in order to convince the readers to change or vote for a particular candidate. A sound system of democracy elsewhere in the world can also serve as a reference point to convince the readers. To buttress the need for INEC to consider the issue of card reader theft seriously, *Vanguard* (February 27) referred to copious examples to drive home a point ‘Cards have been stolen in Ebonyi, Edo (8,319 in November 2014), Delta (1.3 million over two days in August 2014; 6,000 in January 2015), Rivers (31,000 in January 2015) states – at least the reported cases. Where else have cards missed and INEC thought nothing of them? In the latest reported incident in Delta State, 6,000 cards, according to INEC, were stolen’. In January

23, *Vanguard* employed ethotic mode in persuading people about the need for INEC to adjust measures for PVC distribution thus

The revelation of the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa’ad Abubakar III that he had no card shows another side of the elections. How would the Sultan, who has a polling booth in his palace, not have the PVC? Who then has the PVC? The Sultan considered the matter serious enough that he brought it to the attention of President Goodluck Jonathan who was in the palace (*Vanguard*, January 23, 2015, Editorial).

4.1.2 Data Presentation (Survey)

The 384 copies of questionnaire administered across the states in line with sampling procedure earlier stated were retrieved and collated for presentation and analysis. Out of the 384 copies administered, 380 (99%) were retrieved and found useable while only 4 (1%) were not retrieved. The high rate of retrieval indicates that respondents are literate since they could read editorials in newspapers. Presentation and analysis is therefore done based on 380 copies of the questionnaire retrieved.

Table 6: Retrieval of Questionnaire

S/No	State	No. Administered	No. Retrieved	Number Lost
1	Akwa-Ibom	42	42	0
2	Benue	50	50	0
3	Enugu	35	35	0
4	Gombe	28	28	0
5	Kaduna	85	85	0
6	Lagos	144	140	4
	Total	384	380	4

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 6 show that in the retrieval of the copies of the questionnaire administered, only in Lagos that the administered copies were not completely retrieved, but only negligible number (4) was lost. The result shows a high rate of return, demonstrating the level of commitment that the research assistants exhibited during the administration of the questionnaire as well as the

cooperation of the respondents. It also indicates that the responses were honest and a true reflection of the voters' attitudes during the 2015 general elections.

Table 7: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Variable	Option	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Gender	Male	210	55.3	55.3	55.3
	Female	170	44.7	44.7	100.0
	Total	380	100.0	100.0	
Age	18 - 25 yrs	32	8.4	8.4	8.4
	26 - 35 yrs	60	15.8	15.8	24.2
	36 -45 yrs	121	31.8	31.8	56.1
	46 - 55 yrs	111	29.2	29.2	85.3
	56 yrs and above	56	14.7	14.7	100.0
	Total	380	100.0	100.0	
Occupation	Student	87	22.9	22.9	22.9
	Politics	100	26.3	26.3	49.2
	Civil Servant	91	23.9	23.9	73.2
	Business	97	25.5	25.5	98.7
	Others	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
	Total	380	100.0	100.0	
Qualification	SSCE	76	20.0	20.0	20.0
	ND/NCE	79	20.8	20.8	40.8
	B.A, B.Sc, HND	116	30.5	30.5	71.3
	M.A., M.Sc.,	86	22.6	22.6	93.9
	PGD, PhD				
	Others	23	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0		

Source: Field Work, 2017.

Table 7 shows the demographic distribution of the 380 respondents across the six states who also voted during the 2015 general elections. The demographics considered were gender, age, occupation and qualification. These demographics are necessary correlates of the voters' attitude and the media exposure. The higher they are, the higher the propensity to read and respond to sound reasoning and choices during the elections.

By gender, the table shows that 55.3% of the respondents were males and 44.7% were females. Hence, over half of the respondents were males, but a reasonable percentage was females. As such, the imaginary gender gap between male and female was not much found in this study. The constitutional minimum age to qualify one as a voter is 18 years. It is only then

that such a person becomes eligible to vote in an election. By that, 8.4% of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 25 years, 15.8% were between 26 and 35 years, 31.8% were between 36 and 45 years, 29.2% were between 46 and 55 years and 14.7% were 56 years and above. Put together, majority of the respondents (75.7%) were 36 years and above meaning that they could be more averse to election matters as well as be more willing to express their views and read others' views that could shape their voters' attitudes. Respondents in such age bracket could also be vie for certain political s such that their level of concern for election issues will be heightened and they could mobilise others to agitate for some maters patterning to free and fair elections.

Another serious index to voter attitude is the occupation of the voters. Table 7 shows that 22.9% of the respondents were students, 26.3% were into politics as a career, 23.9% were civil servants, 25.5% were into business and 1.3% of the respondents were in occupations other than those listed. Obviously, the result shows that over two-thirds of the respondents were from occupations of politics, civil service and business. Of a truth, these proportions of the respondents are more critical of government decisions and would be keener in election issues.

In terms of qualification, 20.0% of the respondents had Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), 20.8% had National Diploma or Nigerian Certificate in Education. Majority of the respondents 30.5% had a first degree of a Higher National Diploma, 22.6% had masters or doctorate degree and 6.1% had other qualifications not listed. From such display, it shows that the respondents were well educated to read editorials, had economic power to purchase or access the newspapers to read and were old enough to participate actively during the 2015 elections.

Table 8: Respondents' Accessibility and Readership of Editorials

Statement	SA	A	SDA	DA	Total
I read newspapers everyday	182 (47.9)	120 (31.6)	28 (7.4)	50 (13.2)	380 (100)
I buy or read newspapers from friends or offices	105 (27.6)	167 (43.9)	55 (14.5)	53 (13.9)	380 (100)
Editorials are part of newspaper contents I read	105 (27.6)	127 (33.4)	49 (12.9)	99 (26.1)	380 (100)
Editorials influence my political views	133 (35.0)	180 (47.4)	31 (8.2)	36 (9.5)	380 (100)
I also read editorials from online as shared by the newspapers	92 (24.2)	111 (29.2)	50 (13.2)	127 (33.4)	380 (100)
Much of what I learn of candidates and parties if from newspapers	252 (66.3)	81 (21.3)	14 (3.7)	33 (8.7)	380 (100)
The Nation, Vanguard, Daily Trust, Daily Sun and Leadership are among newspapers I read	152 (40.0)	181 (47.6)	14 (3.7)	33 (8.7)	380 (100)

Source: Field work, 2017

Table 8 shows the level of accessibility and readership of newspaper editorials among electorates especially during the 2015 general elections. First of all, the table sought to establish whether newspapers are read at all by the voters. For that, 47.9% strongly agreed that they do read newspapers on a daily basis, 31.6% agreed, while 7.4% strongly disagreed and 13.2% disagreed. The implication is that over two-thirds of the respondents do read newspapers every day. It also shows that newspapers are source of campaign information and a tool for mass education during electioneering campaigns.

On whether the respondents did buy or read the newspapers from friends or offices, 27.6% strongly agreed, 43.9% agreed and just an insignificant percentage, 14.5% strongly disagreed and 13.9% disagreed. Hence, the means of access to newspapers by voters was either by buying the newspapers personally or reading those ones bought from offices and by friends. This is what the overwhelming percentage of agreement suggests.

Another statement respondents expressed their opinion on it was whether editorials are part of the newspaper contents they do read. Besides the fact that they are published on masthead pages alongside attractive font sizes, typeface and cartoons, 27.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that editorials are part of the newspaper content they do read, 33.4% agreed, 12.9% however strongly agreed and 26.1% disagreed. Put together, there was high percentage agreement (61%) against 39% that disagreed. By implication, editorials are confirmed newspaper content that respondents read during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

The third statement in table 8 was to establish whether the editorials read by voters did influence their political views. As the table shows, 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that editorials did influence their political views, 47.4% agreed. Meanwhile, 8.2% strongly disagreed and 9.5% disagreed that editorials did influence their views. It is clear here also that political views held by voters are shape or influenced by newspaper editorials. These editorials, 24.2% strongly agreed that they do read them online from the newspaper sites or as they share such editorials on social media like *Twitter* and *Facebook*, and 29.2% agreed. However, 13.2% strongly disagreed on such pro and 33.4% disagreed. The result shows that newspapers have adopted the use of online platforms of social media to increase the readership of editorials. Although the majority of the respondents held sway, the high percentage of disagreement is an indication that, a good number of voters were not much fascinated about reading editorials online.

Much of what the voters learnt about candidates and their parties was through the newspaper pages including editorials. Table 8 shows that over half of the respondents (66.3%) strongly agreed that learning about candidates and parties was garnered through newspaper even as 21.3% also agreed. It was just (3.7%) that strongly disagreed and 8.7% disagreed. In addition, a total of 87.6% of the respondents agreed that the newspapers: *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*,

Leadership, The Nation and *Vanguard* are among national dailies that they read during the 2015 general elections. By extension, the editorials read were of those newspapers.

Table 9: Issues that the Respondents Considered Most Important During the 2015 General Elections

Issue	Frequency	Percentage
Security	90	23.7
Credibility and Transparency of INEC	93	24.5
Permanent Voters Card	98	25.8
Free and fair Election	89	23.4
Others	10	2.6
Total	380	100

Source: Field work, 2017.

Public agenda during the 2015 general elections were security, credibility and transparency of INEC, the introduction and use of permanent voters card (PVC) as well as conducting a free and fair election and other issues. Table 9 shows that security received 23.7% response, credibility and transparency of INEC to conduct the elections was 24.5%. The issuance and distribution of PVCs received 25.8% attention, free and fair election 23.4%, while other matters 2.6%. Among those issues, PVC occupied the top agenda followed by public worries over the credibility and transparency of INEC to conduct the election. The third prominent issue on the public agenda during the elections was security, followed by free and fair elections, while a few others followed suit.

Table 10: Issues Respondents Read about in Editorials

Issue	Frequency	Percentage
Security	1	0.3
Card Reader	1	0.3
Permanent Voters Card	1	0.3
Peaceful Election	25	6.6
Election date	1	0.3
Defections	1	0.3
INEC Readiness	1	0.3
Conduct at Polls	1	0.3
Electoral Outcome	23	6.1
All of the Above	325	85.5
Total	380	100

Source: Field work, 2017.

The media agenda during the 2015 elections is displayed in table 10 above. An overwhelming majority of the respondents 85.5% agreed on all the options provided in the table, 6.6% said that the dominant matter that they read about in the editorials was how to conduct peaceful elections across the country, 6.1% said that it was the electoral outcome that dominated newspaper editorials, and others 0.3% went for other issues listed above.

From the selected newspapers, key issues that the respondents read about in the editorials were security, card reader machine, permanent voters card, peaceful elections, postponement of the elections, defection of aggrieved party members, the readiness of the INEC for the election, conduct of the voters and the electoral officials at the polls and the outcome of the election. In other words, the issues that the editorials raised crisscrossed the public agenda on the elections, particularly on matters of security, permanent voter card and the conduct of free and fair elections by the INEC. This implies that newspapers were abreast of and more catered for the needs, yearnings and aspirations of the electorates during that election.

Table 11: Voter Attitude towards the 2015 Election.

Option	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)	Total
Anticipated rigging	122 (32.1)	199 (52.4)	19 (5.0)	40 (10.5)	380 (100)
Insecurity	122 (32.1)	187 (49.2)	21 (5.5)	50 (13.2)	380 (100)
Dissatisfaction with representative performance	106 (27.9)	125 (32.9)	44 (11.6)	105 (27.6)	380 (100)
Lack interest in the elections	91 (23.9)	162 (42.6)	67 (17.6)	60 (15.8)	380 (100)
No confidence in INEC	73 (19.2)	166 (43.7)	52 (13.7)	89 (23.4)	380 (100)
Anticipated violence	132 (34.7)	222 (58.4)	3 (0.8)	23 (6.1)	380 (100)
Votes will not count	132 (34.7)	222 (58.4)	3 (0.8)	23 (6.1)	380 (100)

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 11 sought to establish the kinds of attitude that the voters exhibited towards the 2015 general elections. In the table, 32.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that they anticipated rigging, 52.4% agreed, while 5% strongly disagreed and 10.5% disagreed. This shows that the voters expected the elections to be rigged. In terms of security, 32.1% strongly agreed that security was either porous or not guaranteed, 49.2% agreed and just 5.5% strongly disagreed and 13.2% disagreed. This indicates that the voters were not sure about the security of lives and properties during the elections; hence they approached the election with much caution and reservations.

Concerning candidates for the elections, 27.9% strongly agreed that they were dissatisfied with the performance of their representatives in various s, 32.9% also concurred. Only 11.6% strongly disagreed and 27.6% disagreed that they were dissatisfied with the performance of their representatives. Such dissatisfaction was mostly shown against the

candidates of the then ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP). Perhaps as a result, 23.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that they lacked interest in the elections, 42.6% also agreed, while 17.6% strongly disagreed and 15.8 disagreed. Hence, there was voter apathy towards the elections. Interest and enthusiasm of voters was waning drastically.

Another attitude that the voters exhibited was lack of confidence in the INEC to conduct free and fair elections. 19.2% of the respondents strongly agreed and 43.7% also agreed that they had no confidence in INEC. It is only 13.7% that strongly disagreed that they had no confidence in INEC and 23.4% disagreed. Obviously, voters had little faith in INEC's ability to deliver credible, free and fair elections to them. More worrisome is the fact that 34.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that they anticipated violence during the polls and 58.4% agreed too, only a fraction of 6.9% that was with a contrary view. Such voters could either be apprehensive or abscond from voting entirely.

Akin to anticipated violence, 34.7% of the respondents also felt that votes will not count during the elections, 58.4% also agreed on that same point, while just an insignificant per cent (6.9%) differed on that. The result shows that negative attitudes were exhibited among voters towards the 2015 elections. Voter's harboured negative beliefs such as their votes will not count, the election will be rigged, there will be violence, there is no adequate security and as such, the zeal to participate and go out to vote was dying down. Probably, based on their experience and the look of things then, there was so much scepticism towards the elections. Some might believe that the violence that broke out after the 2011 general elections will break out again. With the lack of confidence in INEC, it was extremely hard for one to believe that the elections will be credible, free and fair.

Table 12: Voter Opinion about Editorial Contents

Option	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)	Total
I am convinced with the analysis	79 (20.8)	181 (47.6)	41 (10.8)	79 (20.8)	380 (100)
I was convinced about security	82 (21.6)	99 (26.1)	41 (10.8)	158 (41.6)	380 (100)
I was convinced that rigging will be difficult	133 (35.0)	222 (58.4)	5 (1.3)	20 (5.3)	380 (100)
I was encouraged to pick my PVC	133 (35.0)	222 (58.4)	5 (1.3)	20 (5.3)	380 (100)
I was made to trust INEC	85 (22.4)	123 (32.4)	48 (12.6)	124 (32.6)	380 (100)
Examples in the editorials were convincing	80 (21.1)	174 (45.8)	45 (11.8)	81 (21.3)	380 (100)
Arguments and views expressed were logical	59 (15.5)	155 (40.8)	50 (13.2)	116 (30.5)	380 (100)
Explanations given were detailed enough	59 (15.5)	158 (41.6)	50 (13.2)	113 (29.7)	380 (100)
I saw issues, events and people in better light	69 (18.2)	170 (44.7)	39 (10.3)	102 (26.8)	380 (100)

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 12 shows the various opinions that the voters expressed concerning the contents of newspaper editorials that they read. Based on the breakdown of issues by editorials, 20.8% strongly agreed that they were convinced with the analysis of editorials on issues, 47.6% agreed, 10.8% however strongly disagreed and 20.8% disagreed. With such analysis, 21.6% strongly agreed that they were convinced about security during the elections, while 26.1% agreed. But 10.8% strongly disagreed and 41.6% disagreed. Therefore, the analysis of editorials on issues of public attention was not strong enough to change the opinion of the voters that there was adequate security and that the election will be conducted without rancour.

About the issue of rigging, 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that rigging will be difficult, 58.4% also agreed with that point, but 1.3% and 5.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. This shows that with careful explanation and persuasions concerning the preparations towards 2015 election, the editorials were able to make the voters believe that rigging will be hard to execute and hence popular candidates will be won and the right thing will be done.

In the midst of growing apathy, 35% of the respondents strongly agreed that they were encouraged by editorials to pick up their PVC from the INEC designated collection centres, 58.4% agreed but 1.3% strongly disagreed and 5.3% disagreed. This means that editorials provided motivation for voters to collect their PVCs instead of the Temporary Voters Card (TVC). In a similar vein, 22.4% strongly agreed that they were made to trust INEC to conduct credible, free and fair elections, while 32.4% agreed. Yet, 12.6% strongly disagreed and 32.6% disagreed. This shows that there was a reversing trend of apathy among voters to empathy, from disinterest to interest. INEC on the other hand, was beginning to gain confidence from the voters in management of the elections.

The indices of editorial influence were the examples, logic, explanations and analogy. As can be seen from table 12, 21.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that the examples in the editorials were convincing, 45.8% agreed as well. But 11.8% strongly disagreed that the examples in the editorials were convincing and 21.3% also disagreed. On the logicity of arguments, 15.5% strongly agreed that arguments and views expressed in the editorials were logical, 40.8% agreed, only 13.2% strongly disagreed and another 30.5% disagreed. Hence, 56.3% of the respondents agreed on the fact that arguments were logical. Likewise, 15.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that explanations given in editorials were detailed enough, 41.6% agreed, but 13.2% strongly disagreed and 29.7% disagreed. Again, 18.2% strongly agreed that

they saw issues, events and people in better light, 44.7% agreed on same. On the contrary, 10.3% strongly disagreed and 26.8% disagreed.

On the whole, table 12 shows that the voters were convinced with the analysis of issues that editorials provided. Their hope in security and confidence in INEC were rekindled, and as such, they were motivated to collect their PVCs in place of TVCs. The result also show that the editorials that the voters read had convincing examples, logical arguments, detailed explanations which made the voters see issues, events and people in better light.

Table 13: Voters' Attitudes during the 2015 Elections

Voters Attitude during Elections	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)	Total
Voters complied with voting procedure	104 (27.4)	181 (47.6)	33 (8.7)	62 (16.3)	380 (100)
Voters were orderly during accreditation	104 (27.4)	190 (50.0)	47 (12.4)	39 (10.3)	380 (100)
Voters were orderly during voting	92 (24.2)	127 (33.4)	47 (12.4)	114 (30.0)	380 (100)
Voters were orderly during sorting, counting and declaration of results	105 (27.6)	145 (38.2)	51 (13.4)	79 (20.8)	380 (100)
Voters accepted the results of the elections	105 (27.6)	189 (49.7)	41 (10.8)	45 (11.8)	380 (100)

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 13 shows the voting behaviour exhibited during and after the 2015 elections by the voters. As could be seen from the table, one-quarter (27.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed that voters complied with the voting procedure, close to half (47.6%) agreed while 8.7% strongly disagreed and 16.3% disagreed. The voters were also orderly during accreditation of voters as one-quarter (24.2%) of the total respondents strongly agreed and one-third (33.4%) agreed. Meanwhile, 12.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed together with 30.0% who disagreed. On the whole, two-thirds (77.7%) total agreed indicates that accreditation process was conduct with hitches and rancour by the voters.

In table 13 too, one-quarter (24.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the voters were orderly and on cue during voting, one-third (33.4%) also agreed, but 12.4% strongly disagreed, while little below one-third (30.0%) disagreed. This shows that although there might be some form of disorder during voting in some places, majority of them were orderly. It means they complied with the set down rules, eschewed violence and cue up for voting. The same situation goes with the collation of the results. Over one-quarter (27.6%) strongly agreed that the voters were orderly during the sorting, counting and declaration of results, while 38.2% of the respondents agreed, leaving 13.4% of the respondents who strongly disagreed and 20.8% that disagreed. This way too, the result shows a largely calmed collation process. Again, One-quarter (27.6%) strongly agreed that results declared by INEC were accepted. Majority of the respondents, approximately half (49.7%) also agreed that voters accepted the results of the elections. However, 10.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 11.8% disagreed.

The result shows that voter attitude exhibited during accreditation, voting, collation and announcement of the results by INEC was largely cordial and peaceful. The usual violent behaviour exhibited by the voters who loose election did not manifest. Voters complied with the voting procedure, and were orderly during accreditation, voting, and collation of results. The results eventually declared were largely accepted in good faith and hence, most of the voters had no cause to embark on violence.

Table 14: Voters Attitude after the Elections

Opinion	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)	Total
How I responded to election outcome was influenced by what I read in editorials	106 (27.9)	199 (52.4)	21 (5.5)	54 (14.2)	380 (100)
I had more confidence in INEC	113 (29.7)	199 (52.4)	21 (5.5)	47 (12.4)	380 (100)
I have hope for credible elections in future	113 (29.7)	201 (52.9)	14 (3.7)	52 (13.7)	380 (100)
I believe that free and fair elections is possible	113 (29.7)	201 (52.9)	14 (3.7)	52 (13.7)	380 (100)
I think that I am better informed about politics and government.	113 (29.7)	201 (52.9)	-	66 (17.4)	380 (100)
I did not support violence or any protest	113 (29.7)	252 (66.3)	-	15 (3.9)	380 (100)
I refused to be used for harm or rigging	113 (29.7)	252 (66.3)	-	15 (3.9)	380 (100)
I believe in power of my PVC	137 (36.1)	240 (63.2)	-	3 (0.7)	380 (100)

Source: Field work, 2017.

Table 14 established the opinion of the voters about the influence of editorials on their attitude after the 2015 general elections. Out of the 380 respondents, 27.9% strongly agreed that how they responded to election outcome was influenced by what they read in editorials. Half of the respondents (52.4%) also agreed making the total response for agreement to be 80.3%, just a little per cent (19.7%) of the respondents were on the contrary view (that is 5.5% which strongly disagreed and 14.2% disagreed). This shows that editorials influenced the calmed behaviour that the voters had exhibited over the election outcome in 2015. The correlates of this peaceful behaviour are the revived confidence in INEC's ability, the rekindled hope for credible elections, the sound analysis and round condemnations of overzealous acts by party candidates and agents as well as close monitoring of the whole election process.

Editorials influenced the confidence the voters had in INEC. Out of the 380 respondents, 29.7% strongly agreed that their confidence was boosted by the kind of information they read about INEC's preparations for the election, 52.4% also agreed on the same point, leaving out 17.9% who either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Renewed hope for credible elections in the future was another contribution of the editorials as 29.7% of the respondents strongly agreed on that and 52.9% also agreed of such influence on them. It was only 3.7% of the respondents who strongly disagreed and 13.7% who disagreed. In a similar way, 29.7% strongly agreed that the editorials made them believe that free and fair elections is possible in Nigeria together with 52.9% of the respondents who agreed. It was a minute few, 17.4% who totally disagreed.

Editorials also made significant contribution by educating the voters during the 2015 general election. 29.7 % and 52.9% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that the editorials made them better informed about politics and government during the period, only few, 17.4% disagreed out of the 380 respondents. By that understanding, 29.7% and 66.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed they did not support violence or any violent protest against the election. It was only 3.9% of the respondents that disagreed. This means that the education that the voters received killed any stimulant of violent behaviour and demonstration among the voters. More so, 29.7% and 66.3% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they refused to be used for harm or rigging the election, leaving out only 3.9% of the respondents who disagreed. It is clear then that, the kind of understanding that the voters had received, made them resist not only violence but also any attempt by others to lure or use them to harm others and rig the election. The overwhelming majority of the respondents, 36.1% and 63.2% strongly agreed and agreed that the Permanent Voters Card is not only good but a powerful instrument against electoral fraud of short changing them.

They table therefore shows that the editorials have influenced voters' attitude by instilling confidence in the voters about INEC's integrity and capability in managing the

elections. With a critical analysis of issues, editorials made voters to have hope for credible elections in Nigeria and also believe that free and fair elections are possible. The issues that the editorials raised to the plane of discussion like card readers and permanent voters card gave the impetus for calm among electorates as rigging was shown to be extremely difficult with the new modalities that INEC introduced. In addition, electorates were more enlightened with issues of agenda that editorials presented and because of that, they refused to engage in or support violence during the elections. Editorials also influenced the voters to shun acts inimical to peaceful elections such as rigging. Above all, through the editorials, the voters appreciated the value of PVCs and saw them as their potent tool for credible polls.

4.2 Answering Research Questions

The research questions of the study were stated and answered as follows:

Research Question one: *What were the themes or topics of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections?*

Tables 2, 9 and 10 provide answer to this question.

Table 2 showed that the dominant themes of the selected newspaper editorials were peaceful election, election outcome, negative campaigns, security, conduct at the polls, INEC readiness, permanent voter card, election date, card reader and defections among party members. These were considered key agenda for the public during the 2015 general elections as raised in the mast head editorials of *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers. Such editorial titles were ‘the card reader test’ (*Daily Sun*, March 20, p. 19), ‘why PVC theft should bother INEC’ (*Leadership* January 16, p. 3), ‘arms and elections’ (*The Nation* January 19, p. 17), ‘card readers won’ (*The Nation* March 11, p. 17), ‘soldiers and election duties’ (*Daily Sun* March 6, p. 19), ‘stop destructive political campaigns’ (*Daily Sun* March 25, p. 30), ‘Election Day: let Nigeria win’ (*Daily Trust* March 27, p. 28), ‘learning from the Gbagbos’ (*Daily Trust* March 17, p. 29) ‘inciting the people’ (*The Nation* January 15, p. 17) and ‘Aliyu’s

toxic sermon’ ‘Aliyu’s toxic sermon’ (*The Nation* January 8, p. 17), ‘again, no to polls shift’ (*The Nation* February 2, p. 17), ‘no to transition’ (*The Nation* January 6, p. 17) among others.

The results in table 9 indicates that the public agenda during the 2015 general elections was security, credibility and transparency of INEC, the introduction and the use of permanent voters card (PVC) as well as conducting a free and fair election and other issues. Meanwhile, over three-quarter (85.5%) of the respondents affirmed in table 10 that from the selected newspapers, key issues in the editorials were security, card reader machine, permanent voters card, peaceful elections, postponement of the elections, defection of aggrieved party members, the readiness of INEC for the election, conduct of voters and electoral officials at the polls and the outcome of the election. Fantastically, the issues editorials raised crisscrossed the public agenda on the elections particularly on matters of security, permanent voter card and the conduct of free and fair elections by INEC. This implies that the newspapers were abreast of and more catered for the needs, yearnings and aspirations of the electorates during that election.

Prominent issues in the editorials that were largely of one accord among the selected newspaper were security of lives, election materials, the electoral process; the inclusion and used of the voter authentication machine (card reader); the replacement of temporary Voter’s Card (TVC) with Permanent Voter’s Card (PVC) as a penance for multiple voting, impersonation and election fraud. Negative campaigning which is characterised by blatant disregard for crucial issues and high concentration on character assassination and sentiment, is another theme as well as peaceful election, defections, election postponement, INEC readiness, conduct at polls and the electoral outcome.

Research Question two: *What was the position of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections?*

Figure 1 and table 3 answer the research question.

Figure 1 displays the main areas of editorial stands such as commendation (Praise), condemnation (Attack) and advisory (persuasive). All the editorials of the selected newspapers, therefore, reacted on issues by commending, condemning or advising the stakeholders on peaceful free and fair elections. The editorials condemned the involvement of security personnel during the electioneering campaign, the misconduct of party agents, the postponement of the elections, hate speech, mass defections, moves against the use of card readers and permanent voters' card, among others.

Editorials took attacking stance against defections of elder statesmen to other political parties. This was in editorials such as; Obasanjo's dramatic exit from PDP attracted much criticism from the media. For Daily Sun, Obasanjo's handling of his exit from the party was quite unbecoming of one who intends to take on the role of a statesman. It was a conduct that ought not to have been displayed by one who has held the high office of president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and 'we are unequivocal in adding our voice to those of other well-meaning Nigerians who have condemned the action' (*Daily Sun* February 20, p. 19, 2015, Editorial).

In the same manner, editorials condemned the involvement of security personnel during the electioneering campaign. Prominent among them was a Commissioner of Police, Mbu. Mbu's declaration that 'if they shoot you, shoot back in self-defence; anybody who fires you, fire him back in self-defence ...' is, to say the least, primitive (*Leadership* February 23, p. 3). *The Nation* (March 14, 2015 Editorial) advocated for the sack of Mbu as the paper said, 'we consider as a sad commentary that the inspector general of police has not deemed it necessary to call Mbu to order'. The truth was that the likes of Mbu should not ever be in the force because he and his likes constitute a serious threat to the society.

The misconduct of Godswill Orubebe, agent of PDP, during the collation of Presidential election result, also attracted editorial criticism. *The Nation* (April 3, Editorial) believed that although the former minister had apologised, 'We must say he should never have contemplated

what he did in the first place. If Prof Jega had not exhibited maturity and the exercise had been disrupted, will an apology be able to contain the consequences of such behaviour?' In addition, *The Nation* (March 31, Editorial) frowned that the credibility of the polls in Rivers and Akwa Ibom states was incurably taunted. It urged Professor Attahiru Jega, the INEC Chairman, who has proven to be a man of integrity to see that the charade parade as elections in these states of any other one where such occurrences reported, are thoroughly investigated and urgent remedial measure taken to project electoral justice and integrity.

From table 3, about one-third (32.2%) of the editorials were editorials of attack or criticism. Attack editorials took issue with decisions, stands, policies or people concerning the election. Almost half of the attack editorials (48.3%) were published by *The Nation* such as 'Orubebe's Misconduct' (April, 3, p. 17), 'Condemnable Impunity' (April, 9, p. 17), 'REC's as Election Wrecks' (April, 21, p. 17) etc. One-fifth (20.6%) was from *Leadership*. This included 'Your Majesty, this cannot be true' (April, 7, p. 3), 'Stop the Pre-Election Violence' (March, 24, p. 3), 'Let's Stop the Hate Speech' (March, 15, p. 3), 'Jonathan's 11th Hour Ministers' (February, 26, p. 3), etc.

Praise editorials constituted less than one-fifth of the total editorials (180) generated on the 2015 general election. However, among the newspapers, about one-third (30.4%) of the praise editorials were from *Leadership* such as 'Jonathan's Beauty of Finishing Strong' (April, 21, p. 3), 'Salute to President Jonathan and Prof. Jega' (April, 4, p. 3), 'NBC's Charge to Electronic Media on Hate Adverts' (February, 25, p. 3), 'The Judiciary is also Ready for the Election' (February, 15, p. 3), among others. One-quarter (26.1%) of them were published by *Vanguard* ('We the People', 'Winners are Nigerians' while *The Nation*, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* published less than one-fifth of the praise editorials.

Table 3 result also show that out of the 180 editorials generated on the 2015 general elections, more than one-third (37.2%) was explanatory editorials. This editorial gave readers

insight and facts and explain a complicated issue. Over one-quarter (28.4%) were published by *The Nation*. Meanwhile, one-fifth (20.9%) of the explanatory editorials was from *Daily Trust*. *Vanguard* and *Daily Sun* had less than one-fifth of the explanatory editorials. Persuasive editorials which use facts and argument to persuade readers to think as the newspaper does on a particular issue, constituted little below one-fifth (17.8%) of the 180 editorials generated on 2015 general elections. *Leadership* newspaper had over one-quarter (28.1%) of the persuasive editorials. *The Nation*, *Vanguard*, *Daily Sun* and *Daily Trust* constituted little below one-fifth each, of the persuasive editorials.

Above all, the stand of the editorials on the main issues or themes showed the editorials were attacking, persuasive, explanatory, and praising.

Research question three: *How was the rhetoric of the editorials generated on the 2015 general elections?*

Tables 4, 5 and 12, Figure 1 and 3 provide answer to this question.

From table 4, out of the 180 editorials studied, 49 (27.2%) of them used forensic or legal type of rhetoric, 46 (25.6%) employed epideictic or ceremonial type of rhetoric and one-third 85 (47.2%) of the editorials used predominantly deliberative or political rhetoric. This means that the most used type of rhetoric in the newspaper editorials is deliberative or political rhetoric. Such editorials urge readers to do or not do something based on the expediency or the harmfulness like persuading the public on the use of the card readers and hate speech. Forensic or legal type of rhetoric was the second frequent type of rhetoric used in the selected editorials. It is a type of rhetoric condemns or defends someone's past actions like Orubebe's behaviour during collation, Babangida Aliyu's and Jimi Agbaje's inciting comments during the presidential campaigns.

Epideictic or ceremonial rhetoric was praise editorials, commending some top personalities for their show of restraint and sportsmanship during the general elections. These

included then INEC Chairman, Professor Attahiru Jega's emotional control and resilience in the face of provocation was commended alongside Nigeria for orderly conduct during voting and the then President, Goodluck Jonathan for conceding defeat and congratulating the winner, Muhammadu Buhari. By this, supporters and electorates could exercise control over little grievances and not take the law into their hands, thereby breaching public peace and order. Apart from deliberative or political rhetoric, table 4 shows that *Leadership* and *The Nation* preferred epideictic or ceremonial type of rhetoric above forensic or legal rhetoric.

In table 5, 18 rhetorical devices were identified to be commonly used in newspaper editorials. Out of the 18 devices, one-third (37.9%) were metaphors, 9.1% alliteration followed by neologism and pun respectively. Euphemism and sarcasm constitute 4.5% each, while parallelism, paradox, personification, rhetorical question, hyperbole irony, epigraph and pull quotes constitute 3% each. The least frequent devices were metonymy, allusion, and litotes. The table indicates that metaphor was the most used rhetorical device in writing editorials among newspapers.

In addition, figure 3 showed that the logos mode of persuasion (75) was very common among the newspaper editorials, followed by ethos (56) and pathos (49). In terms of priority, *Daily Sun* considered the logos (17) mode of persuasion most while, ethos (7) and pathos (5) follow. *Daily Trust* provided equal chances for ethos and pathos (7) modes of persuasion, while logos (6) mode was least considered. For *Leadership*, ethos (21) was top most mode of persuasion followed by logos (14) and pathos (10). *The Nation* pulled 25 for logos mode of persuasion, 16 each for pathos and ethos. Similarly, *Vanguard* had 13 for logos, 11 for pathos and 5 for ethos.

The result in table 12 showed that the voters were convinced with the analysis of issues that the editorials provided. Their hope in the security and confidence in the INEC were rekindled, and as such, they were motivated to collect their PVCs in place of TVCs. The result

also showed that the editorials that the voters read were had convincing examples, logical arguments, details and explanations which made the voters see issues, events and people in better light.

Figure 1 showed that two-thirds of editorial stand (47%) was condemnatory or attack, 27% were advice (persuasive) while 26% were praise or commendatory editorials. Thus, on the issues of peaceful election, election outcome, negative campaigns, security, conduct at the polls, the INEC readiness, permanent voter card, election date, card reader and defections among party members, chunk of the editorials condemned stakeholders' behaviour, policy and decisions. Among the dominant issues agenda in editorials, the readers were advised on some decisions and policy options. For instance, on the outcome of the elections, *Leadership* (April 20) advised that 'for PDP, we think this is the time for introspection, to take out time to ask itself what went wrong and to answer that question truthfully, it must admit that it betrayed the trust bestowed on it by the Nigerian people and promise never to toe that path again. The PDP must accept the challenge of winning back the confidence of Nigerians and admit that this is the time to rebuild on the potential of genuine party men and women.

Ceremonial rhetoric praised personalities and the electorates for the decorum they maintained during the election period. Such editorial like *Daily Sun* (April 9, p. 19) said 'We congratulate and praise President Jonathan on his stand to the outcome of this election. His selfless and mature response is a good lesson and a shining example for leaders at every level of government in the country, especially those of the incoming APC. It has unequivocally assured him a place in the pantheon of the nation's greatest patriots and heroes. Thank you, Mr. President'.

Some of the editorial stands were attacking or condemnatory particularly on issues such as use of military in elections, decisions against the use of PVCs and the Card Reader, shift in the polls cum tenure elongation, negative campaigning or hate speech, conduct at polls by

individuals and defections of party members. Editorials reacted negative on the involvement of military in politics. Examples include *Daily Sun* (March 6, p. 19) opines that if soldiers must be used for the elections, their neutrality must be guaranteed. When elections were postponed on grounds of insecurity, *The Nation* (February 10, p. 17) in its editorial ‘Bow out now’ condemned the military action saying that for agreeing to be so used by a section of the political class and the presidency, the military chiefs have no basis to hold on to their s. Babangida Aliyu, former governor of Niger State also came under the attack of the newspapers. *The Nation* (January 8, p. 17) maintained that ‘Given his low estimation of the role of positive values in politics, Aliyu could not certainly have taken the oath of office he swore to uphold as the governor with any seriousness; for the oath presupposes a fidelity to moral values that he has shamelessly disallowed’.

Research Question Four: *What was the attitude of voters towards the 2015 general elections?*

Tables 11, 13 and 14 provide answer to this question.

The result in table 11 implied that voter’s harboured negative beliefs such as their votes will not count, the election will be rigged, there will be violence, there is no adequate security and as such, the zeal to participate and go out to vote was dying down. Probably based on their experience and the look of things then, there was so much scepticism towards the elections. The negative attitude was premised on the belief that the violence that broke out after the 2011 general elections will break out again. With the lack of confidence in INEC, it was extremely hard for one to believe the elections will be credible, free and fair. From the analysis, 93.1% of the respondents agreed that they anticipated violence during the polls.

The result in table 13 showed that the attitude voters exhibited during accreditation, voting, collation and announcement of results by INEC was largely cordial and peaceful. The usual violent behaviour exhibited by voters who loose election did not manifest. The voters complied with voting procedure. They were orderly during accreditation, voting, and collation of

the results. The results eventually declared were largely accepted in good faith and hence, most of the voters had no cause to embark on violence. Majority of the respondents (77.3%) agreed that the voters accepted the results of the elections and 65.8% agreed that the voters were orderly during sorting, counting and declaration of results.

In table 14, the editorials were found to have contributed to the peaceful and orderly conduct of voters during the 2015 general elections. They table demonstrated that editorials influenced the attitude of voters by instilling confidence in the voters about INEC's integrity and capability in managing the elections. With a critical analysis of issues, editorials made voters to have hope for credible elections in Nigeria and also believe that free and fair elections is possible. The issues that the editorials raised to the plane of discussion like card readers and permanent voters card gave the impetus for calm among electorates as rigging was shown to be extremely difficult with the new modalities INEC introduced. In addition, the electorates were more enlightened on issues of agenda that the editorials presented, because of that, they refused to engage in or support violence during the elections. The editorials also influenced the voters to shun acts inimical to peaceful elections such as rigging.

Research Question Five: *How did the editorials influence voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections?*

Figure 1 and table 13 answered the research question.

The editorials condemned or attacked issues that underscored negative voter attitude towards the 2015 general election such as lack of confidence reposed in INEC to conduct a credible, free and fair election in Nigeria. Figure 1 displays the main areas of editorial stands such as commendation (Praise), condemnation (Attack) and advisory (persuasive). All the editorials of the selected newspapers, therefore, reacted on issues by commending, condemning or advising the stakeholders on peaceful free and fair elections. The editorials condemned the involvement of security personnel during the electioneering campaign, the misconduct of party

agents, the postponement of the elections, hate speech, mass defections, moves against the use of card readers and permanent voters' card, among others.

Persuasive and explanatory editorials provided detail evidence and proof for faith in the electoral process most especially that every vote was going to count, On the other hand, voter attitude in table 13 showed that the attitudes voters exhibited during accreditation, voting, collation and announcement of results by INEC was largely cordial and peaceful. The usual violent behaviour exhibited by voters who loose election did not manifest. The voters complied with the voting procedure. They were orderly during accreditation, voting, and collation of results. The results eventually declared were largely accepted in good faith; hence, most of the voters had no cause to embark on violence.

In essence, the editorials influenced the calmed behaviour that the voters had exhibited over the election outcome in 2015. The correlates of this peaceful behaviour were the revived confidence in INEC's ability, the rekindled hope for credible elections, the sound analysis and round condemnations of overzealous acts by party candidates and agents as well as close monitoring of the whole election process.

4.3 Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis was formulated to test whether there was any difference among the editorials about the key topics they considered for editorial comment. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in testing the hypothesis. Pearson Correlation was statistic used.

- i. ***There is no correlation between the position of editorials and voter attitudes towards the 2015 general elections in Nigeria***

Pearson Correlation on SPSS result on the correlation showed high correlation between the two variables. Correlation coefficients of .983, .904, .959 and .981 were posted from the statistics (See Appendix vii). The result showed that the position of the editorials was in tandem

with the attitudes of the voters. No wonder, out of the 380 respondents, three-quarter (80.3%) of them agreed that how they responded to election outcome was influenced by what they read in the editorials.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

From the data presentation and answering of research questions, the following findings were made and discussed. First of all, it was discovered that the 2015 general election issues were given much prominence among editorials from January 1, to April 30, 2015, of *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers. The newspapers were as a tradition, expected to publish 605 editorials, which close to one-third (29.7) were devoted to election issues. This is a clear manifestation of the newspapers commitment to the society by participating in delivering a credible and peaceful election to Nigerians. The newspapers as a whole provided a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and a common carrier of the public expression during the 2015 general election. As the institutional voice of a newspaper, editorials provided leadership on issues important to the community. Justas Conboy (2010) said, it is through editorials that the newspaper pronounces its own on what it considers the central political and cultural matters of the day.

In spite of the differences in geographical base of operation and policy, the finding showed that *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers had within the period yielded to the postulations of the agenda setting theory by giving prominence to elections. The theory as earlier reviewed showed that the editorial page offers the press the opportunity to set agenda and provide comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning. Expository and interpretative editorials can fulfil this responsibility by explaining in detail the electoral procedures such as voter registration, accreditation, voting, collation and how to channel grievances. By avoiding whatever might lead to crime, violence, or civil disorder or give offense to minority groups, the newspaper editorial

contents encouraged the cultivation of positive voter attitude such as to eschew acts capable of truncating democracy by voluntarily presenting themselves for registration, collecting their voter's card after registration, queuing up at the polling units, voting and ensuring that their votes are counted. Perhaps, these dominant ideologies help the voters gain truthful and objective information about the elections from the editorials, and in the end, suppressed negative attitudes in favour of positive ones such that they behaved orderly, participating actively and accepting the results as a true reflection of the majority decision without bitterness or rancour.

Incidentally, the findings also show that over half (53.4%) of the respondents agreed that they read editorials online from the newspaper sites or as they share such editorials on social media like Twitter and Facebook, meaning that the ideal of the press as a civic forum for pluralistic debate, mediating between the voters and the government, remains highly influential. Thus the technological changes in the media industry are a blessing rather than a setback for newspapers. The social media have added a boost to the readership of the editorials. Still the privileged place to transmit the institutional voice of the newspaper; Orosa, García, and Santorum (2013) affirmed in their study that the editorials have a presence that stands out from the rest of the contents; and often appears in the front page of the print newspaper and, to a lower extent, in the homepage of the online newspapers. The online edition offers the readers a couple of hyperlinks to documents that expand the editorial information. By such adaptations, the expectation on the newspaper editorials' influence on voter attitude is heightened as more of the voters would have more access to such editorials in print or online versions. Similarly, Norris (2002) observed that today the traditional meeting places have been altered, but not beyond recognition. Venues such as newspapers ('oped' features, editorial columns, and letter pages), public affairs magazines, and newer outlets (talk-radio programmes, Commentaries, Channels Television's Sunrise and TVC's Hangout, among others) all provide regular opportunities for political debate among a network of politicians, government officials,

journalistic commentators, advocacy-group spokespersons, think-tank analysts, and academic policy experts, in addition to providing opportunities for public input through phone-in or studio discussions.

Contrary to the findings of Ekeanyanwu and Olaitan (2009) that editorials concentrate most of its themes on socio economic issues and news editorials are commonly used to present these issues, this study found a different situation during elections. The issues of agenda set by the editorials and which were common among the selected newspapers were security of lives, election materials and the electoral process; the inclusion and use of voter authentication machine (card reader); the replacement of temporary Voter's Card (TVC) with Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) as a penance for multiple voting, impersonation and election fraud. Negative campaigning which is characterised by blatant disregard for crucial issues and high concentration on character assassination and sentiment, is another theme as well as peaceful election, defections, election postponement, INEC readiness, conduct at the polls and the electoral outcome. These were considered key agenda for the public during the 2015 general elections as raised in the mast head editorials of *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* newspapers. Such editorial titles were 'the card reader test' 'why PVC theft should bother INEC', 'arms and elections', 'card readers won', 'soldiers and election duties', 'stop destructive political campaigns' 'Election Day: let Nigeria win', 'learning from the Gbagbos' 'inciting the people' and 'Aliyu's toxic sermon', 'again, no to polls shift', 'no to transition' among others.

These prominent issues of 2015 general elections demonstrate what agenda setting theory prescribes of the media. The theory according to McQuail (2005, p.512) stipulates that the news media indicate to the public what the main issues of the day are and this is reflected in what the public perceives as the main issues (in this study, 85.5% of respondents in table 10, perceived so). As such, the postulations of the theory were confirmed in that public debate was

represented by a set of salient issues (an agenda for action); the agenda originated from public opinion and the proposals of the electorates; and the relative degree of prominence of issues gave public recognition to the current agenda and had further effects on opinion and the evaluation of the political scene. This finding is in perfect harmony with what happened during September and October of the 1968 US presidential election that McCombs and Shaw (1972) studied. Discussing that study, Baran and Davies (2003) observed that it suggested a very strong relationship between the emphasis placed on different campaign issues by the media and the judgments of the voters as to the salience and importance of various campaign topics.

The study found that more than one-third of editorial stand (47%) was condemnatory or attack, one-quarter (27%) were advice (persuasive) while, one-quarter(26%) were praise or commendatory editorials. Thus, on issues of peaceful election, election outcome, negative campaigns, security, conduct at the polls, INEC readiness, permanent voter card, election date, card reader and defections among party members, chunk of the editorials condemned the stakeholders' behaviour, policy and decisions paving way for calm and restraint among the voters during the elections. The effect of such editorial stand is what the spiral of silence theory describes. Since society rewards conformity and punishes deviance, the fear of isolation constrains people to conform to shared judgments – as umpired by the mass media (Folarin 1998). The theory shows that the media role of education is somehow dictatorial because once issues are presented using words like the public, we, us, etc, people with contrary views become suppressed and decide to join the presented majority of the media. The finding also underscores the fact established in cultivation theory that the mass media cultivate attitudes and values which are already present in a culture. The editorials maintained and propagated these values amongst the voters, thus, binding them together. It can be inferred from the assumption of the cultivation theory that the newspaper editorials influenced the attitudes of the voters; caused them to conduct themselves in a free and fair manner and helped to promote election integrity. It showed

that there was spiral effect on the voters as dominant ideologies were presented and bundled in a different packaging to their audiences, thereby shaping, or ‘cultivating’ readers’ conceptions of social reality or voting behaviour.

The study also established that out of the 180 editorials studied, one-fifth (27.2%) of them used forensic or legal type of rhetoric, one-fifth (25.6%) employed epideictic or ceremonial type of rhetoric and close to half (47.2%) of the editorials used predominantly deliberative or political rhetoric. Based on Hannon’s (2012) study, editorials (particularly endorsement) combined elements of Aristotle’s three forms or genres of texts: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. The deliberative form is designed to derive the best possible solution and is the mainstay of editorials eliciting the voter’s support in an election. Hence, every editorial assembles a combination of rhetorical appeals – logos, ethos, and pathos – to create a convincing case. But while Hannon (2012) the study found that ethical and pathetic appeals, in varying combinations, are often the strongest and most persuasive, this study found that the most used type of rhetoric in newspaper editorials is deliberative or political rhetoric.

Another finding of the study is the use of rhetorical tropes in constructing persuasive arguments. From the data presentation and analysis, 18 rhetorical devices were identified to be commonly used in newspaper editorials. Out of those devices, one-third (37.9%) were metaphors, 9.1% alliteration followed by neologism and pun respectively. Euphemism and sarcasm constitute 4.5% each, while parallelism, paradox, personification, rhetorical question, hyperbole, irony, epigraph and pull quote constitute 3% each. Whereas, Bonyadi and Samuel (2012) in conducting a contrastive textual analysis of selected headlines, culled from the editorials of the English newspaper, *The New York Times*, and those of Persian newspaper, *Tehran Times* found that rhetorical questions and metonymy were the most rhetorical techniques employed in the two papers. The finding confirms Breeze, (2016) assertion that rhetorical devices are extensively used in newspaper editorials to moderate the participation of different

voices through the use of reported speech, and by opening and closing different lines of argument using a range of resources, which include modal verbs, reporting verbs, attribution, attitude markers, graduation, conjunctions and so on, and a variety of rhetorical strategies. Richardson (2007, p.65) explains that such tropes are employed strategically as a way of describing things which makes them present to our mind and are non-obligatory additional structures in texts that may draw attention, and may therefore, indirectly emphasise specific meanings.

The study found that the logos mode of persuasion (75) was very common among the newspaper editorials, followed by ethos (56) and pathos (49). This is similar to a study of ideology and its workings in two Nigerian Newspapers: *The Guardian* and *Daily Trust* using Modality as the analytical element by Bayode (2014). Bayode's analysis of the two papers showed that modals were employed as ideological devices in editorials for the purpose of persuasion and influence. The study showed that *The Guardian* made more use of modals of obligation and necessity, strongly prescribing steps for the government to follow. Meanwhile, *Daily Trust* preferred mainly predictive auxiliary modals to the other kinds of modals which suggest the idea that identifying what would happen in the future is the main concern of the editorial writers. Aristotle cited in Richardson (2007, p.159) says, 'the first mode depends on the personal character of the speaker (Ethos); the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind (Pathos); and the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (Logos)'.

The review of literature had shown that the idea of using ethotic argument is that the readers are more likely to be convinced by someone of good character, someone with expertise or someone with first-hand experience. Editorials do this by using testimonials, referring to particular persons with distinguishable characters or referring to a sound system of democracy elsewhere in the world. Pathos is used in a rhetorical argument to move the audience from one

emotional state to the other like to calm readers. It keeps the audience in a frame of mind to believe the submissions of an editorial. Readers can be persuaded too when an argument is supported by evidence and reasoning. This entails the use of premises and conclusions in argument. A text that is logical and easily understood is far more likely to sway the audience.

The results of the study have established that the voter's harboured negative beliefs such as their votes will not count, the election will be rigged, there will be violence, there is no adequate security and as such, the zeal to participate and go out to vote was dying down. This situation was replica of what Bekoe (2011), Ibeanu and Mbah, (2012) observed that high level of voter apathy leading to low voter turnout and violence characterised the 2011 general elections as a result of negative mobilization by political leaders and by implication inadequate voter education. This scenario replicates what Bolaji (2015) said about 2007 elections that the electoral violence had become such a credible risk despite Nigeria's return to democracy that the mere threat of it was enough to keep large swathes of voters away from the polls, as in Rivers state, where violent threats contributed to low voter turnout. The situation destroyed public trust and confidence in the stakeholders, particularly among candidates of the op parties, some of whom publicly expressed satisfaction with Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in the state.

However, the attitude voters exhibited during accreditation, voting, collation and announcement of results by INEC was largely cordial and peaceful. The usual violent behaviour exhibited by the voters who loose election did not manifest. The voters complied with the voting procedure. They were orderly during accreditation, voting, and collation of results. The results eventually declared were largely accepted in good faith hence, most voters had no cause to embark on violence. Over half of the respondents (77.3%) agreed that the voters accepted the results of the elections and 65.8% agreed that the voters were orderly during sorting, counting and declaration of results. The finding does not invalidate the fact that the 2015 polls were

characterized by apathy and low voter turnout was found by George-Genyi (2015). Majority of the registered voters did not come out to exercise their franchise. Looking at the difference between the total numbers of the registered voters and the total number of accredited voters for all the elections across the 23 local governments in the State George-Genyi (2015) established that the presidential election had a turnout of 40% (Approximately) which means that 60% of the voters did not turnout. In the governorship election, only 41.40% turned out, while 59.60% did not turnout. For the senatorial elections, zone 'A' recorded 43.9% turnout less than 57.1% who did not turnout. A similar trend was witnessed in zone 'B', where 17.89% turned out which is less than 82.11% who failed to turnout. In zone 'C', 30.9% of voters participated in the election with 69.1% voters absent. This study only established that those voters who turned out to vote exhibited largely very peaceful behaviour.

Praising the behaviour of the electorates during elections, *Vanguard* editorial of March 31 notes that neither the sun, nor the downpour, could disperse the long queue of voters. They improvised electricity, when darkness came and saw through processes that produced the atmosphere that held the country together. Commendations for the setting go to the people, whose major peaceful conducts eclipsed the few violent incidents in some places. If Nigerians were unwilling to accommodate the lapses that attended the elections, we would have had a different situation. It is also important to note that the people were able to take their own decisions to be peaceful, not following some of the most inflammatory messages that preceded the elections.

Above all, the editorials were found to have contributed to the peaceful and orderly conduct of the voters during the 2015 general elections. They table demonstrated that the editorials influenced voting behaviour by instilling confidence in the voters about INEC's integrity and capability in managing the elections. With a critical analysis of issues, editorials made the voters to have hope for credible elections in Nigeria and also believe that free and fair

elections is possible. The issues that the editorials raised to the plane of discussion like card readers and permanent voters card gave the impetus for calm among the electorates as rigging was shown to be extremely difficult with the new modalities that the INEC introduced. As established by other researchers (Blanks, 2008; Ho and Quinn, 2009), the newspaper uses the editorial to explain the meaning of the news and thus influence public opinion; interprets, examines, contextualizes and judges key events, and on the whole, influence social behaviour, modify government decisions, and strengthen (or discredit) political institutions.

The finding that the editorials influenced voter attitude during the 2015 general elections is in harmony with what Ladd and Lenz (2009) found that the editorial stance of four newspapers between the 1992 and 1997 United Kingdom (UK) general elections persuaded a considerable share of their readers to vote for Labour party. Pyszczynski, Henthorn, Motyl and Gerow (2010) also said the editorial criticisms of Barack Obama, in the month prior to the 2008 United States (US) presidential election, whether credible or not, produced more negative public evaluations of him when race was salient. In their study, Druckman and Parkin (2005) found that editorial slant of newspapers have also shaped candidate evaluations and vote choice during elections in America. Meltzer (2007, p.83) says the editorial board has the potential to wield power by directing the sentiments of its readers, particularly when it comes to endorsing candidates for political office. Meltzer found that the majority of the people who at least occasionally read a newspaper actually read an endorsement for a gubernatorial or congressional candidate during the 2002 election season in US (66.6%), and of these people, a significant portion said that their voting decision was affected by the endorsement article (11.7%).

Furthermore, the influence of newspaper editorials was established on the Nigerian government policy on fuel palaver during the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo. In unveiling the discursive strategies in Nigerian news magazines, Torwel (2008) found that the

Nigerian news magazines such as *Newswatch* and *Tell* performed their democratic roles by exposing the half-truths about the government's fuel policy and its negative consequences for the people, and this contributed to decreased popular support and the reshaping of the policy in favour of the people. Through their editorials, the news media rallied public opinion to support civil society organisations such as the labour unions against the issue of petrol prices.

The hypothesis tested also showed that there was high correlation between editorial arguments and voter attitudes towards the 2015 general elections. Correlation coefficients of .983, .904, .959 and .981 were posted from the statistics (See Appendix vii). The result showed that the stand of editorials was in tandem with the behaviour of voters. No wonder, out of the 380 respondents, 80.3% agreed that how they responded to election outcome was influenced by what they read in editorials. In essence, the editorials influenced the calmed behaviour voters had exhibited over the election outcome in 2015. The correlates of this peaceful behaviour were the revived confidence in INEC's ability, the rekindled hope for credible elections, the sound analysis and round condemnations of overzealous acts by party candidates and agents as well as close monitoring of the whole election process. This confirms the of scholars (González, 1991, van Dijks, 1995, Filippi, 1997) that editorials affect public opinion both as agenda-setting and in the way they influence social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action. Similarly, a study by Vettehen, Hagemann, and Snippenburg, (2004) on the relation between media use and political knowledge in the Netherlands also found that a clear and positive relation exists between the frequency with which citizens consume political content from the mass media, and the amount of political knowledge they acquire from it. According to the researchers, reading political articles in a newspaper has a higher correlation with political knowledge than has watching political television programmes. Gerber, Karlan, and Bergan (2009) also establish in their study that the voters learn about politics and government primarily from newspapers. This medium influences

voters through the slant of a particular report and by choosing which stories to cover. By extension, editorials influenced voters' attitude and behaviour during the 2015 general elections in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study '*Newspaper Editorials and Voters' Attitude in the 2015 general Elections in Nigeria*', investigated the themes, stand and rhetoric of newspaper editorials on 2015 elections and the consequent influence on voter attitude towards the election. The result showed that the newspapers as a whole had served as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and a common carrier of the public expression during the 2015 general election.

The study found that the key issues that the editorials entertained the most and were largely of one accord among the national dailies in Nigeria during the 2015 general election were security of lives, election materials and the electoral process; the inclusion and used of voter authentication machine (card reader); the replacement of temporary Voter's Card (TVC) with Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) as a penance for multiple voting, impersonation and election fraud. Negative campaigning characterised by blatant disregard for crucial issues and high concentration on character assassination and sentiment, was another key issue as well as peaceful election, defections, election postponement, INEC's readiness, conduct at the polls and the electoral outcome. The content analysis of editorial texts revealed this and 85.5% of the respondents affirmed the issues dominated public discourse during the period.

Epidictic, deliberative and forensic rhetoric were substantially used in the editorials and 18 rhetorical devices were identified to be commonly used in newspaper editorials. Out of the rhetorical devices used, one-third (37.9%) were metaphors, 9.1% were alliteration followed by neologism and pun respectively. Euphemism and sarcasm constitute 4.5% each while parallelism, paradox, personification, rhetorical question, hyperbole irony, epigraph and pull quote constitute 3% each. The least frequent devices were metonymy, allusion, and litotes. In addition, the prevalent mode of persuasion was the logos (75) followed by ethos (56) and pathos

(49). Among the selected newspapers, *Daily Sun* considered the logos (17), while ethos (7) and pathos (5) follow. *Daily Trust* used ethos and pathos mode equally (7), while logos (6) was least considered. For *Leadership*, ethos (21) was top most mode of persuasion followed by logos (14) and pathos (10). *The Nation* pulled 25 for logos mode of persuasion, 16 each for pathos and ethos. Similarly, *Vanguard* had 13 for logos, 11 for pathos and 5 for ethos.

The stand of the editorials on key issues was mostly condemnatory or attack. Close to half (47%) of the editorials were attack editorials. One-quarter (27%) and (26%) of the editorial stand was advisory and praise or commendatory respectively. Thus on the issues of peaceful election, election outcome, negative campaigns, security, conduct at the polls, INEC's readiness, permanent voter card, election date, card reader and defections among party members, chunk of the editorials condemned stakeholders behaviour, policy and decisions. Among the dominant issues agenda in the editorials, readers were advised on some decisions and policy options. Individually, *Daily Sun* had 8 stands for praise or commendation, 7 for attack or condemnation and 14 for advice or persuasion. *Daily Trust* had 5 praise editorials, 3 attacks, and 12 persuasive editorials; *Leadership* had 10 stands that commended actions, 14 condemned and 21 advised on worthy courses of actions. In the same vein, *The Nation* had 14 stands that were commendable in nature, 16 condemnatory and 27 advisory. Meanwhile, *Vanguard* 9 stands for commendable and condemnatory respectively and 11 others were advisory.

The voters' attitude towards the 2015 general election was found to be negative. They were pessimistic that their votes will not count, the election will be rigged, there will be violence, there was no adequate security and as such, they were not enthusiastic about participating or turning out to vote. They were also sceptical about INEC's ability and readiness to conduct credible, free and fair elections. From the analysis, 93.1% of the respondents agreed that they anticipated violence during the polls. However, the attitudes voters exhibited during accreditation, voting, collation and announcement of results by INEC was largely cordial and

peaceful. The usual violent behaviour exhibited by the voters who loose election was minimal. Voters also complied with voting procedure and were orderly during accreditation, voting, and collation of results

Pearson Correlation on SPSS result on the correlation showed high correlation between editorial stand on issues and voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections. Correlation coefficients of .983, .904, .959 and .981 were posted from the statistics. The result showed that the position of editorials was in tandem with the attitudes of the voters. Out of the 380 respondents, over two-thirds (80.3%) agreed that how they responded to election outcome was influenced by what they read in the editorials. In essence, the editorials influenced the calmed behaviour that the voters had exhibited over the election outcome in 2015. The correlates of this peaceful behaviour were the revived confidence in INEC's ability, the rekindled hope for credible elections, the sound analysis and round condemnations of overzealous acts by party candidates and agents as well as close monitoring of the whole election process.

Incidentally, the findings also showed that over half (53.4%) of the respondents read the editorials online from the newspaper sites or as the newspapers and other users share such editorials on social media like Twitter and Facebook, meaning that the technological changes in the media industry are a blessing rather than a setback for the newspapers. The social media have added a boost to the readership of the editorials same as Orosa, García, and Santorum (2013) affirmed in their study that editorials have a presence that stands out from the rest of the contents; and often appears in the front page of the print newspaper and, to a lower extent, in the homepage of the online newspapers. The online edition offers the readers a couple of hyperlinks to documents that expand the editorial information.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the summary, the following conclusions were made. First of all, the selected newspapers: *Daily Sun*, *Daily Trust*, *Leadership*, *The Nation* and *Vanguard* gave much

prominence to election issues in their editorials. It is a sign commitment by the newspapers to the society by facilitating a credible and peaceful election to Nigerians through high number of incisive editorials. The newspapers as a whole provided a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and a common carrier of the public expression during the 2015 general election. As the institutional voice of a newspaper, the editorials provided leadership on issues that were important to the community.

Voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections was significantly influenced from negative to positive. Although turnout was low as compared to other elections, voters were more constructive and cordial during the conduct and after the elections. Destructive attitude found in other previous elections like 2011 was changed.

The dominant media ideologies that had influenced voter attitude towards the 2015 general elections, and from which voters cultivated positive attitudes were security of lives, election materials and the electoral process; the inclusion and use of voter authentication machine (card reader); the replacement of temporary Voter's Card (TVC) with Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) as a penance for multiple voting, impersonation and election fraud. Others were negative campaigning, hate speech and sentiment, peaceful election, defections, election postponement, INEC's readiness, conduct at the polls and the electoral outcome. The relative degree of prominence of issues or themes in the editorials gives public recognition to the prevailing agenda and has further effects on the attitudes of voters and the evaluation of the political scene. Just as McCombs and Shaw (1972) found in their study on agenda setting, there was a very strong relationship between the emphasis that the editorials placed on different election issues and the judgments of the voters as to the salience and importance of various election topics.

The kinds of rhetoric editorials used combined elements of Aristotle's three forms or genres of texts: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. Ceremonial rhetoric praised personalities

and the electorates for the decorum they maintained during the election period. Forensic rhetoric attacked or condemned ideologies against issues such as the use of the military in elections, decisions against the use of PVCs and the Card Reader, shift in polls cum tenure elongation, negative campaigning or hate speech, conduct at the polls by the individuals and defections of party members. Deliberative rhetoric, advised readers on some decisions and policy options. These kinds of rhetoric are same with classification of editorials as advisory attack, and praise. To strengthen and make language more punchy, editorials use rhetorical trope or devices such as metaphor, alliteration, neologism, pun, euphemism, sarcasm, parallelism, paradox, personification, rhetorical question, hyperbole, irony, epigraph and pull quote. More so, the modes of persuasion found in the editorials are logos, ethos, and pathos – to create a convincing case.

Eventually though, the 2015 general elections were largely peaceful as the process and declaration of results were transparently done. Voter attitude in the election was generally in conformity with INEC's electoral guidelines. The voters were orderly during accreditation, voting, sorting, counting, and declaration of results. They also largely accepted the outcome of the election without resorting to post-election violence. Such change of attitudes among the voters was a function of newspaper editorials which are public expressions on the elections. Like before, when the editorials were the underground culprits in ushering independence to Nigeria, abolishing slave trade, terminating tenure elongation of former President Olusegun Obasanjo and the fuel subsidy palaver in Nigeria, the editorials are a civic forum for pluralistic debate, a watchdog for civil and political liberties, a mobilizing agent for public participation, a voice of newspapers on public issues and rhetorical arguments, influenced the calmed attitudes that the voters had exhibited over the election outcome in 2015. The correlates of this peaceful behaviour were the revived confidence in INEC's ability, the rekindled hope for credible

elections, the sound analysis and round condemnations of overzealous acts by party candidates and agents as well as close monitoring of the whole election process.

5.3 Recommendations

Following the conclusions reached, the study makes the following recommendations

- i. Editorial boards and editors of newspapers should take editorial writing as not just a ritual but a civic duty of providing critical analysis on public issues that promote informed decision among readers.
- ii. Newspapers should take the responsibility of providing voter education which is the bedrock of positive voter attitude in Nigeria as an obligation. By presenting such dominant ideologies, negative acts of voting behaviour such as low turnout, apathy, among others will be reduced.
- iii. Engaging audiences through new or social media use will be helpful. In addition to providing access to news and information, the new media can provide a public space for citizens to debate civic issues and express their support for, or discontent with, policies or office holders.
- iv. Newspapers should exploit the new or social media platforms such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, and twitter to enhance more access and reach of editorials.
- v. It is advisable that INEC should scale up the use of media in their voter education campaigns and particularly employ social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter and blogs.

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

The study contributes to the current literature in several ways. First, it builds on the newspaper editorial literature by closely examining its actual effect on voter attitude. Hence the study contributes to theoretical understanding of media power. The issue of whether media

effects affect individuals, groups, institutions, or societies and cultures more widely is affirmed in the findings of the study.

The study approach improved the measurement of the causal effect of media texts by providing a formal treatment of the editorial content in the context of voter attitudes. The triangulation of theories and methods of content analysis and survey helped in establishing what media content can do to voters in a democracy. Researchers would do well to use this study as their departure point when designing studies that attempt to explain political communication processes in a media saturated society.

The study examined how the themes, rhetoric and stands of newspaper editorials indeed influenced voters' attitude. It empirically explored whether newspaper editorials can influence voters' attitude instead of assuming that whoever reads newspapers will choose to vote and behave orderly during elections.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

- i. Research efforts should be made to look at the signed editorials such as opinion articles, columns and letters to editors.
- ii. Investigating the broadcast aspect of the editorials like commentaries would be good.
- iii. Research efforts should also be directed towards new media such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, twitter, etc. and voting behaviour
- iv. Research should be conducted on the strategies of using the media to increase voter turnout.

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Appendix I
SAMPLE CODING SHEET

Coder _____

Name of Newspaper/Magazine _____

Date: _____

Month/Year of publication _____

Category	Recording Units	Frequency (Tally Marks)	Total Number
Themes	Security		
	Card Reader		
	Permanent Voter Card		
	Negative Campaign		
	Peaceful Elections		
	Election date		
	Defections		
	INEC readiness		
	Conduct at polls		
	Electoral outcome		
Types of editorial	Attack		
	Praise		
	Interpretative		
	Explanatory		
Editorial Position	Condemn		
	Commend		
	Advise		
Type of Rhetoric	Forensic or Legal		
	Epideictic or ceremonial		
	Deliberative or Political		
Rhetorical Devices	Pull quotes		
	Metaphor		
	Simile		
	Epigraph		
	Neologism		
	Parallelism		
	Anecdote		
	Alliteration		
	Euphemism		
	Metonym		
	Rhetorical Question		
Mode of Persuasion	Ethos		
	Pathos		
	Logos		

Appendix II

CODING INSTRUCTIONS/GUIDE

General Remarks

Coding must be open for all the editorials. The editorials of selected newspapers should be examined, but only those relating to the 2015 general elections. The study is interested in structural and rhetorical elements therefore, thorough reading is required.

Examination Process

Go through the editorials carefully. Take time reading through them. Use plain papers for note taking. Start the examination at the title, pull quotes. Look at opening paragraphs, the middle, analysis and conclusion. If a newspaper has more than one editorial in an edition on the 2015 election, code all. At the same time, try to find out whether the editorial has other features not captured by the categories. Tally appropriate response categories on the coding sheet, if not sure, mark 'unclear' and specify the problem.

Coding should be as follows

- A. Issue/Theme:** The topic, circumstance or event on which an editorial is written on. Its variables are
1. Security – insurgency, militancy or terrorism
 2. Card Reader – the applicability and usefulness of the machine for election
 3. Permanent Voter Card – a replacement of Temporary Voters Card.
 4. Negative Campaign – character assassination or death wish for opponents.
 5. Qualification of Candidates – whether candidates meet minimum requirements to contest election.
 6. Election date – whether postponement or when it should be fixed.
 7. Defections – the exit of prominent party members to other parties.

8. INEC readiness – whether the umpire body is ready in terms of procurement of materials and logistics.
9. Conduct at polls – how electoral process was organised, the officials and voters behaviour at the poll station as well as the function ability of electoral equipment.
10. Electoral outcome – the collation, announcement of results and stands to announced results.

C. Type of Editorial

Type of Editorial: This entails the functional classification of editorials. Variables to be recorded are

1. Attack – editorials that condemn or criticise a policy or action.
2. Praise – editorials that hail a policy, action or move. The words shower encomiums.
3. Interpretative – it seeks to reveal hidden benefits of a policy or action.
4. Explanatory – one that seeks to give meaning or clarify a policy or action.

D. Editorial Stand: This is the position of the editorial over an issue when it weighs all sides. Variable considered here are

1. Condemn – attack, criticise or declare something to be wrong.
2. Commend – to praise or uphold an action for others to emulate
3. Advise – a conclusion urging readers to take a suggested action.

D. Type of Rhetoric: This is the type of argument employed in the editorial. The variables are

1. Forensic or Legal - This covers any form of argumentative discourse in the editorial condemns or defends someone’s past actions. It concerns itself with the past and its means are accusation and defence. Attack or condemnatory editorials adopts this kind of rhetoric.

2. Epideictic or ceremonial - Here, the editorial is concerned with proving someone or something worthy of admiration or disapproval. It focuses on the present and its means are praise and censure. This is exactly what praise editorials are meant for.
3. Deliberative or Political - This kind of editorial is concerned with the future and its means are inducement and dissuasion. Deliberative rhetoric urges readers to do or not do something based on the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action.

E. Rhetorical Devices: These are the devices employed to strengthen an argument. These could be but not limited to

1. Metaphor - is a substitution based on underlying resemblance
2. Hyperbole – an overstatement characterised by exaggerated language
3. Simile – a comparison of two things with the use of like and as
4. Epigraph – a quote set at the beginning of an editorial or at its divisions to set the tone or suggest a theme.
5. Pun - refers to substitution based on accidental similarity
6. Metonymy - is a figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated
7. Neologism - neologism refers to a recently created (or coined) word or an existing word or phrase that has been assigned a new meaning.
8. Parallelism – recurrent syntactical similarity where several parts of a sentence or several sentences are expressed alike to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences equal in importance.
9. Alliteration – the repetition of initial consonant sounds or vowel sound with a formal grouping.
10. Euphemism – substitution of a milder or less direct expression for one that is harsh or blunt.

- F. Modes of Persuasion:** The strategy employed to persuade a reader. The variables are
1. Ethos - depends on the personal character of the speaker. It entails referring to someone of good character, someone with expertise or someone with first-hand experience. Editorials do this by using testimonials, referring to particular persons with distinguishable characters or referring to a sound system of democracy elsewhere in the world
 2. Pathos - It keeps the audience in a calmed frame of mind to believe the submissions of an editorial.
 3. Logos - when an argument is supported by evidence and reasoning. This entails the use of premises and conclusions in argument.

Appendix III

Cover Letter

Department of Mass Communication,
Benue State University,
Makurdi.

November 20, 2016.

Dear Respondent,

Request to Complete Questionnaire

I am a Post Graduate student at Benue State University Makurdi. As part of the requirement, I am conducting a survey on the '***Influence of Newspaper Editorials on Voter Attitude towards the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria***'.

You have been randomly selected to participate in the research as a respondent. Please answer questions in this questionnaire as accurately as possible. The information you will give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

To this effect, you are NOT required to provide your name on this questionnaire. Please answer accordingly and where space is given, write your answer in full giving as much information as possible.

The researcher appreciates your cooperation in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Iorper Ugondo

BSU/MAC/PhD/13/6971

Appendix IV
STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Newspaper Editorials and Voter Attitude towards Election in Nigeria (NEVAEN)

Instruction: please tick where appropriate [✓]

Section A

1. Gender

(a) Male

(b) Female

2. Age

18-25yrs []

26-35yrs []

36-45yrs []

46-55yrs []

56 and above

3. Occupation

Students

Politics

Civil Servant

Traders

Others

4. Qualification

SSCE

Undergraduate

Graduate

Postgraduate

Others

5. Local Government Area -----

KEY

SA - Strongly agree

A - Agree

SDA - Strongly Disagree

DA - Disagree

6. Accessibility and Readership of Editorials

Statement	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)
I read newspapers everyday				
I buy or read newspapers from friends or offices				
I read newspapers online				
Editorials are part of newspaper contents I read				
I share editorials I like online				
Editorials influence my political views				
Much of what I learn of candidates and parties if from newspapers				
The Nation, Vanguard, Daily Trust, Daily Sun and Leadership are among newspapers I read				

7. What issues did you consider most important during the 2015 election?

- a) Security issues
- b) Credibility and transparency of INEC
- c) Voters card
- d) free and fair election
- e) Other (s) specify

8. Which of the following did you read about in newspaper editorials?

- a) Security
- b) Card Reader
- c) Permanent Voter Card
- d) Negative Campaign
- e) Peaceful elections
- f) Election date
- g) Defections
- h) INEC readiness
- i) Conduct at polls
- j) Electoral outcome
- k) All of the above
- l) None of the above

9. Voter Attitude towards the Election.

Option	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)
Anticipated rigging				
Insecurity				
Dissatisfaction with representative performance				
Lack interest in the elections				
No confidence in INEC				
Anticipated violence				
Votes will not count				

10. Voter Opinion about Editorial Contents

Option	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)
I am convinced with the analysis				
I was convinced about security				
I was convinced that rigging will be difficult				
I was encouraged to pick my PVC				
I was made to trust INEC				
Examples in the editorials were convincing				
Arguments and views expressed were logical				
Explanations given were detailed enough				
I saw issues, events and people in better light				

11. Voter Attitude During the Election

Voters behaviour during elections	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)
Voters complied with voting procedure				
Voters were orderly during accreditation				
Voters were orderly during voting				
Voters were orderly during sorting, counting and declaration of results				
Voters accepted the results of the elections				

12. Voter Attitude After the Election

Opinion	SA (4)	A (3)	SDA (2)	DA (1)
How I responded to election outcome was influenced by what I read in editorials				
I had more confidence in INEC				
I have hope for credible elections in future				
I believe that free and fair elections is possible				
I think that I am better informed about politics and government.				
I did not support violence or any protest				
I refused to be used for harm or rigging				
I believe in power of my PVC				

Appendix V

Inter coder Reliability

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders
results for Volume Coding

File size: 220 bytes

N coders: 5

N cases: 20

N decisions: 100

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise agr. cols 1 & 5	Pairwise agr. cols 1 & 4	Pairwise agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise agr. cols 2 & 5	Pairwise agr. cols 2 & 4	Pairwise agr. cols 2 & 3	Pairwise agr. cols 3 & 5	Pairwise agr. cols 3 & 4	Pairwise agr. cols 4 & 5
94%	95%	100%	95%	95%	90%	95%	90%	90%	95%	95%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
-0.031	0.94	0.942

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
-0.021	100	94	9318

***These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders
results for Themes/Issues Coding

File size: 220 bytes

N coders: 5

N cases: 20

N decisions: 100

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 4 & 5
92%	95%	95%	95%	95%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
-0.042	0.92	0.923

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
-0.031	100	92	9132

***These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders
results for Editorial stand

File size: 220 bytes
N coders: 5
N cases: 20
N decisions: 100

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 4 & 5
90%	90%	95%	90%	85%	85%	90%	85%	90%	95%	95%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
-0.053	0.9	0.905

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
-0.042	100	90	8950

***These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders
results for Types of Rhetoric

File size: 220 bytes
N coders: 5
N cases: 20
N decisions: 100

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 4 & 5
94%	95%	95%	90%	90%	95%	95%	90%	95%	95%	100%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
-0.031	0.94	0.942

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
-0.021	100	94	9318

***These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders
results for Rhetorical Devices

File size: 220 bytes
N coders: 5
N cases: 20
N decisions: 100

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 4 & 5
89%	100%	95%	90%	85%	85%	80%	85%	90%	85%	95%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.155	0.89	0.87

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.164	100	89	8598

***These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

ReCal 0.1 Alpha for 3+ Coders
results for Mode of Perusasion

File size: 220 bytes
N coders: 5
N cases: 20
N decisions: 100

Average Pairwise Percent Agreement

Average pairwise percent agr.	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 1 & 2	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 2 & 3	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 5	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 3 & 4	Pairwise pct. agr. cols 4 & 5
91%	100%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%

Fleiss' Kappa

Fleiss' Kappa	Observed Agreement	Expected Agreement
0.053	0.91	0.905

Krippendorff's Alpha (nominal)

Krippendorff's Alpha	N Decisions	$\sum_c o_{cc}^{***}$	$\sum_c n_c(n_c - 1)^{***}$
0.062	100	91	8950

***These figures are drawn from [Krippendorff \(2007, case C.\)](#)

Appendix VI

Reliability

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
	Valid	380	100.0
Cases	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	380	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

	Value	.987
Part 1	N of Items	22 ^a
Cronbach's Alpha	Value	.988
Part 2	N of Items	21 ^b
	Total N of Items	43
Correlation Between Forms		.988
Spearman-Brown Coefficient	Equal Length	.994
	Unequal Length	.994
Guttman Split-Half Coefficient		.990

**Appendix VII
Correlations**

		stand1	stand2	stand3	stand4	stand5
Behaviour1	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.983**	.904**	.959**	.981**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	380	380	380	380	380
Behaviour2	Correlation Coefficient	.983**	1.000	.886**	.952**	.996**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	N	380	380	380	380	380
Behaviour3	Correlation Coefficient	.904**	.886**	1.000	.946**	.886**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000	.000
	N	380	380	380	380	380
Behaviour4	Correlation Coefficient	.959**	.952**	.946**	1.000	.955**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	N	380	380	380	380	380
Behaviour5	Correlation Coefficient	.981**	.996**	.886**	.955**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.
	N	380	380	380	380	380

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Appendix IX: Selected Newspaper Editorials

Vanguard Editorials

Our Unique Democracy	April 20, 2015
INEC, 2015 Polls, The Future	April 12, 2015
We, The People	April 16, 2015
Our All Season Politicians	April 15, 2015
Winners Are – Nigerians	April 13, 2015
Change Nigerians Want From Buhari	April 10, 2015
2015 Final Hurdles	April 09, 2015
Very Nigerian Moment	April 02, 2015
Thanks Nigerians	March 31, 2015
Let peace Initiative Continue	March 30, 2015
For Votes To Count	March 26, 2015
As 2015 Countdown Begins	March 25, 2015
Desperation To Serve	March 20, 2015
Thugs – Well, Alive	March 16, 2015
Peace Committee’s Herculean Task	March 11, 2015
It’s Still Our Country	March 10, 2015
Very Nigerian Moment	April, 2, 2015
Let’s Ask More Questions	April 6, 2015
2015 Final Hurdles	April 9, 2015
Change Nigerians Want From Buhari	April 10, 2015
Winners Are, Nigerians	April 13, 2015
Our All Season Politicians	April 15, 2015
We, The People	April 16, 2015
INEC, 2015 Polls, The Future	April 17, 2015
Our Unique Democracy	April 20, 2015
Nigerians, Their Future	February 16, 2015
Okonjo-Iweala’s Verdict On Corruption	February 20, 2015
We, The People	February 23, 2015

S' East, S' South NASS Polls: INEC Would Do The Right Thing	April 3, 2015
2015 Presidential Election: A Post-Mortem	April 6, 2015
Agenda For The Buhari	April 7, 2015
Jonathan's Worthy Example	April 9, 2015
Orubebe's Antics	April 14, 2015
Let Peace Reign In Ekiti	April 15, 2015
S' East, S' South: Need For A New Democratic Culture	April 16, 2015
Change In Police Leadership	April 27, 2015
Soldiers And Election Duties	March 6, 2015
The Card Reader Test	March 20, 2015
Stop Destructive Political Campaigns	March 25, 2015
Pay Cut For The President And Other Political Appointees	March 26, 2015

Elections In Liberated Areas Of The Northeast	March 27, 2015
For Fair, Peaceful And Credible Polls. Penalising Electoral Law Violators	March 28, 2015 April 29, 2015
Soludo's Posers On 2015 Polls To Sack The Police Chief	February 2, 2015 April 27, 2015
Don't Postpone The Elections Jonathan's 11th Hour Veto	February 5, 2015 April 24, 2015
Soludo's Allegation On Mismanagement of N30trn Mass Defection And Democracy	February 12, 2015 April 22, 2015
Shifted Polls: Democracy On Trial The Trouble With Ekiti	February 13, 2015 April 17, 2015
2015: Only Dishonest Politicians Need Fear Card Readers Go Out And Vote Tomorrow	February 17, 2015 April 10, 2015
Senate: Need To Re-Stabilize The Polity Election Day: Let Nigeria Win	February 18, 2015 March 27, 2015
Obasanjo's Dramatic Exit From PDP Sambo's Admonition On Hate Learning From The Gbagbos Preaching	February 20, 2015 March 17, 2015
Campaigns Against Electoral Integrity Of Jonathan And Ebeze Presidential Candidates And The Proposed Peace Pact Integrated Farms Interest	March 6, 2015 February 27, 2015
FG's MOU With European Union On 2015 Polls Ekiti Election "Rigging Tape" Merits Looking Into	January 5, 2015 March 4, 2015
End The Judiciary Workers Strike The IGP Should Have Acted Earlier	January 7, 2015 February 24, 2015
Resolving INEC's Challenges With PVCs	January 13, 2015
Is INEC Truly Ready For the 2015 Polls	January 20, 2015
The Abuja Peace Accord	January 22, 2015
The Attacks On Jonathan's Campaign Convoys	January 30, 2015

Daily Trust Editorials

The Soludo, Okonjo-Iweala Bout	February 23, 2015
NBC Is Asleep	February 18, 2015
IGP Suleiman Abba: What Did He Do Wrong?	April 29, 2015
The Chief Justice's Timely Admonition	February 12, 2015
Buhari And The Anti-Corruption Task	April 22, 2015
Protection For The Courts	February 10, 2015
Jonathan: The Beauty Of Finishing Strong	April 21, 2015
No Cause For Pre-Elections Exodus	February 9, 2015
How Times Change	April 20, 2015
INEC And PVC Distribution	February 3, 2015
Buhari And Dwindling National Revenue	April 19, 2015
End The Judicial Workers' Strike	January 27, 2015
Gale Of Post-Election Defections	April 12, 2015
Voting Rights For Prisoners	January 16, 2015
States Must Ensure A Peaceful Election	April 10, 2015
Your Majesty, This Can't Be True	April 7, 2015
Salute To President Jonathan And Prof. Jega	April 4, 2015
We Need A Functional Election Malpractice Tribunal	April 3, 2015
Salute To President Jonathan And Prof. Jega	April 2, 2015
The World Waits For Jonathan To Concede	March 31, 2015

Leadership Editorials

We Must Maintain Peace	March 31, 2015
2015 Polls: A Shaky But Steady Start	March 30, 2015
Stop The Pre-Election Violence	March 24, 2015
Lessons From The Gbagbos	March 19, 2015
Traditional Rulers And Politics	March 18, 2015
Man And Electricity Tariff	March 17, 2015
Let's Stop The Hate Speech	March 15, 2015
First Lady On The Campaign Trail	March 7, 2015
Use Of Troops Inevitable For Peaceful Polls	March 2, 2015
Bring Perpetrators Of Pre-Election Violence To Justice	February 28, 2015
Jonathan's 11th Hour Ministers	February 26, 2015
NBC's Charge To Electronic Media On Hate Adverts	February 25, 2015
Mbu's Irresponsible Threat	February 23, 2015
Let Jega Be	February 20, 2015
As Police Gear Up For Elections	February 18, 2015
The Judiciary Is Also Ready For Election	February 15, 2015
Polls Shift, A Blessing In Disguise	February 13, 2015
Is There Still A Tenure Elongation Agenda?	February 12, 2015
US and Nigeria's Election	February 10, 2015
The Judiciary Is Also Ready For Election	February 8, 2015
If They Cannot Guarantee Security, The Service Chiefs Should Resign Now	February 7, 2015
The Threat By Ex-Militants	February 5, 2015
Go Get Your PVC	February 4, 2015
It Is Politics, Not War	February 3, 2015
Don't Mess With February 14 Date	January 26, 2015
Practical Way To Regulate Campaign Funding	January 25, 2015
Disqualify Under-Aged Candidates Before Polls	January 23, 2015
Media And Hitch-Free Elections	January 20, 2015
Politics And Profaning God's Name	January 18, 2015
Why INEC Must Rethink PVCs	January 16, 2015
Resolve Issues, End Judiciary Strike	January 9, 2015

The Nation Editorials

Orubebe's Misconduct	April 3, 2015
Condemnable Impunity	April 9, 2015
Plug The Holes, Please	April 10, 2015
Polls And Investments	April 15, 2015
Let The Tribunals Sit	April 16, 2015
The Fayose Paradox	April 19, 2015
Not Yet Uhuru	April 20, 2015
RECs As Election Wrecks	April 21, 2015
Abba's Unceremonious Exit	April 24, 2015
Law Supports Impunity	April 26, 2015
Defections	April 27, 2015
Presidential Obscenity	March 1, 2015
Leave Jega Alone	March 2, 2015
No End In Sight	March 3, 2015
CAN Of Worms	March 4, 2015
Sack Mbu Now	March 4, 2015
Democratic Royalty	March 8, 2015
Card Readers Won	March 11, 2015
Imperial Governor	March 12, 2015
Young Democratic Party	March 13, 2015
Mrs Gbagbo's Comeuppance	March 13, 2015
The Slide To Anarchy	March 18, 2015
Soldiers and Polls	March 25, 2015
INEC Inferno	March 25, 2015
March Of 28	March 27, 2015
APC's Campaign Fund Victory	March 30, 2015
Electoral Farce In Rivers And Akwa Ibom	March 31, 2015
Again, No To Polls Shift	February 2, 2015
Arrest The Subversives	February 3, 2015
Budget vs. Campaign	February 4, 2015
Bow Out Now	February 10, 2015
On Tape, A Bastion Of Bandits	February 11, 2015

Is Mbu Above The Law?	February 12, 2015
Jonathan's Gargoyle	February 13, 2015
PVCs or Nothing	February 16, 2015
Better Be Speculations	February 17, 2015
Okrika: A Violence Foretold	February 19, 2015
DHQ's Mud-Slinging	February 20, 2015
Visa Restriction	February 25, 2015
No To Transition	January 6, 2015
A Salutary Decision	January 7, 2015
Aliyu's Toxic Sermon	January 8, 2015
Corruption-friendly Governance	January 9, 2015
Bad Start	January 11, 2015
Equal Right	January 14, 2015
Inciting The People	January 15, 2015
No To TVC	January 16, 2015
Arms And Elections	January 19, 2015
Flush Out Slush Funds	January 20, 2015
A Broken Pact	January 21, 2015
Mbu Comes To Lagos	January 22, 2015
Enough	January 23, 2015
Too Many Cooks	January 26, 2015
No Compromise	January 28, 2015
Subversion In State House	January 29, 2015
Power Show	January 30, 2015