

PETER OBI AND NEWSPAPER NARRATIVES OF POLITICAL CAMPAIGN IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: Due to the requirement for information distribution through news reporting of political campaigns, political journalism is a necessity. The newspaper, as a component of mass media, is a significant journalistic tool built with narrative frameworks that is used to define Political reality and elevate political campaigns. Based on this backdrop, this research examined Peter Obi and Newspaper narratives of political campaign in Nigeria. In methodology, Content analysis of the narratives of News stories, Feature stories, Article and campaign adverts by four national newspapers: The Daily Sun, Guardian, Vanguard and Punch from October 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023 (which is before and after the recent political campaign in Nigeria) was applied. Findings indicated that the national daily newspapers focused on issue-based campaign topics and that their narratives were supportive of Peter Obi's campaigns. The dailies gave Peter Obi's campaigns prominence, which meant that they were more willing to publish stories about Peter Obi's Labour Party campaigns than those of other party.

Keywords: Politics, Campaign, Newspaper, Narratives, Peter Obi

INTRODUCTION

Many people hold the opinion that a society's advancement without the growth of the press will be equivalent to that society's decline. Since the press is seen as the watch dog of the society, it therefore implies that the press keeps an eye on the government. Its main duty becomes to monitor governmental affairs and the affairs of the governed through the media's spectacles so as to warn, expose, direct, and harmonize the government and the governed.

With the way the Nigerian press has consistently evolved over the years from its crude and conventional means of news delivery to a digital sector that connects to a worldwide audience, it has become rather clear how the society has advanced the Media industry in Nigeria. Prior to this, all one had to do was buy a newspaper to read for the purpose of getting access to current events and a broad range of journalistic issues and public opinion. However, due to the convergence of new media, it is now possible to access these newspapers online, which has the advantage of reaching a wide readership.

Just like the media's integral role in government, Political campaigns on the other hand, have been instrumental to the democratic advancement of Nigeria. Ochie (2022) claimed that political campaigns have been a crucial component of Nigeria's democratic and electoral process ever since the country gained its independence. Any political campaign's goal is to support a political party and its candidates while convincing voters to cast their ballots in favor of them. Candidates and political parties prepare and convey their ideas and stances on topics, as well as their proposals for how they would govern if elected through these campaigns. However, Political campaigns are frequently viewed as war in Nigeria, which is a well-known

truth. Due to the glaring differences in their goals, agendas, and accomplishments, opposition parties are at odds in the fight for political power. In order to influence the outcome of the election or to simply win, the rival parties in Nigeria are known to frequently pour significant financial resources into the campaigning process. These motivations play a key role in the candidates' abusive language and character assassination of one another before the election in an effort to gain an advantage among voters. This is where political maturity becomes expedient to sterilize a nation like Nigeria from political diseases and the notoriety of unnecessary political banter.

Political maturity, according to Odu (2023), is the capacity to confine conversations to matters pertaining to the welfare of the people who would eventually be subject to a government. Peter Gregory Obi, the presidential candidate for the Labour party running in the 2023 election, gains support on this matter of political maturity (Odu, 2023). Peter Obi, on the other hand, has actively adopted the opposite approach to how elections are being done in the nation, going above and beyond the typical rallies and campaigns that feature politicians dancing, entertaining, reeling off endless promises, and trading banter. Due to these reasons, Peter Obi's presidential campaign received the most support from young people in particular. Through social media, demonstrations, and street marches, these young people continuously demonstrated their support. It is known that a number of notable human rights activists have chosen Peter Obi as their favored candidate for president. Young Obi followers were given the moniker "Obidients" for this reason.

Peter Obi's campaign and campaign plan are said to have taken a multi-pronged approach and differed from what was initially possible and what is obvious in the opposing camps. The distinctiveness of Peter Obi's campaign can be seen in the way he empathizes with the youth of Nigeria by strategically involving them in worthwhile conversations and assuring them of a brighter tomorrow with quantifiable programs in all the areas of his campaign. (Ani, 2023).

According to Ochie (2022) Peter Obi's philosophy of economic production and economical living attracts "Obedient" more than conspicuous consumption and waste. His thoughts on resourceful management and investing in vital industries for the development and prosperity of the economy is distinct. Peter Obi's third-party candidacy appeals to young people who are disgruntled with the two major parties, which has led to the largest political movement in Nigerian history. Peter Obi has succeeded in uniting the previously unidentified Labour Party as a potent third force against the two well-liked political heavyweights in Nigeria through his messages of caution and accountability as well as his widely spread message of moving Nigeria from "Consumption to Production". (Ani, 2023).

Statement of the Problem

Political campaigns have soared on the wings of the media over time. The press has come under fire from detractors who believe that despite the fact that this claim is undisputed, the press, which is supposed to be the watchdog of society, appeared to have compromised in reporting a balanced coverage of political campaigns. As some media outlets are held accountable for the way they frequently use biased news narratives to support a particular candidate for their own selfish interests. In-depth newspaper articles about Peter Obi's campaigns, particularly his presidential campaign, have frequently featured him as the subject of interest. The stories contain a variety of tones and topics, frequently reflecting the political slants of the newspaper that published them. Peter Obi is a visionary leader who is dedicated to enhancing the lives of

common Nigerians hence narratives in major Newspapers in Nigeria frequently highlighted his accomplishments while in government, Presenting him as a skilled and successful politician. However, some news narratives criticized Peter Obi's political campaigns more harshly, centring on scandals and controversies that have surrounded Peter Obi, while painting him as an unethical politician who cannot be trusted with the future of the nation and praising his main rivals as deserving of the positions up for grabs.

Despite all of these, well-known newspapers in Nigeria lack direction and sincerity in their reporting, and there seems to have been a clear compromise with regard to the ethics of journalism. This is accurate despite the fact that several political campaigns were well-liked in Nigeria. Also, It is obvious that there is a paucity of factual coverage of political campaigns in the nation's media companies, notably in newspaper firms. The New York Times, on the other hand, has benefited by the adoption of journalistic tones, with a clear concentrate on unvarnished fact, and this has led to their ascent to prominence in the media.

Therefore, it has now become a major issue of concern that some Newspaper organizations in Nigeria have not differentiated themselves in this perforation of media convergence's era or dispensation like their international counterparts have by prioritizing news values like news prominence, particularly during political campaigns.

Objectives of the Study

The specific Objectives of this study are;

1. To determine the frequency of Newspapers narratives of Political Campaigns in Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the degree of news prominence on Peter Obi's Political campaign
3. To determine the tone of coverage on Peter Obi's campaign
4. To identify the direction of Newspaper reportage of political campaigns in Nigeria

Research Questions

1. What is the frequency of Newspaper narratives of Political Campaigns in Nigeria?
2. What is the degree of news prominence given to Peter Obi's Political Campaign?
3. What is the tone of coverage on Peter Obi's Campaign?
4. What is the direction of Newspaper reportage of political campaigns in Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Roles of Mass Media in Political Environment: According to Oluwakem (2021), as democracy spreads more widely around the world, academic interest in the media's crucial functions in the political contexts of contemporary democracies has grown. Due to the necessity of information dissemination as a significant democratic requirement, political journalism is crucial and indispensable for promoting citizens' reasoned and rational choices in their political decision-making and actions (Chambers & Costain, 2001).

According to McNair (2009), Political journalism serves the constitutional roles of the mass media in a democracy. These roles include surveillance through routine news reporting of political events, critical scrutiny through the interpretation of political issues and the

coordination of opinions, also known as the correlation function, representation and advocacy through editorial writing on important political issues etc.

News Framing: News is a journalistic construct or product that is employed to define political reality. Thus, the process of creating news results in "a finished articulation of what really matters in political affairs at any given time" (McNair, 2007). News as a product is given to readers for consumption in newspaper printing. Reporters use "narrative frameworks by which they tell stories about the events to fix political events, such as campaigns, into the news. The manufacturing or construction process of the narrative frameworks is known as "framing," and the word "frame" is used to refer to both terms in general. (McNai, 2007)

Knudsen (2014) only defines framing as "how certain elements in a news narrative affect the reader" at the micro level. Framing at the macro level is the way of news presentation. According to De Vreese (2005), frames are enduring patterns of issue-related selection, exclusion, presentation, cognition, and interpretation used by symbol handlers (journalists) to organize political and social movement discourse. When used in relation to this subject, framing is the news narrative regarding political campaigns.

The Role of the Press in Political Campaigns: As the government's fourth estate, the press serves as the public's voice, disseminating information to inform voters. (Ikpegbu & Ihejirika, 2020). The press plays a crucial part in shaping events in the nation, even as there are many institutions in society that have significant effect. The press however serves as the collective voice and the stories they write have a significant impact. Many times, the media will choose to draw attention to a particular issue in Political campaigns to the point where it becomes a hot topic.

The Media: Traditional forms of media include broadcasts on radio and television as well as the printed press. Online journalism and social media are examples of new media (Olumuji, 2021). As the fourth estate of the realm in a democracy, the media perform crucial functions, particularly in guaranteeing broad public involvement in elections. Such functions includes: providing a platform for the public to communicate their message to the electorate, giving political parties and candidates a platform to communicate with the electorate, educating voters on how to exercise their democratic rights, reporting on the evolution of an election campaign, giving the public a platform to communicate their concerns, opinions, and needs to the parties and candidates, and allowing the parties and candidates to deliberate Reporting results and keeping track of the vote-counting process, examining the election itself to determine its fairness, disseminating information that, to the greatest extent feasible, avoids inflammatory language, and aiding in the prevention of election-related violence(Akinwalere, 2019)

In support of the media's function, Akinwalere (2019) asserts that it informs the public about current affairs and creates awareness of a range of societal concerns, having a profound influence on public perceptions and ways of thinking. The media are the tools used to mould or affect public opinion. This reason gave rise to the belief according to Chiluya (2011) that the press exercises the rights to withhold information or make it public. Nevertheless, the media is fundamentally challenged by an election, which calls into question its objectivity and impartiality.

Popular Nigerian Political Campaigns

Due to the nature of the contests among politicians, the Nigerian electoral process is currently more dynamic than in previous years. Political parties conduct election campaigns, during which remarks are made in an effort to sell candidates and win over voters. While issues that affect the public should be addressed in campaigns, candidates choose to attack the personality of opponents.

Though there have been many political campaigns in Nigeria, some have remained outstanding in the political history of the country. Some of these well-liked political campaigns are outlined and explained in Adedeji (2015)

Awolowo, Obafemi Jeremiah Oyeniyi (1959, AG): At the time, it was thought that Chief Awolowo's Actions Group was the most well-organized political party in Nigeria, with a definite ideology and platform. In the elections held that year, he ran a similarly effective campaign. In helicopters, Chief Awo travelled the length and breadth of the country, reaching out to the general populace with the promises of enhanced welfare, free health care, and education as upheld by his political party. Awo's campaign was undoubtedly innovative and years ahead of its time, even though his party was unable to win enough votes outside of the western region to make him Nigeria's first Prime Minister.

Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola (1993, SDP): Abiola was the Social Democratic party candidate in 1993 election and it is still recognized as maybe the most free and fair election Nigeria has ever had in many circles. "Hope '93" served as Chief Abiola's campaign theme. As a result of Babangida regime's structural adjustment policies which had devastated many Nigerians' economies, Chief Abiola's message was well-received, especially with the catchy melody. The outcome was a resounding victory for the Social Democratic party's nominee.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2011, PDP): 2011 was a huge success for GEJ's presidential campaign. With the catchphrase "I had no shoes," He portrayed the underdog, promising a breath of fresh air. The general populace of Nigeria responded favourably to his message. He inspired many to believe that ordinary Nigerians might achieve greatness. He became the face of the new Nigerian dream and won the election despite some suspected anomalies.

Babarinde Raji Fashola, (2011, ACN): BRT, as he is more often called, ran for re-election as governor of Lagos, Nigeria's economic hub, in 2010. Based on his first term's performance, the electorate was favourable to his candidacy. But the SAN didn't take any chances when he ran for office on the continuity platform. His posters loudly declared, "BRF is working." A resounding win was the outcome.

Peter Ayodele Fayose (2014, PDP): Despite being impeached in 2006 on suspicion of corruption, Fayose returned to governorship in 2014 and defeated the intelligent Kayode Fayemi. However, his campaign lacked a cohesive narrative. With a strong blend of populist tokenism (or "Stomach Infrastructure," as he termed it) and street smarts, Fayose won over the hearts and minds of the voters. Fayose ate pounded yam and drank palm wine with the genuine voters while his rivals made a big splash on social media. Despite all of his challenges, he defeated the incumbent in each of the State's 16 Local Government areas.

Bola Tinubu, Atiku Abubakar, Peter Obi (2023): The ruling and opposition parties have historically faced off in a two-horse fight for the presidency of Nigeria, but Peter Obi, a strong third candidate running under the Labour Party, entered the race in 2023. Former governor of Nigeria's prosperous Lagos State, Tinubu is regarded as a political godfather and kingmaker in the southwest of the country. The wealthy political veteran boasts of helping Buhari win the presidency in 2015 on his fourth effort. After years of controlling political puppets, Tinubu declared that the time has come for him to run for president. His campaign anthem was "Emi Lokan," which means "It is my turn" in Yoruba, his native tongue.

On the other hand, Atiku Abubakar, a PDP candidate who had lost his previous five elections, was running the sixth time. Since he is from the same northern region as the departing leader, Buhari, many people worried that Abubakar's bid to be the president could usurp an unofficial plan to alternate the presidency between Nigeria's northern and southern regions.

Peter Obi, a two-term former governor of Anambra State, was promoted as a respectable challenger to the leading contenders. He abstains from the excesses of the usual "African Big Man" leader, who avoids traveling with a huge entourage, flies economy, and handles his own luggage. Many young Nigerians who refer to themselves as "Obedient" have flocked to Obi in favour of his "No frills" strategy.

Theoretical Framework

The press can genuinely create news to shape an audience's worldview according to a widely held idea in the communication industry (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzch, 2009). This is a result of the media's role in determining the audience's agenda.

The agenda setting theory, one of the most well-known conceptual frameworks in media studies, was developed from the theories of Bernard Cohen in 1963, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald Shaw in 1972 (Mc-Quail, 2010; Baran & Davies, 2009). The general consensus is that what the media provides to the public is frequently interpreted as topics deserving of attention and ultimately shapes viewer agendas. This theory is therefore relevant to this research by reason of the implication of press portrayal of political campaigns, being the most significant event or breaking news in the nation, causing the audience to embrace all of its significance.

On the other hand, the Development Media theory, which Dennis Mc-Quail introduced in 1987 to support the role of the press in societies, is another theory that is pertinent to this research. It is an expansion of the normative theories from earlier times to take into account the media in developing countries' involvement in bringing about the necessary social transformation. (Anaeto, Onabanjo & Osifeso, 2008). It is thought that the press has a legal obligation to the nation to carry out development initiatives that are in line with the laws and policies put in place in the country. As a result, the media have the flexibility and duty to not merely inform, but to inform accurately; to educate, but to educate successfully; and to amuse, but to entertain wisely. As a result, it addresses press behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

This study makes use of content analysis. Quantitative Analysis of the information contained in a communication is known as content analysis (Shehu, 2015). The approach is thought to be

the best one since it will enable the researcher to provide pertinent information that will address the research questions posed for this study through examination of the newspaper content.

Population of the Study

All of the daily Sun, Guardian, Vanguard, and Punch Newspaper editions published between October 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023 make up the study's population. On the basis of the fact that they are national daily Newspapers, these publications were specifically chosen. According to earlier surveys, these newspapers are read by people from all six of the nation's geopolitical zones. In addition, they arguably rank among Nigeria's top publications in terms of readership.

A total of six months (October 2022 to March 2023) were spent reviewing the papers. This made the number of newspapers reviewed in six months (in respect to one media outlet) to be 182 newspapers. There will be 728 newspapers total for the four major publications. This means that 728 editions of the Newspaper will form the population of this study.

Sample Size

146 issues of the chosen newspapers make up the study's sample size. Using the sample size formula from Nwanna (1981), this is determined. According to the formula, if there are only a few hundred people in the population, a sample size of 40% or more will be sufficient; if there are many more, a sample size of 20%; if there are a few thousand people, a sample size of 10%; and if there are several thousand people, a sample size of 5% or less will be sufficient. Since there are many hundreds of participants in this study, 20% was chosen as the expected frequency figure. This Nwanna's (1981) formula is

$$N = NV(P)$$

Where:

N = Sample Size

NV = Population Value

P = Expected frequency value

Therefore: $(728 \times 20) \div 100$

N = 146 (Actual Sample Size)

Sampling Techniques

A given population is assumed to be too huge for any researcher to reasonably see every component of it. This is where sampling comes into play. In order to assist in the selection of specific newspaper editions that will equal the sample size initially obtained, a multistage sampling technique is used in this study. Following is a breakdown of the research's multistage sampling method:

Stage one: In Nigeria, there are more than 92 legally operating newspapers that print daily editions. Four newspapers would be chosen for the purposes of this analysis from these numbers. These newspapers were chosen mostly due to their greater circulation. First, the elite publications the Guardian and Vanguard are widely read in the nation's western region. Second, the Daily Sun is a sensational daily that enjoys strong readership in the country's Eastern region. Thirdly, a popular newspaper with a Northern perspective is the Punch. This means that each of these publications has practically comprehensive coverage of the entire nation, which is primarily divided into the East, West, and North.

Stage two: These newspapers were evaluated over the course of six months, from October 2022 to March 2023. This span of time was chosen since it encompasses the time before and following the 2023 political campaigns.

Stage three: Since 146 newspapers make up the sample size for this research endeavour at this time. Using Nwanna's (1981) sample size formula, which recommends using 20% of the population if there are many hundreds. Thus, 728 newspapers' overall population of 20%. In this case, 146 will then be 20% of 728.

That is, $20/100 \times 720/1 = 146$

Instrument for Data Collection

The coding sheet is the tool used for data collecting. After achieving 80% agreement between two independent coders who coded 24 issues (eight each) of the chosen newspapers for the pretest, Holsti's (1969) intercoder reliability formula is used to confirm the reliability and validity of the instrument. The instrument is also face-validated by two Professors of Mass Communication before it is used in collecting the data. The content categories examined in the selected newspapers include: Story type: This means the form in which the particular story to be coded is written. They include: News Stories, features, article and advert.

Story Placement: In this category, emphasis is on where the stories appear in the selected newspaper. In this study, the following pages are of interest to the researchers: the front, back, and inside pages. Political Campaign Stories on the front, and back pages indicate prominence while stories on the inside indicate non-prominence.

Direction of Coverage: A story is coded as positive if it depicts fair and balanced coverage of Peter Obi and the narratives of Political campaigns by Nigerian Newspapers. It is coded as negative if it portrays one sided coverage of Political Campaigns in Nigeria. A story is coded as neutral if its direction is neither positive nor negative.

Frame of story: This involves the focal slants or angles from which the stories about Political campaigns are reported. Party Manifesto, Health Profile, Age controversy, Ethnicity, Corruption, Party Zoning, Party Structure, Ethnicity, Religion and Morality.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The coding sheet is used to record the codes given to the variables in the content category. The data are then transferred to a Microsoft Office Excel 2007 spreadsheet for analysis using the statistical product and service solutions version 16.

To determine the number of times a given content category appears in a particular edition, the following coding schemes were adopted.

- The Guardian: Oct., 2022 - March, 2023 = N1
- The Vanguard: Oct., 2022 - March, 2023 = N2
- The Punch: Oct. 2022 – March, 2023 = N3
- The daily Sun: Oct., 2022- March, 2023 = N4

While the unit of analysis has been coded as follows:

- News = 1
- Feature = 2
- Article = 3
- Advert = 4

Let's test the objectives

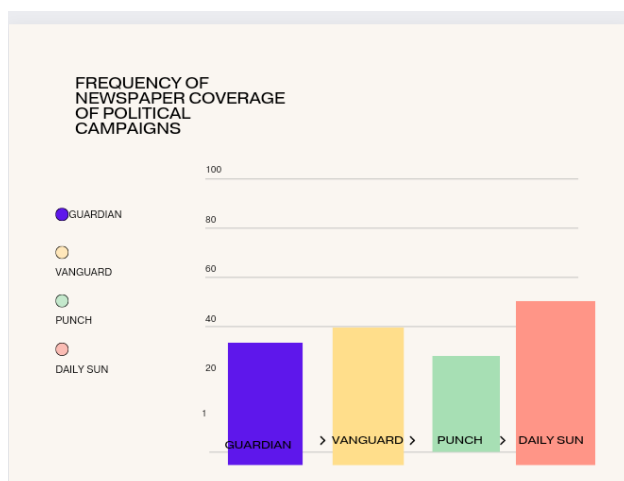
Objective 1: The Frequency of Newspaper Narratives of Political Campaigns in Nigeria?

Table 1: Description of the frequency of newspaper coverage of political campaigns in the dailies

	Frequency				Total	Percentage
Unit of Analysis	N1	N2	N3	N4		
1	9	10	7	15	41	28%
2	8	7	10	10	35	24%
3	15	17	12	16	60	41%
4	2	4	-	4	10	7%
TOTAL	34	38	29	45	146	100

Result

From various editions of the newspaper studied and as shown in Table 1, out of the 146 sampled newspapers, only 41 straight news stories on political campaigns were found which constitutes 28 percent of the news contents. While feature stories on political campaigns that appeared on the selected editions were 35, which constitutes only 24 percent while Articles was leading on the table with 60 in total, Constituting 41 percent of the article contents. The advert placements on political campaigns are 10 in total, which constitutes 7% in all the editions.



The findings from the table analysis show that the various newspapers published mostly articles on political campaigns than they published campaign news, feature, and adverts. What it implies is that Newspapers in Nigeria were more involved in trying to influence and determine the direction of voters, thereby setting agenda for the readers, who are the ultimate target of all political campaigns.

Frequency distribution of typologies of issue-based frames

Table 2: Description of the frequency of issue-based framing.

Units of Analysis	N1	N2	N3	N4	Total	Percentage
Personality profile	2	2	—	3	7	5%
Political zoning	9	9	2	12	32	21%
Ethnicity	5	6	2	6	19	13%
Party exploits	4	7	7	5	23	16%
Age controversy	6	3	—	8	17	12%
Policy exploration	6	3	1	3	13	9%
Religion	3	4	7	3	17	12%
Morality	5	5	-	8	18	12%
Total	40	39	19	48	146	100

Results

Following the results as shown in Table 2, amongst the various editions of the newspaper examined, the daily Sun, which is coded as N4, published more of the issue-based reports of political campaigns in Nigeria with 48 in total. Following behind is the Guardian newspaper, coded as N1 with 40, and both N2 and N3 (Vanguard and the Punch) are trailing behind with 39 and 19 respectively.

It can therefore be deduced that Newspaper narratives were issue-based. Which implies that key themes were given adequate concentration, helping the readers or potential voters with a breakdown of the intricacies often involved in Nigeria's Political campaigns? The findings also show that some frames like political zoning were more frequent in the daily editions of the newspapers than other frames. Its shows that the national dailies narrated the issues and matters arising from political zoning than any other issues arising from the campaigns.

Objective 2: The degree of prominence given to Peter Obi’s Political Campaign?

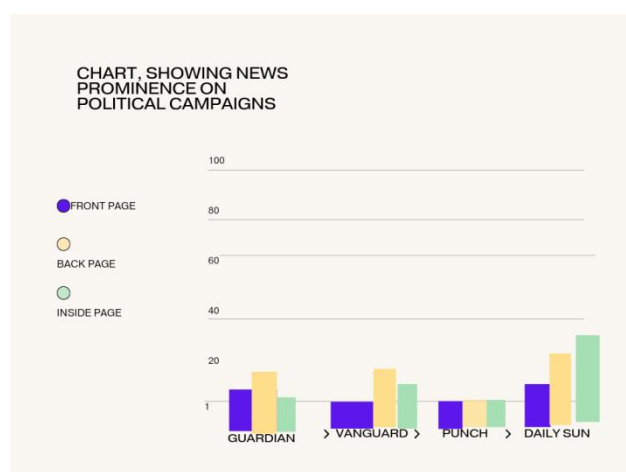
This category emphasis on the appearance of the selected newspaper. In this study the following pages are of interest to the researcher: The front, back and inside pages. Political campaign stories that appear on the front and back pages indicate prominence while stories on Peter obi's campaign stories on the inside indicate non-prominence.

Table 3: Cross tabulation of Prominence

Unit of Analysis	N1	N2	N3	N4	Total	Percentage
Front Page	12	8	10	14	44	30%
Inside Page	10	6	8	12	36	25%
Back page	18	16	10	22	66	45%
Total	40	30	28	48	146	100

Results

From the various editions studied and as shown in Table 3, the newspapers carried stories of Peter Obi's campaign on back and front pages of their newspapers than they carried the inside pages. The daily Sun (N4) published more about Peter Obi political campaigns than can be seen with the Guardian, Vanguard and Punch newspapers. Even though that above table illustration showed that much prominence was giving to the reportage of Peter Obi's Political Campaigns, Major emphasis is on the Daly Sun and Guardian Newspapers. It further showed that these two national dailies were more akin to publishing about Peter Obi's Political campaigns than they are to publish any other Political candidate.



Objective 3: The tone of coverage on Peter Obi’s Campaign?

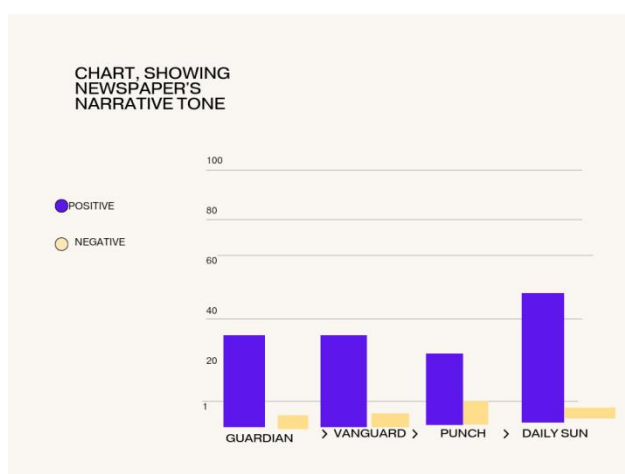
This category sees that the tones are coded Positive, if it depicts a fair and balanced narratives of Peter Obi's campaign whilst the story is coded negative, if only a one-sided angle of reporting is observed or published.

Table 4: Cross tabulation of the tone of coverage

Units Of Analysis	N1	N2	N3	N4	Total	Percentage
Positive	33	30	20	48	131	89.7%
Negative	2	3	8	2	15	10.3%
Total	35	33	28	50	146	100

Results

As can be clearly seen in table 4, results showed that the daily Sun newspaper (N4) coverage tone of Peter Obi's campaign is positive with 48. Guardian newspaper is next with 33 and Vanguard and the Punch newspapers are 30 and 20 respectively. It can also be seen from the table illustration that the Punch newspapers published more outright negative stories of Peter Obi's campaign than any other newspaper did. Findings show that more national dailies were favourably disposed to Peter Obi political campaign than any other Political candidates. A total of positive 89.7% as against 10.3% that is negative is clear proof of the fact that Peter Obi's Political campaigns were of optimal interest to the Newspapers.



Objective 4: The direction of the Newspapers reportage of Political Campaigns in Nigeria?

Table 5: Cross tabulation of the direction of Newspaper reportage of Political Campaigns

Units Of Analysis	N1	N2	N3	N4	Total	Percentage
Pro APC	1	1	3	1	6	4%
Pro PDP	4	5	1	2	12	8%
Pro LP	10	6	3	23	42	29%
Pro other parties	-	2	2	-	4	3%
Anti-APC	8	12	5	15	40	27%
Anti-PDP	7	8	5	8	28	19%
Anti-LP	1	2	4	1	8	6%
Anti-other parties	-	2	1	3	6	4%
Neutral	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	31	38	24	53	146	100

Results

The results shown in the above table illustrates that the direction of the Newspapers examined were more of Pro- Labour Party and anti-All Progressive congress party. The table analysis showing results of 23 stories for daily Sun and 10 for Guardian, illustrates that both Daily Sun Newspaper and Guardian Newspapers have projected LP campaigns than any other party campaigns. Findings show that all the examined editions of The Guardian, Vanguard, Punch and Daily Sun newspaper had nil neutrality in their reportage of political campaigns. It implies that every edition had little or more affiliation with one party or the other. The punch Newspaper editions for instance, are more of Pro-APC than other Newspaper editions.

The dominant News frames adopted by the selected newspapers in their narratives of Political campaigns

Table 6: Tabulation of the dominant News frames.

Units Of Analysis	N1	N2	N3	N4	Total	Percentage
Party Manifestos	7	2	1	5	15	10%
Economy	6	4	1	6	17	12%
Party Structure	4	3	6	4	17	12%
Zoning	10	1	9	13	43	29%
Corruption	7	6	2	6	21	14%
Health Profile	9	10	1	13	33	23%
Total	43	36	20	47	146	100

Results

From the various editions of the newspaper studied and as shown in Table6, Newspapers dominant narratives were on the issue of political zoning than any other news frame. There were spread Narratives on zoning which amassed 43 in total, followed by stories on health Profile of candidates with 33 in total. Narratives on corruption appeared 21 in total whilst stories on the state of the economy and party Structure are trailing behind with a total of 17 for each newspaper. Party Manifestos narratives are least in the table with 15 in total. The above table provides the evidence that the daily Sun newspaper (N4) published spread narratives of political campaigns than other newspapers. Findings also show that the Narratives of the political campaigns by these newspapers differ slightly from each other. For instance Guardian Newspapers(N1) were more interested in writing about party Manifestos than the Daily Sun Newspaper (N4), Vanguard (N2) and Punch (N3) respectively, while the punch Newspaper editions emphasized on campaign news on party structures than the Guardian, Vanguard and daily Sun newspapers did.

DISCUSSIONS

Following the research topic, Peter Obi and Newspaper Narratives of Political Campaign in Nigeria, the researcher's investigation is motivated by the desire to learn how the eminent national dailies in Nigeria, such as the Guardian, Vanguard, Punch and Daily Sun newspapers, narrate political campaigns, especially Peter Obi's campaign in their dailies.

The presentation formats adopted in the narration of political campaigns are first identified and analysed. Table 1 illustration provided that out of the 146 sampled newspapers, only 41 straight news stories on political campaigns is found which constitutes 28 percent of the news contents. While feature stories on political campaigns that appeared on the selected editions were 35, which constitutes only 24 percent. Articles is leading on the table with 60 in total, constituting 41 percent of the article contents, while Advert placements on political campaigns are 10 in total, which constitutes 7% in all the editions.

From these findings, Articles were the most popular format followed by the feature formats. Articles and feature formats of news presentation make room for the accommodation of broad perspectives on a subject matter. It goes to show that more national dailies were invested in projecting campaign issues with broad analysis than just report straight news from the campaigns. It therefore gives credence to the role of the press as having the sole influence on elections due to the way they set agenda for the audience using the media. These roles as pointed out in the literature review of this study include surveillance through routine news reporting of political events, critical scrutiny through the interpretation of political issues and the coordination of opinions, also known as the correlation function, representation and advocacy through editorial writing on important political issues etc (McNair, 2009)

In determining what Newspaper published more issue-based reports on political campaigns, Table 2 presented illustrations of the Daily Sun Newspaper sitting top with a total of 48. Following behind is the Guardian Newspaper with 40 while Vanguard and the Punch Newspapers are seen trailing behind with 39 and 19 total issue-based editions respectively. It however, shows that the national daily newspapers centred their narratives on issue-based campaign topics. It can be deduced that issue- based topics such as party zoning were prominently addressed among the selected newspapers which goes to show that the Newspaper were interested in the expanding narratives that will engage the audience rather than stale, lifeless and redundant political campaign news that have a little or no impact on the audience.

In Table 3, it was clear that the newspapers carried stories of Peter Obi's campaign on back and front pages of their newspapers than in the inside pages. The Daily Sun published more about Peter Obi political campaigns than can be seen with the Guardian, Vanguard and Punch newspapers. Even though prominence was given to the reportage of Peter Obi's Political Campaigns in almost all the Newspapers, Daily Sun and Guardian Newspapers both presented a more elaborate coverage on Peter Obi's campaign.

As can be seen in table 4, The Daily Sun Newspaper narrative tone of Peter Obi's campaign is positive with 48. Guardian newspaper is next with 33, Vanguard and the Punch newspapers are 30 and 20 respectively. It can also be seen from the table illustration that the Punch newspapers published more outright negative stories of Peter Obi's campaign than any other newspaper did. The findings show that there is no comparison in 89.7% positive tone with merely 10.3% negative tone with regards to how favourably disposed all the newspapers are towards Peter Obi's campaign.

Furthermore, the directions of the Newspapers examined were more of Pro- Labour Party and anti-All Progressive congress party as was illustrated in table 5. Results showed that there are 23 stories for Daily Sun and 10 for Guardian, which means that both Daily Sun Newspaper and Guardian Newspapers have projected Labour party campaigns than any other party campaigns. Findings show also that there was nil neutrality in their reportage of political campaigns from

all the examined newspapers. What this means is that the press which should engage in balanced and nonpartisan reporting all have sides hence the reason, their narratives are perceived as sentimental writings meant to satisfy their personal interest in the game of politics.

Finally, Table 6 showed that Newspapers dominant narratives were centred on the issue of political zoning. Narratives on political zoning amassed 43 in total. From table 6, evidence showed that the Daily Sun Newspaper (N4) published spread narratives of political campaigns than other newspapers. What it means therefore is that the Narratives of the political campaigns by these newspapers are in disparity from one another. For instance, Guardian Newspapers (N1) were more interested in writing about party Manifestos than the Daily Sun Newspaper (N4), Vanguard (N2) and Punch (N3) respectively. The evidence of these findings confirms McNair's claim that News is a journalistic construct or product that is employed to define political reality. Thus, the process of creating news results in a finished articulation of what really matters in political affairs at any given time (McNair, 2007).

Conclusion

By forming a vital link between political parties, candidates, and voters, the media play a critical function in election campaigns. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that newspaper coverage is a valuable resource and a powerful weapon for advancing democracy. (Gerth & Siebert, 2012). Through the coverage provided in their stories, the media transmits the pragmatic proposals, as well as the different positions of the contenders on important issues, which are crucial information for citizens who will eventually make their decisions based on the media coverage and narratives. The concept and direction of the national Dailies' narratives of Peter Obi's campaign and political campaigns in general had not yet been determined when this research began. The ultimate objective became to ascertain the direction of narratives in political campaigns after attempting to comprehend how frequently Nigerian publications projected Peter Obi's Campaign.

The Mass Media, as the fourth Estate of the realm and the watchdogs of the society, has the exclusive duty of monitoring the activities of the society through the media. Politics, on the other hand, raises the question of whether press ethics are best upheld or whether it has turned into a matter of self-preservation at the expense of the society.

The media profession has consistently upheld the value of impartiality and balance in reporting, however there have recently been some significant stories on how journalists and media organizations have consistently compromised on this issue. The data from this study indicates that the National Dailies had a special, personal interest in the candidates they anticipated to win the most. The newspapers seemed to encourage sentimental bribery in their reportage, though the existence of bribery in this case cannot be confirmed.

If these Newspapers in this research study had adopted balanced reporting as their major ethics, it would have not been easy to tell which individuals and subjects the Newspaper establishment preferred, but it was rather obvious that they had a relationship with the parties in question. For instance, it appears that The Punch tabloid is more interested in the candidates of the All Peoples Congress party than that of the Labour Party and The People Democratic Party. The Daily Sun tabloid, which strongly promoted Peter Obi's campaigns more than those of other party candidates, can be argued to have done the same.

Even though it is nearly impossible to stay emotionally detached from election campaigns in Nigeria, journalists should adhere to certain standards of conduct such as balanced and objective News reporting, Contextual truth, impartiality, transparency, integrity, public accountability and independence so that those they are reporting to will not have to question the veracity of their stories or narratives on the basis of skewed or compromised news.

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