

ISRG Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (ISRGJMS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: isrg j. multidiscip. Stud.

ISSN: 2584-0452 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjms/>

Volume – II Issue - VI (June) 2024

Frequency: Monthly



Exposure to Governor Soludo's Threatening Video and its Influence on Voting Decision among Voters in Anambra State House of Assembly Polls.

Obiakor, Casmir U.^{1*}, Ikegbunam Peter C.², Ezeumenwa Favour³

^{1, 2, 3} Department of Mass Communication, COOU, Igbariam Campus

| Received: 16.05.2024 | Accepted: 20.05.2024 | Published: 08.06.2024

*Corresponding author: Obiakor, Casmir U.
Department of Mass Communication, COOU, Igbariam Campus

Abstract

Nigerian political system has undergone severe corruption to the level that political office seekers and their privies have adopted different kinds of campaign strategies in seeking the voters' support. Among the recently adopted strategy is the use of threat which is sustained by the fear of losing out among the voters who have been hypnotized to think that voting against the candidate supported by the incumbent would attract grave danger. This study investigated the influence of an attempt towards threatening the people of Anambra to vote for APGA candidates by Soludo in the 2023 House of Assembly elections. The major objective of the study is to find out whether the governor's threat of "There Will Be Consequences" actually generated support for the party in the State Assembly elections. The study adopted the survey research method in studying 383 respondents from Ayamaelum, Ihiala and Dunukofia Local Government Areas of Anambra State. The social judgment theory was used as the theoretical framework and findings revealed that although the respondents are well exposed to the threat, the threat never generated any positive support for the party in the State Assembly elections. The study also found that the respondents have negative perception of the style of campaign by the Governor. The study concluded that the use of issuance of threats in securing political support has failed. It was recommended that Nigerian political officer holders should strive to do well for the masses and campaign on their goodwill rather than application of threats as that cannot work on an informed audience.

Keywords: Governor Soludo's threatening video, Exposure, Influence, Voting decision, Voters, Anambra State HOA Polls.

Introduction

Political campaign has a long history in democracies around the world. Significantly, the most important fact about its success is that it is built on persuasion. Persuasive communication through the application of different strategies, have formed the bases of political campaigns among different democratic States across the

globe. The essence of such ventures during political campaign periods is to manage or manipulate the minds of voters through subtle means to accept to act in line with the wishes of the speaker by supporting the political party of his or her choice.

Among these persuasive strategies used by “*political mind changers*” include advertising, political public relations, theme songs, stump speeches etc which in one way or the other move the audience from where they are to where the speakers want them to be (Owuamalam, 2016). However, some politicians subscribe to some rhetorical approach or campaign strategies that can best pass as negative campaigns. In this kind of campaign, the politicians, their privies and supporters rather than advance reasons for the audience to support their candidates, subscribe to threatening the electorates. With special reference to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, among the dominant and most felt kinds of rhetoric used in canvassing for votes among politicians is threat of different magnitude.

Unfortunately, threats and related languages ordinarily should not form the bases of political campaign in any sane democracy. This is because people who are the target of the campaigns are meant to willingly select and vote for the party and candidates that meet their expectations at each round of an election. Supporting this view, Odionye (2016) argues that rather than apply other strategies, political parties should strive to adopt the public relations strategies in getting supports from the masses. The best strategy a party can adopt if they want to survive in an election is the application of goodwill. This accounts for why advanced democratic rhetoric recommends the use of goodwill and its promising actions to get the people to vote for a candidate in an election (Øyvind & Ketil, 2022).

Generally, Political communication is a branch or form of communication saddled with the responsibility of establishing mutual relationship between politics, political office seekers and the citizens (Norris, 2016). This relationship is predicated on the interaction between politics and citizens. Premising on the above subject, communication between political office seekers and the masses are expected to be an interactive process aimed at encouraging free transmission of information from the sender to the receiver. To do this, some forms or modes of persuasion such as Pathos, Ethos or Logos can be applied to produce the desired effect which is to get the support sought (Higgins & Walker, 2012). The application of these triangles of rhetoric in political communication has over the years been seen as strategies for getting support among voters in different democracies. Political communication is the process by which a nation’s leadership, media and citizenry exchange and confer meaning upon messages that relate to the conduct of public policy. The involvement of the people here became sacrosanct considering the fact that the policies to be made will have unlimited influence on their lives and wellbeing.

Sadly, Governor Chukwuma Charles Soludo, a prominent academic Professor of Economics who was voted into power as the Anambra State governor in 2021, caused a stir in the State ahead of the March 18 House of Assembly election of 2023. With his campaign message targeted at ensuring that APGA won majority of the seats in the House, the governor eventually turned into threatening the voters in the State by promising to ensure that all ongoing projects by the State Government in any community where APGA candidate lost the election would be withdrawn. As captured in one of the video clips, Governor Soludo threatened to:

Sideline lawmakers who were elected on the platforms of other political parties and work only with the members of his party, the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA);

“The person(s) I will work with in Awka must be an APGA member. If you vote for another person in another party, he will only be receiving his salaries. A House of Assembly member cannot build roads, schools or hospitals; “it is me that is the governor that will do it. It is only those (lawmakers) in my party that will have access to my office and it is only them that can tell me what they want for their constituencies.

The above statement from a serving governor of a State is definitely going to generate mixed reactions from the voters in the State. In persuasive communication, attitude change can be obtained through creation of messages that motivate the target audience to engage in reasoning process to accept or even reject the communicated messages. To this end, one may be forced to ask whether this message from Governor Soludo went down the mind of the audience to cause them to reason towards voting his party in the election. Considering the importance of persuasion in political campaign and game of mind changing, whether this kind of campaign approach generated positive or negative voting behavior among the voters in the State cannot be ascertained without a study of this nature. It was in recognition of the above reason that the current study investigated exposure to the threatening campaign message of the Governor and its influence on the voting behavior of the electorates in Anambra State’s House of Assembly elections.

Statement of Problem

In every true democracy, political office seekers, holders and their supporters usually canvass for votes based on what they and their party have done if they are in power or canvass for support based on what they intend to do for the people should they be given the mandate to control the affairs of the people. Unfortunately, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) who is the Governor of Anambra State had changed the narrative to threatening the voters as the best way to get the people to vote his party’s candidates in the State. Instead of campaigning for the candidates of the party in the election, the governor in a viral video threatened communities saying “*there Will Be Consequences for Anambra Residents, Communities Who Did Not Vote For APGA*”. It has never been clear whether these threats as delivered to the people by Governor Soludo necessarily meant that the voters are hypnotized to act in line with his wishes, nor does it imply that it was accepted as actionable, such that it actually influenced the voting behaviour of the electorates in Anambra State during the State House of Assembly election in 2023. Again, whether there are other intervening variables in the communication process impacting the voters’ decision cannot be ascertained. It is in the light of these that this study is set to investigate the influence of Governor Soludo’s threats on patterns of voting in the 2023 State House of Assembly elections in Anambra State.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study include:

- To ascertain the respondents’ level of exposure to the threatening video of Governor Soludo in the State House of Assembly election
- To find out the respondents’ perception of the video clip of Governor Soludo threats.
- To find out the extent to which Governor Soludo’s threatening video encouraged voters to vote for APGA State House of Assembly candidates in the State.

- To ascertain the respondents' degree of believability that voting against APGA would deny them their rightful benefits from the government of the State.

Significance of the Study

The study on politicians' use of threats for securing compliance among voters is a new means of political persuasion or communication that has surfaced in the Nigerian political landscape. Before the 2023 general elections, it was ballot box snatching, result manipulation and finally the era of vote buying which lasted till the last series of elections in the country. Understanding the new dimension of political campaign among the people will be of immense benefit to the media whose role centers on the responsibility of informing, educating and entertaining the masses. Through this study, the media will see beyond the rhetoric of threat to what the people being threatened think. To the political parties, this study will serve as a means of exposing the thoughts of the people being addressed to the message of threats being passed. With this, they will decide whether to discontinue with threats and maintain the basic elements of persuasion that has worked for parties over the years. This study will equally draw attention of media and social science scholars to the need to re-examine the excesses of the political office holders who take the masses for a ride rather than for a development. The study will form a template for policy formulation among policy makers considering the impact it will leave on the voting behaviour of the electorates in Nigeria. Finally, this study will encourage scholarship by serving as a source of literature to future scholars in this area.

Theoretical Framework

Social Judgment Theory

Social judgment theory is a general theory of attitude change propounded by Muzafer Sherif, but was advanced by Carolynne Sherif and Carl Hoveland in 1961 (González, 2022). The proponents intended to provide a general framework for organizing, categorizing and understanding the basic processes underlying the effectiveness of persuasive communications from the perspective of individual processing and interpretation of messages. This theory best applies in political marketing where mind games are being played with the aim of changing peoples' views of an issue to get them to your side of the divide (Mencia de Garcillán, 2015).

The theory argues that individuals interpret media messages based on their previous orientations and attitude towards the subject matter of discussion. To the proponents of the theory, any persuasive message dished out to the audience suffers two fates of either being rejected or accepted. The acceptance or rejection of the message is subject to the cognitive map of the target audience. According to proponents of this theory, when a persuader presents a piece of information to an audience, some level of elaboration takes place. This elaboration refers to the amount of effort that any audience member has to use to process and evaluate a message, remember it, and subsequently accepts or rejects it.

As a persuasive theory of mass communication, the social judgment theory places emphases on three cognitive compartments where both the received messages and formulated attitude are processed. These three cognitive compartments include the latitude of *acceptance*, the latitude of *non-commitment* and the latitude of *rejection*. According to the proponent of this theory, political communication is a persuasive exercise whose survival depends largely on the cognitive compartments of target audience (Mencia

de Garcillán, 2015). At the latitude of acceptance, the target is already in support of the views of the speaker and nothing again could make them to make a move against the source. People within the latitude of acceptance need no persuasion because they are already in support of the communication even before the message comes. The opposite of the latitude of acceptance is the latitude of rejection. No amount of persuasion can make an audience change their mind if they have concluded that they will work against a particular candidate in an election. The latitude of rejection zone is where the individuals place attitudes they consider unacceptable or objectionable. So, any effort to change the mind of these audience members is most likely to fail irrespective of the method applied; this is because they have made up their minds. This accounts for why efforts of persuasive communication scholars pay attention to what facilitates and what hinders audience change of opinion and attitude towards a party or candidate (González, 2022).

Significantly, this lefts political mind game changers with the audience in the latitude of non-commitment. These audiences are at the center of either to accept or reject the canvassed opinion or idea. Naturally, an audience is most likely to change their views and support for or against a candidate in favour of a team that is smart enough to align themselves with their enemy or problem. This works on the fact that the enemy of your enemy is your friend while the friend of your enemy is automatically your enemy. To this people, experts have argued that persuasive communication is very important in political marketing (González, 2022). Considering the name of the theory, social judgment theory pays attention to the judgments that the audience make over a given political communication. Importantly, peoples' judgments are usually premised on their perception and evaluation of contents of the message. Their judgment is as well located on an attitude-scale in their mind which controls their assessment of the message dished out to them by the presenter who is there to change their minds. In the process of judgment, the peoples' previous beliefs about the party and the candidate influence them more than the logic or solidity of an idea as presented by the speaker. The proponents of this theory according to González (2022) points out that this is because, in some respects, people possess predetermined views that are deeply ingrained in them which may be right or wrong. In this respect, they tend to see ideas close to their anchors as more alike than they really are causing them to assimilate those ideas more easily. On the other hand, ideas that are further from the peoples' anchor are perceived as more different and generally unusual than they really are leading to outright rejection.

Drawing from the above views, threatening the people may be counter-productive to any political party that adopts threat as a political strategy to change peoples' mind. Relating this theory to the current study, effective persuasive communication is a research based activity that is designed to understand the audience. To achieve a change of opinion and attitude, it is necessary to take into account the fact that while some of the audience and highly involved, others are lowly involved. Whether the Governor embarked on this kind of research before the campaign was not known. Therefore, his threat of "*There will be consequences*" may appeal to some and at the same time, displease others. The message may also, positively or negatively influence the target audience knowledge, understanding and decision making based on the construction of the language of the message which

automatically shared certain relationship that this research work is set to unravel. How the threat worked for the party in the last election is a matter of the three cognitive compartments of the individuals and their level of involvement as outlined above.

The Review

There Will Be Consequences: A Critical Review

This is the title of the threatening message issued to Anambra voters ahead of the State's House of Assembly election in 2023 by the APGA Governor - Prof Charles Chukwuma Soludo. The message was issued as a campaign message to the people of the State and eventually, the tone and the language was not in line with what it should be in a political communication parlance when votes are being canvassed for. Professionally, the message lacks the ingredients of persuasion where experts have recommended the use of goodwill more than threat (Odionye, 2017). In rhetoric of communication, the essence of persuasion is to win support for the candidate or part of one's choice. Unfortunately, unguarded utterances have been documented to cause misfortune to several political parties in the past (Tietaah, 2016).

Voting Decision: An Action Guided by Negotiated Exchange

In taking the decision to vote for or against a party, the voters are at liberty based on their primordial experience and attitude to decide what to do. Mainly, reasonable and literate individuals take decisions along their beliefs and sometimes along laid down rules. People consider the actions that they want to take based on the cost/benefit analysis. In political marketing, message presenters design their messages as advertising contents in such a manner that it can appeal to the audience to encourage the support that they seek. These messages are sieved and processed by the individuals to whom they are targeted. It is at the level of message interpretation that they consider what is there for them if they should take this action being communicated. At this stage, the previous actions and inactions of the political party being marketed is examined alongside what the people stand to benefit from the action they are being persuaded to take.

Negotiated exchange can be productive, reciprocal and general in nature. According to Liu, Chen & Holley (2017), the type of exchange is determined by the level of attachment that the people feel with the source and the degree of satisfaction they feel will be obtained. The people are most likely to take the action that if they consider voting for APGA in the State House of Assembly election will be more beneficial and in line with their interest as a people than not voting for them. Likewise, Governor Soludo's threat of 'there will be consequences' is likely to generate no positive reaction from the people if they feel that voting for APGA will not be beneficial to their interest and what they want.

Methodology

This study was based on quantitative research method of survey using questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The population of this study is all the registered voters in Ayamelum (54,532), Ihiala (73,953) and Dunukofia (50,063), with a total of 178,348 registered voters according to INEC data, 2023. The sample size of 399 (Taro Yamani's method) was used for this study as drawn from the population. The study adopted purposive sampling technique to select only those who voted in the 18th March State House of Assembly election in Anambra State. Proportionately, this figure was divided into three in the ratio of 122:165:112 for Ayamelum, Ihiala and Dunukofia respectively.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions

Thematic data

Table 1: What is the respondents' level of exposure to the threatening video of the Governor in the State House of Assembly elections?

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
Very highly exposed	187	48.8
Highly exposed	125	32.6
Moderately exposed	51	13.4
Poorly exposed	20	5.2
Not exposed at all	0	0
Total	383	100

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

Table 6 above documented that threat of the Governor went viral and was seen by those whom he wanted to use the threat to intimidate. The degree of exposure to the threat among the respondents cannot be divorced from the fact that the threat was made in the presence of the internet savvy generation who share everything on the internet once they are done. This justifies the aim of the global village which has been enabled by the development of the internet and its gadgets.

Table 2: What is the respondents' dominant perception of Soludo's video clip on *There will be consequences* political campaign?

Response category	Frequency	%
Soludo acted like an amateur in that kind of campaign	98	25.5
The governor did what every political office holder can do	75	19.5
His application of threat is unprofessional and unacceptable	107	27.9
The governor only campaigned for his party and that is all	35	9.4
His threat generated more negative than positive support for APGA	68	17.7
Total	383	100

Source: Researcher's field survey 2023

The information in this table is showing the perception of the video clip of the Governor and his threat among the respondents. The data show that the people have negative perception of the action taken by the Governor who was just a year and few days in office. The implication of this is that as a public office holder, there are certain actions that people are expected to abscond from taking considering the light it will shine on them.

Table 3: To what extent did Governor Soludo's video clip on *There will be consequences* political campaign encourage voters to vote for APGA State House of Assembly candidates in the State?

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
To a very great extent	48	12.5
To a great extent	53	13.8
To no extent at all	102	26.6
To a minimal extent	86	22.4
To a very minimal extent	94	24.7
Total	383	100

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

The data above show that the threatening video of the Governor had less significant impact on making the people to vote for his party. On the responses recorded, only 26.6 percent of the respondents were of the view that the threat made them consider voting for APGA. This number is a relatively small compared to the number that dismissed the threat. The implication of this data is that the use of threat is never the best option as a sitting office holder in a State like Anambra.

Table 4: To what extent did the respondents believe that voting against APGA would deny them their rightful benefits from the government of the State?

Response category	Frequency	Percentage
To a very significant extent	0	0
To a significant extent	0	0
Undecided	76	19.8
To a very little extent	28	7.6
To no extent	279	73.6
Total	383	100

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2023

The data from this table have shown that Governor Soludo's threat of 'There will be consequences' for voting against APGA in the State House of Assembly election was rather seen as an empty threat by the respondents under study. From the population of 383 respondents, only 19.8 percent were staying on the fence on whether they believed the threat to mean that if they voted against the party, they would see the consequences. The people of Ayamelum local government damned the threat and voted for the PDP candidate in the interest of zoning. The candidate of APGA that won in Dunukofia was a result of zoning too. The implication of this is that there are other factors that control the people's voting decision other than threat and party affiliation. In conclusion, threat does not command believability among the respondents especially in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

On the first research question posed to ascertain the respondent's level of exposure to the video of the Governor threatening the

voters in the State, it was found that the people are massively exposed to it. According to the data from the table, at least all the respondents in the sample were exposed to the threatening video clip of the Governor but at different magnitude. From the table, 48.8 percent of the respondents admitted being *Very Highly Exposed* to the video while another 32.6 percent said that they were *Highly Exposed* to it. 13.3 percent were *moderately exposed* to the video-clip while 5.2 percent were *poorly exposed* to it. Significantly, none of the respondents said that he or she is not conversant with the video. This shows how viral the video went within the period of its dissemination to the public. The degree of its exposure as recorded above can be linked to the massive use of the internet by the respondents. The finding is in line with Obiakor & Ikegbunam (2021), that social media is one of the most vibrant means of dissemination information to the masses and that they have the capacity to provide direct access to contents to an unprecedented number of people. This is because a normal 'Soludo' would have asked the media to kill the story if the story has not been posted on the internet once he realizes that he has done more damage to the party. This suspicion manifested in the later claim by the Governor who came up with denial to launder his action where he was denying threatening the people even when the video is still in the public domain.

On the second research question which interrogated the respondents' perception of the action taken by the Governor in the viral video-clip of *There Will Be Consequences*, it was found that an overwhelming majority of the respondents were totally against the threat. From the table 2 above, 27.9 percent were of the view that using threat in seeking for votes from the people is grossly unacceptable to the people. This was followed by another 25.5 percent of the sample who said that the Governor acted like an amateur in the action displayed in the video-clip. The table further revealed that it was only 19.5 and 9.1 percent of the sample that see the action as a means of saving his party in order to remain in office. Unfortunately, the remaining 17.7 percent agreed that his subscription to the use of threat generated negative rather than positive support for his party. This finding demonstrated that there is more negative perception of the action of the Governor than positive perception. The perception above is a perfect reflection of the views of proponent of the Social judgment theory which in tandem with the view of González (2022), prescribes that persuasion rather than threat is the best method to lure voters in a contest. The finding agrees with the belief that the people know who is doing well and who is cheating them. One thing in politics is that it is a game of cheating but the more the game grows the more the people wise up. Significantly, this finding corroborates that of Agbi & Saka-Olokunboye (2019) who argued that instead of striving to convince the masses, Nigerian Politicians resort to other strategies such as vote buying, manipulation of results and threat to keep themselves and their party in power, most times against the will of the masses. Governor Soludo's threat of "there will be consequences" is cheap effort to manipulate the people and subvert the will of the masses on the choice of their representatives.

On the third research question posed to ascertain the extent to which the video-clip of the Governor's *There Will Be Consequences* encouraged support for APGA, it was found that the video generated less than 30% positive impact in encouraging support for APGA. Before the election, APGA had a total of 24 members out of 30. After the election, it has only 17 members. From the table 3 above, 102 respondents accounting for 26.6

percent of the respondents said that the video-clip encouraged them to vote for APGA to no extent at all. From the same sample, 86 respondents admitted that it encouraged them to support APGA to a minimal extent while 94 respondents said that it encouraged them to vote for the party to a very minimal extent. This finding agrees with that of Ikegbunam & Agudoso (2021) where it was found that getting exposed to any media content is one thing while acting in line with the message exposed to is another. This was concretized by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen's theory of reasoned action in Ikegbunam & Obiakor (2023), beliefs, attitudes and intentions have something to do with an individual's thoughts that certain action will generate a favorable outcome Truly, the voters in Anambra State heard the Governor, but whether they would go ahead to act based on the instruction passed is another part to the issue. This finding is equally in tandem with the provision of the Negotiated exchange theory which has been found to be productive, reciprocal and general in nature. According to Liu, Chen & Holley (2017), the type of exchange is determined by the level of attachment that the people feel with the source and the degree of satisfaction they feel will be obtained. Voting in the 2023 Anambra State House of Assembly election was guided by certain factors that are reciprocal in nature. Among such factors is the zoning arrangement that produced Governor Soludo which was jettisoned by some APGA executives in their choice of candidates.

While examining the extent to which the respondents believed that voting against APGA would generate regrettable consequences as threatened by the Governor, the researchers found that the threat is a wasted effort made by the Governor. According to the table, the best favorable option APGA obtained from the respondents is 76 respondents accounting for only 19.8 percent of the sample who chose the undecided response category. Apart from these respondents, 276 other respondents in the study accounting for 73.6 percent of the sample said that they believed the threat to *no extent at all*. This left the party with another 28 respondents who admitted that they believed the threat to *a very little extent*. This finding revealed that Governor Soludo's effort to get support for the candidates because he is a governor relying on the ground that, out of fear of losing out, people were most likely to vote for a candidate enjoying the support of the incumbent has failed completely. This should be a lesson for other politicians. Significantly, the media are not alone in the control of the people. Such factors as audience attitude and predetermined desires also play significant role in controlling the actions taken by the audience of the media content. An important factor that controls behaviour is believability in the reality of a content. In respect to this fact, the finding above disagrees with that widely acclaimed ultimate power of the media which previous media scholars like Asemah (2011); Nwabueze (2014); Agbanu (2013) and other agenda setting proponents have accepted that media beat the drum and the people dance the tune. In this study, zoning factor as a matter of equity in the State has questioned the acclaimed ultimate power of the media leading to the disbelief suffered by Governor Soludo's threat among the people. The people lost their trust and respect for the Governor the day this letter of "history beckons" was made public. Without trust, a source is off the record when it comes to its credibility (Nwabueze & Ikegbunam, 2015). Fisher (2016) further argued that trust is one of the major controlling characteristics of an influencer which to a large extent determines the believability of the contents among the people.

Summary

This study has examined the exposure of the people to the widely circulated video-clip of Governor Soludo titled 'there will be consequences'. The target of the study was to ascertain the extent of exposure, the perception of the video, its impact on their voting decision on the day of election and whether they believed that voting against APGA in the election could actually and truly mean that they will lack infrastructure under the leadership of the serving Governor. The study examined the relationship between the message and the voting decision of citizens in the State as far as the 2023 State's Assembly election was concerned. Relying on the research questions posed and data obtained in the field, this study has summarized that Governor Soludo's threat failed and generated negative perception of his person and the support for the party in the election. The public rejection and complete negligence of his threat was felt in the outcome of the election where the party which was in control of 24 seats struggled to get majority of the seats in the 2023 election. The findings also revealed that there is negative perception of the action taken by the Governor.

Conclusion

Considering the findings, the study concluded that the use of threat in seeking voters' support does not produce the required effect and should be discontinued among politicians. Again, this study supports the view that setting agenda is different from acting the agenda by the people. This was as it is found in the study where the threat though well received failed to get the people to act in line with the message. Political office holders in Nigeria do what Soludo did and sometimes it works for them considering the fact that masses are sometimes afraid of losing out. The Nigerian political atmosphere has been driven out of facts and figures by the fear of staying out of power among the voters who subscribe to voting for candidates without any reasons other than they are being supported by the government in power. This study among other things has revealed that the zoning ideology brought into politics has formed a yardstick for making voting decision among a reasonable number of people in the country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the researchers recommended that:

Nigerian political officer holders should strive to do well for the masses and campaign on their goodwill rather than application of threat as that cannot work on an informed audience.

All parties should subscribe to zoning and as a matter of equity and fairness and in the interest of their political party struggle to ensure that the zoning is fairly maintained at all cost.

The voters should learn to have decisions of their own each time they are about to cast their votes. This is because the mistake of one day in an election lasts for at least four years on the people.

Further studies should investigate reason why some voters still accept to remain manipulated in the fear that they may lose out entirely if they fail to vote for the candidate enjoying the support of the incumbent government.

References

1. Abdulmumin, I. (2021). *Zoning policy in the Nigerian political system; Reasons, effects and intricacies*. Retrieved 20 May 2023 from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/columns/490022->

zoning-policy-in-the-nigerian-political-system-reasons-effects-and-intricacies-by-ibrahim-abdulummin.html?tztc=1

2. Agbi, N. & Saka-Olokungboye, N. (2019). Money politics, vote buying and selling in Nigeria: An emerging threat to good governance. *International Journal of Advanced Academic Studies*, 1(2), 146-152
3. Awobamise, A. O., Jarrar Y. & Nnauife, S. (2019). Social media, sexual harassment and rape discourse in Nigeria: An exploratory study. *Journal of Religación: Revista de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades* 4, 199-209. ISSN-e 2477-9083. file:///C:/Users/PETER%20IG/Downloads/Dialnet-SocialMediaSexualHarassmentAndRapeDiscourseInNigeria-8274146.pdf
4. Church, S. A. & Onyebuchi, C. A. (2012). Quantitative and qualitative analysis of audience perception of the effects of public opinion polls in Nigeria's nascent democracy. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2 (15).
5. Ekeli, E. O. (2008). Mass media ethics, peace building and reconciliation. In E. M. E. Mojaye, E. Arahgba, O. Soola & L. Oso (Eds.). *Media dialogue, peace building and reconciliation*. Conference proceedings (pp 336-344). Ibadan: ACCE and Book Wright Nigeria.
6. Fisher, C. (2016). *The trouble with 'trust' in news media, communication research and practice*, DOI: 10.1080/22041451.2016.1261251 To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2016.1261251>
7. González, S. D. (2022). *The theory of social judgment*. Retrieved 23 May 2023 from <https://exploringyourmind.com/the-theory-of-social-judgment/>
8. Gupta, V. (2021). *Domestic violence awareness month: Culturally specific services, legal assistance, and engaging everyone in bringing an end to violence*. Retrieved 24 May 2023 from <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/blog/updated-definition-rape>
9. Higgins, C. & Walker, R. (2012). *Ethos, logos, pathos: Strategies of persuasion in social/environmental reports*. file:///C:/Users/PETER%20IG/Downloads/HigginsWalker2012.pdf
10. Ikegbunam, P. C. & Agudoso, F. I. (2021). Cultivating Biafran agenda in Nigeria: Evaluation of the influence of radio Biafra's rhetoric of ethnic marginalization on rural dwellers in the South-east. 13(1), 23-37, DOI: 10.5897/JMCS2020.0698 <http://www.academicjournals.org/JMCS>
11. Ikegbunam, P. C. & Obiakor, C. U. (2023). Exposure to social media videos of yahooplus victims and its influence on attitude changes among young ladies in Nigeria. *ANSU Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, (ANSUJASS) 10(1): 101-117.
12. Kruglanski, A. W.; Van, L. & Paul, A. M. (2012). *Handbook of theories of social psychology*. London, England: Sage. pp. 224-245.
13. Lau, R. R., Kleinberg, M. S. & Ditonto, T. M. (2018). Measuring voter decision strategies in political behavior and public opinion research. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. doi:10.1093/poq/nfy004
14. Liu, D., Chen, X. & Holley, E. (2017). Help yourself by helping others: The joint impact of group member organizational citizenship behaviors and group cohesiveness on group member objective task performance change. *Personnel Psychology*. 70 (4), 809-842. doi:10.1111/peps.12209.
15. Mencía de Garcillán, L. (2015). *Persuasion through sensory and experiential marketing*. <https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/310/31045568027.pdf>
16. Merriam-Webster (2017). *Definition of rape*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rape>.
17. Muldoon, K. A., Denize, K. M., Talarico, R. et al. (2021). COVID-19 pandemic and violence: Rising risks and decreasing urgent care-seeking for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors. *BMC Med*, 19, 20 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-020-01897-z>
18. Norris, P. (2016). *Political communication*. <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/Political%20Communications%20encyclopedia2.pdf>
19. Nwabueze, C. D. & Ikegbunam, P. C. (2015). Media re-victimization of rape victims in a shame culture? Exploring the framing and representation of rape cases in Nigerian dailies. *Global Media Journal*, 13 (24)1-20.
20. Nwammuo, A. N. (2015). The views of women of press coverage of rape cases in Nigeria: A misrepresentation or an under-representation. *An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies (LALIGENS), Ethiopia*. 4 (1), 163-182
21. Obiakor, C. U. & Ikegbunam, P. C. (2021). Social media shared video-clips on covid-19 and undergraduates' perception of health realities of the virus. *ANSU Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, (ANSUJASS) 8(2): 57-72.
22. Ojete, N. E. (2008). Social mobilisation role of mass media: A study of the 2006 national population census. In I. A. Fred & Omu A. (Eds.), *Mass media in Nigeria democracy*. Lagos, Ibadan, Benin City, JattUzairu: StirlingHordon publishing Limited
23. Øyvind, I. & Ketil, R. (2022). The game of goodwill: An exploratory study of discursive goodwill strategies of interest organizations in a consensus democracy. *Interest Groups & Advocacy*, 11, 353-372 <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41309-022-00153-4>
24. RAINN: An American anti-sexual violence organization (2020). *Rape and Womanhood in sub-saharan African countries*. www.rainn.uhgd
25. Ugwuanyi CJ (2018). Newspaper coverage of rape cases in Nigeria: Do newspaper report set agenda on the issue? *International Journal of Communication*, 100-109.
26. United Nations Children's Fund (2020). *Rape and violence against women in Africa*. [Werty.yuuioewytyue_yuioe](http://www.unicef.org/press/2020/08/11/rape-and-violence-against-women-in-africa)
27. WHO (2017). *Sexual violence*. http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/.../chap6.pdf. Accessed 27 Dec 2017.