

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The world over, citizens are at the centre of any socially organised steps to develop society (Jega, 2007). Societies, on the other hand, are in a never-ending search for ways to mobilize citizens for total development. Governments are seeking ways to prove and sustain their legitimacy, and citizens are always looking forward to being given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to social development through social communication.

Political trust and communication have become key issues in governance (Blinder, 2007). Political trust determines how the citizens view and respond to a political system and its incumbents. Political communication discusses all the socially-based efforts to generate and exchange communication among holders of public office, institutions, groups and the citizens to engender credibility and trust in a political system. Apart from the process of choosing leaders, the next key index of democracy is citizen participation in governance.

Democracy goes beyond the formal trappings of democratic political systems (such as multiparty and elections) to include such elements as accountability and genuine popular participation in the nation's political and economic decision making processes (Martin, 1993) The workability of a political system is largely a function of political communication and political trust. Communication drives citizen participation in governance. The kinds of communication interlink, the processing and transmission of information needed by a society determine the workability of a political system. Therefore, a political system works smoothly and grows when there is sufficient information generated, processed, disseminated and used up within and among the major actors in a political system (Ukonu, 2007). This has been the difference between advanced and emerging democracies in the world. In view of these, there has been a growing political need to analyse citizens' use of political/governmental communications, especially now that the international community is engaging with Nigeria as a clime in which democracy is taking root.

A trust and credibility survey conducted by Edelman public relations firm, has revealed that 72 percent of Nigerians in mainstream institutions of media, government, business and NGOs consider trust to be the most important in the patronage of a product or relationship with an organisation (Nwantok, 2018).

1.1 Background to the Study

Researchers have long been interested in how societies generate, collate, process and exchange political information through various media for effective governance and followership (Pew Research Centre, 2016; Olasina, 2015; Blind, 2007). Research focus in these areas has been on ways to avoid political instability, guarantee free speech, foster meaningful opposition to government and engender social debate and discussion, which are the hallmarks of every free, democratic society. Government programmes and policies have been given good doses of research attention. A lot of content analyses have also focused on government programmes and messages (Ugwuanyi, 2016; Adeniyi, 2012;Egwemi, 2010; Ejinkonye, 2006). However, few studies have investigated how citizens receive, respond, and use information given out by government. The communication process is not complete without this form of assessment, digestion, use, and feedback to the messages by the intended target audience. This is vital now that a plethora of new media have made social communication, especially through the mass media, truly interactive.

On the contrary, since credibility and perception are not always linked to specific messages, the general dispositions of citizens shall also be used to measure the credibility and perceptions of citizens to governmental communications. Many factors affect such dispositions, and they are considered in this study. For instance, the social media have added a new lease to citizen reactions to government messages, and a systematic analysis of these responses is germane to the government, citizens and the mass media. This will lead to necessary proposals on how to harness the instrument of social communication (mass media, social media, interpersonal, and small group media) to maximize citizen reception, assimilation, and reaction to government communication.

On the other hand, according to Luengo & Maurer (2004), some recent analyses state that government information in the media, considering their tone and credibility, leads to an informed and engaged public. The processes of governmental communications via mass media have a significant impact on the civic engagement of the citizens. This impact

takes shape in a positive direction or, in other words, the improvement of social commitment towards governance is determined by the process of governmental communications. According to Moneke (2007) cited in Ndolo and Ezinwa (2011), these objectives are ideals to be pursued by government towards building a welfare society for the benefit of the citizen. These objectives are said to be fundamental because their progressive realization defines the essence of government and where they are abandoned, there might as well be no government at all.

At the same time, however, the vast quantity of and accessibility to government information has prompted concerns about credibility because the origin of information, its quality, and its veracity are less clear than ever before in governance and its processes. This has resulted in an unparalleled burden on individuals to locate information that they can trust. Yet this is not an easy task, given that governmental communications complicate many of the means by which people traditionally go about evaluating information.

Scholarly interest in credibility dates back to Aristotle's writings on rhetoric and specifically on his notions of *ethos* (appeal based on the character of a speaker), *pathos* (appeal based on emotion), and *logos* (appeal based on logic or reason). More modern accounts of credibility define it as the believability of a source, and it rests largely on perceptions of the trustworthiness and expertise of the information source as interpreted by the information receiver (Hovland, 2017). This definition guided research on credibility in psychology and communication, which largely focuses on source credibility, typically conceptualized as the believability of a speaker and closely aligned with Aristotle's notion of *ethos*. Research in the field of information science has focused instead on the credibility of information, where the emphasis has been on believability of messages rather than speakers, which is somewhat akin to Aristotle's notion of *logos*. Attention to these varying conceptualizations of credibility is necessary in the realm of governmental communications, as determinations of credibility by the citizens may rest on evaluations of the source of some information, the message alone (as when source information is obscured), or on a combination of the source and the message. In this environment of information scarcity, credible sources were often characterized by such features as formal positions indicating particular training and education or by jobs requiring specific, relevant experience. Thus, credible sources of information were often

easily recognized by virtue of their observable and verifiable credentials, which were rooted in specific qualifications or training. Although this system of bestowing credibility endures today in a number of domains, the evolution of networked information-sharing tools has significantly altered it in many cases.

This is perhaps, why successive Nigerian governments since early eighties to date initiated several image restoration policies to, such as War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Rebranding Nigeria Project (RNP), Transformation Agenda, and the current, Change mantra of President Mohammed Buhari. All these are governmental communications efforts in repositioning the image and reputation of the country. Despite the fact that almost every new regime or administration in Nigeria has the penchant for initiating fresh image reform projects instead of acceding to those ones from its predecessors, yet such image modification policies seem to have yielded no significant results on the citizens.

Political communication is a well-researched area in communication research. A lot of survey and content analysis have pried into images of government and media coverage of government programmes, policies, communications and actions. Some surveys have even examined audience perception of media coverage of given government policies: Ugwuanyi, (2016), 'An evaluation of newspaper coverage of selected image management projects in Nigeria'; Adeniyi (2012), 'Nigeria's external image and the media'; Egwemi (2010), 'Managing Nigeria's image crisis'; Ejinkonye (2006), 'Heart of Africa: Another drain pipe'; Afam (1999), 'The influence of the mass media on the residents of Abia state regarding the 1999 general elections'; Agubamah (2009), 'Accountability and good governance: A pre-requisite for democratic politics in Nigeria'; Ngonso (2015), 'Understanding rhetoric in selling political agenda'; Ukonu (2016), 'A sociological analysis of political campaign promises and the eclipse of change in Nigeria'; and Yaser (2016), 'Effects of exposure to electronic media political content on voters' voting behaviour'. However, very few studies have considered general citizens' response to governmental communications.

Since the emergence of the interactive media, scholars have been studying them in various ways such as their uses in political campaigns (Morah, 2012; Graber and Smith, 2005, cited in Nwokeafor and Okunoye, 2013); and how much penetrations they have

among citizens, and politicians (Oyebode, 2014). New technologies of communication have made the audience important factors in the generation and use of political communication, and in the process of feeding back to the major sources of political communication, which are the government and mass media. Political office holders and aspirants seem to be using the social media heavily in reaching the audience. Modern electioneering campaigns are principally a social media affair. Many politicians have quickly launched on the internet to meet the citizens (Oyebode, 2014; Okoro and Adibe, 2013).

According to George Washington university report (2017), There are three primary functions of government communication: informing, advocating/persuading (for policies and reforms), and engaging citizens. Communication represents an important function of government, responsible for improving three principle elements of government: effectiveness (building broad support and legitimacy for programs), responsiveness (knowing citizens needs and responding to them), and accountability (explaining government stewardship and providing mechanisms to hold governments accountable). Many countries lack a culture of consultation and participation, and this is exacerbated by low literacy rates and lack of information provision. But enhanced citizen participation is a key indicator of effective government communication. Effective public communication efforts enable citizen participation. Therefore, government communication is more than just developing effective spokespeople, it also involves the provision of customer oriented services, and building capacity for citizens to provide government with feedback as regards these services. In developing countries, this requires crafting and promoting good practices when it comes to transparency issues. It is important to understand that neglecting to provide information to the public represents a serious impediment to governance, and underscoring the benefits of improved government communication has a strong multiplier effect. This point underlies the need to address what incentives governments have to share information (both internally and externally) or be held accountable, and explain how improved communication capacity can deliver those benefits. External communication (with the media and the public) can have a disciplining impact on policy work and help coordinate communication within governments, because consistent internal information is required to communicate efficiently and effectively with external audiences. In many cases, countries not only lack capacity in communication

between government and the public, but also internal communication among government agencies.

Odugbemi (2017), Governments need to be made aware of the incentives for communicating. Governments often don't realize that communication is part of their job and is fundamental to their functioning. In many countries, no budget is provided for continuing communication efforts. Secrecy laws and data that may "look bad" if released to the public impede the willingness to communicate. Political elites and bureaucrats may believe that knowledge is power and that sharing it results in diminished influence. In some countries, governments don't see the need to raise their own capacity because they already own media outlets, such as state-owned radio and newspapers. In his view, Sina (2017) opines that, "Weak government communication has clear negative consequences. Some countries, however, provide the necessary resources to run strong communication operations. For instance, the United Kingdom has around 1000 people at any time working in the government communication area. Getting political "buy in" from leaders, who may perceive communicating with the public as a risk, requires demonstrating the contribution of government communication to improved governance and development outcomes. Communication for educational use may be more attractive to governments than communication that serves to hold them accountable. Finally, governments need to be more aware of the link between accountability and re-election, (Odugbemi, 2017).

In view of the above, Okoye (2011, p.1) states that "media reports, analysis and renditions of issues shape and reshape the perception of the people to issues and impacts on their understanding and reaction to them." He explains that a good issue may receive a bad press and becomes a bad issue. A bad issue on the other hand may be properly dressed and redressed and the public may receive such an issue positively. Thus, Akpan (1985) concludes that if the public lack confidence in the press in a society then the press is as good as dead, likewise the government.

Clearly, citizens' assessment of governmental communications will depend on perceptions of such a government (Madhav, 2007; Ozigbo, 2000 cited in Okpaga, 2007, Ansah, 2007). Citizens want freedom, accountability and participation, and the basic features of good governance include the conduct of an inclusive government wherein all the critical stakeholders are allowed to have a say in the decision-making process (Sen, 1990; Odoh, 2015). Good governance itself is based on the democratic enthronement of

leaders. It is on the basis of legitimate authority to govern that leaders find the obligation in conscience to lead well. It is also on the same basis that the citizens find voice to react to governance.

The part played by colonialism, militarism, democracy, ethnic and religious divisions, corruption, and party politics in governance in Nigeria has rubbed off negatively on the citizenry (Chimee, 2009; Joseph, 2001 cited in Osimiri, 2009; Odoh, 2015). This brings about the need to engage with the citizens on their perceptions of government as a way to determine the influences of the past or current ratings of governance. This study therefore, seeks to evaluate and redirect the attention of the Nigerian populace towards effective participation in the process of political communication. It focuses on the assessment and perceptions of governmental communications among the Nigerian populace. Thus, the media become the only hope and easy platform for the government to convince its citizens to play their expected part in democracy.

Notwithstanding, these responsibilities are capable of eroding the public trust and credibility of the media as purveyors of information and, by extension, the credibility of the government. The implications are further described by Kogah (2005,p.15) as follows “declines in public evaluations of media performance is significant because without public trust in media contents, the media’s ability to inform the public, serve as watchdog over powerful institutions, and assist in self-governance are compromised”. Thus, Jega in Araka (2011,p.6) cautioned that ‘the credibility of any government with the populace is largely a function of their perception and it is the media’s prerogative and privilege to mould that perception. Araka emphasizes that, perception is everything and that it is the political role of the media to mould people’s political perception.’

Hence, Egbuna (2011, p.1) contends that ‘subjective reporting for instance, has the tendency to undermine not only the credibility of the government and the media but also the capacity of the electorate to make the right choice.’ Okoye (2011) emphasizes that if the media misrepresent facts and import extraneous and jaundiced issues into their reports and analysis, the society may become unstable and their reports may lead to a breakdown of law and order. On the other hand, he noted that if the media report objectively, the society may make tremendous progress under an environment of stability. He explains that if the media educate properly and professionally, the people may make informed choices on issues based on knowledge. Thus, Toure (2011)avers that the media have a

key role in ensuring active, positive and peaceful relationship between the government and her populace in governance as well as ensuring that every government process is credible and acceptable to the generality of the masses.

Credibility has been defined as believability, trust, reliability, accuracy, fairness, objectivity, and dozens of other concepts and combination thereof (Self, 1996). It also has been defined in terms of characteristics of persuasive sources, characteristics of the message structure and content, and perceptions of media (Metzger, 2003). Some studies focus on the characteristics that make sources or information worthy of being believed, while others examine the characteristics that make sources or information likely to be believed (Flanagin and Metzger, 2007). A person is trustworthy for being honest, careful in choice of words, and disinclined to deceive (Wilson, 1983). Information is trustworthy when it appears to be reliable, unbiased, and fair. Based on the foregoing, it becomes imperative for the researchers to appraise the perception and credibility of the government communications among the Nigerian residents.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

The importance of responsible, active and politically conscious citizenry can hardly be belaboured. There can be no meaningful attempt to grow a political system without concomitant effort to create an atmosphere for the citizens to play an active part in such attempts. This fact is more pronounced in this era of media-acculturated citizenry.

It is often held that Nigerians do not believe in their government, yet experience has shown that political support for a government is determined to a great extent by political party affinity, ethnicity and religion (Blind, 2007). How these factors of political support mix with citizen reaction to governmental communications is quite unclear, and needs to be investigated. Doing this will require a consideration of many factors rarely considered by the researchers, but which are critical to any effort to boost the credibility of government messages.

For many decades, the past and present Nigerian government have made successive attempts to launder the image and reputation of Nigeria and Nigerians through series of image reform policies, yet it however seemed such efforts yielded no desired result. Fab-Ukozor (2002, p.35) agrees with the above assertion where she stated that although past regimes/administrations in Nigeria have made efforts at using public relations strategies

and by extension, image reform policies to redeem the country's image, mass media reports and public complaints seem to show that Nigeria's image has not improved.

Therefore, the need to ascertain peoples' perception as it regards these governmental communications and its credibility becomes very essential. More so, the way most image experts and public policy analysts within and outside the country perceive these seemingly unending image reform policies vis-à-vis the public uproar that greeted poor planning and implementation of such projects in recent years, have not been adequately evaluated. Indeed, not much empirical studies have been done to ascertain the degree of success or otherwise of the diverse governmental communications and its credibility.

This study therefore takes a citizen's perspective to appraising perceptions and credibility of governmental communications among the Nigeria residents. Based on the foregoing it becomes imperative for an empirical enquiry to evaluate the credibility and perception of governmental communications among the South East residents. The measure of the believability of governmental communications in the South East was aimed at finding the effectiveness and use of those messages from government to the people. Government at different levels in the South East reach out to the citizenry through the mass media and other platforms on their social-economic policies and programmes; the prospect of the economy peace and attitudinal change campaigns daily in the mainstream media and social media while poverty, insecurity, clamour for Republic of Biafra, herdsmen attack on the rural farmers and other forms of civil unrest are bound in the South East. Does it mean that those messages from government are not credible or the audience have failed to understand and interpret those messages? If the three denominators, the government, people and communication find a balance, mutual suspicion and distrust will be non-existent. The researcher considered this a major gap in knowledge which the present study aims at filling.

This study takes the aforementioned into cognizance, and aims to ascertain the levels of participation of the audience, and the motives behind reactions to governmental communications. This includes public debates and discussions of political messages arising from speeches by political office holders; how the media cover political issues and informal discussions among the citizens on various online and offline platforms and so on.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The main purpose of this study is to evaluate the credibility and perception of governmental communications among the South Eastern Nigerian populace. Other specific objectives are:

1. To examine the level of South East Nigeria residents' awareness of government communications.
2. To ascertain how these citizens general knowledge about governmental communications affect their perception of government policies.
3. To determine the extent to which these governmental communications have influenced the attitude of these people towards their relationship with the government.
4. To evaluate if the citizens perceive these governmental communications as credible.
5. To assess the kinds of responses given to these governmental communications.
6. To examine factors that affect citizens' access and response to governmental communications.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were consequently raised to achieve the research objectives:

1. What is the level of South East Nigeria residents' awareness of government communications?
2. Are these citizens' knowledgeable about the policies of federal government?
3. Do these citizens' perceive governmental communications as credible?
4. What number among these citizens' is influenced by governmental communications to believe that government is working?
5. Do these citizens' believe in the ability of government to deliver good governance, influence their responses to governmental communications?
6. What factors influence citizens' access and response to governmental communications?

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was aimed at assessing how the citizenry in South East Nigeria perceive governmental communications as credible or not. This study covers the period of 1999-2017, being the period of Nigeria's uninterrupted democracy. The media, political actors and government agencies are considered in the area of sources of such communications.

The study was limited to audience perception of governmental communications in South East of Nigeria with particular reference to universities, government ministries and markets in South East Nigeria. The South East Nigeria was chosen because residents of the geopolitical zones see themselves as being marginalised in terms of having government presence in the region. The study covers all governmental communications but specifically, the current Change mantra of President Mohammed Buhari.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The citizens are at the centre of political communication. The activities of all the other political actors are geared towards the electorate, who are key targets of the messages. This study can be a rallying point to the key actors on the political and governance stages on how to help the audience become better users of governmental communications.

Agencies and incumbents in government need to learn how to boost message credibility, and this study has a lot of part to play in portraying the factors affecting government message credibility, especially political influences of the media. This study can also help in providing knowledge necessary to build a stronger political system by showing why political trust and response to given governmental communications should go beyond party affiliations, the personality of incumbents and ethnic considerations.

This study will also add to existing studies and theories on citizens' perceptions of governmental communications. This study will contribute to Nigeria's national communication development, global competitiveness in political consciousness and literate citizenry. It will enrich the curriculum of academic institutions on political communication, especially in strengthening the synergy between politics and communications. It will therefore be of benefit to scholars, researchers, students, professionals, communication experts, and serve as platform for advising the media practitioners on how to boost their capacity in projecting governmental communications.

Furthermore, this study can make a veritable source of data for government officials involved in generating, processing and relating with the mass media in disseminating governmental communications, especially now that Nigeria is redefining many of her political values.

Theoretically, this study will serve as empirical grounds to reveal the applicability of the agenda theory and how people perceive and respond to governmental communications and its credibility. Academically, this study will serve as a resource material for scholars in this area, and other related areas. It will also give insight into areas that are likely to attract research interest amongst scholars and researchers alike.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Here, key terms and variables as used in this research work have been defined operationally within the framework of this research below:

Assessment: Analysis, evaluations, appraisals based on citizen perceptions, views, uses, and applications of governmental communications.

Credibility: This defines the extent to which citizens believe, trust, support, and favourably relate with government messages. In this regard, credibility becomes directly related to the notion of political trust because as a government agency makes policies that consistently produce successful results, trust develops over time. On the contrary, if a government agency or a firm produces policy that repeatedly lack credibility, distrust ensues, and is likely to persist. That is why every organizational action and policy is also a potential act of building trustworthiness.

Governmental Communications: The various messages emanating from government meant for the citizen, and to which the citizens often react to in a number of ways. Such messages can be on any subject, not necessarily politics. In this study, it refers to messages from the government, transmitted through the mainstream media, social media and other platforms that promote publicity, awareness and enlightenment of the populace in the South East. It includes budget speeches, monetary policies like Treasury Single Account (TSA); Bank Verification Number (BVN), activities of anti-graft agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), national orientation campaigns, “change begins with me”, “good people, great nation”, “rebranding Nigeria”, “electoral reforms” and Fulani

herdsmen killings was used to test their credibility among the citizenry. Assessment of governmental communications was based on general questions measuring citizens' dispositions to governmental communications.

Perception: Views, dispositions, beliefs, opinions, level of sensitivity, descriptions, and imagery of governmental communications.

Political Communication: This can be defined as imparting, exchanging, sending or transporting of messages, information or thoughts on human affairs and their environment backed with an official authority (i.e. legal power) based on a purpose or to achieve specific objectives. It can also be described as the gap or intermediary between the political organisations (political parties) and the citizenry. It is a way of communicating issues, stories, and events about political organisations to the citizens through the mass media.

Political Participation: Political participation is an aggregate of actions by the citizens with regard to acts relating to the political reality and governance in an organised political context. Political participation, like political apathy, is an abstract concept best described by certain variables. Political participation defines attempt by people to perform acts or react to acts in line with the selection of office holders or to other acts of political office holders. It is the involvement of people, (not necessarily active) in any political process before a collective decision is arrived. In other words, political participation entails citizens' engagement in the discourse of socio-political and economic issues which serve as yardsticks for choosing would-be leaders. It may also include assessing the capabilities of the incumbencies and advocating ways of ameliorating societal ills for a more prosperous country. Political participation includes such activities like political discourse, political campaigns, voter registration, the actual voting, writing and signing of petitions, attending of civil protests, joining interest groups that engage in lobbying, political advocacy, monitoring and reporting of cases of violation of the electoral process such as frauds, rigging, intimidation, violence, monetary inducements, underage voting, etc.

Residents: This refers to a distinct part of the collective individuals that constitutes the total number of people living in an area. It means the people resident in the South East geo-political zones of Nigeria. It entails the residents of the five states, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.

Governance: Governance is the exercise of democratically vested power and authority in the name of, and on behalf of the people. Governance done with accountability and respect for the interests and needs of the people translate to good governance. Inclusiveness and accountability are key ingredients of good governance. These ingredients are the centripetal forces that attract people's reactions to governmental communications.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews related literature to the study of political communication and citizens' participation in the political process. The framing, perception and attitude change theories were also used to anchor the study.

2.1 An Overview of Governmental Communications

Image is the totality of impression about a company, an individual, or an organization as perceived by its various publics. Hence, the mental picture or overall impression, or strong feeling members of the public have about an individual, organization, institution or country in conformity to the latter's observable traits over time. The status of Nigeria both at home and abroad is a direct function of the orientation of its citizenry as manifested in their attitudinal dispositions, social mores and values. Prior and immediately after independence, the country was believed to be a relatively orderly, humane and value-based society, as family bonds were strong and individuals were more conscious of their responsibilities and obligations.

There is an agreement among communication practitioners, image experts and policy analysts that Nigeria's image and reputation nose-dived several decades ago. This agreement among scholars seems to attribute this to multiplicity of factors ranging from military interventions in the affairs of the country, maladministration, Nigerian governments' insensitivity, prohibitive and deceptive approach to governance to unabating socio-political and ethno-religious crises in the country.

On this note, Saliu (2006, p.6):

laments the deplorable image of Nigeria and Nigerians. In his words, "a considerable amount of time and resources have been expended by the Obasanjo government since 1999 to redeem the image of the country, which had been battered by successive military regimes due to their opportunistic style of administration and insincerity in handling both internal and external interests by Nigerian rulers. Before our eyes, sanctions of various descriptions were slammed on Nigeria and Nigerians who had been treated with some respect and dignity in major capitals of the world became subject of scorn and disdain even in the eyes of less endowed countries of the world".

Saliu further blames the root cause of Nigeria's problem on the Babangida regime's numerous atrocities, and lack of credibility which among others; include the truncation of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. This particular election came after many postponements, manipulation and monumental wastes on political programmes majority of Nigerians never knew was intentionally planned to fail.

Every day, people encounter more information from the government than they can possibly use. Several mass media tools like, books, newspapers, television, radio and Web sites are just a few of the government resources used in contributing to the flow of information before the masses. However, all information is not necessarily of equal value. In many cases, certain information appears to be better, or more trustworthy, than other information. The challenge that most people then face is to judge which information is more credible. The concept of credibility has received considerable attention since government seems to be more interested in the protection of its political image irrespective of any measures used to attain this height.

It is against the above background that one may understand the problem with previous governments in Nigeria since independence. As a result, most of which have been riddled with controversies leading to violence including a Civil War (1966) and several abrupt seizure of power by the military (1966; 1983). On this note, Egbuna (2011) observes that the partisan involvement of the media in the First Republic, Federal and Regional elections only created doubts on the integrity of the government and the elections that brought them to power. The issue of bias resulting from media ownership is also evident in government-owned broadcast media. Udejaja (2004, p.255) notes that 'the National Assembly accused government- owned media establishments of partiality and bias in favour of the executive to the detriment of the other arms of government.' He explains that the then Senate President, Anyim Pius Anyim had complained about the one-sidedness of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in their treatment of news covering the Senate. He also reported a finding that revealed veiled but deliberate policies by State Governments to marginalize the opposition in the use of state-owned broadcasting outfits. He stressed that, most Governors were believed to be hand in glove with the Chief Executives of their State media houses to strangle plurality of ideas in the State's airwaves. State-owned broadcasting stations have been shown to be consistently biased and partisan in their coverage of elections. The Transition Monitoring Group (TMG) on 2003 elections in their

final report notes that on January 28, 2003, newly registered political parties protested in Abuja about an alleged blackout of their activities by the Federal Government controlled radio and television stations. The report explained that the tendency of the ruling party to dominate the government-owned media was not limited to the Federal Government or ruling party alone, but was also evident in virtually all states and across the different political parties in control of those states.

Moreover, as a result of the multiplicity of socio-economic, political and ethno-religious crises that bedevilled Nigeria since the attainment of political independence in 1st October 1960, have to a large extent, dented the image and reputation of the country. No doubt, the situation tends to portray Nigeria and Nigerians both home and abroad in bad light. Therefore, in view of the country's negative perception rooted in endemic corruption, unstable political atmosphere, devaluation of the Naira, unabatingly socio-political and religious crises, military intervention in politics and so forth, suffice it to note that while these problems could explain lack of robust positive image for the country, the incidences of unhealthy economy resulting in debt crises were crucial issues (Saliu, 2006; Aligwe, 2000; Ukozor, 2006; Egwu, 2007; Ndolo, 2011 and Aliede, 2010).

According to Okoye (2005), these social problems are incongruous with the noble dreams of the nation's founding fathers. The collective quest of the nationalist leaders to build a virile, united and peaceful nation upon independence was jettisoned by the country's military-cum-civilian leaders, who ruled the country at various times. Therefore, instead of ensuring that the noble objectives or ideals set by the country's foremost nationalists are realised to the fullest, most past and present Nigerian political rulers often resort to primitive accumulation of surplus wealth at the expense of the ever pauperized, dehumanized and impoverished Nigerian masses they claim to represent at various levels of government. More so, much of our rich and highly cherished cultural and religious values, which beautifully served as a parameter for regulating the social conduct of our forebears during the early days, have been thrown overboard and in turn, the reverse order syndrome has gripped the country. The innumerable socio-economic and political factors responsible for these situations have continued to hurt Nigeria's image and perception among the populace and thus, undermined its development and stagnated its progress in the view of Udeaja (1988, p.1). Similarly, Achebe (1983) blames it on what he calls poor leadership.

In spite of the accusations and counter-accusations levelled against past Nigerian civilian leaders by the military, the latter was no better. Besides, the cycle of coup d'états increased in geometric progression in the country as military coupists that belonged to diverse opposing political camps ruthlessly launched one coup d'état after another. This is evident in coup d'états staged by the country's military officers in 1983, 1985, and later part of 1990s. Indeed, the three successive coups of Generals Muhammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha trailed the emergence of the Third Republic.

At this stage, many Nigerians became disappointed and disillusioned with military rulership and were desirous of experiencing democratic governance. However, the annulment of June 12, 1993 election by Babangida, which many saw as the freest and fairest Presidential election in Africa, plunged the country into more crises. General Babangida handed over to Ernest Shonekan whose tenure was short-lived and he could not do much to improve on the situation he met, until General Sani Abacha took over power on November 17, 1993.

Still Nigerians continued to experience the same hardship, and frustration became the order of the day. Indeed, Abacha's tenure earned Nigeria the worst condemnation from several World Bodies. He prolonged the return to civil rulership and recorded the worst crimes under Human Rights Abuses (Ukozor, 2009). Again, the reign of Sani Abacha as a maximum ruler created negative image within and outside the country. His regime became the greatest disappointment in the history of military rulership in the country as Abacha's self-succession saga compelled international community to treat Nigeria as a Pariah state.

Likewise, after his eight years in the leadership saddle, Obasanjo toed the path of infamy via his inordinate quest for tenure elongation with its attendant damnable consequences on Nigeria and Nigerians. Moreover, Obasanjo's civilian administration that succeeded Abdulsalami Abubakar's regime was crowded with tales of corruption starting with "Ghana-must-go" bags which the executive arm of government allegedly used to induce the National Assembly to absolve his leadership of allegations of conflict of interest when he purchased Transcorp shares, which was kept in blind trust for him while he was still a

sitting President (Johnson-Agba, 2006). Other corruption allegations against Obasanjo came to limelight during his legendary fight with Vice President Atiku Abubakar during which they accused each other of misappropriating Petroleum Development Trust Fund (PTDF). During this period therefore, Obasanjo's regime, established EFCC and ICPC to champion the war against corruption, but many perceived their efforts as going after mostly perceived enemies of the government while their cronies remain untouched.

In the process of all these image issues, Nigerian government floated numerous media image campaigns targeted at influencing the citizens' perception, attitude and practice. From thence, it has continued to be a routine project for every government that comes to power, ranging, from the second republic to this present government of President Muhammed Buhari. This project was adopted by every government to help restore the country's image among the people. This is perhaps, why successive Nigerian governments since early eighties to date initiated several image restoration policies, such as War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER), War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Rebranding Nigeria Project (RNP), Transformation Agenda, and the current, Change mantra of President Muhammed Buhari. All these were governmental communications efforts in repositioning the image and reputation of the country.

As a consequence, researchers and practitioners in diverse fields including information science, marketing, management information systems, communication studies, human-computer interaction (HCI), and psychology have examined credibility assessment government communications from a variety of different perspectives (Rieh & Danielson, 2007). Many studies of credibility tend, however, to investigate credibility by relying on definitions, approaches, and presuppositions that are field-specific (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007). In information science, government credibility has been understood as one of the criteria of relevance judgment used when making the decision to accept or reject retrieved information (Rieh & Danielson, 2007). Communication researchers have, on the other hand, been examining government credibility as a research agenda distinguishing message credibility, source credibility, and media credibility (Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus, & McCann, 2003). Management information systems (MIS) researchers have examined government credibility issues in expert systems and decision support systems

by querying people as to whether they believe the advice these systems provide. Consumer behavior researchers have addressed how consumers distinguish subjective and objective claims in governmental communications Web sites.

Consequently, previous studies of credibility have provided insights in relation to particular media such as the Web (Fogg, 2003; Huerta, 2003; Rieh, 2002), particular types of information such as political information (Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2000), news information (Sundar, 1999), and scholarly information (Liu, 2004) as well as particular settings such as schools (Fidel et al., 1999). As an information seeker encounters information, a series of judgments are made about the credibility of that information. These judgments are based on various factors to be discussed in greater depth in the following sections. Taken together, those judgments comprise the credibility assessment which feeds into the decision to accept or reject information.

Information quality refers to people's subjective judgment of goodness and usefulness of information in certain information use settings with respect to their own expectations of information or in regard to other information available. Information quality is composed of five facets: usefulness, goodness, accuracy, currency, and importance (Rieh, 2002). These facets of information quality are not necessarily always consistent. Information may be accurate but not useful, useful but not important, important but no longer current, current but inaccurate, and so forth. In such cases, one of the questions people ask themselves would be whether they can believe what the information says or, if not, whether they can at least take it seriously (Wilson, 1983). Thus, credibility is a chief aspect of information quality.

According to Day (2000), governmental communications are varied, multi-faceted, highly planned, and strategically assembled media symphonies designed to increase awareness, inform, or change behaviour in target audiences. Little wonder that political communicators seek to harness their expertise aimed at informing and changing public opinion. Increasingly, mass media and social organizations have a large, more positive role to play in the dissemination, investigation and use of environmental guidelines and values.

Media relations plays a vital role in national security strategy formulation and execution. Effective media relations can help further the aims and achievements of military, political, economic and informational objectives thereby achieving or promoting the national security strategy. It is also one of the key ways the governments can influence

support and shape attitudes especially among coalition members and other international players and partners. It is just as important for building support in the growth of every nation. A governing factor in whether the United States supports any government policy is, “does it have the support of the people?” Communicating messages to the American public is part of the process of building that support. The recent embedding process during the Iraqi/Afghan/American wars on terror and its success by all accounts, both inside and outside the military indicates that media play major role in propaganda and disinformation. The United States used embedded program to engage media especially the international media to their wars and to gain every opportunity and maintain information dominance and superiority. Direct media engagements and press briefings must continue as they augment and clarify operations and information from other sources. The Department of Defense (DOD) conducted a public affairs campaign during Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) with the goal of keeping the American public and the international community informed about the U.S. strategy and conduct of operations during OIF and OEF. The programs include a variety of strategies and means that attempted to clearly communicate the U.S. resolves for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Effective communication strategies and the means to execute those strategies when communicating to the American public and the world will ensure that the United States continues to promote its security strategy around the world as it continues its role as world leader in the global war on terrorism.

The problem of examining the role of the mass media in political communications and their effects on national issues, election campaigns in particular, is not confined to Nigeria. Anywhere in the world, the press has always been involved in politics, formation of public opinion, perception of images of candidates for political offices, the definition of social reality and social norms, the education, information, enlightenment and entertainment of the public, as well as the presentation and clarification of issues, values, goals and changes in culture and society. Some kinds of communication on some kinds of issues, brought to the attention of some kinds of people under some kinds of conditions have some kinds of effects' (Berelson, 1948).

Scholars have been concerned for centuries with the possible influence of the mass media of communication on the formation of public opinion and attitudes, but there have been divergent and diametrically opposed views on the subject. The result of many disputes about the role of the press is, arguably, what the French call a 'dialogue of the deaf', where nobody hears the other side's argument. "The entire study of mass communication is based on the premise, that there are effects from the media, yet it seems to be the issue on which there is least certainty and least agreement' (McQuail, 1983).

Aristotle and Plato (Thomson, 1964), for instance, acknowledge the immense power of propaganda carried out in the face-to-face setting during their days. Some writers believe that the media are very powerful, while others see the powers of the press as very limited. For example, politicians and journalists agreed that the role of the media is crucial, though they disagree about how effectively it is being played. Further tribute to this role is paid by the various social scientists who have made research into mass media and political communications a growth point in academic industry. Yet clear and specific descriptions, definitions and analyses of what the mass media actually contribute, or ought to contribute, to the political communication process are still inconclusive. In the words of C.R. Wright (1960:4) It is customary to speak of 'the influence of the press' in global terms, as if it were a single, indivisible pressure at work within society, but closer examination reveals that newspapers are actually multi-functional institutions which make their presence felt in a variety of ways.

In the middle of 2003, disagreement over the safety of the oral polio vaccine pitted ordinary citizens and community leaders in the predominantly Muslim north of Nigeria against the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and Nigeria's federal authorities. During the crisis that ensued, five northern states (Niger, Bauchi, Kano, Zamfara and Kaduna) banned the use of the controversial vaccine on children in their respective domains. Underpinning Obadare's paper is the assumption that the immunization crisis is best understood after considering developments in the broader politico-religious contexts, both local and global. Thus, he locates the controversy as a whole against the background of the deepening interface between health and politics. He suggests that the crisis is best seen as emanating from a dearth of trust in social intercourse between ordinary citizens and the Nigerian state on the one hand, and between the same citizens and international health agencies and pharmaceutical companies on the

other. The analysis of trust is historically embedded in order to illuminate the dynamics of relations among the identified actors.

2.2 New Trends in Governmental Communications

One of the significant advocacies of PR practitioners and image experts is that there should be massive mobilization of the citizenry towards adequate participation in the various stages of planning and implementation of Nigeria's image reform projects. Gone are the days when planners/implementers of national image reform projects plan for and not with the targets of image rebuilding programmes.

Raising awareness and sparking dialogue might seem to be the optimal outcome for any governmental communications campaign or strategy, but with increasing public skepticism and diminishing budgets, how might top-down, old-fashioned, traditional government communication styles be tailored to widening industry needs?

On this note, Ms Ranson commented on the comparative dullness of governmental communications in wider Europe when compared to that of the UK. In view of this, Alex Aiken introduced "OASIS", the core aspects of successful communication: 'O' representing objectiveness; 'A' representing the audience; 'S' representing strategy; 'I' representing implementation and; 'S' representing score/evaluation. These values embodied the basis of all governmental communications in the quest to obtain optimal levels of public understanding; however they also required a story, emotion, digital listening, a united approach and nudges. Using the 'ABC' acronym, Mr Aiken relayed the importance of considering the audience (A), the brevity of the message (B) and the conversation generated (C). Looking first at the recent Scottish "Better Together" campaign¹, fact and emotion was used to evoke feelings of patriotism for a "United" Kingdom. *"Effective public communication improves, saves and enriches lives."* Aristotle, originator of the notion of 'communication', established three dimensions to successful communication: **ethos** – the source's credibility/authority; **logos** – the logic used to support the claim (facts); and **pathos** – emotional or motivational appeal. Ethos, logos and pathos should all be central to the tone of a campaign, but pathos was often lost.

Mr. Aiken went on to highlight the need to approach communication as a science, referring to the periodic table (in which atomic weights were occasionally ignored to classify elements into chemical families more effectively - highlighting the importance of presentation), the basic premise being that there were several, related family elements that

equated to successful communication (see the table in the presentation depicting the core competencies of communication, including OASIS).

It was important to note what was actually relevant within the communication, looking specifically at the behaviour we were trying to change. Though the heart of the GCS model was in the OASIS model, Mr. Aiken went on to discuss the importance of the 'S' (score and evaluation): when additional insight was gained it could be used to improve campaign effectiveness. Several methods were used to evaluate GCS campaigns, including: media measurement (volume and favourability thus generating a score); internal communication (focus groups and staff surveys); monthly assessment (though delivery (things done); and impact (change in behaviour)); and, finally, digital measurement. Looking specifically at the UK EBOLA campaign as an example, Mr. Aiken explained the cross-government (departmental) work that was undertaken to provide reassurance, tell stories of progress and encourage open discussion throughout the campaign.

The difference between successful and unsuccessful communication was planning enough time to ensure that all the aforementioned elements could be considered, as opposed to "SOS" communication (Sending Out Stuff). When asked by an audience member about encouraging productivity within a team, Mr. Aiken stressed the importance of creating a culture where failure was acceptable, in order to learn and move on from it, rather than a creative process that might be stifled because suggestions might be feared inadequate. He went on to say that working environments should inspire confidence and empower people. The main objective should be to tell the truth with objectivity, integrity and impartiality.

2.3 Future Trends in Governmental Communications

The media are pivotal to every government today due to their function of disseminating political events, issues, and developments around the clock. The public, the media and the politicians have dependencies on each other. To understand the attitudes, motives, beliefs, thoughts and behaviour of one, we have to understand all these dimensions ranging from the attitude to the behaviour of the other. The government, political elites, public and the mass media influence one another in a number of ways and on scale of values. Governments influence the media by their function of sourcing and by different pressures used by them for achieving and furthering their political goals. The mass media influence

the conduct of government officials by raising and legitimizing issues and also influence the public and voters by providing them political information which results in changing their values, beliefs, attitudes and even behaviours. The public influence the media through their viewership, listenership and/or readership or collectively through market place (Leighley, 2004, p.13). In line with the above assertions, Lane, (2013:1) avers that;

The media help to influence what issues voters should care about in election and what criteria they should use to evaluate candidates. There is a cyclical relationship between the media, the government and the public and while the media can occasionally shape public opinion, it has a greater influence in enumerating to voters what issues are important and less of an influence in convincing them on what to think about those issues. The media work more effectively by placing a spotlight on certain issues they feel the public should be concerned with. The government plays a role in dictating the media's content through the media's regular use of public officials as sources in the news. Just as the government influences the media, the media can help set the political agenda by focusing on specific issues and influencing what issues the public and government should be concerned with.

In political markets, electors need information to judge the record of government and to select among alternative candidates and parties. If citizens are poorly informed, if they lack practical knowledge, they may cast ballot that fail to reflect their real interest. Moreover, policy makers need accurate information about citizens to respond to public concerns, to deliver effective services meeting real human needs, and also, in democracies to maximize popular electoral support to be returned to office (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) cited in (Obot 2013, p.177).

Information in the political market place comes from two primary sources. Personal interactions, which commonly include informal face-to-face political conversations with friends, family and colleagues, traditional campaign rallies, community forums, and grassroots meetings. These information resources remain important, especially for election campaigns in poorer democracies, and the growth of e-mail and online discussion groups may revive the importance of personal political communications. But these channels have been supplemented in modern campaigns by the mass media including the printed press (newspapers and magazines) electronic broadcasts (radio and television news), (Obot, 2013, p.177).

According to Obot, (2013, p.177), “since true democracy involves the participation of an informed and rational electorate, all legitimate measures and strategies should be exploited to make it possible for the citizenry to have the required information or alternatives to act on”. To this end, Hallin and Mancini (2004) cited in Obot, (2013, p.177) assert that;

The mass media are assuming many of the information that political parties once controlled. Instead of leaning about an election at a campaign rally or from party canvassers, the mass media have become the primary source of campaign information. There has been a tendency for political parties to decrease their investments in neighbour canvassing, rallies and other direct contact activities, and devote more attention to campaigning through the media. The growth of electronic media, especially television, has tended to diminish the role of the party. The electronic media also make it easier to communicate events and issues through personalities.

Swanson (2004) cited in Obot, (2013, p.177) also notes that;

In place of or in addition to traditional campaign practices such as rallies of the party faithful, political parties and candidates relied on the sophisticated use of the mass media to persuade voters-the “consumers” of political communication to support them at election time, and they offered campaigns that feature the appealing personalities of party leaders. Television provides an “aesthetic” platform for the presentation (airing) of political advertising and electioneering campaign messages.

The press is consequential because voters need information about candidates in order to make a choice that corresponds to their preferences. Limits on what a person can know and experience make the press the source of that information for most of us (Patrock, 1995, p.136).

As earlier noted, the mass media play so many political roles to the citizens which amongst others include the creation and promotion of political awareness. However, the way and manner the mass media perform these political functions significantly affects audience perception. And of course, there cannot be an objective perception without exposure. This implies that media exposure can significantly serve as the basis for audience perception (negative or positive) of a given situation.

2.4 Media Exposure and Voters’ Perceptions of Elections

There is no doubt about the fact that the media have a core function of providing the citizens with relevant, adequate and unbiased information before, during and after every government projects. The social responsibility function places a demand on the media to,

amongst other things, give fair, balanced and objective political reports. While identifying the political functions of the mass media, Mboho (2005, p.157) asserts that the mass media have the political functions of

1. Creating and promoting political awareness.
2. Identifying and promoting civil responsibilities among the people.
3. Mobilizing the people toward that achievement at national goals.
4. Promoting social justice based on the responsibilities and rights of the individual in the society.

Every democratic governance thrives on the amount of supports enjoyed from the masses. This is why any government in power does everything possible to win this masses support. This they do through various governmental communications strategies and at most, propaganda. The mass media are not only key avenues for providing the required information; they also determine what is available in the public domain. The mass media have remained a key factor in the political sphere in democracy. During election, the mass media provide a link between the political party/candidate and the electorate. The mass media serve as a platform for the government leaders to reach her citizens. Through coverage of government programs and airing of political advertisements, the media help in influencing citizens' decision either in favour or against a given government agenda or leaders (Obot, 2013). Media in a democratic set up are acknowledged as important factors as they play major role in establishing and strengthening accountability and sustainability of the governments.

2.5 Credibility and Perceptions of Governmental Communications

Worldwide, credibility of, and support for governments have been declining, while perceptions has been moving steadily towards negative (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2000). As from the 1970s to 1990s, and beyond most governments in advanced countries such as Norway, Australia, Japan, Germany, New Zealand, USA, have been grappled with dwindling citizen trust for government, (Blind, 2007; Christensen and Laegrid 2003).

Only Netherlands was reported to have had rising levels of citizen trust and support for government policies during this time. Low voter turnout, youth disinterest in politics, decreasing levels of civic involvement and disbelief in the integrity of government have been noticed as some of the symptoms of declining support and trust in the political

systems of advanced countries (Blind, 2007; Tanguay 1999; Gray and Caul 2000; Adsett 2003; Saul 1995; Putnam 2000).

According to the Independence Hall Association (2016), the attitudes of Americans towards governmental communications and programmes stem from government itself, the growing political influence of the media, and people's expectations from government. The Association says that Americans' view of government handling of the Vietnam War, Monica Lewinsky scandal, the Watergate scandal, foreign policy, and the gulf war negatively affected public views of government. On the other hand, the Association notes that the media hardly report the good things government does. Instead, through investigative reporting, the media uncover the dark and sordid sides of government, forcing constant negative views of government in the minds of the public. Thirdly, sometimes people simply expect too much of government, and this has led to widely differing views and paradigms on political ideologies, from liberalism to conservatism.

A 2016 survey by the Pew Research Center showed that the major issue in why voters support either Hilary Clinton or Donald Trump was that one candidate was not the other. That is, people supported Clinton because she is not Donald Trump, more than any other factor, and vice versa. The Pew Research also found that there has been a partisan divide on Americans' views on the war on terror, the economy, immigration, gun policy. This line of findings is the same with the Nigerian situation.

Ugwuanyi (2016) finds that the perceptions of Nigerians towards three image management projects between 2004 and 2009 was based on people's impression of government functionaries. That is, people believed that government had no moral grounds to ask Nigerians to change their perceptions about the country when the image of the country is a result of years of bad leadership. This view, according to Ugwuanyi, was highly in line with, and could have stemmed from, media coverage of the image projects. Governments in the developing world such as Nigeria have often been described by the media and citizens as over bureaucratic, bulky, over-centralized and expensive to manage, inefficient, insensitive, dictatorial, egalitarian and corrupt (Olasina, 2015; Nurudeen & Usman, 2010).

Ukonu (2016) finds that a major factor in the voting patterns of Nigerian during the 2015 general election was simply personality. Ukonu also found that analysis, and support for government policies and positions followed the same pattern. Support for Buhari and

Jonathan or PDP or APC on any political issue depended on who an individual supported during the elections. Political analysts believe that support or trust in a government should transcend party and ideology, (Hetherington, 2004; Warren, 2006).

Blind (2007) speaks about political trust as a concept in politics in which citizens appraise the government and its institutions, policy-making in general and/or the individual political leaders as promise-keeping, efficient, fair and honest. Political trust, in other words, is the “judgment of the citizenry that the system and the political incumbents are responsive, and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny” (Miller and Listhaug 1990, p. 358). As such, “political trust is a central indicator of public’s underlying feeling about its polity” (Newton and Norris 2000, p. 53). Citizens can trust or distrust a political system and its organizations (macro level or organizational trust) or particular incumbents (micro level trust) based on how they adjudge their activities (Miller, 1974). According to Citrin, (1974, p.974-975:)

The organizational political trust can be further subdivided into the components of *diffuse or system-based trust*, and *specific or institution-based trust*. Diffuse political trust refers to the citizens’ evaluation of the performance of the overall political system and the regime. Specific political trust, on the other hand, is directed towards certain political institutions, such as the Congress or the local police force. The second category of political trust, or the so-called *micro-level or individual political trust*, happens when trust is directed towards individual political leaders. The individual political trust involves a person-oriented perspective whereby citizens become trustful or distrustful of government “because of their approval or disapproval of certain political leaders.

Political trust, and by extension, credibility and support, heighten when government is perceived to be meeting expectations, and keeping its word. Government messages, encapsulating its actions, policy and programmes are critical to attracting support for government or otherwise, (Blinder 2000; Porte and Metlay 1996).

2.6 Factors Affecting Citizen Exposure to, and Knowledge of Government Activities

The history of politics and governance in Nigeria has not been particularly helpful to citizen participations in governance (Akinwale, 2010 p.1). The colonial history of the country ended with transition to a civilian government in 1960. The civilian experience lasted barely six years before military intervention which took the country another 33

years of military dictatorship minus the four years between 1979 and 1983 when a civilian stint reoccurred.

From the 1966-1979 and the 1984 to 1999 periods of military rule, the only social voices that reacted to any government positions critically were a few dare devil journalists who were also scarred for that, some of them eternally. The military silenced political voices and traumatized opposition, making government a rule of force, for the oppressed and by the despotic (Uche, 1999; Jika, 1990; Mvendaga, 1997).

Democracy came with a new lease of political life, and fortunately it coincided with the IT revolution of the 21st century. According to the World History, (2013, p. 1), “the year 1990 linked the world economically, politically and culturally” while 2000 linked the world electronically and digitally through the internet, computer and mobile communication devices like cell phones.

In Nigeria, echoes of political and information freedom became louder immediately following return to civil rule. Ojebode, (2011) acknowledges that it was at the turn of the century that Nigerians demanded freedom of information more feverishly. This was remarkably shown in the presentation of a bill to the National Assembly in December 1999 by the Media Rights Agenda through Hon Tony Anyanwu. The journey of the bill was long as it became law in 2011 after being signed by former President Goodluck Jonathan on May 27, 2015.

In 2001, former President Olusegun Obasanjo superintended over a process that saw the National Communication Commission granting licence to mobile telecommunication companies to operate in Nigeria. Just years later in 2004, Nigeria had become one of the fastest growing GSM markets in the world. As against just 450 000 working lines from NITEL in 2001, by August 2004, there were over seven million GSM subscribers (Jidaw.com, 2013).

As at 2013, a survey by Terragon insight (2013, p.11) showed that there were 113,195,591 mobile subscribers in Nigeria with mobile perpetration placed at 69.0%; mobile internet users outnumbered desktop users at the rate of 60.69% to 30.31%, with over nine million social media users, social networking ranked 72% of online activities in the country. From merely making calls and sending SMSs, subscribers now build strong platforms for active political information sharing from discussing government, public office holders, aspirants to participating in online opinion polls (Sowunmi, 2011).

So far, the social media have improved political participation, but they are mainly interpersonal and group media, more than mass media. Thoroughbred analysis, interpretation, coverage of political events and political socialization are still in the domain of traditional media, whether online or on-earth. According to a report by *Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre* (2013), it was to address flaws that marred previous elections in Nigeria, that various institutions and individuals set up social media platforms that enabled the citizens to oversee the electoral process and report electoral malpractices to authorities through their mobile phones, computer and other electronic devices.

The social media have proved veritable sources of prompt citizen reaction to governmental communications. INEC received over 70,000 reports from social media users on irregularities at polling centres during the 2011 general elections in Nigeria (Elike, 2013). The Nigerian government duly received the reply of the citizens when government removed fuel subsidy in 2014. It was the same with the *Bring Back Our Girls* movement that followed the kidnapping of the Chibok Girls in April 2014.

2.7 Sources of Governmental Communications

The pre-independence era (1859-1959) saw the predominance of radio and newspapers in the exchange of political communication. When TV came from 1959, the audience could still not do more than passively pay attention to media contents. The media were more powerful in convincing the citizens to toe a certain line because of limited literacy (Nwokefor and Okunoye, 2013). Olajide (2002, cited in Onwukwe, 2011) note that prior to this period, political rallies, personal contacts and speeches were popularly used for mobilizing electorates' support on political issues, and that this was greatly propelled by the mass media force.

The risky, expensive, time-consuming, and scary nature of engaging in politics negatively affected citizen interest in it. The mass media were principally in charge, and political rallies were dreaded for violence. Knowledge and information on political matters thus remained in the hands of a few (Okoro and Adibe, 2013). New technologies of communication have however made the audience important factors in the generation and use of political communication, and in the process of feeding back to the major sources of political communication, which are government and mass media. With increasing knowledge of the computer and Internet, and invention of many devices in Information

Communication Technology (ICT), politicians as well as the electorate embrace the use of blogs, websites and other social media platforms for communicating political issues.

Oluwole (2017) states that internet use in Nigeria decreases from 92 million users to 91million users accounting for the country's 8th position on the log of ten countries with the most internet users. However, he further argues that Nigeria's most internet traffic comes mainly from mobile and desktop computers of which are served by mobile ISPS, Ethernet wired and wireless.

According to the National Broadband Plan (2013-2018) the country is expected to attain 30% broadband penetration by 2018 which stands at 21% at 2017, Nigeria Communication Commission (2017 Report). The study of most searched stories online in Nigeria for the year 2017 revealed that these political personalities dominated, President Buhari, Nnamdi Kanu and Governor Fayose of Ekiti state. (weblick.com.ng). the above revelation indicates that political stories maintain prominence among internet users in Nigeria.

Necessity of social interactions, determined by the requirements of a mixed economy and rapid migration to capitalist economic order has enhanced patronage of the new media by individuals, governments and corporate organizations. The use of the Internet by politicians to communicate with their constituencies has further extended the concept of "mediatization" of politics in Nigeria. Kent (1986), a Swedish researcher first spoke on "mediatization" of political life by which he meant a process whereby a political system to a high degree is influenced by and adjusted to the demands of the mass media (Oyebode, 2014).

As noted, the social media has revolutionized the ways in which governments put out information to the citizens. In turn, the citizenry has improved radically in the ways they react to government communications, thanks to the social media. On September 15, 2010, former president Goodluck Jonathan announced that he was going to run for the presidency on Facebook. He was imitating President Obama, who did the same in 2008. That action sparked a social media burst. Various government agencies and actors began aggressive social media connections.

INEC, political parties, candidates, media houses, civil society groups and even the police began vehement social networking outreach, (Adibe and Odoemelam, 2011). Interest in political communication through the social media increased as many people, especially

the electorate upgraded their interest in reacting to government communications. Oluwafemi (2016) notes that more than 16 million Nigerians sign in to Facebook every month while 7.2 million log in daily. These numbers according to him, come directly from 1, hacker way. He further states that in September 2015, Facebook released statistics to the effect there were a hundred million people in Africa who were active in the network. Going by these figures, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya alone accounts for at least 34 million monthly active users. As the user base grows, the owners have become more dynamic with the introduction of new technologies for high growth markets, light video Ads, “bandwidth targeting and expert targeting”. Mendelson (Facebook, 2016). According to E.E (2016) 92 million Nigerians are internet users out of which 1.8 million people use Twitter monthly.

To underscore the use of internet in monitoring public opinion on political issues, including elections, Premium Times Nigeria (2014) states that “ On October, 2014, the day former Head of State, Muhammadu Buhari, declared his intention to run for president in the 2015 election , news website, Sahara Reporters activated an opinion poll asking Nigerians to indicate who they would vote for if the election were to hold that day between Mr. Buhari (as the candidate of the All Progressive Congress APC) and President Goodluck Jonathan (as the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party PDP). The poll lasted for only 24 hours and out of a total of 15,435 persons that voted, Mr. Buhari got 12,246 representing 79 percent of the total votes cast while President Jonathan got 3189 votes, representing 21 percent of the total votes”. The Sahara reporters used e-poll platform.

Similarly, Mr. Reno Omokri, on his blog “build up Nigeria” posed same questions from 16th October 2014 to 18th October 2014 and generated 8,866 respondents using poll daddy’s platform. Mr. Buhari polled 6411 votes representing 69.87 percent of the total tally, President Jonathan had 2,455 votes representing 26.75 percent while 310 persons being 3.38 percent were undecided.

From the foregoing, it could be seen the traffic generated on the internet by the polls conducted. The outcome of the online poll was consistent with the elections as the President Jonathan of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) lost to Mr. Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC).

As at 2013, there were over nine million social media users in Nigerian (Tarragon Insight, 2013, p.24). The nature of the social media itself helped in making the users love the media. The media are interactive, allow connectivity to a limitless range of friends, with whom one can share information and readily publish one's own information on the web. The ubiquitous access of the social media has positively affected political participation. Citizens are no longer passive consumers. They also create messages in the process of political communication. The most critical effects of the social media in political communication have been in political mobilization, especially for protests against unpopular governments and policies of governments, voicing of concerns, inputs of opinions and perceptions and ideas in the political process.

The Arab Spring of 2011 and the London Riots of 2012 are raw cases. According to Dominick (2011,p.19), Social media such as *Twitter*, *Myspace*, *YouTube*, *Flickr* and others have become significant channels of communication... *Facebook* has more than 250 million members worldwide (that's more than the total population of Brazil) and *YouTube* contained more than 70 million videos with about 14 hours of content uploaded every minute. Social media have become the first source of breaking news events. Much of the information about the post-election violence in Iran came from *Twitter* users and videos posted on *YouTube*. Advertisers and public relations practitioners have embraced social media with gusto. It's rare these days to find an advertising or PR campaign that does not have a social media component. The traditional media have also increased their use of social media. Among other examples, TV programs have *Facebook* pages; recording studios promote bands on their *MySpace* pages. Magazines encourage readers to form their communities; most newspapers allow readers to share pictures on their websites, and CNN reporters are frequent on *Twitter*.

Many Tunisians were silent about government ban on sales of wares on the streets without a permit. Just a few Tunisians like the 26-year old primary school dropout and vegetable seller, al Tayyib Muhammed, dared to disobey government by selling vegetable on the streets of streets of Sidi Bouzid without a permit. Police brutality against Muhammed triggered violence. But once the social media came into the violence, the whole nation caught the bug. The 27-year rule of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali crashed on January 14, 2011. The Arab spring had set in. As it still burned, it consumed the strong man of Libya, Mummar Gadhafi, along with his 42-year reign as well as the

31-year rule of Ali Abdulla Saleh of Yemen It is still threatening to down other rulers at this writing.

It was a *Facebook* page created to honour a young man killed by police brutality in Egypt that triggered nationwide protests in Egypt from January 25, 2011. More than 470,000 people, rallied by *Facebook* page, coalesced into a rampaging group. Another YouTube video spurred yet more 500,000 people to add to the inferno. YouTube and Twitter were all used to fuel public outrage that downed the 30-year rule of President Hosni Mubarak (Ukonu, 2014).

According to Akaeze, (2011, p.32), “The social network media, particularly *Twitter*, helped the protests. Egyptians sustained the protests through sending messages through the medium to direct and re-invigorate the protesters bent on bringing down the government. In countries where state-owned media controlled communication, social media became the option. People used them (social media) against the backdrop of restrictions on conventional media and people are often ready to do whatever they were urged to do to show that they were truly free.

The social media are a fad among the youth, who have moved massively from the traditional to more modern media. Piesion and Lieven (2007) found that “individuals aged between 18-24 spend more time on social networking than watching television. The potential of the internet for attracting people who were underrepresented in traditional forms of political participation is well demonstrated. The internet provides easy reaction to government communication, voting online, voting in polls, debating, and blogging (Norris 2001; Quantifier and Visser, 2008). The relatively cheaper cost of going online and being exposed to political news have triggered more reactions to government actions and messages (Bimber, 2001). And there is just the right volume of information necessary for one to actively participate in civic life and political discussion (Tolbert and Mcneal 2003). “As an interactive medium, the internet can strengthen the workings of direct democracy and improve relations between citizens, politicians, and their intermediaries through processes like e-government” (West, 2004).

The great numbers of young people getting enamoured of the web is necessitating emphasis on the need to make the medium more appealing to the youth (Pasek, Kenski, Romer and Jamieson, (2006). Due to the nature of online news and the fact that they are mostly used by the youth there are indications that they might cause a peculiar kind of

reaction to government communications, political discourse and development. Wellen, Quan, Witten and Hampton (2001) provide research evidence to show that online interaction supplements interpersonal relations resulting in increased voluntary association membership and political participation. Delli (2010) expresses fear in a study that news in the online environment may have resulted in societal fragmentation and displacement of community concerns.

Brenner (2013; p.5) study on *Pew Internet Social Networking*, found that the growing ubiquity of cell phones, especially has made social networking sites just a finger tap away. Through the use of these social media, the populace has become more socially aware. This is because most of the issues discussed on the social media are societal and local in nature, often derived from the new in the traditional mass media

2.8 Explicatory Analysis of the Governmental communications and Strategic Management of Nigeria's Image Reform Projects

One of the significant advocacies of PR practitioners and image experts is that there should be massive mobilization of the citizenry towards adequate participation in the various stages of planning and implementation of Nigeria's image reform projects. Gone are the days when planners/implementers of national image reform projects plan for and not with the targets of image rebuilding programmes.

It is in an attempt to reverse this ugly trend that the past successive Nigerian governments initiated series of reform programmes to reposition the image of the country and re-orientate her citizens. These image reform policies among others include: War Against Indiscipline (WAI); National Orientation Agency (NOA); Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER); War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C); Nigeria: Heart of Africa Project; Citizens' Diplomacy; National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS).

Again, if what communication scholars did in mobilizing Nigerians towards nationalism, effectively co-ordinated post-independence national building efforts and the fight against military authoritarianism are anything to go by, then indigenous image experts and stakeholders can even do better now. The manifestations of such accomplishments are replete in the works of Omu (1978), Nwuneli (1985), Salama (1978), Ezera (1960), Okonkwor (1978) and Duyile (1987). Others are Uche (1989), Nwosu (1990), Umechukwu (1995), Okonkwo (1995), Osuji (2001) and Aliede (2003).

Previous empirical works obviously indicated that efficient harnessing of experts needed for the pursuit of similar campaigns in the past succeeded with the involvement of multi-media. According to some eminent communication scholars like Ekwelie (1980), Ogbodoh (1990) and Aliede (2006), the combination of traditional mode of communication with modern communication systems where necessary, will hasten the attainment of set goals in the desired quest for effective management of national image reform policies in the country.

In a similar vein, direct contact with Nigerian citizens should be made with the support of the local political leaders, group leaders and traditional rulers whom the people trust. These local leaders have what it takes to bring their subjects together with a view to persuading them to be part of the image restoration campaigns.

All in all, participatory image restoration campaign approach as advocated by Nwosu (2008), persuasive campaign strategy, public agenda setting strategy as enunciated by Nwosu (2001), social integration campaign approach, community self-help approach, enduring media campaign strategy as well as enthronement of good governance are identified in this study, as the best strategies for the proficient management of Nigeria's image reform policies.

Nkwocha (2002, p.3-5), is unequivocal on Nigeria's horrible image in the world media as he confessed that Nigeria does not have a good image in the global media. On the situation at home, he sounds rhetorical: "what good image can Nigerian earn with daily reporting of ethnic, religious and politically motivated clashes and violent crimes that lead to loss of thousands of lives and property worth billions of Naira". According to Nkwocha, global networks like CNN, NBC, BBC, VOA, including some tabloids are awash with avalanche of negative reports on Nigeria, as their reports often centre on such terrible topics like advance fee fraud, hard drugs, violent crimes, ethnic, religious and political clashes, prostitution, bad governance and political assassinations. These put together, with the negative local and international publicity it engendered, aided the distress and tribulation of the country.

In a paper titled "foreign media projection of Africa: The role of African communicators", Egwu (2011, p.1) attempts a justification for the often wicked portrayal of developing countries, especially African nations by western media. According to Egwu, it is the tendency to attribute to others unacceptable intentions, impulses, attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours, that are actually present in oneself, or one's culture or

society, adding that the west often project on Africa western unacceptable attitudes and values, which are present in western life and society.

With almost a unanimous position of majority of scholarly opinions pointing to the fact that the country's image at the local and international levels tilt to negativity, Okunna (2002) examines Nigeria's and Nigerians' image problem from the point of view of social degeneration and crises, describing the country's youths as 'lost generation'. Baker (2000, p.70) agrees where he affirms that: A nation without positive image and therefore good reputation may have the most beautiful strategic planning document and institutions and fail to neither develop nor meet its economic growth aspirations. It therefore means that one of the major assets a nation has is its reputation..., stressing the need for a good image and reputation at home, before expecting the international community to take us serious or even want to interact with us.

Aliede (2009) in his elaborate doctoral thesis lends support to the foregoing view, where he stated that heated global competition and rivalry among nations worsened Nigeria's case, just as increased internal crises like ethnic, communal, religious, political killings, drug trafficking, financial crimes and corruption in high places exacerbated the country's woes and unfavourable image. Aliede further observed that the woes of the past years had apparently earned Nigeria several negative perceptions at home and abroad, mainly due to the actions and inactions of its leadership. Consequently, Nigeria is hated at home and its citizens despised, smeared and snubbed abroad.

2.9 Text of Some Governmental Communications

The fact that governance in Nigeria is still at a low ebb makes it wise to consider what the rulers actually say to the citizens. There is no administration that comes on board that does not promise Eldorado, while indirectly blaming past administrations for all the social ills. Thus, apart from what people make of those speeches, what actually do the leaders say, especially upon coming on board? We take a look at some of the speeches that heralded various administrations in Nigeria.

The military leaders often pass on the message that militarism should be accepted because civilian administrations always pillaged the country. Nwoke (2012, p 131) captured one of such messages in the coup speech broadcast of the late Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu after the January 1966 coup:

Our enemies are the political profiteers, swindlers, the men in high and low places who seek bribes and demands ten percent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers and VIPS of waste, the tribalists, the nepotisms ... over four decades since that broadcast the political profiteers are still very much around, the only difference today is that the bribe givers and takers are now more sophisticated; they deal in billions of money: naira, pound sterling, dollars, and the VIPS of waste, those who seek to keep the country divided permanently, the tribalists and nepotists are still very prominent in Nigeria's polity. The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership.

Wabimibola (2011, p.2) notes that "the military era was termed hostile, dictatorial and rude. Its focus was strictly on power and clearly authoritarian in approach. The government came first before the people". Nwoke (2012, p.132), using some lines from Chinua Achebe's *The Trouble with Nigeria* puts the reactions of Nigerians succinctly:

The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership. Nigerian leadership regimes are characterized by their rascality and indiscipline. The Nigerian power elite's brand of politics is short sighted, it lacks ideological content; it is disorganized opportunistic and incapable of building strong, efficient and effective institutions. Mainly focused on crude means of capturing power in a do-or-die manner, this brand of politics is superficial, alienating, anti-people and anti-intellectual. Mediocrity is the Nigerian leaders' standard creativity has been stored inside, and rascality has been elevated as an acceptable means of governance.

It was these circumstances that made Nigerians heave a sigh of relief with the return to democratic rule in 1999. The then president, Olusegun Obasanjo, promised an all-out war against corruption, declared that "it will not be business as usual." Wabimibola (2011, p.13) observed:

The introduction of PDP was generally welcomed as the waited intervention in the crises that rocked Nigerians for almost nine years under Abacha's regime. Abacha was clearly the worst of the classical authorities that stepped into power. Nigeria was not far from division and war was imminent. On the final introduction of democracy, the first four years of OBJ, as taken as a trial version of the bliss to come. However, the last four years showed that the traces of the past leadership were still clothed within the reins of PDP-led

government, of course that PDP leadership has to a large extent taken us more than thirty years backwards. The justification for this claim is simple. This neo-colonial approach can be defined as “the party rules the people” system, so far, the PDP has created a pseudo-democratic government which at the end of the day still denies the people a voice and right to feel and truly be Nigerians.

It was on the hills of the Obasanjo’s effort to rid Nigeria of corruption that the late Umaru Yar’Adua came on board with his seven-point agenda. Yar’Adua met a restive Niger-Delta, and promised to give special attention the Niger-Delta in his seven-point agenda. President Musa Yar’ Adua announced a seven-point action plan for his administration if elected in the April 2007 general elections. He also told Nigerians of his resolve to tackle the myriad of Nigerian problems through his seven-point agenda, which ranged from security to power. Following his swearing in on May 29, 2007, Yar’Adua outlined his agenda in his inaugural address as follows:

1. **Power and energy:** This infrastructural reform in this critical sector through the development of sufficient and adequate power supply will be to ensure Nigeria’s ability to develop as a modern economy and our industrial nation by the year 2015.
2. **Food security:** This reform is primarily agrarian based. The emphasis on development of modern technology, research financial injection into research production and development of agricultural inputs will revolutionise the agricultural sector leading to a 5-10-fold increase in yield and production. This will in increase domestic and commercial and technological knowledge transfer to farmers.
3. **Wealth creation:** By virtue of its reliance on revenue from non-renewal oil, Nigeria has yet to develop industrially, this reform is focused on wealth creation through diversified production especially in the agricultural and solid mineral sector. This requires Nigerians to choose to work, as hard work by all is required to achieve this reform.
4. **Transport sector:** the transport sector in Nigeria with its poor roads networks is an inefficient means of mass transits of people and goods. With a goal of modernized industrialized Nigeria, it is mandatory that Nigeria developed its transport sector. The PDP government has already started this process by the ongoing rehabilitation and modernization of the railway while the reforms might take some time to take effect. It is a need that must be addressed.

5. **Land reforms:** While hundreds of billions of dollars have been lost through unused government-owned landed asset, changes in the land laws and the emergences of land reforms will optimize Nigeria's growth through the release of lands for commercialized farming and other large scale business by private sector. The final result will ensure improvements and boosts to the production and wealth creation industries.
6. **Security:** An unfriendly security climate precludes both external and internal investment into the nation. Thus, security will be seen as not only a constitution requirement but also as a necessary infrastructure for the development of a modern Nigerian economy. With its particular needs, the Niger Delta security issue will be the primary focus marshalled not with physical policing or military security but through honest and accurate dialogue between the people and the Federal Government.
7. **Education:** The two-fold reform in the education sector will ensure firstly the minimum acceptable international standards of education for all with that achieved, a strategic educational development plan will ensue excellence in both the teaching and learning of skills in science and technology by students who will be seen as the future innovators and industrializes of Nigeria.

In his budget speech to the National Assembly in 2008, Yar'Adua also noted:

Allocation for security and Niger Delta ₦ 444.6 billion, which is 20% of the total Federal Government budget up 6.5% from 2007 allocation. Allocation for Education, ₦ 210 billion which is 13% of the total MGG spending. Allocation for Energy Sector, ₦ 139.78 billion including National Integrated Power Projects which will be implemented through alternative funding, and ₦ 212.1 billion that is 7% of total budget for Agriculture and Water Resources. NDDC, ₦ 69.9 billion naira as against ₦ 24 billion in 2007. ₦ 94.36 billion naira for Transportation Sector; 138.17 for Health (<http://www.nigerianmusa.com>)

In 2009, Yar'Adua tried to demonstrate his commitment to the 7-point agenda. He made the following budget speech in 2009:

Power: ₦ 3.5 billion for the Mambilla hydro-electric power generation project, ₦ 21.5 billion for other generation projects (including N 6.5 billion for the completion of the Niger Delta Power Holding Company's NIPP projects (₦ 32 billion for transmission projects, and ₦ 19.25 billion for distribution. Transport: ₦12.4 billion for the completion of the Ajaokuta- Warri line to Delta steel Jetty; ₦8.3 billion for the modernization of locomotives, coaches and wagons, rehabilitation works and procurement of railway equipment and N 8.4 billion for

the dredging of the lower River Niger. Development of the Niger Delta ₦28.4 billion was set aside for East-West road project to improve accessibility to the region, ₦92.8 million on project to improve and restore the environment and 18.6 billion other projects particularly the establishment of two sophisticated skills acquisition centres to help the youths in the region acquire practical skills relevant to the energy and petrochemical industry. The aggregate expenditure for 2009 is ₦2.87 trillion comprising ₦140.7 billion for statutory transfer, ₦283.6 billion for dept service, ₦1.649 trillion for recurrent (non-Dept) expenditure and ₦796.7 billion for (<http://www.nigerianmuse.com>)

It might not be easy to say that President Yar'Adua would have failed even if he did not fall sick, or even die eventually. But prior to his illness, some had started calling his agenda the 7-point endangered. Ngonso (2013) found in a study that that the President Yar'Adua applied rhetoric in selling the 7-point agenda, and that the agenda received wider acceptance by Nigerians. It also confirmed that credibility of the originator accounts for the acceptance of the political agenda. The implication here is that for political agenda to be accepted, the product and the producer must be credible, the import is that rhetoric is based on ethical practices.

Goodluck Jonathan landed on the Yar'Adua platform and promised to build the Nigeria of our dreams. The following is an excerpt from his speech after winning the 2011 general elections:

My Dear Compatriots, I stand in humble gratitude to you, this day, having just sworn to the oath of office as President, Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of our great nation. I thank you all, fellow citizens, for the trust and confidence, which you have demonstrated through the power of your vote. I want to assure you, that I will do my utmost at all times, to continue to deserve your trust....

At the polls, we saw the most dramatic expressions of the hunger for democracy. Stories of courage and patriotism were repeated in many ways, including how fellow citizens helped physically challenged voters into polling stations to enable them exercise their franchise. The inspiring story of the one hundred and three-year-old man, and many like him across the country, who struggled against the physical limitations of age to cast their vote, is noteworthy....

Fellow citizens, the leadership we have pledged is decidedly transformative. The transformation will be achieved in all the critical sectors, by harnessing the creative energies of our people. We must grow the economy, create jobs, and generate enduring happiness for our people. I have great confidence in the ability of Nigerians to transform this country. The urgent task of my administration is to provide a suitable environment, for productive activities to flourish. I therefore call on the good people of Nigeria, to enlist as agents of this great transformation. My dear countrymen and women, being a Nigerian is a blessing. It is also a great responsibility. We must make a vow that, together, we will make the Nigerian Enterprise thrive. The leadership and the followership must strive to convert our

vast human and natural resources into the force that leads to a great Nigeria. The Nigeria of our dreams must be built on handwork and not on short cuts.

Fellow citizens, in every decision, I shall always place the common good before all else. The bane of corruption shall be met by the overwhelming force of our collective determination, to rid our nation of this scourge. The fight against corruption is a war in which we must all enlist, so that the limited resources of this nation will be used for the growth of our common wealth. I am confident that we have every reason to look to the future with hope. We owe ourselves and posterity the duty of making this country respectable in the comity of nations.....

My fellow countrymen and women, Nigerian is not just a land of promise; it shall be a nation where positive change will continue to take place, for the good of our people. The time for lamentation is over. This is the era of transformation. This is the time for action. But Nigerian can only be transformed if we all play our parts with commitment and sincerity. Cynicism and skepticism will not help our journey to greatness. Let us all believe in a new Nigerian. Let us work together to build a great country that we will all be proud of. This is our hour. Fellow Compatriots, lift your gaze towards the horizon. Look ahead and you will see a great future that we can secure with unity, hard work and collective sacrifice. Join me now as begin the journey of transforming Nigeria

* I will continue to fight, for your future, because I am one of you.

* I will continue to fight, for improved medical care for all our citizens

* I will continue to fight for all citizens to have access to first class education

* I will continue to fight, for electricity to be available to all our citizens

* I will continue to fight, for an efficient and affordable public transport system for all our people * I will continue to fight for jobs to be created through productive partnerships. You have trusted me with your mandate, and I will never, never let you down. I know your pain, because I have been there. Look beyond the hardship you have endured. See a new beginning, a new direction; a new spirit. Nigerians, I want you to start to dream again. What you see in your dreams, we can achieve together...

Jonathan's inaugural speech contained the word corruption just two times, and it was in the same paragraph. Nonetheless, those two times, anything that ought to be said about corruption was said. But it can be argued that his scant use of the word signified his lack of understanding of its scale in the nation in contrast to the emphasis placed on it by President Buhari.

Jonathan ended up almost consumed by insurgency and corruption of public officials. On the heels of corruption and national insecurity, Jonathan lost the presidency in 2015, and ushered in Muhammad Buhari. In his inaugural speech, President Buhari praised Nigerians for the part they played in the success of the elections. He expressed happiness at the mature political culture that was gaining grounds in the country. He thanked Goodluck Jonathan for superintending over a process of free and fair elections that

brought him (Buhari) to power. He expressed hope that the precedent set by Jonathan would become an enduring practice in future conduct of elections in Nigeria. However, much of the remarks he made afterwards were indirect, but scathing attacks on Jonathan's administration. Some of the attacks reached to Obasanjo.

President Buhari noted:

Having just a few minutes ago sworn on the Holy Book, I intend to keep my oath and serve as President to all Nigerians. **I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody. A few people have privately voiced fears that on coming back to office I shall go after them. These fears are groundless. There will be no paying off old scores. The past is prologue.**

Our neighbours in the Sub-region and our African brethren should rest assured that Nigeria under our administration will be ready to play any leadership role that Africa expects of it. Here I would like to thank the governments and people of Cameroon, Chad and Niger for committing their armed forces to fight Boko Haram in Nigeria. I also wish to assure the wider international community of our readiness to cooperate and help to combat threats of cross-border terrorism, sea piracy, refugees and boat people, financial crime, cybercrime, climate change, the spread of communicable diseases and other challenges of the 21st century. At home we face enormous challenges. Insecurity, pervasive corruption, the hitherto unending and seemingly impossible fuel and power shortages are the immediate concerns. We are going to tackle them head on. Nigerians will not regret that they have entrusted national responsibility to us. We must not succumb to hopelessness and defeatism. We can fix our problems.

The president promised to allow rule of law and independence of other arms of governance to reign supreme. He kept hammering away at his preparedness to tackle corruption and cleanse Nigeria's dirty linen. It is on these terms that Buhari's administration has received some knocks, with fuel shortages and price hike, insurgency, 2016 budgetgate, and worsening economic conditions, all of which happened in less one year into his administration. He had said:

For their part the legislative arm must keep to their brief of making laws, carrying out over-sight functions and doing so expeditiously. The judicial system needs reform to cleanse itself from its immediate past. The country now expects the judiciary to act with dispatch on all cases especially on corruption, serious financial crimes or abuse of office. It is only when the three arms act constitutionally that government will be enabled to serve the country optimally and avoid the confusion all too often bedevilling governance today.... My appeal for unity is predicated on the seriousness of the legacy we are getting into. With depleted foreign reserves, falling oil prices, leakages and debts the Nigerian economy is in deep trouble and will require careful management to bring it round and to tackle the immediate challenges confronting us, namely; Boko Haram, the Niger Delta situation, the power shortages and unemployment especially among young people. For the longer term we have to improve the standards of our

education. We have to look at the whole field of medicare. We have to upgrade our dilapidated physical infrastructure.

His description of Boko Haram, and the plans to defeat them were quite ambitious, and complete antithesis to certain theories of the origin and sponsorship of the group. It is at such a point that one really has to wonder what the citizens make of such communications. This is an important gap to be filled by this study. For instance, Buhari said:

Boko Haram is a mindless, godless group who are as far away from Islam as one can think of. At the end of the hostilities when the group is subdued the Government intends to commission a sociological study to determine its origins, remote and immediate causes of the movement, its sponsors, the international connexions to ensure that measures are taken to prevent a recurrence of this evil. For now the Armed Forces will be fully charged with prosecuting the fight against Boko haram. We shall overhaul the rules of engagement to avoid human rights violations in operations. We shall improve operational and legal mechanisms so that disciplinary steps are taken against proven human right violations by the Armed Forces.

Boko Haram is not only the security issue bedevilling our country. The spate of kidnappings, armed robberies, herdsmen/farmers clashes, cattle rustlings all help to add to the general air of insecurity in our land. We are going to erect and maintain an efficient, disciplined people – friendly and well – compensated security forces within an over – all security architecture.

Buhari's take on power, unemployment and the international image and the general expectations of Nigeria is even more daring:

No single cause can be identified to explain Nigerian's poor economic performance over the years than the power situation. It is a national shame that an economy of 180 million generates only 4,000MW, and distributes even less. Continuous tinkering with the structures of power supply and distribution and close on \$20b expended since 1999 have only brought darkness, frustration, misery, and resignation among Nigerians. We will not allow this to go on. Careful studies are under way during this transition to identify the quickest, safest and most cost-effective way to bring light and relief to Nigerians.

Unemployment, notably youth un-employment features strongly in our Party's Manifesto. We intend to attack the problem frontally through revival of agriculture, solid minerals mining as well as credits to small and medium size businesses to kick – start these enterprises. We shall quickly examine the best way to revive major industries and accelerate the revival and development of our railways, roads and general infrastructure.

Your Excellences, my fellow Nigerians I cannot recall when Nigeria enjoyed so much goodwill abroad as now. The messages I received from East and West, from powerful and small countries are indicative of international expectations on us. At home the newly elected government is basking in a reservoir of goodwill and high expectations. Nigeria therefore has a window of opportunity to fulfil our long-

standing potential of pulling ourselves together and realizing our mission as a great nation.

The big question is how Nigerians reacted to this message, why did they react as they did? This forms a crucial part of this study.

2.10 Political Importance of the Mass Media

Harold Lasswell (1969) itemizes three functions performed by the mass media, namely, surveillance of the world to report on-going events, interpretation of the meaning of events, and socialization of individuals into their cultural settings.

Another attribute of the media is the deliberate manipulation of the political process. The manner in which these functions are performed, and affect the lives of individuals, groups, and social organizations, as well as the course of domestic and international politics.

In the same vein, LucianPye (1963) points out that there is a 'peculiarly intimate relationship between the political process and the communication process.' Karl Qeutsch (1966) also suggests that a study of the nerves of the body politic - its decision-making processes - gives insight into the performance of its bones and muscles: the exercise of power. In a special version of the 'everything in politics is communication' argument, Almond (1960) has noted: All of the functions performed in the political system - political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication rule-making, rule-application and rule-adjudication -are performed by means of communication. In relation to developing societies, the communication functions of the mass media are even more crucial (Sommerland, 1966; Mazrui, 1971; Mowlana, 1971).

A developing society is in a more or less constant condition of crisis, faced with the possibility of disunity, with the need to mobilize its people for a war on poverty, disease, hunger, indiscipline, economic sabotage, smuggling, armed robbery, hooliganism, vandalism, brigandage, social injustice, and crippling attitudes and traditions. It is also faced with the need to ensure that its few resources - human, physical, natural and material - are harnessed for achieving the goals of political stability, rapid industrialization, rural development, freedom of the individual, greater economic equality, democratic political participation, and for solutions of other problems. The press in developing countries serves a multiplicity of purposes. It is an instrument of

political, social, cultural and physical communication, and of economic progress. It is a medium of news and a means of establishing mutual understanding or misunderstanding. The constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979, recognizes the crucial role the press could play, not only in political communications but also in national integration and development: 'The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people (Nigeria, 1979).

2.11 Re-Looking the Nigeria's Image Reform Projects as Factors of Governmental communications and its Credibility poise.

The image of any country can make or mar it. This is the main reason why various government aim at maintaining favourable image communication in their interactions with citizens and global community. There are, however, countries that have suffered negative image within the comity of nations and this has affected them greatly. According to Chima Alexandra O. Nigeria appears to have a tremendous bad image both within and outside the shores of the country, hence, the need for a well strategized

The Buhari/Idiagbon regime which ousted Shagari's administration in December 31, 1983 initiated **War Against Indiscipline (WAI)** to launder the image and reputation of the country. In sheer modesty, this regime consistently strived to use resources at its disposal to wage relentless war against indiscipline and corruption in Nigeria few months after its emergence. Aligwe (2000, p.102-103) agrees to the above claim where he affirmed that the brave soldiers of WAI annihilated bribery and corruption, abuse of public office and resources, lawlessness, impatience, unpatriotic, greed, graft, laziness and idleness, favouritism, mediocrity, cheating, disorderliness, dishonesty, fighting and quarrelling in public, drug trafficking, swindling, gambling as well as drunkenness. Though the Buhari regime that threw up the image reform programme was short-lived, yet WAI to a large extent, succeeded in the eradication of indiscipline and corruption in the country.

General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida's regime came on board in 1985. The image reform policy tagged **Mass Mobilization for Social Justice Self Reliance and Economic Recovery (MAMSER)**, initiated by Babangida in 1987 was adjudged as the

most ambitious and expensive image reform programme ever embarked on. In spite of the huge material and human resources sunk into this image restoration policy, the programme to a large extent, could not impact positively on the lives of Nigerian citizens because of lack of commitment and sincerity on the side of the initiator of the project.

Similarly, the image reform project christened **War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAI-C)** was initiated by Sani Abacha. Regardless of the huge amount of resources expended on the project, WAI-C became a political hoax, as it served as propaganda machinery to dress up innumerable atrocities perpetrated by the maximum ruler. Indeed, WAI-C like other past image reform policies that came before it, recorded colossal failure because of lack of commitment, insincerity and poor implementation. Instead of utilizing this image reform programme to launder the image and reputation of Nigeria and Nigerians, the dictator increasingly used it to witch hunt, hound and oppress his perceived political opponents/enemies.

The **National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)** was introduced by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo during his first tenure as the civilian president of Nigeria. In fairness, this image reform policy since its inception has impacted positively on the socio-economic and political life of Nigerian citizens. Doubtless, NEEDS like WAI, has succeeded to a large extent in reaching out to local, state and national development targets.

Nigeria: Heart of Africa project, which was introduced by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has been discontinued sequel to the fact that it could not impact positively on the challenges Nigeria and Nigerians are facing within and outside the country. According to Professor Dora Akunyili, Heart of Africa could not fly for many reasons, but the two most prominent reasons are: Firstly, the name is contentious; Malawi was the first to use the Heart of Africa. Secondly, Nigeria: Heart of Africa project was first launched overseas; and this automatically disconnected ordinary Nigerians from this project. This, no doubt, made the project look elitist in nature. The truth is that any image reform project that seeks to reposition the image of a country both internally and externally should start from home before it gets abroad. Despite the fact that huge chunk of money was sunk into this past Nigeria's image reform campaign projects like WAI-C, Ethical

Revolution and MAMSER, the dreams of Nigeria: Heart of Africa project remain unrealizable.

The **Rebranding campaign programme**, which was introduced by Umaru Yar'Adua's administration stems from the need to ensure that it succeeds where others failed. However, most image reform experts and political pundits perceive this image reform project as a conduit pipe through which the country's hard earned financial resources are drained away by the executors of the project.

In summation, the major cause of failure of the past Nigeria's image reform projects include but not limited to the use of non-experts and unpatriotic individuals in various stages of project conceptualization, design and implementation. Moreso, lack of commitment, insincerity and deceptive attitude of our political leaders, inadequate provision of resources as well as outright alienation of Nigerian masses from taking active part in different stages of planning and implementation of image reform policies also gravely impeded the prosecution of such transformation programmes in the country. The truth remains that most Nigerian governments always **plan for and not with** the Nigerian citizens in the transformation process and this results in the failure of such restoration projects in the country, no matter the huge human and financial resources expended on such projects.

Anti-Corruption Fight: President Muhammadu Buhari's anti-corruption war was the major element that drove his campaign and consequent election into office. The change mantra of the All Progressives Congress was hinged on 'Anti-corruption fight'.

Treasury Single account - When the gains of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration are counted, the implementation of the Treasury Single Account (TSA) policy will make the list. Before the policy, Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) operated thousands of questionable and poorly monitored bank accounts. This bred systemic corruption, compromised revenue remittances and deposit dormancy. But the implementation of the policy was not a walk in the park. The government's initial attempts to adopt TSA were unsuccessful, as the CBN lacked the technological capacity to manage the retail aspect of the policy. RTGS, a Swedish eTechnology platform, was expected to drive the payment leg of the project, but was found unsuitable for retail

payments. That was when SystemSpecs came into the picture. Through the company's flagship software Remita, which powers the TSA, the government has been able to recover over N3 trillion of its cash assets lying dormant in Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) and 40,000 ghost workers have been pushed out of the public sector, a statement credited to the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo.

Electricity: Under President Buhari, the Federal Government agreed to a 50 million Euro (about N11.15 billion) loan agreement with French government for capacity-building and upgrade of power training facilities in Nigeria. The country also signed a \$237 million agreement with World Bank to improve power.

Security: The relocation of the Nigerian Military Command Centre to Maiduguri, since May 2015, contributed to the success in the fight against insurgency in the North Eastern part of the country. As at February 2016, the total number of persons rescued by the Nigerian troops during the ongoing operations in the North East came to 11,595 Also, since December 2015, the well-motivated and rejuvenated Nigerian Military has regained all Nigerian territories previously under Boko Haram control and the nation has also witnessed a broke ties within the terrorist group – Boko Haram. The regional cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram insurgency and violent extremism, through the operations of the 8,500 strong Multi-National Joint Task Force in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, currently headed by a Nigeria military general have also recorded a remarkable success. Nigeria has provided \$21million to the Task Force since June 2015 and is committed to an additional \$79 million, bringing the total of Nigeria's commitment to the Task Force to \$100 million, this was part of what the Presidency listed as achievements during the May 29, 2016 first year celebration.

Ogoni Clean Up: Implementation of the Ogoni Report: Presidential approval for the Implementation of United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report 2010 for the clean-up of Ogoniland with regards to oil pollution and inclusion of stakeholders in the process of implementation is another major project of the present government as championed by the government communications.

Rail Services: According to government official reports, “President Muhammadu Buhari in July 2016 commissioned the \$1.457 billion Abuja- Kaduna rail services at Idu Station in Abuja, project started by his predecessors. The Abuja-Kaduna rail line is one of the first Standard Gauge Railway Modernisation Projects (SGRMP) undertaken in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa. The standard gauge line connects federal capital city Abuja with its commercial capital Kaduna, enabling faster movement of goods and people between the two cities. The construction of the Abuja-Kaduna rail line started in February 2011. The China Civil and Engineering Construction Company (CCECC), which is also constructing the Lagos Rail Mass Transit System in Nigeria, built the line for the Nigerian Federal Government. The project employed approximately 4,000 people and is expected to create more than 5,000 additional jobs during operation.

2.12 Negative Political Communication

In the lead up to the 2015 elections, there was a lot of fire coming from rival political parties, especially the PDP vs. APC. Some media analysts expressed anger at what they saw as misdirected political communication, which could have a negative effect on citizen reaction to governmental communications.

On one occasion in October 2014, the presidency and then governor of River State, Chibuike Amaechi, threw a lot of tantrums on the political arena. Aruwan (2014) captured one of the moments of political communication gone sour. The following is an analysed dialogue of the salvo between the presidency and governor Amaechi. Aruwan began by lamenting the lack of decorum among political office holders with regard to the way they bombarded one another with uncomplimentary remarks. Aruwan noted:

The political communication in Nigerian media last week was really troubling because the contents were basically combative, violent-orientated and devoid of issue-based discussion that would have direct bearing on the unity and healthy political life of this country. The ongoing political narratives and bantering between and among the political bigwigs in the country is so worrisome, especially as the country is heading towards general elections in first quarter of 2015. With deluge of threats to Nigeria’s corporate existence as a country and other underlying challenges associated with ethno-religious crises and of course the lingering, itching clog of insurgency, the power tussle between North and South vis-à-vis mundane PDP- APC political squabbles and many more are bearing more of a combative look than political communication.

Aruwan quoted Pipa Norris of Kennedy School of Government (KSG) in Harvard University, who saw political communication as an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public. The process, he said, operates down-wards from governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and also upwards from public opinion towards authorities.

He added that, in essence, political communication also has to do with how media report, power struggle, their biases and impartial coverage in ensuring sound political process. Aruwan says that the most crucial aspect of it is the analysis of speeches by politicians and those that are trying to influence the political opinion through formal and informal conversations among members of the public. He said that in our context here in Nigeria, political opinion is influenced through both formal and informal ways. Political actors use the mass media to display their political shenanigans and up the ante of political rivalry between one another which the public are at the receiving end.

According to Aruwan, the forgoing can be aptly captured by the assertions of the [former] Rivers State Governor, Rotimi Amaechi who on 25th October, 2014 while addressing students, alleged that the First Lady, Mrs. Patience Jonathan's feud with him revolved around her desire to corruptly share Rivers State resources. Amaechi said:

The quarrel between me and the wife of the President is because she said I should bring your money, Rivers people's money and share with her. I had to abuse the federal government and they abused me back before they could do the work you now see on that road." He also hit at his old ally and now arch rival, Barrister Nyesom Wike, saying, "What kind of vision is that for a thief? They have been thieves for too long so it cannot be new vision. The only thing that is new is that he has industrialized stealing.

At a rally to celebrate the seventh anniversary of his Supreme Court victory at the Amesiemaka Stadium in Ikwerre local government area of the state, Amaechi also said:

When Ebola broke out, to show you how much the President hates us, he visited Lagos. Did he visit us? He did not care. He wanted all of us to die. And I took it as a challenge and say none of us will die. I brought out money. It took the President at the end of Ebola to give us ordinary 200 million naira. I released one billion, one hundred and six million naira to fight Ebola. See our airport. The President lands there. We are like refugees...We were to give Port Harcourt water. As I am talking to you, the Minister of Finance has refused to move the file back to the executive council for approval so that you can have water. They don't care for you. Punish PDP with your vote. That 'thief' will not be governor

of Rivers, [literally referring to Wike]. One of them campaigning for governorship was the contractor to do the road. He abandoned the road and took N3 billion and left. Now he wants to become governor, a thief will not be our governor. I challenge them to integrity test, any of them, from Abuja to Rivers State, I challenge them to integrity test. I have worked with them. I have their records; they are in the office of the governor. I challenge them to go ahead. The problem we have is that EFCC is no longer working. Corruption is at its industrial scale. Thieves are thieves; we now have an industry called corruption.

The Presidency, in its response on 26th October, 2014 challenged Amaechi to stop what they called ‘political rascality’, saying, “Governor Rotimi Amaechi took his obnoxious willingness to denigrate the highest office in the land in a reckless bid to advance his selfish political interests to a new level of irresponsible and rascally behaviour with his totally false and baseless vituperations against President Jonathan, the First Lady and the Federal Government.”

The Presidency said that the governor had “totally lost all sense of propriety, decorum and responsible political behaviour and resorted to unacceptable demagoguery, libel, blackmail and incitement of public disorder.” It further warned Amaechi that there are legal, constitutional and moral limits to political rascality beyond which he will not be allowed to go without repercussions. And that the immunity which he currently enjoys notwithstanding, will end some day and a day of reckoning will surely come when he will answer for all his actions and false allegations against the President and Mrs. Jonathan.

The Presidency further stated: “Nigerians know that while Mr. Amaechi falsely accuses others of corruption, he cannot show or explain to the people of Rivers State what he has done with the billions of Naira that has accrued to the state under his tenure. They also know that while Amaechi continues to falsely accuse the Jonathan Administration of having done nothing for Rivers State, he has recklessly squandered huge state resources on dubious, vain-glorious projects or self-aggrandizement. According to the presidency:

Nigerians will know too that while he falsely alleges that Rivers and other states have not received funds due to them from the Federation account, the only outstanding allocation was for September, which was released to all states well over a week ago. The Governor should stop trying to make President Jonathan the scapegoat for his woeful performance in Rivers State and look to his own very apparent failings and incompetencies. He should also stop blackmailing the First Lady who has demanded nothing from him other than good governance, justice, equity, fairness, real development and progress in Rivers State.

Wike on 27th October, 2014 replied Amaechi saying he lacked the legal, traditional and moral authority to accuse anyone of corruption, when he had corruption written all over him. According to Wike

I challenge Governor Amaechi to a public debate on corruption. I will present to Nigerians the facts about his corrupt activities. Amaechi insults the wife of the President that she demanded money from him. That is pure falsehood. The wife of the President never met him anywhere. Rather, Amaechi's wife collected money from all local councils and legislators for her pet project. Amaechi accuses people of corruption, but the name of his senior brother is corruption. Amaechi should stop seeking attention by attacking the President and his wife, I am here, he should face me. No matter the level of blackmail adopted by Rotimi Amaechi, PDP will win Rivers State in all elections in 2015. Amaechi is deliberately gagging the media in Rivers State, making it impossible for them to report correctly and denied stealing Rivers money.

In replying the Presidency, in the continuation of the cold war, then Rivers state commissioner of information and communication, Ibim Semenitari said Governor Amaechi is an elected official and not a mere 'prefect'. She said:

I would want to say that the presidential spokesman should be careful for the kind of threats he issues to an elected governor. He should remember that the President is not a prefect of the governor. He was elected as President just as the governor was elected as a governor, and Nigeria is a federation. And please, Abati should know his limits and need not attempt to cross his boundaries. It is a bit strange to hear the kind of comments coming out of the Presidency and this shows that the statement was already prepared before governor Amaechi spoke. At no point in his speech did Governor Amaechi make any references. His wife was not even discussed because she is not an official of government. I do not understand where or how Mr. Abati got his story, so we just take it that this is one of those clear indications of rascality within the Presidency trying to call a dog a bad name and hang it.

Arunwan concluded by saying that all these narratives are negative political communication and violent-orientated. He called for moderation in view of the consequences that could come out of such smear politicking which will have negative impact on the public. They are really not a good material coming out of Nigeria's politics, he lamented.

2.13 Empirical Review

Enginia George-Genji (2015) conducted a research on *Political Participation and Voting Behaviour in Nigeria, a study of the 2015 General Elections in Benue State*; an analysis of the political participation of Benue electorate and how it affected their behaviour during the elections. Survey research method was employed by issuing questionnaire to

residents of Benue State. The study revealed that effective political participation was influential in managing the voting behaviour of the electorate and it was central to the change of power from the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) to the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state.

Ojekwe (2015) conducted a research on *Political Advert Campaigns and Voting Behaviour: A Study of Akinwunmi Ambode Election Ad Campaign in Lagos State*. The study employed survey research method to analyze the campaign used and voters' response. It concluded that political ad campaigns have a minimal effect on electorate's voting behaviour but still plays a major role in the electoral process.

Ezinwa, Odii and Ekwe (2015) conducted a research on *The Influence of Hate Campaigns on the Voting Behaviour of Electorate in Nigeria*. The study adopted a mixed method research design using content analysis to analyze some of the hate campaigns messages reported in three national dailies, while survey method was employed to investigate the kind of influence hate reports had on the electorate. The respondents were drawn from the North Central and South East geopolitical zones. The electorate in the North Central maintained that hate speeches did not affect their decisions while those in the South East agreed that their decisions were influenced by hate reports.

Akubor (2015) conducted a research on *Campaigns and Electioneering: Reflecting on the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria*. He studied *The Punch Newspaper* and *Tell Magazine* to analyze the campaign used and survey (questionnaire) was used to examine the effects of the campaigns on the electoral process. The study revealed hate speeches as the main theme. Findings indicate that unlike what is obtainable in other parts of the world where democracy is practiced, with policy issues forming the backbone of campaign message, the Nigerian situation was basically on persons, character assassination, violence and abusive (hate) speeches. The study argues that this campaign strategy often leads to electoral violence before, during and after elections.

In a paper titled "foreign media projection of Africa: The role of African communicators", Egwu (2011, p.1) attempted a justification for the often wicked portrayal of developing countries, especially African nations by western media. According to Egwu, it is the tendency to attribute to others unacceptable intentions, impulses, attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours, that are actually present in oneself, or

one's culture or society, adding that the west often project on Africa western unacceptable attitudes and values, which are present in western life and society.

Arguably, the 2011 general elections on Nigeria went down in history as better than the elections in 1999, 2003 and 2007. Though the 2011 elections have come and gone, media researchers have continued to conduct series of research to ascertain media role and influence. One of such studies is the one conducted by Ojobo on "The Influence of the Mass Media on the 2011 General Elections in Kano State". In carrying out the study, Ojobo used the survey research method with questionnaire as the measuring instrument. The study, in the end, revealed that the mass media were considerably balanced in their reportage of the elections. Ojobo further revealed in the study that audience exposure to mass media reports on the 2011 general elections influenced their perception of the elections.

In a similar study, Umaru in 2011 did a study on "The Influence of Mass Media Messages on the perception of the 2011 General Elections by the Residents of Northern Nigeria". 393 respondents from the three geopolitical zones that constitute the Northern Region of Nigeria were studied. Survey research method was used with questionnaire serving as the measuring instrument. The study showed that the mass media influenced the perception of the residents of northern Nigeria on the 2011 general elections.

Okonkwo in 2011 also conducted a study on "The Mass Media and the 2011 Elections in Imo State". Survey research method was employed while questionnaire was used to ascertain the influence of the mass media on the residents of Imo State as regards the 2011 elections. Okonkwo revealed in the study that audience exposure to mass media reports on the 2011 elections in Imo State, to a very large extent, influenced their perception of the elections.

Related to Okonkwo's study is the study of Njoku conducted in 2011 on "The Mass Media and Rivers State Residents Perception of the 2011 General Elections. The study used the survey research method while the questionnaire was utilized as the instrument for the collection of data. Using 386 respondents drawn from the three senatorial zones of the state, it was found that audience exposure to mass media reports on the 2011 general elections shaped the views of Rivers people on the 2011 general elections, indicating that

their exposure to media reports on the 2011 general elections influenced their perception of the elections.

From all the studies reviewed, it is very obvious that the mass media successfully influenced the perception of the audience on the elections. This has further upheld the assumptions of majority of the powerful effect theories that the mass media have the capability of influencing the audience to think and act in the intended manner.

Aliede (2009) in his doctoral thesis lends support to the foregoing view, where he stated that heated global competition and rivalry among nations worsened Nigeria's case, just as increased internal crises like ethnic, communal, religious, political killings, drug trafficking, financial crimes and corruption in high places exacerbated the country's woes and unfavourable image. Aliede further observed that the woes of the past years had apparently earned Nigeria several negative perceptions at home and abroad, mainly due to the actions and inactions of its leadership. Consequently, Nigeria is hated at home and its citizens despised, smeared and snubbed abroad.

Another study on "The Mass Media and Citizens Perception of the 2007 General Election" in Niger State was conducted by Ibrahim in 2007. Here, the residents of the three senatorial zones of the state, including Minna, the state capital were studied. Survey research method was employed for the study while questionnaire was deployed as the measuring instrument. Findings from the study showed that the citizens' exposure to mass media reports on the 2007 general elections influenced their perception of the election.

Nnaane in 2007 conducted a study entitled "An Empirical Study of the Media Dependency Behaviour of Nigerian Electorates in the 2007 Elections". The study used the survey research method in which 100 copies of the questionnaire were administered to 100 respondents from the population of postgraduate students at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Using purposive sampling technique, it was found that the electorates depended on the media, especially radio for information/news about the elections and that their exposure to the media helped to shape their perception of the 2007 general elections in Nigeria.

Similarly, Kalu in 2007 carried out a study on "Ebonyi State Residents Assessment of mass media coverage of the 2007 General Elections in Nigeria. To actualize the study, Kalu used the survey research method with questionnaire as instrument for data

collection. Studying 399 respondents from the three senatorial zones in the state, the study revealed that Residents of Ebonyi State adjudged the mass media to have performed very well in the coverage of the 2007 General Elections. It was also revealed that their exposure to the media influenced their judgment of the elections.

Using the same survey research method, measuring instrument and sampling technique as used by Kalu, Timipa in 2007 did a study on “The Role of the Mass Media in the 2007 General Elections in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria.” The study showed that the residents of South-South Region of Nigeria significantly exposed themselves to mass media reports on the 2007 general elections. Timipa further unveiled in the study that the perception of South-South residents of Nigeria on the 2007 general elections was influenced by their exposure to media messages.

With almost a unanimous position of majority of scholarly opinions pointing to the fact that the country’s image at the local and international levels tilt to negativity, Okunna (2002) examines Nigeria’s and Nigerians’ image problem from the point of view of social degeneration and crises, describing the country’s youths as ‘lost generation’. Baker (2000, p.70) agrees where he affirms that:

A nation without positive image and therefore good reputation may have the most beautiful strategic planning document and institutions and fail to neither develop nor meet its economic growth aspirations. It therefore means that one of the major assets a nation has is its reputation..., stressing the need for a good image and reputation at home, before expecting the international community to take us serious or even want to interact with us.

Musa also did a similar study on “The Broadcast Media and Citizens Perception of the 2003 General Elections in Sokoto State”. Just like other studies reviewed above, Musa deployed the survey research method to prosecute the study while questionnaire was utilized as instrument for data collection. Using 298 respondents systematically selected from the three senatorial zones in the state, the study revealed that the respondents were significantly exposed to broadcast media reports on the election. It was also revealed that broadcast media reports on the elections carpentered (influenced) audience perception of the elections.

Another study was conducted by Okon in 2003 on “The Role of the Mass Media in the 2003 General Elections in Akwa-Ibom State”. In this study, survey research method was

utilized while questionnaire served as the instrument for the collection of primary data. 377 respondents were sampled to elicit relevant responses for the study. In the end, the study revealed a high level of audience exposure to mass media reports on the elections. It further showed that audience exposure to media reports on the elections impacted on the perception of the audience regarding the elections.

In a related study entitled “The Perceptions of Akwa-Ibom Residents on Radio Reportage of the 2003 General Elections in Nigeria” which was conducted by Bassey in 2003, gave credence to Okon’s study. To execute the study, Bassey used the survey research method with questionnaire as the measuring instrument. Findings showed that 98% of the respondents were very exposed to radio reports on the 2003 elections and that their exposure influenced their perception of the elections.

Furthermore, a study entitled “Electorate’s Perception of Mass Media Coverage of the 2003 General Elections in Nigeria” was executed by Nwankpa in 2003. Here, 6 states were selected from the six geopolitical zones in the country. The study adopted the survey research method with questionnaire as the data collection instrument. Studying a sample size of 476, the study revealed that the Nigerian Electorates were very exposed to mass media reports on the 2003 General Elections. It was further discovered from the study that exposure to mass media reports on the elections significantly influenced their perception of the elections.

Nkwocha (2002), is unequivocal on Nigeria’s horrible image in the world media as he confessed that Nigeria does not have a good image in the global media. On the situation at home, he sounds rhetorical: “what good image can Nigerian earn with daily reporting of ethnic, religious and politically motivated clashes and violent crimes that lead to loss of thousands of lives and property worth billions of Naira”. According to Nkwocha, global networks like CNN, NBC, BBC, VOA, including some tabloids are awash with avalanche of negative reports on Nigeria, as their reports often centre on such terrible topics like advance fee fraud, hard drugs, violent crimes, ethnic, religious and political clashes, prostitution, bad governance and political assassinations. These put together, with the negative local and international publicity it engendered, aided the distress and tribulation of the country.

In a related study, Muhammed in the year 2000 conducted a study on “The Mass Media and the Perception of the 1999 General Elections amongst Youths in Yobe State”. Using systematic sampling technique, 388 youths were studied. The survey research method was adopted for the study while copies of the questionnaire were administered to all the respondents. The study revealed that 89% of the respondents sufficiently exposed themselves to media reports on the general elections. The result also showed that the media were significantly determined their views regarding the 1999 elections.

Hassan in 1999 conducted a study on “the Influence of the Mass Media on the Knowledge and Perception of the 1999 General Elections amongst the Residents of Kano State of Nigeria”. Here, Hassan tried to ascertain whether the mass media were able to influence the knowledge and perception of Kano State residents regarding the 1999 elections. To execute the study, Hassan employed the survey research method while the questionnaire served as the measuring instrument. Using multi-stage sampling technique, 396 respondents were used for the study. Finding from the study showed that 97% of the respondents were very exposed to issues regarding the election through the mass media. It was further revealed that their exposure to political reports in the media significantly influenced their perception of the 1999 general elections. This therefore, implies that the media were able to shape how the masses perceived the 1999 general elections.

On a broader note, Isa in 1999 conducted a study entitled “Using the Mass Media to Influence the People’s Perception of the 1999 General Elections in Northern Nigeria.” In carrying out this study, Isa used the multi-stage sampling technique to select 400 respondents from the three geopolitical zones in Northern Nigeria. Using the survey research method in which the questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection, it was found that the perception of 99% of the respondents regarding the 1999 elections in Northern Nigeria was influenced significantly as a result of their exposure to mass media reports on the elections.

Furthermore, Ibrahim carried out a study in 1999 on “The Mass Media and Voters’ Decision Making in Northern Nigeria”. 398 respondents were carefully selected from the three geopolitical zones of the region. Using the survey research method and questionnaire as the measuring instrument, it was found that voters’ perception of the 1999 elections in Northern Nigeria was influenced by the mass media.

Studies on the mass media and the 1999 election also abound in the southern region of Nigeria. Afam conducted a study in 1999 on “The Influence of the Mass Media on the Residents of Abia State Regarding the 1999 General Elections.” 371 residents selected from Osisioma-Ngwa, Aba-North, Umuahia-South, Isiukwuato, Isiala-Ngwa North Local Government Areas were deployed to execute the study. Survey research method was used while questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. Using simple random sampling technique, it was revealed that 89% of the respondents were significantly exposed to mass media reports of politics particularly on the 1999 general elections. The study also showed that their exposure to mass media reports on the elections shaped their perception of the election. The study further showed that the media were able to shape the people’s perception on the 1999 elections because of their high believability level of mass media reports on the elections.

Another study was conducted in 1999 by Obasi on “Exposure and Perception of Mass Media Coverage of the 1999 General Election in Delta State”. The study used the survey research method where the questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. 403 respondents were systematically selected for the study. In the end, the study showed that there was a very high exposure level amongst the respondents as 99% of the respondents significantly exposed themselves to mass media reports on the 1999 elections. It was also discovered from the study that the high level of exposure influenced the residents’ perception of the 1999 elections.

More so, a study on “South-East Residents Assessment of Mass Media Role in the 1999 General Elections” was conducted in 1999 by Okolo. Survey research method was used for the study while questionnaire was as well utilized as the instrument for data collection. Using 386 respondents selected from Abia, Imo and Ebonyi States, findings revealed amongst others that the South-East residents were, to a very large extent exposed to media reports of the 1999 elections, and that their exposure to the media influenced their perception of the elections.

Apart from the 1999 general elections in Nigeria, similar studies were also conducted on the 2003 general elections. Egba in 2003 carried out a study on “the influence of Broadcast media report of the 2003 General Election on the Residents of Bayelsa State”. 371 respondents were systematically selected from the 8 local government areas of the state. Survey research method was used while questionnaire was used to collect primary

data. The study found that the exposure level was low in the rural areas while that of the urban areas was high. Amongst those who were very exposed to broadcast media reports on the elections, the study revealed that exposure influenced their overall view of the elections.

Just like the 1999 and 2003 general elections in Nigeria, a number of similar studies also abound in the 2007 general elections. In a study conducted by Yusuf in 2007 on “The Role of the Mass Media in the 2007 General Elections in Benue State”, effort was made to ascertain the performance of the media regarding the 2007 general elections in the state. The study used survey research method with questionnaire as the instrument for data collection. Using a sample of 347 respondents from the three senatorial zones in the state, findings revealed that there was high level of audience exposure to mass media messages on the elections, and that their exposure greatly shaped their perception of the election.

Another point worthy of emphasis is the fact that virtually all the studies reviewed made use of just one measuring instrument (questionnaire) which many scholars (Luke, 2010, Hassan, 2010, Okolo, 2009) have argued is inadequate for such kinds of studies. These scholars contend that the rigid nature of the questionnaire makes it impossible for such studies to fully actualize their set objectives. To this end, they recommended the addition of other instruments such as the interview and observation.

2.14 Theoretical Framework

In order to provide a theoretical base for this study, two theories were used.

Framing theory and Perception theory were used to explain the study and provide insight on the assessment of the perception and credibility of governmental communications among the residents in South East Nigeria.

2.14.1 Framing theory

This theory was first introduced by sociologist Erving Goffman in the 1970s to systematically explain that humans use their ingrained expectations to make sense of their lives. From media perspective, media framing can be viewed from the sociological and psychological angles. Sociological framing focuses on the words, images, phrases and presentation styles that communicators use when relaying information to recipients while

psychological media framing deals with the effects of media frames on those who receive them (Drunkman, 2001 and Iyengar, 1991).

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text through repetition or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols (Entman, 1999,p.52). In other words, the media can increase voters' interest in election through the pattern of their report.

According to Uwakwe (2010,p.187) "media framing means that media coverage shape how people see issues" such as governmental communications. In other words, media can shape people's perception of reality. Pavlik and McIntosh (2011,p.292) opined that "traditional news media often decide how they will frame a story before the reporting is completed and sometimes before it has even begun". This means that a journalist may beforehand decide how he/she wants an issue, a person or an event to be perceived by reporting them in a particular way or by using certain words, images or symbols in the report. Entman (2001) cited in Balnaves, Donald and Shoesmith (2009,p.68) describes a news incident in which a (former) Soviet Union aircraft shot down a civilian aircraft as an 'attack', while labeling as a 'tragedy' a similar incident in which a United State aircraft shut down a civilian Iran airplane'. An election may be described as free and fair credible depending on how the said election is framed in the media. It could also be contented that the way the media frame themselves can influence the way the audience perceive them. If other media for instance, frame the reports of others as biased, the tendency that the audience will see anything coming from such media as bias is there.

Balnaves, Donald & Shoesmith (2009,p.68) explained that "framing makes certain information in a news story salient and depresses the importance of other information". It is unarguable that the journalist can manipulate the audience perception of an event, issue, idea or person through framing. It is also noteworthy that the way the media frame event, issue or ideas in their reports inversely influence the audience perception of media coverage. The media may be perceived to be fair, biased or otherwise as a result of their framing of an issue or event. In other words, the media could be judged based on the way they frame an issue, event or idea.

According to Hague and Harrop (2007,p.130) "The journalists' words, as much as the camera operator's images help to frame the story, providing a narrative which encourages

a particular reaction from the viewer”. It could be deduced here that journalists can elicit and obtain a particular desired response from voters through the words, images symbols used in their reports. Repetition and association technique of persuasion could be used to achieve this. Harris (2004,p.238) explained that “candidate can come to have a prevailing image that becomes the frame through which their action are viewed”. In the 2011 general election, Gen. Muhammadu Buhari, the presidential candidate of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), was said to be framed as an “Islamic extremists”. According to Agbo and Otoh (2011,p.53) “this perception was very high in the southern and north central part of the country and may have worked against him despite this impeccable personality”. EU EOM Report (2011,p.34) indicated that one third of the coverage given to Buhari was negative”. The media can also frame itself through the reports it carries about itself. The media can write reports to review the coverage of an election. There was such headline as “New media centres to boost elections reporting (The Guardian April 14,2011); “Groups design news service to ensure better coverage of elections” (The Guardian April 14, 2011); “Radio Nigeria Committed to credible polls” (The Guardian April 4, 2011).

Pavlik and McIntosh (2011,p.292) describe framing as “one of the biggest problems of journalism today as the facts of a story are frequently forced to fit into the frame, or angle regardless of reality. Similarly, Lippmann cited in Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009,p.179) observed that “of public affairs, each of us sees very little, and therefore, they remain dull and unappetizing, until somebody, with the makings of an artist, has translated them into a moving picture”. This is why experts believe that media people are in the business of selling meanings.

Thus, Entman, Jorg and Pellicano (2009,p.176) rightly observed that “all governmental communicators engage in framing strategically, seeking to exert power over outcomes by inducing target audiences to accept interpretations that favour their interests or goals”. These government communicators, according to them, are politicians, bloggers, political satirists, editorial writers and pundits. They are however of the view that reporters and news editors in main stream national news media normally engage in framing without intending to push any particular policy or political goal. Governments in their efforts to influence its citizens rightly and in-line with its agendas use the media, both public and private to effectively achieve these aims by strategically using framing to score political

points. Pavlik and McIntosh also believe that journalists are often not even aware that they are framing stories but only reflecting reality.

It could be concluded from the foregoing that the media is capable of influencing audience perception of an event such as the governmental communications through the nature and pattern of its reports. Inversely, the nature of media coverage of an event can also influence audience perception of the media itself.

2.14.2 Perception Theory

Perception according to Bovee, Thill, Dovel and Wood (1995,p. 97) is the process of being exposed to a stimulus, paying attention to some degree, and then interpreting the received message. Hence, perception involves the process of exposure, attention and interpretation. In other words, for perception to take place there must be exposure to stimuli with certain level of attention paid to the stimuli and finally the stimuli are interpreted by the audience. Among the assumption of perception, theory according to Anaeto, Onasanjo and Osijeso (2008,p.66), are that “mass communicators want audiences to pay attention to their messages, and make appropriate changes in attitudes or beliefs, or produce the desired behavioural responses”. During every governmental communications or campaign, citizens are bombarded with messages from government spokespersons or agents through various media seeking their attention in order to support their policy or influence their behaviour in a particular way. But writers have shown that perception is not as simple as it appears. It is rather a complex process. According to Berdson and Steiner (1964) cited in Severin and Tankard (1992,p.56) perception is the “complex process by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world”.

Bovee (1995) in the same vein has further argued that mere exposure to a stimulus does not guarantee that people will pay attention to it. They noted that audience is overloaded with competitive messages and are as such constrained to choose which stimuli to attend to. Likewise, in governmental communications coverage, the masses are faced with hard decision of choosing which station to listen to and why they must accept the message. Severin and Tankard (1992,p. 57) observed that, “perception is influenced by a number of psychological factors, including assumptions based on past experiences (that often operate at an almost unconscious level), cultural expectations, motivation (needs), moods and attitudes. Similarly, Bovee (1996,p.98) added that “in addition to the message content

and the quality of presentation, interpretation is affected by the audience needs, motives, experiences and expectations; the context or situation in which the message is recommended; and the order in which the stimuli are received". The foregoing obviously explains the concept of selective perception. Selective perception according to Severin and Tankard (1992,p.57) is the tendency for people's perception to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes and other psychological factors. Since, individual have different wants, needs, attitudes, they are not likely to react to the same stimuli in the same way. In other words, selective perception implies that different people can react to the same message in different ways.

This study is thus interested in understanding how the different residents of South East Nigeria react to government communications messages. Since it has been shown that perception is a product of exposure, attention and interpretation. It is pertinent to examine other processes that are similar to selective perception viz: selective exposure, selective attention and selective retentions.

Selective exposure according to Hasan (2013,p.166) occurs when people tend to expose themselves selectively only to communications which are generally in accordance with their established convictions and avoid communication which seem to challenge their beliefs". In other words, citizens may decide not to expose themselves to certain media content or media organization that contradict their existing beliefs, convictions and attitudes. Severin and Tankard noted that, "the notion of selective exposure follows nicely from Festinger's theory of Cognitive Dissonance which suggests that one way to reduce dissonance after making a decision is to seek out information that is constant with the decision. This is because of the belief that people tend to avoid information that will create psychological imbalance in them and as a result seek information that is consistent with their prevailing attitudes and beliefs. Similarly, an individual may avoid a radio station or political message that will create psychological tension in the person.

Selective attention, write Severin and Tankard (1992,p.64) explains "the tendency for a person to pay attention to those parts of a message that are constant with strongly held attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour". This indicates that people may pay more attention to a particular broadcast station or message than the other.

Selective retention according to Severin and Tankard is "the tendency for the recall of information to be influenced by wants, needs, attitudes and other psychological factors".

Studies have lent support to selective retention. It was discovered that “details were frequently left out when people passed on stories or descriptions of pictures. It was also found that people in favour of segregation learnt plausible pro-segregation and implausible anti-segregation statements easily than they learnt plausible anti-segregation and implausible pro-segregation statements”.

It could be understood so far that people do not expose themselves to every message and even when they do, the level of attention given to the messages will not be the same likewise the quality of information retained. In other words, masses are not expected to expose themselves to every political message and even when they do, they are not expected to react in the same way to the message. They are not also expected to retain all the message they paid attention to. This theory explains why citizens perceive their government as reliable on one message source and react to a given message in a particular way and even recall a particular message for future use.

2.15 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study as follow:

- H₁ The knowledge level of governmental communications among the South Eastern Nigeria populace is dependent on the level of awareness of governmental communications.
- H₀ The knowledge level of governmental communications is not dependent on the level of awareness of the governmental communications.
- H₂ The knowledge of South Eastern Nigeria populace about government policies influences their perception of governmental policies as credible.
- H₀ The knowledge of the South Eastern Nigeria populace about government policies does not influence their perception of governmental policies as credible.
- H₃ There is a significant relationship between the South Eastern residents’ perception of the governmental communications as credible and their responses to the governmental communications.
- H₀ There is no significant relationship between the South Eastern residents’ perception of the governmental communications as credible and their responses to the governmental communications.

2.16 Summary of Literature

This study reviewed conceptual and empirical studies from local and international sources. From the related literature reviewed, knowledge gap was found in those conceptual works and empirical studies including dissertations in the area of governmental communication, mass media and voter behavior, political advertising, media and political participation, negative communication and hate campaigns, image question in media projection of Nigeria, credibility issues in media reportage, new trends in governmental communications, managing conflicts through communication strategies, the media and mass mobilization as no empirical study was seen to have assessed the credibility and perception of governmental communications in the South East Nigeria from a broad perspective that cuts different forms of messages. This ranges from selected budget speeches, Monetary policies like Treasury Single Account (TSA), Bank Verification Number (BVN), image and attitudinal change campaigns, “Change Begins With Me”, “Good People, Great Nation”, “Rebranding Nigeria” and anti-corruption campaigns of federal government with a view of ascertaining audience believability of the credibility of the messages in the South East Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter offered a description of the research methodology and procedure that guided this study. This included: research design, population of the study, area of study, sample size, sampling techniques, Instrument for Data Collection, Validity of Research Instrument, Reliability of Research Instrument, and Techniques for Data Analysis

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey method. The justification for its adoption is predicated on the account of its appropriateness to the study and the fact that it also goes hand in hand with survey research method.

3.2 Area of study

The area for this study consists of fifteen purposively selected local government areas from the five States of the South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. Three local government areas were purposively selected from each of the state. In the five South East states, these local government areas were selected, Anambra- Awka South, Awka North and Anambra East; Ebonyi- Abakaliki, Ekwo and Ohaukwu; Enugu- Enugu-North, Nsukka and Nkanu-West; Abia- Umuahia North, Umuahia South and isukwuato and Owerri municipal, Okigwe and Owerri North for Imo state. The population of each of the chosen local government was obtained, after which the results of the various states of south east was summed up and used as the target population for this study.

Universities, markets and government ministries were studied in the various local governments. In each state, a local government with a university was selected. The same with local governments, markets and government ministries. Two markets were selected in each state, one in the rural area, and the other in the urban area.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises Nigerian citizens domiciled in the South East who are students and staff in the universities, business people in the markets and workers in the ministries. These clusters have been purposively chosen in line with the thrust of the study. The total population of universities, markets and ministries is therefore 198,953. This forms the population of the study.

Table 3.1: Sample frame of selected study areas

	State	Population (approx.)
Abia state	ABSU	19, 000
	Fed Univ. of Agric.	13,000
	Uturu market	3000
	Umuabia market	2500
	Ministry of Education	89
	Ministry of Agriculture	54
	Total	37643

	State	Population
Anambra State	UNIZIK	21, 000
	Odumegwu Ojukwu University	17,000
	Eke Awka market	3200
	Igbariam market	4100
	Ministry of Transport	96
	Ministry of Information	78
	Total	45474

	State	Population
Ebonyi State	EBSU	23000
	FUNAI	4000
	Abakpa abakaliki market	2300
	Nwaelem market	2250
	Ministry of commerce	63
	Ministry of Lands	72
	Total	31685
	State	Population
Imo State	IMSU	23500
	FUTO	14900
	Eke Onuoha market	2340
	Iheagwu market	2120
	Ministry of Local Government	79
	Ministry of Chieftaincy	65
	Total	43004
	State	Population
Enugu State	UNN	15000
	ESUT	23000
	Ogige market	1800
	Eke Agbani market	1200
	Ministry of Culture and Tourism	76
	Ministry of Finance	71
	Total	41147

3.4 Sample Size

Due to the largeness of the population size of this study, the researcher systematically selected a manageable but representative sample size for the study. In determining the sample size, the Cochran (1963, p.75) formula for large, definite populations was used. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 Npq}{Ne^2 + Z^2 pq}$$

Where:

n = sample size

Z^2 = standard error of the mean or the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails. At 95% confidence level, Z is often set at 1.96.

p = the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population. This is often assumed to be .5, where the 95% confidence level is used.

$q = 1 - p$

e = desired level of precision, often assumed to be 0.05 in the social sciences where a 95% confidence level is often used.

Therefore,

$$n = \frac{1.96 \times 198953 \times .5 \times 1-.5}{198953 \times 0.0025 + 1.96 \times .5 \times 1-.5} = 777.991082.$$

The sample size is approximately 778.

The sample size is therefore 778. The various states were apportioned samples based on the proportion of their population relative to the sample size. Accordingly, Bowley's (1926) proportionate sampling technique was used, and is given as follows:

$$n_h = (N_h / N) * n$$

Where n_h is the sample size for stratum h ,

N_h is the population size for stratum h ,

N is total population size, and

n is total sample size.

After using the formula to compute sample sizes for various states, the following table emerged, with the samples for states listed in the column labelled calculated stratum sample.

Table 3.4: Proportionate sample size distribution

State	Clusters	Clusters	Cluster sample size	Population	Calculated Stratum Sample
Abia	Universities, Markets, Ministries	Students,	47	32,000	147
		Business people,	40	5,500	
		Civil servants	60	143	
				37,643	
Anambra	Universities, Markets, Ministries	Students,	50	38,000	178
		Business people, Civil servants	60	7,300	
			68	174	
				45,474	
Ebonyi	Universities, Markets, Ministries	Students,	42	27,000	124
		Business people, Civil servants	37	4,550	
			45	135	
				31,685	
Enugu	Universities, Markets, Ministries	Students,	51	38,000	161
		Business people, Civil servants	50	3000	
			60	147	
				41,147	
Imo	Universities, Markets, Ministries	Students,	48	38,000	168
		Business people, Civil servants	50	4,460	
			70	144	
				43,004	

The proportionate sampling were also applied in determining how many copies of the questionnaire to give to the universities, markets and ministries in each state since the populations of these areas differ significantly in each of the states.

However, Wimmer and Dominick, (2013) online calculator only provides for a basic sample size which requires an over sampling to make provision for mortality in the field. Bertlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001,p.46) citing Salkind (1997,p.107) Fink (1995, p. 36) and Cochran (1977, p.396) suggested over sampling when a researcher is studying a large population and error margin is expected. Bertlett, Kotrlik and Higgins (2001, p.46) also stated that “if the researcher decides to use over sampling, let him estimate the response rate as a means of calculating for it”. To calculate for the over sampling procedure, a response rate estimate of 95% was adopted. The calculation for the contingency is shown below:

$$n_2 = \frac{\text{Minimum sample size}}{\text{Anticipated response rate}} \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 3.2}$$

Where anticipated return rate = 93%.

Where n_2 = sample size adjusted for response rate.

Where minimum sample size = 778.

Therefore:

$$n_2 = \frac{\text{Minimum sample size}}{\text{Anticipated response rate}} = \frac{778}{95\%}$$

$$n_2 = 778/0.95 = 818$$

Approximately 818

The sample size for this study is 818 respondents.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study adopted the purposive method in selecting the two local governments to study. In each state, selection of areas of study depends on local governments that have universities, urban markets and rural markets. Considerations were given to areas where there are universities, markets and government ministries at the same time. Then a second local government were selected for the rural markets.

Multi stage sampling was used to select the universities, faculties, and two faculties, departments, staff and students.

The markets were divided according to certain well known merchandise such as clothing/jewellery, beverage, staple foods, industrial raw materials/goods and road transport workers and respondents were purposively chosen in line with these criteria

The state ministries selected are the ministry of education, transport, lands, culture and tourism, local government, chieftaincy, finance, Commerce and agriculture. These were studied in all the local government areas. During the meetings, the instrument was shared first to the heads of these sub-units in the markets, who in turn identified their members. Research assistants were on hand to guide the completion of the instruments.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

The study adopted the questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contains structured and unstructured questions. Questions tested relevant variables, especially the assessments and challenges affecting citizen perceptions and credibility of governmental communications. Data were measured at the various levels such as ordinal, nominal, interval and ratio levels. Relevant scales were therefore provided for valid and reliable measures at these levels.

3.7 Validity of Research Instrument

The measuring instruments addressed the objectives of the study, face and content validation of the questionnaire was done to ensure clarity, relevance, specificity and the inclusion of all relevant items to the study. To this end, copies of the instruments were given to two expert researchers in the Departments of Mass Communication, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, and University of Nigeria Nsukka, where very helpful comments, suggestions and necessary corrections were made by these scholars after the review. After that, the project supervisor gave final validation to the instruments.

3.8 Reliability of Research Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was checked using test-retest technique. Test-retest, according to Nachmias and Nachmias (2009), involves the administration of the measuring instrument to the same group of persons at two different times, and the computation of the correlation between the two sets of responses. This means that for reliability of an instrument to be effectively established, a researcher has to administer his instrument on the respondents at two intervals to check their ability to be consistent in

responses. This is because experts say that measuring instrument must constantly measure what it sets out to measure (Ogboushi,2006 p.243; Kothari, 2012, p.74).

For test-retest in this study, 30 copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in the three local government areas in Enugu, Imo and Anambra states at two separate intervals; given that 10 copies were administered in each Local government.

After the first administration, the responses provided were collated and documented. Two weeks later, the second administration was done. This interval was initiated to avoid a situation where a respondent recalls the exact question asked in the first test thereby providing the same response which may lead to over estimation. In addition, some of the questionnaire items were slightly reframed while retaining their original meaning.

The Pearson correlational coefficient formula was used to ascertain the reliability pattern of the study. The correlation coefficient was computed using Karl Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient given below.

Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient

$$r = \frac{\sum(x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x - \bar{x})^2 \sum(y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

Which is same as

$$r = \frac{N\sum XY - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{N\sum Z^2 - (\sum X)^2 (N\sum X^2 - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

At the end of using Karl Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient statistical procedure for checking test re-test reliability, findings revealed 0.8, 0.7, 0.8, 0.9, and 0.8 levels of reliability under the five research questions raised (see appendix).

3.9 Techniques for Data Analysis

The quantitative data that were generated from the use of questionnaire were presented using simple frequency distribution tables, percentages and numbers to ascertain the perception and credibility of governmental communications among the populace in South East Nigeria. These data were presented and analysed using one research question after another. It means that questions on the questionnaire that address every research question were presented under that research question. Chi-square tests of dependency and correlation statistical tool were used in testing the hypotheses. Data collected through questionnaire were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

To elicit information from the respondents, 818 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the people in the selected states of the study. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse the copies of the questionnaire which were found valid for the study.

The aim of this study was to assess the perception and credibility of governmental communications among the populace in South East Nigeria. In this chapter, the researcher presented and analyzed the data generated through the administration of questionnaire.

The research questions raised included:

1. What is the level of citizens' awareness of governmental communications among the South Eastern Nigerian populace?
2. To what extent are the people of South Eastern Nigeria knowledgeable about governmental communications?
3. To what extent have these government communications influenced the attitude of the people?
4. To what extent have the people perceive these governmental communications as credible?
5. To what extent have the peoples' attitudes towards governmental communications influenced their responses?
6. What other factors influenced the citizens' access and responses to governmental communications?

The questionnaire which comprised closed-ended questions was divided into two segments. The first section was made up of items that dealt with the demography of the respondents, while the second section answered questions on the psychographic data of the respondents.

The demographic data of the respondents as collected using questionnaire were presented first. This was equally followed by the psychographic data collected to answer the research questions raised.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

This section focused on the analysis of items in the questionnaire which were drafted to address the six research questions in the study

Demographic Information

Table 4.1: Age bracket of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Years)		
18 – 27	146	19
28 – 37	201	26
38 – 47	220	28
48 and above	211	27
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.1 above indicates that the respondents whose age are between the age range of 18-27 are 147, representing 19%, 201 representing 26% are within the age 28-37, 220 representing 28% are at the age of 38-47, while those whose age fall within 48 and above are 211, being 27 %.

Table 4.2 :Gender

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	563	73
Female	215	27
Total	778	100

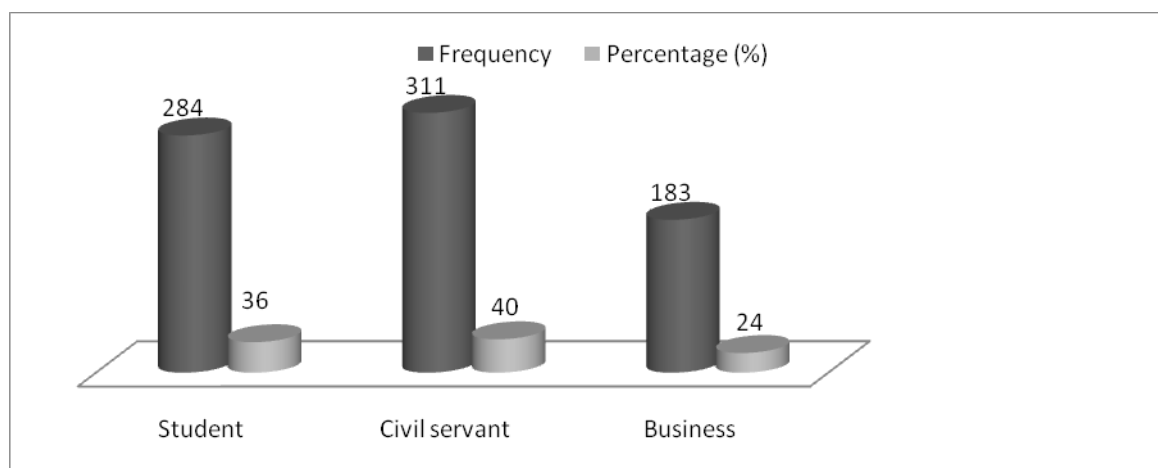
The gender distribution of respondents on table indicates that there are 563 men, representing 73%, while females are 215, being 27%.

Table 4.3: Educational Qualification (Years)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal Education	23	3
FSLC	90	12
SSC	284	36
B.Sc and above	381	49
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.3 above indicate that the respondents that have not attained formal education are 23 representing 3%, 90, representing 12% are FSLC holders, 284, representing 36% are SSCE holders while 381 representing 49% are those who have B.Sc and above. This implies that having respondents with B.sc holders at 49% and being the highest percentage. There is likelihood of a high level of understanding and knowledge of governmental communications and perhaps, a wide exposure to such communications.

Figure 4.4: Occupation of respondents

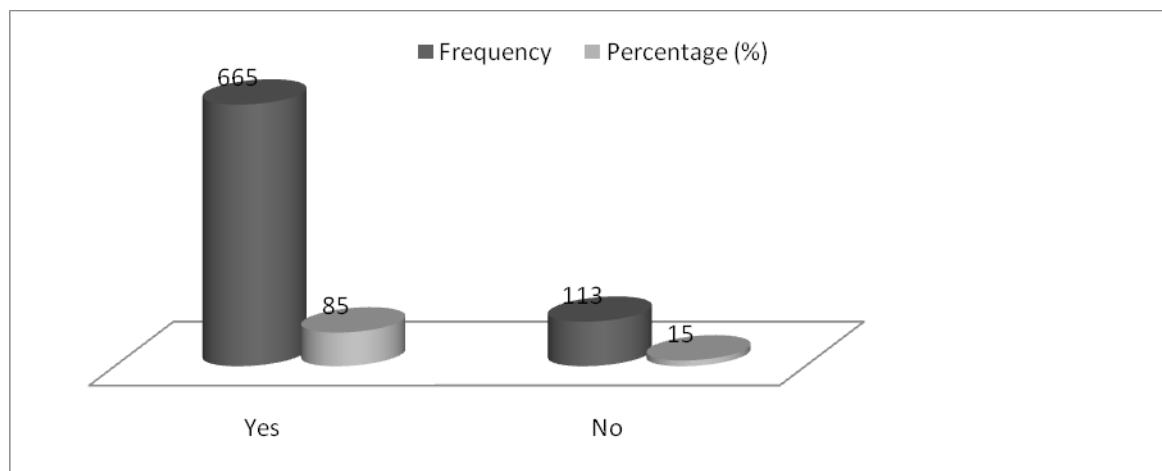
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.4 above indicate that 284, respondents are students representing 36%, 311 are civil servant representing 40%, while 183, are into business representing 24%. From the above, there is tendency of civil servants and students being more aware of governmental communications than business people. It means a correlation between table 4.3 and 4.4.

Section B: General Questions

This section is guided by the six research questions used in the study. The analysis of psychographic data deals with analyzing data gathered from the assessment of governmental communications, awareness and credibility.

Figure 4.5: Awareness of Governmental communications on various media platform



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.5 above shows that 665, respondents representing 85% are aware of governmental communications on various media platform while 113, representing 15% are not aware. This suggests that majority of the respondents sampled were exposed to governmental communications in different media. This revelation lends support to the use of mainstream media and social media on the part of government in disseminating messages to the citizens in the South East.

Table 4.6: Level of exposure to Governmental communications messages

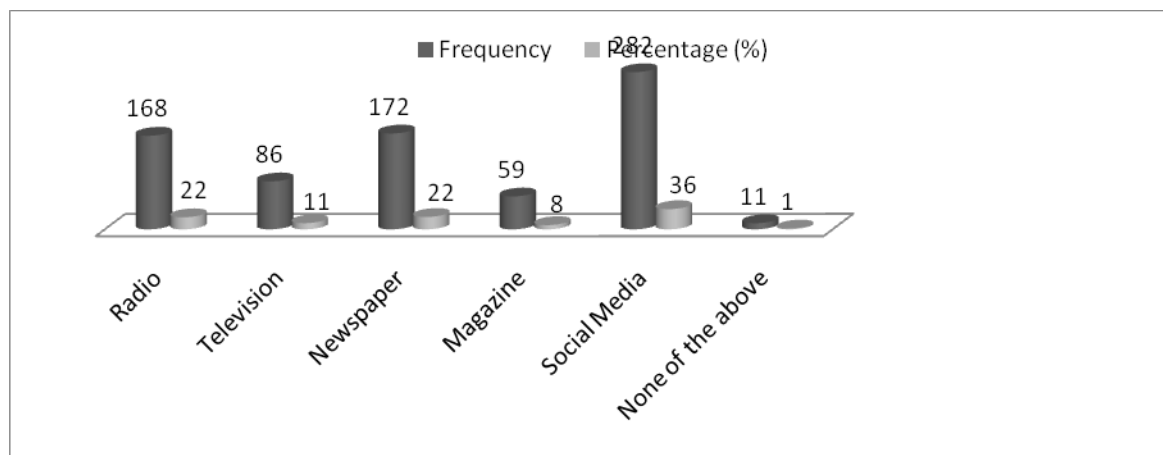
Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very often	273	35
Often	201	26
Rarely	191	25
Never	113	14
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.6 above indicate that 273, respondents representing 35% are very often exposed to governmental communications messages, 201, representing 26% are often expose to

governmental communications messages, 191, representing 25% are rarely exposed to governmental communications messages, while 113, representing 14% never have time to expose themselves to governmental communications messages. This table implies a high level of exposure to governmental communications. This is possible when we recall that in table 4.1 majority of the respondents are educated and aware of governmental communications.

Figure 4.7: Governmental communications reception medium



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.7 above shows that 168, respondents representing 22% received governmental communications through radio medium, 86, representing 11% received governmental communications through television medium, 172, representing 22% received governmental communications through newspaper medium, 59, representing 8% received governmental communications through magazine, 282, representing 36% received governmental communications through social media while 11, representing 1% receive their messages from none of the above medium. It is evident that the use of Internet which has made Nigeria among top ten countries with the most internet users is manifest here. Olowole (2017) asserts that the most searched stories in Nigeria for the year 2017 revolves around these personalities; President Mahammadu Buhari, Nnamdi Kanu and Gov. Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti State. The above depicts that political stories maintain prominence among internet users in Nigeria.(webclick.com.ng), Oluwafemi (2016) notes that 16 million Nigerian sign in to facebook every month while 7.2 million users log in daily. According to EIE (2016) 92 million Nigerians are internet users out of which 1.8 million use twitter monthly. To underscore the growth in the use of internet and social

media in particular, Nigeria Communications Commission (2017 Report) states that according to National Broadband plan (2013-2018), the country is expected to attain 30% broadband penetration by 2018 which stands at 21 % as at 2017. From the foregoing, the dependency of respondents on social media for governmental communications is visible.

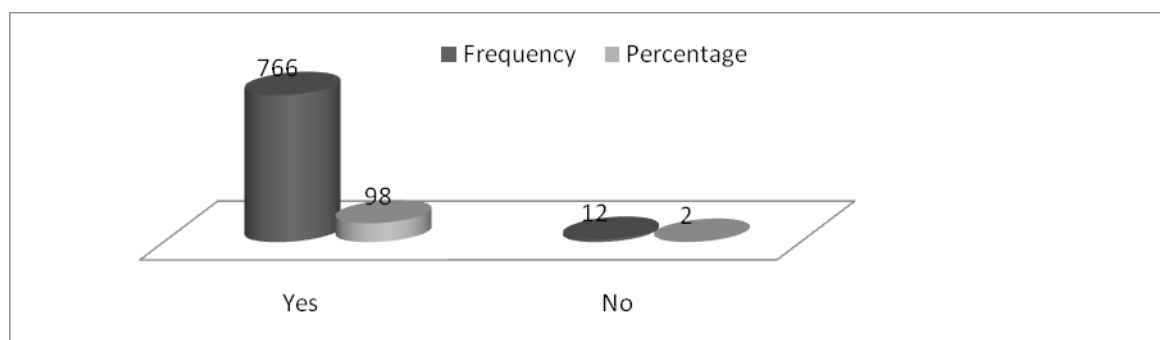
Table 4.8: Credibility of the Governmental communications reception medium

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very credible	201	26
Credible	398	51
Not credible	117	15
Can't say	062	8
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From table 4.8 above indicate that 201 respondents, representing 26% believe that the medium from which these governmental communications were received is very credible, 398, representing 51% believe that the medium from which governmental communications were received is credible, 117, representing 15% believe that the medium from which these governmental communications were received is not credible while 0.62, representing 8% can't say if the media are credible or not. The respondent's opinion on the credibility of reception medium is consistent with Aristotle's three dimensions to successful communication: - Ethos- authority: logos- the logic used to support the claim(facts) and pathos – emotional or motivational appeal. The authority in context means ownership of the source, while facts explain the quality of content and emotional appeal or motivation driven from the medium by the audience.

Figure 4.9: Awareness level of Governments "Change begins with me" campaign



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.9 above revealed that 766, respondents, representing 98% are aware of governments “change begins with me” campaign while 12, representing 2% are not aware. The level of awareness of this campaign could be attributed to its currency and prominence given to it by the federal government since the flag off on 8 September 2016. There is likelihood to the awareness level of the campaign by the name from its derivation from the change mantra of the APC led government and National Orientation Agency (NOA). Adekunle (2016) cites Buhari “Change slogan of this administration is not only in terms of social and economic reforms but also in the role that individual citizens must play in actualizing it. Nigerians can contribute to change through the way we conduct ourselves, engage our neighbours, friends and generally how we relate to the larger society in a positive and definitive way and manner that promotes our common good and our common destiny”. Being a pet project of current administration, it is probable that the respondents due to media exposure were aware and conscious of the campaign.

Table 4.10: Awareness level of “Rebranding Nigeria” campaign

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	680	87
No	98	13
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

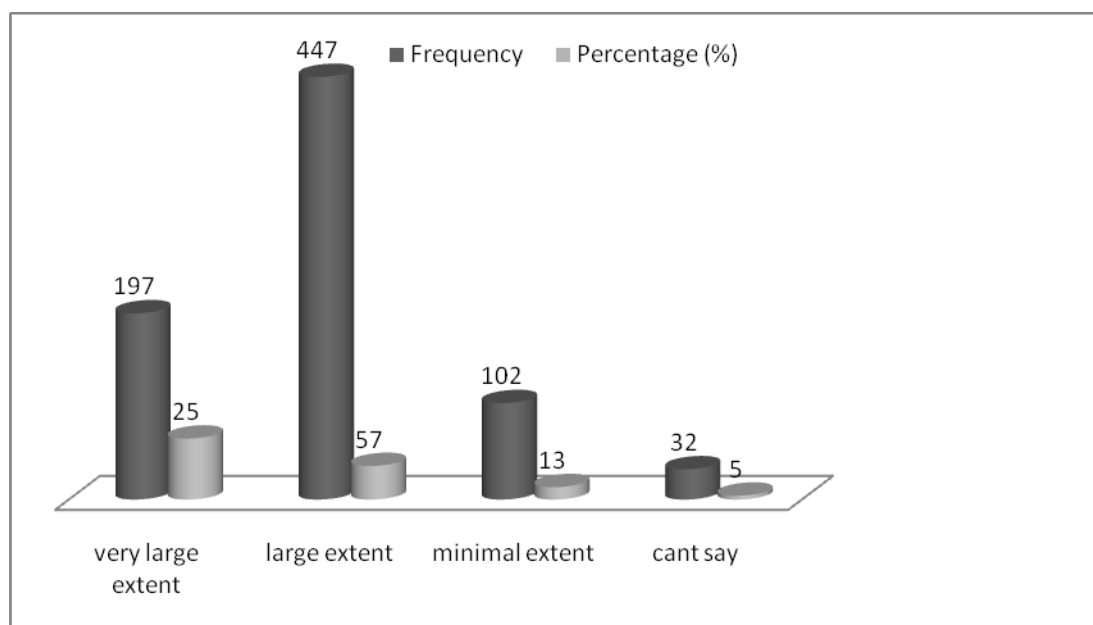
The above table 4.10 indicates that 680, respondents representing 87% are aware of the Nigeria rebranding campaigns and 98 respondents, representing 13% are not aware. The decline in the awareness level from the previous table could be attributed to lack of currency of the campaign. Unlike the “change begins with me” campaign that is still running, “Rebranding Nigeria” campaign which was launched in 2009 ceased to exist after the administration of President Umaru Yar’Adua.

Table 4.11: Awareness level of President Buhari's anti-corruption campaigns

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	585	75
No	193	25
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.11 indicate that 585 respondents, representing 75% are aware of President Buhari's anti-corruption campaigns, 193 respondents, which represents 25% are not aware. The table shows that the populace are conscious of governmental communications on the anti-corruption campaign of the current federal government. Anti-corruption being one of the campaign trusts of President Buhari and the APC may be accountable for the prominence given to it in the media. A foremost civil right activist and criminologist, Femi Odekunle (2015) opines that anti-corruption war of Buhari led federal government is a sure part for economic recovery, growth and development. (Channels Television interview).

Figure 4.12: Extent of awareness level of transformation agenda of the past regime

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.12 show that to a very large extent 197, respondents representing 25% are aware of the transformation agenda of the past regime, at 447 respondents, representing 57% are to a large extent aware of transformation agenda of the past regime, 102 representing 13%

of the respondents, are to a minimal extent aware of the transformation agenda, and 32 respondents representing 5% cannot really say if they are aware of the transformation agenda. This could be attributed to the level of literacy of the respondents evident in figure 4.3 which indicates that 49% of the total respondents possessed bachelor's degree and above as their educational qualification.

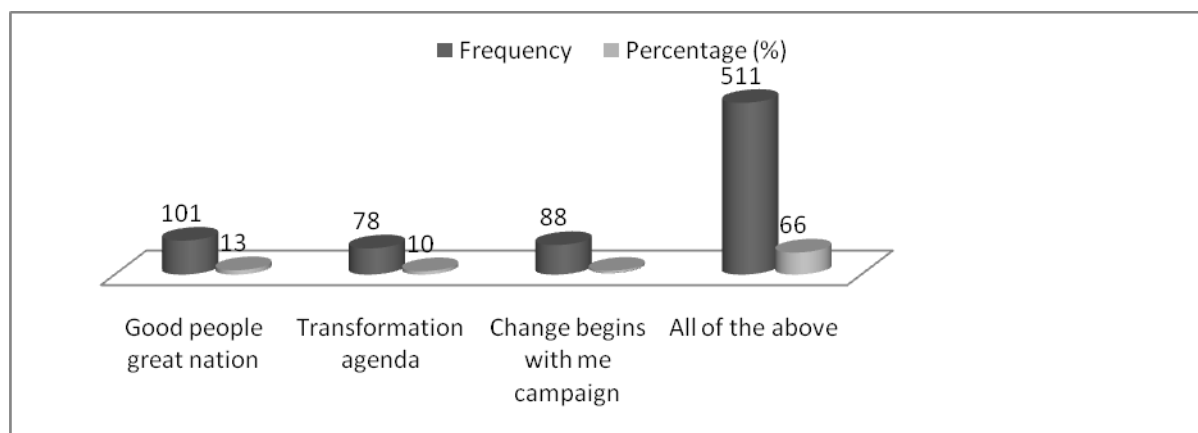
Table 4.13: Extent of knowledge of Nigeria 2016 budget

Variables	Freq	Percent
The budget was padded and shows government carelessness	764	
98.20		
The budget was excellent	001	0.13
The budget was a solution to our national challenges	002	0.26
The budget was ok & was passed without hinges by the N. Assembly	011	1.41
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.13 above shows 764 representing 98% of the respondents said that the budget was padded and shows government carelessness, 1 representing 0.13% of the respondents said that the budget was excellent, 2 representing 0.26% of the respondents said that the budget was a solution to our national challenges, while 11 respondents representing 1.41% said that the budget was ok and was passed without hitches by the National Assembly. By this implication, it could be seen that the budget padding controversies in 2016 National budget eroded the confidence of the respondents. The demographic data of the respondents suggests awareness predicated on literacy and occupation as factors responsible for awareness of government policies.

Table 4.15: Knowledge of Governments promotional campaigns on nation building and attitudinal change



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.15 shows that 101 respondents representing 13% are knowledgeable about ‘good people, great nation’ government promotional campaigns on nation building and attitudinal change, 78 respondents, representing 10% are knowledgeable about transformation agenda of the government promotional campaigns on nation building and attitudinal change, 88 representing 11% of the respondents, are knowledgeable about the change begins with me campaigns of the government promotional campaigns on nation building and attitudinal change, and 511 respondents representing 66% indicate that they are knowledgeable in all of the above government promotional campaigns on nation buildings and attitudinal change.

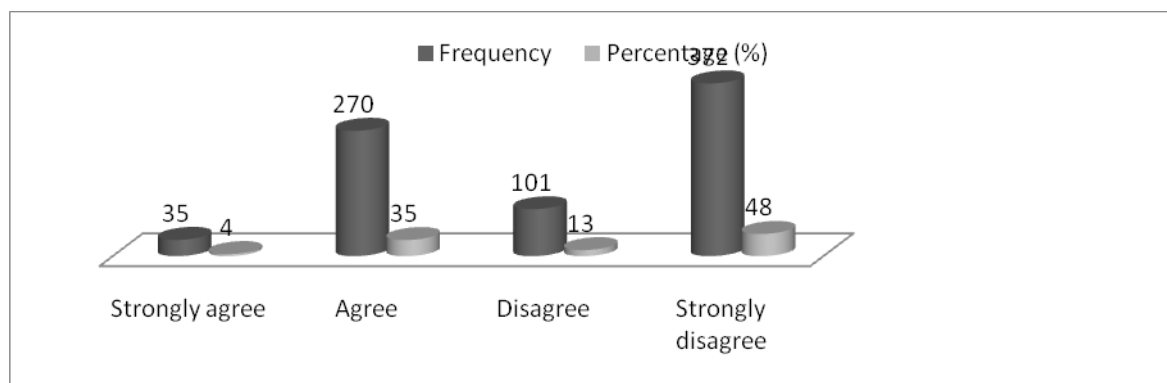
Table 4.16: Extent of belief in the present Government as a true agent of positive change

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	214	28
Agree	231	29
Disagree	119	15
Strongly disagree	132	17
Undecided	082	11
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.16 shows that 214, respondents representing 28% strongly agreed that the present government is a true agent of positive change, 231 respondents, representing 29% agreed that the present government is a true agent of positive change, 119 representing 15% of the respondents, disagreed, and 132 respondents representing 17% strongly disagreed that the present government is a true agent of positive change, while 82 respondents, representing 11% are undecided. It is interesting that majority agree and perceive government change mantra as a true campaign for positive change but the level of participation and legitimacy for government policies remains cause of concern. It is imperative to juxtapose this with the level of citizens' participation and dispositions towards patriotism and nation building. Brecht (2002,p.15) states that “the worst illiterate is the political illiterate. He hears nothing, sees nothing, takes no part in political live. He does not seem to know the cost of living, the price of beans; flower, rent and medicine all depend on political decisions...” it is left to be seen how the respondents belief in the present government has translated into good governance.

Figure 4.17: Do you agree that Nigerians are good people and great nation with all its political, economic, social and security challenges?



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure above shows that 35, respondents representing 4% strongly agreed in the theme, ‘Nigerians’ good people great nation regardless of any political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling it, 270 respondents, representing 35% agreed in the theme, ‘Nigerians’ good people great nation regardless of any political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling it, 101 representing 13% of the respondents, disagreed, and 372 respondents representing 48% strongly disagreed in the theme, ‘Nigerians’ good

people great nation, looking at the political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling it.

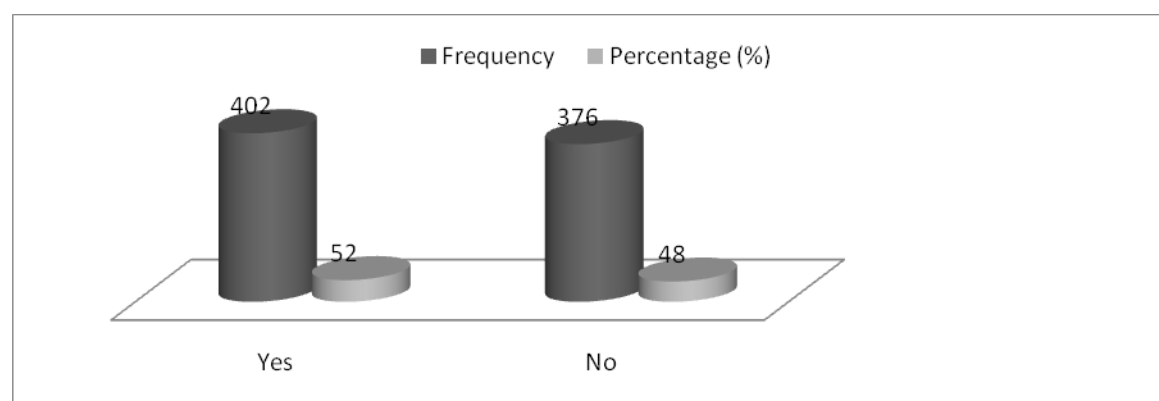
Table 4.18: Budget reflection of inclusive governance

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	02
Not at all	759	98
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above, 19 respondents representing 2% think that the 2016 budget indicates all is inclusive and reflective of every geopolitical zone in its governance and projects delivery, 759 representing 98% of the respondents think that 2016 budget is an indication of non inclusive and sectional government. The respondents seemingly capture the cry about the neglect of the South East geo-political zone by the President Muhammadu Buhari government. According to National Assembly budget and research office (2015), the sum of 28.22 billion naira was appropriated for capital projects for the five states whereas FCT got 209 billion naira. The North West region, the home region of the president had a generous allocation for capital project worth 73.7 billion naira for the implementation of 802 projects. The North East got 46.69 billion, South West- 48.97 billion while South-South got 35.31 billion naira.

Figure 4.19: The level of positive influence of anti-corruption campaigns on the behaviour of the respondents.



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4.19 indicates that 402 respondents, representing 52% have positive attitude towards President Buhari's anti-corruption campaigns, while 376 respondents

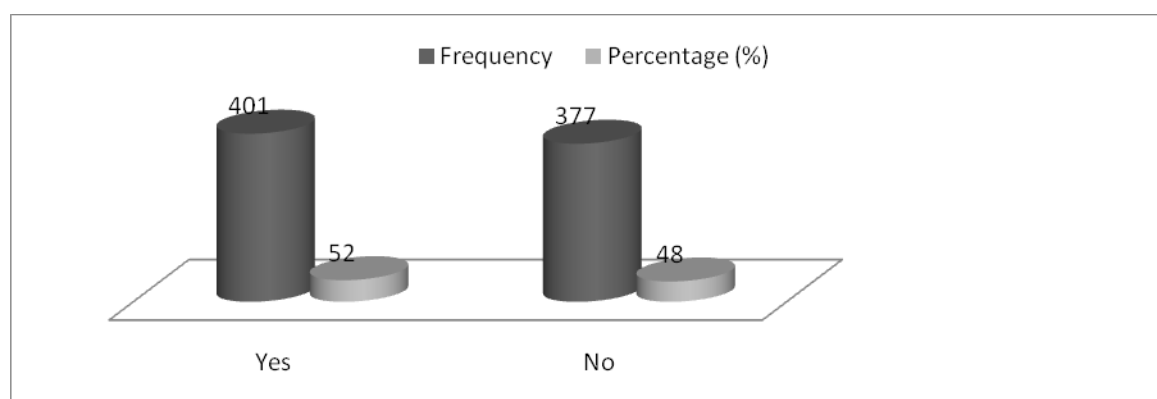
representing 48% have not had their attitude influenced. The respondents view is seemingly consistent with the 2016 corruption ranking of Nigeria by the Transparency International. Nigeria is the 136 least corrupt nation out of 175 countries according to 2016 corruption perception index by Transparency International. Corruption rank in Nigeria averaged 119.14 from 1996 until 2016, reaching all time high of 152 in 2005 and a record low of 52 in 1995.

Table 4.20: Citizens belief in change begins with me government campaign

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	207	27
No	571	73
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The above indicates that 207 respondents, representing 27% believe the governmental communications that change really begins with the citizens, while 571 respondents representing 73% disagreed with the governmental communications that change begins with the citizens. Gbolagade (2006) asserts that ‘change begins with me’ is a two-way responsibility... who first? “ to fulfil this mission or campaign for national values, the onus is on the president and his team to exude good characters worthy of emulation and sincerity in governance. Leadership begins with examples as well as exceptional nation. Get us social justice and change begins with me” the respondents tend not to believe more in this campaign unlike the anti-corruption.

Figure 4.21: Citizens belief in good people great nation campaign

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table and figure above revealed that 401, respondents, representing 52% believed in-line with the governmental communications image campaign that we are of course a great nation, however, 377, representing 48% think otherwise. The respondents opinion on this campaign is seemingly even unlike their level of belief in change begins with me campaign. There is tendency of this particular campaign being more appealing to the respondents than the change begins with me.

Table 4.22: President Muhammed Buhari's 2016 National budget rating

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Credible	282	36
Not credible	496	64
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From above, 282 respondents, representing 36% rated President Muhammed Buhari's 2016 budget as credible, while 496, representing 64% rated President Muhammed Buhari's 2016 budget as not credible. The respondents had earlier viewed padding controversy and low allocation of capital project to the South East geo-political zone as issues in the 2016 budget.

Figure 4.23: Credibility of communications campaigns in promotional behavioural change and nation-building

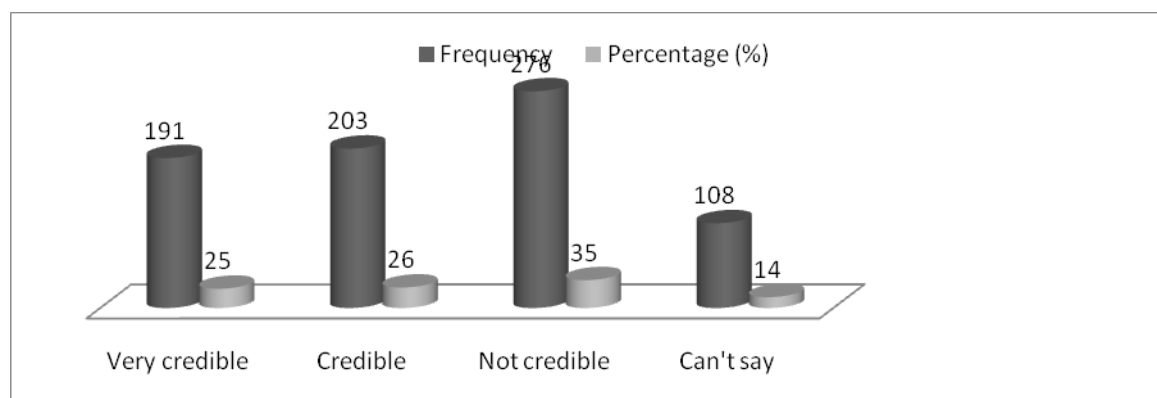


Figure above indicates that 191 respondents, representing 25% consider government communications as very credible, 203, representing 26% rated government communications as credible, while 276, representing 35% government communications as not credible, and 108, representing 14% can't say if government communications are credible or not.

Table 4.24: Nigeria's Government credibility measurement in relation to their promises

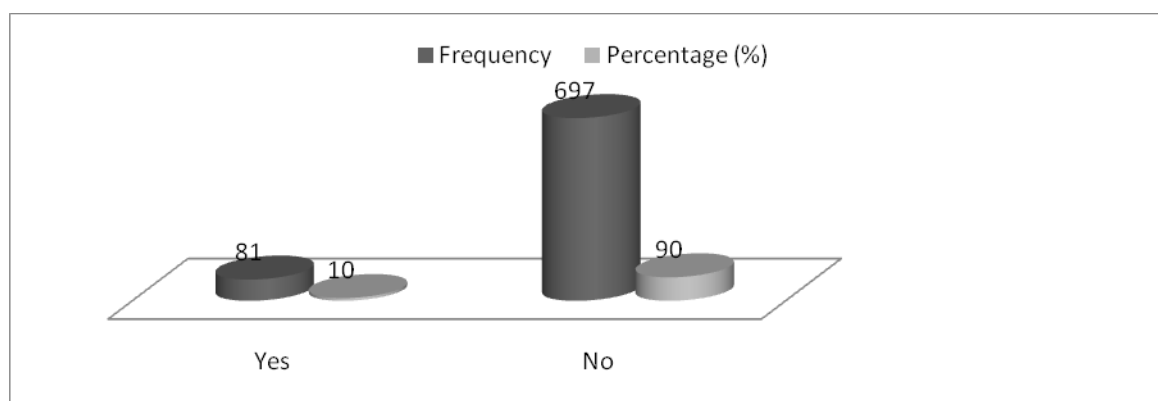
Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very reliable	00	00
Reliable	07	1
Not reliable	705	91
Can't say	66	8
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table above indicates that 7 respondents, representing 1%, while measuring Nigerian government credibility, rated Nigeria as reliable in relation to fulfilment of promises and other governmental communications, 705, representing 91% rated Nigerian government as not reliable in this assessment, while 66, representing 8% can't say if Nigerian government should be rated as credible or not. The respondent view is in consonance with SBM intelligence (2017) which says that President Buhari's government during the 2015 electioneering campaign made 171 campaign promises that border on economy, anti-corruption, accountability in public service and reduction of cost of governance. On the first two of these, there was marginal improvement by the government in comparison with

its delivery in the first year but the scorecard is still too poor to definitely proclaim any significant progress. On anti-corruption, a low 33% performance scorecard was recorded. An improvement on the 17% recorded in the first year while foreign exchange, power supply and road infrastructure had low growth. (source: <http://www.worldviewstrafor.com>)

Figure 4.25: Federal Governments reliability in the management of the proposed 50 million Euro loan with French Government for capacity building and upgrade of power training facilities in the country.



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure reveals that 81 respondents, representing 10% hold the government reliable in the management of the proposed 50 million Euro loan with French government for capacity building and upgrade of power training facilities in the country, however, 697 respondents representing 90% disagreed and hold the government not reliable and credible of such management. The respondents' opinions cast doubts over the success of the proposed upgrade of power facilities in the country which is in consonance with the findings of related studies on failed contracts in Nigeria. Amade, et al (2015) citing Opawale (2013) states that a study carried out in 2000 revealed that before 1999 Nigeria lost 265 million dollar annually via different types of illegal procedures in the award of contract- escalated contract sums, use of unqualified contractors, over invoicing, contracts outside budgetary provisions and diversion of funds to private pockets. Perhaps the failure of successive administrations in the execution of power reform projects may have informed the respondents' opinion.

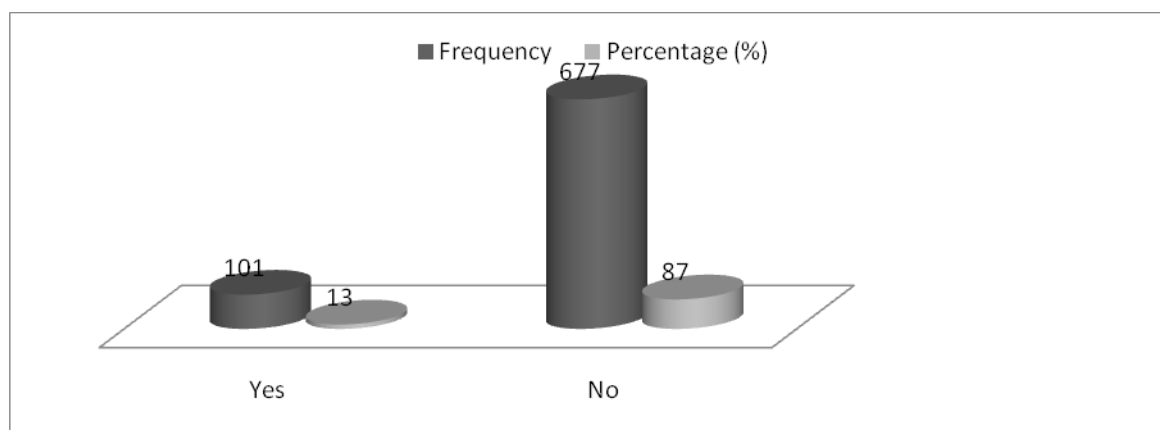
Table 4.26: Governments rating as a reliable government in its fight against corruption

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	473	61
No	305	39
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From above, 473 respondents, representing 61% agreed that the federal government is transparent enough in their fight against corruption war as it relate to TSA , 305 respondents representing 39% disagreed and claimed that the TSA reports has been inconsistent and does not indicate being reliable enough in its fight against corruption war. The respondents view may be consistent with the position of the accountant-general of the federation Ahmed Idris’s observation of ignorance on how TSA works by Nigerians as the greatest challenge. Agabi (2017) citing Idris, contends that “the greatest challenge is that people should understand that TSA is out to achieve efficiency and effectiveness. It is one of the critical aspects of our economic reform if you are talking of accountability and transparency, the best way to go is TSA” he further admits that there is the issue of deploring the save money into funding the economy. Currently, the government is exploring effective ways of using some of the TSA savings to drive budget implementation. (Daily Trust, December 19 2017). The admittance of knowledge gap on the part of the authorities could lend credence to the respondents’ opinions.

Figure 4.27: The budget capture of serious project per geopolitical zone



Source: Field Survey, 2017

From above, 101 respondents representing 13% agreed that the 2016 budget captured serious projects in their geopolitical zone in its government and projects delivery, 677 representing 87% of the respondents said that the 2016 budget did not capture any serious project in their geopolitical zone. The public outcry of marginalization by the people from the South East over infrastructural development and neglect of the zone in political appointments could be a justification for the respondents' opinion.

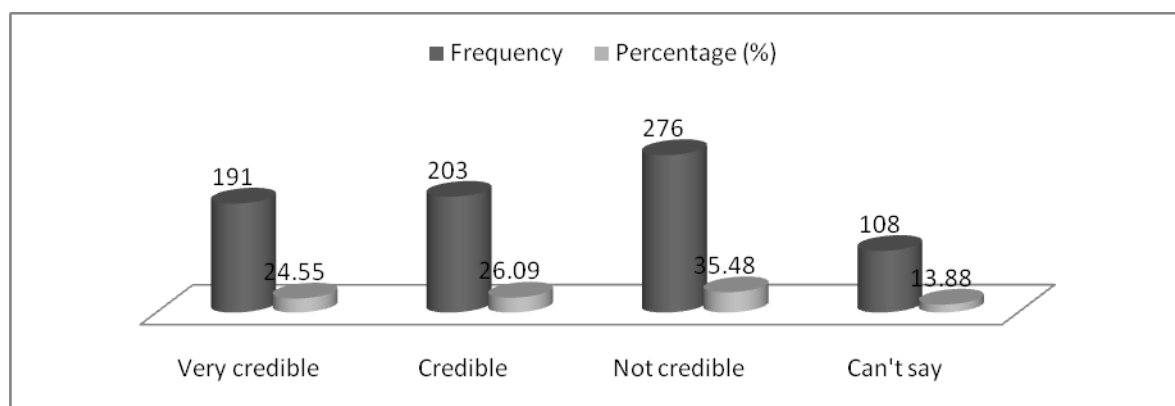
Table 4.28: The anti-corruption campaigns positive influence on the behaviour of the respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	402	52
No	376	48
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table above indicates that 402 respondents, representing 52% have positive attitude towards President Buhari's anti-corruption campaigns, while 376 respondents representing 48% have not had their attitude influenced.

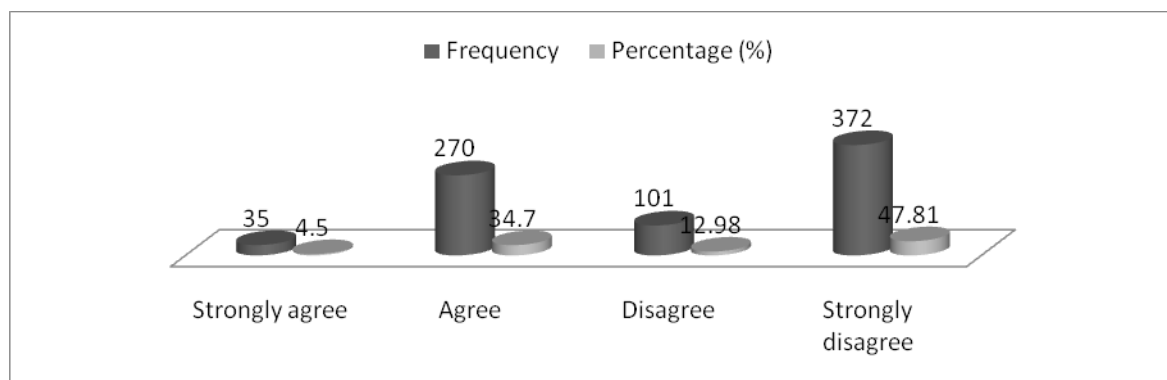
Figure 4.29: Credibility of governmental communications campaigns in their promotional behavioural change and nation building



Source: Field Survey, 2017

From above indicate, 191 respondents, representing 24.6% consider governmental communications as very credible, 203, representing 26.1% of the respondents rated various governmental communications as credible, while 276, representing 35.5% governmental communications as not credible, and 108, representing 13.9% can't say if governmental communications are credible or not.

Figure 4.30: Do you agree that Nigerians are good people and great nation with all its political, economic, social and security challenges?



Source: Field Survey, 2017

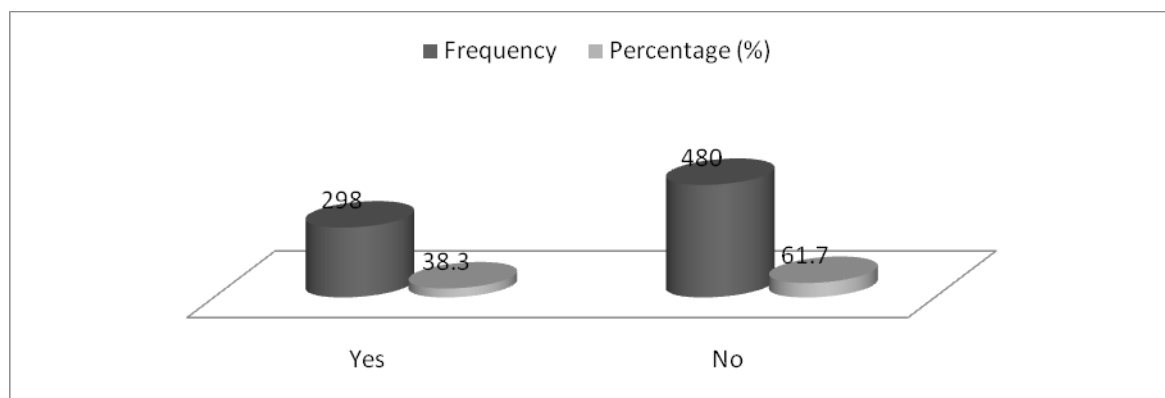
The above shows that 35, respondents representing 4.5% strongly agreed in the theme, ‘Nigerians’ good people great nation regardless of any political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling it, 270 respondents, representing 34.7% agreed in the theme, ‘Nigerians’ good people great nation regardless of any political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling it, 101 representing 12.98% of the respondents, disagreed, and 372 respondents representing 47.81% strongly disagreed in the theme, ‘Nigerians’ good people great nation, looking at the political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling it.

Table 4.31: Existence of projects in south east captured in the previous national budget passed

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	302	38.82
No	476	61.18
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The above reveals that 302, respondents, representing 38.82% believe that government budgets passed previously contain some vital projects in south east zone, however, 476, representing 61.2% disagreed, therefore believe that south east zone are neglected in terms of infrastructural development.

Figure 4.32: National projects sited in your constituency presently

Source: Field Survey, 2017

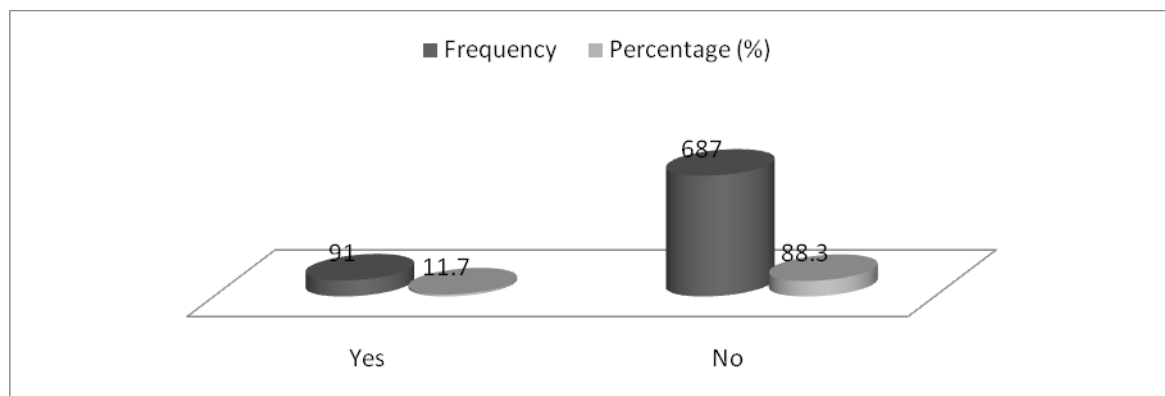
The above shows that 298 respondents, representing 38.3% indicate that there are noticeable national project awarded and commissioned in their zone as captured in the previous national budget, while 480 respondents representing 61.7% disagreed by stating otherwise.

Table 4.33: Governments political promises or awarded projects

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	771	99.10
No	007	00.90
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table revealed that 771 respondents, representing 99.1% indicate presence of government promises and award of contract in there zone, while 7 respondents representing 0.9% said no to the question.

Figure 4.34: Actualisation of political promises/awarded contracts by Government

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table shows that 91 respondents, representing 11.7% hold the government credible and reliable in their promises and national project award, while 687 respondents representing 88.3% disagreed and state that government is not reliable and credible in their promises.

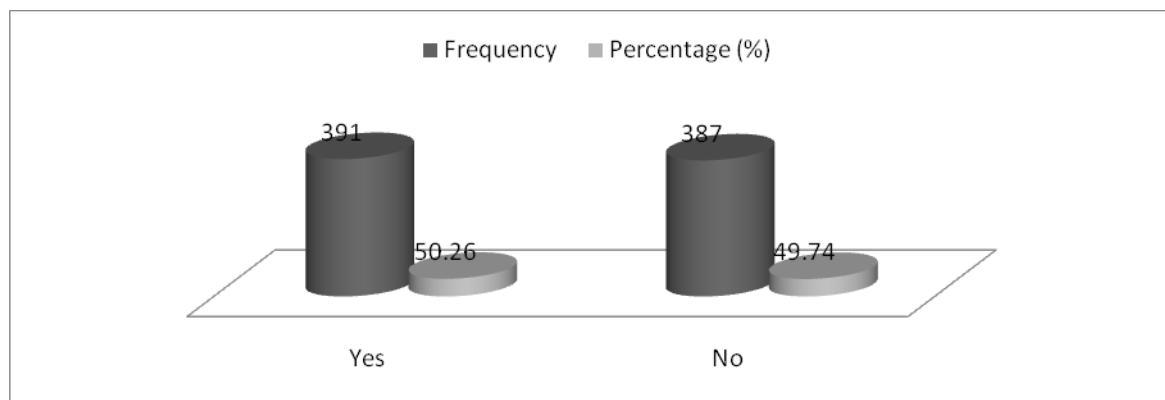
Table 4.35: Federal Governments reliability in the management of the proposed 50 million Euro loan with French Government for capacity building and upgrade of power training facilities in the country.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	081	10.41
No	697	89.59
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table above reveals that 81 respondents, representing 10.4% of the respondents hold the government reliable in the management of the proposed 50 million Euro loan with French government for capacity building and upgrade of power training facilities in the country, however, 697 respondents representing 89.6% disagreed and hold the government not reliable and credible of such management.

Figure 4.36: ‘Change begins with me’ mantra’s positive influence on citizens behaviour



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table indicates that 391 respondents, representing 50.3% agree that change begins with me mantra campaign has influenced them positively, 387 respondents representing 49.74% disagreed and said no that the campaign has not made any noticeable influence on them.

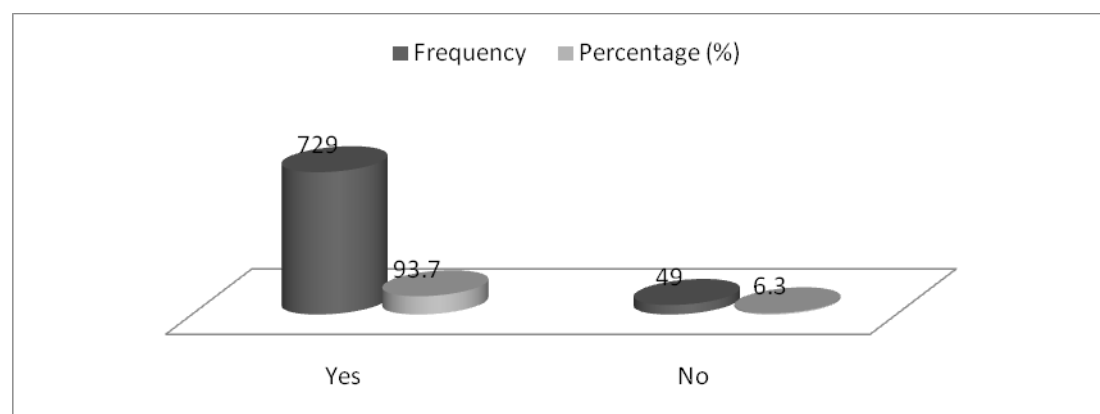
Table 4.37: Nigeria ministries, departments and agencies compliance to the federal governments single treasury account (TSA) policy

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	764	98.20
No	014	01.80
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above, it indicates that 764, respondents representing 98.2% agreed that Nigerian ministries, departments and agencies have complied with the federal government single treasury policy, 14 respondents representing 1.8% disagreed on this matter.

Figure 4.38: Citizens compliance to the Central Bank's stamp duty tax policy



Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the above, 729, respondents representing 93.7% agreed that they have complied with the central bank stamp duty policy, 49 respondents representing 6.3% said they have not complied with this policy.

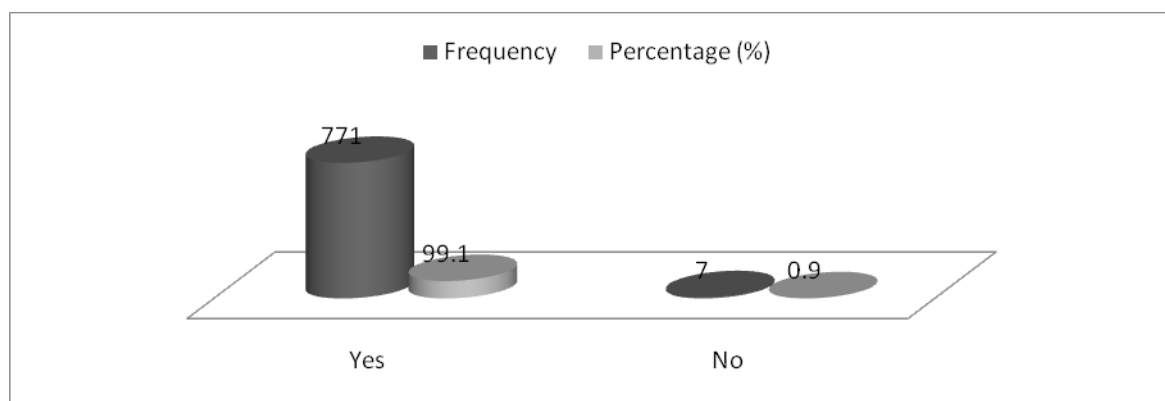
Table 4.39: Citizens' crime report to the police

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	384	49.36
No	394	50.64
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The above Table reveals that 384 respondents, representing 49.36% agreed that they do report crimes whenever they noticed it, 394 respondents representing 50.64% do not report crimes.

Figure 4.40: Through the whistle blowing policy, citizens' ability to report money laundering to the appropriate authorities.



Source: Field Survey, 2017

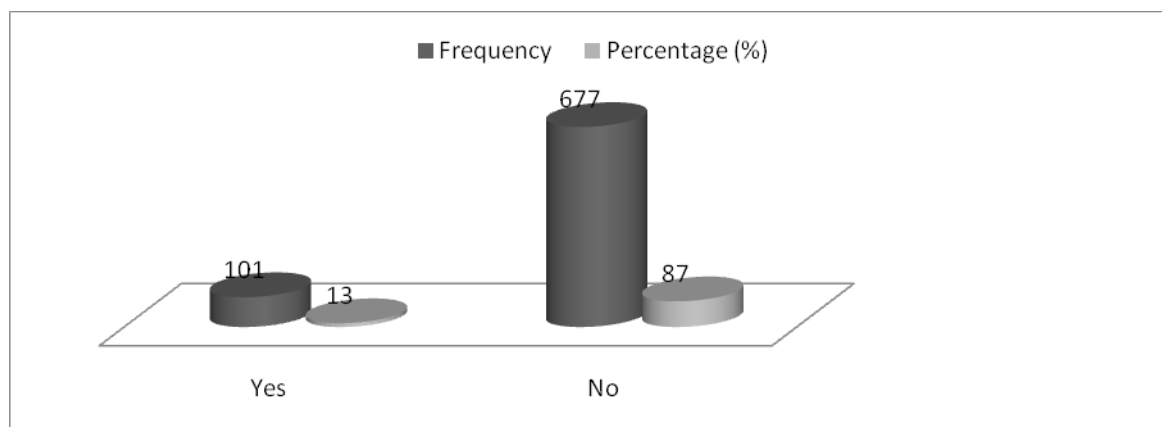
Figure above indicates that 771 respondents, representing 99.1% agreed that they can report money launders through the federal government whistle blowing policy, 7 respondents representing 0.9% disagreed.

Table 4.41: Credibility of the governmental communications reception medium

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Very credible	201	25.84
Credible	398	51.16
Not credible	117	15.04
Can't say	062	07.97
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From table 4.41 figure 4.41 above indicate that 201 respondents, representing 25.84% believe that the medium from which these governmental communications were received is very credible, 398, representing 51.16% believe that the medium from which governmental communications were received is credible, 117, representing 15.04% believe that the medium from which these governmental communications were received is not credible while 0.62, representing 07.97% can't say if the media are credible or not.

Figure 4.42: The budget capture of serious project per geo-political zone

Source: Field Survey, 2017

From the figure above, 101 respondents representing 13% agreed that the 2016 budget captured serious projects in their geopolitical zone in its government and projects delivery, 677 representing 87% of the respondents said that the 2016 budget did not capture any serious project in their geopolitical zone.

Table 4.43: National projects sited in your constituency presently

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	298	38.30
No	480	61.70
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table and figure above state that 298 respondents, representing 38.3% indicates that there are noticeable national project awarded and commissioned in their zone as captured in the previous national budget, while 480 respondents representing 61.7% disagreed by stating otherwise.

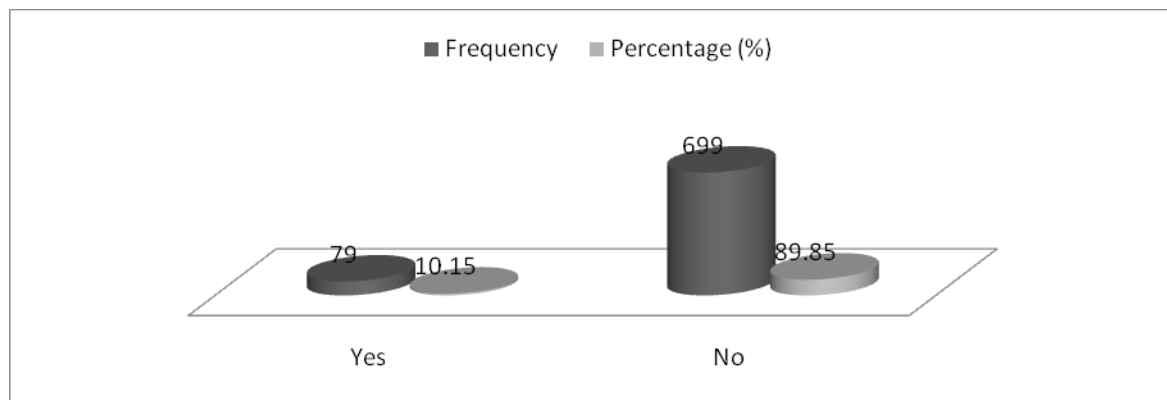
Table 4.44: Governments political promises or awarded projects

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	771	99.10
No	007	00.90
Total	778	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4.44 reveals that 771 respondents, representing 99.1% indicate presence of government promises and award of contract in their zone, while 7 respondents representing 0.9% said no to the question.

Figure 4.45: Justification of Governments claims of being transparent through their reluctance to unveil the actual amount recovered by anti-corruption agencies.



Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table and figure indicate that 79 respondents, representing 10.15% agreed that the federal government is transparent enough in their fight against corruption war, 699 respondents representing 89.85% disagreed and claimed that the government has not been transparent enough in this fight against corruption war.

4.2 Test of Hypotheses

The test of hypotheses was done using the null hypotheses which is the ideal thing in a hypothesis test and tested on two-tailed bases.

Hypothesis One: Ho: The knowledge level of governmental communications among South Eastern Nigerian populace is not dependent on the governmental communications

To test for hypothesis one, data collected from 5 and 14 were tested using Chi-square test of dependence to cross tabulate the tables. These tables looked at the awareness level and knowledge level of respondents towards assessment of the perception and credibility of governmental communications.

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[90% Conf. Interval]	
awareness	778	.8547558	.0126404	.3525736	.8339394	.8755722
knowledge	778	.659383	.0170017	.4742216	.6313844	.6873817
combined	1556	.7570694	.0108754	.4289914	.7391704	.7749685
diff		.1953728	.0211857		.1605028	.2302427

diff = mean(awareness) - mean(knowledge) t = 9.2219
Ho: diff = 0 Welch's degrees of freedom = 1436.65

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0
Pr(T < t) = 1.0000 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000 Pr(T > t) = 0.0000

The degree of freedom from the calculation is 2. At $df = 2$, when error limit is 0.05, table value is 5.991. The test of hypothesis indicated that calculated value of 9.2219 is greater than the table value of 5.991 at 0.05 error limit. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted. Therefore, the knowledge level of governmental communications among south eastern Nigerian populace is dependence on the governmental communications.

Hypothesis Two: Ho: The knowledge level of South Eastern Nigerian populace does not directly influence their attitude towards perceiving the governmental communications as credible.

To test for hypothesis two, data collected from 14 and 20 were tested using chi-square test. These tables looked at how attitude is dependent on knowledge level of respondents towards assessment of the perception and credibility of governmental communications.

		Practice	Knowledge
Practice	Pearson Correlation	1	0.356**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	778	778
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	0.356**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	778	778

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

Two-sample t test with unequal variances

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Err.	Std. Dev.	[90% Conf. Interval]	
attitude	778	.0244216	.0055374	.1544534	.0153025	.0335407
knowle~e	778	.659383	.0170017	.4742216	.6313844	.6873817
combined	1556	.3419023	.012029	.4744995	.3221045	.3617001
diff		-.6349614	.0178807		-.6644016	-.6055213

diff = mean(attitude) - mean(knowledge) t = -35.5110
 Ho: diff = 0 Welch's degrees of freedom = 940.433

Ha: diff < 0 Ha: diff != 0 Ha: diff > 0
 Pr(T < t) = 0.0000 Pr(|T| > |t|) = 0.0000 Pr(T > t) = 1.0000

The analysis indicated that degree of freedom from the calculation value is 2. At $df = 2$, when error limit is 0.05, table value is 5.991. The test of hypothesis indicated that calculated value of 35.5110 is greater than the table value of 5.991 at 0.05 error limit. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted. Therefore, “the knowledge level of governmental communications among south eastern Nigerian populace directly influences their attitude towards the governmental communications”.

Hypothesis Three: Ho: There is no significant relationship between the south eastern Nigeria residents' perception of the governmental communications as credible and their responses to governmental communications

To test for hypothesis three, data collected from 20 and 34 were tested using correlation. Correlation is used to establish relationship. These tables looked at how attitude of respondents is significantly related to their practices towards perception and credibility of governmental communications.

Considering the fact that correlation cannot be greater than one, the calculated value should not be greater than one. The higher the calculated value the more relationship is established. The test of hypothesis three indicated that correlation is significant at 0.01, which means that the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is accepted. The calculated value of 0.356 is an indication of high significant relationship. Therefore, "there is a significant relationship between the south eastern Nigeria residents' perception of the governmental communications as credible and their responses to government communication".

4.3 Discussion of Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study in relation to the six research questions raised.

1. Research Question One: What is the level of South East Nigeria residents' awareness of government communications?

Considering the fact that 84.5% of the respondents are aware of governmental communications on various media platform, 35.1% of the respondents are very often exposed to governmental communication messages, 98.6% of the respondents receive governmental communications through multimedia platform such as (newspaper, magazine, radio, TV and social media), 98.5% of the respondents are aware of governments "change begins with me" campaign, 100% of the respondents are aware of the Nigeria rebranding campaigns, 100% of the respondents are aware of President Buhari's anti-corruption campaigns, and also 57.5% of the respondents are to a large extent aware of transformational agenda of the past regime, while 51.2% of the respondents believe that the medium from which governmental communications were received is credible, it is therefore clear that at a high rate of 78.2%, the residents of South East Nigeria are aware of the governmental communications.

These findings imply that to create public awareness, multimedia channels must be considered.

Research Question Two: Are these citizens' knowledgeable about the policies of federal government?

Given that 98.2% of the respondents know that the budget was padded, this knowledge therefore demonstrates government carelessness, 65.9% of the respondents know that the Buhari's government is fighting a genuine war against corruption, 100% of the respondents know various governmental communications campaigns on nation buildings and attitudinal change such as "good people great nation", "transformation agenda", "change begins with me", campaigns of the government, only 29.7% of the respondents are knowledgeable that the present government is championing genuine campaigns of positive change, while 34.7% of the respondents agreed to be knowledgeable in the theme, 'Nigerians', good people great nation regardless of all the political, economic, social and security issues bedeviling the nation, 98.6% used mostly print, electronic and social media as their main source of information on government communications, 51.2% considered their own media channel for government communications as credible, then it is apparent that at an average of 68.3% residents of the South East Nigeria are knowledgeable about governmental communications.

The implications of these findings are that the Nigerian government did well in creating awareness about the government projects and activities. Most of the respondents are knowledgeable about the government, projects, achievements and insincerity in most of their promises and communications.

Research Question Three: Do these citizens' perceive governmental communications as credible?

According to the findings, 2.44% of the respondents think that the 2016 budget indicates and reflects all inclusive of every geopolitical zone in its government and projects delivery, 51.7% of the respondents think that the anti-corruption campaigns have influenced them positively to avoid bribery and extortions at their area of practice, 26.6% of the respondents believe the governmental communications that change really begins with the citizens, 51.54% have similar believe in-line with the governmental

communications' image campaign that Nigeria is of course, a great nation, 50.3% of the respondents think that "change begins with me" mantra campaign has influenced them positively in-line with the campaign, and 10.2% of the respondents think that the federal government is transparent enough in their fight against corruption war, also 98.2% of the respondents think that Nigerian ministries, departments and agencies have complied with the federal government single treasury policy, and 99.1% of the respondents believe they can report money launders through the federal government whistle blowing policy, then given that governmental communications are pivotal to both social and human development and given the result of "table 19" it can be said that the governmental communications have to a low extent at 48.6% influenced the current attitude of the people.

The implications of these findings indicate that the residents of South East Nigeria think the government is not fair to them. Hence, do not see the government communications as credible enough.

Research Question Four: What number among these citizens' is influenced by governmental communications to believe that government is working?

Judging from the results of the analysis presented, 23.1% of the respondents rated president Mohammed Buhari's 2016 national budget as credible, in line with the above, 26.1% of the respondents rated various governmental communications irrespective of sources and medium, as reliable, meanwhile, 8.5% of the respondents can't really say if Nigerian government should be rated as credible or not in terms of actualization of promises made, 10.4% of the respondents hold the government reliable in the management of the proposed 50 million Euro loan with French government for capacity building and upgrade of power training facilities in the country, while 60.8% of the respondents agreed that the federal government is transparent enough in their fight against corruption war as it relate to single treasury account (TSA), thus, the result of the analysis of Nigerian communications credibility status indicate a low average of 25.8% of the respondents perceptions of Nigerian communications. This is very worrisome because a government seizes to be responsible once it fails to enjoy legitimacy and supports of the people. When credibility is in doubt; democratic principles and the essence of governance are denied.

The implications of these findings are that irrespective of the governmental communications, the people chose to perceive the information in line with their individual dispositions, value, welfare and influence from their significant others (opinion leaders). Hence, government stands to lose its credibility once the peoples' welfare is in doubt.

Research Question Five: Do these citizens' believe in the ability of government to deliver good governance, influence their responses to governmental communications?

Speaking of the positive extent to which the governmental communications have shaped the attitude of residents of South east Nigeria to influence their practices, 51.7% of the respondents have responded positively towards President Buhari's anti-corruption campaigns, 34.7% of the respondents responded positively in-line with the theme, 'Nigerians' good people great nation regardless of any political, economic, social and security issues bedevilling the nation, 38.82% of the respondents believe that government budgets passed previously contain some vital projects in southeast zone and indicates inclusive government, 11.7% of the respondents sees government as credible and reliable in their practices, promises and democratic dividend deliverance.

Judging from the results of the analysis presented so far, 50.3% of the respondents agreed that change begins with me mantra campaign has influenced them positively in their actions lately, 98.2% of the respondents agreed that Nigerian ministries, departments and agencies have complied with the federal government single treasury policy, 93.7% of the respondents agreed that they have complied with the central bank stamp duty policy, 49.4% of the respondents agreed that they do report crimes whenever they noticed them, 99.1% of the respondents agreed that they are willing to report money launders through the federal government whistle blowing campaign,

These findings imply that the Nigerian residents only comply with the government communication when such communications motivate their wants and not just because the government said so, hence, no need for misinformation and disinformation, but the truth alone. Peoples' behaviours and actions are as a result of active motivation

Research Question Six: What factors influence citizens' access and response to governmental communications?

The analysis of data in respect to this research question indicated that 51.2% believe that the credibility of the medium from which governmental communications were received influence the level of reliability attached to the communication, 87.02% of the respondents said that the 2016 budget did not capture any serious project in their geopolitical zone therefore this action alone regulate their positions about any governmental communications, 61.7% of the respondents said they do not feel belonged in any government that has no noticeable impact in their entire zone. To them, the presence of government infrastructure determines the presence of government and 99.1% of the respondents indicate that their experience with the past government promises and award of contract, as well as its influences how the government shall be perceived in its present communications. This implies that 74.8% of socio-cultural issues have affected the practices of residents towards government perceptions and credibility of governmental communications among the populace in south east Nigeria.

The implication of this finding is that, it is not possible for any governmental communications to make head-ways without first of all taking into cognisance these factors and working out ways to address them in the cause of their campaigns. The factors are: social, economic, cultural, and religious factors. Their continue effects on government communications and other related campaigns cannot be over emphasised.

From the above discussion, the following inferences were made:

- a. The study found significant alterations in the basic features of the mainstream media in relation to the sources of information, that social media has become the major source of governmental communications. The study inferred that the social media use has gained prominence over the traditional media in the dissemination of governmental communications while credibility issues have remained unresolved. This displacement paradigm is in line with citizens' use of social media for political communication globally.
- b. It further revealed that audience assessment and credibility of governmental communications is based on the evaluation of the actions of those political actors in governance. Audience believability is not swayed by mere content of governmental communications but the visible dividends of democracy and attitudes of the operators of political system (leaders).

- c. The study established that the audience ranked projects delivered in their constituencies higher than promotional campaigns on attitudinal change and patriotism.
- d. Promotional campaigns of government have not influenced the citizens' believability and commitment to the nation as marginalisation and ethnic bias has continued to dominate their consciousness.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter contains a summary of this research work, the findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestion for further studies. This chapter finally brought the entire study to an end while making some explanations and giving recommendations on the way forward.

5.1 Summary

1. The analysis to research question one revealed that high rate of 84.5% of the residents in Southeast, Nigeria were aware of the various governmental communications.
2. Further analysis showed that 98.6% of the awareness campaigns on governmental communications were created by the various mass media platforms such as print, electronic and social media, thereby showing a multimedia approach.
3. With regards to research question two, data analysis indicated that to a large extent, 98.2% of the respondents in South East Nigeria were knowledgeable about governmental communications. For instance, the study revealed that 65.9% of the respondents know that the Buhari's government is fighting a genuine war against corruption.
4. Data also revealed some level of difference as over 60% of the respondents exhibited no knowledge about the change begins with me campaigns. From the analysis of data, it is obvious that the respondents know about various governmental communications; as majority depicted awareness of the rebranding Nigeria campaign, transformation agenda, fight against corruption. Almost 40% of the respondents were not knowledgeable about the president Buhari's fight against corruption as they saw it as not a genuine one, not credible, and instead a witch-hunt of the opposition party members. Over 70% of the respondents do not have the knowledge about the change begins with me campaigns. The absence of this knowledge is worrisome, considering the fact that lack of knowledge might not warrant government support and positive response. Governmental communications are seen as not always credible and reliable.

5. The findings in relation to research question three showed to a very low extent that the attitude of the people towards 2016 national budget reflects an inclusive government, as a result, the contents of the budget presented by the president indicates biasness and negligence of some geopolitical zones. The government allocation of the democratic dividends could not spread equally across the six geopolitical zones. To a very large extent, 98.2% of the respondents think that Nigerian ministries, departments and agencies have complied with the federal government single treasury policy, and 99.1% of the respondents believe they can report money launders through the federal government whistle blowing policy.
6. Data analysis in regard to research question four revealed, among other things that the government was not too credible, objective and fair to all parties in its communications. The data equally revealed that the majority of the respondents believed that government reports during crisis were full of bias. In its efforts to reposition its national image, a lot of misinformation and propaganda were noticed. On the factors that influenced respondents' perception on how the governmental communications were seen as credible, it was revealed that majority of the respondents believed that their knowledge of government anti-corruption campaigns, rated the government low on credibility. On a different view, to a very low extent, respondents saw governmental communications as free, fair and credible. This is very worrisome because a government seizes to be responsible once it fails to enjoy legitimacy and supports of the people. When credibility is in doubt; democratic principles and the essence of governance are denied.
7. Response to research question five indicated that an average of 58.6% of residents in south East Nigeria have had their behaviours influenced by the governmental communications; meaning that about 40% of the residents did not have their behaviours influenced. The data collected in response to research question five also revealed that all the respondents kept to some of the messages of the campaigns. There were some who completely took the message of the campaign the way it was. They showed knowledge of the whistle blowing policy, stamp duty policy, TSA policy, registered for BVN, avoided crimes, and so on especially money laundering. The data collected in relation to research question six showed

that 74.8% of the respondents in South East Nigeria were of the view that socio-cultural, political and religious issues (family, friends, culture, church and politics) have affected the practices or behaviour towards government communications.

8. The findings from data presented in relation to research question six also indicated that all the respondents said that certain social, political, cultural, economic and religious factors kept them from fully adhering to the tenets of the governmental communications. They noted that their political parties' ideologies, religious values and tribalism, are sometimes the factors that are inimical to the government messages. They also agreed that their close ties with family members, individual welfare and friends also affected their decisions towards governmental communications. The respondents noted that the lack of infrastructures in their zone, lack of national projects presence, lack of national political positions and some measures of selectivity in the fight against corruption that toes party-line and some obvious lies and propaganda noticeable by various government spokespersons, double speaking and other several issues are factors that have affected their compliance with the messages of government campaigns.

The test of hypotheses indicated that the null hypotheses were all rejected and their alternate accepted. This means that the hypothesis which stated that: "the knowledge level of governmental communications among South Eastern Nigeria populace is dependent on the level of awareness about the governmental communications" was accepted at $9.2219 > 5.991$; "the knowledge level of South Eastern Nigerian populace directly influence their attitude towards perceiving the governmental communications as credible" was accepted at $35.5110 > 5.991$; and "there is a significant relationship between the South Eastern Nigerians' residents' perception of the governmental communications as credible.

5.2 Conclusion

Given that only 48.6% of the residents of South East Nigeria had their attitude influenced by the governmental communications and only about 58.6% of the residents had their behaviours influenced in-line with the campaign messages, it is safe to conclude that most governmental communications did not really do much to influence the attitude and practice of residents in South East part of Nigeria. This is expected, considering the fact

that 74.8% of the respondents in South East Nigeria were of the view that socio-cultural, political, economics and religious issues (family, friends, culture politics, church and occupation) have affected their practices or behaviour towards governmental communications. This situation is very bad because a government ceases to be responsible once it fails to enjoy legitimacy and supports of the people. When credibility is in doubt; democratic principles and the essence of governance are denied. The government has therefore, not done enough for citizens which should induce positive attitude and practice. Genuine motivation is lacking. There is no doubt that an attitude formed or held for a long period may be difficult to change. It can only take more persistent campaigns and conversation to alter the attitude of an already made up mind. It is more worrisome when the credibility of the sources of any information is in doubt. Compliance would be very difficult.

5.3 Recommendations

Considering the fact that this study aimed at examining the assessment of the perception and credibility of governmental communications among the residents in South East Nigeria, the following are therefore recommended:

1. A situation where 78.2% of the residents in South East Nigeria were aware of the government campaigns messages means that almost 28% of the study areas were not aware. Twenty percent of South East residents is a large number and needs to be taken care of. It is therefore, recommended that the combination of mainstream media, social media and outdoor channels of communications need to be taken into cognisance in handling governmental communications.
2. Only 51.2% of the residents in South East Nigeria were knowledgeable about governmental communications, even their knowledge was said to be on the surface level. The researcher recommends that governmental communications should contain more information beyond just news and announcement, so as to make the people more knowledgeable about government policies and their implications, as well as carry the citizens along in the day to day running of the government.
3. The findings of the study revealed that only 48.6% and about 58.6% of the residents of South East Nigeria had their attitude and practices influenced by the governmental communications respectively; meaning that over 30% of the residents did not stop being themselves. This calls for more aggressive campaigns.

It is recommended that campaigns should target the perception and practices of the people, especially in areas where they must have formed dogmatic opinions or actions. More information needs to be incorporated into campaigns to address all these issues.

4. The fact that 74.8% of the residents in South East Nigeria were of the view that socio-cultural, political, economics and religious issues (family, friends, politics, culture, tribe, church and occupation) have affected the practices or behaviour towards governmental communications, it is recommended that government-related communications like all the image repositioning campaigns and other governmental communications should take into cognisance the social, cultural, political ,tribe, religious and economic issues or factors in their design and dissemination of information.
5. More so, this study is also recommended for researchers and scholars alike who will want to carry out further studies in this area and other related areas. The use of this study will go a long way to help expand the quality and quantity of knowledge available in the area of governmental communications, credibility and persuasions.

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study provided empirical data on the credibility and perception of governmental communications among the residents of South East Nigeria. This reveals the significant alterations in the basic features of the mainstream media in relation to the sources of information, that social media has become the major source of governmental communications. It also exposed that the social media use has gained prominence over the traditional media in the dissemination of governmental communications while credibility issues have remained unresolved. This displacement paradigm is in line with the citizens' use of social media for political communication globally.

The study indicated that audience assessment and credibility of governmental communications is based on the evaluation of the actions of those political actors in governance. Audience believability is not swayed by mere content of governmental communications but the visible dividends of democracy and attitude of the operators of political system (leaders).

The study established that the audience ranked projects delivered in their constituencies higher than promotional campaigns on attitudinal change and patriotism.

Promotional campaigns of government have not influenced the citizens' believability and commitment to the nation as marginalisation and ethnic bias has continued to dominate their consciousness.

The study further revealed that effective public communication efforts enable citizen participation. Therefore, government communication is more than just developing effective spokesperson, it also involves the provision of customer oriented services, and building capacity for citizens to provide government with feedback as regards these services. In developing countries, this requires crafting and promoting good practices when it comes to transparency issues.

It revealed that government communications involve not only sending out persuasive messages to the public, but also explaining working policies, creating awareness of the rights of citizens, and developing mechanisms that enable two-way communication between citizens and government and ensuring maintenance of fundamental human rights.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

This study ascertained the perception of governmental communications among South Eastern populace measuring the level of credibility and public attitude towards those messages. The study revealed that exposure to those communications have not translated into attitudinal change and legitimacy. Therefore, other researchers can examine specific communication strategies, media campaigns and programmes that will ensure citizens' change of attitude, legitimacy, patriotism and nation building.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

This study has by design limited to South East Nigeria. This implies that the result of the study may not be wield exact result due to varying degree of perception of Nigerian to governmental communications. The attitude of respondents towards the questionnaire was another area where the study experienced some limitations. Even though the researcher made effort to identify the right people to fill the questionnaire, some respondents still supplied information that are not most correct while some refuse to return their own copies.

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APPENDIX I

SECTION C: QUESTIONS ON SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS

KEY: TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT – VLE; TO A LARGE EXTENT – LE; TO A LOW EXTENT – LOE; TO A VERY LOW EXTENT – VLOE; NEVER – N; WEIGHED MEAN

QUESTION	VLE	LE	LOE	VLOE	N	Total	WM	Mean score
Aware of the budget debates	231	271	108	97	71	778	2828	3.63
Aware of the economic debates	234	190	200	104	050	778	2788	3.58
Aware of the change begins with me	109	401	101	107	60	778	2726	3.50
Aware of the rebranding campaign	131	171	208	171	97	778	2402	3.09
Aware of the anti- corruption campaign	230	194	100	184	070	778	2664	3.42
Aware of Buhari's independence speech	59	301	201	107	110	778	2426	3.12
I responded to the messages I got on the budget debate (by sending a comment publicly)	200	251	128	97	102	778	2684	3.45
I responded to the messages I got on the economy	130	290	100	200	058	778	2568	3.30
I responded to the messages I got on change begins with me	100	310	102	205	61	778	2517	3.24
I responded to the messages I got on rebranding campaign	131	171	108	297	71	778	2328	2.99
I responded to the messages I got on anti-corruption campaign	134	200	190	204	050	778	2498	3.21
I responded to the messages I got on the independence anniversary speech	109	301	101	107	160	778	2426	3.12

My response to any government messages depends on my likeness for the president	131	171	208	197	71	778	2428	3.12
I look at the merits of a message before I react	234	190	100	104	150	778	2594	3.33
The media influence my opinion on governmental communications more than people	109	301	108	100	160	778	2418	3.12
I'm afraid that negative responses to government messages may bring me harm	211	71	108	297	91	778	2348	3.02
Government is in the habit of doing what it says	134	290	100	200	054	778	2584	3.32
I think my past experience about government affects my reaction to governmental communications	109	201	201	200	67	778	2419	3.11
I think my religious background affects my reaction to governmental communications	230	71	308	97	72	778	2624	3.37
I think my party affiliation affects my reaction to governmental communications	130	194	200	104	050	778	2284	2.94
I think my ethnic background affects my reaction to governmental communications	60	101	401	107	109	778	2230	2.87

Source: Field Survey, 2017

DESICION MEAN = 3

Appendix II: Research Questionnaire

Department of Mass Communication,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka.
January 18, 2017.

<p>An Assessment of the Credibility and Perception of Governmental Communications among the Populace in South East Nigeria</p>

INTRODUCTION

This research questionnaire is designed to gather information on the **Perception and Credibility of Governmental Communications among the Residents in South East Nigeria**

The researcher is a Ph.D student in the above-named university and information gathered will be treated with utmost confidence. The results of the study are strictly for academic purposes. Be assured that your responses shall remain confidential.

For any questions or further information please use the contact phone number and e-mail below:

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INSTRUCTION

PLEASE MARK/TICK AGAINST YOUR CHOSEN RESPONSE OR SUPPLY DETAILS AS APPROPRIATE TO EACH STATEMENT BELOW.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Gender: (a) Male [] (b) Female []
2. Age: (a) 18 – 27 [] (b) 28 – 37 [] (c) 38– 47 [] (d)48 and above []
3. Educational Qualification: (a) SSC [] (b) Bsc [] (c) Msc and above [] (d) None []
4. Occupation: (a) Student [] (b) Civil servant [] (c) Business []

SECTION B: GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. Do you watch or listen to any Nigerian medium / media?
Yes [] No []
2. Are you aware of governmental communications on our various media platforms?(a)
Yes [](b) NO []
3. How often are you exposed to these governmental communications messages? (a)
Rarely [] (b) Often [] (c) Very Often [] (d) Never []
4. On which medium do you receive these governmental communications messages? (a)
Radio [] (b) Television [] (c) Newspaper [] (d) Magazine [] (e) Social Media []
(e) None of the above []
5. How credible is the message? (a)Very credible (b) Credible(c) Not credible (d) Can't
say.
6. Are you aware of the “change begins with me” government campaigns? (a) [] Yes
(b) No []
7. Have you heard of the Nigerian “Rebranding campaigns”? (a) Yes (b) No
8. Are you aware of the “anti-corruption campaigns by the President Buhari’s regime?
(a) Yes [] (b) No []
9. Have you heard of the transformational agenda of the former regime? (a) Yes (b) No
10. What do you know about the Nigerian 2016 budget? (a) the budget was padded and
an evidence of a careless government [] (b) the executive presented an excellent
budget [] (c) the budget was a solution to our several national challenges [] (d) No
problem at all with the 2016 budget, and the National assembly passed it with no
hinges []

11. From what you know, can you say that the Buhari's government is fighting a genuine war on corruption? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
12. What government promotional campaigns on attitudinal change and nation building do you know? [] (a) Rebranding Nigeria campaign; Good people great nation [] (b) Transformation agenda [] (c) Change begins with me campaign [] (d) All of the above [] (e) I don't know []
13. Do you agree that the present government is a true agent of positive change? (a) Strongly agree [] (b) Agree [] (c) Strongly Disagree [] (d) Disagree [] (e) Undecided []
14. How do you rate the president Mohammed Buhari's 2016 national budget? (a) Very credible [] (b) Credible [] (c) Not credible [] (d) Can't say []
15. Did the budget capture any serious project in your geo-political zone? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
16. Do you think the budget reflects inclusive government? (a) Yes [] (b) Not at all []
17. Do you think the anti-corruption campaigns have influenced you positively to avoid bribery and extortions at your area of practice? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
18. How credible do you consider governmental communications in their promotional behavioural change and nation building campaigns? (a) Very credible [] (b) Credible [] (c) Not credible [] (d) Can't say []
19. When the government says that change begins with you, do you believe them? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
20. In the Rebranding campaign, do you believe we are truly great nation? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
21. With the massive cases of kidnapping in the southern Nigeria, Herdsmen brutal killings all over, and Boko Haram terrorism activities in the North, as well as, mass abduction of the Chibok girls, do you agree that Nigerians are good people and great nation? (a) Strongly agree [] (b) Agree [] (c) Strongly Disagree [] (d) Disagree [] (e) Undecided []
22. Have there been any proposed project in your geopolitical zone, captured in any of the previous national budget passed? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
23. Are there any noticeable national projects sited in your constituency at present? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

24. Has the government ever promised to undertake a project or award a contract in your area? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
25. Have these promises/contract been actualized? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
26. In your assessment of the government credibility, how would you rate the Nigerian government in relation to the measurement of the level of promise implementation? (a) Very reliable [] (b) reliable [] (c) Not c reliable [] (d) Can't say []
27. Do you agree that the Federal government would be reliable enough in the management of the proposed 50 million Euro loan with the French government for capacity-building and upgrade of power training facilities in Nigeria? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
28. Do you think the 'change begins with me' mantra has influenced you positively (a) Yes [] (b) No []
29. Do you think that the federal government's reluctance to unveil the actual amount of money generated from the anti-corruption agencies like EFCC and ICPC, justifies the government claims of being transparent. (a) Yes [] (b) No []
30. Do you think the Nigerian various ministries, departments and agencies have complied with the federal government Single Treasury Account (TSA) policy? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
31. Have you complied with the Central bank's stamp duty tax policy? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
32. With the government's inconsistency in the actual amount of money realised from the single treasury account (TSA), can you rate the government as a reliable government in its fight against corruption? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
33. Do you report crimes to the police whenever you notice them? (a) Yes [] (b) No []
34. With the whistle blowing policy of the federal government, do you think you can report any money launder? (a) Yes [] (b) No []

SECTION C: QUESTIONS ON SPECIFIC COMMUNICATIONS

KEY: TO A VERY LARGE EXTENT – VLE; TO A LARGE EXTENT – LE; TO A LOW EXTENT – LOE; TO A VERY LOW EXTENT – VLOE; NEVER – N; WEIGHED MEAN

QUESTION	VLE	LE	LOE	VLOE	N	WM
I am aware of the budget debates						
I am aware of the economic debates						
I am aware of the change begins with me						
I am aware of the rebranding campaign						
I'm aware of the anti- corruption campaign						
I'm aware of Buhari's independence speech						
I responded to the messages I got on the budget debate (by sending a comment publicly)						
I responded to the messages I got on the economy						
I responded to the messages I got on change begins with me						
I responded to the messages I got on rebranding campaign						
I responded to the messages I got on anti-corruption campaign						
I responded to the messages I got on the independence anniversary speech						

My response to any government messages depends on my likeness for the president						
I look at the merits of a message before I react						
The media influence my opinion on government commutation more than people						
I'm afraid that negative responses to government messages may bring me harm						
Government is in the habit of doing what it says						
I think my past experience about government affects my reaction to governmental communications						
I think my religious background affects my reaction to governmental communications						
I think my party affiliation affects my reaction to governmental communications						
I think my ethnic background affects my reaction to governmental communications						

Appendix IV

The result of test-re-test reliability correlation between the two sets of data collected from the first and second administration of (20) copies of the questionnaire to respondents in Enugu metropolis using SPSS.

Question 1

Correlations

		First week	Second week
First Week	Pearson Correlation	1	.803
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Second week	Pearson Correlation	.803	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

Source: Field survey, (2017)

Question 2

Correlations

		First week	Second week
First Week	Pearson Correlation	1	.701
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Second week	Pearson Correlation	.701	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

Source: Field survey, (2017)

Question 3

Correlations

		First week	Second week
First Week	Pearson Correlation	1	.800
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Second week	Pearson Correlation	.800	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Correlations

		First week	Second week
First Week	Pearson Correlation	1	.800
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Second week	Pearson Correlation	.800	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

Source: Field survey, (2017)

Question 4

Correlations

		First week	Second week
First Week	Pearson Correlation	1	.901
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Second week	Pearson Correlation	.901	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

Source: Field survey, (2017)

Question 5

Correlations

		First week	Second week
First Week	Pearson Correlation	1	.810
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	20	20
Second week	Pearson Correlation	.810	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	20	20

Source: Field survey, (2017)

