

## Radio Political Advertising in Nigeria: Influence on Electorates Acceptance of Political Parties Candidates

Okezie, Kristopher O<sup>1</sup> and Abugu James O<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Federal College of Dental Technological and Therapy, Trans Ekulu, Enugu, Nigeria

E-mail: [Obiyom2016@gmail.com](mailto:Obiyom2016@gmail.com).

<sup>2</sup>Department of Marketing FBA, Enugu Campus, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

E-mail: [james.abugu@unn.edu.ng](mailto:james.abugu@unn.edu.ng).

\*Corresponding author: Abugu James O.

### Abstract

*This study explores the influence of radio advertising on the electorates' choice of political parties' candidates in selected states of South East Nigeria. All registered voters in the states formed the study population. The sample size of 400 respondents was obtained from a population of 3,232,251 registered voters. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Tables and percentages were used in the presentation and analysis of data. Findings from the study showed that; radio campaign advertising significantly influences the electorates exposure of political parties candidates in the selected states in South Eastern Nigeria, that exposure to radio campaign advertising influences the electorates' opinion of political parties' candidates and that the radio campaign advertising significantly serves as a mobilization tool on the electorates about political parties' candidates. The study concluded that advertising plays significance role on electorates acceptance of political parties candidates and recommended that political parties should continue with the use of improved radio campaign advertising to seek and gain acceptance by the electorates.*

**Keywords:** Radio political advertising, effects, electorates acceptance, political candidates, mobilization, choice.

**DOI:** 10.7176/JMCR/81-05

**Publication date:** August 31<sup>st</sup> 2021

### INTRODUCTION

Advertising has been widely used to achieve a number of objectives. In politicking, politicians, party supporters and political parties trade on political advertising. Radio programme is essential to democracy and a democratic electioneering especially when it comes to information dissemination. A free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote and the knowledge of how to cast a vote, but also about a participatory process where voters engage in public debate and have adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself in order to make informed choice. This is where radio political advertising comes to play a role in influencing, informing and mobilizing the electorates.

Advertising has become imperative in politics such that it will be difficult to divorce advertising successfully from politics. This has led to the idea that political socialization and mobilization are achieved through effective political advertising, which may come in the form of radio advertising" (Ezegwu and Ezegwu, 2014). The relationship between politics and advertising has led to the emergence of new ideas and strategies aimed at packaging and marketing political parties and their candidates to the people.

Okigbo (1992) agrees that elections are won and lost largely on the ability of the campaign managers to use communication effectively. Nwodu (2003) contends that "politicians rise to power because they can talk persuasively to voters and political elites. Scholars and practitioners alike agreed that radio political advertising is important for every electioneering effort. In the 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election understudy, the parties where candidates contested are:

1. Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)
2. All Progressive Congress (APC)
3. Kowa Party (KP)
4. Hope Democratic Party (HDP)
5. Allied Congress Party of Nigeria (ACPN)
6. Allied for Democracy (AD)

7. United Democratic Party (UDP)
8. National Conscience Party (NCP)
9. African Democratic Congress (ADC)
10. Action Alliance (AA)
11. United Progressive Party (UPP)

However, in spite of the assumed effectiveness of political advertising, debates continue to show that these advertising campaign messages sway or discourage the electorate. Ansolabere et al (1999) posit that “negative advertising actually discourages people from going to polls to vote and diminishes confidence in the political system”.

Politics in Nigeria has always been expressed through political parties, which are created to achieve political power. Political parties are structured around specific ideologies and ideas of human societies, these ideas and ideologies are communicated to the party faithful, the electorates and other members of the public. Radio political advertising, therefore, becomes one of the means to communicate these ideologies.

The electorate in selected states in the South East Nigeria witnessed an unprecedented increase in number and style of radio political advertising messages and campaigns in the 2015 general election. Most of the political parties sponsored one form of radio political advertising or the other, in order to bring to the attention of the voting public, the parties’ ‘political manifestoes as well as the parties’ candidates for the various elective offices in the area. The essence of their campaign was to sell their parties and candidates.

Nevertheless, that radio advertising was delivered does not inevitably mean that it was received; nor does it indicate that it was understood and accepted, whereby its influence on the behaviour of the electorate in the selected states of the south east during the general election of 2015, could be implied. This study thus, sought to assess the influence of radio political advertising messages on the electorates’ choice of candidates in Nigeria’s presidential general elections of 2015, with particular reference to the electorates in the selected states of the South East namely; Enugu and Imo States.

The researchers therefore hypothesized that;

1. The electorates in the selected states of the South East Nigeria were not significantly exposed to radio political advertising during the 2015 Presidential election.
2. The choices of the electorates in the selected states of the South East Nigeria were not significantly influenced by radio political advertising.
3. The electorates in the selected states of the South-East Nigeria were not significantly mobilized through radio political advertising for the 2015 presidential election.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Conceptual Review

#### Conceptual Analysis of Radio Political Advertising

Political advertising according to Nott (2020) is a form of campaigning that allows candidates to directly convey their message to voters and influence the political debate.

Caywood (1991) sees it as “political marketing which involves the social and managerial process by which candidates and parties obtain their election goals through creating, offering and securing approval of ideas or values with the voter”.

The main goal of virtually every political advertising is to persuade and influence constituency voters.

Asemah and Edegoh (2012) contended that political advertising has become part of the political culture of most democracies with Nigeria as a democratic nation inclusive.

As opinioned by Nwosu (2003) political advertising is regarded as an offshoot of marketing politics just like orthodox advertising is a subset of orthodox marketing promotion and marketing communications.

### **Concept/Definition of Advertising**

One of the most widely accepted definition of advertising is the one offered by the American marketing association. The association defines advertising as: “Any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor”.

Advertising according to Eskilson (2008) is a form of communication intended to persuade an audience (viewers, readers or listeners) to purchase or take some action upon products ideas, or services. It includes the name of a product or service and how that product or service could benefit the consumer.

Advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication by identified sponsor aimed at informing, educating, reminding, persuading prospects, buyers or consumers to patronize organizations products or service (Abugu, 2014).

Ugbaja (1997) states that advertising is a primary tool in marketing decision variables which firms used to inform, persuade and educate the consumers about products offering by an identified sponsor with a view to developing consumers preference for the products. It is therefore mass communication which is aimed at helping to sell goods, services, ideas persons and institutions or organization.

According to the Texas Ethics commission (2017) political advertising includes communications supporting or opposing a candidate for nomination or election to either a public office or the use of media by political candidates to increase their exposure to the public (Olujide et al., 2010).

### **Functions of Advertising**

The major functions of advertising are to communicate information about products and services through various media with the aim of selling them. Advertising has to do with informing the people about the existence of something, so as to draw their attention to it (Tejumaiye, Esimon & Obia, 2018).

Cook (2007) note that advertising is also used to demarked a product. Johnson (2008) stated that other important function of advertising is positioning that is the creation of a favorable attitude toward a product in the mind of the consumers. It can also be described as renting a space in the mind of the consumers in order to influence his buying decisions.

Thus, advertising performs the crucial function of ensuring that a particular product or service brand is the one that occupies that favorable position in the mind of consumers. In positioning, the emphasis is not on the product feature or the image of the company but on what can be done to fix the product first in the minds of the consumers, especially in a competitive marketing environment.

### **Influence Of Radio On Electorates Opinion And Choice**

Most of the studies carried out in Nigeria have come to term that political campaign messages have some bearings on deciding who to vote or who not to vote (Opeibi, 2005). He found out that both political parties and their followers make use of different persuasive strategies to woo support from the electorates in order to gain and control power.

Through coverage and presentation of news, information, facts, figures, editorials, and other analytical pieces about an issue, radio exert considerable influence on awareness creation of such issue (Enahoro, 2010).

Adekoya et al., (2015) revealed that through commentaries and programmes radio act as secondary agents of mobilization. In the views of Martin and Werner (2017) voting behaviour is dependent on the consideration of a significant number of political campaign messages, and that radio was the best medium used among others. Hamid and Aliyu (2017) stated that over the years mass medial have proven to be veritable sources of information during elections in Nigeria.

Thus, it is understood that while the political campaign messages are being planned, radio widely distribute those political campaign messages, and in the end, electorates are primed to them recall the framing or construction of such messages that have salience with them while they are voting.

A number of studies greatly agreed that political campaign messages have some bearings in deciding who a voter should vote for or against (Opeibi, 2005). Pate (2014) stated that based on a study carried out in 2011, Nigerians heavily depend on radio as major source of public information. In the view of Familisu (2014) “radio political advertising influences ranked most popular means of disseminating information not minding the continent.

As averred by Nwodu (2003) “it would not be out of place to admit that proper management of influence and communication is at the root of any political process. Thus given that the radio is veritable tools for reaching widely special heterogeneous audiences with the same communication message, it is undoubtable that they would serve well as pivotal institution upon which the pendulum of our new political order should swing.

### **Role Of Political Advertising On Political Mobilization And Electorates Behaviour**

Cox et al (1998) define political mobilization as the process by which a passive collection of individuals in a society is transformed into an active group in the pursuit of common goals or coerced into political participation by an authoritarian government.

Goldstein and Ridout (2002) identified three main elements of mobilization in their work, which affects voter turnout among citizens. According to the scholars, these elements are the aggregate rate of mobilization, effective mobilization contact, and change in targeting of mobilization. They determined that mobilization carries with it the power to promote individual participation and argued that the more intense it is, the more effective and convincing it is, thus the more it gets people to participate in a process or vote.

Michelson (2006) define political mobilization as a direct or indirect process through which people are induced to participate in political action. It is indirect when persons are contacted through intermediaries, such as talk hosts. High levels of exposure of the public to the radio, especially the news media, will tend to inform people about politics, give them a better understanding of politics, heighten their subjective efficacy and therefore, mobilize them politically (Newton, 2009).

Green and Gerber (2004) suggest that radio advertising makes politics come to life and helps voters to establish a personal connection with the electoral process. According to Dale and Strauss (2009), there are many mobilization strategies including but not limited to face-to-face canvass, street signs, television, radio, newspaper, leaflets, text messaging, direct mail, commercial phone calls, email among others with radio as the most effective. Radio political advertising often appeal to peoples base emotions, though they sometimes contain false or misleading information (Burson, 2002).

### **Theoretical Framework**

So many theories are bound to address media (radio) influence. Some of these theories are offshoot of the minimal effects and powerful effects theories of the press. However, for this study, we shall hinge our discussion on three of the commonly related theoretical construct. These constructs are the agenda-setting theory of the press, the two-step flow of communication theory and source credibility theory. The rational for selecting these theories is obvious. The three theories address media surveillance/courage and therefore, help to determine its role in specific social situation.

#### **Agenda Setting Theory**

The first theoretical construct, which will also help us to analyze the performance of radio industry is the Agenda-setting theory of mass communication. Agenda setting posits that audiences learn the salient issues from the radio, thus incorporating a similar sets of weights and importance into their own personal agenda.

Umehukwu (2001) and Folarin (2002) agree that the media have an impact on Agenda-setting in that they have the ability to choose or emphasize certain topics thereby causing the public to perceive the issues or topic as important. This implies that the radio pre-determine what issues are considered as important at a given time in a given society. The relevance of the theory to the study can be established since radio advertising can be used to shape people’s behavior and by extension used by the political parties in Nigeria to influence the populace concerning their political agenda.

### The Two-Step Flow of Communication

The two-step flow of communication theory seeks to explain how individuals from different social groups select and use media messages to influence votes. According to Lattimore, et al (2009) the two-step flow theory is built on the premise that certain people in our society are opinion leaders who shape how other members of the society respond to mass coverage. Subscribing to the idea, studies show that information from the radio moves in two distinct stages. First, individuals who have access and pay close attention to the radio and their messages receive the information, the second step is its interpretation and influence by those individuals called opinion leaders who are generally well informed and respected people pass information to others through informal interpersonal communication.

Nevertheless, since a greater percentage of Nigerians are not literate, even the few who possess the radio, find it difficult to understand the content of the message, hence the need for proper education. This underscores the appropriateness of the two-step flow theory to the study. The theory has improved our understanding of the limit to which the radio influence decision-making putting to rest the question why certain radio campaigns may have failed to change audience attitudes and behaviour during elections and the likes.

### The Source Credibility Theory

The source credibility theory states that “people are more likely to be persuaded when the source presents itself as credible”. Using this theory to explain the influence of political advertising, scholars describe ‘Source Credibility’ as “the believability of a communicator as perceived by the recipient of the message”. The theory was further broken into three sub-models that can be used to make the theory more aptly applicable. These include: the factor model, the functional model, and the constructivist model. The factor model (a covering laws approach) helps determine the extent to which the receiver judges the source as being credible. The functional model (a covering laws approach) views credibility as the degree to which the source satisfies the receiver's individual needs. The constructivist model (a human action approach) analyzes what the receiver does with the source's proposal.

There are different elements that may comprise a person's credibility but, according to this source credibility theory, the two elements most commonly identified are ‘perceived expertise’ and ‘trustworthiness’ of the source. Study shows that source credibility theory indicates that the ability to internalize the message is influenced by the potential impact the message has upon the receiver.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a survey research method. The area of the study was selected states in South Eastern Nigeria (Enugu and Imo states). The population of the study was registered voters of 18 years and above which amounted to 3,232,251 (INEC, 2015). This figure was the total number of registered voters in the states under study (Imo and Enugu States). A sample size of 400 respondents was obtained from the above population. Questionnaire was the instrument used to elicit relevant information from the respondents.

The data collected for the study were presented in tables as frequency distribution and both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used for the analysis of the data gathered for this study.

From a total of Four hundred (400) questionnaire sent to the respondents, three hundred and forty-eight (348) (87%) were duly completed and returned, while fifty-two (52) representing 13% copies were not returned.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**Table 1.1: Distribution of respondents based on age.**

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18yrs-28yrs	120	35
29yrs-39yrs	144	41
40yrs-50yrs	65	18
51yrs and above	19	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100</b>

**Sources: Field Survey, 2021.**

From table 1.1, it was observed that 120 respondents representing 35% were 18yrs-28yrs, 144 respondents representing 41% were 29yrs-39yrs, 65 respondents representing 18% were 40yrs-50yrs while 19 respondents representing 6% were 51yrs and above.

**Table 1.2: Distribution of respondents based on whether they listen to radio campaign advertising or not.**

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	340	98
No	8	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Field Survey, 2021.

From table 4.2, out of 348 respondents, 340 (98%) of the respondents said Yes that they listen to radio campaign advertising while 8 (2%) of the respondents said no, that they do not listen to radio campaign advertising.

**Table 1.3: Distribution of respondents on whether radio campaign advertising exposes them to know the various political parties candidates.**

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	240	69
Agree	102	29
Disagree	3	1
Strongly disagree	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 1.3 reveals that out of 348 respondents 240 (69%) of the respondents strongly agree that listening to radio campaign advertising exposes them to the various political parties candidates, 102(29%) of the respondents agreed that listening to radio campaign advertising exposes them to the various political parties candidates, 3(1%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 3(1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Table 1.4: Distribution of respondents on whether exposure to radio political advertising gives adequate political content and political awareness.**

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	301	86
Agree	41	12
Disagree	3	1
Strongly disagree	3	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 1.4 shows that out of 348 respondents, 301(86%) of the respondents strongly agreed that exposure to radio political advertising gives adequate political content and political awareness, 41(12%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 3(1%) of the respondents disagreed that exposure to radio political advertising gives adequate political content and political awareness, while 3(1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

**Table 1.5: Distribution of respondents on whether political advertising influences electorates choice.**

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly agree	204	59
Agree	84	24
Disagree	46	13
Strongly disagree	14	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2021.

Table 1.5 indicates that out of 348 respondents, 204 (59%) of the respondents strongly agreed that regular listening to radio campaign advertising influences their opinion, 84(24%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 46(13%) of the respondents disagreed that listening to radio campaign advertising influences them while 14(4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

## TEST OF HYPOTHESES

### Hypothesis One

The electorates in the selected states of the south east were not significantly exposed to radio advertising during the 215 presidential election.

**Table 1.6: Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Radio campaign advertising and electorates exposure of the political parties candidate.	2.8253	1.27682	348
	3.1613	1.37593	348

Source: SPSS version 15.00

**Table 1.7: Correlations**

	Radio campaign advertisement	Electorate exposure of the political parties candidate
Radio campaign advertisement	Pearson Correlation 1	.716(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed) .000	
	N 348	348
Electorate Exposure of the Political Parties Candidates	Pearson Correlation .716(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed) .000	
	N 348	348

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

Source: SPSS version 23.

Table 1.6 shows the descriptive statistics of the radio campaign advertising via, electorate's exposure of the political parties' candidate. With a mean response of 2.8253 and std. deviation of 1.27682 for radio campaign advertising and a mean response of 3.1613 and std. deviation of 1.37593 for electorates exposure of the political parties candidate and number of respondents (348). By careful observation of standard deviation values, there is not much difference in terms of the standard deviation scores. This implies that there is about the same variability of data points between the dependent and independent variables.

Table 1.7 is the Pearson correlation coefficient for radio campaign advertising and electorate's exposure of the political parties' candidate. The correlation coefficient shows 0.716. This value indicates that correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed) and implies that there is a significant positive relationship between radio campaign advertising and electorates exposure of the political parties candidate ( $r = .716$ ). The computed correlations coefficient is greater than the table value of  $r = .195$  with 346 degrees of freedom ( $df = n-2$ ) at alpha level for a two-tailed test ( $r = .716, p < .05$ ). However, since the computed  $r = .716$ , is greater than the table value of .195 we conclude that there is a significant positive relationship between radio campaign advertising and electorates exposure to the political parties candidates ( $r = .716, P < .05$ ).

### Hypothesis Two

The choice of the electorates in the selected states of the south east Nigeria, were not significantly influenced by radio political advertising.

**Table 1.8: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.973 <sup>a</sup>	.946	.946	.24798	1.162

a. Predictors: (Constant), Choice to radio campaign advertising.

b. Dependent Variable: Electorates choice of political party candidates.

**Table 1.9: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	106.744	1	106.744	1735.883	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	6.088	99	.061		
	Total	112.832	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Electorates choice of political party candidates.

b. Predictors: (Constant), choice to radio campaign advertising.

**Table 1.10: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.115	.043		2.689	.008
	Choice to ratio campaign advertisement	.877	.021	.973	41.664	.000
					4	

a. Dependent Variable: Electorates choice of political parties' candidates.

R = 0.973, R<sup>2</sup> = 0.964, F = 1735.883, T = 41.664, DW = 1.162

### Interpretation:

The regression sum of squares (106.744) is greater than the residual sum of squares (6.088), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is greater than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance.

R, the correlation coefficient which has a value of 0.973, indicates that exposure to radio campaign advertising has a positive influence the electorates choice of political parties. R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 96.4% of the variation in the electorate's choice of political party is explained by the model.

With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of about .24798. The Durbin Watson statistics of 1.162, which is less than 2, indicates there is no autocorrelation.

The choice to radio campaign advertising coefficient of 0.973 indicates a positive significance between choice to radio campaign advertising and electorates knowledge of political parties, which is statistically significant (with t = 41.664). Thus knowledge to radio campaign advertising influence the electorate's choice of political parties in selected states in south east.

### Hypothesis Three

The electorates in the selected states of the south east Nigeria, were not significantly mobilized through radio political advertising for the 2015 presidential election.

**Table 1.11: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.738 <sup>a</sup>	.545	.541	.80973	.622

a. Predictors: (Constant), radio campaign advertising.

b. Dependent Variable: Mobilization and opinion of electorates about a political parties' candidates.

**Table 1.12: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	77.862	1	77.862	118.755	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	64.910	99	.656		
	Total	142.772	100			

a. Dependent Variable: Mobilization and opinion of electorates about a political parties' candidates.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Radio campaign advertising.



**Table 1.13: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.451	.152		2.974	.004
Radio campaign advertising	.693	.064	.738	10.897	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Mobilization and opinion of electorates about a political parties candidates.  
 $R = 0.738$ ,  $R^2 = 0.545$ ,  $F = 118.755$ ,  $T = 10.897$ ,  $DW = .622$

**Interpretation:**

The regression sum of squares (77.862) is greater than the residual sum of squares (64.910), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is greater than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance.

R, the correlation coefficient which has a value of 0.738, indicates that there is positive relationship between radio campaign advertising and the mobilization and opinion of electorates about a political parties candidates. R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 54.5% of the variation in the mobilization and opinion of electorates about political parties candidates is explained by the model.

With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of about .80973. The Durbin Watson statistics of .622, which is less than 2, indicates there is no autocorrelation.

The radio campaign advertising coefficient of 0.738 indicates a positive significance between radio campaign advertising, mobilization and opinion of electorates about a political parties candidates, which is statistically significant (with  $t = 10.897$ ). Thus radio campaign advertising significantly served as a mobilization tool on the electorates about political parties candidates in the states under study.

**Discussion of Findings**

1. The study established that the electorates in the selected states of the south east Nigeria were significantly exposed to radio political advertising during the 2015 presidential election. This is inline with the submission of Panagopoulos and Green (2008) that radio advertisement produce large aroused among customers.
2. The study also found that exposure to radio campaign advertising influences the electorates' opinion of political parties' candidates in selected states in South East. This view was supported by Enahoro (2010) when he observed that radio campaign advertising has short and long term influences on voters.
3. It was also found that radio campaign advertising significantly serves as a mobilization tool on the electorates about political parties' candidates in selected states in South East. This supports the opinion of Lattimore et al (2009) that opinion leaders use the radio as a means of influencing and mobilizing their followers, especially during election.

**Conclusion**

In line with the above findings, this study opined that radio campaign advertising significantly influences the electorates knowledge of the political parties candidates and acceptance in selected states of the South East, Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

1. The political parties in selected states of South East should continue to use radio campaign advertising to seek and gain the electorates exposure and acceptance of their candidates through development of potent advertising messages.
2. The political parties should as well increase the use of radio campaign advertising to influence the opinion of the electorates in the right direction.
3. The political parties should equally improve on the use of the radio campaign advertising to mobilize the electorates more to participate in the political electioneering.

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