



Proactive Public Relations and Politics of Deception: Analysis of Osinbajo's 2023 Presidential Declarative Statement.

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Abstract

This work filled the gap of political selection and election of leaders in Nigeria and how such abnormality could be corrected with proactive public relations. The work was anchored on game and gate-keeping theories of political science and mass communication using content analysis methodology. The findings show that old politicians and present crops of political leaders in Nigeria are liars and incompetent to deliver electioneering campaign promises. Therefore; the research recommend that Nigerian media houses as a matter of urgency should start a proactive public relations campaign using all the media outfits - print, broadcast, digital or social media to educate the political parties and the electorates on how to make choice of political leaders in Nigeria. The media should use news analysis and broadcast commentaries to boost reputation of trusted political candidates. Journalists should intensify investigative and interpretative reporting to discourage deceptive political promises. Public relations officers should exploit press conferences to educate political parties and electorates to create deliberate political awareness among Nigerians. Other media messages to be used are the editorials and advertorials in newspapers, radio, television, social media and magazines to project the best candidates. Cartoons and short drama could be employed to encourage proper selection of reputable and tested Nigerians. Dramas, films and home videos aimed at condemning bloody elections and political parties should pick young people of between 40 to 50 years from South-East of Nigeria for the presidential seat for 2023.

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Introduction

The season for electioneering campaign for the office of Nigerian president is here again. Many are coming out from their cocoons to declare for the presidency. The media houses must not forget their public relations duty to timely inform political parties and the electorates to select and elect only the best. Politics is a game of number and trickery. It takes a sound and bold national media network to gate-keep democracy by proactive presentation of political figures with reputable characters who can deliver campaign promises on the altar of bloodless politics, security and good governance. What is public relations? Public relations is a branch of mass communication that promotes mutual understanding. It is also a branch of management sciences that manages reputation of political figures. According to Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994) public relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends. This paper identifies these various publics as Nigerian citizens both home and abroad who have high expectation on political dividends in terms of security of lives and properties, schools and market places, farms and industrial areas that are presently under serious threat. Since public relations is a management tools in the hand of the media, media persons should go extra mile to give Nigerians reputable servant leaders to take Nigerians out of pains of governance of this administration. Public relations is linking the general public to social and political issues of interest (Lyle Gregory 1991). By this definition, no Nigerian should exclude himself or herself from political activities. For we all are political animals. And political activities affect us all in one way or the other whether you are a Christian, muslim, pagan, illiterate or literate. Therefore, PR gate keepers must carry all along in the choice of electing a viable president this time around.

Public relations as a tool of political communication, has the social responsibility of give direction to electorates to vote for the best candidate who will deliver dividends of democracy to the citizens when it is used proactively. On this note, this paper using content analysis methodology to x-ray the Vice President Yemi Osinbajo's 2023 presidential declarative statement to unfold his ambition whether he is the right candidate for Nigeria 2023 presidential election or we should look for another. Does Osinbajo has what it takes to move Nigeria out of economic and insecurity quagmire? What are his socio-political achievements during the seven years of Buhari/Osinbajo administration? These and other queries public relations officers would like to analyse in this study.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

Edafejirhaye, (2012) and Ishola (2003) cited World Assembly of Public Relations at Mexico City (1978) defining public relations practice as the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders, and implementing planned programmes of action which serve both the organization's and the public's interest. In today's business markets, politics and day to day communication in organizations, one of the most important things to an organization is the ability to market or advertise their products, boost candidates political image, corporate identity or services. There are two important types of public relations that play a major role within organizations and individuals. They are proactive and reactive public relations.

Proactive Public Relations

Edafejirhaye, (2012) sees proactive public relations as the ability of an organization to take control of the PR message that's being relayed to the general public and aim to get the word out before anything bad can occur.

As a contrast, reactive public relations can be defined as a reactive approach that attempts to combat or defend any negative issues or events related to an organization. True to its name, reactive public relations does not take effect until after a negative or unsatisfactory event occurs and has the potential to damage the reputation of an organization or an individual. Many organizations today incorporate proactive public relations as part of their political communication, business and advertising strategies. Edafejirhaye and Edafejirhaye (2008) highlighted some of the characteristics of proactive public relations to get a clearer understanding of why it is so important as a political and advertising tool.

It Strengthens the Image of the Organization

A proactive public relations strategy helps to strengthen the image and brand of an organization through the media at no additional cost. This gives an organization the opportunity to spread their intended messages and not reach into their own budgets to do so. Being proactive allows an organization to control the conversation instead of allowing the conversation to control the organization. In the eyes of the public, this will only help to strengthen the brand and image of political figure in the organization.

Low Costs

Public relations differs from other types of advertising due to the fact that it does not set out to purchase or buy advertising space. The advertising for proactive public relations is done for free by the media. Although the message is better controlled when purchasing an ad, advertorial or commercial, most organizations enjoy the benefit of any free public relations that they can receive from media news, opinion page and commentaries.

Credibility

The general public typically perceives proactive public relations messages as more credible than any advertisements that are paid for. For example, when there is an ad placed in a newspaper, many individuals feel as if the newspaper is simply advertising the message because they have been paid to do so by an organization. A message that is delivered by a news reporter, PRO or journalist is perceived as more credible because there was no money paid for it to be delivered. The issue of credibility also bother on the reputation of political figure's character. This sheds light on public relations ethics.

Public Relations Ethics

The term ethics often is used interchangeably with morals and values-because ethical questions generally ask what is morally right or what should be valued. Although philosophers say that these three terms generally can be used interchangeably, they add that there are differences in their precise meanings (Velasquez, 1991, p. 412). We study ethics to develop rules or principles that can be used to solve problems in which morals and values are in question. Morals generally refer to "traditions of belief that have evolved over several years or even centuries in societies concerning right and wrong conduct" (Buchholz, 1989, p. 52). Values, then, are beliefs about what objects or ideas are important. As Velasquez (1991 p.408) put it: "To decide to choose your own values is to decide to philosophize". Thus, we study ethics to determine how to make moral judgments and value judgments. Not all decisions that public relations people make involve ethical issues. The difference lies in Buchholz' (1989 p. 53) opinion whether "questions of justice and rights are serious and relevant moral considerations". Public relations decisions

are likely to involve ethics when practitioners are serving in the role of organizational conscience. These decisions generally involve the question of social responsibility. Management theorists have debated the meaning of the term “social responsibility” extensively. Bartol and Martin (1991 P. 115) captured its essence, however, when they said: “Organizational social responsibility refers to the obligation of an organization to seek actions that protect and improve the welfare of society along with its own interests”. Moral obligation confers on public relations officer the duty to maintain traditional values, social justice and honesty to deliver promises of political campaign. Deception is frowned at in our communities in every part of Nigerian society. Hence politics of deception is strange in Nigeria.

Politics of Deception

The history of deception in politics could be traced to 360 BC in ancient Athens. It was Plato’s concept of the ‘noble lie’ (Plato, 360 BC: Book 3) relaying the thinking of Socrates, referred to the importance of deceptive myths that were essential to maintaining order in society. The idea here was that to ensure harmony in the context of a social hierarchy, myths needed to be created in order to help people accept their location within that hierarchy. According to him, God made some to rule (the golden race), others to build (iron and bronze workers) and still others to fight (soldiers). Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* attempted to distinguish between sophistry and rhetoric with a noble purpose although, according to Corner (2007: 672), his own arts of persuasion seem at times close to the advocacy of deception. What is then is politics of deception?

There is no universal definition of politics. Some political scientists define politics as the process by which scarce resources are allocated within a social unit (be it a city, a state, a nation, or an organization) for the purpose of providing for human needs and desires. Politics has been defined in many different ways. Edafejirhaye (2010) defines politics as all activities that involve in the process of getting and consolidating state power for the purpose of allocating and controlling state resources. The different views of politics examined here are as follows: Politics as the art of government, politics as about public affairs, Politics as study of conflict. politics as the study of power. The chancellor Bismarck told the German Reichstag that politics is not a science but an art. In other words he believed that politics was the art of government. This classical interpretation of politics was evolved from the original meaning of the term in Ancient Greece (Heywood, 1997). The word politics comes from the Greek word polis, meaning everything that concerns or belongs to the polis, or city-state. Since the city-states no longer exist, the modern form of this definition is what concerns the state. Thus, politics can be defined as the study of the state. Politics is also defined as the study of the government a collection of officers who make, interpret and enforce rules for the whole community. This definition of politics offers a highly restricted view of politics. According to this definition politics takes place just within the government departments, cabinet rooms and legislative chambers. This means that politics is the matter of politicians, civil servants and lobbyists. According to this view the vast majority of the people are not involved in politics. All the institutions that are not engaged in running the country are regarded as non-political (Heywood, 1997). This definition can, however, be narrowed still further. This is evident in the tendency to treat politics as an activity carried on by certain designated organizations (political parties). In other words politics is regarded as an activity connected with political parties. Thus, only politicians are considered as political, whereas civil servants are seen as non-political. In the popular mind, politics is closely associated with the activities of political parties and politicians. This extremely narrow view of politics helps to explain why negative images have so often been attached to the world politics. Politics is often described as a negative phenomenon because only politicians are seen as decision-makers. Is politics something associated solely with government and state? The term is widely used in other context than that of the government and state. People are often said to be acting politically in their relations with their bosses and colleagues in an office, or in the management

of the club of some kind, or in many other situations in which government, state and political parties are not mentioned. Nevertheless, much western political thinking rests on a distinction between the public realm and private life. The distinction between the political and the non-political coincides with the division between an essentially public sphere of life and private sphere. How can we differentiate the public sphere from private sphere? The traditional division between the public realm and private realm conforms to the distinction between the state and civil society. The institutions of the state are considered as the part of the public sector, whereas the civil society belongs to private sector. Thus, public sector is regarded as political, whereas the private sector is considered to be non-political. Hence, politics is an essentially public activity and it does not take place in private sphere of life. It does not have right to infringe upon private affairs and institutions.

Politics as the study of power. Some political scientists see conflict as the essence of politics. Conflict is a necessary characteristic of society. Human beings differ from each other, they come from varying cultural backgrounds and have differing and complex set of preferences. People's wants are infinite and the resources possessed by societies are limited and therefore generally insufficient to satisfy everybody's desires fully. Since the resources available to society are limited, choices have to be made (Bentley, Dobson, Grant & Roberts, 1995). It is the necessity of making such choices which leads to conflict. The conflict does not take place between individuals but also exists between larger groups between countries, as well as within them. There is a competition for access to, or control over, a society's resources. Some political scientists see politics as a particular means of abolishing conflict by compromise, conciliation and negotiation, rather than through force, so that people can live in reasonable harmony with each other. Politics is the art of finding peaceful resolutions to conflict, through compromise and the building of consensus. On hearing the word politics, what usually springs to mind are images of state institutions, political parties, law enforcement agencies and various departments of government. But politics is not only confined to a particular sphere, but also takes place in every corner of human existence. According to the sociologists Dowse & Hughes (1972) politics is about power. They say: politics occurs when there are differentials in power. This suggests that, any social relationship which involves power differentials is political. Political relationships would extend from parents assigning domestic chores to their children to teachers enforcing discipline in the classroom from a manager organizing a workforce to a general ordering troop into battle (Haralambos & Holborn, 1995).

Deception, according to English Dictionary is an act or statement that misleads, hides the truth, or promotes a belief, concept, or idea that is not true. It is often done for personal gain or advantage. Deception can involve dissimulation, propaganda and sleight of hand as well as distraction, camouflage or concealment. There is also self-deception, as in bad faith. It can also be called, with varying subjective implications, beguilement, deceit, bluff, mystification, ruse, or subterfuge. Deception is a major relational transgression that often leads to feelings of betrayal and distrust between relational partners. Deception violates political principles of accountability and is considered to be a negative violation of electorates' expectations.

Empirical Framework

A significant amount of deception occurs in the political communication terrain especially during electioneering campaign and in political advertisement as Aririgwuzoh (2019) observes. For instance, during 2015 and 2019 Nigeria presidential electioneering campaign the APC the Buhari's party told a lot of lies using various media with the aim of getting and consolidating political power. According to Aririguzoh (2019) research work, using a content analysis, her

study examined 12 of the presidential campaign advertisements created for ex-president Goodluck Jonathan and his People's Democratic Party (PDP); and the opposition coalition flag bearer, Retired General Muhammadu Buhari and his All Progressives Congress during the 2015 Nigerian presidential election campaigns. The aim of the study was to identify the deceptions in these advertisements. The study findings show that both sides engaged in deceptive advertising. Buhari/APC engaged more in misinformation, lies, misrepresentation and spreading of unproven facts. Goodluck/PDP avoided misrepresentations and misinformation, but used lies, unproven assertions and pufferies. She therefore; recommended that political campaign advertisements be scrutinized before they are aired.

Edafejirhaye, Ogunwuyi and Olawunmi (2022) in their research findings not only discover lies of the Buhari administration but also unravel evil agenda of the same sponsoring insecurity to remain in power.

In the same vein, Eronmosele, (2019) documented over 60 lies of Buhari/Osinbajo administration from 2015- 2022. To set the record straight for posterity and Nigerian electorates to beware of similar deceptions in 2023 election, this paper highlighted some of the deceptions.

Buhari Political Deceptions

1. Ban on government officials from going abroad for medical treatment: FAILED

While he initially denied many forex to pay for their treatments abroad, President Buhari as of May 2018, had gone to the United Kingdom five times for the treatment of an undisclosed ailment. Apart from treating himself in the London hospital against the promise he made to end medical tourism by improving the quality of healthcare delivery in the country, his son, Yusuf was flown in an air ambulance to the UK for treatment of injuries he sustained in a power bike crash in Abuja. After his treatment, the boy was flown back to the country in a chartered aircraft; a situation which triggered a public outcry.

2. State and community Policing: FAILED

While the government has largely paid lip service to community policing, President Buhari has led the campaign against the realisation of state police in the country. When asked about state police in an interview with Aliyu Mustapha of VOA in Washington, the president was quoted to have said, "I want the Nigerian Constitution to be consulted first and see what it says. If it says they should be allowed, then they should be allowed but don't forget, how many times did we have to release money to states in the name of bailouts to enable them to pay salaries..." Asked whether he was convinced about state police, he answered, "I am not convinced. You cannot just give someone guns and ammunition, train him and refuse to pay him, you know what will eventually happen." The interview was published by Premium Times on May 2, 2018.

3. Public declaration of assets and liabilities: FAILED

President Buhari had many times during the 2015 election campaign vowed to declare his assets and make the report public. However, he is yet to release the full report of his asset declaration to the public months to the end of his administration. Asked during his first media chat on December 30, 2015, the president said he has declared his assets four times but declined when pressed to release the document to Premium Times which had earlier sent an FOI request to the Code of Conduct Bureau to make the report available to it. The CCB had responded that only the president could authorise the release of the report to the media.

4. Introduction of National Gender Policy and offer of 35 per cent appointment to women: FAILED

President Buhari reneged on this promise early in the life of his administration by appointing only six out of the 36 ministers he used in forming his cabinet in November 2015. Today, with the exits of Mrs. Kemi Adeosun after she was busted for using a fake NYSC discharge certificate and Amina Alhassan, who left to contest election in Taraba State, Mr. Buhari has not deemed it fit to replace the two ministers with new ones. This perhaps underscores why he told journalists in Germany after a meeting with the country's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, on October 14, 2016, "I don't know which party my wife belongs to, but she belongs to my kitchen and my living room and the other room." He was standing next to Mrs. Merkel, who frowned at the comment.

5. Creation of three million jobs per year: FAILED

Instead of creating three million jobs per year which could have culminated in a total of 12 million jobs in four years, the unemployment rate under the Buhari administration has risen from 18.8 per cent in Q3 2017 to 23.1 per cent in the third quarter of 2018 according to a recent report by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS). According to the Bureau's Labour Force Statistics – Volume I released on December 19, 2018, the total number of people classified as unemployed—which means they did nothing at all or worked for a few hours (under 20 hours a week) rose from 17.6 million in Q4 2017 to 20.9 million in Q3 2018.

6. The revival of Ajaokuta Steel Company: FAILED

Despite the above promise, the government is yet to take any concrete action to revive the giant steel company. The House of Representatives had on December 6, 2018 adopted a report calling on Mr. Buhari to terminate the re-concession deal on the national steel firm. The lawmakers made the call during the debate on the report of the ad-hoc committee set up to probe the failure of the steel company. They asked the government to take a cue from the United States and demonstrate a strong political will to resuscitate the Ajaokuta Integrated Steel plant by direct sourcing. The president is yet to take action on the appeal.

7. Creation of a Social Welfare Programme where a minimum of N5000 would be paid to 25 million poorest and most vulnerable citizens: FAILED

This campaign promise generated a serious controversy when the president denied he or the APC ever made such a promise contrary to one of the campaign billboards that was strategically placed at Mabushi Flyover. The billboard which carried the picture of Mr. Buhari and his Vice, Yemi Osinbajo, announced the duo would pay every unemployed graduate in the country N5,000. Till date, the government has not implemented the policy and the party has rather explained the failure away by blaming the PDP for looting the treasury even when a large number of members of the ruling party were PDP chieftains before they defected and became cleansed from every sin they committed.

8. Building one of the fastest-growing emerging economies in the world with a real GDP growth averaging 10 per cent annually. FAILED

Instead of building one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, the Nigerian economy slipped into recession and has since been struggling amidst high inflation, high-interest rate and depleting foreign reserves. As at the last quarter of 2018, the World Bank said the projected growth of the economy in 2018 would drop from 2.1 per cent it had estimated for the country in April to 1.9 per cent.

9. Generation, transmission and distribution of at least 20,000 MW of electricity within four years and increasing to 50,000 MW with a view to achieving 24/7 uninterrupted power supply within 10 years. FAILED

As of December 2014, the total installed capacity of the country's power plants was 7,445 MW, available capacity was 4,949 MW and the average generation was about 3,900 MW. However, during campaigns, then Lagos Governor now Power, Works and Housing Minister, Babatunde Fashola, had boasted on Channels TV, "Power generation isn't rocket science. It's just a generator. So just remember that your *'I better pass your neighbour'* in one million times in capacity but in one place."

However, on August 3, 2018, while addressing a retreat for top officials of his ministry he said the generation capacity is 7000 MW while the distribution capacity stood at 5,222 megawatts, a situation that shows no improvement and far off the 4000 megawatts promised to be delivered yearly by the administration.

<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/08/power-generation-rises-to-7000-mega-watts-fashola/>

10. Empowerment scheme to employ 740,000 graduates across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. FAILED

There is no distinct empowerment scheme for graduates across the country as promised by the APC. This promise should not be confused with the N-Power scheme targeted at building vocational and apprenticeship skills.

11. Payment of allowances to the discharged but unemployed Youth Corps members for 12 months while in the skills and entrepreneurial development programme. FAILED

There is no evidence of any payment to discharged but unemployed youth corps members anywhere in the country as promised by the ruling party during the 2015 election campaigns.

12. Establishment of a free-tuition and scholarship scheme for pupils who have shown exceptional aptitude in science subjects at O/Levels to study ICT-related courses. FAILED

There is no evidence the Federal Government has initiated a free-tuition and or scholarship scheme for primary school pupils anywhere in the country.

13. Creation of 720,000 jobs by the 36 states in the federation per annum (20,000 per state) FAILED

There is no evidence this promise has been fulfilled in any state of the Federation including those controlled by the APC.

14. Creating additional middle-class of at least 2 million new home owners in our first year in government and 1 million annually thereafter. FAILED

Instead of creating additional middle-class, more people have slipped into poverty to an extent Nigeria has overtaken India in the poorest of the poor index and is now considered the world headquarters of poverty.

15. Creating a National Conflict Resolution Commission to prevent, mitigate and resolve civil conflicts within the polity. FAILED

There is no evidence to show the government has forwarded a bill for the creation of the commission to the National Assembly.

16. Building six centres of excellence to address the needs of special education – There is no evidence the government has initiated the building of the centres of excellence for special education in any zone in the country.

17. Increasing the number of doctors from 19 per 1000 population to 50 per 1000 – FAILED

Instead of attracting more doctors, the country has witnessed a huge brain drain in the health sector than ever before. Even the president has no confidence in the nation's healthcare delivery system and has consistently gone to the UK for treatment and for his son.

18. Strengthening operational and legal instruments to discipline members of the Armed Forces over confirmed cases of human rights violations – FAILED

No serious action has been taken by the government to discipline errant officers and men of the Nigerian Armed Forces in the face of gross human rights abuses. Instead, the Presidency has always defended the Armed Forces anytime international bodies like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch etc, released reports indicting the military of rights violations.

19. Free maternal and child healthcare services – FAILED

The Federal Government has not initiated free maternal and childcare services in any part of the country.

20. Upgrading all Federal Government-owned hospitals to world-class facilities within five years – FAILED

None of the federal government-owned tertiary institutions has been upgraded to world-class standard since the administration came into power.

21. The defeat of Boko Haram and the rehabilitation and reintegration of repentant insurgents – FAILED

Boko Haram is still unleashing terror on many parts of the Northeast and has recently intensified attacks in Borno and Yobe states. More soldiers have been killed by the insurgents than in the past while morale has gotten to its lowest ebb among troops resulting in protests and mutiny (Eronmosele, 2019; IPC, 2019, Aririguzoh, 2019, Edafejrhayeh, Ogunwuyi, & Olawunmi, 2022). The above political deceptions are enough for Osinbajo to hide himself from 2023 presidential electioneering campaign. He mistakenly tested Nigerian media boldness by declaring to run for 2023 presidency. And he has been receiving media bombardment on the ground of Public relations ethics and media gate-keeping practices.

Theoretical Framework

Theory is simply a “set of related propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomenon by specifying relationship among concepts” (Wimmer & Dominick; 2006 P.11). A good theory should clearly explain why a particular concept should behave in a particular way. This is why Griffin (1991 P.4) argues that “a good theory explains an event or behaviour. It brings clarity to an otherwise chaotic situation. It draws order out of chaos”. A good theory must therefore clarify confusing situations. It should of necessity, “ventilate a situation or event that appears nebulous to the extent that it would guarantee concrete, precise and detailed understanding of the situation or event” (Nwosu; 2006 P.32). This paper therefore; is anchored on two theories- the game theory and gate-keeping theory.

Game theory

Game theory according to Myerson, (1991) is the study of mathematical models of strategic interactions among rational agents. It has applications in all fields of social sciences, as well as in logic, systems science and computer science. Originally, it addressed two-person zero-sum games, in which each participant's gains or losses are exactly balanced by those of other participants. In the 21st century, game theory applies to a wide range of behavioral relations including politics. It is now an umbrella term for the science of logical decision making in

humans, animals, as well as computers. Modern game theory began with the idea of mixed-strategy equilibria in two-person zero-sum game and its proof by John von Neumann (Bellhouse, 2007). Von Neumann's original proof used the Brouwer fixed-point theorem on continuous mappings into compact convex sets, which became a standard method in game theory and mathematical economics. His paper was followed by the 1944 book "Theory of Games and Economic Behavior", co-written with Oskar Morgenstern, which considered cooperative games of several players. The second edition of this book provided an axiomatic theory of expected utility, which allowed mathematical statisticians and economists to treat decision-making under uncertainty. Game theory was developed extensively in the 1950s by many scholars. It was explicitly applied to evolution in the 1970s, although similar developments go back at least as far as the 1930s. Game theory has been widely recognized as an important tool in many fields (Zemmelo, 1913; Neumann, 1928; Kim, 2014).

The application of game theory to political science is focused in the overlapping areas of fair play, sportsmanship, political economy, public choice, war bargaining, positive political theory, and social choice theory. In each of these areas, researchers have developed game-theoretic models in which the players are often voters, political parties, states, special interest groups, and politicians just as Nigerian are about to elect new president. The media must fulfill their obligation as the fourth estate of the realm by give the masses needed political media education. The reason is that politics is a game of number, trickery and mathematics. It must be carried out in the spirit of sportsmanship and not do or die.

Gate Keeping Theory

The propounder of this theory is Kurt Lewin 1947. Gate-keeping is the process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the internet, or some other mode of communication. The academic theory of gate-keeping may be found in multiple fields of study, including communication studies, journalism, political science, political communication, political advertising and sociology (Bass, 1969). Gate keeping originally focused on the mass media with its few-to-many dynamic. Currently, the gate-keeping theory also addresses face-to-face communication and the many-to-many dynamic inherent on the Internet. Social psychologist Kurt Lewin first instituted Gate-keeping theory in 1947 (Bennett, 2004).

Some of the assumptions of the theory according to Anaeto, Onabajo & Osifeso (2008) are:

Media professional and organizations act as gates to the flood of information going and coming in within the larger society.

Media houses guide jealously information by taken drastic decision to lock up or open the gate for some information to go out or not in the interest of the public. Hence the media has the power to project the best political candidates to electorates through political media education.

Gate-keeping occurs at all levels of the media structure-from a reporter deciding which sources are presented in a headline story to editors choosing which stories are printed or covered. This also includes Public relations officers and political scientist helping the people to make appropriate choice of credible candidates through media education. Thereby filter out unwanted candidates.

Prof. Yemi Osinbajo's 2023 Presidential Declarative Statement

- 1. Fellow Nigerians, a few moments ago, I met with President Muhammadu Buhari. I informed him that I wanted to succeed him as the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Though it is not my life-long ambition, it has become imperative that to rescue Nigeria, we need someone to build on the*

achievements of President Buhari. I have looked around; I do not see anyone better suited to carry on that solemn assignment than my humble self. As a great father of the nation, which Buhari is, he wished me well.

- 2. I took this bold step after a wide-ranging consultation with Nigerians of various ethnic, religious, and economic hues. I listened to market women and men, I sat down with the young and old, I heard from students and intellectuals, I broke bread with the unemployed and the underemployed, I accepted the counsel of traditional rulers and kingmakers across Nigeria, and more importantly, I weighed in the opinion of my wife and children. All the signals that I got were positive. Go PYO.*
- 3. Unlike all those who want to rule you as their subjects, I offer myself to serve our great country, Nigeria, with utmost humility. Growing up in Lagos, I did not know that I would be where I am today – one heartbeat away from the presidency of this great country. Having been here, having seen all parts of Nigeria from a close range, having worked beside a great but humble leader, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, for almost seven years now, having interacted with leaders at federal, state, and local government levels, I have a burning desire in me to continue with Buhari's master-plan for Nigeria.*
- 4. The master plan may not be clear to some of you, my compatriots, but there is a master plan coming together. The worldwide economic downturn, COVID-19 pandemic, and decades of lack of investments in Nigerian infrastructure may have blurred what President Buhari has achieved. But trust me, he has taken Nigeria to a new height. Though you may not feel it, you may not honestly say that you are better off today than you were in 2015, but believe me, in things that matter most, values and sincere leadership, our country is in a better place.*
- 5. My fellow Nigerians, trust me when I say that no matter how dark it looks, we are on the right path. The temporary disruptions that we see today, the blurriness caused by the dust in the air should not blind us to the long time gains of our investments of this day. I share in your pains of this day of cultivation. Inshallah, we shall all smile soon as harvest time comes.*
- 6. The Nigeria of 2015 was an active erosion site, swallowing homes, roads, and farmlands. What we have done is to channel the floodwater away from the site. Though the gullies are still collapsing and expanding at some places, fundamentally, we have plucked the remote causes. I seek the presidency to begin the next level of the project, which is to fill up the gullies, recover our once lost land and begin reconstruction. In my time as president, you will see mansions rising in our fatherland once overrun by ugly gullies.*
- 7. I have looked around the field of those aspiring to be president. Though they may be honorable men and women in their own right, none of them has what it takes to complete the job that President Buhari started. This is not the time to bring in people who were not there when the corpse was buried and have them start digging from the legs.*
- 8. Those of you who watched with amazement what I accomplished in those few days that President Buhari handed power to me can attest that if I get only four years to be the steward of this great nation, I will turn Nigeria into what Ronald Reagan called "a shining city on a hill."*

9. *As we know, some people are born corrupt. Some people have corruption swimming all around them. I am clothed in a bright gown of integrity. Integrity is modest, integrity is humble and integrity never fails to accomplish and excel. I never have and will never steal from the Nigerian people. Those who steal are greedy. Period. They never change. Please do not believe them when they say they are born-again.*
10. *I am vast in the rudiments of nation-building and sustainable economic growth. When I come into my own as president, that skill set will make all the difference. It helps that more than all the pretenders in the political arena, I am hardworking, I am committed to my stated goals and I am determined to rise above all my enemies and my competitors. My vision for Nigeria is clear and simple. I want Nigeria that is great but just, prosperous but fair and progressive but united. Justice, fairness and unity are very close to my heart.*
11. *I have never cheated to be where I am in life. We are where we are as a nation because we have allowed some people to cheat and steal their ways to what we call success. I made myself what I am today by converting challenges into opportunities. That is the philosophy that I will bring to my presidency. I will deploy this philosophy to lure back our compatriots who have lost faith in the Nigerian project. They will give Nigeria a second chance when they see my sincerity of purpose.*
12. *I understand the internal factors dragging down the economy of Nigeria. I have the foreign and nationwide connections that I need to speed up the economic renaissance of our nation. When it comes to security concerns, I will take decisive actions to quell the lingering security problems across Nigeria. As someone close to the beaming youth of this nation, I know how to inspire them to deploy their restless energy into productive ventures. I have done it on tiny scales in line with my limited portfolio as vice president. As president, I will multiply my effort by 100 million folds.*
13. *Those who know me well will tell you that I am like water. I have no enemy. I will carry every part of the country along in the journey of Nigeria's emancipation. Yes, that is what PYO stands for – total and final emancipation of Nigeria. We are all children of God, and the God that I serve does not discriminate. I firmly believe that what is good for my children must be extended to the children of the lowest citizens of our country.*
14. *I believe now is the time to reverse this current system where we leave a great majority of our people to wait for crumbs to trickle down to them from the table of the rich and mighty. When I am president, I will ensure that the least amongst us have the first choice before the mighty. Having run "TraderMoni" and a school feeding program, having worked with young entrepreneurs starting a business, I know the potential in them. I will not let that potential go to waste anymore.*
15. *I know what most of you are waiting to hear. What about my great friend and benefactor, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (aka BAT)? As you all know, I have tremendous respect for Asiwaju, Jagaban Borgu. But in matters of the fate of 200 million Nigerians, we cannot afford to let emotions rule us. The situation of Nigeria today is so critical. We need a healthy, vibrant, and untainted leader to handle the situation, now that we still can.*
16. *The same goes for other aspirants from all the other political parties. We have no room to play around anymore. We have no space for people who will*

learn on the job. We have no patience for those carrying a truckload of toxic baggage. The urgency of our situation is palpable.

For this and other reasons, I offer myself to serve our great nation by declaring my interest in running for president. It will be the greatest honor of my life to serve you all.

May God bless you all. And may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Methodology

The method used in this research is content analysis. Content analysis is an interpretation of what is contained (content) in a message. According to Cole (1988), it is a “method of analysing written, verbal or visual communication messages.” Content analysis is the study of recorded human communications such as dairy entries, books, newspaper, videos, text messages, tweets, facebook updates and others. Being the scientific study of the content of communication, content analysis is actually the study of contexts, meanings, subtexts, intentions contained in the messages. In simple terms, content analysis is the analysis of what is already said, written or recorded. Through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns, content analysis is a “research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Harwood & Garry (2003) opine that content analysis was used to analyse newspaper articles, magazines, hymns, advertisements and other political speeches. Over the years, this method has witnessed a steady growth in the others fields of social science, arts and humanities. The method of content analysis can be applied to study majorly five types of texts.

1. Written texts – including documents, Political adverts, books, papers, newspapers and others.
2. Oral texts– including sound, speeches, audio-messages,radio message, lectures, political statements and campaign promises.
3. Iconic texts– including graphs, paintings, posters, drawings and many others.
4. Audio-Visual texts– including films, television messages. adverts in media, social media messages and videos.
5. Hypertexts – texts on the internet and social media.

In this study the text of Osinbajo 2023 presidential declarative statement was obtained from the social media on the 29th March, 2022 for analytical study (Premium Times, March 29;2022).

Analysis of Prof. Yemi Osinbajo 2023 Presidential Declarative Statement

The statement of Osinbajo is hereby analysed thematically paragraph by paragraph.

1. **Building on Buhari Achievements.** (Paragraph 1)

Osinbajo wants to build on the achievements of Buhari. And he is the only one in Nigeria that is fit for the job. Literature review in this study shows that Buhari/Osinbajo administration from 2015-2022 was rooted on political deceptions and unfulfilled political campaign promises (Eronmosele, 2019, *The Nation* newspaper of Monday November 19, 2018; p. 2, *The Punch* Newspaper of Monday November 19, 2018; p. 6). Therefore Buhari has no achievement to build upon.

2. **Wide Consultation.** (Paragraph 2)

Osinbajo might have had such a wide consultation by merely sitting at his office with all the category of people he mentioned without town hall meeting, face to face meeting,

opinion survey, internet survey. community/media relations. And no media in Aso Rock visa-vis in Nigeria reported the meetings. This is a demagogue (political deception to lure electorate).

3. **7 Years of No Achievement.** (Paragraph 3)

Prof. Osinbajo could not point out to Nigerians some of his achievements in the 7 years of working with Buhari. How can he convince Nigerians to waste another four years on him when there are better Nigerians who can do the job.

4. **Buhari took Nigeria to better Place.** (Paragraphs 4- 8)

Osinbajo is merely building on the lies of APC/ Buhari campaign promises that failed woefully (IPC, 2019, Aririguzoh, 2019, Edefejirhaye, Ogunwuyi & Olawunmi, 2022).

Buhari promised to bring the price of fuel from N85 per litre to N45. He failed. Nigerians are buying fuel now as at April 2022 at N200 per litre.

Dollar to naira exchange rate under Buhari is risen to over N600 to a American Dollar. During his electioneering campaign in 2015 he promised to make a naira equal to a dollar.

Buhari promised subduing Boko Haram and insecurity within two months in power, today; insecurity has overwhelm all security outfits in Nigeria (Edefejirhaye, et al 2022).

Nigerians are undergoing serious pain at various level as result of high prices of goods, services and hyper-inflation in all ramifications of Nigeria economy; yet Osinbajo is deceiving us that Buhari has placed Nigeria in better and higher level. And he wants to build on this pains and sufferings to eliminate the average Nigerians.

5. **Osinbajo has vast knowledge of nation building and economic growth.** (Paragraphs 10-15)

Is it really true that Osinbajo has such competency? Where is the evidence in these seven years? Is he waiting for Buhari to die and take over leadership before he displays the competency? That was not the spirit of Joseph in Egypt. This is a show of Pentecostal witchcraft when fellow Nigerians are dying under cruel economy. So Prof. Osinbajo can only use the magic wane when become the president of Nigeria? Surely, he has just failed political communication examination. If he decides to maneuver his way to the presidency without Nigerian votes Nigerians cannot expect good result from him.

Discussion of Findings

The literature review corroborates paragraph 1 of Osinbajo declarative statement that Buhari/ Osinbajo administration has no tangible achievement for Osinbajo to build on as he opined. The game and gate-keeping theories on which this study is anchored, nullify his candidacy on ground of questionable reputation and deceptive records.

Osinbajo acclaimed wide consultation before his annunciation in paragraph 2 is a demagogue. In public relations ethics and political communication it is a political deception strategy which game and gate-keeping theory counseled against. Since no Nigerian media reported his wide consultation, his presidential ambition may not sail through.

Seven Years of No Achievement. (Paragraph 3). Prof. Osinbajo could not point out to Nigerians some of his achievements in the 7 years of working with Buhari. It means he agreed that he wasted his chance of bringing positive change according to their party campaign slogan. How can he convince Nigerians to waste another four years on him when there are better Nigerians who can do the job. It is on media record that these seven wasted years are the worst years in Nigerian history. Edefejirhaye, (2021) asserts that Buhari administration brought Nigeria 40 years backward in terms of insecurity, economy, policy making, agriculture, trade and commerce.

Osinbajo claim that Buhari took Nigeria to a better Place in (Paragraphs 4- 8) was also nullified by his own statement that Nigerians were in real agony during the same period. This is self deception. The statement betrayed his master-Buhari also. From the above analysis, Osinbajo is merely building on the lies of APC/ Buhari campaign promises that failed woefully (IPC, 2019, Aririguzoh, 2019, EDAFEJIRHAYE, et al 2022).

Buhari promised to bring the price of fuel from N85 per litre to N45. He failed. Nigerians are buying fuel now as at April 2022 at N200 per litre.

Dollar to naira exchange rate under Buhari is risen to over N600 to a American Dollar. During his electioneering campaign in 2015 he promised to make a naira equal to a dollar.

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Nigerians are undergoing serious pain in various level as result of high prices of goods, services and hyper-inflation in all ramification of Nigeria economy; yet Osinbajo is deceiving us that Buhari has placed Nigeria in better and higher level. And he wants to build on this pains and sufferings to eliminate the average Nigerians.

Osinbajo's claims that he has vast knowledge of nation building and economic growth in (Paragraphs 10-15) have been discarded by the seven inactive years of the administration. Is it really true that Osinbajo has such competency? Where is the evidence in these seven years? Is he waiting for Buhari to die and take over leadership before he displays the competency?

Conclusion

It is obvious that Nigerians have been beguiled by many politicians for these years. However, there is still hope for Nigeria if the entire media network wake up for the responsibility to educate political parties, electorates and elder-statesmen to pick tested, reputable, competent and proven Nigerians as presidential candidates for the forthcoming election.

Recommendations

Nigerian media houses as matter of urgency should start a proactive public relations campaign now using all the media outfits- print, broadcast, digital or social media for the followings:

News analysis and commentaries on proven political candidates.

1. Investigative and interpretative journalistic reporting on deceptive and corrupt politicians.
2. Press conferences to educate political parties and electorates.
3. Press releases to create deliberate awareness among Nigeria,
4. Editorials and Advertorials in newspapers, radio, television social media and magazines to project the best candidates.
5. Cartoons and short drama pieces to encourage proper selection of reputable and tested Nigerians. Dramas, films and home videos aimed at condemning bloody elections.

Nigerians are tired of recycling old and tired politicians. Political parties should pick young people of between 40 to 50 years from South-East of Nigeria to test run this new political process. This research is very optimistic that if all the recommendations are observed, Nigeria will henceforth continue to produce good presidents.

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