

## **Newspaper Framing of the 2019 Nigerian Presidential Election**

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### **Abstract**

This study was carried out to determine how Nigerian newspapers framed the 2019 presidential campaigns, using content analysis. Data were drawn from the editorial contents of four national newspapers (*Daily Trust*, *The Guardian*, *The Nation* and *The Punch*) published between November 19, 2018 (which officially marked the beginning of the presidential election campaigns) and February 21, 2019 (when the campaigns officially ended). Data analysis was descriptive using simple percentages. Findings indicated that the newspapers gave both frequent and prominent coverage to the presidential election. Expectedly, the two leading political parties –APC and PDP –dominated the campaign stories with the APC presidential candidate, Muhammadu Buhari featuring more than the PDP’s candidate, Atiku Abubakar in a reflection of the Nigerian factor syndrome. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the position of the agenda setting, gatekeeping and framing theories which affirm the media’s power in setting public agenda as well as shaping the tone and influencing the direction of public discourse and ultimately public opinion and action is validated. Among others, it was recommended that newspapers should improve on their performance in reporting elections, especially in the areas of issue-based report and according visibility to so-called smaller political parties and candidates. This way democracy is better enhanced through a more balanced public discourse.

**Keywords:** Nigerian Factor/Media Capture, News Framing, Media Capture, Election Coverage, Political Communication.