

The Influence of Political Advertising on Nigerian Electorate

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ABSTRACT This work examined the influence of political advertising messages on the choice of governorship candidates by the electorate in Imo State, South East Nigeria, in the 2011 governorship election in the state. In particular, the study sought to ascertain the extent that the electorate in Imo State was exposed to political advertising; which media was the electorate most exposed to in political advertising as well as the extent that political advertising influenced the voting decisions of the electorate. To achieve this, the study used the survey method with the questionnaire as research instrument. Through multi-stage sampling, 120 respondents were selected in the two of the three senatorial zones in the State and administered the questionnaire. The findings indicated, among other things, that the electorate in Imo State was well exposed to political advertising; that radio was the most effective channel for political advertising; that the respondents were influenced in their choice of candidates to the extent that they perceived such messages to be credible. In the light of the findings, it was concluded that political advertising was an essential factor in the political decisions of the electorate in Imo State. Similarly, it was recommended that candidates should strive for credibility in their political messages, while the electorate should be critical of all political messages to decipher the truth.