

Public Relations in Electioneering Process for Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines the roles of public relations in electioneering process in Nigeria, and it explores the various tools of public relations employed by political parties for reaching out to their publics, as well as the role of public relations officers in managing the images of political parties. The study adopted two theories which are Agenda setting and Audience theory. Agenda setting theory can be used by public relations officer managing the party electioneering campaign to set agenda for public debate on political issue, radio and television debate. Audience theory explains how people use the mass media for gratification of their needs and this explain the role public relations strategies adopted by political parties can have effect on their publics. The study concluded by recognizing the importance of public relations strategies in electioneering process by way of image making and management.

The study recognizes that the country's democracy is at risk if the activities of the politicians are not put under serious checks through regular developmental communication that could make them see politics as a call for service and not an avenue for amassing wealth which could have negative implication for sustainable electoral development in Nigeria. It recommends that public relations officers must be given adequate fund and free hand to perform optimally. In addition he must be well-trained and be able to apply public relations skills to address challenges that the party may face, before, during and after election by the party.

Keywords: Public relations, electioneering process, political parties, political campaign, party manifestoes, Sustainable Development