



Firehose of Falsehood Propaganda and Political Decision-Making among the Electorate in South-East Nigeria

¹Chukwuebuka Stephen Nworie, ²Chibuzor Cosmas Nwoga, ³Adaolisa Ucha Chidiebere, ⁴Ruth Ngozi Aloh, & ⁵Mercy Nnedimma Nwalieke

^{1,3,4&5}Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki

²Department of Mass Communication, Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

¹<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-3825-9070>

²<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3587-0551>

³<https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8742-930X>

⁴<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5869-9236>

⁵<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8307-1324>

*Corresponding Author: chukwuebuka.nworie@ebsu.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Background: Political communication in Nigeria in the twenty-first century has increasingly been characterised by post-truth politics, where repetition often takes precedence over factual accuracy. This trend poses a serious threat to democratic processes by shaping public opinion through misinformation and disinformation, thereby influencing political outcomes. Despite growing scholarly attention to misinformation, empirical evidence on the application and effects of the firehose of falsehood propaganda model in Nigeria's electoral context remains limited, particularly in South-East Nigeria.

Objective: This study examined the prevalence of the firehose of falsehood propaganda technique in political communication in South-East Nigeria and assessed its influence on the political decision-making of the electorate.

Method: The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 18 items administered to 356 registered voters selected from the five states of South-East Nigeria—Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo. The study was anchored on the Media Framing Theory and Rational Choice Theory. A two-stage sampling procedure involving stratified and purposive sampling techniques was employed. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The instrument was validated by experts in media effects research and produced a test-retest reliability coefficient of 0.87.

Results: The findings revealed that the firehose of falsehood propaganda technique is widely deployed in political communication in South-East Nigeria, with 56.1% of respondents affirming its prevalence. Although its influence is moderated by factors such as political literacy, personal interests, ethnicity, religion, and group affiliations, the technique significantly shapes political interest, participation, mobilisation, campaign engagement, and voting decisions.

Unique Contribution: This study extends the application of the firehose of falsehood propaganda model to Nigeria's electoral communication environment by providing empirical evidence that its effects are significant but moderated by socio-cultural and cognitive factors. The findings demonstrate that political literacy and social identities mediate the influence of coordinated disinformation on electoral decision-making, thereby enriching propaganda and political communication scholarship in emerging democracies.



Conclusion: The study concludes that while the firehose of falsehood propaganda model has not completely displaced the core political values and ideological orientations of the electorate, it exerts a significant influence on political behaviour and electoral decision-making in South-East Nigeria.

Key Recommendation: The study recommends the institutionalisation of comprehensive media and information literacy programmes, strengthened fact-checking mechanisms, and strategic collaboration among electoral bodies, media organisations, educational institutions, civil society organisations, and digital platforms to build public resilience against coordinated disinformation during electoral processes.

Keywords: Firehose of falsehood, propaganda, political communication, political decision-making, media effects.

Keywords: Firehose of falsehood, propaganda, political communication, political decision-making, media effects

INTRODUCTION

Democracy extends beyond the constitutional right of citizens to vote and contest elections. It also encompasses the freedom of citizens to make informed electoral choices without manipulation, deception, or coercion. Any form of psychological, physiological, socio-economic, or informational manipulation that distorts citizens' freedom of political choice undermines democratic principles (Ajiteru, 2024; Ajiteru et al., 2025). Contrary to these democratic ideals, studies across the world have shown that political decision-making is increasingly shaped by manipulative communication strategies deployed through the media and other social institutions (American Historical Association, 2018; Guess & Lyons, 2020; Obukoadata et al., 2024). The media have been a powerful instrument of political communication. Scholars argue that propaganda remains a defining feature of political communication (Osimen & Adeyefa, 2024), although contemporary political campaigns increasingly rely on misinformation and disinformation disseminated through both traditional and digital media (Ajiteru et al., 2025).

According to Brügger and Milligan (2019), propaganda refers to the strategic planning and deployment of communication to promote a particular cause, ideology, or political agenda while undermining opposing viewpoints. Similarly, Waisbord (2018) describes political propaganda as the deliberate dissemination of information intended to achieve political objectives by appealing more to emotions than to evidence. Political propaganda is characterised by sensationalism, half-truths, selective framing, misinformation, multimodal communication, and the construction of "otherness." O'Donnell and Jowett (2015) further define propaganda as a deliberate and systematic effort to shape perceptions, manipulate cognition, and direct behaviour in ways that advance predetermined objectives. Thus, propaganda is intentional, strategic, and manipulative (Guess & Lyons, 2020; Vamanu, 2019), with the primary aim of promoting political agendas by influencing public attitudes and behaviour. Rather than merely informing citizens, propaganda seeks to persuade audiences to accept, reject, or support particular political actions or candidates. As Stanley (2018) argues, propaganda is often accompanied by an explicit or implicit call to action. Among the emerging propaganda techniques that have gained prominence in recent years is the firehose of falsehood model.



The firehose of falsehood, commonly referred to as firehosing, is a propaganda strategy that seeks to overwhelm audiences through the rapid, continuous, repetitive, and multi-channel dissemination of misinformation and disinformation. Unlike conventional propaganda, which often relies on credibility and consistency, the firehose of falsehood model prioritises volume, speed, repetition, and emotional appeal over factual accuracy. The strategy is designed to create confusion, reduce critical evaluation, and increase the likelihood that repeated messages will be accepted as true. By saturating multiple communication platforms simultaneously, firehosing seeks to maximise exposure and reinforce desired political narratives, thereby increasing its potential influence on political decision-making.

The firehose of falsehood strategy is frequently associated with Russian propaganda because of its extensive application by Russia during the Cold War and in more recent geopolitical conflicts (Paul & Matthews, 2017, as cited in Aminulloh et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the strategy has become increasingly evident in political campaigns across many democratic societies, including Nigeria, particularly through social media platforms, online news outlets, political advertisements, and interpersonal communication networks.

Within political communication, firehosing represents a systematic persuasive strategy through which political actors repeatedly disseminate emotionally charged messages, half-truths, misleading narratives, and fabricated information across multiple media channels to gain public support. The repetitive, sensational, and multi-platform nature of this communication strategy enables propagandists to dominate public discourse, suppress competing narratives, and influence citizens' perceptions of political candidates, parties, and electoral issues.

The underlying objective of the firehose of falsehood model is to create a powerful first-impression effect that becomes deeply embedded in public memory through continuous repetition. This strategy reflects the psychological principle known as the illusory truth effect, whereby repeated information is more likely to be perceived as truthful regardless of its factual accuracy. The approach bears similarities to the propaganda philosophy commonly attributed to Joseph Goebbels—that repeated falsehoods may eventually be accepted as truth. Today, similar communication strategies are evident in political campaigns, commercial advertising, public relations, and digital media promotion. The extensive use of traditional and social media platforms enables such messages to be disseminated rapidly, repeatedly, and simultaneously to diverse audiences (Aminulloh et al., 2022).

Against this backdrop, and in view of the growing concerns regarding the influence of misinformation on democratic processes, this study examined the prevalence of the firehose of falsehood propaganda model in South-East Nigeria and investigated its effect on the political decision-making of the electorate.



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Political propaganda is inherently self-serving. This reality undermines the media's normative role as the watchdog of society and the moulder of public opinion. When political decisions are shaped primarily through the "bullet effect" of the Firehose of Falsehood (FoF) propaganda model, the media risk becoming instruments of anti-democratic manipulation rather than facilitators of informed democratic participation. Under such circumstances, the media dependency paradigm may be exploited for political advantage through the systematic dissemination of misleading information. Rather than promoting informed citizenship, firehosing propaganda can reinforce ethnocentrism, religious polarization, misinformation, disinformation, political othering, and passive audience behaviour.

Although propaganda in Nigerian politics has received considerable scholarly attention, the specific application of the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model in political communication within South-East Nigeria has received little empirical investigation. Existing studies have largely focused on fake news, ethnic political advertising, political misinformation, and general propaganda, with limited attention to the distinctive characteristics of the Firehose of Falsehood model, such as rapid dissemination, message repetition, multichannel communication, and the overwhelming volume of information.

Empirical evidence from Indonesia by Aminulloh et al. (2022) revealed that Firehose of Falsehood propaganda generates cognitive confusion that influences electorates to make political decisions that depart from their independent reasoning and rational judgment. The repetitive, consistent, multichannel, multimodal, and half-truth characteristics of the model are capable of weakening prior political beliefs, creating cognitive dissonance, and encouraging acceptance of the propagandist's preferred narrative, thereby shaping subsequent political decisions.

However, the Firehose of Falsehood is largely regarded as a Western propaganda strategy with roots in Russian political communication. Whether this relatively novel propaganda model has been adopted by political actors in South-East Nigeria remains largely unknown. Furthermore, previous Nigerian studies have often produced divergent findings due to limited geographical coverage, fragmented samples, and inadequate representation of all the states in the South-East geopolitical zone.

This study therefore seeks to bridge these gaps by examining the existence and influence of the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model on political communication and political decision-making among the electorate in South-East Nigeria. Replicating empirical investigations on this propaganda strategy is essential for understanding the contemporary communication factors shaping electoral behaviour and democratic participation in the region.



OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to examine the influence of the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model on political decision-making among the electorate in South-East Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the extent to which the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model is employed in political communication in South-East Nigeria.
2. Examine the effect of the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model on the voting decisions of the electorate in South-East Nigeria.
3. Investigate the factors that moderate or mitigate the influence of the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model on the political decision-making of the electorate in South-East Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Firehose of Falsehood (FoF) Propaganda Model

The Firehose of Falsehood (FoF) propaganda model emerged from the information warfare strategies employed by the former Soviet Union during the Cold War (1950s–1990s). The technique later gained prominence through Russia's communication strategies during the 2008 conflict with Georgia and the 2014 annexation of Crimea (Paul & Matthews, 2017). The model is designed to influence public attitudes and behaviour by flooding audiences with a continuous stream of misleading, false, exaggerated, or partially truthful information disseminated rapidly through multiple communication channels.

The primary objective of the Firehose of Falsehood model is to persuade audiences to adopt the interests of the propagandist without recognizing that they have been manipulated. Unlike conventional propaganda, which may rely on a limited number of carefully constructed messages, the Firehose of Falsehood employs simultaneous, repetitive, rapid, and multichannel dissemination of information intended to overwhelm audiences and reduce their ability to critically evaluate competing narratives.

One of the defining characteristics of the model is consistency. Christian (2017) argues that continuous repetition creates a monopolistic communication environment in which the propagandist dominates the information space. Closely related to consistency is speed, whereby messages are released continuously before opposing viewpoints can effectively respond.

Another important characteristic is multichannel dissemination. According to Dunwoody et al. (2022), the Firehose of Falsehood strategy simultaneously utilizes multiple communication platforms—including television, radio, newspapers, online news platforms, websites, and social media—to maximize audience exposure and message reinforcement. The coordinated use of



multiple channels significantly increases the persuasive power of propaganda by creating the impression that similar information is being independently confirmed across various sources.

Kakutani (2018) further explains that the propagandistic nature of the Firehose of Falsehood lies in its deliberate dissemination of half-truths, misleading narratives, and outright falsehoods with the intention of manipulating rather than informing audiences. Consequently, the model shares important characteristics with fake news, misinformation, and disinformation while fundamentally violating the social responsibility function of the media.

Dunwoody et al. (2022) further observed that the Firehose of Falsehood is consistent with political psychology research demonstrating that epistemic uncertainty and existential anxiety often increase individuals' susceptibility to authoritarian and conservative narratives. In some instances, the model becomes an instrument of information warfare by integrating propaganda, media convergence, and strategic disinformation into a coordinated communication campaign (Bauerlein, 2017).

Unlike traditional propaganda, which often combines facts with persuasive messaging, the Firehose of Falsehood may deliberately employ entirely fabricated information to confuse, distract, and manipulate public opinion. Consequently, it represents one of the most sophisticated contemporary propaganda techniques employed in political communication.

Propaganda and Politics: The Voting Decision-Making Process in South-East Nigeria

Politics constitutes one of the fundamental pillars of democratic governance because it provides citizens with opportunities to participate in leadership selection and public decision-making (Vegetti et al., 2015). Political decisions—including party affiliation, candidate preference, and voting behaviour—are expected to be based on informed evaluation of candidates, political ideologies, and public policy alternatives. However, these decisions are often influenced by numerous communication factors, among which the media occupy a central position.

As agenda setters and agents of public opinion formation, the media are expected to educate citizens and facilitate informed political participation. In practice, however, political competition has increasingly encouraged political actors to utilize the media primarily for self-promotion rather than public enlightenment. This development has contributed to the growing use of propaganda, whereby political actors strategically package exaggerated, selective, or misleading information to influence public opinion.

The interaction between politics and propaganda therefore raises an important democratic question: Are electorates making political decisions independently, or are their choices increasingly shaped by the persuasive strategies of propagandists?

Evidence from Nigeria suggests that propaganda continues to exert considerable influence on electoral outcomes. Okolie et al. (2021), in their study titled *Campaign Propaganda, Electoral*



Outcome and the Dynamics of Governance in the Post-2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria, found that political actors exploited media platforms to disseminate campaign messages embedded with ethnic and religious sentiments in order to shape electoral outcomes. The study concluded that although propaganda contributed significantly to the electoral success of the winning political party in 2015, many of the campaign promises that facilitated electoral victory remained largely unfulfilled.

Similarly, Apuke and Tunca (2018) argue that the widespread adoption of smartphones has significantly expanded the reach and effectiveness of propaganda, even in remote communities across Nigeria. Propaganda, by its very nature, promotes the interests of individuals or groups while simultaneously projecting the perceived weaknesses of opponents. As an integral component of political competition, propaganda possesses considerable capacity to shape public opinion and influence electoral behaviour.

When propaganda dominates political communication, electorates may become increasingly susceptible to manipulation, thereby undermining their capacity for independent political reasoning. Such circumstances threaten democratic ideals because citizens may become passive recipients of persuasive messages rather than active participants in rational political deliberation.

Consistent with this position, Olayode (2015) and Ezirim et al. (2016) observed that political propaganda in Nigeria has increasingly assumed ethnic dimensions by portraying political candidates as representatives of particular ethnic identities. Religious identity has similarly become a dominant campaign strategy, as demonstrated during the debates surrounding the All Progressives Congress (APC) Muslim-Muslim presidential ticket in the 2023 general elections (Nwankwo, 2019; McKinnon, 2021; Omokri, 2022; Chigbu et al., 2024).

According to Isiaq et al. (2018), strong ethnic and religious loyalties continue to shape political patronage and voting behaviour in Nigeria. Consequently, many voters make electoral choices based less on candidates' competence, ideological orientation, or policy proposals than on ethnic, regional, and religious affiliations. Political parties and candidates frequently exploit these identities by framing campaign messages that reinforce ethnic and religious divisions in order to influence electoral outcomes.

These developments suggest that political decision-making among many Nigerian electorates may increasingly reflect the influence of strategically deployed propaganda rather than objective evaluation of political alternatives. It is against this background that the present study examines whether the Firehose of Falsehood propaganda model has become a significant determinant of political decision-making among the electorate in South-East Nigeria.



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the media framing theory and the Rational Choice theory (RCT) to analyse how media projecting (firehosing propaganda) is capable of othering or altering political realities like voting decision among electorates. The RCT is built on the notion that social occurrences cannot be adequately explained outside the rational actions/decisions of individuals (Hedström & Stern, 2017). Operationally, rational choice refers to the process of voting decision making of electorates by deciding what of the propaganda projections are available and then selecting the most preferred one according to some consistent benchmark. The media framing theory, as propounded by Erving Goffman and Robert Entman (1974) proposes that the narrative structure of the media (frame) which include selection emphasis and presentation overwhelms the audience with rapid, repeated, and multi-channeled/multimodal message and invariable create a referent point on which political course would be charted. The RCT built active media parlance however is of the opposing view that electorates' voting decision may not actually be determined by firehosing propaganda but by an informed and gratifying decision borne-out of personal or group interests. Recourse to this, we hypothesize that: firehosing propaganda has significant effect on the voting decision making of electorates in South-east Nigeria; the voting decision making among electorates in Nigeria is influenced by individual or group interests and not propaganda; firehosing propaganda nurture electorates' private/group interest to vote a party candidates in South-East Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey was applied to gather the responses on the subject matter from South-Easterners. The population of the study was the 25,332,025 (2.37% growth rate projection) South-Easterners as reported. Sample size of 385 was obtained using confidence interval width (at 95% confidence level and 5% error margin) using Australian Calculator. A close-ended questionnaire was utilized through personal survey. Two-stage sampling was employed. In stage one; the population was stratified into 5 strata based on the 5 existing states in the zone. In the second stage; purposive sampling was utilized to select respondents among electorate. The instrument was validated by researchers in media effect from Department of Mass Communication, Alex-Ekwueme Federal University Ndufu-Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State Nigeria. Data collated were presented using percentage-frequency distribution table.

DATA PRESENTATION

356 copies of questionnaire instrument distributed were returned. This 92% returning rate was considered significant enough for the course of this survey.



Table 1: Demographic Data of the respondents

Categories of data	N	%
Gender:		
Male	154	43.3
Female	182	51.1
Undisclosed	20	5.6
Age:		
18-30	157	44.1
31-50	93	26.1
51-above	106	29.8
Education:		
No basic education	12	3.4
FSLC/SSCE	134	37.6
Tertiary Education	210	59.0
Religious affiliation:		
African religions	75	21.1
Christianity	132	37.1
Muslim	46	12.9
Others	103	28.9
Partisan political career:		
Yes	179	50.3
No	127	35.7
Undisclosed	50	14.0

Source: Survey, 2025

As presented in the above table, there is fair distribution of the respondents by gender, religion, age and partisan politicking as career. However, data on education qualification indicated high formal education qualification among the respondents.

Table 2: Ascertaining the rate of application of firehosing propaganda model in political communication in South East Nigeria by measuring the presence of the precursors of firehosing in the media

The precursors of Firehosing propaganda	N	%
Multichannel communication	218	61.2
Rapid and consistent communication	307	86.2
Multimodal communication	291	81.7
Manipulation/sensationalism	224	62.9
Half-truth/ falsehood	196	55.1
Repetitive media framing	314	88.2
Intention to sway or mislead the electorates	209	58.7
Projection of political opponents' weaknesses	212	59.6

Source: Survey, 2025

Data on the above table showed a significant presence of firehosing propaganda in south-east Nigeria media. Among the listed precursors of firehosing propaganda, repetitive media framing



and rapid/consistent dissemination of the propaganda messages tops the list while falsehood and half-truth and intents to manipulate the people are moderate.

Table 3: Measuring the effect of firehosing propaganda in the voting decision of electorates in South-East, Nigeria

Elements of political voting decision making	N	%
Decision to participate in political discussions	97	27.2
Membership of political party	102	28.7
Decision to participate in electoral campaigns?	271	76.1
Mobilizations		
Choosing/voting political party/candidates during elections	199	55.9
On-the-poll canvass for political candidates during elections	135	37.9
Voting candidates based on party affiliation/line	194	54.5
Voting political party/candidates based ethnic appeal/origin	117	32.9
Voting political party/candidates based on religious affiliations	186	52.2

Source: Survey, 2025

From the data presented in the above table, firehosing propaganda has high effect on electorates' decision to participate on political mobilization campaigns, on-the-poll canvass for parties and their candidates and in voting decision; moderate effects on the voting decision of the electorates based on party affiliation, religious appeal, and on-the-poll election canvassing. However, other political decisions like participation on political discussion, political party membership and canvassing for candidates/political are less influenced by firehosing propaganda.

Table 4: Mitigating factors to the effect of firehosing propaganda in the voting decision making of electorates in south-East Nigeria

Mitigating factors	N	%
Education and political literacy	143	40.2
Personal or group interests	252	70.8
Political Apathy	94	26.4
Religious ideology/affiliation	118	33.1
Ethnicity/ origin	209	58.7
Disenfranchisement	98	27.5
Physiological factors	128	35.9
Other factors	73	20.5

Source: Survey 2025

Personal and group interests are the major mitigating factors. Following this is ethnic inclination. Hence, firehosing could be effective if applied in form of ethnic or group othering. Other factors have moderate and low mitigation power.



DISCUSSION

The survey reports the existence of firehosing in political communication in South-east Nigeria. Among the determining precursors, repetition, consistency, and use of multimodal and multichannel were the most pronounced factors in firehosing propaganda in the geopolitical zone. Subject to previous empirical submission, political communication are mostly heralded in propagandists' agenda to hold sway the people and chart the political action to their advantage and invariably creating hurdles for the opponents. Propaganda is an undeniable tool for political education and communication. As a common tool in competitive adventures, propaganda has been used over the years competitively in political sphere (Aboyade, 2022). And while had propaganda bare and controllable decades ago, the technological evolution has revolutionalised propaganda s a political communication tool.

Today's technologies have introduced jet age platforms or tools which has enshrined falsehood into propaganda. And from half-truth, we now experience full falsehood multi-channeled, multimodal, consistent and rapidly disseminated over a period of time. Tools like deepfake and AI are capable of misrepresentation and deception. With these tools readily available in the digital sphere, firehosing has been on the increase (Akinola et al., 2024).

The study reports moderate and low influence of firehosing on the political decision making of the electorates in the zone. From the 6 items questions, 76% of the respondents indicate that firehosing have affected their decision to participate in electoral campaign and mobilization; 55.9%, 52%, and 32% of the respondents accepts firehosing influence on their in their choice of political party or candidates; voting candidates on political party line, religious affiliations, and ethnicity, respectively. Others areas in political decision making has low effect of firehosing propaganda. These figures showed the average effect of firehosing as a propaganda tool in political decision making.

Reporting the mitigating factors to the firehosing propaganda effects on the electorates' decision making, the respondent indicated significant role of personal and group interests (70.8%); educational and political literacy (40.2) ethnicity (58%) and physiological factors (35.9%). This justifies the precursors of political decision making in south-east, Nigeria. Hence, firehosing propaganda wearing such colouration has greater advantage of influencing political outcome in the southeast Nigeria. This, however, calls for further empirical inquiries. These empirical facts indicate active media audience, as argued by Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh (2024). Increasing media literacy and right to judgment and decision is on the rise in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that firehosing propaganda model is a growing issue in South-East Nigeria. This study concludes that the firehose of falsehood propaganda technique is actively deployed in political communication across South-East Nigeria, with an average application. While the propaganda does not entirely override deeply held values such as ethnicity, religion, and political literacy, it nevertheless exerts a measurable influence on key political decisions in the political interest, participation, mobilization, voting behavior, and on-the-poll canvassing. The findings



reveal a complex media effect where electorates demonstrate resilience, yet remain partially vulnerable. In light of the growing post-truth paradigm characterized by fake news, misinformation, and disinformation, there is an urgent need for national and global policies that prioritize media literacy, independent fact-checking, and institutional partnerships. Without deliberate reorientation programmes, firehosing could gradually undermine democratic political development in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policies are essential in tackling the problems identified at the course of this research

1. National orientation agencies and other agencies, public and private institutions, government and NGOs should carry national wide and consistent mass literacy programmes on fact-checking, of political issues to help equip the citizens in battling firehosing propagandists.
2. The Nigerian National Communication Commission and other regulatory bodies should regulate all available media –conventional or digital is essential in Nigeria to fight firehosing propaganda.
3. Government should institute media literacy scheme to equip the journalists and the citizenry on on fact-checking journalism, AI and technologies, and things of that kind to mediated and act as alternative and authentic sources of political information

Ethical clearance

Ethical consent was sought and obtained from the participants used in this study. They were made to understand that the exercise was purely for academic purposes, and their participation was voluntary.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the respondents and empirical works consulted for assisting us with data collection. We equally appreciate the ...AE-FUNAI University Library staff for their cooperation and support.

Sources of funding

The study was not funded.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

Chukwuebuka Stephen Nworie: conceived the study, pilot study and wrote the proposal and discussion of findings. Dr. Nwoga Chibuzor handled the methodology, review of literature, interpretation of findings, manuscript proofreading. Adaolisa Chidiebere was in charge of the research design and survey field work (data gathering). Ruth Ngozi Aloh crafted the research instrument (questionnaire) and participated in the survey field work, while Nwalieke Mercy



Nnedimma handled the data collation. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft, and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

Data availability statement

The datasets on which conclusions were made for this study are available on reasonable request.

Citation:

Nworie, C. S., Nwoga, C. C., Chidiebere, A. U., Aloh, N. R., & Nwalieke, M. N. (2026). Firehose of Falsehood Propaganda and Political Decision-Making among the Electorate in South-East Nigeria, *International Journal of Sub-Saharan African Research*, 4(2), 772-786. <https://doi:10.5281/zenodo.20921116>

REFERENCES

- Ajiteru, S. A. R. (2024). The impact of inadequate governance on security in Nigeria: The approach of Police Force. Command Abuja. *International Journal of Law and Society*, 1(4), 162–180. <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijls.v1i4.185>
- Ajiteru, S.A.R., Sulaiman T. H., Abalaka, J. N. (2025). Political Propaganda, The Impact Of The Election Campaign, The Electoral Outcome, And The Dynamics Of Governance In Nigeria Following The 2015 Presidential Election. *International Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 2 (2), 76-98. DOI : <https://doi.org/10.62951/ijsw.v2i2.324>.
- American Historical Association. (2018) Official website of the American Historical Association . United States. [Web Archive] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/lcwaN0010598>.
- Aminulloh, A., Artaria, M. D., Surya, Y. W. I., Qorib, F., & Hakim, L. (2022). Firehose of Falsehood Propaganda Model in the 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election, *Mediator: Journal Komunikasi*, 15 (2), 249-263.
- Apuke, O. D., & Tunca, E. A. (2018). Understanding the implications of social media usage in the electoral processes and campaigns in Nigeria. *Global Media Journal*, 20(18), 16–31. <https://www.globalmediajournal.com/open-access>.
- Brügger, N., & Milligan, I. (2019). The SAGE handbook of web history. SAGE Publications Ltd, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526470546>.
- Chigbu, G. U., Aboh, S. C., & Ganaah, J. (2024). Religious othering in Nigeria’s electoral discourse: Towards a critical religious tolerance. *Discourse & Society*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265241257628>..
- Dantani, U., Wika, N., & Maigari, A. M. (2017). Internet revolutions, democratic globalization and elections outcome in the twenty-first century: echoes from Nigeria. *Glocalism: Journal of Culture, Politics and Innovation*, 3, 1–27. DOI: 10.12893/gjcp.2017.3.5.



- Dunwoody, P. T., Gershtenson, J., Plane, D. L., Upchurch-Poole, T. (2022). [The fascist authoritarian model of illiberal democracy](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2022.907681). *Frontiers in Political Science*, 4. doi:10.3389/fpos.2022.907681. ISSN 2673-3145.
- Ezirim, G. E., Nnamani, K. E., & Nnaegbo, O. (2016). Democracy at the crossroads: Ethno-regional power contestations and democratization in a diversified Nigeria, 1960–2015. *South East Journal of Political Science*, 1(1), 96-123
- Guess, A., & Lyons, B. (2020). Misinformation, Disinformation, and Online Propaganda. In Persily, N., & J. Tucker (Eds.), *Social Media and Democracy: The State of the Field, Prospects for Reform (SSRC Anxieties of Democracy)*, pp. 10-33). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ikechukwu-Ibe, C. J., & Aboh, S. C. (2024). The youths are wiser now: A positive discourse analysis of resistance in Nigeria's 2023 electoral rhetoric. *Journal of Language and Politics*. DOI: 10.1075/jlp.23104.ike.
- Isiaq, A. A., Adebisi, O. M., & Bakare, A. R. (2018). Ethnicity and election outcomes in Nigeria: Interrogating the 2015 presidential election. *Journal of African Elections*, 17, 11a6.
- John, A. A., Adeyinka, P. A., & Tahir, A. I. (2024). Fake News and Political Misinformation: Implications for Democratic Process in Nigeria. *Covenant University Journal of Politics & International Affairs*, 12 (2), 176-195.
- McKinnon, A. (2021). Christians, Muslims and Traditional Worshipers in Nigeria: Estimating the Relative Proportions from Eleven Nationally Representative Social Surveys. *Review of Religious Research*, 63(2): 303-315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00450-5>
- Michiko, K. (2018). *The death of truth: notes on falsehood in the age of Trump*. Crown publishers, USA.
- Nwankwo C (2019) Religion and Voter Choice Homogeneity in the Nigerian Presidential Elections of the Fourth Republic. *Statistics, Politics and Policy* 10(1): 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1515/spp-2018-0010>.
- Obukoadata , P. B., Okon,P. E., & Obogo, L.(2024). Exploration Into Usage, Frequency, and Prominence of Propaganda Devices by Political Parties in Nigerian Newspapers During the 2019 Electioneering Campaigns, *Newspaper Research Journal*, 45(1) 90–109 doi:.org/10.1177/07395329231213035.
- Okolie, A., Enyiazu, C., & Nnamani, K. E. (2021) Campaign propaganda, electoral outcome and the dynamics of governance in the post-2015 presidential election in Nigeria, *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7 (1), 1922180, DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2021.1922180.
- Olayode, K. O. (2015). *Ethno-regional cleavages and voting behaviour in the 2015 general elections: Issues and challenges for democratisation and nation building*. Paper presented at the National Conference on the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria: The Real Issues', Abuja: Electoral Institute, 26–29.



- Omokri, R. (2022) Muslim-Muslim ticket: Lessons from the islamisation of Constantinople. *Thisdaylive.com*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2022/09/06/muslim-muslim-ticket-lessons-from-the-islamisation-of-constantinople> (accessed 11 June, 2025).
- Osimen, G. U., & Adeyefa, C. R. (2024). Social Media and Political Propaganda: A double-edged Sword for Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences* 5(4), 21-38.
- Paul, C., & Matthews, M. (2017). The Russian “Firehose of Falsehood” Propaganda Model: Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It.. <https://doi.org/10.7249/pe198>.
- Tandoc, E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining "fake news": A typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137-153.
- Vamanu, I. (2019). Fake news and propaganda: A critical discourse research perspective. *Open Information Science*, 3(1), 197-208.
- Vegetti, F., Vezzoni, C., & Segatti, P. (2015). *The backbone of democracy: Electoral availability and European. Final conference of the European election study 2014* held at University of Mannheim, Germany.
- Waisbord, S. (2018). The media as amplifiers of political propaganda. In *Propaganda and Information Warfare in the 21st Century* (pp. 53-72). Routledge.