Marketing Strategies of Nigerian Political Parties: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract-Political parties operating within a country may compete by using different competitive methods due to dissimilar political marketing orientations of party leaders and other internal distinctive competences. This implies that marketing strategies differ among political parties in Nigeria because each party employs different mixes of marketing variables to compete in our democratic politics. Accordingly, this paper examines the contents of marketing strategies employed by Nigerian political parties. In pursuit of this objective, four dominant political parties were selected out of the thirty political parties that participated in the 2003 General Elections in Nigeria, and their electorates. Quota and stratified sampling techniques were mostly used in their selection. Our questionnaire was administered on 800 respondents; out of which 626 were returned. After editing, 598 were found usable. These were analyzed with tables, frequencies, percentages, and ANOVA.The findings indicate that marketing strategies of Nigerian political parties contain product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence elements. Nigerian parties were found to be essentially product and sales-oriented in their approach. The tested hypothesis showed that there are significant differences in the contents of the marketing strategies employed by Nigerian parties. Based on these findings, it is recommended that parties should sharpen their strategies to be more issue-based and people-oriented.

Keywords-Marketing Strategies, Politics, Political Parties, Electorate, Democracy,Election.

I. INTRODUCTION

Prior to Nigerian independence in 1960, the colonial administration had organized a couple of general elections without any deliberate and systematic marketing programme undertaken in any of them (Nzeribe, 1992). Yet, political parties and candidates canvassed for votes, located offices in different towns and villages, etc. This explains why Henneberg (1996) noted that researchers in political marketing will continue to discover that political parties do not always consciously make marketing decisions although one might classify certain activities or processes as marketing management.

After independence, however, a new dimension was observed as political marketing communications started gaining ground. In 1963 elections, for instance, advertising gained prominence as notable politicians like Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the Action Group, used it to send messages to the public. Sales promotion also had its own slot when chief

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Awolowo used helicopters to write campaign messages in the sky (i.e. sky writing) to propagate his campaign messages.

During the series of election conducted in 1979 to usher in the second Republic, deliberate efforts were made by virtually all parties to persuade voters by using marketing promotional techniques like advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, publicity, and even direct Marketing.

The trend continued in 1983 with the hiring of advertising agencies by some of the political parties to promote their candidates. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN), for example, hired Saatchi and Saatchi from Britain.

However, the best of times for political marketers in Nigeria came between 1991 and 1994 when Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) which contested in the series of elections within the period continued the tradition of using professional advertising agencies. The SDP had a foreign team comprising British and America experts that worked with their Nigerian counterparts (e.g. Sunrise Marketing Communications).

The NRC also followed suit as it syndicated creative campaign efforts through Nigerian and foreign experts (O'Cass, 2001).

The result was that the SDP candidate (MKO Abiola) had a clear victory with 58.6% of all the votes cast, and having at least one third of the votes cast in 29 out of then 30 states in Nigeria(Ibodje and Dode,2007)

According to Nnadozie (2007), the 1993 presidential election gained popularity among Nigerians and therefore generally accepted by the people. It was also acclaimed by both national and international observers as the most genuine, freest and fairest in the history of elections in Nigeria.

Scholars believe that Abiola's victory was largely made possible by the massive deployment of marketing strategies, though he never became the President for reasons best known to the then military junta (Achumba and Dixon-Ogbechi, 2004; Osuagwu, 2008).

Due to what public opinion perceived to be an injustice to the winner of June 12, 1993 elections, political marketing began to lose its salt as interest in politics began to wane in Abacha days (i.e. between 1994 and 1998, even with the existence of parties like United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN) Congress for National consensus (CNC), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), and Grass root Democratic Movement (GDM).

But between June 1998 and May 1999, political marketing activities resumed with the restoration of democracy in Nigeria by Abubakar. This culminated in the swearing-in of Obasanjo in May, 29 1999 as a civilian president.

The 1999 general elections did not particularly win the accolade of Nigerian and International publics because of the incidences of rigging, and other electoral vices. But there seemed to be a general consensus, even if unwritten, among Nigerians to tolerate the result so that the military will vacate the political arena(Nnadozie,2007)

If marketing strategies could work in 1993 general elections, then there is a part it must play in our on-going political experience. That part is in the marketing concept which believes that our electoral process must be conducted in such a way that its outcomes are satisfactory to all and sundry. This is the crux and theme of this thesis. In pursuit of this theme, an analysis of the marketing strategies employed by the dominant political parties in 2003 general elections was considered worthwhile. The idea was to determine the extent to which marketing thoughts have pervaded the heart and soul of political parties in Nigeria. This helps to classify the characteristics of the Nigerian political market with a view to creating appropriate models for political marketing practice in Nigeria.

II.   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Element of Marketing in Electoral Politics.

Essentially, politics is about power; but the struggle for power results in conflict and competition. Therefore, under girding political practice is the struggle for power which creates disagreement and conflict. Nevertheless, the effects of politics which are conflict and disagreement are never permanent, and must be managed for the improvement of society to be achieved.

From another dimension, politics is about policy. Extending this view, Bruce Miller in Nzimiro (1992) states that 'policy is a matter of either the desire for change or the desire to protect something against change. This also leads to conflict.

According to Nzimiro (1992), politics in modern society is expressed through political parties which are created to achieve the goals of society. This is why political parties are organized around specific ideas often called 'ideologies'. Originally, they were formed from local communities and the spread of their influence evolve from the establishment of the electoral system.

The history of human civilization shows clearly that class conflict is an inherent characteristic of human societies. Whereas in the past, this conflict derived from disproportionate ownership of land capital, today it is basically expressed in the control of state apparatus and media.

What is more? Each class saw marketing as a weapon to be employed in the ideological war of politics. The result is that political parties have now become the platforms for rearing leaders who are keenly interested in the contest for power through the electoral system.

Politics now becomes the struggle to control the power base, as the state establishes its machinery for controlling the populace. The control of the populace is not always obvious for human nature abhors absolute dependence. Thus, political control is often disguised when the winning group controls political power, its constituent members, and

operatives become the ultimate beneficiaries. Today, the electoral process has become the expression of the democratic form of struggle within a given class system.

A participant in this power struggle who is aptly called 'a politician' and whose aim is to be in government has to market himself and his party's manifesto. He must be able to convince his electorate that his party's programme is more relevant to their needs than his competitors'. In addition, he must convince them that he can ably represent them and ensure that his party's programme is implemented. According to Ohiwerei (2002), the political party can be likened to a company, the party ideology to a company's mission statement; the party manifesto to a company's marketing strategy/plans, and the party candidate to a brand. The logical conclusion following from this thought process is that a political party, if it is to be effective and successful, should operate like a business or a company. Given this analogy, there is no gainsaying the relevance of marketing in politics.

The success of any company depends on the success of its brands or services. Similarly, the success of a political party in an election depends on the success of its candidates. It is imperative therefore for the politician to have a close look at what makes a brand successful.

In brand marketing, the key to success is a thorough understanding of the market, the consumer and the competition, by the help of the market research. The knowledge thus acquired helps in having a clear vision of the role the brand will play in the market. That role must meet a particular need better than competing brands. In other words, the adoption of a marketing approach in politics promises to bring about rationality in our political processes.

III.   THE CONCEPT OF ELECTION AND ELECTORAL PROCESS

In the current edition of the international Encyclopedia of social science Vol. 5, election is defined as 'one procedure of aggregating preferences of a particular kind.' The two features of this definition are procedure and preferences. By procedure, the concept is used to describe a special way of doing something. Preference connotes choice between alternatives.

In the light of the above definition, Ibodje S.W. and Dode, R. (2007) described election as a procedure that allows members of an organization or community to choose representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. For Gwinn and Norton (1992), election is the formal process of selecting a person for public office or accepting or registering a political proposition by voting. They state further that an election is one of the means by which a society may organize itself and make specified formal decisions, adding that where voting is free, it acts simultaneously as a system for making certain decisions regarding the power relations in a society, and as a method for seeking political obedience with a minimum of sacrifice of the individual's freedom. The essence of a democratic election is freedom of choice.

For Eya (2003), election is seen as the selection of a person or persons for office as by ballot and making choice as

between alternatives. Eya defines Electoral process as the method adopted in the selection of persons for political offices. He further sees electoral frauds or malpractices as improper, illegal, deceitful or immoral behaviours and conducts which vitiate free and fair electoral processes. This definition will be adopted in this paper.

A fair electoral process, according to him, must have some basic structures, which include; statutory provisions establishing the electoral bodies, Delineation of wards/constituencies, Registration of political parties, Registration of voters, Recruitment and training of ad-hoc staff, Procurement of electoral material, logistic, screening of candidates, provision of polling agents, monitoring agents, actual voting, accreditation of voters, counting votes and providing avenues for settlement of disputed results.

Onyeka (2002) elucidates what characterizes a proper electoral process. For him, the basic objective of election is to select the official decision makers who are supposed to represent citizens-interest. He posits that an electoral process reinforces the concept of self-rule, celebrates it and legitimizes governmental power. Elections, according to Onyeka, extend and enhance the amount of popular participation in the political system adding electoral history started with restrictive voting based on property ownership and tax payment. The basic constituents of the electoral process according to Onyeka, include; political parties, political opinions, pressure groups and mass media. They all converge in the electoral process to determine who the leaders would be and ensure that the elected officials will represent their constituencies effectively.

Similarly, the 1987 Political Bureau Report gave a lucid clarification and interpretation of elections and electoral processes. It states that four basic conditions are necessary for the holding and conduct of free and fair elections. These include;

    a. An honest competent, non-partisan administration to run elections
    b. Enabling rules and regulations – Electoral laws;
    c. A developed system of political parties
    d. An independent judiciary to interpret electoral laws.

The Report underscores the importance of free and fair elections as a prerequisite and precursor for Peace, Stability and Progress in the polity. From the gamut of literature reviewed on the concepts of "democracy" and "election", Nigeria's democratic and electoral processes have always accommodated, provided and projected the basic principles, tenets and features of democracy and elections, yet the incidence of electoral frauds and malpractices have continued to emerge through the electioneering years.

For our purpose, election is defined as a form of procedure recognized by rules of an organization whereby all or some of the members of the organization choose a small number of persons or one person to hold office of authority. Election is said to be free and fair where it is conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. Furthermore, general election is the process in which all political parties contest for elective

posts. . Ibodje S.W. and Dode, R. (2007) have itemized the functions of election as follows:

- Provides a means of selecting office holders.
- Provides for popular control, ensuring that those who govern are, within the constraints of the choices offered to the voters.
- Guarantees that citizen's support will be given to the government.
- Ensures that government is responsible since the representatives are answerable to the electorate.
- Provides a basis for peaceful change of government.
- Provides a channel of communication between governors and governed.

However, the electoral process suffers diminutive conceptualization in political discourse, such that it is taken to be equivalent to election or electoral system. But the concept, to wit, reaches beyond the method of choosing public office holders; or the method of translation of votes into seats or decision as to who has won an election. Perhaps, the most beneficial way to comprehend the electoral process is to explore a descriptive conceptualization, which exposes the distinctive features of the process. This is necessary in order to make the idea of electoral process clear and inclusive.

According to Nwabueze (1993), the electoral process embraces within its ambit all the institutional procedures, arrangement and actions involved in elections. Specifying, he said; It includes the suffrage, the registration of voters, delimitations of constituencies, the right to contest elections, electoral competition between rival political parties, body charged with the conduct and supervision of election, the method of selection of candidates within the political parties, nomination of candidates, method of voting, the actual conduct of elections, the determination of results, trials and determination of election disputes, electoral malpractices and their consequences.

Furthermore, the electoral process includes election observation and verification activities carried out by local and international bodies or both. It also includes the establishment of institutions and structures that will mobilize the populace towards involvement in the electoral process, and provides the rules and regulations that govern the process. Indeed, the electoral process is an all-encompassing process, which involves many issues and operations. The issues and operations are elastic depending on the type of political system and the level of maturity of the democratic process.

The electoral process can be divided into two parts, the Constitutional and non-constitutional. The constitutional aspect has issues that are prescribed in the constitution such as the body responsible for the electoral process and the independence of such a body. The non-constitutional aspect such as, voters' register, procedure at election, electoral offences etc., are issues that are more appropriately covered by Acts of National Assembly – i.e., the Electoral Law. The dynamics of the electoral process require such matters as registration of voters, method of voting – whether by secret

or open ballot or by Option A4, period and time table of elections etc. to be non-constitutional in order to make allowance for easy and expeditious change in the system when necessary (Nwabueze, 1993). Therefore, the electoral process is a defining and regulating process in the democratic contest.

It is imperative to add here that the electoral system is an institutionalized procedure for the choosing of office holders by some or all of the recognized methods of an organization (op. cit). There are two types of electoral system: the plurality system and the proportional system.

Under the plurality system of first part the post, the person with the simple majority of votes wins. Under the proportional system, votes are allocated proportionally to candidates according to percentage scores of political parties.

IV. POLITICAL PARTIES

According to Ibodje S.W. and Dode, R. (2007) a political party is an organized group with a clearly defined policy whose main aim is to win or retain political power. A party tries to win political power if it is the opposition, but if the party is in power, it tries to retain such powers.Ideally, political parties are manifestations of differences in the social structure. A political party is therefore expected to represent a major interest group in any society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK(efficiency Theory, Marketing mix management theory,Game theory.)

V. EFFICIENCY THEORY

Efficiency theory has been instrumental in establishing what constitutes performance in an organization (Drucker, 1978). Johnie (1988) points out that performance achieved by managers is actually made up of two important dimensions, namely: effectiveness and efficiency.

Effectiveness is the ability to choose appropriate goals and achieve them. To put it perspective, Drucker points out that effectiveness is essentially doing (i.e. accomplishing) the right things.

Efficiency, on the other hand, according to Drucker, is the ability to make the best use of available resources in the process of achieving organizational goals. Drucker calls this "doing the right thing".

In essence, political parties as an organization needs to exhibit both effectiveness (doing things right) in order to achieve a high level of performance.

Hunt (1994) indicates that productivity is the goal of a political party, and he calls productivity a performance measure which includes effectiveness and efficiency. Robbins (2001) maintains that productivity implies a concern for both effectiveness and efficiency. He further argues that effectiveness means achievement of goals, while efficiency is the ratio of effective output to the required to achieve it.

A political party, for example, is effective when it wins at the polls but it is efficient if it does so at a low cost. In other words, a political party is effective when it attains its votes or vote-share goals, but its productivity also depends on achieving those goals efficiently. Popular measures of political party efficiency include vote-share, size of membership, party growth rate, winning spread, minimal intra party conflict, minimal defections out of the party, (Barack, 1995).

VI. MARKETING MIX MANAGEMENT THEORY

There are essentially two competing paradigms in marketing that situate political marketing practice. These are Marketing Mix Management (MMM) paradigm and Relationship Marketing (RM) paradigm. The MMM paradigm is considered by many experts to be the theory of marketing that has dominated marketing thought, research and practices since it was introduced around 1960 (McCarthy, 1960). The theory rests on the notion of four Ps i.e. product, place, price and promotion; and largely obscured earlier models such as the organic functionalist (Alderson, 1950), systems-oriented (Fisk, 1967) and parameter theory approaches (Rasmussen, 1955). Some definition of marketing are based on the MMM thinking (e,g. American Marketing Association, 2002; Stanton, 2003; Baker, 1999 etc.). These definitions typically see marketing as the appropriation of techniques to get goods across to a market. Marketing is thus, by this approach, managing a set of activities in order to persuade the customer to buy a product. This function is often made the exclusive preserve of certain professionals who are located in a separate department of the firm. Marketing in this paradigm is a profession.

As Johanson (2005) noted, MMM theory is often labeled transaction marketing because its main focus is on facilitating singular purchases, not the maintenance of existing customers' relationships. The marketer tries to win customers over and over again, irrespective of whether they have made purchases before or not. Most importantly this concept is found on manufactured goods type of logic. MMM paradigm, though originally developed in response to the (then) growing market of fast-moving-consumer goods in the 1950s North America, now informs most of the contemporary political marketing literature. The elements of the MMM paradigm constitutes the cornerstone of the marketing theory (Jobbes, 2001). The so-called '4ps', i.e. the marketing instruments of product, price, place, and promotion, as well as the 'marketing concept constitutes the cornerstones of marketing theory (Jobbes, 2001; Kotler, 2003). But Milton, Booms and Bitner, 1982) have extended the 4ps to 7ps and argue that the additional 3ps of people, process and physical evidence apply mostly to the marketing of services, and since political marketing is situated in service marketing, it becomes imperative to discuss the 7ps as the instruments of political marketing.

In other words, 4ps were introduced by McCarthy (1960) in its current form, i.e. for tangible products and transactional exchanges while the 7ups relate to intangible products. Henneberg (2003) advised that the development of methodological foundation of political marketing theory should be based on these instruments and at the same time integrate and adopt new conceptual development as in marketing theory to the existing body of knowledge in political marketing. Henneberg (2002) classified these

instruments as 'generic' functions, which serve as requirements for successful political marketing management. They affect exchange relationships of political actors (e.g. political party, electorate, etc) in the complex network of political relationships.

Many of the seminal contributions of the fifteen years are devoted to a discussion of the 4ps of political marketing (Farrell and Lahortmann, 1987; Reid, 1988; Niffenegger, 1989; Wortmann, 1989; Harrop, 1990; O'Shanghnessy, 1990; Newman, 1994; Scammell, 1995; Egan, 1999; Scammell, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 2001; O'Cass, 2001; Henneberg, 2002; Wring, 2002a; Lloyd, 2003.)

Besides being relevant to operational aspects of the use of marketing instruments, such discussions also touch upon the essence of what political marketing is. For example, discussions of the notion of 'product' in a political exchange clearly relate to more fundamental questions about the 'political market' and the underlying interactions and value exchanges.

VII.   GAME THEORY

Another theoretical underpinning of this work is the game theory. This means that political marketing borrows some of the techniques of the game theory.

Historically, the game theory was propounded in the 1920s by Emil Borel, and was further developed by John Von Neumann to explain the behavior of the economic man or the rational actor. John Von Neumann was also credited with further development of infinitesimal calculus which deals with change and its effect under certain conditions.

The game theory, as Jack Piano and Robert Riggs (1973) see it, deals "with rational decision strategies in situation of conflict and competition, when each participant or player seeks to maximize gains and minimize losses". The emphasis of the theory was the application of mathematical models to political studies, and it has its origin in those parlour games, like chess, chicken poker or bridge characterized by "element of conflict, decision making and cooperation". These are games between two or more players, where the decision of each player "are contingent upon the decision of others" (Ajayi, 2006).

The central point here is the nature of inter-dependence of whatever decisions are made by the different players participating in the game. This is because it is not possible for any one player to make a choice without giving considerations to the choices made by the other players. Thus the task before each player is to ensure that decisions are based on expectations of what actions the other players would take at any given time. The import of this is that the game entails elements of consistency and rationality among actors because such actors have partial control over the strategic factors affecting their environment. According to Ajayi (2006), the use of games theory in political studies is based on the following assumptions:

1. That the game is usually well defined.
2. That the game has an explicit set of rules.
3. That the information available to the players is specified at every point.

4. That the scoring system is complete (Verma, 1975). Central to the theory are two vital components, namely; the players and the strategies or tactics. The players, also known as the decision makers, could be individuals or institutions are assumed to be rational with well defined objectives and are endowed with resources to checkmate competing forces. To guide the deployment of these resources are rules.

The game theory further argues that "each player has a scale of utilities according to which he prefers some outcomes, so long as he plays the game at all". The player also has a range of options among different moves he can make, and there are particular expectations of such moves. Even though their knowledge of outcome of their actions are uncertain, the theory further argues that if players must play well, they must know what they know and what they do not know, and they must know what they can and what they cannot do.(Duetsch, 1978). But the assumption of the theory that a player can strategize in a manner that takes care of all possible contingences has little application to real life situations.

The outcome of whatever strategy is adopted gives rise to the different forms of game theory we know. Examples include:

a.   The zero – sum game.
b.   The non zero – sum game.
c.   The zero – sum n – persons game.
d.   The non zero – sum n – person games.

In the zero – sum game we have only two players and the gains of one always equal to the loss of the other. In (b) and (c), two or more persons are involved, and the players may share the division of the award, and the gain of one need not be equal to the loss of the other. In (d) where there are three or more players, it is possible for two or more players to cooperate against the others by pooling resources and making collective decisions during the play. This is the idea behind the coalition and realignment in politics or 'ganging up' on the front runner in order to stop his chances of winning (Verma, 1975).

No matter its inadequacies, game theory has found relevance in analyzing major issues of national and international politics. It is used, for instance, as analytical tool of strategic studies to explain the phenomenon of wars, diplomacy and bargaining. It has also been found useful in explaining the dynamics of national politics, especially issues of electoral politics, voters behavior, political alliance and elite conspiracy .

VIII.   DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES.

Out of 400 copies of the questionnaire administered to the four dominant parties to confirm whether marketing strategies applied to their activities and if they were capable of improving significantly the level of electorate support, a total of 311 copies were returned, of which 298 were complete and usable resulting in a net response rate of 74.5%. This is an appreciably high response rate, considering that the average top executive survey response rates are in the range of 15% and 20%(Deng and Dart,1994 Felton 1959), and that collecting data for such a country - wide study with a large population is difficult due to the

numerous obstacles encountered(Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Mavondo, 2005; Miles and Snow, 1978)
In the second phase of the research, data were collected from the residents of the states where the parties being studied controlled, out of the 400 copies of questionnaire administered, 315 were returned. After editing, only 300 were found usable and suitable for our purpose. This also amounted to 75% response rate. For both phases of the research, data analyses were performed in two stages: (a) Manual computation and tabulation of data; and
(b) Analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed by computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. Demographic characteristics of the total sample in phase one of the study are presented in table 4.1. In all the parties more than half of the participants were male with the share of male respondents being highest (60.4%). The party subsamples are similar with respect to the age of the average level of education, marital status, position in the party. Our main motivation for limiting the survey to certain states within a geopolitical zone was only the concentration of the membership of the parties being studied in these areas.

TABLE 4.1 Sample Characteristics of Parties (Members)

	PDP	ANPP	AD	APGA	TOTAL
Number of target respondents*	200	120	40	40	400
Share of actual respondents	150	80	35	33	298
Share of response rate (%)	75	66.7	87.5	82.5	74.5
Share of male (in %)	60.4	54.0	50.5	50.7	53.9
Share of female (in %)	39.6	46.0	49.5	49.3	46.1
Average age in years(standard deviation in bracket)	(17.68)	(16.09)	(14.12)	(12.56)	(15.44)
Respondents who completed university education (in %)	26.4	14.5	36.5	17.3	24.4
Share of respondents who are married (in %)	62.7	55.0	43.5	37.6	48.6
Share of respondents who hold office in the party and having secondary education and above.	80.5	65.5	75.5	72.5	73.5

Source: Field Survey of Dominant Parties: 2003 Elections, 2007.
Note:* Distribution according to proportion of Dominance.

TABLE 4.2 Sample Characteristics of Electorate

	PDP	ANPP	AD	APGA	TOTAL
Target respondents	200	120	40	40	400
Actual respondents	155	85	31	29	300
Response Rate (%)	75.5	70.8	71.5	72.5	75
Share of female (in %)	39.6	46.0	49.5	49.3	46.1
Share of male (in %)	60.4	54.0	55.5	50.7	53.9
Average age in years (standard deviation in bracket)	40.73 (17.68)	38.20 (16.09)	38.29 (14.12)	39.08 (12.56)	38.95 (15.44)
Share of respondents who have secondary education and above (in %)	66.4	64.5	76.5	77.3	71.3
Share of respondents who are employed or self employed (in %)	67.6	53.5	55.0	62.7	60.0
Share of respondents who are married	53.4	57.0	53.6	57.4	55.1

Source: Field survey, 2007
Table 4.15   Mean Scores of Marketing Strategies of the Dominant Parties

.S/N	RESPONSES	FP	LP	CP	NP	TOTAL
1	Product related strategies	5.1	6.3	5.3	3.5	**20.2**
2	Promotion related strategies	4.8	6.3	5.0	4.1	**20.2**
3	Distribution related strategies	4.9	6.1	5.8	4.8	**21.6**
4	Price related strategies	4.8	6.1	5.1	4.3	**20.3**
5	People related strategies	4.4	6.0	4.5	4.3	**19.2**
6	Process related strategies	5.0	5.9	5.3	3.8	**20**
7	Physical evidence strategies	4.3	5.7	4.1	3.5	**17.6**
8	Party oriented strategies	4.7	5.6	4.9	4.7	**19.6**
9	Sales oriented strategies	5.0	5.6	5.5	5.2	**21.3**

10	Market oriented strategies	4.3	5.7	4.3	4.2	**18.5**
	TOTAL	**47.3**	**59.3**	**49.8**	**42.4**	

All factors measured on 7-points scale.

KEY: LP= Leader Party – PDP; CP=Challenger Party – ANPP;

FP=Follower Party – AD; NP= Nicher Party – APGA.

IX. INTERPRETATION OF RESULT

On a general note, the parties employed more of distribution related strategies (x=21.6) and sales oriented strategies (x=21.3). Next to these two are price related strategies (20.3), product related strategies (x=20.2) and promotion related strategies (x=20.3). These are followed by process oriented strategies (x=20.0), party oriented strategies (x=19.6), people oriented strategies (x=19.2), market oriented strategies (x=18.5), physical evidence (x=17.6).

Conversely, the Leader party has the best mix of all the ten strategies, and this is evidenced by an overall mean score of 59.3. This is followed by the Challenger party (x=49.8), Follower party (x=47.3), and Nicher party (x=42.4).

As table 4.15 shows all the marketing strategies employed by the Nigerian dominant political parties have been identified as falling under two major categories i.e. marketing mix strategies and political marketing orientation strategies. The marketing mix strategies include product, promotion, place (distribution), price, people, process, and physical evidence.

The political marketing orientation strategies include product-oriented strategies, sales-oriented strategies, and market-oriented strategies. The parties' mean scores on each of the strategies have been shown on table 4.15 and can be interpreted as follows

On Product Related Strategies
Lx=6.3> Cx=5.3> Fx=5.1> Nx=3.5. This means that Leader party employs more product oriented strategies than other parties.

On Promotion Oriented Strategies
Lx=6.3> Cx=5.0> Fx=4.8 > Nx=4.1. The Leader party applies promotion-oriented strategies more than other parties.

On Distribution Related Strategies
Lx=6.1 > Cx=5.8 > Fx=4.9 > Nx=4.8. The Leader party employs more of the distribution oriented strategies than other parties.

On Price Related Strategies
Lx=6.1 > Cx=5.1 > Fx=4.8 > Nx=4.3. The Leader party uses price related strategies more than other parties.

On People Related Strategies
Lx=6.0 > Cx=4.5 > Fx=4.8 > Nx=4.3. The Leader party adopts people-oriented strategies more than other parties.

On Process Related Strategies
Lx=5.9 > Cx=5.3 > Fx=5.0 > Nx=3.8. The Leader party is ahead of other parties in the application of process related strategies.

on physical evidence strategies

x=5.7 > Fx=4.3 > Cx=4.1 > Nx=3.5. The Leader party is leading other parties in the application of physical evidence strategies. It is followed by Follower party, Challenger party and lastly Nicher party.

On Party Oriented Strategies
Lx=5.6 > Cx=4.9 > Fx=4.7 = Nx=4.7. This means that the Leader party is leading other parties in the enforcement of party position upon the electorate.

On Sales Oriented Strategies
Lx = 5.6 > Cx = 5.5 > Nx = 5.2 > Fx = 5.0. The Leader party employs more sales-oriented strategies than other parties. However, it is closely followed by Challenger party in this respect.

On Market-Oriented Strategies
Lx = 5.7 > Cx = 4.3 = Fx = 4.3 > Nx = 4.2. This shows that the Leader party is ahead of other parties in the application of market-oriented strategies.
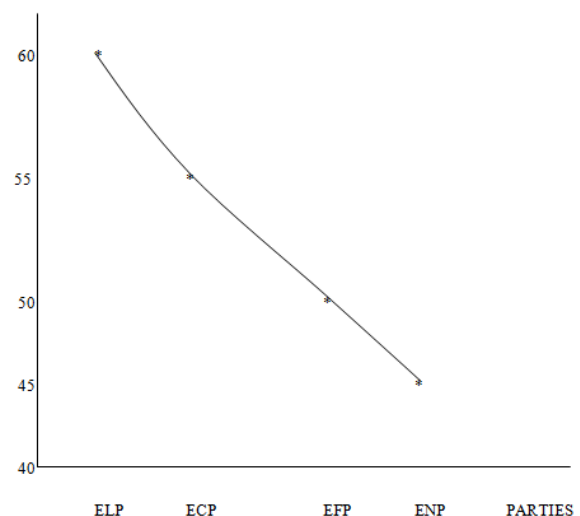
Mean Score

Figure 10: Perking order of the parties' marketing strategies.
TABLE 4.18: Descriptive & ANOVA Statistical Analysis of the Marketing Strategies of the Parties.

	F	L	C	N	F-Value Cal.	F- Tab.	Decision	Relative Size
Variable 1 Product Strategies	5.13 (1.23)	6.29 (0.76)	5.25 (0.46)	3.5 (1.22)	9.08	0.000	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 2 Promotion Strategies	4.75 (0.89)	6.29 (0.76)	5.0 (1.85)	4.12 (0.41)	3.97	0.010	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 3 Place Strategies	4.86 (1.13)	6.14 (0.69)	5.75 (0.71)	4.67 (1.03)	4.16	0.016	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 4 Price Strategies	4.75 (1.1.7)	6.14 (0.38)	5.13 (1.35)	4.33 (1.22)	3.31	0.037	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 5 People Strategies	4.38 (1.30)	6.0 (0.58)	4.50 (0.20)	4.33 (1.03)	3.87	0.021	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 6 Process Strategies	5.00 (1.51)	5.86 (0.38)	5.25 (0.89)	3.83 (0.75)	4.56	0.011	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 7 Physical Evidence	4.25 (1.39)	5.71 (0.95)	4.13 (1.13)	3.50 (1.38)	3.96	0.019	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 8 Party Oriented	4.38 (1.77)	5.57 (1.81)	4.88 (0.99)	4.67 (1.63)	0.526	0.762	Accept Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 9 Sales Oriented	5.00 (1.07)	5.57 (0.98)	5.50 (1.20)	5.17 (0.98)	0.484	0.696	Accept Ho	L>C>F>N
Variable 10 Market-Oriented	4.25 (1.04)	5.71 (0.95)	4.25 (1.04)	4.17 (0.41)	4.61	0.001	Reject Ho	L>C>F>N

The figure in parenthesis represents the standard deviation and level of significance: x=0.05.
Decision Rule: Reject Ho if F-Calculated > F-tabulated. Otherwise acce

X. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Based on the above view point, several typologies have been developed to classify and describe parties' political marketing behaviours into a few types. A political marketing orientation is commonly defined as how a party uses strategy to adopt and/or change aspects of its environment for a more favourable alignment. In literature, it is variously referred to as political marketing pattern, ideological thrust, predisposition, or choice.

Arguably one of the most well received approaches to conceptualizing and operationalizing marketing strategy implementation is the typology of Kotler (2002). It is recognized in the literature as the competitive marketing structure and it comprises the market leader, market challenger, market follower, and market nicher.

In line with this arrangement, it stands to reason that PDP (the ruling party) is the market leader; ANPP is the challenger, while AD and APGA could stand as market follower and market nicher respectively. The parties are asymmetrical in that the ruling party held a majority at the time immediately after the general elections under reference. It attempted to retain or increase its support by presenting the image of a favourable political manager, proposing policies, advertising and defending its existing programmes and so on. The opposition (i.e. challenger and the Follower) attempted to reduce the ruling party's support by doing such things as criticizing the activities of the ruling party and arguing that they have a better set of policies than those currently in place. This asymmetry is shown in the data presented in the analysis that follows.

However, the competition among political parties can be broken into two, somewhat different, periods. These periods will be thought of as one for this study rather than as periods in a two period strategy.

The first period is the time between elections and the activities of the parties involved the marketing strategies directed at programme development and building the image as well as reputation of the party. Marketing strategy is defined in a broad sense to include things like appearances at public functions and talk shows, advertising, consultation with groups, development of position papers, selling policies to various constituencies, attending launches, listening to constituents, digesting and criticizing the ruling party actions. We might also consider the timing of new policy initiatives and legislation as reflecting a development of marketing strategy. The resources used are mostly time, effort, the goodwill of volunteers and party members as well as party funds. Marketing strategy is also costly in non-monetary terms in the sense that there are always opportunities lost in terms of time and resources that party activists or politicians could spend on other activities, working in their constituency, or simply as leisure or in seeking other forms of private income. It may also use resources that could either be used elsewhere or saved for the election campaign itself. These include the time and goodwill of volunteers and staff.

The second is the period during an election campaign in which the remaining marketing strategies are complemented. At this point, effort (e.g. logistics, rallies etc.) and most advertising funds are spent. This is a winner takes all strategy, rather than a strategy of positioning. Although this campaign period has its own dynamics, it is

probably best thought of as a complete commitment of all marketing strategies over a short time interval.

In other words, the parties follow a number of strategies in a marketing competition depending on such things as information available and ability to appropriately redeploy strategies. This means that appropriate functional strategies contribute to the effectiveness of political marketing. In particular, it has been established that the match between politics and marketing strategy contributes immensely to the understanding of political marketing. The reason is not far fetched. The primary purpose of marketing is to create long term and mutually beneficial exchange relationship between an organization and its publics (i.e. individuals and organizations with which it interact). The manner in which parties undertake marketing, however, has continued to evolve. Increasingly, political marketers are involved in charting the direction of the party and contributing to strategic decisions that enable the party to create and sustain competitive advantage. Political marketers are therefore no longer mere implementers of decisions in the area of campaign but also active initiators and makers of party manifestos and programmes.

Political marketing strategy is a plan for selecting, analyzing a target market (constituency) and then developing and maintaining a marketing mix (product, price, promotion, place, people, process, physical evidence) that will satisfy the market.

A target market (constituency) is a group of voters at whom the party directs its marketing strategies. Marketing mix is a combination of seven elements that a party uses to attract voter responses. Thus, the marketing mix elements form the components of marketing strategy because once a party selects a target market (voter group) it must develop a set of marketing mix that satisfies or matches the needs of its target markets. This sets the stage for political marketing.

The underlying premise of this research is that political marketing is essentially an iterative process with the semblance of strategic marketing. This is because as a party's external environment changes, market opportunities and threats emerge and disappear, and may re-emerge in a modified form at a later stage. In essence, the formulation of a marketing strategy is concerned with matching the capabilities of a political party with the demands of its external environment (i.e. political market place)

XI.   CONCLUSION

Theoretical Findings
The Role Of Marketing Strategies
Generally, political organizations use marketing strategies in such activities as image building, issue-tracking, the targeting of voters, timing of elections and aiding in policy formulations (Kavanagh, 1995, Smith and Hirst, 2001). In other words, marketing strategies are required in electoral competition among rival political parties. Marketing strategies are also needed as short term tactical device (information-gathering in the run-up to elections) and a long-term or permanent managerial activity to ensure sustained governance (Nimmo, 1999; Smith & Hirst, 2001).

It stands to reason that political parties wishing to gain long-term competitive advantage must strive to design marketing strategies that will achieve the satisfaction of relevant target audience (voters, party members, party funders, etc.)

Marketing strategies occur in three phases of the electoral process. These are pre-election period which embraces marketing planning and campaign activities. It also involves strategy formulation and gradual implementation. The second is the phase of election. In this phase, legal requirements may not permit overt activities. Yet marketing activities (such as personal selling, telemarketing, logistical issues) continue. In the third phase, the post-election analysis begins. Winners begin to deliver on their electoral promises.

The political parties generally employ the following aspects of marketing strategies :

Product Strategies: A political party's product may include its candidates, leadership or executives, elected or appointed members in government positions, staff, party constitution, party conferences and policies, among others (Lees-Marshment, 2001a).

Marketing concepts, principles, frameworks and strategies in the area of product (design, launch etc.) have been substantially adapted in order to be of relevance in electoral politics.

Promotion Strategies: political products are promoted via all channels consumed by the target audience. These channels have been enumerated by Savwate (1990) as advertising (e.g. print advertisement, audio-visual advertisements, etc); publicity (e.g. write ups, reporting in print and audio-visual media), public relations, lobbying etc); personal selling (door-to-door visits, group meetings, public rallies, telephone calls etc); sales promotion (e.g. exhibitions, leaflets and stickers, etc).

Distribution Strategies: The distribution strategy is concerned with the conditions regarding the availability of exchange offer (political product) to the exchange partner. There are two aspects involved: campaign delivery and offering delivery.

The campaign delivery aspect provides the primary exchange partner (the electorate) an access to all relevant information about political product. The offering delivery aspect refers to the fulfilment of political promises (Harrop, 1990; Palmer, 2002).

Pricing Strategies: In political marketing, 'price' tends to be redefined as an element of 'costs' or 'sacrifices' (Henneberg, 2003). Inhibitions (e.g. caused by opportunity cost considerations) can prevent voter decision process as well as electoral act itself. Therefore, political marketers try to reduce the necessary (monetary and non-monetary) efforts for voters to process political information, form opinion, evaluate alternatives, and participate in politics in the wider sense.

The People Strategies: The 'people' dimension of political marketing instruments can be viewed from two perspectives:
Parallel – campaign team
Internal – cohesion team
The parallel – campaign team refers to organisations such as single issue groups (like NLC, NBA, Afenifere, NPSA, etc)

that perceive an overlap of their agenda with that of the party.

The internal – cohesion team is concerned with the relationship with party members and party activities as well as all the 'touch point' agents of the party (e.g. front-benchers, spokes people, etc.)

The Process Strategies: The political marketers can choose among different processes to deliver their 'product' to the electorate: such process could be democratic or undemocratic, friendly or unfriendly, encouraging or threatening, etc. For instance, a party may require, as a pre-condition for its ticket that a candidate should show evidence of his community's support.

Physical Evidence Strategies: In this case, the political marketer develops a picture of its intended voter value proposition for instance PDP uses umbrella as its logo. Besides, the reputation of the political entity (political party or candidate) serves as a physical evidence that service will be delivered as promised. Political parties in advanced democracies (like U.S.A, Germany, United Kingdom, etc) are market-oriented in their politicking while nascent democracies product and sales-oriented. Nigeria falls under this category.

MODEL3: The Political Marketing Process

swing needed to gain a seat. If the persuadable voters are less than the required swing in that constituency then the constituency should not attract the attention and resources of the party in question.

Constituency Research: This is vital for a full understanding of the current position of the major parties within a constituency since historical voting data does not give any idea of recent changes in the partisan nature of the constituency.

Canvass Records: Canvassing should be undertaken in order to determine the supporters of the particular parties (or even floating voters, so that the constituency organisations can tailor specific strategies to the relevant sections of the electorate.

The combination of constituency research, census statistics, canvass records and historical data allows the political strategists to determine the principal competition and the relevant voting groups to be targeted.

STAGE 2: Competition Determination and Voting Group Identification

This stage involves determining the main competition and segmenting the various voter groups as well as incorporating all the recent data from canvassing and constituency research.
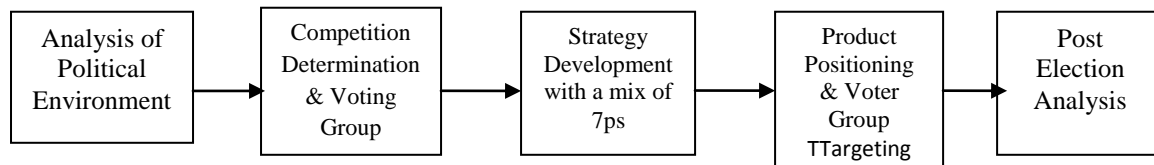

Figure 18.0: The Political Marketing Process
Source: Designed by the Researcher (2009)

There are five stages in the political marketing process:

STAGE 1: Analysis of political Environment: This is concerned with the analysis of the political environment. This would include information gathering about the political tradition (e.g. zoning arrangement) and constituency identification.

Also in this stage, constituencies that are most likely to change their allegiance are identified since such constituencies are particularly important to all the various parties ,and resources can be targeted more effectively at these constituencies, thereby saving political parties both money and time (Baines, 1996).

Other issues in this stage include:

Historical Data: These are reviewed to show the party's vote- share and major source of competition at the previous election (i.e. if it is an existing party).

Census Statistic: This shows the demographic structure of the constituency. It reveals changes in the constituency's demographic and partisan profile. With this revelation appropriate targeting of relevant voting groups can take place.

Constituency Ranking: Knowing where each constituency stands in the electoral federation helps to determine the

STAGE 3: Strategy Development
This concerns a decision on how the seven variables of marketing will be combined to gain effect. These variables are commonly referred to as 7p's or components of marketing strategy. They are products, promotion, price, place, people, process, and physical evidence. They have been briefly explained as part of theoretical underpinning of this paper.

STAGE 4: Product Positioning and Voter Group Targeting
Product positioning gives voters reasons to favour a particular party or candidate. This reason derives from the policies, issues and the reasoned argument of the political marketer.

Voter group targeting can be conducted through door-to-door canvassing, telephone, direct mail and local meetings, etc.

STAGE 5: Post-Election Analysis
The essence of good marketing in politics is to learn from previous successes and failures, and to build these into future planning and strategy. This stage attempts to determine what lessons can be learned from previous stages.

XII. POLICY IMPLICATION

On the Marketing Strategies of the Parties

Marketing strategy is concerned with setting direction and matching internal resources and skills with a changing political environment in a way that enhances the performance of the parties over time. This fit-view of strategy was espoused by Peter Drucker and other organizational theorists in the 1980s. Other contemporary researchers have seen strategy as a process by which organizational resources and competences are leveraged to yield new opportunities and provide competitive advantage. Thus the association of marketing strategy with politics remains a significant shift in marketing management since the 1990s.

A panoramic view of the literature shows that politics will lose its salt and glamour without the inputs which only marketing can provide, especially in a democratic environment. Thus marketing concerns and viewpoints have become pivotal in the management of political affairs.

In today's world, the realities of democracy are making the shift toward political marketing mandatory for all political parties and nation-states. The move is no longer a choice because in the battle for vote-share, marketing strategy is the most effective weapon parties can employ to leverage vote shares.

It has been observed that marketing strategies in a party promote innovativeness which contributes to the creation of positional advantage which in turn leads to superior electoral performance. The implication is that marketing strategy reflects a systematic effort by a political party to acquire information about its vote market and to integrate such information into political marketing process.

In the light of the foregoing theoretical background and the results of this research, it is strongly recommended that Nigerian political parties have to be totally market-oriented. A market-oriented party seeks to understand electorate's expressed and latent needs and goes ahead to develop superior solutions to meet those needs in its programmes. In other words, the goal of market-oriented party is to provide superior value for electorate. The result is that voter satisfaction leads to party re-election

Research has also shown that when a party is market-oriented and hence able to meet voters' needs more accurately and effectively than competitors; and in a manner which competitors find difficult to emulate, it will be able to achieve competitive advantage. Market-orientation thus represents both an additional strategic dimension and an important basis for building a sustainable competitive advantage.

When a party is market-oriented, it is able to look beyond current voters' needs to develop future programmes that will tap latent needs which serve to strengthen a party's position in the vote market over time. Market-orientation is also crucial in guiding a party's process of selecting its flag bearers who are ultimately used to create voter value, quick and extensive market penetration with decreased campaign and electioneering costs. There is always a strong positive relationship between market orientation and party's overall performance, and Nigerian parties can benefit from it. Hence, political campaigns in elections should focus on issues of social, economic and political relevance to replace the usual dramatization of ideological bankruptcy across the political landscape by the political parties.

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