CONTENTS

i

NIGERIAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW
VOL. 5 No. 1

CONTENTS

NIGERIAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

THE DYNAMICS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IN NIGERIAN PARTY POLITICS.

BY

WORLU ROWLAND E.
Dept. of Business Studies
Covenant University, Pmb 1023,
Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria.
Email: Worlurek@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The institutional context of political marketing in Nigeria is essentially different from the situation in the United States and other European countries. As a result observers of Nigerian democratic system have argued that the outcome of recent elections in Nigeria indicate that our democracy is witnessing a decline in vitality leading to reduced civic engagement, a decreasing voter turnout during elections, and significant decline in party membership. This worrisome situation is a pointer to the fact that our political parties are yet to maximize the benefit of marketing strategies in politics. This paper confirms the inherent capabilities of marketing strategies to increase a party or candidate's share of the vote through depth interview with political strategists.

First a hypothetic deductive model was developed based on the recent development in America and British political marketing management, and now tailored to political marketing scenarios in Nigeria to make the framework more realistic. Based on the result, this paper advocates for a more painstaking adoption of marketing strategies by Nigerian political parties for the sustenance of democratic ideals in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Dynamics, Marketing strategies, Nigeria party, politics.

INTRODUCTION

Social scientists, and in particular those studying marketing, have so far not given much systematic attention to the dynamics of marketing strategies in a competition among political parties. As a result, political parties are simply thought of as full time image selling agencies. This means that politicians and political parties can be likened to firms that produce an image of themselves as their major product.

Much as the image is made up of public statements and policy promises, it has no production costs. It does, however, have selling costs in issues of time, effort and

opportunities cost. To the extent that this stylized view of political parties is interesting, it might tell us something about political behaviour generally, and in particular the dynamics of marketing strategies in this image selling process.

The overriding purpose of this paper is to determine whether the dominant parties in Nigeria adopt marketing strategies (which are embedded in the political marketing process) in electioneering situations. This is done with a focus on the 2007 general elections and by studying four dominant parties that participated in that election.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

A marketing strategy is a consistent, appropriate, and feasible set of principles through which a particular organization hopes to achieve its long-run customer and profit objectives in a particular competitive environment (Kotler 2002). Marketing strategies consist of the "overall programme of actions which the marketer, under adverse or conflict conditions, adopts in order to achieve a desired outcome or series of outcomes".

Craven and Piercy (2003) agreed with this definition but contrasted it with the components of strategic marketing which they listed as the analysis, strategy development, and implementation activities which require developing a vision about the market of interest to the organization, - Selecting target market strategies, Setting objectives, implementing, and managing the marketing programme for positioning strategies designed to meet the value requirements of the customers in each market segment. Marketing strategy seeks to deliver superior customer value by combining the customer influencing strategies of business into a co-ordinated set of market-driven actions.

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. To this end. Ajayi (2006) argues that politics connotes a process whose end or purpose is the good of society.

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 as it asserts the age-long view of politics as the authoritative allocation of value 'or who gets what, how and why?'

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 evolved 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 this 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, 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.

In a further attempt to clarify the interface of marketing with politics, Butler and Kavanagh (1977) observed that parties are like business seeking to promote their products, except that one seeks votes and the other sales. All these have been incorporated in figure 1.1 below which illustrates ideal political marketing process.

Analysis of Political Environment	Competition, Determination & Voting Group Identification	Strategy Development with a mix of 7ps	Product Positioning & Voter Group Targeting	Post Election Analysis
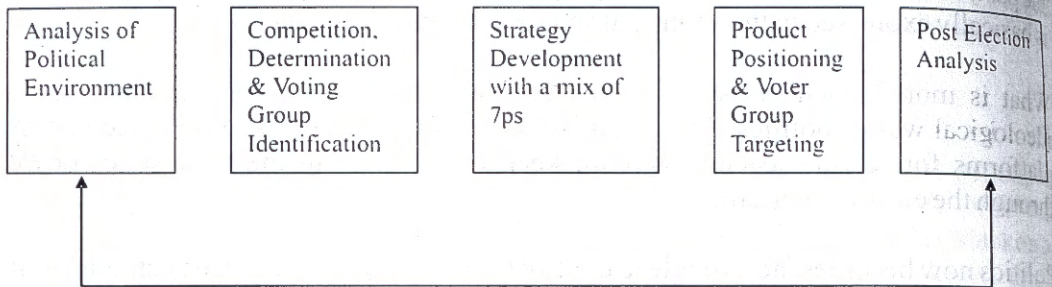
Figure 1: The Political Marketing Process

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 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.

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.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
POLITICAL MARKETING ORIENTATIONS AND STRATEGIES
Parties can use political marketing to increase their chances of achieving their goal of winning general elections. They alter aspects of their behaviour, including policy, membership, leadership and organization structure to suit the nature and demands of their market. They can do this by being product, sales or market oriented (Lees-Marshment, 2001).

A PRODUCT-ORIENTED PARTY argues for what it stands for and believes in. It assumes that voters will realise that its ideas are the right ones and therefore vote for it. his type of party refuses to change its ideas or product even if it fails to gain electoral or membership support.

A SALES-ORIENTED PARTY focuses on selling its argument to voters. It retains its predetermined product design, but recognises that desired supporters may not automatically want it. Using market intelligence to understand voters' response to its behaviour, the party employs the latest advertising and communication techniques to persuade voters that it is right. A sales- oriented party does not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers.

A MARKET-ORIENTED PARTY designs its behaviour to provide voters satisfaction. It uses market intelligence to identify voter's demands, and then designs its product to suit their needs. It does not attempt to change what people think, but to deliver what they need and want.

A market-oriented party will not simply offer voters what they want, or simply follow opinion polls because it needs to ensure that it can deliver the product on offer. If it fails to deliver, voters will become dissatisfied and the party will risk losing electoral support in the long term. It also needs to ensure that it will be accepted within the party and so needs to adjust its product carefully to take account of this. A market-oriented party therefore designs a product that will actually satisfy voters' demands; that meets their needs and wants, is supported and implemented by the internal organisation, and is deliverable in government.

COMPETITIVE MARKETING STRATEGY
Kotler (2003) noted that marketing strategy depends on a firm's size and position in the market place. He imagined that a competitive market will produce a competitive structure that also applies to political marketing.

Market Leader	Market Challenge	Market Follower	Market Nicher
40%	30%	20%	10%

Figure 2: Competitive market structure. Source: Kotler (2003).
By implication at least 40% of the vote market is in the hands of a market leader, the party with the largest vote share. Another 30% of the market is in the hands of a market challenger, a runner-up party that is actively trying to expand its share using highly aggressive tactics. Another 20% is in the hands of a market follower, another runner-up party that seeks to maintain its vote share and not rock the boat. The remaining 10% is in the hands of several small parties called market nichers which serve small market segments that they hope will not attract the interest of the larger organizations.

MARKET LEADER STRATEGIES
Almost every industry contains one firm that is acknowledged to be the market leader. The firm has the largest market share in the relevant product market. It usually leads

the other firms in price changes, new-product introductions, distribution coverage, and promotional intensity. The leader may or may not be admired or respected, but other firms will acknowledge its dominance. The leader is an orientation point for competitors (i.e. a firm to either challenge, imitate or avoid. Kotler, et al, 1999, Kotler 2003)

The life of a dominant firm is not altogether easy. It must maintain constant vigilance. Other firms keep challenging its strengths or trying to take advantage of its weaknesses. The market leader might plunge into second place, if it is not up and doing.

A dominant firm's objective is to remain number one, and according to Kotler (2003) dominant firms cannot be expected to sit idly by as smaller firm nibble away at them. What the market leader can do therefore to discipline upstart firm is two fold: from a military perspective, they can try 'brinkmanship', massive retaliation', limited warfare; 'graduated response', 'diplomacy', 'diplomacy of violence', "threat system", and so on. From a business point of view, they can practice:

1. **Innovation strategy:** This means that the dominant firm refuses to be content with the way things are and leads the industry in new-product ideas, customer services, means of distribution, and cost-cutting discoveries'. By continuously creating new customer values, the dominant firm takes the best course possible to discourage competitors.

2. Fortification strategy: Here the dominant firm keeps its prices reasonable in relation to the perceived value of its offer and competitors' offers. It produces its brands in a variety of sizes and forms so as to cover the varying preferences of the market instead of letting competitors get a foothold. It creates additional brands to fortify its hold on shelf space and dealers' effort.

3. **Confrontation strategy:** As Kotler (1999) noted, the dominant firm faces extremely aggressive challenger whose actions demand a quick and direct response. The dominant firm can wage a promotional war, engaging in massive promotional expenditures which the aggressor cannot match. It may also engage in price war.

4. **Harassment strategy:** The dominant firm might go to major suppliers and threaten to reduce its purchases if the latter supply the upstart firm. Or it might put pressure on distributors not to carry the competitor's product. Or it might hire the better executives of an aggressive firm. The dominant firm can also refrain its competitors through legal devices. It might push legislation that would be more unfavourable to the competitors than to itself.

MARKET CHALLENGER STRATEGIES
Kotler (2003) noted that firms which occupy second, third, and fourth places in an industry can be called runner-up or trailing firms. They may be quite large in their own right although smaller than the leader. In political marketing, parties take the place of these firms, and they collectively form the opposition (Lees-Marshment,

1999; Baines, 2003).

Here in Nigeria, challenger position can be ascribed to ANPP, AD, and APGA; while PDP is the leader.

The runner-up firms or in our case the opposition parties can adopt one of two postures. They can decide to attack the leaders and others in a grab for further market (vote) share (i.e. market challenger). Or they can be content to play ball and not rock the boat (market followers).

Market challengers can attempt to gain market share in three ways:

- direct Attack Strategy (also called head-on strategy) Here the challenger tries to beat the market leader through sheer doggedness and fight
- Backdoor strategy (also called end-run or blindside) in which the challenger runs around the dominant firm rather than into it.
- Guppy strategy of attacking smaller competitors rather than the market leader.

Several other strategies are available to the market challenger who is seeking an advantage vis-à-vis competition. These are price-discount strategy, cheaper goods strategy, prestige goods strategy, product proliferation strategy, product innovation strategy, manufacturing-cost-reduction strategy, intensive advertising strategy. A challenger does not only depend on one strategy element but a combination of strategies to improve its position over time.

MARKET FOLLOWER STRATEGIES

Not all runner-up firms choose to challenge the market leader. Some settle in favour of following rather than attacking the leader. Kotler (1999) cautioned that a market follower must be clear on how it is going to hold on current customers and win a fair of new ones. Each follower must work a set of target markets to which it can bring distinctive advantages location, services, financing. It must be ready to enter new markets that are opening up.

Armstrong et al (1999) warned that followership is not the same as passivity or being a carbon copy of the leader. The follower has to define its own path to growth, but decides to do this in a way that does not create intense competitive retaliation.

MARKET NICHER STRATEGIES

Nearly every industry includes a number of minor firms that operate in some parts of the market and try to avoid clashing with the majors. These smaller firms attempt to find and occupy market niches that they can serve effectively through specialization and the majors are likely to overlook or ignore. These firms are variously called market nichers, market specialists, threshold firms, or foothold firms.

An ideal market niche according to Kotler (1999) will have the following characteristics:

i.   The niche is of sufficient size and purchasing power to be profitable
ii.   The niche has growth potential
iii.   The niche has been bypassed or neglected by major competitors

iv.   The firm has superior competencies to serve the niche effectively
v.   The firm can defend its position against an attacking major because of the goodwill it has built up.

Market nichers often become specialists in some end-use, vertical level, customer size, specific customer, geographic area, product or product line, product feature or service.

MARKETING MIX 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). 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.)

*   The political parties in Nigeria use marketing mix strategies as follows:
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 (e.g. design, launch etc.), have been substantially adapted in order to be of relevance in 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' (Hennerberg, 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 (e.g. whether you vote or not I'll win, shows undemocratic process).

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.

RESEARCH METHODS

The results reported here are based on a study of Nigerian political parties actively engaged in the application of marketing strategies. Four of these parties (i.e. PDP, AC, APGA and ANPP known as dominant parties) were purposively selected to serve as a representative sample from the list of 50 political parties registered by Nigerian Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC, 2007).

Depth interviews were carried out with 24 members of Nigerian National Assembly (6 from senate and 18 from House of Representatives). These samples were proportionally selected; and party's dominance was defined on the basis of ability to control at least one gubernatorial seat and / or presidential seats.

In addition 6 party officials representing each of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, and drawn from the 4 dominant parties were engaged in in-depth interviews along with 4 senior campaign directors of each of the 4 dominant parties.

The depth interviews were designed to determine the marketing strategies currently employed by Nigerian political parties and to assess whether or not they could be

refined into a political marketing framework model. Thus, a deductive model was devised.

Development of Measures

To measure the dynamics of marketing strategy in politics, a ten - item measure adapted from previous studies (Baines, 1996; Klein and Roth, 1990; Theodosius and Katsikeas, 2001; Clark and Pugh, 2001; Jain, 1989) was used to capture the perception of differences between the respondent's understanding of marketing strategy and politics.

The measures used to assess the effectiveness of marketing strategy in politics were chosen on the basis of literature surveyed (Osuagwu, 2008; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Reid, 1988' Wring, 1999' O'Cass, 2001; O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Scammel, 1997; Shama, 1976; Nimmo, 1999; Newman, 2002).
In both cases, a five-point scale from (very similar) to 5 (very different) was used.

Instrumentation

In addition to the interviews 870 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the state officers of the 4 participating parties to confirm from their experience whether marketing strategy applies to their political operations, and if it is capable of improving significantly the patronage of the electorate as well as the result of the elections. A total of 311 questionnaires were returned, of which 297 were complete and usable resulting in a net response rate of 34.4%. This result constitutes a fairly high response rate, considering that the average top management survey response rates are in the range of 15% and 20% (Menon, Bharadjvaj and Howell, 1996), and that collecting data for such a country-wide study with a large population is difficult due to numerous obstacles encountered (Douglas and Craig, 1983).

The questions used in this research represent a qualitative adaptation of the ten hypotheses proposed in this study in a 5 item Likert scale based on 7p's of marketing and 3 political marketing orientations. This method is chosen because it is well suited for obtaining in-depth narrative responses, especially for providing broad insight into a party's application of marketing strategy in its dealings with electorate.

Validity and Reliability Measures

The possibility of threat to validity in this study was reduced by presenting a description of politics as a construct and explicative political marketing model grounded on the concept of marketing strategy as well as democracy.

The proposed model illustrated internal and external validity as well as assumptions guiding overall research reliability and potential for generalizability. Trochim (2001) refers to this as "wanting the measure to reflect the construct, the whole construct, and nothing but the construct".

This study assumed that there is an explanatory relationship between marketing strategy and political practices. This relationship was captured in our explicative political marketing model, and in operationalizing the marketing strategy components while focusing on electorate.

By also assuming an explanatory relationship between marketing strategy and electoral victory (citizens' mandate) within the construct of politics, the conclusion of this study can, in specific instance of high proximal similarity, be used for extending theory based analytic generalization of marketing strategy in every political situation.

Results

The returned questionnaires constitute a high response rate and provide the confidence that non response is not an issue (Weiss and Heide, 1993). Responses can be aggregate as follows:

Table 1: Relevance of Marketing Strategy to Politics

S/N0	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Yes	297	100%
2	No	-	-
	Total	279	100%

by the parties

S/n		AC	PDP	ANPP	APGA	F.Value	Level of Sig.	Relative size
	Variables	F	L	C	N			
1	Credible Product Development	5.13 (1.23)	6.29 (0.76)	5.25 (0.46)	3.5 (1.22)	9.08	0.000	L>C>F>N
2	Responsible Promotion	4.75 (0.80)	6.29 (0.76)	5.0 (1.85)	4.12 (0.41)	3.97	0.016	L>C>F>N
3	Effective distribution	4.86 (1.13)	6.14 (0.69)	5.75 (0.71)	4.67 (1.03)	4.16	0.016	L>C>F>N
4	Minimal cost for electorate (Price)	4.75 (1.17)	6.14 (0.38)	5.13 (1.35)	4.33 (1.22)	3.31	0.037	L>C>F>N
5	Friendly Process of reaching out	4.38 (1.30)	6.0 (0.58)	4.50 (0.20)	4.33 (1.03)	3.87	0.021	L>C>F>N
6	Committed membership (people)	5.00 (1.51)	5.86 (0.38)	5.25 (0.89)	3.83 (0.75)	4.56	0.011	L>C>F>N
7	Evidence of commitment to democracy	4.25 (1.39)	5.71 (0.95)	4.13 (1.13)	3.50 (1.38)	3.96	0.019	

Table 3: Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Political Marketing orientations of the parties

S/n		AC	PDP	ANPP	APGA	F.Value	Level of Sig.	Relative size
	Orientation	F	L	C	N			
1	Product Orientation	4.38 (1.77)	5.57 (1.81)	4.88 (0.99)	4.67 (1.63)	0.762	0.526	L>C>N>F
2	Sales Orientation	5.00 (1.07)	5.57 (0.98)	5.50 (1.20)	5.17 (0.98)	0.484	0.696	L>C>N>F
3	Market Orientation	5.71 (0.95)	4.33 (1.22)	4.25 (1.04)	4.17 (0.41)	4.61	0.001	F>C>L>N

The figure in parenthesis represents the standard deviation.

Discussion, Implications, and Conclusion

Discussion:

A systematic investigation into the relationship between marketing strategy and politics has not been reported in the literature; yet the results reported above suggest that political activities are strongly influenced and conditioned by marketing strategies. Accordingly, this study demonstrates the value of the marketing strategy construct as an important determinant of electoral victory and effective governance.

There are three segments of political activities by parties. These segments are pre-election, during election, and post election. Marketing strategies are crucial in each of these segments.

In applying the marketing mix strategies, it is instructive to note that a political product includes the political party, candidate, programmes, manifestoes, etc. the promotional programmes include all aspects of marketing promotion such as advertising, publicity/public relation, sales promotion, personal selling and direct marketing.

Distribution would include ward networking, party and campaign offices, etc. price here are redefined to mean the effort or cost that the electorate suffers to ensure that their candidate secures the mandate.

Strictly speaking, none of the parties in Nigeria qualifies to be called a market-oriented party because they hardly design their products to suit the needs of the electorate. For instance, the candidates that emerge in party primaries' are often selected by party leadership and imposed on the membership, and by extension on the electorate.

All the respondents stressed the importance of the local factors. Each ascribed his or her party's dominance of some constituencies and or state to the existence of strong, effective local candidate who had built a strong personal following.

There was a general consensus among respondents that Nigerian electorate and supporters find it difficult to resist monetary inducement due to abject poverty in the country and the fear that they might not be remembered after the candidates had secured their mandate.

The study also revealed that most parties and candidates do not bother about the need to articulate quality programmes and ideologies since offering money to electorate could give them a leeway. As a result, marketing strategies of political parties in Nigeria are party centred, non-issue centred, capital intensive, money driven and labour-intensive. Again, the parties and their candidates do not engage in serious post election analysis to know what went wrong, how and where. Even at that, the model generally applied.

Be that as it may, there are significant differences in the effectiveness of the marketing strategies of employed by parties. The differences are determined by the performance objectives of the parties. For example, the Leader Party tends to gauge its performance in terms of increase in votes which an indicator of growing electorate acceptance for its new political products. On the other hand, Challenger Party gauges its performance in terms of operational efficiency; whereas Nicher Party may pursue an objective of regional relevance.

Managerial and Policy Implications
It may be difficult to generalize from a single study. However, the results presented in this study help party managers and policy makers to enhance their understanding of the complex interface between marketing strategies and party politics. Our findings indicate that political activities are conditioned by marketing strategies. As a result, party managers and policy makers should allow themselves to be influenced by marketing strategies when making political decisions.

Party managers can establish open communication channels both formally and informally as well as accepting marketing training to be aware of the significant dimensions of marketing strategies and how they impact on the electorate.

All respondents stressed the importance of local factors. This means that political marketers should domesticate, rather than standardize, the application of marketing strategies in all political situations.

CONCLUSION
The overriding objective of this study is to draw scholarly attention to the nexus between marketing strategy and politics. Despite the importance of these two constructs in the literature, the relationship between them has received little or no research attention.

In the light of the above, we illustrated the marketing strategy and proposed a testable research model in the form of political marketing process to test the relationship between politics and marketing strategy.

Despite the fact that marketing strategy demonstrated a relatively high explanatory power regarding the variance between party politics and marketing, there were certainly other influential factors that were not considered such as the linkages among political practices, political entities, the electorates, and the society at large. Using marketing principles and techniques to understand and evaluate such linkages is worthwhile for efficient and effective democratic practice in a society.

Further work should also test the model proposed in this study in other countries since the present study was based in Nigeria. The essence is to show the degree to which the strategies of political parties can depend on voter behaviour in the different relevant segmentation bases such as tribe, gender, geopolitical zone, age group and social class, among others. A proper understanding of the political behaviour of voters and other stakeholders would assist political parties in designing efficient and effective marketing strategies, ensure healthy political competition among parties, and deepen democratic culture in nations.

REFERENCES

Ajayi. M. (2006) Reflections on Democratic Succession in Nigeria. Covenant University. Journal of Business & Social Sciences. Vol. 1, N01 December 2006.

Baines (1996) Coordinating Political Campaigns: A marketing Planning Perspective. Journal of Political Marketing. Vol.4 No 2.

Butler & Kavanagh (1977) The British General Elections of 1997. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Craven & Percy (2003) Strategic Marketing (8ᵗʰ Edn) Irvin. McGraw-Hill: Boston. M.A.

Douglas & Craig (1989) Evolution of Global Marketing Strategy: Scale. Scope and Synergy. Columbia. Journal of World Business 24 (Fall), 47-59.

Harrop. M. (1990) 'Political Marketing'. Parliamentary Affairs. 43. pp 27-91

Hennerberg (2003) "Second Conference on Political Marketing" ' Journal of Marketing Management. Vol.12. pp 23-31.

Hornby. A.S. (1974). Oxford's Advanced Learner's Dictionary: Oxford University Press. P 656.

INEC (2007) INEC Publications. 2007.

Kavanagh (1995) Election Campaign: The New Marketing of Politics. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Kotler. Armstrong Senders. Hong (1999) Principles of Marketing. Prentice Hall. London.

Lees-Marshment (2001) Political Marketing & British Political Parties. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Menon. Bharadjvaj & Howell (1996) Antecedents & Consequences of Marketing Strategy: Marketing 63(2). 18-40.

Newman. B. (2002) 'The Role of Marketing in Politic' Journal of Political Marketing. Vol. No.1. pp 1-5.

Nimmo. D. (1999) "The Permanent Campaign Marketing as a Governing Tool in Newman. 13.1 (Ed). Handbook of Political Marketing. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage. Pp 73-86.

Nzimiro (1992) Marketing and Politics. APCON Publications. Vol.4

O'Cass (2001) "Political Marketing: An Investigation of the Political Marketing Concept and Political Marketing Orientation in Australian Politics". European Journal of Marketing. Vol.35. No. 9 10. pp.

1003-1025.

Ohiwerei (2002) Branding in Politics. APCON Publications. Vol. 4.

O'Shaughnessy (2001) "The Marketing of Political Marketing". European Journal of Marketing. Vol. 35 No.9/10.

Osuagwu (2008) Political Marketing: Conceptualization Dimensions and Research Agenda. Marketing Intelligence & Planning (U.K). Vol.26 Issue 7, ppp793-810.

Reid (1988) 'Marketing the Political products', European Journal of Marketing. Vol. 22. No.9. pp. 34-47.

Scammel (1997) 'The Wisdom of the War. Room. US Campaigning and Americanization', Joan Shorenstein Centre. Policy Research paper 12-17. Cambridge MA; Harvard University.

Wring (1999) The Marketing Colonization of Political Campaign in Newman. B. (Ed). The Handbook of Political Marketing Thousand Oaks, Sage.