

## Effect of Marketing Communication Mix on Eligible Voters during Political Campaigns in Ilorin Metropolis

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### Abstract

Individuals aspiring for political positions must create a considerable level of awareness for eligible voters to vote for them. Marketing communication mix is a tool for creating awareness; this study therefore examined the effect of this marketing communication mix on voters during political campaigns in Ilorin Metropolis. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study and the population for the study comprised of eligible voters from the three local government areas in Ilorin – Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South. A sample of 369 respondents was taken out of which 282 respondents filled and returned the questionnaire. One research hypothesis was formulated for this study. Self- structured questionnaire designed in line with five point Likert format was used as instrument for data collection. The null hypothesis formulated was tested using multiple regression statistics at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that marketing communication mix had significant effect on eligible voters during political campaigns; therefore, the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It was concluded that marketing communication mix is a tool that could be used by political aspirants. The study recommended that political aspirants should invest more on marketing mix during campaigns to achieve their set goals.

**Keywords:** Marketing Communication Mix, Political Aspirant, Political Campaign, Eligible Voters, Election.

### Introduction

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### Introduction

A political aspirant may have the best quality required to hold a position and can put together a supremely talented management team, but, ultimately, success will depend on the level of

level of persuasion with which significant numbers of eligible voters are held to elect him/her. In politics, campaigns have become an essential tool used amongst candidates contesting for various positions to get the electorates to vote for them (Grace, 2015). Seeking elective positions require that aspirants should develop effective strategies, possess adequate knowledge of eligible voters' behavior and communicating messages that will assist in election success. For eligible voters to elect a political aspirant, it is vital that political parties and candidates provide the electorates with adequate information on party policies, clear cut vision as well as their political agenda and manifesto to enable electorates actively choose their candidates, having adequately informed (Grace, 2015). To achieve this, political aspirants need to adopt marketing communication mix during campaigns.

Marketing communication mix is a strategy used to reach as many people as possible to convey to them what the candidate or organization has to offer (Brain, 2013). This strategy includes advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. Political parties and candidates must be able to integrate these strategies in order to achieve their aims and objectives. According to the American Association of Advertising Agencies (2016), by integrating marketing communication strategies, individuals or organizations provide clarity, consistency and maximum communications impact. Eligible voters are always eager to hear political aspirants make promises that will better their lives; this gives the aspirant a competitive edge over another aspirant who dwell so much on personal achievement. Fayipitan (2015) stated that voters are more likely to believe a politician who crafts his campaign messages as being the fight to improve voters' lives, or something similar, and come with some good measure of integrity. Such messages can be well communicated using the various marketing communication mixes.

Politics in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara state, has witnessed series of game plans adopted by various aspirants from several political parties for decades and many political aspirants had contested for various positions over the years with elections won and lost by contestants from various parties. Losing a political contest is not unconnected with factors like inadequate awareness of programmes, using the wrong communication strategies, and financial constraints among many other factors. This has spurred the study to look into the effect of marketing communication mix on eligible voters' decision during political campaigns in Ilorin metropolis.

Political campaign cannot be ignored by any party that wants to be successful in the present political dispensation. Politicians must be able to create awareness and give necessary information through the use of effective marketing communication mix to reach out to eligible voters. It is not just enough for political aspirants to contest for positions based on qualifications, but they also need to market themselves to eligible voters to achieve success. It is unfortunate that many politicians in Nigeria have not seen marketing communication mix as a tool to reach and influence eligible voters. Political aspirants should be able to explore marketing communication strategies like advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing in reaching out to eligible voters. Creating awareness and passing information through these strategies could go a long way to influence voter's behavior positively.

This study therefore seeks to find answers to this question: What is the effect of marketing communication mix on eligible voters during political campaigns in Ilorin metropolis? In the light of the foregoing, therefore, the study is designed to examine the effect of marketing communication mix on eligible voters during political campaigns.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Concept of Marketing Communication**

In this era of digital technology and competition, businesses cannot survive without marketing their products, brand or services. Marketing is the performance of those activities which seek to accomplish individual or organization's objective by anticipating customer or client needs and directing flow of need-satisfying goods and services from producer to customer or client (Al and Trout, 2006). Marketing communication mix is a combination of different promotional tools (Amstrong and Kotler, 2014). It helps to develop brand awareness, which means that consumers translate product information into perceptions about the product's attributes and its position within the larger market (Felicia, 2016). The primary goal of marketing communication is to reach a defined audience to affect its behavior by informing, persuading and reminding. Marketing communication attracts new customer for brands by building awareness and encouraging trial. The secondary role of marketing communication is building and reinforcing relationships with customers' prospects, retailers and other important stakeholders. Successful marketing relies on the combination of options called the marketing communication mix. These options include advertising, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling.

Neil (2004) identified five marketing communication tools that can be used by business organizations and individuals to create awareness and build customer relationship. This include advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. Each category involves specific promotional tools that are used to communicate with customers. For example, advertising includes broadcast, print, internet, mobile, outdoor and other forms. Sales promotion includes discounts, coupons, displays and demonstration. Personal selling includes sales presentations, trade shows and incentive programmes. Public relations includes press releases, sponsorships, events and web pages. (Amstrong & Kotler, 2014)

**Advertising:** Advertising is often the most prominent element of the communication mix. In fact, marketing and advertising are often misconstrued as having the same meaning. Advertising includes all messages a business pays to deliver through a medium to reach a targeted audience.

Since it involves the majority of paid messages, companies often allocate significant amounts of the marketing budget to the advertising function. While it can be costly, the advertiser has ultimate control over the message delivered, since it pays the television or radio station, print publication or website for placement. Advertising is mostly used by political parties and aspirants to create awareness, with the use of television, radio, newspaper and posters. The 2015 election campaign in Ilorin metropolis was not left out. The author asserted further that, recently, political parties and their candidates are becoming increasingly aware of the effectiveness of advertising and its role in getting the electorates to choose a particular

candidate or party over the other by way of informing them.

**Personal Selling:** Personal selling is sometimes integrated with the direct marketing element. However, many companies and individuals make such extensive use of a sales force that it is important to consider this component distinctly. This is personal presentation by the firm sales force for the purpose of marketing sales and building customer relationships (Amstrong & Kotler, 2014). Distribution channel suppliers use salespeople to promote products for resale to trade buyers. Retail salespeople promote the value of goods and services to consumers in retail businesses. Selling is more emphasized by companies that sell higher-end products and services that require more assertive efforts to persuade customers to buy. Personal selling is relevant to political aspirant during campaigns. the candidate carry out rally whereby they gather quite a number of eligible voters to create awareness and inform them of what they can offer to the people.

**Sales promotion:** Sales promotion is a short term incentives to encourage the purchase or sales of a product or service (Amstrong & Kotler 2005). Sales promotions or discounts are similar to advertising in that they are often promoted through paid communication. However, sales promotions actually involve offering a discounted price to a buyer. This may include coupons, percent-off deals and rebates. Along with advertisements to promote deals and coupon mailers, companies use exterior signs and in-store signage to call customer attention to the discounts. Goals of this communication tool include increasing revenue and cash flow, attracting new customers and clearing out extra inventory. Political aspirants also engage in sales promotion indirectly, they make promises to electorates that they will put certain things in place when they are elected and this could influence voters' behavior positively.

**Public Relations:** Public relations are sometimes somewhat similar to advertising in that much of it involves messages communicated through mass media. The major difference is that you don't pay for the time or space for the message. Public relation is the management of relationships and communication to establish good will and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (Arun & Meenakshi, 2012). A television or newspaper feature story mentioning a business, for instance, is not paid for and can provide brand exposure. The downside of public relations is that you do not always control the messages. You can try to influence them through press releases and invites for media coverage, but the media could put a negative spin on the story. Political aspirants can create awareness and disseminate information through public relations.

**Direct Marketing:** Direct marketing includes some aspects of both sales promotions and personal selling. It is interactive communication with customers where the company's message seeks or implores a response from targeted customers. E-mail and direct mail are common formats. These messages are sent to customers with special offers or calls to action, often promoting limited-time deals or new product launches. Mail-order clubs, online or print surveys and infomercials are other examples of direct marketing communication. The internet is also part of direct marketing, political aspirant are judiciously making use of the available sites on the internet to create awareness and disseminate information on what they have to offer.

#### **Developing Effective Marketing Communication Mix**

Kevin (2016) identified the following ways of developing effective marketing communication mix:

**Target Customer:** A target customer is the market segment that you think is most likely to buy your products or services. Find out what your target customer reads, listens to, views and trusts among all the media outlets you have available. This requires you to talk with customers, put out questionnaires and surveys and examine the outlets your competition uses.

**Communication Channels:** Though your target customer may use many types of media, one must select the ones that will carry the message out the best. For example, if one sells discount clothing, one must place the marketing message on online discount chat rooms, bulletin boards and even on flyers. On the other hand, if one sells upscale clothes, the customers might expect to see a message in glossy magazines, on billboards and even on television.

**Cost Estimates:** Once you identify the ideal mix of outlets for your marketing message, estimate the total cost of your marketing campaign. As a small business, you have to evaluate the affordability of your market mix. If you find it is too expensive, substitute more affordable media outlets for the most expensive ones.

**Measuring:** After you initiate your marketing programme, measure the results to make sure you are spending your money wisely. You can ask customers where they heard about you as they make a purchase, you can have customers fill out response cards when you ship products to them, and you can call or email those who bought from you to conduct a brief survey that includes where they heard about you. Use your feedback from customers to determine how effective your initial marketing mix has been.

### **The Importance of Voting**

According to Adewale (2011), in a true democratic society, it is essential to ensure a government that follows the will of the people, and not the one that forces the people to follow it, comes on board; that is, a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Similarly, in a truly democratic society, all eligible voters are given chance to select their leader through their right to vote and to be voted for. The representative or candidates who have been elected are liable in many ways to the people who voted and elected them. They have to implement those pledges made during elections with much transparency, accountability and good governance. Voting is a patriotic right to choose your representative in government. A citizen's vote is a secret ballot. Voting is the most important exercise a citizen will do as a responsible citizen of a democratic nation. In a functioning democracy, being able to vote allows citizens to express their political opinions by voting a particular policy or candidate that has one's best interest in mind. By this, you can decide your own future by opting for a candidate who is ready to fulfill your aspirations and possibly those people who share the same opinion with you.

Voting is a right of all eligible voters in any country. It is seen as the normal or typical form of political activity and it remains the primary means of political participation. The goal of any voting system is to establish the intent of each individual voter and translate those intents into a final tally or reality.

### **How to Run a Political Campaign**

Benjamin (2014) identified the following ways to run a political campaign:

- I. **Get the Right Tools for your Political Campaign:** In the modern political age, technology is the backbone of any campaign. Well designed tools will allow your campaign team to share information easily and efficiently, make well-informed

decisions, and easily expand as you approach Election Day. Putting the right tools in place can make one's campaign effort much easier.

- ii. **Hiring your Campaign Staff:** Every campaign, from school board on up, needs three positions filled: treasurer, fundraiser and campaign manager. Depending on the size and budget of your campaign, these can be done either by full-time paid staff, consultants that work on multiple campaigns, or volunteers. The treasurer is responsible for maintaining the campaign's financial accounting both for internal purposes and for filing legally required campaign statements.
- iii. **Formulating a budget.** The very first step is determining a vote target — the number of votes needed to win. Many campaign professionals recommend communicating with each potential voter six times. If each contact cost \$.50, then your campaign would spend \$3 per voter for this voter contact. The campaign would also, of course, need to spend money on fundraising, staff and other overheads.
- iv. **Determining the Right Strategy and Message for your Campaign:** Strategy and messaging vary tremendously between campaigns. Unlike other portions of the campaign, these tie directly into the candidate's personal beliefs. Early in the campaign, the candidate and his key staff must have very frank discussions about these issues.
- v. **The Heart of Running the Campaign:** After your tools, team, budget, strategy and messages are put together. Running the actual campaign is mostly just a matter of implementing. Campaign needs to be prepared for changing circumstances and one may need to revise any of these previously prepared items; but with solid planning, your daily operations will run much more smoothly.

### Empirical Framework

Grace (2015) carried out a study on political advertisement campaign and voting behaviour: a study of Akinwumi Ambode's election in Lagos state. He employed both purposive sampling technique and simple random technique to select 200 respondents across Lagos state. A 12-itemed questionnaire was used to elicit the necessary information from the respondents. The result from the survey revealed that there is no doubt that political advertising plays some role in influencing the electorates. He concluded that using theme songs in political adverts campaign are very effective in selling and seizing the electorates' attention which could in turn mean change of choice of candidate.

Shanto and Markus (1999) examined the effect of political advertising on commercial advertiser in West Los Angeles. He employed experimental survey method and the experiment was conducted in three separate sites in the Greater Los Angeles area. The result revealed that exposure to political advertisements did not affect the standing of product adverts vis-à-vis political adverts. He concluded based on his findings that political advertising hardly constitutes a threat to the advertising industry.

### Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative method and descriptive survey to enhance proper understanding of the research variables and made use of questionnaires to elicit information from eligible voters in Ilorin metropolis. This study examined two variables – eligible voters

in Ilorin metropolis. This study examined two variables – eligible voters (dependent) variable and marketing communication mix (independent) variable. The population of the study comprised of eligible voters from the three local government areas in Ilorin – Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South. There is no sampling frame available for the study to adopt, therefore, the study employed Godden's (2004) sample size formula for infinite study population to arrive at a representative sample of 369 respondents.

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 \times p(1-p)}{M^2} \quad \text{Where:}$$

SS = Sample size for infinite population (more than 50,000)

Z = Z value (e.g. 1.96 for 95% confidence level)

P = Population proportion (expressed as decimal) (assumed to .5 (50%) since this would provide the maximum sample size)

M = Margin of error at 5% (.05)

For instance, if the proportion is 60%

$$SS = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.6(1-0.6)}{0.0025} = \frac{3.8416 \times 0.6(0.4)}{0.05^2} = \frac{0.921984}{0.0025}$$

$$= 368.7936 = 369$$

Convenience sampling method was used to select 369 eligible voters from the three local government areas in Ilorin (Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South).

The study employed primary source of collecting data to gather required information for the study. Primary data were obtained using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher and three assistants to the respondents. Out of the 369 questionnaires administered 282 were filled and found useable.

The questions used to elicit information are capable of finding out the level of marketing communication mix effect on eligible voters in Ilorin metropolis. The study made use of questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire was divided into parts – I and II. Part I elicited information about the personal data of the respondents such as gender, age and occupation, while part II consisted of questions measuring effect of marketing communication mix on eligible voters. Five-point Likert scale answers ranging from (1= strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree) was used.

## Data Analysis

### Results

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of marketing communication mix on eligible voters in Ilorin metropolis. The result is shown in the table below:

**Hypothesis: Marketing communication mix has no significant effect on eligible voters during political campaign.**

**Table 1: Model Summary**

| Model | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .255 | 0.65     | 0.48              | 0.33618                    |

a. Predictor: (constant), Direct Marketing, Sales Promotion, Advertising, Personal Selling  
(Author's Computation, 2016)

**Table 2: ANOVA**

| Model        | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Squares | F     | Sig  |
|--------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-------|------|
| 1 Regression | 2.176          | 5   | .435         | 3.851 | .002 |
| Residual     | 31.193         | 276 | .113         |       |      |
| Total        | 33.369         | 281 |              |       |      |

a. Predictor: (constant), Direct Marketing, Sales Promotion, Advertising, Personal Selling  
b. Depended Variable: Eligible Voter  
(Author's Computation, 2016)

**Table 3: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |                  | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T      | Sig  |
|-------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                  | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)       | 4.213                       | .122       |                           | 34.667 | .000 |
|       | Advertising      | .022                        | .032       | .551                      | .681   | .496 |
|       | Personal Selling | .021                        | .035       | .533                      | .605   | .546 |
|       | Sales Promotion  | .047                        | .033       | .109                      | 1.428  | .155 |
|       | Public Relations | .132                        | .048       | .265                      | 2.758  | .006 |
|       | Direct Marketing | .022                        | .034       | .512                      | .642   | .522 |

a. Dependent Variable: Eligible Voters  
(Author's Computation, 2016)

### Discussion of findings

**Table 1:** The result of this study revealed that the value of  $r^2$  is 0.65 (which accounted for 65% of variance) of eligible voters is explained by marketing communication mix. This implies that marketing communication mix has significant effect on eligible voters' decision during political campaigns by 65%, while the remaining 35% are explained by other variables which are outside the model. Hence, marketing communication mix influences eligible voter's decision during political campaigns.

**Table 2:** The Anova results as presented in table 2 shows that the value of F cal. is 3.851 with significant value of 0.002. Since the significant value is less than 0.05, it means that marketing communication mix has effect on eligible voters during political campaigns. The findings is in line with that of Grace (2015) which revealed that political advertising plays some roles in influencing the electorates.

**Table 3:** The coefficient table was used to test whether the five independent variables (marketing communication mix) contributed to the dependent variable (eligible voters). The t value in this study was significant at 0.05 alpha level. The result of the coefficient table implies that for one additional use of "advert", the gross performance, which is proxy for eligible voters, increased by 55.1%. This implies that advertising strategy during political campaign helps to achieve greater result. The result on "personal selling" also shows a positive correlation between marketing communication mix and eligible voters' decision. The magnitude of beta coefficient for personal selling is statistically significant at 0.05 alpha level. The result shows that personal selling influenced eligible voters during political campaigns by 53.3%. The magnitude of beta coefficient for sales promotion is statistically significant at 5% level. This implies that sales promotion has effect on eligible voters by 10.9%. Public relation is significant at 0.05 alpha level. The result reveals that public relation strategy affect eligible voters by 26.5%. Direct Marketing is also significant at 0.05 alpha level and the result reveals that an increase in the use of direct marketing accounted 51.2% influence on eligible voters.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Every individual or organization that has something to offer must communicate its message in one way or the other to the target audience for awareness creation. There are various ways in which political aspirants can promote themselves during political campaign. Political aspirants make use of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. However the type of marketing communication mix to be adopted by a political aspirant at a particular point in time depends primarily on his financial strength and that of the party to which he belongs. Based on the findings the study concludes that marketing communication mix are essential factors to be considered by political aspiranst during political campaigns to achieve the desired result. Hence, the following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- i. Political aspirants should make use of advertisement strategy during political campaign to better influence eligible voters.
- ii. Political aspirants should adopt personal selling during political campaigns to achieve greater result.
- iii. Political parties should present candidates that the media practitioners will be willing to announce to the public to better influence voters' behaviour.
- iv. Political parties should make use of direct marketing during political campaigns to create awareness and influence eligible voters.

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