Posters as Tools for Political Marketing in Samaru Community, Kaduna State

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of posters in political marketing as a strategy for creating awareness among electorates in Samaru Community of Kaduna State. In assessing the role of posters as a political marketing strategy, the following were examined: the extent to which political posters create awareness on the choice of candidates among electorates in Samaru community, the language usage in posters to influence the choice of electorate and the most effective political marketing strategy that influence electorate in Samaru community. Social Judgment theory was adopted as the theoretical framework of the study while survey design was employed to collect and analyse data. Findings indicated that posters create awareness and sensitize the electorates on the beneficial factors associated with politics. The study also discovered that the use of language in posters is very effective as it keeps the electorates acquainted with the political ideologies of the various political parties and candidates. The study recommended purposeful use of posters during campaign periods to market candidates contesting for political offices, given their mobilization and sensitization potentials.

Key words: Posters, Political Marketing, Political Awareness and Electorates.

Introduction

Political campaign involves series of activities taken to achieve a particular outcome in politics, health and business. Politicians embark on different actions that they think will help to influence the attitudes of the electorates. One of the most popular tools that they use is political posters which are specially designed to promote candidates and their ideologies to the electorates. Accompanying posters are slogans designed to give extra effects to the photographs of the candidates. The slogans are usually words, phrases or sentences which politicians persistently recount in the course of presenting campaign speeches. The ultimate goal of the use of posters and slogans is to make the electorates change by accepting the presented ideologies (Arens, Wetgold & Arens, 2011).

Posters and slogans, according to Arens et al. (2011) are double edged sword that politicians use to work on the emotions of the electorates. Posters are designed to attract the attention of passers-by, making them aware of political view points, enticing them to attend specific events or encouraging them to support a particular candidate. Arens *et al.* (2011) state that posters are indispensable avenues for political parties and candidates to reach large portion of the electorates who would be unreachable by political campaign messages delivered at rallies.

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The posters through their coverage of campaigns and featuring of political advertisements have the potential of persuading voting assessments of the electorates. Equally, Arens *et al.* (2011) say poster is an essential part of the democratic process and can be an important means of helping the public understand the difference between opponents.

Campaign slogans are embedded to sell the candidate's political mission or ideology. Political campaign posters are made aggressive since they are always pasted on the walls or billboards in competition with others (Shardama & Mohammed 2013). During elections, posters, especially the colored; provide a link between the political parties/candidates and the electorates. The posters serve as a platform for political parties/candidates to campaign for votes. According to Achor, Nwachukwu and Udensi (2016), poster is massively employed since there is no known cutting edge strategy that can win all the time, given the political terrain in Nigeria. To be able to holistically influence voters, different forms of posters which are anchored on different unique selling propositions were used.

Irrespective of the level of political campaign, the electorates are the target. They buy the political product if the product meets their needs; they are also the recipients of political messages that solicit their support or vote. The voters may vary in their expectations which could range from a desire for total change from 'politics as usual', vibrant and visionary political leadership, to detribalized leader with universal electorate-focused programmes (Achor, Nwachukwu & Udensi, 2016). The implication is that, poster messages must be anchored around a specific issue, which explains why a candidate should be preferred to others in an election (Owuamalam, 2014). Shardama and Mohammed (2013) agreed that posters are important for every election campaign. Posters are very important forms of visual communication.

Equally, Curran (2005) affirmed that for any democratic system to thrive, it is vital that political parties and candidates provide the electorates with adequate information on their policies, clear-cut visions as well as their political agendas to enable electorates actively choose their candidates based on full information. To achieve this, political parties use posters in their campaigns. Poster assists a voter to make an informed choice at election time. In fact, for an election to be considered free and fair, electorates must have adequate knowledge of the candidates, political parties and election policies. Therefore this study, examines the effects of poster on the choice of political parties and candidates among electorates in Samaru community, Kaduna Sate.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the extent to which political posters create awareness on the choice of candidates among electorates in Samaru community;
2. To ascertain the influence of political posters on the choice of candidates by the electorates;
3. To determine whether there are other political marketing factors that influence

electorates' choices of candidates in Samaru community.

Literature Review

Mass media perform a crucial role in the democratic process. According to Gurevitch and Blumler (1977), the mass media possess enormous powers and their powers come from three sources – structural, psychological and normative. Thus, the structural root of the power of the mass media "springs from their unique capacity to deliver to the politician and audience, which in size and composition, is unavailable to him by any other means". The psychological root of the media power stems from the relationships of credibility and trust that different media organizations have succeeded in developing (albeit to different degrees) with members of their audiences.

Gurevitch and Blumler (1977) assert that the combined influence of these structural and psychological sources of strength enables the media to interpose themselves between politicians and the audience and to "intervene" in other political processes as well". This interposition is expressed in the way in which the mass media are capable of restructuring the timing and character of political events (conventions, demonstrations, leader appearances, etc.), defining crisis situations to which politicians are obliged to react, requiring comment on issues that media personnel have emphasized as important, injecting new personalities into the political dialogue (such as television interviews) and stimulating the growth of new communication agencies (such as public relations firms, opinion poll agencies, and political advertising and campaign management specialists). On the other hand, the normative root of media power stems from the respect that is accorded in competitive democracies to such tenets of liberal philosophy as freedom of expression and the need for specialized organs to safeguard citizens against possible abuses of political authority. From the foregoing, the mass media occupy strategic place in the politics of any nation.

Islam (2002) notes that the media industry, whether public or private plays an important role in any economy by gathering support or opposition for those who govern, by highlighting or failing to do so the views and/or sins of industry, by providing a voice for the people or not doing so, and by simply spreading economic information. The mass media not only carry information about the economy, but also messages about the social, political and religious lives of the people. Democracy thrives on the principle of informed electorates making responsible choices and decisions. The mass media are not only key avenues for providing the required information; they also determine what is available in the public domain. Mass media enrich democracy, while democracy provides conducive environment for an efficient functioning of the mass media. It is almost impossible to have a democratic society without the full complement of a robust mass media system (Islam, 2002).

In the opinion of Curran (1991) a "democratic function of the media system is to act as an agency of representation. It should be organized in a way that enables diverse social groups and organizations to express alternative viewpoints. This goes beyond, however, simply disseminating diverse opinion in the public domain. Thus, another democratic function of the media is to assist the realization of the common objectives of society through agreement or

compromise between conflicting interests. The media should contribute to this process by facilitating democratic procedure for resolving conflicts and defining collectively agreed aims. For example, the media should brief the electorates about the political choices involved in elections, and so help to constitute elections as defining moments for collective decisions about the public direction of society. The media system should also facilitate organized representations by giving due publicity to the activities, programmes and thinking of organized groups in addition to the formal processes of government and opposition parties. But the media system is itself an important mechanism for collective self-reflection. By staging a public dialogue in which diverse interests participate, the media should also play a direct role in assisting the search for areas of common agreement and compromise. It should also provide an adequate way in which people can engage in a wider public discourse that can result in the modification of social attitudes affecting social relationships between individuals and groups.

According to Islam (2002) it is impossible to have a truly democratic society without an efficient mass media system. A political system that lays claim to democracy without a virile mass media would certainly be a 'malnourished' and 'still-birth' political contraption (Islam, 2002). That is why McNair (2002) has aptly pointed out that "in democratic political systems, media function both as transmitters of political communication which originates outside the media organization itself and as senders of political messages constructed by journalists". He lists four functions of the mass media in a democratic society to include the following:

a. Firstly, they must inform citizens of what is happening around them (what we may call the 'surveillance' or 'monitoring' function of the media).
b. Secondly, they must educate as to the meaning and significance of the 'facts' (the importance of this function explains the seriousness with which journalists protect their objectivity, since their value as educators presumes a professional detachment from the issues being analyzed).
c. Thirdly, the media must provide a platform for public political discourse, facilitating the formation of 'public opinion', and feeding that opinion back to the public from whence it came. This must include the provision of space for the expression of dissent without which the notion of democratic consensus would be meaningless.
d. Finally, the media in democratic societies serve as channels for the advocacy of political viewpoints.

Poster as a Medium of Communication

A poster in general sense, is any piece of printed paper designed to be attached to a wall or vertical surface. Typically posters include both textual and graphic elements, although a poster may be either wholly graphical or wholly text. Posters are designed to be both eye-catching and informative. Posters may be used for many purposes. They are a frequent tools of advertisers (particularly of events, musicians and films), propagandists, protestors and other groups trying to communicate a message. Posters are also used for reproduction of art works, particularly famous works, and are generally low-cost compared to original art

works. Sontag(1999) cites Hutchinson's definition, at the beginning of his book: The Poster, An Illustrated History from 1860, thus:

> A poster is essentially a large announcement, usually with a pictorial element, usually printed on paper and usually displayed on a wall or billboard to the general public. Its purpose is to draw attention to whatever an advertiser is trying to promote and to impress some message on the passer-by. The visual or pictorial element provides the initial attraction--and it must be striking enough to catch the eye of the passer-by and to overcome the counter-attractions of the other posters, and it usually needs a supplementary verbal message which follows up and amplifies the pictorial theme. The large size of most posters enables this verbal message to be read clearly at a distance.

Posters, according to Gallo (1989) are designed to attract the attention of passers by making them aware of political view points, enticing them to attend specific events or encouraging them to support a particular candidate. Gallo further explains that modern posters dated back to 1870, when the printing industry perfected color lithography and made mass production possible. By 1890, the technique had spread to Europe. Since then to this day posters are found in different sizes and used for either advertisement of products or political candidates. They are meant to persuade, motivate, entice the voters and grab their attention (Gallo (1989).

Political Marketing and Political Communication

Scammell (1999) notes that "the political communications literature, tend to treat political marketing as only one aspect of broader process". Political communicators perceive political marketing as "a response to developments in media and communication technologies" and tend to view modern politics as intertwined with the media. The emergence of non-ideological "catch-all" parties and the role of the media as an autonomous major actor in the political process trouble political communication scholars who emphasize the potential consequences for civic engagement with politics and voice concerns over the quality of communication output and its influence on the democratic system as a whole.

In Scammell's (1999) view, marketing's unique contribution is the introduction of strategic concern regarding the electorate's wants and needs. The incorporation of strategy in election campaign influences goals, priorities, policies and party behavior. At the same time, this "strategy" element is a very serious threat to democratic processes. Scammell (1999) notes though that political marketing should be discerned from propaganda as the former involves reciprocity which the latter lacks. Emphasis on strategy introduces a new focus, which shifts away from the use of promotional techniques and deals with the overall strategic objectives of parties and candidates. According to Scammell (1999), this new focus "effectively reverses the perspective offered by campaign studies/political communications approaches. Political marketing is no longer a subset of broader processes: political communications becomes a subset of political marketing, tools of promotion within the overall marketing mix".

From being a set of theoretical and practical tools for the successful conduct of election campaigns, political marketing has expanded to a permanent strategic element of governance. Thus, from being a subset of a party's electoral communication, it has now grown so much that it has "annexed" political communication as one of its components. Of course, that is how political marketers perceive it. Butler and Collins (1994) present the structural characteristics of political marketing as follows:

1. The product: person/party/ideology, loyalty, mutability;
2. The organization: amateurism, negative perception of marketing, dependence on volunteers;
3. The market: ideologically charged, social affirmation, the counter-consumer;
4. Process characteristics: style versus substance, advertising and communications standards, news and media attention, political polls, tactical voting.

Through the prism of the aforementioned arguments; it can be claimed that political communication can offer guidance to political marketing on how to improve its negative perception, on how to make its outcomes more substantial to voters, on how to improve its standards and on how to attract media attention. Emmanuel and Ibrahim (2013) reveal that political campaign posters are essential visual communication means that the political candidates use in canvassing for votes. The study affirmed that campaign posters and slogans are very important means of communicating to the electorates, which are embodiments of political candidates' ideologies and missions. Similarly, Izeghe (2015) reveals that political advertising plays a key role in influencing the electorates. The study concludes that using theme songs in political advertising campaigns are very effective in seizing the electorates' attention which could in turn mean change of choice of candidates.

Talabi and Adebola (2015) establish in their study that advertising is important in every society. Majority of the respondents surveyed in this study attested to the fact that they were influenced by the political advertising endorsement. Equally, Elebute (2013) found in his study that the visual concepts developed by artists have contributed immensely in promoting Nigerian politicians. The study revealed further that through the use of designs, which were accompanied by words, pictures, colors, values, lines, shapes as well as other graphic art forms, Nigerians are made to witness a more colorful campaign exercise between 1963 and beyond. The study also indicated that the future of visual arts as a profession in Nigeria depends largely on the degree of improvement of the resources available to the practitioners.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Social Judgment Theory. The theory was propounded by Muzafer Sheriff in 1961. The theory postulates that individuals interpret messages based on their orientation towards the subject being discussed, and their attitudinal composition. In social judgment theory, a message is accepted or rejected based on the cognitive map of the receiver and on the receiver's ego involvement, particularly if it falls within one's latitude of acceptance. The social judgment theory believes that individuals have three cognitive compartments where they locate both the received message and formed

attitude. These compartments include: latitude of acceptance, latitude of rejection and latitude of non-commitment.

The latitude of acceptance compares messages that are ordinarily acceptable to the electorates; the latitude of rejection refers to messages that are considered unacceptable, for instance, when the electorate discovers that messages are pure negative propaganda (Achor and Moguluwa, 2012). The latitude of non-commitment describes messages which the electorates are indifferent about, that is they may accept or reject them. The Social Judgment theory proposes that political marketing communicators/persuaders must carefully consider the pre-existing attitude the electorates/audience might hold about any political issue before crafting a message" (Achor & Moguluwa, 2012). The electorate (receiver) after some thought process on the persuasive advertisement should believe or not that the political candidate or political party being advertised is superior to other competing candidates or parties, which will make them continue to support the candidate or decide to vote for the candidate in the election.

Social Judgment theory best approaches the perspectives of individuals' attitude and the factors that relate to the change are a judgmental process. This is based on external stimuli and persuasion that are derived from an exposure. Thus, this theory is applicable to the study of posters and the messages that are embodied which are subject to different interpretation and judgment from different individuals.

Methodology

This study employed survey method. Survey, according to Babbie (2005) is the measurement of excellent attitude and orientation of elements in a large population with a list of questions aimed at extracting specific data from a particular group of people. Equally, it is a research method used to gather information on opinion and views of people about various issues and events in the society (Rubin, Haridakis and Piele, 2010). Questionnaire was used to generate data considering its ability to accommodate a large population. The population of this study consisted of all the electorates of the Samaru community of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The number of all the electorates in Samaru community is 15,949 as recorded by Independent National Electoral Commission in 2019. The sample size for this study was calculated using Survey Monkey Online Calculator. A confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 9 were used to arrive at a sample size of 118.

Purposive sampling was used for selecting the electorates in the Samaru community. Neuman (2012) says that purposive sampling is used when researcher uses his/her judgment in selecting cases with specific purpose in mind. Bello and Ajayi (2000) define purposive sampling as "the procedure in which a researcher purposely selects certain groups as samples because of their relevance to the investigation under consideration." Consequently, purposive sampling was used in selecting the respondents. The justification for this selection of the electorates is basically due to their wealth of experience, as the researchers selected only those that have immense experience of politics and have been participating in elections since

1999 to date. Thus, 118 copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents and 106 were successfully retrieved.

Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

The data collected from the study were presented, analyzed and interpreted using frequency tables and scores.

Table 1: Respondents view on whether posters create awareness about political candidates

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	37	34.9
Agree	45	42.4
Disagree	13	12.3
Strongly disagree	11	10.4
Total	106	100

Data in Table 1 shows that 37 (34.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed that posters create awareness about political candidates, 45 (42.4%) simply agreed, 13 (12.3%) disagreed while 11 (10.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that posters create awareness about political candidates during elections.

Table 2: Respondents view on exposure to posters made them vote wisely

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	15.0
Agree	54	51.0
Disagree	29	27.4
Strongly disagree	7	6.6
Total	106	100

The table 2 shows that 54 (51%) of the respondents agreed that posters made them vote wisely, 16 (15%) strongly agreed, 29 (27.4%) disagreed while 7 (6.6%) strongly disagreed. This means that respondents' exposure to posters made them vote wisely.

Table 3: Respondents view on how they perceive the use of Posters as a political marketing strategy

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very Effective	41	38.6
Effective	46	43.3
Less effective	15	14.1
Ineffective	4	3.7
Total	106	100

The responses from the table 3 below shows that 46 (43.3%) of the respondents perceive poster usage to be effective as a political marketing strategy, 41 (38.6%) also perceived it to be very effective, 15 (14.1) perceived it as less effective and 4 (3.7) as ineffective. This implies that the respondents perceived the use of poster to be effective as a political marketing strategy.

Table 4: Respondents view on Effectiveness of Languages Used in Campaign Posters

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	29	27.3
Agree	48	45.2
Disagree	19	17.9
Strongly disagree	10	9.4
Total	106	100

Table 4 shows that 48 (45.2%) of the respondents agreed on the effectiveness of the use of languages in posters, 29 (27.3%) strongly agreed, 19 (17.9%) disagreed and 10 (9.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that the languages used in campaign posters are effective.

Table 5: Respondents view on whether Language on campaign posters influences their voting decision

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	48	45.2
Agree	36	33.9
Disagree	13	12.2
Strongly disagree	9	8.4
Total	106	100

Data in Table 5 shows that 48 (45.2%) respondents strongly agreed that language on campaign posters influences their voting decision, 36 (33.9%) simply agreed, 13 (12.2%) disagreed while 9 (8.4%) strongly disagreed. This implies that language used on campaign posters influence the respondents' voting decision.

Table 6: Respondents view on to what extent poster influence decision of voting a candidate

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
To a very large Extent	34	32.0
To a large Extent	40	37.7
To a low Extent	22	20.7
To a very low Extent	10	9.4
Total	106	100

Data in Table 6 shows that 40 (37.7%) of the respondents are influenced by the posters to a large extent, 34 (32.0%) are influenced to a very large extent, 22 (20.7%) are influenced to a

low extent, while 10 (9.4%) are influenced to a very low extent. This implies that posters influence the voting decisions of respondents towards a candidate.

Table 7: Respondents view on exposure to a candidate's poster influences choice during election

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	26	24.4
Agree	42	39.6
Disagree	25	23.5
Strongly disagree	13	12.2
Total	106	100

Data in Table 7 shows that 42 (39.6%) of the respondents agreed that exposure to a candidates posters influence their voting choice during election, 26(24.4%) strongly agreed, 25(23.5%) disagreed while 13(12.2%) strongly disagreed. This implies that exposure to a candidate's poster influences the choice of the electorates during election period.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion below is done based on the research questions guiding the study. Attempt is made to establish the relationship between the data collected and analysed and the research objectives, as well as the literature reviewed and the theory used in the study.

Objective one: Extent to which political posters create awareness on the choice of candidates among electorates in Samaru community

Posters massively create awareness of a political candidate; from table 1, 42.4% of the respondents agreed that posters create awareness, with the role of creating awareness, enlightenment as well as campaigning for a political office for a candidate. Furthermore, table 2 indicated that exposure to posters made them vote wisely where 54 respondents representing 51% agreed that posters play that role. Participation in politics, changing of decision from voting one candidate to another is all anchored by the awareness, display and exposure to political posters. Thus, posters have played a significant role: creating awareness of political candidate.

The findings corroborates a study conducted by Freedman, Franz, and Goldstein, (2004) were they found that exposure to the campaign increase the sense of campaign, as it brings voters closer to a normative ideal of an informed and political engaged public. Craig et al. (2005) find that voters increase their knowledge of the candidate's positions during the campaign, but also the gap between the most knowledgeable and less knowledgeable tend to increase during the campaign. Also Arens *et al.* (2011) shows how voters learn moderately during the election campaign. That is, there is strong evidence that the campaign increases voters' political knowledge.

Objective two: To ascertain the influence of political posters on the choice of candidates by the electorates

Firstly, how the electorates perceive the use of posters as a political marketing strategy is shown in table 4, it posits that the use of language in the posters is very effective as it serves as slogan or mantra that electorate can remember easily and identify a political candidate. From table 4, 48 respondents representing 45.2% agreed that language used in posters is very effective. This language can influence decision of voting. Table 5 shows 48 respondents representing 45.2% strongly agreed that language in campaign posters influenced voting decision. This findings above conforms to Price and Zaller (1993), which stated that when the voter is exposed (which is a function of political awareness) to the message, he will try to recollect how this message fits his predisposition (which is a function of the political sophistication to recall memory) and then provide an evaluation of the party or candidate. And also according to Sciarini and Kriesi, (2003), the voter will resist messages that are inconsistent with their predisposition, but only if the voters have the knowledge and sophistication that allow them to access this message in light of their predisposition.

Objective three: To determine whether there are other political marketing factors that influence electorates' choices of candidates in Samaru community

From table 6, poster does influence the decision of voting of the electorates with 40 respondents representing 37.7% of the population. Furthermore, Posters influences the choice of electorate during election as shown in table 7 with 42 respondents representing 39.6% agreed on the influence. The findings corroborates a study conducted by Redlawsk (2001), which demonstrated how the uses of heuristics are much applied by most voters, but also that the use increases by the complexity of the vote choice. Rosar (2008) shows how the exploratory of appearance matters as attractive candidates receives higher polls especially if they compete against unattractive candidates.

Conclusion

Posters in this our contemporary society is one of the effective means of creating awareness to the people of a society with the purpose of leading them towards certain desired actions (Voting). From the finding of this study, it can be concluded that poster is a potent tool for creating awareness on a topical issue in the community in order to inform, educate and enlighten the electorates as well as shaping or even influencing their voting decision. Posters aimed at covering issues that concern the electorates ranging from politics, participation, action and involvement. To this effect, poster has been attest to be performing its purpose and contributing role of campaigning, creating awareness and influencing voting decision.

Poster creates awareness, educates and enlightens the electorates and points out potentials that the society can exploit in such a way those electorates can see and understand its' context. Poster sets agenda and acts as a gate keeper of public issues; it performs the eye role especially in showing out candidates that are contesting and their manifesto as it affects the society as a whole. The findings of this study shows that there was a high level of awareness

and knowledge of politics among the studied population and there is need for further campaigns, and awareness through the poster to help improve the enlightenment of the people, and ways to win elections.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given:

i. Sufficient posters should be displayed during campaign periods to clearly identify the candidates contesting for a particular office.
ii. Party manifestoes and proper slogans should be employed on the display of campaign posters.
iii. Spaces should be allocated for the display of posters in order to prevent haphazard displays in the community.

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