

Ethical Political Marketing and Public Relations (Pmpr) Communications for Checkmating Electoral Violence in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study explored the adoption of ethical political marketing and public relations' communications by Nigerian politicians for checkmating electoral violence in the country. The objectives were to: ascertain the extent Nigerian politicians employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns, and determine the level of ethical public relations practices in their electioneering behavior. Survey design was employed in the study. The primary data were sourced through structured electronic-questionnaire (e-questionnaire). The area of study was: Enugu in the South-East, Lagos in the South-West, Port Harcourt in the South-South and Kano in the North. The results show that: majority of Nigerian politicians do not employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns, and that the level of application of ethical public relations practices in their electioneering behavior in the country was not significant. It was then recommended that the politicians should stop employing unethical Machiavellian do-or-die comments and behaviour during electioneering.*

Keywords: *Ethical Communications, Political Marketing, Political Public Relations, Electoral Violence, Nigeria.*

I. Introduction

Electoral violence has been the signpost of many elections in Nigeria since the country's independence. Nigerian politicians have at sundry times been accused of the penchant for inflammatory statements or speeches that foment the electoral violence. Again, in almost all the religious crises witnessed in the country, politicians have been fingered for directly or indirectly being behind them, to advance selfish political interests. For instance, some political elites in the country have been accused for exploiting the Boko Haram crisis at one time or the other for cheap political gains (Okonjo-Iweala, 2014; Citizens for Nigeria, 2009; Musa, 2014).

According to all Africa.com (2009) one of the Jos crises erupted during an electioneering campaign tour of Jos by a prominent northern politician, who allegedly asked Muslims not to vote for a Christian.

Hence, the Cleen Organization (2009), was unequivocal in asserting that this ethnic communications for support by politicians in Nigeria during electioneering campaigns is one major factor that whips up public sentiments for violence and crisis during electioneering in the country.

Compass (2010:7) also reported that the Jos crisis of 2010 where over 650 innocent people, mainly hapless women and children were killed was ignited by some political undertones.

Why is electioneering campaigns in Nigeria always dotted with unethical political communications that are crises prone? Awolowo (1961:12) offered the answers that it is because politicians are in the habit of criticising — indeed attacking, abusing and vilifying — one another both in private and in public. Awolowo (1961:3) also observed that another reason which fuels the belief that politics is a bad game is that good politicians are few and far between. The general run of them are irredeemably mundane: materialistic, atheistic, immoral, ruthless and unscrupulous.

During the 2011 general elections, electioneering violence was again unleashed on the masses due to the unethical political communications and win-at-all-costs attitude of some Nigerian politicians. To worsen the matters, terrorism dimensions to violence entered the Nigerian political diary, with bombings and news of bombings in some quarters (Okonjo-Iweala, 2014; Amadi, 2011; Njoku, 2011). Thus, some unscrupulous Nigerian politicians hang on religious sentiments to recruitment foot-soldiers that execute electoral violence for them at the turn of every election in the country.

Diamond (1998) also observed that some Nigerian leaders never failed to supply ethnic accusations and suspicions, however hysterical and malicious, in order to transform people's ignorance, basest prejudices and wildest fears into electoral victories for themselves. This was why Okadigbo (1987:10) bemoaned that value consensus and cultural homogeneity are lacking in the comments of politicians, leading to incessant conflicts between the more significant corporate groups in the country. Hence, the main thrust of this paper is to appraise the implications of unethical political marketing public relations communications on elections in Nigeria.

Meanwhile, Political Marketing Public Relations (PMPR) is the application of marketing principles and public relations strategies to win acceptability and support of a political party, politicians, political course, programme or policy (Lee-Marshment, 2001; Odigbo, 2012). Samaila (2003: 197) says that specifically, political marketing is the use of marketing techniques in politics to influence the voting (buying) decision of the electorate (customers). In the observation of Harrop (2008), a marketing perspective offers a fresh slant on understanding electoral change and that marketing techniques have, on balance, improved the quality of political communication in British elections.

Political marketing when ethically applied is very good for socio-economic and political development of a nation. For instance, it was the astute application of political marketing efforts of the democrats in the US that resulted into the unprecedented election of the first black president, Barak Obama, by the Americans.

On the other hand, the National Communication Association (NCA, 2013), states that Ethical communication refers to the moral aspect of communication or communicating with truth, fairness and equity in mind. Ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others (NCA, 2013).

According to Iruonagbe et al (2013), political violence is the use of threat or physical act by an individual or group of individuals within a political system against another individual or individuals, and/or property, with the intent to cause injury or death to persons and/or damage or destruction to property; and whose objective, choice of targets or victims, surrounding circumstances, implementation and effects have political significance. Political violence also include all forms of collective attack within a political system.

Considering the fact that elections in Nigeria since the first republic have been marred by violence, blood sheds, massive riggings, court cases etc, what are the implications of unethical political marketing public relations communications on peaceful electioneering in the country? This study tried to find out.

II. Statement Of The Problem

Before the 2011 general elections in Nigeria, majority of the citizens had lost faith in electoral democracy and there were general voter-apathy everywhere due to electoral violence and electoral frauds that thwarted the citizens' right in electing candidates of their choices into positions of leadership in previous elections. In the 2007 general election, the major unethical political comment was that the election would be a do-or-die affair, and true to fact, that election was one of the most violent in the history of the country. In the 2011 general election, some innocent youth corpsers working in some parts of the country were massacred in cold blood, hundreds of other citizens also lost their lives, churches, mosques, cars, houses and other valuable property were burnt, all in the name of election (Ikeji, 2011; Nigerianbestforum, 2011).

Violence has been a feature of the country's electoral process since the colonial era. But during colonial rule, it was easily curtailed due to the nature and scope of participation, characteristics of the politicians and electorates and the nature of colonial domination. However, after independence, electoral violence became intense as struggle for power among politicians intensified. Successive elections in Nigeria were characterized by violence during campaigns, polling and collation among other problems (Iruonagbe et al, 2013). Alemika (2011), also observed that violence, corruption and lack of transparency are embedded in the aims and strategies of Nigerian political parties and politicians, hence, past elections in the country were characterized by both psychological and physical violence. What has been the level of application of ethical political marketing and public relations (PMPR) communications by Nigerian politicians and the correlation to electoral violence in the country? This study tried to find he answer.

III. Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- i. To ascertain the extent Nigerian politicians employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns.
- ii. To determine the level of ethical public relations practices in their electioneering behavior.
- iii. To determine the correlation of unethical PMPR communications to electoral violence in the country.

IV. Research Hypotheses

The following null-hypotheses were tested in the study:

- i. Nigerian politicians do not significantly employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns.
- ii. The level of ethical public relations practices in the electioneering behavior of most Nigerian politicians is not significant.
- iii. There is no significant correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria.

V. Scope Of The Study

The study was restricted in scope to a survey of the opinion of respondents selected from four states in four geographical areas of Nigeria, namely Enugu, Lagos, Port Harcourt and Kano for fairly national spread. The respondents were politicians, party leaders, voters and some workers of the electoral body.

VI. Literature Review

6.1 Political Marketing Public Relations (PMPR) Concept

This study is hinged on the theoretical construct of political marketing public relations (PMPR) concept as a good philosophy in political engineering and effective two-way communication based on truth and adequate information (Black, 1989: 17) as anti-dote to electioneering violence in Nigeria. According to Lee-Marshment (2001) categorized the electioneering marketing behaviour of political parties and politicians into three:

- Those that adopt the product concept: by forcing their thoughts, beliefs and actions down the throats of the electorates (customers), whether they like it or not.
- Sales-oriented political parties: that try to sell their beliefs, arguments or manifestoes to the public through heavy adverts, inducements and campaigns, and abandon them as soon as voted into office, and
- Market-oriented political parties that not only design their manifestoes to suit voters' satisfaction, but also deliver on their promises, political offerings/dividends to the voters, when voted into office. To this group, belongs the ethical PMPR communications mind-set.

However, the communications must be based on good works based on good intentions, not ill motives. For that is the only way a wholesome democracy devoid of electoral violence will be enthroned in any country, through ethical political marketing and public relations campaigns. Kotler (2003) posits that political candidates, political parties and their policies are products that could be sold to the electorates (consumers) and other operators in the political market. But to do this effectively, they must employ the right political marketing and public relations strategies.

On the other hand, ethical political marketing public relations campaigns are usually fashioned after effective two-way communication principles, which help to douse rumours, build mutual understanding and usher in peaceful elections in any system (Black, 1989). Here, there is a mutual exchange of communication/information between the politicians and the electorates, through which the politicians and political parties track their real feelings, opinions, wants and needs in order to deliver such to them most appropriately. Some media of two-way communication for political marketing public relations campaigns include: street campaigns, house-to-house campaigns, radio phone-in programs, television phone-in programs, website contacts, suggestion boxes, public complaints boxes, chatrooms, instant messaging, social-networkings, telephone conversations, and other face-to-face media like workshops, seminars, symposia, interviews, etc. that offer opportunities for questions-and-answers sessions to the electorates (Wikipedia, 2010).

Nkamnebe (2003) observes that as is consistent with marketing orthodoxy, managers of the political process can increase the satisfaction level in the polity by recognizing that enduring political behaviour could be achieved by systematically conceptualizing political ideas to meet the needs and wants of political consumers. Anyanwu (2012), adds that ethical political marketing public relations campaigns demands that the politicians and political parties must be people-oriented, which is the only way to enthrone political stability in the country.

6.2 Electoral Violence Concept

Igbuzor (2010) conceptualises electoral violence as “any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post- election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes.” The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES, 2011) sees it as “any violence (harm) or threat of violence (harm) that is aimed at any person or property involved in the election process, or at disrupting any part of the electoral or political process during the election period.” Election violence generally involves political parties, their supporters, journalists, agents of the government, election administrators and the general population, and includes threats, assault, murder, destruction of property, and physical or psychological harm (Aniekwe & Kushie, 2011; IFES, 2011).

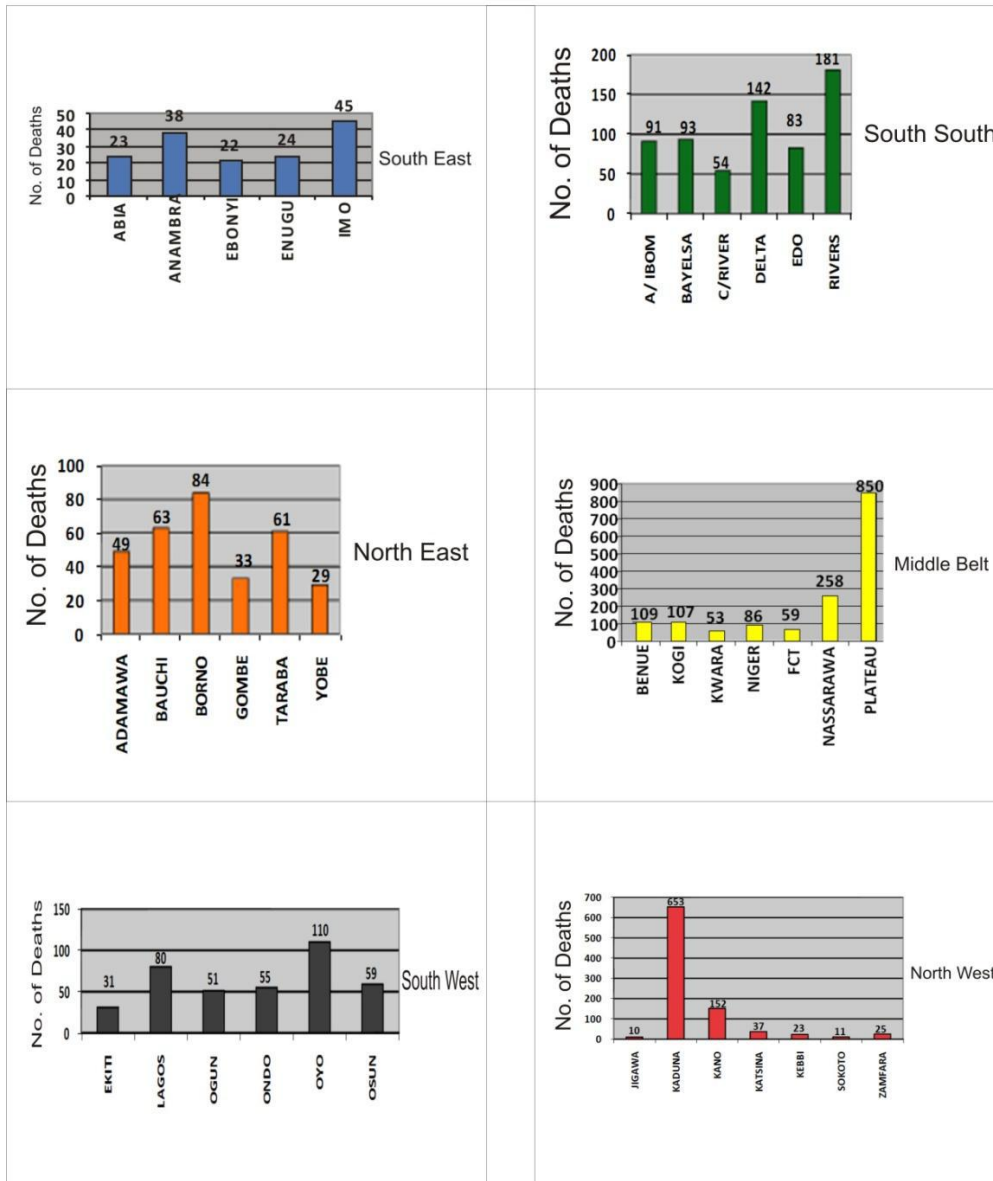
6.3 Nigeria and Electoral Violence

Obasanjo (2002) attributed violence in Nigeria's body politic to lack of the culture of debate and argument over issues when there are disagreements between politicians, who usually resort to tribal and sectional sentiments rather than political party machineries for the resolution of problems. Galadina (2003) catalogued other causes of electioneering violence in Nigeria to include:

- Domination and marginalization of sections, groups and persons in the acquisition and sharing of political positions,

- Rigging elections and manipulation of political process in favour or against certain groups, sections and persons,
- Unilateral cancellation or alternation of already agreed political arrangements without recourse to other parties involved,
-
-
- Falling apart of Godfathers and Godsons due to issues of contracts, appointments or methods of management of states.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF FATALITIES FROM ELECTORAL VIOLENCE PER STATE AND PER ZONE (JUNE 2006 - MAY 2014)



Source: Bello, Shamsudeen Kabir (2015), Political and Electoral Violence in Nigeria: Mapping, Evolution and Patterns (June 2006- May 2014). *IFRA-Nigeria working papers series, n°49*.

Anifowose (1982) pointed out that collective violence has flowed regularly from the Nigerian political process... Men seeking to seize, hold, or realign the levers of power have continually engaged in collective violence as part of their struggle. Political violence also include riots, party clashes, political demonstration with violence, looting, arson and political assassinations. It may involve thousands of people as in demonstrations and riots, as well as individual isolated incidents involving a handful of people as in political assassinations

(Anifowose, 1982). Odigbo (2003: 174) observed that political violence could be avoided through a wholesome political marketing culture rooted in market-orientation and ethical public relations practices.

VII. Methodology

Survey design was employed in the study. The primary data were gathered through structured questionnaire and analyzed with chi-square and correlation coefficient. The population of the study was 2,000,000. A sample size of 333 was determined from the population by using Taro Yamane's statistical model.

VIII. Data Analysis

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Data

OPTIONS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Sex:		
Male:	178	53.45%
Female	155	46.55%
Age:		
21 – 30 years	88	26.43%
31-40 years	89	26.73%
41 – 50 years	96	28.83%
50 years Or Above	60	18.02%
Education:		
O'Levels/Equivalent	96	28.83%
OND/NCE	89	26.73%
HND/BA/B.Sc	100	30.03%
MBA/M.Sc/PhD	48	14.41%
Total	333	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2011.

From table 1 above, the respondents' demographic data show that 53.45% were males, while 46.55% were females; 26.43% were in the age bracket of 21 to 30 years, 26.73% in the age range of 31 to 40 years, 28.83% were aged between 41 to 50 years, while the remaining 18.02% were either 50 years or above. 28.83% had only O'Levels; 26.73% had either OND or NCE, 30.03% had First Degrees, while the remaining 14.41% had either Masters Degrees or PhDs.

(ii) Table 2: Assessment of the employment of ethical political marketing communications in electioneering campaigns by Nigerian politicians

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	60	18.02%
Agree	67	20.12%
Undecided	75	22.52%
Disagree	71	21.32%
Strongly Disagree	60	18.02%
Total	333	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Data on table 3 show that 18.02% of the respondents strongly agreed that Nigerian politicians employed ethical political marketing communications in electioneering campaigns in the country. 20.12% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 22.52% were undecided; 21.32% disagreed, while the remaining 18.02% totally disagreed with the point. See figure 2 below for a graphic picture of this result.

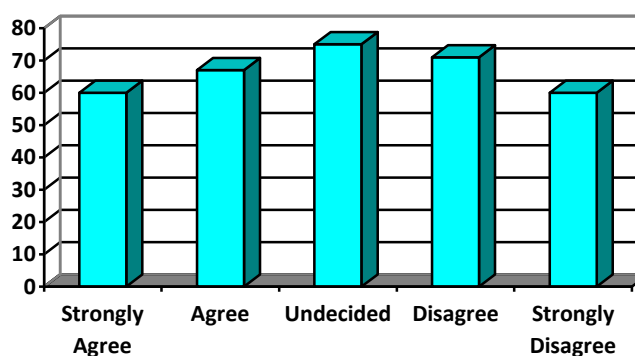


Fig. 2: Nigerian politicians' employment of ethical political marketing communications.

Table 3: Assessment of the employment of ethical public relations practices by Nigerian politicians in their electioneering behavior

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	75	22.52%
Agree	60	18.02%
Undecided	67	20.12%
Disagree	71	21.32%
Strongly Disagree	60	18.02%
Total	333	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Data on table 3 show that 22.52% of the respondents strongly agreed that Nigerian politicians employed ethical public relations practices in their electioneering behavior. 18.02% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 20.12% were undecided; 21.32% disagreed, while the remaining 18.02% totally disagreed with the point. See figure 3 below for a graphic picture of this result.

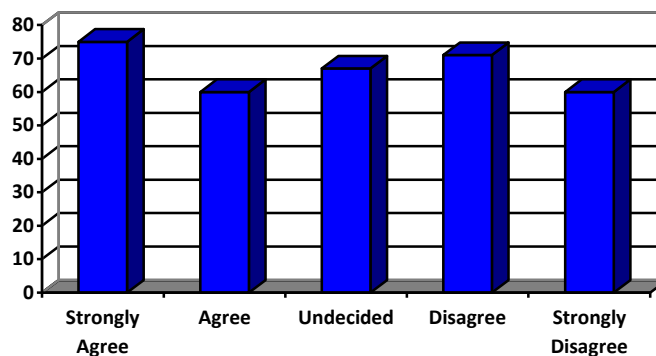


Fig. 3: Employment of ethical public relations practices by Nigerian politicians.

Table 4: Assessment of the correlation of unethical PMPR communications to electoral violence in the country

Options	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	115	34.53%
Agree	131	39.34%
Undecided	46	13.81%
Disagree	21	6.31%
Strongly Disagree	20	6.00%
Total	333	100%

Source: Field survey, 2015.

Data on table 4 show that 34.53% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria. 39.34% of the respondents equally agreed with that; 13.81% were undecided; 6.31% disagreed, while the remaining 6.00% strongly disagreed with the view. See figure 4 below for a graphic picture of this result.

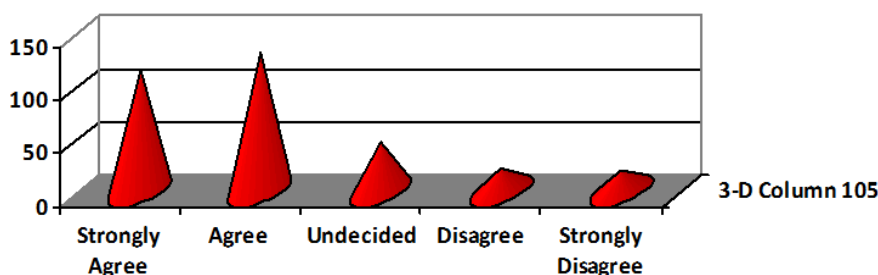


Fig. 4: Correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria.

Tests of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One:

Ho: Nigerian politicians do not significantly employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns.

Hi: Nigerian politicians significantly employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns.

Test Statistics = Chi-Square (X^2)

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{O - E}{E}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Expected Frequency} &= \frac{\sum \text{Observed Frequency}}{\text{Number of Observations}} \\ &= \frac{60 + 67 + 75 + 71 + 60}{5} = 66.60 \text{ or } 67 \text{ approx.} \end{aligned}$$

Degree of Freedom = 4. Hence, Critical Chi-Square at 5% Margin of Error = 9.49

$$\begin{aligned} X^2 &= \frac{(60 - 67)^2}{67} + \frac{(67 - 66)^2}{66} + \frac{(75 - 67)^2}{67} + \frac{(71 - 66)^2}{66} + \frac{(60 - 67)^2}{67} \\ &= 0.73 + 0.015 + 0.96 + 0.38 + 0.73 \\ &= 2.82 \end{aligned}$$

Decision

Since the calculated chi-square $X^2_{\text{calculated}} = 2.82$, greater than the critical chi-square = 9.49, we hereby accept the Ho which says that “Nigerian politicians do not significantly employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns.”

Hypothesis Two

Ho: The level of ethical public relations practices in the electioneering behavior of most Nigerian politicians is not significant.

Hi: The level of ethical public relations practices in the electioneering behavior of most Nigerian politicians is significant.

Test Statistics = Chi-Square (X^2)

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{O - E}{E}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Expected Frequency} &= \frac{\sum \text{Observed Frequency}}{\text{Number of Observations}} \\ &= \frac{75 + 60 + 67 + 71 + 60}{5} = 66.60 \text{ or } 67 \text{ approx.} \end{aligned}$$

Degree of Freedom = 4. Hence, Critical Chi-Square at 5% Margin of Error = 9.49

$$\begin{aligned} X^2 &= \frac{(75 - 67)^2}{67} + \frac{(60 - 66)^2}{66} + \frac{(67 - 67)^2}{67} + \frac{(71 - 66)^2}{66} + \frac{(60 - 67)^2}{67} \\ &= 0.96 + 0.55 + 0.00 + 0.38 + 0.73 \\ &= 2.62 \end{aligned}$$

Decision

Since the calculated chi-square $X^2_{\text{calculated}} = 2.62$, greater than the critical chi-square = 9.49, we hereby accept the Ho which says that “The level of ethical public relations practices in the electioneering behavior of most Nigerian politicians is not significant.”

Hypothesis Three

Ho: There is no significant correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria.

Hi: There is a significant correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria.

Test Statistics = Spearman Correlation Coefficient (r_s)

Table 5: Statistical Test of Hypothesis 2

Options	Data 1	Data 2	Rank 1	Rank 2	D	d ²
Strongly Agree	115	60	4	1.5	2.5	6.25
Agree	131	67	5	3	2	4
Undecided	46	75	3	5	-2	4
Disagree	21	71	2	4	-2	4
Strongly Disagree	20	60	1	1.5	-0.5	0.25

Adapted from tables 4 and 5. Source: Field Survey, 2013.

$$\sum d^2 = 6.25 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 0.25 = 18.50$$

$$\text{So } r_s = 1 - \frac{2 \times \sum d^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{(2 \times 18.50)}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

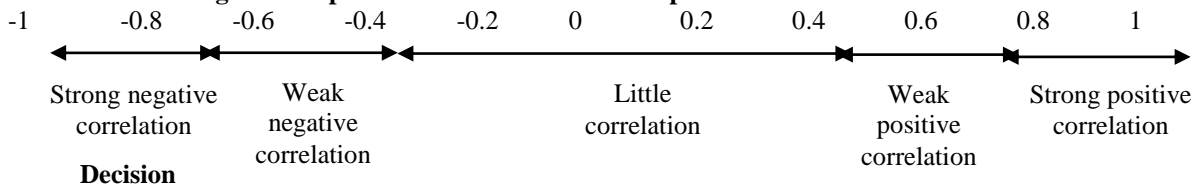
$$r_s = 1 - \frac{2 \times 18.50}{5(5^2 - 1)}$$

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{37}{120}$$

$$r_s = 1 - 0.308$$

$$r_s = 0.691$$

Fig. 5: Interpretation of the result of the Spearman correlation coefficient



Decision

The result of the Spearman Correlation Coefficient ($r_s = 0.691$) shows a positive correlation, we hereby reject the H_0 and accept the H_1 which says that “there is a correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria.”

IX. Summary Of Results

From analysis of the data, the following results were obtained:

- i. Nigerian politicians do not significantly employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns.
- ii. The level of ethical public relations practices in the electioneering behavior of most Nigerian politicians is not significant.
- iii. There is significant correlation between unethical PMPR communications and electoral violence in Nigeria.

X. Discussion

As revealed by our number one result, Nigerian politician do not significantly employ ethical political marketing communications in their electioneering campaigns, which forms part of the reasons for the incessant electoral feuds, violence, conflicts and crises in the electoral history of the country. This result is supported by the report of the Nigeria Watch database that between the period of June 2006 and May 2014 there were 915 fatal incidents related to elections in Nigeria. The report added that a total of 3,934 deaths were recorded from these 915 incidents, with the highest prevalence in Plateau State and the lowest in Jigawa State. As the main stakeholders of electoral processes, political parties and politicians were directly involved in the electoral violence (Bello, 2015).

The number two result revealed that the level of ethical public relations practices in the electioneering behavior of most Nigerian politicians is not significant, apart from the consequent electoral violence accruing from that, this creates a wide gulf between the politicians and the electorates. The politicians and their political parties through a culture of unethical communications often incite the masses into acts of violence against one another. According to Alemika (2011), violence has been a feature of the country’s electoral process since the colonial era. For instance according to the Transition

Monitoring Group (TMG, 2007), a coalition of 170 NGOs in Nigeria, in 2003, the election was characterized by violence, corruption, and the falsification of results. In 2007, foreign and national monitors observed that violence, corruption, fraud, and manipulations marked the acclaimed “do-or-die election.” While in the 2011 elections, there were violence that claimed 800 lives over three days in Northern

Nigeria and displaced 65,000 people, making the elections the most violent in Nigeria's history (Bekoe, 2011).

These were because, majority of the politicians and political parties employed unethical public relations practices of buying votes either from the electorates or from the electoral bodies that are supposed to serve as impartial umpires. This is a very sad commentary and unarguably one of the major reasons for the frequent post-election violence and truncation of democracy by the Nigerian military, who usually claim to be on salvation missions (Odigbo, 2003). Hence, the correlation between the unethical political marketing public relations communications cum behavior of the politicians and electoral violence in the country, as the number three result revealed.

XI. Recommendations

Mindful of the findings of this study, the researchers recommended as follows:

- i. Nigerian politicians and political parties should be educated to drop unethical marketing communications practices in shopping for votes during elections.
- ii. Politicians and political parties in Nigeria must endeavour to employ public relations research in articulating the feelings, opinions and needs of the electorates, in order to package appropriate manifestoes, programmes and projects that could suitably satisfy those needs.
- iii. For peace to reign in the country, they must also instill ethical public relations practices in their electioneering behavior at all times.
- iv. Finally, the politicians and political parties should imbibe ethical public relations practices by dropping the electioneering behavior of vote buying, electoral officers' buying, voters' buying, electoral gangsterism, thuggery and manipulation of election results, all of which are the off-s hoot of electoral violence in Nigeria.

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