



Mass Media and Electioneering Campaign in Kogi State: A Study of the 2019 Gubernatorial Election in Lokoja Metropolis

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Abstract

The mass media remains a critical stakeholder in any democracy. Moreover, since the return of Nigeria to democratic rule on May 29, 1999. The mass media have remained key in deepening democracy at all levels of governance in the country. However, the influence of the mass media in the conduct of the 2019 gubernatorial election in Kogi State have not been large investigated in the literature. Therefore, this study seeks to achieve the following research objectives: Determine the influence of the electioneering campaign in the mass media on voting behaviour of the electorate; Find out other factors that affect their voting behaviour; Besides, survey design was adopted with data collected from both primary and secondary sources while multiple regression analysis was adopted to analyse the data collected. The study revealed that the electorate made rational choice. Meanwhile, the personality of the individual voters matters a lot. This explains why the electorate voted the candidates of their choice because they naturally liked them and because as members of a group, they were told to vote a particular candidate; not because they were given money, intimidation crowds out voting behaviour⁹⁹, from their ethnic group, from the same political party, promised a better job. This study recommend that political parties should curtail the large sum of money spent on election campaign.

Keywords: Mass media, Election, Gubernatorial, Voting, Lokoja

1.0 Introduction

The beauty of life is made obvious because people live in group. But the beauty of life and meaning will not be seen without communication even though people live in group. Communication is, therefore, the wheel of life. Without it, who we are and what we believe in will not be known by others. In the society, people know one another through communication, and are also understood by one another through communication.

There are different types of communication such as: intra-personal, personal, group,

political and mass communication. Among the types of communication, our concern is on mass communication. This type of communication takes place in the mass media. Media is the plural form of medium. So, mass media refer to the various means through which mass information is disseminated to large number of people, who are not connected to one another but may receive the information simultaneously. There are basically eight different mass media and each of these falls under any of the broad categories. They are radio, television, film, books, sound recordings,



newspapers, magazines and the internet (Anthony & Momoh, 2020).

The mass media are the most popular means of communication channels. They are used for different purposes including, dissemination of information, for the education of the masses, for entertainment purpose, for advertising products and services and sometimes for propaganda. The mass media are, therefore, tools in the hands of many; people who used them for different purposes. Politicians also use them to reach out to the electorate during campaign. So, the mass media and electioneering campaign in Nigeria have a long history.

Before the independence of Nigeria as a sovereign state, there had existed several mass media channels of newspaper, radio and television. These channels, especially the newspaper, were used by politicians for campaign purposes. In fact, some of the newspapers were established by the politicians. Prominent among the politicians who established their own newspapers were the late Nnamdi Azikiwe; who established the West African Pilot in 1937 and Obafemi Awolowo; who established the Tribune newspaper in 1949. These newspapers, together with the Western Nigerian Television established in 1959, Eastern Nigerian Television in 1960, Northern Nigerian Television, established in 1962, and which primarily served regional interests were also used for political purposes (Momoh, 2019).

Till today, the mass media remain the predominant means through which electioneering campaigns are done in Nigeria by politicians, especially those who seek for political offices on the platforms of big political parties like the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All-Progressives Congress (APC). Through the different mass media, these politicians

canvass for votes from the electorate and make promises that are not redeemed when elected. But the essence of using the mass media for electioneering campaign by these politicians is to pass on their messages and promises to a large number of people.

In Kogi State, before the November 16 Governorship Election, candidates campaigned for votes from the electorate across the 21 Local Government Areas of the state. Therefore, the radio, television, newspaper, magazine, the social media and the outdoor media were used by the politicians and their political parties to seek for votes. This study is, therefore, on Mass Media and Electioneering Campaign in Nigeria, with a focus on the 2019 Governorship Election in Lokoja-the Kogi State capital. It is against this background; this study seeks to provide answers to the following research questions: Do the electorate in Lokoja expose themselves to the mass media during the 2019 Governorship election in Kogi State? Does the electioneering campaign in the mass media influence voting behaviour of the electorate? What other factors affect voting behaviour of the electorate? Do electorate consider the 2019 gubernatorial election credible?

2. Literature Review

There are growing studies on mass media and electioneering campaign. In a study by Lawan and Mohammed (2018) entitled "The role of mass media in political socialization which focus on the 2015 general election in Nigeria" it was established that the mass media has done a lot in their role as a watch dog and public opinion formation role. The study, however, unraveled that ethnicity, ownership structure, sensationalism and corruption are some of the fundamental factors that have compromised the efficiency of the media in fostering effective



political socialization in Nigeria. In view of this, the study recommends that the media in Nigeria must assist in building and maintaining an environment conducive for effective political socialization in the country. However, Lawan and Mohammed study does not examine the influence of Mass Media on Electioneering Campaign in the 2019 Governorship Election in Lokoja, Kogi State.

Udeze and Akpan (2013) in their study of the influence of political advertising on the choice of governorship candidates in Imo State during the 2011 governorship election, revealed that majority of the electorate in the State were exposed to political advertising, mainly on radio which to a large extent influenced the choice of candidates during the governorship election. However, the above studies do not examine the influence of Mass Media on Electioneering Campaign in the 2019 Governorship Election in Lokoja, Kogi State.

Sule, Sani and Mat (2017) in their study examined the extent to which the 2015 Presidential Election differs from the previous Presidential Elections in Nigeria. The study revealed that the 2015 Presidential Election was different to some extent with the previous Presidential Polls in Nigeria in term of voters' influence. The influence was attributed to factors such as: religious affiliation, ethnicity, regionalism, nepotism, issue-based politics including corruption, insecurity, poverty, unemployment, among others which influenced political behaviour of the electorate. However, the study does not examine the influence of Mass Media on Electioneering Campaign in the 2019 Governorship Election in Lokoja, Kogi State.

Kachii, (2018) assessed the impact of political advertising on voting behavior of

electorate in Benue State. The study was conducted to unravel the influence of politically motivated campaign songs during the 2015 elections on electorate in Benue State. The study revealed that campaign songs only created the political atmosphere and promoted political candidates, but did not guarantee electoral victory. Moses (2019) in his study of Electoral violence and its implication on Nigeria's democracy in Bayelsa state unraveled that the election was characterized by violent activities which no doubt flawed the electoral process. In fact, the election was marred with all sort of sharp practices such as intimidation, vote buying, rigging and destruction of both sensitive and non-sensitive materials and so on. As a result of this, the research recommended among others that there should be massive re-orientation of the electorates and politicians on the need to accept defeat and embrace dialogue in any electoral contest. Nevertheless, the above studies do not examine the influence of Mass Media on Electioneering Campaign in the 2019 Governorship Election in Lokoja, Kogi State.

Lawal and Momoh (2019) in a study entitled "Vote buying and electoral integrity in the 2018 gubernatorial election in Ekiti State" identified key implications of vote buying on the conduct of credible elections in future elections in Ekiti State such that present situation has provided poor voters the opportunities to see election as a period when their vote can be sold to the highest bidder...On the whole, the implication of vote buying on Nigeria's electoral processes has resulted to various degrees of irregularities that have questioned the level of electoral integrity in the country. The researchers therefore recommended that there is need to strengthen the existing legal framework to guide against vote buying



such as the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended 2015) in order to address some of the notable inconsistencies and potential loopholes in the Electoral Act. Despite, the contributions of Lawal and Momoh's study, it does not examine the influence of Mass Media on Electioneering Campaign in the 2019 Governorship Election in Lokoja, Kogi State. It is against this background; this study seeks to make contributions to this research area.

3. Theoretical Framework

This work is supported by two theories: sociological and rational choice theories. The sociological theory is said to have been developed following the works of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, titled "The People's Choice", and published in 1944. It was about the U.S. presidential election at that time. The theory says that behaviour of electorate is tied to their sociological construct. It means the groups, class, age grade and association etcetera. It also says that voters or electorate remain rooted in group's interest and reflections, rather than having feelings for a political party due to family influence (Momoh, 2019). The theory, while holding that the media have limited effect on voting decision, noted that social group and personality of the individual voters determine their voting behaviour. As noted by Heywood (2007:267), the theory links voting behaviour to group membership, suggesting that electors tend to adopt a voting pattern that reflects the economic and social position of the group to which they belong. Rather than developing a psychological attachment to a party on the basis of family influence, this model highlights the importance of social alignment, reflecting the various divisions and tensions within society. The most significant of these

divisions are class, gender, ethnicity, religion and region.

Rational choice theory also known as Economic Theory of Democracy, is attributed to Anthony Downs, following is work titled "An Economic Theory of Democracy.", published in 1957. According to Rui (2010:158), the operation of the model is based on three fundamental premises: (1) all decisions — those that are made by voters and political parties— are rational, ie, guided by self-interest and enforced in accordance with the principle of maximization of action's utility; (2) the democratic political system implies a level of consistency that supports predictions about the consequences of decisions made by voters and political parties, ie, their agents — voters, parties and government — are responsible and trustworthy, which makes it possible to make predictions about the consequences that result from different choices, and (3) the democratic system assumes — despite the consistency stated in the previous point — a level of uncertainty, sufficiently important to allow different options. From the above submissions, it means that the theory holds that voters' behaviour and decision are based on interest and the utility (benefits) to derive from voting. The theory is not categorical about whether voters' interest is immediate or futuristic. That is, whether they will gain immediate gratification or fulfillments that will come when a government is formed. However, it has established that voters are rational, and even when persuaded by politicians and their parties, they react or respond based on their interests and envisaged gains. It means that voters are active participants in electoral processes.

The two theories are, therefore, relevant to this study. There is an interface between the



theories. While, the sociological theory posits that voters behaviour is dependent on groups to which they belong as well as their personality rather than too much influence from exposure to the media, the Rational Choice theory talks about voters' interest and benefits which are pursued rationally. The link is that group has common goal to pursue and protect. Individuals also have interests to protect. So, anything outside the group's and individuals' interests will not be rationally pursued, irrespective of persuasion and media messages.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted the Survey method because of the nature which requires people's opinion.

Population of Study

According to 2006 census exercise, the population of Lokoja, the Kogi State capital is 195, 261. Meanwhile, the Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room for Kogi State Governorship Election, 2019, states that Lokoja has 137.301 registered voters but 118, 673 has Permanent Voters' Cards (www.placng.org).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The population of study is 137301, and a sample of 400 will be used for this study. The sample size was arrived at using Taro Yamane's formula in calculating what would be the appropriate sample size considering the number of voters with Permanent Voters Card.

1 + N (e)^2

Where N = Total Population

E = Degree of Difference

Therefore,

137301 / (1 + 137301) * (0.05)^2

137301 / (1 + 137301) * (0.0025)

137301 / (1 + 137301) * 0.0025 = 344.2525 / 398.8

Approximately 400

So, 400 is the sample size for work.

Meanwhile, stratified random sampling was adopted for the study. Stratified random sampling was considered "because it assures for more representation of every segment of the population". Therefore, Lokoja was segmented into 10 areas: Felele, Old Market, Adankolo, Lokogoma phase 1, Lokogoma phase 2, Kabawa, Gadumu, New layout, Peace Community and Ganaja.

4.2 Research Instrument

Questionnaire was the research instrument used for this study. The questionnaire was designed in unambiguous words to obtain the views of the respondents.

4.3 Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity of the research instrument, it was submitted to Authority in the research area who approved it after assessing it.

4.4 Method of Data Collection

The researcher personally distributed the copies of the questionnaire to respondents at the designated areas. It took several days for the researcher to conclude the work.

4.5 Model Specification

In order to determine the influence of electioneering campaign in the mass media on voting behaviour of the electorates and the possibility of other factors affecting voting behaviour, the study specifies a multiple linear regression model shown in equation 3.1.

Y = f(X) ----- 3.1

Where Y stands for voting behaviour and X stands for list of explanatory variables such as knowledge of the candidate,



persistent campaign by in various mass media and campaign by political parties.

Equation (3.1) is the functional specification and the estimable specification is given by

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_{1i}X_i + u_i \text{ ----- } 3.2$$

Where

i stand for individual respondents and *u_i* is the error term

However, in order to incorporate other factors that affect voting behaviour other than the factors specified in equation 3.1, the study specifies equation 3.3 as

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_{1i}X_i + \alpha_iZ_i + u_i \text{ --- } 3.3$$

Where

i stand for individual respondents and *u_i* is the error term

and Z stands for other variables such as electorate voted because heard it from my ethnic group, Members of my group agreed to vote for the candidate so I voted for him or her, electorate voted because I was humiliated by political thugs and I like candidate so I voted him or her.

However, equations (3.2) and (3.3) will be estimated separately.

5. Tables and Figures

5.1 Table 1 Showing gender of respondents

Sex	No	Percentage
Male	228	59.4

Female	156	40.6
Total	384	100

Source: (Survey, 2020)

Table 2 Showing Academic qualifications of respondents

Academic qualifications	Number	Percentage
SSCE	103	16.7
OND	91	22.9
HND	117	25
B.Sc.	73	6.3
Total	384	100

Source: (Survey, 2020)

Table 3 Showing Marital Status of respondents

Single	116	29.2
Married	243	66.7
Widow	18	3.1
Widower	7	1
Total	384	100

Source: (Survey, 2020)

Model Specification

5.2 Data Analysis

Influence of Electioneering Campaign in the Mass Media on Voting Behaviour of the Electorates



The influence of electioneering campaign in the mass media on voting behaviour of the

conform to their various a priori signs. It further shows that holding other variables in

Table 1: Regression output

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics		
	Coefficients				Beta	Tolerance	VIF
	B	Std. Error					
(Constant)	3.765	.246		15.276	.000		
I know about the candidate	.234	.043	.240	5.501	.000	.457	2.189
Candidate voted because of persistent campaign in various mass media	.084	.029	.087	2.881	.004	.952	1.050
Campaign by political parties	-.594	.043	-.606	-13.679	.000	.442	2.263

a. Dependent Variable: candidate voted because of election campaign on the various media

R – Squared 0.671 Adjusted R – Squared 0.671 DBW 2.01

electorates is evaluated in table 1. The standardized coefficients of the variables were used for interpretation.

Table 1 shows the regression of candidate who voted because of election campaign on the various media and the list of explanatory variables such as, ‘I know about the candidate due to campaign on various media’, ‘Candidate voted because of persistent campaign in various mass media’, and ‘Campaign by political parties on various media’. Looking at the entire model, the study revealed that the explanatory variable explained about 67.1 percent of the variations in candidates voting because of election campaign on the various media. The Durbin Watson value of 2.0 shows that the model is free from autocorrelation.

More so, it could be observed that all the explanatory variables were found to be statistically significant at 5 percent level. With the exception of ‘Campaign by political parties’, which assumed departed from a priori expectation, other explanatory variables in the model were found to be

the model constant, 1 percent increase in the knowledge of electorates about the candidate to be voted for in an election would lead to 24 percent increase the number of candidate who voted because of election campaign on various media. Similarly, persistent campaign in various mass media was found to exert positive and significant impact on candidate who voted because of campaign on various media. The study found that under ceteris paribus assumption, 1 percent increase in persistent campaign in various media would lead to 8.7 percent increase the number of candidate who voted because of election campaign on various media. Again, it was observed that campaign by political parties on various media crowds out the number of candidate who voted because of election campaign on various media. With this, the study found that holding other variables in the model constant, 1 percent increase in campaign by political parties on various media would lead to 6 percent decrease in the number of candidate who voted because of election



Model 2	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients				
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.509	.557		4.502	.000
I know about the candidate	.121	.050	.123	2.392	.017
Candidate voted because of persistent campaign in various mass media	.090	.033	.093	2.708	.007
Campaign by political parties	-.374	.079	-.381	-4.760	.000
Voted because heard it from my ethnic group	.140	.057	.138	2.467	.014
Members of my group agreed to vote for the candidate so I voted for him or her	.043	.040	.042	1.071	.285
Voted because I was humiliated by political thugs	-.349	.059	-.227	-5.871	.000
I like candidate so I voted him or her	.435	.072	.454	6.020	.000

campaign on various media. This is quite surprising as ordinarily, one would expect campaign by political parties on various media to spur the rate at which electorates vote during election. However, it could be pointed out that most electorates vote for candidates notwithstanding the candidate’s political parties.

Result of Other Factors that Affect Voting Behaviour

The behaviour of voters or electorates in whether to vote in an election is affected by a number of factors outside media publicity. It is in recognition of this that the study included other factors such as ‘Electorate voted because he or she heard it from ethnic group’, ‘member of my group agreed to vote for the candidate so I decided to vote for him’, ‘I voted because I was humiliated by political thugs’ and ‘I voted because I like the candidate’. Table 2 shows the result of other factors that affect voting behaviour and the magnitude of their impacts.

Table 2: Factors that Affect Voting Behaviour

a. Dependent Variable: candidate voted because of election campaign

R – Squared 0.714 Adjusted R – Squared 0.709 DBW 2.01

Table 2 shows the result of the factors affecting voting behaviour. It could be observed that most of the variables in the model were found to be statistically significant. Looking at the a priori expectation of the signs, the study found that campaign by political parties assumed the wrong a priori sign while the signs of other variables were observed to be in conformity with their theory postulate. The value of **R – Squared (0.714)** and **Adjusted R – Squared (0.709)**

have also increased indicating the relevance of the additional explanatory variables in the model. However, looking at the ceteris paribus interpretation of the individual impact of the explanatory variables on whether candidate voted because of election campaign, the study



found that holding other variables in the model constant, 1 percent increase in electorate knowledge of the candidate would lead to 12.3 percent chance of the electorate voting for that candidate. In other words, if the awareness of candidates by the electorates increases by 5 percent, the chances of that candidate being voted for would increase by (5*12.3 %) 61.5 percent. This indeed is significant and reflects the importance of publicity on choice of candidate for an election.

Similarly, the study shows that most electorates voted because of persistent campaign in various mass media. This is reflected in the fact that holding other variables in the model constant, 1 percent increase in persistent campaign in various mass media would lead to 9.3 percent increase in the candidate being voted for in an election. Meanwhile, the study found that Campaign by political parties discourages electorates from voting. The study found that under ceteris paribus assumption, 1 percent increase in campaign by political parties would lead to 38.1 percent decrease in the choice of that candidate being voted for in an election. This revealed that electorates do not cast their votes on the ground of political parties and are resent about the campaign of political parties.

Other important factors that play in the wheel of voting behaviour are ethnic group and humiliation. It is not surprising to find out that in multi-ethnicity country like Nigeria, ethnic group go as far as to influence voting behaviour in an election. The study found that holding other variables in the model constant, 1 percent increase in ethnic campaign would lead to about 13.8 percent increase in the voting behaviour of electorates. However, humiliation by thugs was found to crowd out voting behaviour. The study found that holding other variables

in the model constant, 1 percent increase in the rate of humiliation by thugs would lead to 22.7 decrease in voting behaviour. This is not surprising as most electorates would prefer to stay at home to being mal-handled by political thugs.

Lastly, electorates personal knowledge of the candidate for an election was found to be significant and positively affect voting behaviour. The study showed that holding other variables in the model constant, 1 percent increase in electorates knowledge of the candidate would lead to about 45.4 percent increase in voting behaviour

6. Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this work, the following recommendations are made:

Firstly, since electorates resent the campaign of political parties, parties should curtail the large sum of money spent on election campaign.

Secondly, candidates should make effort to relate with the electorates for better result.

Lastly, political thugs should not be used during election as it daunts voting behaviour.

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