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Communication Campaign and the need for Harnessing Women Population Advantage for Electoral Success in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Political participation such as voting in elections in Nigeria has shown that women often troop out en masse to exercise their franchise more than men. It is disheartening that the political space in Nigeria is still largely men affairs despite the huge population advantage of women often seen queuing up for hours to cast their vote during general elections. This study examines the place of communication campaign in harnessing women population advantage for women electoral success in Nigeria. The study was anchored on Communication Persuasion Matrix Model. Survey Research Method was adopted; questionnaire was used as research instrument for data collection. The population of the study is the population of all female students of School of Postgraduate Studies of Ebonyi State University. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS 20.0 version. Hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square Test of Independence. The study found that women's exposure to communication campaign has no significant relationship with women's electoral success in Nigeria. The study recommended that women population advantage should feature prominently in any communication campaign aimed at supporting women to salvage their present situation.

Keywords: Women, Political Participation, Nigeria, Communication Campaign.

INTRODUCTION

Women participation in political process in Nigeria is orchestrated with chauvinism to disadvantage of women. Over the years, communication campaigns of various dimensions are staged to sensitize women for successful utilization of their population advantage to achieve electoral victory. Reflecting on the significance of women in political process in Nigeria, [1], notes that

Nigerian women are an important voting bloc, because 49% to 50% of Nigeria populations are women. One of the cardinal tenets of democratic participation is the majority. These further puts women in front of every election contest since majority of them often troop out to exercise their franchise in any general election in Nigeria when compared with their male counterparts. [1], argue that the low level of political participation of women is becoming alarming and disturbing. They further postulate that this ugly development hampers women from contributing their quota to the development of Nigeria.

Channel TV, (2012) in [2], reports that the 2006 census puts Nigeria women at half the population of the entire country. [2], opines that despite the numerical advantage of women and the massive participation in voting, less than 20% of political offices are held by women. Comparing other Africa countries with Nigeria, [2], writes that Nigeria has the lowest

representation of 5.9% in the national legislature when compared to most other African countries. According to him, Uganda has 34.6%, South Africa has 34.2%, Ethiopia 27.7%, Cameroun 20%, Niger 12.3% and DR Congo has 8.0% national legislature representation respectively. [3], [4] and [5] observe that two-third of the country's 70% adult non-literate population constitutes women, as reported. According to [3], it is a fact that women constitute about 49% of the total population; though, they are discriminated against in the political process.

In Nigeria, women participation in politics is not proportionate to the 50% of the nation's population which they represent and has not translated into equal representation in political leadership positions [4]. The recommendations of 30% women participation in politics by Beijing Platform of Action and 35% of National Policy on Women in Nigeria is yet to yield the desired fruits [4]. Despite actions taken by Nigeria women groups, women

activist/advocates, civil society organization, international organization etc women participation in political and leadership position is less than 0.5%. Corroborating this assertion, [4], bodes that the present National Assembly in Nigeria has low average of 0.05% of women in both lower and upper houses of the bicameral legislature. [5] ,also avers that women who constitute the majority of the masses are held in political bondage, after the elections, they are easily forgotten and neglected. It is regrettable that although women constitute the greater number of the registered voters in any election held in Nigeria, they are yet to experience full representative position [6].

[7], states that it is quite unfortunate that women in Nigeria do not have expected confidence in the leadership abilities of their fellow women and do not support them to win election but if they are ready to change these long-held perception by men, they should resolve to support one another in

pursuance of their political ambitions. They observed factors such as envy, jealousy and other problems associates with interpersonal relations are common with women, generally most women would rather vote or support men to win election than their fellow women in spite of their numerical strength.

Due to cultural chauvinism and other factors that does not support/promote women population advantage in Nigeria electoral process, [7] further conclude that women in Nigeria are viewed by men as inferior, second class citizens, weaker sex, people to be seen and not to be heard, child bearers, primary care-givers, they wondered if Nigeria political terrain will ever assume a favourable posture for the women folk. [4] says that most Nigerians including women still believe and accept the traditional believes that view that women are inferior to men because of the patriarchal nature of Nigeria. This problems associated with women participation in politics

is not peculiar to Nigeria political atmosphere alone. In Kenya, for instance, out of 222 parliamentary seats in Kenya between 2008-2012, only 16 seats were won by women representing 9.9% [8].

Despite their huge population advantage, studies shows that women participation in politics are hindered by a lot of factors, these includes discriminatory practices against women, wrong perception of women in politics, unhealthy political environment, media negative reports, cultural imperialism, purdah system, economic status etc. These are some of the major factors militating against women in politics [4]; [9].

All these odds, women population

POPULATION ADVANTAGE OF NIGERIAN WOMEN FOR ELECTORAL SUCCESS

The population strength of women in Nigeria denigrates their political representation in both elective and appointment positions, which is why [12] writes that aspirations and concerns of women, who represent majority of population of the country, have been undisputedly discarded. The Nigerian women in many contests have made an

advantages in Nigeria politics notwithstanding, hinder woman full participation in politics. According to records from the National Population Commission [10], the fact remains that women constitute about 56% of the total population of the country yet they have about 0.5% representation in the country's parliament and other decision making positions in the country. This is not encouraging. Arguing on why Nigeria's electoral process records more women losers than winners, [11], writes that it is largely due to the sentimental attachment on feminine gender.

indelible mark in nation building.

[13], observes that despite their numerical strength in terms of population; there is no time in the history of the nation when women came together in support of any woman candidate in major elections in Nigeria, even when there are empirical evidence that they constituted about half of the total

population of the country. [13] further notes that regardless of the major roles they play and in conjunction with their population, Nigerian society has not given due recognition of the vital roles they play such as a mother, producer, time manager, community organizer, social and political activists.

The challenges of women participation in politics in Nigeria has been advocated in many academic literatures. A study by [14] recommends that women need to critically sensitize themselves to change the negative attitude and perception they exhibit against their fellow women when issue of galvanizing support for any women's active participation in politics is being debated. The study conducted by [15] shows a marginal participation of women in the decision-making of the political parties of National Republic Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). In the same vein, [4], records that during the formation of political parties

leading to the Fourth Republic, no female featured prominently in the party process. Since independence till 1999, [7], bodes that only about 3.1% of women were elected into political office and 5% alone into appointive positions. Thus, Nse [15], contents that women subjugation in societies they (women) are numerically dominant portends grave danger when issues for their emancipation and empowerment are in focus. There seems to be a consensus opinion that Nigerian women constitutes about half of the population of the country [15].

The dominance in academic literatures on the possible causes of low patronage of women despite their population in political landscape of the country as reported by [16] includes but not limited to poor political capital amongst female candidates, lack of resources to prosecute political campaigns, discriminatory laws, gender-insensitive policies, lack of internal party democracy, lack of access to strong political affiliations

by women, inability to compete in violent or fraudulent political settings, gender discrimination,

socio-cultural barriers, religious norms and practices, gender-based violence, etc.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FOR WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

The term strategic communication becomes popular over the last two decades. It implies infusing communication effort with an agenda and master plan (www.idea.org). Therefore, that master plan involves promoting the brand of an organization, urging people to undertake specific action to correct unfair policy of government or advocating for a particular legislation that command the support of the masses (www.idea.org).

[17],assert that strategic communication is the purposeful use of communication by individual, groups, or organization to fulfill its mission. [17], outlines six basic stages for deploying strategic communication for effective and efficient result to include; proper management, marketing, public relations, technical communication, political communication and

information/social marketing campaigns. [18],observe that ineffective communication strategy has been the cause of ethnic and religious differences among citizens which in their word „makes development agenda a difficult task to implement“. Conceptualizing the term strategic communication, [18] write that communication strategy is conceptualized as a functional strategy that provides focus and direction to the communication functions.

Political communicationbeing one of the basic approachto achieve result in any political contest or in an organizational level need to address Nigerianwomen“s need to reclaim their pride of place by adopting a lucid communication approach that will harp on their population advantage for electoral victory.

The prominent role of strategic communication as stressed by [18] is a powerful force for change in

both developed and developing countries. Effective women participation in election and governance of Nigeria has been one of the most discussed political epitaphs in the country's history, though with passive communication approach. That is why [19] succinctly posit that "strategic communication is an active communication process based on sharing determined messages with the public opinion in the frame of vision and goals, influencing and manipulating the perception of public opinion positively".

In Nigeria, lack of proper communication planning, tactics and correct coding in the past marred most communication campaigns aimed at making women to be part of major political players in the country. Corroborating this assertion, [19], reports that strategic communication; embodies planning, development of tactics, correct information coding to provide effective perception of the message, conveying the message to the target audiences in the most

smooth and effective way and using the most developed technology. These distinctive characteristics of the strategic communication make it valuable and effective besides proper using, provides successful results. Strategic communication is a notion that is generally used for describing the planned communication campaign. American strategic communication consultant Emil Goldman; described strategic communication as "a strategy influencing attitude and behaviour" Karagöz, in [19].

Analyzing the power of strategic communication, [4] writes that strategic communication is not a novel concept used as means for propaganda, media interaction, marketing/advertisement and information operations; such thinking actually limits the influence of strategic communication by oversimplifying its range and activities. With effective, clear plan and direct implementation mechanism; strategic communication (SC) could prove to be the only approach that

successive government in Nigeria should adopt if the clamor for electoral success and inclusive

democracy that allow women to contribute their quarter is to be met.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women participation in politics has been advocated in many quarters, both at national and international levels. In these international and national fora, advocacies for more inclusiveness of women in both elective and appointment positions have been made. Some of these advocacies are; the issue of 35 percent affirmative action in Nigeria, United Nation Declarations on human right, the Beijing Platform for Action, The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2005 These advocacies were done employing various communication campaigns to draw support for enhanced women participation in politics. But available statistics still support the status quo where men not only dominate but set the political tone even with their numerical disadvantages. Despite these litanies of activism for women

emancipation from their political oubliette not much has been achieved. Research has also shown that the result of well-coordinated, organized, managed and focused strategic communication campaign over the years has always given fruitful and result oriented outcome. Available statistics of women population in Nigeria and their status in terms of elective and appointive positions does not portray effective correlation in all quantitative measures. Many communication campaigns have been put in place in all levels of governance in Nigeria to encourage women participation in politics, but none had been strategically channeled to educate women on their population advantage over their male counterparts and to utilize their population strength in galvanizing for their political liberation and freedom. Women in

high positions both elective and appointive are less than acceptable benchmark and below global acceptable standards in Nigeria.

The literature linking women population advantage and strategic communication for women's electoral success in Nigeria is still unexplored. This provides a context for examination of the

relationship between women's electoral success and women population advantage in Nigeria. This study therefore, tends to enhance the understanding on causal link between women population advantage in Nigeria and women's electoral success.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of strategic communication campaigns (SCC) in harnessing women population advantage in Nigeria's electoral process. Specifically, the study set out to;

1. examine the rate of women exposure to communication campaigns.

4. find out the link between communication campaigns on women population advantage and women's electoral success in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Communication Persuasion Matrix Model

This study is framed on communication Persuasion Matrix Model (CPMM). The model is one of the earliest approaches to attitude change through communication campaigns with the assumption that effective influence of any

communication campaigns requires a sequence of coordinated steps to be effective and result driven [20]. This model was developed by Williams J. McGuire while trying to analyze how mass media messages especially public communication

campaigns can persuade people to align their thought, approach and actions with the content of the message.

Communication persuasion matrix model was largely an attempt by scholars to correlate communication campaigns with its acceptability through a lay down procedures; these procedures include, exposure/presentation, attentions/awareness, comprehension/understanding, acceptance, retention and action (<http://ivanteh-runningman.blogspot.com.ng>).

Effectiveness of communication campaigns requires certain measureable tendencies to track its acceptability or otherwise [20]. The persuasive nature of mass media messages and its influence on the target audience can be aggregated by putting side by side the objectives of the campaign and its outcome. [20] argue that CPMM

outlines the inputs (or independent variables) to the persuasion process that potential persuaders can control along with the outputs (or dependent variables) that can be measured to see if any influence attempt is successful. Social communication campaigns often creates an imprint in the minds of the audience thereby expose them to the content of the campaign and create certain degree of attention to the information [21]. Communication campaigns across the spectrum of health, pro-social and environmental domains practically shares some element of similarities to commercial advertising campaign [21]. Information processing and mental comprehension, interpretative perceptions, cognitive connections and emotional reactions of communication campaigns influence the major objective of the campaign.

HYPOTHESES

Based on the available literature, we make the following assumptions:

1. H_1 There is no significant difference between exposure to communication campaigns

and women's electoral victory in Nigeria.

2. H₁ There is no link between communication campaigns on

women population advantage and women's electoral success in Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHOD

(a) Design and Sample

To answer the research questions and accept/reject the hypotheses, we sampled the opinion of 150 female students of Postgraduate School of Ebonyi State University. Ebonyi State University is owned and managed by Ebonyi State Government. According to the latest National Universities Commission (NUC) current ranking of states owned universities in Nigeria, Ebonyi State University ranked among the best ten state owned universities in Nigeria (<http://educacinfo.com>).

Ebonyi State University has eight faculties and 56 departments/academic programmes going by the records obtained at the Directorate of Academic Planning of the institution. The influx of female

students at the postgraduate level may not be unconnected with this ranking by NUC. Out of eight faculties, Faculty of Education was randomly picked for the study. Bio-Academic data of registered postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education shows that the number of registered female PhD students is 199, M.Ed is 484 students and PGDE is 137, given a total of 820 female postgraduate students in the Faculty of Education where the sample of the study were drawn (Bio-Metric Unit of SPGS, 2017). Bowle's (1952) proportionate technique was used to assign sample elements to each of the categories (Ph.D, M.Ed and PGDE) of registered female students. Two administrative staff of Postgraduate

School in charge of the selected faculty was used to administer 150 copies of the instrument to all categories of postgraduate school students. Out 150 instruments

administered, a total of 143 copies were found to be useable for the study.

CONCEPTS AND MEASUREMENTS

The demographic details of the respondents relevant to the study objective were ascertained through nominal scales of: Gender: Female, 1. Marital status: Single 1, Married, 2, divorced, 3. Widowed, 4. Age: 18-25, 1; 26-35, 2; 36-45, 3; and 46-and above, 4. Educational qualification: B.Ed, 1; PGDE, 2; M.Ed, 3.

Examining the rate of women exposure to communication campaigns, three questions were raised. The first is the respondent's ability to identify any communication campaign, the rate of women exposure to communication campaigns and medium of exposure to communication campaigns. To determine their ability to identify communication campaigns and rate

of exposure to communication campaign, nominal and ordinal options were employed. Both nominal and ordinal options of „Yes“, „No“, and „Not Sure“ were adopted as units of measurement. „Every hour“, „twice a day“, „once a day“, „weekly“, and radio, television, newspaper, billboard, posters, internet were used to measure the rate and medium of exposure respectively.

To measure communication campaigns and its influence on voting behaviours of respondents; questions such as the influence of communication campaigns on the voting attitude of women, were asked. These were measured in Likert Scale with mean ($M = 3.0$) value and above. To test the hypotheses, Chi-Square Test of Independence was used to examine

mean significant differences between communication campaign, women's population advantage and women's electoral success in Nigeria. The significance level was

0.05. Data were coded and entered in excel sheet and were analyzed using SPSS 20.0 version software.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data collected in the field were analyzed in this section, its implication were discussed in accordance with the general objective of the study.

Table 1 below shows the demographic variables of the respondents. Since the study centers on female folk, sex variables was not necessary. For marital

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Marital Status		
Single	36	25.2
Married	107	74.8
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
Total	143	100
Age		
18 - 25	-	-
26 - 35	39	27.3
36 - 45	81	56.7
46 -55	23	16.0
56 - and above	-	-
Total	143	100
Educational		
Qualification	87	60.8
B.Ed	31	21.7
PGDE	25	17.5
M.Ed	45	31.5
Total	143	100

status, single were 36(25.2%) while the married were 107(74.8%), while divorced and widowed recorded no entries. This indicated that the married were the major participant in the study. Respondents age shows that 36-45 age bracket recorded the highest entry of 81 (56.7%), followed by 26-35, 39 (27.3%) while 46-55 had the least entry of 23 (16.0%). Analyzing the education

qualification, the result obtained indicated that respondents with B.Ed had the highest entry of 87 (60.8%). PGDE and M.Ed recorded 31(21.7%) and 25(17.5%) respectively. This outcome shows that the majority of respondents that participated in the study were B.Ed holders. See table 1 below for more details.

Table 1: Demographic Variables of Respondents

Respondent's ability to identify or recognize communication campaigns were highlighted in Figure 1 below. It shows that 89 (62.2%) affirmed that they can identify communication campaigns. The No item recorded 33(23.0%) while Not Sure had a record of 21(14.8%). The implication of this finding suggest that majority of those that participated in the study can actually identify communication campaigns geared towards women population advantage in Nigeria. See Figure 1 above for further details.

Figure 1: Ability to Identify Communication Campaigns Messages

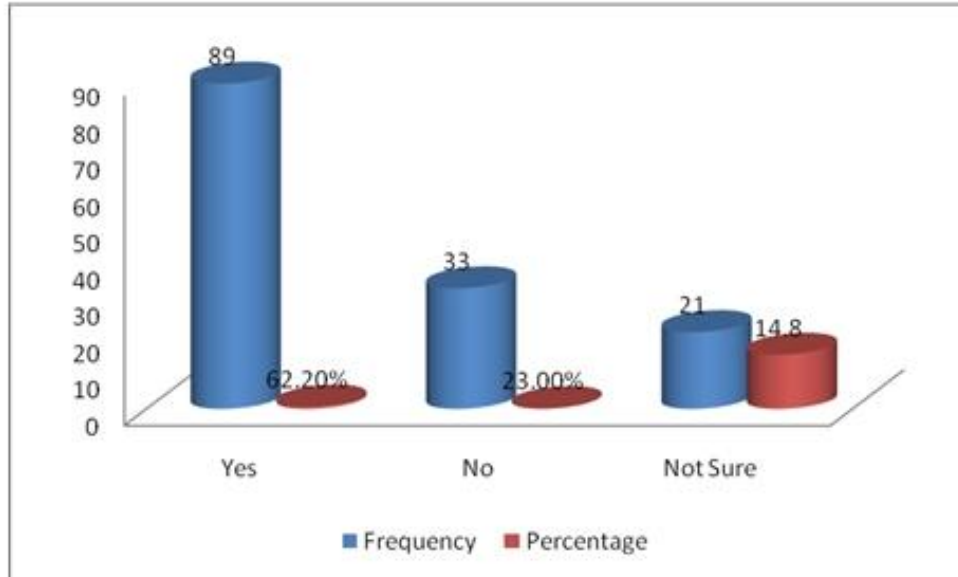


Table 2 below showed that the rate of women exposure to communication campaigns is predominated by once a day 73 (51.1%). Twice a day was 42(29.4%), while every hour, weekly had a

record of (n=10, 6.9%) and (n=18, 12.6%) respectively. The implication of this findings is that greater number of participant's expose themselves to communication campaigns once a day.

Table 2: The Rate of Women Exposure to Communication Campaigns

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Every Hour	10	6.9
Once a Day	73	51.1
Twice a Day	42	29.4
Weekly	18	12.6
Total	143	100

Table 3 below examine medium of exposure to communication campaigns by women. Analyses of this item in the questionnaire indicated that radio and television recorded the highest frequency of (n=67, 46.8% and n=42, 29.4). For those whose medium of exposure to communication campaigns on women population advantage for electoral success was newspaper recorded (n=12, 8.4%). Those whose medium of exposure to communication campaigns were billboards, posters and internet

recorded less frequencies of (n=8, 5.6%; n=5, 3.5% and n=9, 6.5%). The implication of this finding is that radio and television remain the most effective medium of exposure of women to any communication campaign. This also corroborated the previous study of [22], who conducted a study on Evaluation of the Media Campaign on Breast Cancer in Edo State and found that women were more exposed to radio and television communication campaigns in Edo State. (See table 3 below).

Table 3: Medium of Exposure to Communication Campaigns

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	67	46.8
Television	42	29.4
Newspaper	12	8.4
Billboard	8	5.6
Posters	5	3.5
Internet	9	6.3
Total	143	100

Table 4: Mean Scores, Std. Dev. & Statistical Decisions on Communication Campaigns Influence on Voting Behaviour and Women Electoral Success in Nigeria

Item	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision Rule
Campaign communication messages that advocate for women population advantage influences my voting behaviour?	143	2.4965	1.08689	Rejected
Communication campaign messages that advocate for women population advantage abounds	143	3.3636	1.28669	Accepted
Communication campaigns guarantees women electoral success in Nigeria	143	2.4266	1.23042	Rejected

Communication campaigns influence on voting behaviour and women electoral success in Nigeria. Three items took care of this research question. The first focused on communication campaigns that influence voting behaviour of women. The demonstration of a mean of (M=1.2) in the first item with frequency of (n=8, 5.6%)

showed rejection or disagreement with the statement (see table 4 above). The second item addressed the availability of communication campaign on women population advantage with the mean value of (M=3.3) showed a frequency of (n=73, 51.0%) agreed with the statement in table 4 above. The implication of this finding is that

despite vigorous communication campaigns in various media platforms for women electoral success in Nigeria, the anticipated result are elusive.

Table 5: Women Exposure to Communication Campaigns and Electoral Success in Nigeria

Women exposure to communication campaigns	Communication campaigns guarantees women					Total
	SD	D	U	A	SA	
SD	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (7.0%)	10(7.0%)
D	0(0.0%)	28 (19.6%)	25 (17.5%)	18 (12.6%)	2 (1.4%)	73 (51.0%)
U	18 (12.6%)	24 (16.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	42 (29.4%)
A	18(12.6%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	18 (12.6%)
SA	36(25.2%)	52(36.4%)	25(17.5%)	18(12.6%)	12(8.4%)	143 (100.0%)

Calculated chi-square = 230.444; df = 12; P-value = 0.000; chi-square critical = 21.026

Table 5 above showed the chi-square test of independence which tested the mean difference in women exposure to communication campaigns and electoral success in Nigeria. The

alternate hypotheses were rejected; this shows that women exposure to communication campaigns does not guarantee their electoral success.

CONCLUSION

The study indicated that the majority of those that participated in the study can actually identify communication campaigns geared towards women population advantage and women's electoral success in Nigeria. The study showed that radio and television are the most effective medium for women's exposure to communication campaigns. We also observed zero relationships between women exposure to communication campaigns and women's electoral success in Nigeria.

The fact that Communication campaign message that advocate for women population advantage is always championed in various media platforms; but it does not guarantee influence of such communication campaign on the target audience. The effective use of such communication campaign to drive for inclusiveness of women's electoral success cannot be reconciled with available data when the proportions of men in elective positions is placed side by side with that of women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study therefore, recommends as follows;

1. That radio and television be used for communication campaign since there are the best mediums for women exposure to communication campaigns.

2. Strategic communication campaigns should critically highlight population advantage of women when galvanizing for support to women for more inclusive political participation as Nigeria general election year draws closer

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