



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

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GAME THEORY AS ANOTHER PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF POLITICAL MARKETING: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIA'S ELECTORAL PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

A number of scholars in political marketing have noted that political marketing is a concept originating from a set of philosophical foundations. These foundations are marketing, political and stakeholder theories (Banes 1996, Lees-Marshment, 1999; Scammel, 2003; etc). But our present study captures 'game theory' as another critical foundation of political marketing practice. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling are used to clarify the relationship between game theory and political marketing. The research findings which is based on a survey of political marketers, suggest that game theory explains a significant proportion of the variance in the degree of political marketing programme implementation. The paper concludes with respect to the explanatory power of game theory in the context of political marketing strategy.

KEYWORDS

philosophical foundations, politics, marketing, game theory, relationship.

INTRODUCTION

In view of the profound impact of political marketer's decisions on the well-being of electorates and other stakeholders, it is important for political parties to have specific guidelines to develop and implement marketing strategies in socially responsive ways (Robin and Reinenbach, 1987). This paper therefore builds on the research dealing with the concept of political marketing.

Political marketing has been defined as a marriage between marketing and political science designed to enhance electorate well-being of the stakeholders (citizens, corporate bodies, international community and the environment).

The concept of political marketing has been described and discussed in a variety of contexts. For example, Philip Kotler argues that election campaigning has an inherently marketing character and that the similarities of salesmanship in business and politics far outweigh the difference. According to him, marketing strategy is at the heart of electoral success because it forces a campaign to put together, in a very short period of time, a winning relatively stable coalition of diverse and sometimes irreconcilable groups.

Scammel (1999) discussed how the concept of political marketing practice originated in the state of California, around the time of World War 1.

Guided by the concept of political marketing, Baines (1996), Scammel (1999) Lees-Marshment (2001) Wring (2002), and Newman (1999) tracked the sets of political actors in several studies. These actors include political parties, candidates for elections, electorates, party functionaries and supporters.

Consequently, political marketing application has moved from solely a communication tool to an integrated way of managing politics, be it policy development, permanent campaigning (Nimmo, 1999) or even governing (to the extent that government has become 'symbolic' in certain circumstances) (O'Shaughnessy, 2003)

The major objective of this paper, therefore, is to build on the research dealing with political marketing by proposing the inclusion of 'game theory' in the philosophical structure of political marketing.

The ultimate goal is to offer a deeper insight in a nomological sense. This perspective is expected to guide future empirical studies in political marketing. In addition, it should provide political marketers with practical guidelines on how to facilitate the development and implementation of marketing programme that enhance electorate well-being while preserving the well-being of the party's other stakeholders.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political marketing is a concept that originates from a set of philosophical foundations in political and marketing thoughts. These foundations include marketing (e.g. Scammel, 1999, Kotler, 1999, 2002), political science (e.g. Kavanagh, 1997; Lees-Marshment, 1999; Harrop and Nimmo, 2001), and stakeholder theory (e.g. Carrol, 1989; Evan and Freeman 1988; Freeman, 1984). We can now consider each of these foundations in turn.

POLITICAL MARKETING AS A CONCEPT ORIGINATING FROM MARKETING

Kotler (2002) has long argued that marketing thought can be viewed in terms of fundamental marketing strategies. He described the following philosophical concepts: production orientation, product orientation, selling orientation, marketing orientation, customer orientation, and societal marketing orientation.

Lees Marshment (2001) put this argument in proper perspective by positing that political parties can use marketing to increase their chances of achieving their goal of winning general elections. They alter aspects of their behaviour, including policy, membership, leadership and organizational structure, to suit the nature and demands of their market. They can do this by being product, sales or market-oriented.

A product-oriented party argues for what it stands for and believes in. It assumes that voters will realize that its ideas are the right ones and therefore vote for it. This type of party refuses to change its ideas or product even if it fails to gain electoral or membership support.

A sales-oriented party focuses on selling its argument to voters. It retains its pre-determined product design, but recognizes that desired supporters may not automatically want it. Using market intelligence to understand voters' response to its behaviour, the party employs the latest advertising and communication techniques to persuade voters that it is right. A sales-oriented party does not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers.

A market-oriented party designs its behaviour to provide voter satisfaction. It uses market intelligence to identify voter demands, then designs its product to suit them within the limits of available resources.

POLITICAL MARKETING AS AN EXTENSION OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Politics is essentially about power, but the struggle for power results in competition among political actors. Thus, the undergirding political practice is the struggle for power.

From another dimension, politics is about policy. Extending this view, Bruce Miller in Nzimiro (1992) states that policy is a matter of either the desire for change or the desire to protect something against change.

According to Nzimiro (1992), politics in modern society is expressed through political parties which are created to achieve the goals of society. This is why political parties are organized around specific ideas often called 'ideologies'. Originally they were formed from local communities and the spread of their influence evolve from the establishment of the electoral system.

Ohiwerei (2002) observed that the political party can be likened to a company, the party ideology to a company's mission statement; the party manifesto to a company's marketing strategy/ plans, and the party candidate to a brand. The logical conclusion following from this thought process is that political party, if it is to be effective and successful, should operate like a business or a company. Given this analogy, there is no gainsaying the relevance of marketing in politics. The success of any company depends on the success of its brands or services.

Similarly, the success of a political party in election depends on the success of its candidates. Political marketing shares with political science a desire to understand underlying process; and therefore creates explanatory models of party and voter behaviour. Political science typically links the marketing of politics to the decline of ideological cleavages, and the rise of Kirchheimer's famous 'catch-all' parties. The less clear the ideological divide, the more parties will have to rely on the techniques of marketing to manufacture. Catch-all cannot provide an adequate explanation of the entire political market. Political marketing instead looks to theories of competitive marketing strategy and market segmentation theory for alternative explanations.

POLITICAL MARKETING AS A CONCEPT EMBEDDED IN STAKEHOLDER THEORY

The stakeholder view of the political party holds that the party operates in a network of relationships. This means that the party engages in various exchange relationships with many exchange partners including supporters, electorate, competitors, other functional committees within the party, and various stakeholders in the society like civil society, trade unions, cultural associations, etc.(e.g. freeman, 1984, carrol 1989, Evan and Freeman, 1988; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Stakeholder theory is grouped in the literature of business ethics and corporate social responsibility(Carrol, 1989; Frederick, Davies, and post, 1988)

A party's marketing decisions affect the well – being of various stakeholders. For this purpose, a political marketing's stakeholders can be classified as external stakeholders, internal stakeholders, and distant stakeholders (Sirgy, 2002) internal stakeholders are members and other functional committees and business units within the political party other than marketing or campaign and strategy committee. External stakeholders refer to stakeholders outside of the party, upon which the survival and growth of the party depend (e.g. electorates, promoters, suppliers, funders and supporters). Distal stakeholders refer to stakeholders that influence the survival and growth of the party indirectly through external stakeholders (e.g. legal groups, advocacy groups, government agencies, civil society, trade unions, ethnic and cultural groups, etc). For political marketing, voters are considered to be the primary external stakeholders. Political marketers' primary responsibility is to meet the demand of their electorate (citizens) and enhance their quality of life.

EXPLAINING THE GAMES THEORY

Games theory is a system for describing games and using mathematical techniques to convert practical problems into games that need to be solved. Games theory can be described as a distinct and interdisciplinary approach to the study of human behavioural and such disciplines include mathematics, economics, psychology, political marketing, and other social and behavioural sciences. If properly understood, it is a good law for studying decision-making in conflict situations and it also provides mathematical techniques for selecting optimum strategy and most rational solution by a player in the face of an opponent who already has his own strategy.

Historically, the game theory was propounded in the 1920s by Emil Borel, and was further developed by John Von Newman to explain the behaviour of the economic man or the rational actor.

The crux of the games theory is the nature of the inter- dependence of whatever decisions are made by the different players participating in the game. This is because it is not possible for any one player to make a choice without giving considerations to the choices made by the other players. Thus, the task before each player is to ensure that decisions are based on expectations of what actions the other players would take at any given time. The layout of this is that the game entails elements of consistency and rationality among actors because such actors have partial control over the strategic factors affecting their environment. According to Ajayi (2006), the use of games theory in political studies is based on the following assumptions:

1. That the game is usually well defined
2. That the game has an explicit set of rules
3. That the information available to the players is specified at every point.
4. That the scoring system is complete.

Central to the theory are two vital components: the players and the strategies or tactics. The players also known as decision makers, could be individuals or institutions and are assumed to be rational with well defined objectives and are endowed with resources to checkmate competing forces. To guide the deployment of those resources are rules.

The game theory further argues that each player has a scale of utilities according to which he prefers some outcomes, so long as he plays the game at all. The player also has a range of options among different moves he can make, and there are particular expectations of such moves. Even though their knowledge of outcome of their actions are uncertain, the theory further argues that if players must play well, they must know what they know and what they do not know, and they must know what they can and what they cannot do (Duetch, 1978).

The outcome of whatever strategy is adopted gives rise to the different forms of game theory we know. Examples include:

- (i) **Two- Person Zero-Sum Games:** Here, we have only two players and the gains of one always equal to the loss of the other. In other words, two players are involved and the sum of the payoffs for every set of strategies by the two players is zero.
- (ii) **Two-Person Non-Zero-Sum Games:** Here two players are involved and there is one strategy set for which the sum of the payoffs is not equal to zero.
- (iii) **Non-Constant Sum Games:** The values of payoffs for this game vary.
- (iv) **Multi-Person Non-Constant-Sum Games:** Many players are involved in the game and the payoffs for the players vary.
- (v) **Cooperative Games:** In this game there is cooperation between some of the players and there are rules guiding the cooperation within the players. Political marketing can be modeled as a cooperative game with some players forming alliance with prospective successful political parties while others defect from parties that they feel can fail in an election.
- (vi) **Combinatorial Games:** This makes use of combinatorial analysis.
- (vii) **Stochastic Games** which is probabilistic in nature.
- (viii) **Two-Person Zero-Sum Stochastic Games**
- (ix) **Stochastic Multi-Generation Game.**

Some other games are given interesting names to emphasize the issues being portrayed. Examples are:

- (i) **Matching Penny Game**
- (ii) **Prisoner's Dilemma**
- (iii) **Ultimatum**
- (iv) **Angel Problem**
- (v) **Tragedy Of The Commons**
- (vi) **Majority Rule.**

(i) Two- Person Zero-Sum Games

This game involves two players in which losses are treated as negatives and wins as positives and the sum of the wins and losses for each set of strategies in the game is Zero. Whatever player one wins player two loses and vice versa. Each player seeks to select a strategy that will maximize his payoffs although he does not know what his intelligent opponent will do. A two-person zero-sum game with one move for each player is called a rectangular game.

Formally, a two-person zero-sum game can be represented as a triple (A, B, Y): where

$A=[a_1, a_2, \dots, a_m]$ and

$B=[b_1, b_2, \dots, b_n]$ and are payoff functions, e_{ij} such that

$Y=[a_i, b_j] = e_{ij}$.

This game can be represented as an m x n matrix of payoffs from player 2 to player 1 as follows:

$$\begin{bmatrix} y[a_1, b_1] & y[a_1, b_2] & \dots & [a_1, b_n] \\ y[a_m, b_1] & y[a_m, b_2] & \dots & [a_m, b_n] \end{bmatrix}$$

The two- person zero-sum games can also be represented as follows:

Suppose the choices or alternatives that are available for player 1 can be represented as 1, 2, 3, m

While the options for player two can be represented as 1, 2, 3, n

If player 1 selects alternative: and player 2 selects alternative j then the payoff can be written as ay. The table of payoffs is as follows:

Alternative for player 1

	1	2	3n
1	a ₁₁	a ₁₂	a ₁₃	...	a _{1n}
2	a ₂₁	a ₂₂	a ₂₃	...	a _{2n}
3	a ₃₁	a ₃₂	a ₃₃	...	a _{3n}
.					
.					
m	a _{m1}	a _{m2}	a _{m3}		a _{mn}

Alternative for player 2

The strategies employed in a two person zero sum game could be pure, dominating or mixed strategies.

PURE STRATEGIES

In pure strategy, the maximum criterion enables one to obtain a saddle point solution. The maximum criterion states that for a two person zero sum game, it is rational for each player to choose the strategy that maximizes the minimum pay off to be received by each of them. The pair of strategies and the payoffs such that each of the players maximizes the minimum payoffs is the solution to the game. So with his strategy player1(row player) can guarantee that the payoff is at least v, the lower value of the game where:

$$V = \sup \inf y_i(a_i, b_j) = \text{Max } a_i(\text{Min } b_j a_{ij})$$

While player 2 (column player) can guarantee that player1's payoff is no more than v, the upper value of the game.

$$V = \inf y_j(b_j, a_i) = \text{Min } (\text{Max } a_{ij})$$

For the maximum criterion which states that a saddle point solution exists in pure strategies we have

$$V = \sup \inf y_i(a_i, b_j) = V = \inf \sup y_j(b_j, a_i)$$

$$\text{Max } a_i(\text{Min } b_j a_{ij}) = \text{Min }_j (\text{Max }_i a_{ij})$$

DOMINATING STRATEGIES

In a payoff matrix, row dominance of i over j occurs if a_i > a_j while column dominance of i over j occurs if b_i < b_j. If dominance occurs, column j is not considered and we reduce the matrix by dominance until we are left with 1x1 matrix whose saddle point, solution can be easily found. We consider the matrix:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 3 & 4 & 5 & 3 \\ 3 & 1 & 2 & 3 \\ 1 & 3 & 4 & 4 \end{pmatrix}$$

Observation shows that every element in column 1 is less than equal to that of column 4, and we may remove column 4- the dominating column. Similarly, b3 dominates b2 and we remove the dominating column b3. The game is reduced to:

$$\begin{pmatrix} 3 & 4 \\ 3 & 1 \\ 1 & 3 \end{pmatrix}$$

In row dominance, we eliminate the dominated rows a_j (where a_i > a_j) while in column dominance we eliminate the dominating column b_j(where b_i < b_j) since player2 desired to concede the least payoff to the row player and thus minimize his losses.

This procedure is repeated using row dominance. Since a1 dominates a2 and also dominates a3, we remove the dominated rows a2 and a3. This is due to the fact that player1, the row player, wishes to maximize his payoffs. We then have 1 x1 reduced game [3 4] which has a saddle point solution. Generally, if a dominated strategy is reduced for a game, the solution of the reduced game is the solution of the original game.

MIXED STRATEGIES

Suppose the matrix of a game is given by:

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 2 & -1 & 3 \\ -1 & 3 & -2 \end{pmatrix}$$

Inspection shows that row and column dominance cannot be used to obtain a saddle point solution. If no saddle point solution exists we randomize the strategies. Random choice of strategies is the main idea behind a mixed strategy. Generally a mixed strategy for player is defined as a probability distribution on the set of pure strategies. The minimax theorem put forward by Von Neumann enables one to find the optimal strategies and value of a game that has no saddle point solution and he was able to show that every two- person zero-sum game has a solution in mixed if not in pure strategy.

As we noted above in cooperative game, it is possible for two or more players to cooperate against the others by pooling resources and making collective decisions during the play. This is the idea behind the coalition and realignment in politics or ganging up on the front runner in order to stop his chances of winning.

No matter its inadequacies, game theory has found relevance in analyzing major issues in political marketing. It is used, for instance, as analytical tool of strategic studies to explain the phenomenon of conflicts, competition, bargaining, electoral politics, voter behaviour, political alliance and elite conspiracy.

THE NEXUS BETWEEN GAME THEORY AND POLITICAL MARKETING THEORY

The contentious issue in the political marketing literature concerns the extent to which the elements of the marketing programme (i.e product, promotion, price and distribution) which Lee and Sirgy (2004) identified as the marketing beneficence should be handled to fit the characteristics of the various political markets and meet the expectation of the electorate.

The other aspect of the marketing concerns the preservation of the well-being of party's other stakeholders (e.g. employees, civil society, trade unions, cultural associations, international community etc. Lee and Sirgy (2004) called this marketing nonmaleficence.

These two aspects have been reflected in the definition of political marketing. For the avoidance of doubt, political marketing is the political mechanism of applying commercial-marketing techniques by political parties in order to win the mandate of the electorate for the purpose of enhancing the well-being of all stakeholders.

To fully capture the relationship between political marketing and game theory, we will identify specific dimension of beneficence and nonmaleficence marketing to show how game theory interfaces with the four marketing mix decision areas (product, price, distribution and promotion). Within each cell, we identify specific dimensions of political marketing.

TABLE 1: DECISION AREAS OF POLITICAL MARKETING GAME

DIMENSION	Product Decision	Price Decision	Distribution Decision	Promotion Decision
Marketing Beneficence	Credible candidate, Leadership ideologies, Symbols, Constitutions, Activities, Policies, Behaviour etc.	Issues that will not increase the suffering of the masses	Increase the visibility of the product through network, i.e Grassroot visibility	Campaign must include voters' education, and must be issue-based with facts and figures
Marketing Nonmaleficence	Products that are consistent with democratic practice	Avoid hurting the stakeholders	Follow the standard practice in logistics and transportation	Communicate in the manner that does not reinforce negative stereotypes and materialism

Political marketing as a game requires the development and marketing of products that meet the expectation of the citizens through transparent democratic processes within the party. Parties should ascertain the marketability of products or candidates through market intelligence. Failure to do this will put them at a competitive disadvantage.

In relation to making product decisions that preserve the well-being of the party's voter-stakeholders, we assert that it is important to study the political risks associated with the adoption of the party's product in relation to none voter stakeholders. These include under-aged citizens, non-nationals, corporate bodies etc.

Accordingly, the degree of caution exhibited by parties in designing and developing products that enhance the well-being of electorates as well as preserving the well-being of other stakeholders should lead to the loss of opposition at the polls. Thus we state the following hypotheses:

H₁: The more credible the party's products are to the electorates, the greater the possibility of loss of the opposition.

Hypothesis one above is a scenario of the zero-sum game. In the zero-sum game, we have only two players (i.e. two-party system or a multi-party system that is very weak in terms of opposition and the gains of one always equal to the loss of the other.

With respect to pricing decisions, the resources involved in political marketing strategy are mostly time, effort, the goodwill of volunteers and party members as well as party friends. Political marketing strategy should further be geared towards providing the palliatives to cost incurred in non-marketing terms in the sense that there are always opportunity lost in terms of time and resources that party activists or politicians could spend on other activities, working in their constituency, or simply as leisure or in seeking other forms of private income. It may also use resources that could either be used elsewhere or saved for the election campaign itself. These include the time and goodwill of volunteers and staff. This means that parties and their candidates should reciprocate the sacrifice of members and electorate, and should be seen to so do. This leads us to the second hypothesis:

H₂: The more selfless the party's candidates are to the citizens and other stakeholders, the greater the possibility of splitting the votes and seats at the polls.

In the non zero-sum game, two or more players (parties) are involved, and the gladiators may share from the award or the division of the award, and the gain of one need not be equal to the loss of the other. This is because all the parties are perceived serious contenders.

In the case of distribution decisions, political marketing encourages parties to increase their visibility in all the nooks and crannies of the country. The goal is to maximize the voters' accessibility to the party's products. The more extensive the network, the more likely the opponents will be displaced at the polls. This leads to the third hypothesis:

H₃: The wider the geographical spread of the political party in the political market, the greater the size of membership and tendency of acceptability.

This is the zero-sum-person's game. The scenario is like the case of hypothesis two – since the division of the award and the gain of one need not be equal to the loss of the other.

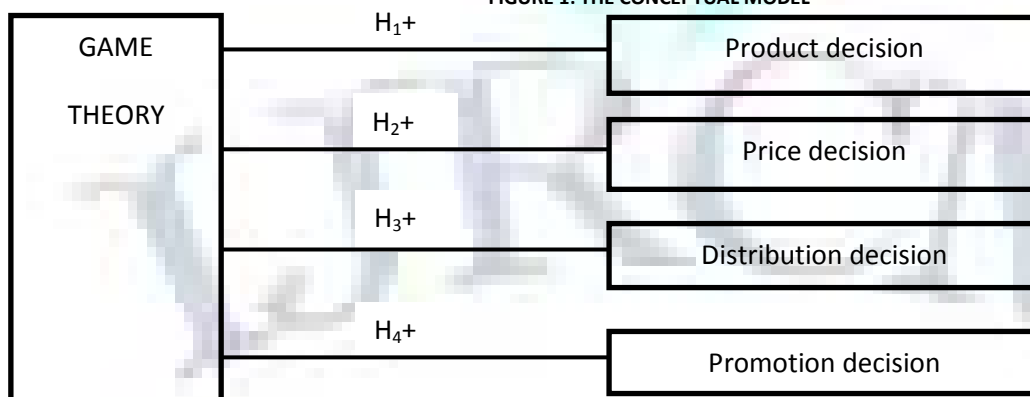
With respect to promotion decisions, the game theory reinforces the notion that voters' well-being will be enhanced if they are provided with both quality and quantity information about the party's products, costs and benefits. This would mean the strength and unique pedigree of the party and its candidates.

Voter education is part of political marketing game. Consistent with that spirit, political marketers are advised to make concerted effort to educate the citizens about the need to exercise their franchise, and be sure to vote for the candidate of their choice. Accordingly, the degree of tact exhibited in promoting the party's product should be reflected in the outcome of the polls. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

H₄: The weaker the campaign machineries of Leader party, the greater the tendency of coalition among parties to stop the victory of that leader.

This is the non zero-sum n-person game. It means that there are three or more players (parties) or candidates. It is possible for two or more players to cooperate against the others by pooling resources and making collective decisions during the election (play). This is the idea behind the coalition and realignment in politics or 'ganging up' on the front runner in order to stop his chances of winning (Verma, 1975).

FIGURE 1: THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL



RESEARCH METHOD

The results reported here are based on a study of Nigerian political parties actively engaged in political marketing. 20 of these parties were purposively selected to serve as a representative sample from the list of 54 political parties registered for 2007 general elections.

Thirty participating officials were selected from each of the 20 parties' three tier levels of officials (i.e. National, State, and Local Government Areas). This selection process was designed to reflect uniquely hierarchical input, identification and evaluation of political marketing practice and the interface of game theory.

Further to the above, a sample of 424 voters was randomly selected from the six geo-political zones in Nigeria (i.e. North West, North Central, North East, South West, South-South, and South East).

DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES

To measure game theory, a seven-item measure adapted from previous studies (Klein and Roth, 1990; Clark and Pugh, 2001) was used to capture the perception of differences between the respondents' understanding of game theory and political marketing practice.

The measures used to assess the applicability of game theory to political marketing programme were chosen on the basis of the literature surveyed (Nimmo, Butter & Kavanagh, 1997; Downs, 1957; Harrop, 1990; Maarek, 1992; Lees-Marshment, 2005; Scammell, 1999). In all cases, a five-point scale from (very similar) to 5 (very different) was used (see table 2 below).

TABLE 2: CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Constructs and items	Regression Weights	Standardized loadings	t-Value
PRODUCT (CR*= .92; VE^{xx} = .70)			
Party behavior	0.860	0.784	15.429
Party leadership	0.968	0.856	16.538
MPs and candidates	0.955	0.873	17.777
Membership & Staff	0.875	0.820	15.643
Symbols, constitution & activities	(Set to 1)	0.847	
PRICE (CR = .83; VE = .55)			
Time	0.897	0.728	10.728
Cost	0.931	0.763	11.692
Goodwill	0.951	0.754	11.352
Mandate	(Set to 1)	0.730	
PROMOTION (CR = .95; VE = .81)			
Campaign theme & message	1.148	0.945	18.461
Campaign content	1.172	0.943	18.662
Campaign media strategy	1.174	0.948	18.836
Canvassing & Sales Promotion tools	1.038	0.855	16.171
Canvassing & promotion budget size	(Set to 1)	0.804	
DISTRIBUTION (CR = .91; VE = .72)			
Ward network/campaign delivery	1.156	0.848	15.842
Control over network delivery	1.163	0.897	16.757
Logistics strategy/offering delivery	1.040	0.834	15.212
Budget for network/delivery	(Set to 1)	0.828	
GAME THEORY (CR = .87; VE = .50)			
Game definition	0.981	0.649	10.980
Explicit set of rules	0.681	0.693	11.815
Specific information	0.751	0.723	12.167
Complete scoring system	0.807	0.714	12.720
Language of the game	0.866	0.745	10.937
Players wit	1.004	0.646	12.354
Rational value	(Set to 1)	0.758	

MODEL FIT INDEXES ARE AS FOLLOWS

Chi-Square = 616.133; df = 265 (p = 0.000); CFI = 0.981; TLI = 0.977; IFI = 0.981; RMSEA = 0.066

$$CR = \frac{(\sum \text{Standardized Loading})^2}{(\sum \text{Standardized Loading} + \sum \lambda^2)}$$

KEY: *composite reliability (

$$\frac{\sum (\text{Standardized Loading})^2}{(\sum (\text{Standardized Loading}) + \sum \lambda^2)}$$

*Variance Extracted (VE) =

TABLE 3: CORRELATION BETWEEN CONSTRUCTS: VE_{xx}

Construct	1	2	3	4	5
1. Product	0.836				
2. Price	0.496	0.742			
3. Promotion	0.466	0.561	0.900		
4. Distribution	0.399	0.544	0.534	0.549	
5. Game Theory	0.499	0.610	0.505	0.345	0.707

NOTE: Diagonal is the square root of the average variance extracted.

INSTRUMENTATION

In line with the foregoing, 400 was determined as the sample size, causing 400 copies of the questionnaire to be distributed to the 20 participating political parties to confirm from their experience whether game theory applies to their political marketing operations, and if it was capable of improving significantly the level of voter patronage as well as result in high electoral success at the poll. A total of 318 copies of the questionnaire were returned, out of which 301 were complete and usable resulting in a net response rate of 75.25%.

THE TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

The overall Chi-Square for the model exhibited in figure 1 is significant (chi-square = 735.790, df = 27, P < 0.001), as might be expected given the size of the sample, such that tests involving large samples will generally lead to the rejection of the model even if it is appropriate (Bagozzi and Baumgartner, 1994; Arbuckle and Worthke, 1999). We therefore consider other structural diagnostics for relative global fit suggested by Bollen (1989) and Byrne (2001).

FIGURE 2: FINAL MODEL INVOLVING THE POLITICAL MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS



Chi-Square = 735.790, df = 271
 CF1 = 0.975; TL1 = 0.970
 IF1 = 0.975; RMSEA = 0.076

NOTE: standardized parameter estimate above the lines and t-value below the lines.

Other measures of model fit were comparative fit index (CF1 = 0.975), Tueker-Lewis fit index (TL1 = 0.970), incremental fit index (IF1 = 0.975) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.076). Given that all the fit indexes were inside conventional cut-off values, the model was deemed acceptable (Hair et al, 1998). The relationships proposed in the model are examined next (Figure 2 and Table 5).

Hypothesis one (H₁) to hypothesis four (H₄) propose a positive relationship between game theory and the practice of political marketing which utilizes the marketing mix elements (price, product, promotion and distribution). The positive relationship between game theory and the level of success in product decisions (H₁) is strongly supported as indicated by a parameter estimated of 0.461 (p < 0.01). Similarly, the statistically significant estimates of 0.568 (p < 0.01) for game theory and price decision (H₂), 0.664 (p < 0.01) for game theory and distribution decision (H₃) and 0.428 (p < 0.01) for game theory and promotion (H₄) indicate that all four hypotheses are strongly supported.

TABLE 5: MODEL PARAMETER ESTIMATES and t-VALUES

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables		R ²
	S.p	t-values	
Product	0.461	6.505 ^{xx}	0.21
Price	0.568	7.520 ^{xx}	0.32
Distribution	0.664	8.059 ^{xx}	0.44
Promotion	0.428	5.863 ^{xx}	0.18

KEY: S.p = standardized parameter estimate
 xx p < 0.01

With regard to the proportion of variance of the political marketing mix elements that is explained by the game theory, results were quite acceptable concerning product decision: An R2 value of 0.21 was reported, indicating that 21% of the variation in product decision is explained by game theory. Similarly, the proportion of variance of price decision, distribution decision and promotion decision that is explained by game theory is 44%, 32%, and 18% respectively.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT AND CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION

A systematic investigation into the relationship between game theory and political marketing practice has not been reported in the literature, yet the results reported above suggest that political marketing decisions are strongly influenced and conditioned by game theory. Accordingly, this study demonstrates the value of the game theory construct as an important determinant of political marketing strategy.

Hypothesis one (H₁) stated that game theory is positively related to the degree of voter patronage due to high credibility. The results strongly support this assumption, i.e. product decision appears to be premised on the desire of political party to present a credible candidate to the electorate (Ajayi, 2006; Worlu, 2005; Wring, 2001; Scammell, 1999).

Concerning the link between pricing decisions and game theory, the results indicate that the basis of the party's pricing strategies is the game theory. This is consistent with H₂. This corroborates previous studies which indicate that political parties tend to present for election purposes candidates who have track records of philanthropic engagements among the citizens, and express commitments towards alleviating the suffering of citizenry in all areas of development (Baines, 1996; Wring, 1994; Harrop, 1990; Newman, 994; O'Shaughnessy, 1990).

Hypothesis three (H₃) indicated that there exists a positive relationship between game theory and distribution decision. This is confirmed in the present research findings which reveal that the wider the geographical spread of the political party in the political market, the greater the size of membership and tendency of acceptability. Lees-Marshment (1999) and Scarrow (1996) also corroborated this stance.

The role played by party managers in the selection of promotion strategy is underscored in political marketing. The results strongly support that game theory is positively related to the promotional strategy of the party (Egan, 1999; Lees-Marshment, 1999; Bradshaw, 1995).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

It may be difficult to generalize from a simple study. However, the results presented in this study help political marketing managers to enhance their understanding of the complex interface between game theory and political marketing phenomenon. Our findings indicate that political marketing operations are conditioned by game theory as well as other philosophical foundations. As a result, political managers should allow themselves to be influenced by game theory when making political marketing decisions.

Political marketers and managers can establish open communication channels both formally and informally as well as accepting culture and marketing training to be aware of the most significant marketing dimensions of the electorate. This will increase cultural understanding that could be factored into the political marketing decision process to increase the degree of game theory application.

CONCLUSION

The overriding objective of this study is to draw scholarly attention to the nexus between game theory and political marketing strategy. Despite the importance of these two constructs in the literature, the relationship between them has received little or no research attention.

In the light of the above, we illustrate the game theory and proposed a testable research model to test the relationship between game theory and political marketing strategy. A paramount task in the political marketing literature is to clarify what determines political marketing strategy; and our results have clearly indicated that game theory is an important construct that should not be ignored as an important determinant of political marketing strategy.

Despite the fact that game theory demonstrates a relatively high explanatory power regarding the various aspects of the political marketing strategy variables, there are certainly other influential factors that were not considered (e.g. environmental factors, organizational factors, expanded marketing mix factors, and individual factors). By building on our theoretical framework, further research should explore the relevance between political marketing strategy of the party and game theory.

Further work should also test this framework in other countries since the present study was based in Nigeria.

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Hoping an appropriate consideration.

With sincere regards

Thanking you profoundly

Academically yours

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